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HOMELESSNESS SERVICE HAS BRUSH WITH KINDNESS

Approximately 400 Hunter and Central Coast families will benefit from rejuvenated crisis and transitional accommodation, as an upgrades program commences in Newcastle.

Delivered with the support of the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, Habitat for Humanity Australia's Brush with Kindness project will see 150 volunteers deliver maintenance and upgrades at 20 units across the regions that provide transitional accommodation for vulnerable people including survivors of domestic violence and those experiencing housing stress.

A \$120,000 grant from the Foundation has seen the first housing makeover undertaken at the Matthew Talbot Homeless Service in Wickham, where repairs and a fresh coat of paint were applied to one of the charity's transitional units with the assistance of volunteers from Newcastle Permanent, Hunter Young Professionals and Newcastle Business Club.

Habitat for Humanity Australia CEO Nicole Stanmore said that the Brush with Kindness program was about more than a coat of paint.

"The program provides vulnerable people of the Hunter and Central Coast with clean, inviting and dignified accommodation through these renovations, by working with providers who don't always have the funding or resources to undertake this work themselves," Ms Stanmore said.

"It shows the tenants of facilities such as Matthew Talbot Homeless Service that people care and that makes a huge difference because we know that taking the first step to seek support requires such bravery.

"If you take that step and arrive to this room and it makes you feel welcome, you're on your path to recovery."

Matthew Talbot Homeless Service Manager Glenn Beatty said helping vulnerable people feel comfortable and valued made a world of difference to their wellbeing.

"Our clients are with us because they are going through a rough time, and as well as homelessness they could also be experiencing job loss, health issues or relationship breakdowns," Mr Beatty said.

"It's important that they feel that they matter, and caring about their accommodation is another way we can demonstrate that we also care about their wellbeing and increasing their social engagement opportunities and sense of safety.

"Receiving assistance from Habitat for Humanity Australia and the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation means we are able to direct our funding and resources towards helping even more people, particularly in this time of high demand."

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Chair Ross Griffiths said that the social impact of the Brush with Kindness program was immeasurable.

Media release

“You can’t assign a value to people’s self-esteem, so we know that a \$120,000 investment from us is actually worth so much more,” Mr Griffiths said.

“This is the first time we’re seeing Brush with Kindness in Newcastle and the Central Coast, so we’re thrilled to be a part of the rollout.

“I’ve no doubt lives will be changed as a result of these renovations.”