

2022 Year in Review – New South Wales Community Hubs

Community hubs are designed to create social cohesion in some of the most disadvantaged communities. They are welcoming places where families from diverse backgrounds, particularly women with preschool children, can connect, share, and learn together.

Hubs are embedded in primary schools and harness existing school infrastructure, local government, and community services. Hubs bridge the gap between families and the wider community, connecting families with each other, their schools, local services and support, and providing a gateway to health, wellbeing and education services.

This report highlights the achievements of our community hubs in New South Wales (NSW). For a national view, please read our 2022 Year in Review at <https://www.communityhubs.org.au/news-events/2022-year-in-review/>.

The 25 hubs in NSW are located in primary schools in Blacktown (three sites), Canterbury Bankstown (six sites), Coffs Harbour (one site), Cumberland (three sites), Fairfield (four sites), Liverpool (three sites), Parramatta (two sites), and Wollongong (three sites)¹. A complete list of host schools is shown in Table 1, Appendix A. In Term 1 2023, we will recruit one replacement and two new host schools, bringing the size of the network to 28 hubs in NSW.

Local support for hubs is provided by Illawarra Multicultural Services (Wollongong), Liverpool City Council (Liverpool), and Settlement Services International (Blacktown, Canterbury Bankstown, Coffs Harbour, Cumberland, Fairfield, and Parramatta).

In 2022, NSW hubs engaged with families in a variety of ways. They delivered early childhood programs and conversational English classes, as well as vocational pathways including education and training opportunities for hub participants.

Key highlights from 2022:



2,654 families engaged with New South Wales hubs



1,147 early childhood sessions were conducted across 23 hubs



1,131 conversational English classes ran across 18 hubs



96 local organisation partnered with New South Wales hubs



78 jobs were secured by hub participants



301 referrals were made to early childhood services, such as maternal and child health

¹Community hubs are funded by the federal government through the Department of Home Affairs, the Scanlon Foundation, state governments and participating schools. Hubs across eight LGAs are funded by the Department of Communities and Justice, Multicultural NSW until 2024.

Engagement

Engagement activities provide hub leaders with the opportunity to build strong relationships with families and facilitate connections to their school and local services. Hub leaders develop the hub space and the program offerings to address the needs of their host school and the local community. Some activities include the Women's Water and Safety program, cooking classes and 'Sit n Sip' - an activity where families come into the hub to connect with one another over a cup of tea.

Across 2022, hub leaders made 2,260 referrals to external support services with the most common being education and training (436), family support (338) and emergency aid (269). In addition, the NSW community hubs partnered with 96 local organisations. For a complete list, see Table 2 Appendix A.

Early childhood

Early childhood programs such as playgroup act as a soft entry point for families to attend other hub activities, form friendships with community members or be referred to external services. Early childhood activities often take place in a hub, providing families with a comfortable and safe environment to connect.

In 2022, 32 of the 96 partners who worked with NSW hubs were playgroup providers, which reflects how hubs respond to the needs of their communities by delivering valuable playgroups and children's language and literacy activities. Last year, 22 hubs offered playgroup programs that were either place-based or online. In addition, 14 hubs ran targeted school readiness programs including classroom visits, and playgroups for school transition.

After a six-month break, the hub re-established the School Readiness Program with UnitingCare in February. It started with three participants and grew during the last two terms to 16 participants. All parents have reported positive experiences with the program so far and that their child is always happy when coming to the program. Parents mentioned they see that their child has become more confident, is getting better at playing and interacting with other children, their literacy and numeracy skills improved, sitting down for a longer period to work on tasks, completing tasks at home, asking for help from siblings, and following instructions. Parents also mentioned they have formed new, meaningful friendships with other parents attending the program.

Hub leader, Chester Hill Public School, Canterbury Bankstown

English

English language activities enable migrant families to build English language skills and increase confidence to participate in the community. Various types of English classes are delivered including conversational and introductory sessions to formal accredited classes.

In 2022, 18 NSW hubs delivered English sessions place-based, offsite, or online, with at least 374 adult attendees, 54% were women with a dependent child². Hubs are a welcoming and familiar space for participants to learn English and through these sessions 122 referrals were made to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). In addition, 15 partner organisation worked with hubs to deliver conversation and formal English classes

Vocational pathways

Hubs help create career pathways and nurture core skills by delivering informal and formal training activities. Across 2022, vocational activities included floristry courses, barista courses, and parent workshops in literacy.

For some, working or volunteering in hubs is their first employment experience and in 2022, 194 people volunteered in a New South Wales hub. Hubs also referred 436 people to education and training services and delivered 466 formal and informal training sessions. They also engaged 25 partner organisations to equip participants with work ready skills, and 78 jobs were secured by hub participants during the year.

This term, the 'café skill taster' course was run for six weeks, and seven parents have attended in total. The course has the parents' gaining knowledge and skills about working in a café. Each week has a new delivery and food presentation focus. For six weeks the staff were given coffee made by the participating parents. The course has encouraged two friends to open their own café shop very soon.

Hub leader, Bert Oldfield Public School, Blacktown

For more information, visit www.communityhubs.org.au or contact:

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² Based on regular attendees in CHA-funded English classes Term 1 and 2, and new attendees in Term 3 and 4 2022.

Appendix A: Host schools and partner organisations - New South Wales community hubs

Table 1: Host schools – New South Wales community hubs, 2022

LGA	School name
Blacktown	Bert Oldfield Public School
Blacktown	Colyton Public School
Blacktown	Kings Langley Public School
Canterbury Bankstown	Banksia Road Public School
Canterbury Bankstown	Bankstown Public School
Canterbury Bankstown	Bass Hill Public School
Canterbury Bankstown	Chester Hill Public School
Canterbury Bankstown	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Canterbury Bankstown	Villawood East Public School
Coffs Harbour	Narranga Public School
Cumberland	Granville Public School
Cumberland	Hilltop Road Public School
Cumberland	Westmead Public School
Fairfield	Bossley Park Public School
Fairfield	Fairfield West Public School
Fairfield	Prairievale Public School
Fairfield	Smithfield Public School
Liverpool	Heckenberg Public School
Liverpool	Hoxton Park Public School
Liverpool	Marsden Road Public School
Parramatta	Parramatta West Public School
Parramatta	Rydalmere Public School
Wollongong	Warrawong Public School
Wollongong	Wollongong Public School
Wollongong	Wollongong West Public School ³

³ Left the network Term 4, 2022.

Table 2: Partner organisations – NSW community hubs, 2022

Organisation name	
Anjali Fisher	Fitted for Work
Arab Council Australia	Foodbank Australia
Arts and Cultural Exchange	Glow Gym Fitness
AusRelief	Good360 Australia
Ayden Littleford	Gymea Community Aid & Information Service
Bankstown Community Resource Group	Healthy Cities Illawarra
Bankstown Public School Parents and Citizens Association	Heartfulness Institute
BCC Institute	Hills Community Aid
Belgravia Leisure	Housing NSW
Big Fat Smile	Indian Crisis Support Agency
Blacktown City Council	Jump Start Jellybeans
Boronia Multicultural Services	Karabi Community & Development Services
breakthru	Karitane
Bunnings Warehouse	Kiama Community College
Cafe On The Boulevard	Learning Links
Cancer Council Australia	Liverpool City Council
CatholicCare	Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections
Centrelink	Marina Robins - Arts Facilitator
Charmaine Barretto	Mission Australia
Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre	Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency
Chester Hill Public School Parents and Citizens Association	NSW Department of Education
City Of Canterbury Bankstown	NSW Health
City of Parramatta Council	OzHarvest
Community Care Kitchen	Parramatta Artist Studios
Community First Step	Parramatta College
Community Migrant Resource Centre	Piccolo Me Australia
Connect Child and Family Services	Playgroup NSW
CORE Community Services	Plus Fitness
Creating Links	Prosper
Cumberland Multicultural Community Services	Ramya Kodiyalam Santhanam
Cumberland Women's Health Centre	Reclink Australia
Diabetes Australia	Royal Life Saving Australia
Doterra Australia and NZ	Royal Life Saving Society - New South Wales
Ermington Branch Library	Royal Botanic Garden Sydney
Ethnic Community Services Cooperative	Rydalmere Public School Parents and Citizens Association
Fairfield City Council	SDN Children's Services
	Seav May Tea
	Services Australia

Table 2 (continued): Partner organisations – NSW community hubs, 2022

Smithfield Public School Parents and Citizens Association	TAFE NSW
Sonyla's Beauty Spot	TAFE Outreach
Spinal & Sports Care	The One Box
St George and Sutherland Community College	The Salvation Army
St Vincent de Paul Society	The Social Outfit
STARTTS	UnitingCare
Strong Safe Families	Western Sydney Local Health District
Sydney Community College	Westmead Public School Parents and Citizens Association
Sydney Multicultural Services	Wollongong City Council
	Woodville Alliance
	Woolworths Supermarkets
	Yarra Plenty Regional Library
	Yoga Peace Australia