



You started renovating your place with the best of intentions. But somewhere along the way, other things took precedence and you just never got around to finishing the job, did you? Have no fear, the *DIY Rescue* crew are here to help, as **Guy Davis** discovered when he spoke with team member Tara Dennis

Rescue ranger

Tara Dennis has got my number. "Don't you know someone who has started renovating a property and hasn't finished? You must! Everyone does! It's probably you!"

At this point in the conversation, I must make my confession to the host of Nine's new home renovation program, *DIY Rescue*: I'm the kind of guy who thinks about renovation projects but never gets around to starting them.

"That's probably the safest and cheapest way to do it," she laughs.

It would appear that I'm in the minority when it comes to renovations, because Tara and the *DIY Rescue* team have encountered plenty of would-be handymen who have taken on home improvement jobs, only to pull the plug on the project halfway through. "It's one reason why I think this show will appeal to everyone – everyone's a candidate," says Tara.

"We all have jobs around the house we haven't finished, whether we rent or own. It's a pretty big problem, actually, because the interest rates are low right now and people are excited about getting into property. They may have spent all their money just getting in the door and then they get all revved up, all excited about renovating and start ripping things out without realising the cost and the enormity of the job, not to mention how long it will actually take.

"So many people bite off more than they can chew, basically. It's a very common occurrence."

Tara admits that shows like *Changing Rooms*, *Room for Improvement*, *Backyard Blitz* and the like could well have played a part in the average homeowner's eagerness to give their place a once-over.

"I think we make it look so easy on the telly, and people sit there and think, 'That looks easy. I could have a go at that'. So *DIY Rescue* is good because we can pay back our debt to society in some small way by going out and fixing the problems!" she laughs.



"It's really a good thing to go and help people out a little bit, makes you feel like you've done something quite worthwhile – it's great to take them from something that's really quite dreadful to a beautiful home in just a few days."

And when Tara says "really quite dreadful", she's not exaggerating. In one case, the team was faced with a concrete slab surrounded by a timber frame that they had to transform into a kitchen, laundry, bathroom and lounge room.

Another house they tackled had no ceiling and no walls: "We turned that into the most amazing kitchen-dining room-living area," says Tara. "By the time we left, there were teaspoons in the drawer."

What's truly amazing about the unfinished renovations the *DIY Rescue* team takes on is that many of them have gone unfinished for years. Some have even remained incomplete for over a decade.

More often than not, though, it's a case of overly-ambitious home handymen finding they've taken on projects that are beyond them. "People



get a bit gung ho without thinking," says Tara.

"We've had a guy who stuck a wall down the middle of his lounge room to make a room for his daughter but he didn't take out the lounge room's central light. And that light could never be turned on because it was a fire hazard – the bulb was leaning against this new wall.

"Then there was another guy who ripped an oil heater out of the wall without checking if there was any oil in the tank. Oil started flooding right across the room, impregnating the floorboards."

True to its name, *DIY Rescue* offers much-needed assistance to property owners who find themselves in such predicaments. But it's not like the team does all the work while the homeowners take a four-day holiday – the people who started the renovation have to help finish the renovation as well.

"We try to get them to invite all their friends as well," says Tara. "We bring all the qualified people for the jobs they're needed for but it always

helps if they've got a friend who's a carpenter or a landscaper. If there are as many people on site as possible, we welcome that – we're not the kind of show that hides what happens.

Everyone's on camera and we shoot it the way it is, so the more the merrier.

"Our show's about achieving good, practical resolutions using great new products and ideas. It's also about working with them to get what they want to achieve – it's not *Changing*

Work in progress: Luke Van Dyck, Greg Norton, Leah McLeod and Tara Dennis fix up botched home improvements on DIY Rescue.

"It's great to take them from something that's really quite dreadful to a beautiful home in just a few days"

Rooms, where we're imposing our ideas onto them. If we can take their ideas and go one step further, making them better than they imagined, that's what we do."

■ *DIY Rescue*, WIN, Tuesday, 7.30pm

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