



Thank you: Denise Gibson cries recalling the 63 volunteers, including Matt De Remer and Cameron Wright (above), who renovated her fire-damaged house (inset pictures).

Picture: MARK STEWART N46DT301

Renovation rescue

Charity | Anna Prytz

Volunteers bring hope after tragedy

DENISE Gibson wept tears of joy as an army of volunteers renovated her Bulleen home made virtually uninhabitable by a fire nearly two years before.

Mrs Gibson's husband, Harry Gibson, died a week after smoke from the July 2009 blaze damaged his lungs.

And while the fire was limited to a spare room, the rest of the house and furniture was left covered in

soot. Uninsured and without money to pay for repairs, the grieving 64-year-old had no choice but to live on amid the blackened walls.

That was until last month when 63 good Samaritans from Doncaster's Riverside Church spent two days scrubbing, painting and rebuilding to make Mrs Gibson's house liveable again.

She was left speechless. "I don't know what to say when I think about what they did," Mrs Gibson said last week. "When they all walked in that day, I just cried."

Mrs Gibson was put in touch with her helpers by Manningham's welfare agency, Doncare.

Volunteer Matt De Remer said the church had been on the lookout for


community projects. "Doncare said, 'We've got this lovely lady who needs some help,' and we came over and met her, saw her situation and that was it," Mr De Remer said.

Fellow volunteer Cameron Wright said it was well worth it. "They were great days," Mr Wright said. "It was a huge undertaking, but to see her and the house now is great."

Doncare also had the house rewired and replaced furniture.

"I don't know what I would have done without them all," Mrs Gibson said. "I just love them. They're the best friends I've ever had."

To make a donation to Doncare, phone 9841 4215 or go to doncare.org.au

 Do you know a good Samaritan or someone who needs a little charity? Let us know at manninghamleader.com.au