

# MID-YEAR UPDATE 2024

At the six-month mark of 2024, we look back on some of the stories of impact from our community hubs network.

 **98**  
active hubs

 **9,097**  
families engaged



## WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

“We combine, we’re **one community**, you stand as one.”  
– Hub participant

First and foremost, hubs are about connecting people with schools, each other and organisations offering health, education and settlement support services to bridge critical information and service gaps in local communities.

By engaging families, often women with pre-school aged children (many of whom don’t attend services elsewhere), hubs also:


- help children develop social and language skills, resilience and prepare them for school;
- provide participants with the opportunity to learn and practise their English; and
- support entry into broader vocational pathways including volunteering, skills training, and work.

It’s all helping to build a socially cohesive Australia.

## MID-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

 **3,456** early childhood activities

 **2,845** conversational and formal English classes

 **5,042** referrals made to external support services, including family support, education and training, and preschool

 **410** local organisations delivered programs and services

 **993** people volunteered in a hub

 **226** jobs secured by participants

To learn more about the impact of community hubs, watch our [video](#).

## OUR COMMUNITY HUBS NETWORK

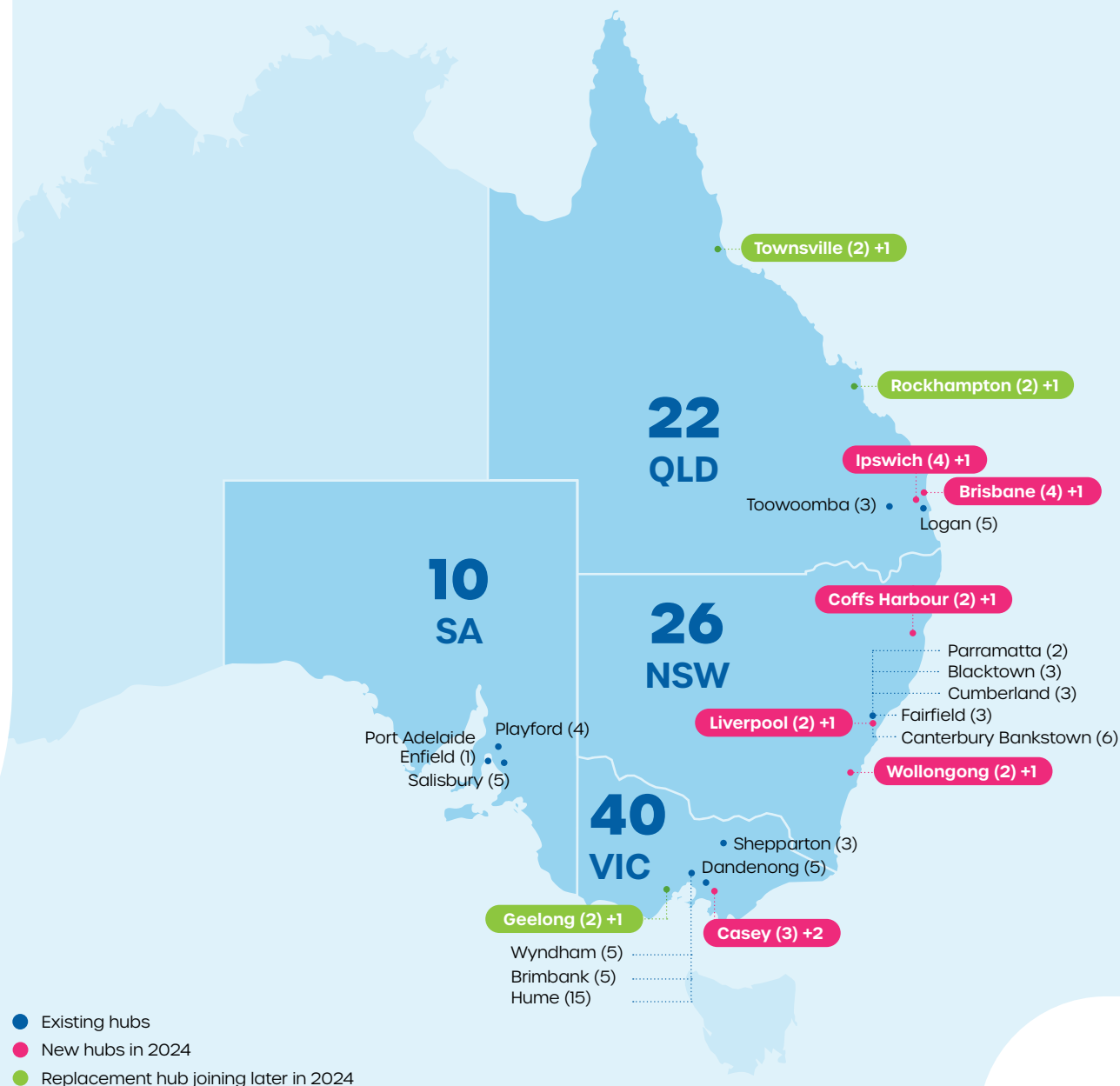
In 2024, we welcomed **seven new schools** to the network and farewelled Colyton Public School in Blacktown (NSW).

Our new schools are:

- Austral Public School in Liverpool (NSW)
- Barton Primary School and Fleetwood Primary School in Casey (Vic)
- Nundah State School in Brisbane (Qld)
- Primbee Public School in Wollongong (NSW)
- Springfield Lakes State School in Ipswich (Qld)
- William Bayldon Public School in Coffs Harbour (NSW)



To find your nearest hub location, visit our [Hubs Directory here](#).



## STORIES OF IMPACT ACROSS OUR FOUR KEY PROGRAM AREAS

### ENGAGEMENT

**Engagement and connection are at the heart of every community hub. Across the network, in the first six months of this year, hubs co-hosted events with their schools, held regular coffee and chat sessions, offered art therapy and cooking classes, and encouraged connection with one another and their local services.**

At St Albans Heights Primary School community hub in Brimbank (Vic), time together in the hub's garden has been a great way for participants to connect with one another, with some making friendships for a lifetime. Through their hard work as a team, they are preparing to plant and nurture the garden in the coming months.

Through engagement activities like these, hub leaders build a trusting relationship with participants and, in turn, are able to better connect them with the external services and support they need.

In the first half of 2024, hub leaders made 5,042 referrals to external support services, including family support, education and training, and preschool. While these referrals ensure participants receive any immediate information and services they need, it also helps build their confidence in knowing who to go to in the future and how to seek support on their own.

Hubs also partnered with 410 local organisations to facilitate programs, offer counselling and support, and donate funding or resources.



Photo: Hub participants transforming the hub garden together as a team.

“ Being able to embed yourself in your community and find those people to be your **replacement village** when your family can't be there is a really incredible opportunity. ”

– Hub participant

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

**When children start school ready to learn, the impact is positive for the child, families, the school, and their local community. Most hubs offer programs such as playgroup, connecting families to local early childhood activities, and helping pre-school aged children to learn, grow, improve their social skills, and prepare for school.**

Community hubs held 3,456 early childhood sessions in the first six months of 2024, including playgroups, early years' activities, and children's language and literacy classes. Classes were delivered in partnership with 123 local providers, reflecting the responsiveness of hubs in meeting the needs of their local communities.

In South Australia, a number of community hubs – including Elizabeth Park Schools, Elizabeth Vale Primary School, Playford College and St Mary Magdalene's School – invited their participants to 'Playgroup at the Park', a community expo showcasing local health and early childhood service providers, including a vaccination clinic.

This gave parents and carers easy and convenient access to a range of organisations while their children enjoyed play time together. More than 70 adults and 83 children enjoyed the event.

To learn more about hub participants and their satisfaction with hub activities, we conducted an Early Years Program survey finding parents and carers with at least one child aged three, four or five: were happy with hub activities (98%); agreed the hub supported them as a parent/carer (96%); and agreed their child had benefited from hub activities (97%).



Photo: Hub participants enjoying a day out at 'Playgroup at the Park'.

**You really feel like you're making a difference in more than a child's life, but in the lives of a family. That's **real change**, it's long term and for generations to come.**

– Hub leader



## ENGLISH

**English language activities provide hub participants with opportunities to learn and practise their English through informal and formal classes. This helps build the confidence of participants to become active members of their local communities.**

Across the network, 2,845 English classes were delivered in the first half of the year, with 205 referrals made to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

To deliver English classes, hubs worked with 89 partner organisations including AMES Australia, Anglicare and TAFE NSW, as well as a range of independent English language facilitators.

In May, we welcomed the continued support of the Federal Government with funding for English and childminding secured for the next four years.

At Woodridge North State School community hub in Ipswich (Qld), Cecilia, a facilitator from TAFE Queensland, gets creative with her English class, combining English language skills with cooking and a dollop of local history.

In April, Cecilia taught her class how to make traditional ANZAC biscuits while sharing the story of the original ANZACs and their significance in Australian history.



**Photo:** Hub participants learn how to make traditional ANZAC biscuits.

“ We may look different, we may sound different, we may speak different languages, but at the end of the day, **we're all one.** ”

– Hub leader

## VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

**Across our hub network, we're helping participants build pathways to employment by providing access to volunteering and informal and formal training opportunities.**

For some hub participants, working or volunteering in a community hub is their first employment experience in Australia.

In the first six months of 2024, 993 people volunteered in a hub while 226 jobs were secured by hub participants.

A volunteer survey<sup>1</sup> run in May revealed almost two thirds (62%) of participants volunteered to give back or because they were retired, while a quarter (24%) were seeking employment pathways. As a result of volunteering in a hub, 85% agreed it contributed to their sense of purpose.

To give participants the opportunity to learn new skills or find work, 1,582 vocational training sessions have been run, from informal sewing classes to playgroup facilitator training and accredited Certificate III and IV education support programs.

Hubs also made 625 referrals, connecting hub participants to education and training providers in their local community.

In a partnership with the Royal Life Saving Society of New South Wales and Figtree Sports, Warrawong Public School community hub in Wollongong (NSW) facilitated a learn-to-swim program for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Hub leader Farah Alashhab said the goal was to enable the women to become comfortable in the water and learn to swim in a women-only space. "I just wanted to give them a supported space where they can learn and overcome their fears".



**Photo:** Participants from Warrawong Public School community hub learn vital life skills in a women-only learn-to-swim program.

“They're empowered to go and help themselves, so it's **breaking down the barriers.**”

– Hub leader

<sup>1</sup> Findings of the South Australian Government's Community Neighbourhood Development survey, May 2024.

To learn more about the  
National Community Hubs Program,  
visit: [communityhubs.org.au](https://communityhubs.org.au).

With thanks to our major program  
funders for their continued support:



Australian Government



“ It’s a bit of a pulse, a  
heartbeat within the school  
community and a much-loved  
resource in our school. It’s  
open, inclusive and everyone  
feels welcome. It’s a real  
gift for us to have a hub. ”

– Principal