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## The compelling stories of two men who turned their lives around after hitting rock bottom

# Living proof of a new life

By SANDRA PETERSON

JOSHUA Slater never thought he'd be able to put a roof over the head of his young family until the Live Works program helped him give meaning to his life.

Mr Slater, 23, said "couch surfing" had been his way of life since he was 15. But when his partner, Tweet Doan, gave birth to their daughter, Myeisha, three years ago, he realised his lifestyle had to change.

For two years, he struggled to find work. With no job and no credit rating, he was unable to rent a home.

As a way to overcome the obstacles, Mr Slater

### STARTING OVER **1**

enrolled in Live Works, which gives 16 to 22-year-olds a chance to get building industry apprenticeships. He started the 12-week program in July last year and by October was working as an apprentice plasterer for Dibartolomeo Plasterers.

Mr Slater said he found a talent for the trade when Live Works sent him to work on a run-down Department of Housing home in Balga.

"It was a mess when we started and there was nothing but dirt out the front and back," he said. "We were really proud when we finished the job and I said I wouldn't mind living in it and, if I ever got the chance, I'd never let it get back to what it was."

Mr Slater's wish came true when he moved his family into

the Balga home he helped renovate in May.

"We feel like a proper family now," said Ms Doan, who is six months pregnant with their second child. Outcare Inc, which runs the Live Works program, leases the Balga property from the Department of Housing and is subletting it to Mr Slater so he can build a credit rating and eventually rent a home in his own right.

Outcare's youth services manager, Sam Mesiti, said Mr Slater had come a long way in a short time.

Mr Slater's boss, Rob Dibartolomeo, said he was happy to have such a "great kid on board".

For information about Live Works, call 9473 1121, or visit [www.outcare.com.au](http://www.outcare.com.au).

To hire an apprentice, call Skill Hire on 9477 1900, or visit [www.skillhire.com.au](http://www.skillhire.com.au).



Picture: DANIEL WILKINS