

# Building the Kingdom in Australia

By Ben Robinson

As the sun rises over Mount Baw Baw, Callan Brooks is doing what he loves: building. He smiles as he fits another two-by-four into place, feeling the sense of accomplishment for a job well done.

Watching Callan work, you'd never guess that he is hearing impaired. But it hasn't slowed him down. To Callan, it seems he was born to do this. And perhaps he was—for five generations his family has been builders.

"When I was 15, I left school to start my apprenticeship," he says. "If you find an apprenticeship you like, it's common among Australians to leave school and do that full time." Callan has been building ever since. Whether he's constructing homes, bolstering his own testimony, or magnifying a calling, Callan is consistently engaged in building God's kingdom.

Just as his hearing loss hasn't held him back from his work in construction, it hasn't hindered his desire to learn and preach the gospel.

"While growing up, I barely understood 10 percent of what was said from the pulpit," Callan says. He wanted to serve a full-time mission but didn't qualify because of his hearing. However, he prayed and trusted that the Lord's will would be done. Then something unexpected happened: Callan's hearing worsened.

"When I was 18, I was completely deaf for six long months. I went to church for the feelings, because that's all I got out of it," he explains.

During this time, Callan built his testimony and relied on the Spirit. But what initially seemed to be a larger trial turned out to be the answer to his prayers. Because of the sudden drop in his hearing ability, he qualified for a cochlear implant, which improved his hearing enough to qualify him for a full-time mission. Callan soon left to serve in Perth, Australia.

Now home in Moe, Victoria, Callan serves in his ward's Young Men presidency, where he helps 10 young men

**Setbacks and hearing loss couldn't stop this young adult from helping hasten the Lord's work in Australia.**

stay strong in the gospel in a place where remaining so is particularly difficult. To do this, he emphasizes the role of the Spirit in building up true conversion.

"We try to lead the young men to experience their own conversion through reading the Book of Mormon and utilizing Church programs," he says.

The impact of this fifth-generation builder's work is obvious, through his work on buildings, his witness of the gospel, and his mentoring of young men in his ward. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CALLAN BROOKS



## MORE ABOUT CALLAN

### *What kinds of activities are there for young single adults?*

Australia has large conventions every year where all the YSAs are invited to gather together. Because young adults are so spread out in Australia, it helps to have a time for everyone to meet. This is a great sacrifice for members, as they will travel thousands of miles to attend.

### *What do you like to do in your free time?*

I love to play sports, primarily basketball. We have a big Easter basketball competition run by the members every two years. It includes a women's division, a three-point competition, and a dunk competition.

## THE CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

143,891 Latter-day Saints

303 congregations

145 family history centers

6 missions

5 temples

## FACTS ABOUT AUSTRALIA

Capital: Canberra

Official language: English

## BY THE NUMBERS

Over 23 million people

Over 500 national parks

Highway 1 is the world's longest national highway, with 9,000 miles (14,500 km) of road circumnavigating the country

