



# **MID-YEAR UPDATE 2025**

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The National Community Hubs Program is a place-based initiative that supports families from diverse backgrounds, particularly women with pre-school aged children. Grounded in four pillars – engagement, early childhood, English and vocational pathways – hubs are based in primary schools to make it easier for families to access opportunities for support, learning, and connection from the earliest years.

**At the six-month mark of 2025, we look back on some of the stories of impact from our hubs network.**



**98**  
active hubs



**9,459**  
families engaged

## WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Hubs exist to create connection. For many families, it can be challenging to navigate unfamiliar systems and build a sense of belonging – especially for women with young children. Hubs offer a welcoming, culturally safe space where families can build trust, access services, and take steps toward their goals.

Each hub is shaped by the unique needs of its community, but across the network, three things remain consistent:

- supporting children's development and preparing them for school including playgroup and transition to school,
- creating opportunities for parents and caregivers to learn and practise English and,
- providing vocational pathways for hub participants through volunteering, training and finding work.

As participants build confidence and connection, they also begin to contribute – to their schools, their communities and broader society. Together, we're building stronger communities – one relationship, one conversation, and one act of inclusion at a time.

*Discover every day moments that make hubs special.*  
**[Watch the video to learn more](#)**



## MID-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS



**3,607** early  
childhood activities



**1,126** participants  
regularly attended English  
classes and activities\*



**5,869** referrals made to  
external support services



**458** local  
organisations  
delivered programs  
and services



**1,251** people  
volunteered in a hub



**191** jobs secured  
by participants, by  
spending time in a hub

*\*Based on regular attendees in  
CHA-funded English classes in  
Term 1 and 2, 2025.*

## UPDATE FROM OUR CEO

**The first half of 2025 has brought encouraging momentum – from sustaining a strong national footprint of 98 hubs to continuing the vital support hubs provide to families throughout the school year.**

We were delighted by the Federal Government's announcement of \$6.45 million to establish 25 new community hubs across the country. This investment recognises the critical role hubs play in helping families build strong foundations – through connecting with one another, early childhood activities, and services and support they need.

This builds on further welcome support from the Queensland government, with three years of continued funding for hubs in Ipswich and Logan, and new funding from Multicultural NSW to support our hubs in New South Wales. While we continue to advocate for sustainable funding for the 14 hubs in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Townsville, we remain focused on ensuring every hub is supported to deliver high quality programs every day.

We also extend a warm welcome to our newest hubs in Victoria – St Albans East Primary School in Brimbank and St Thomas Aquinas Primary School in Geelong.

Importantly, in May, we welcomed 162 hub leaders, support coordinators and school leaders to our sixth national conference in Melbourne. The conference was a wonderful reminder of the strength of this network and the importance of creating space for everyone to connect, share, and learn from one another.

We were honoured to be welcomed by Minister Dr Anne Aly, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, who shared her personal story of arriving in Australia as a young child - and the isolation her family experienced. Her words deeply resonated:

**Hubs would have made all the difference,**

she said. Minister Aly's reflections were a timely reminder of why hubs matter. Community, connection, and culturally safe spaces can transform lives.

Looking ahead, we're excited to pilot 'Huddle Up in Community Hubs', a new initiative developed this year in partnership with North Melbourne Football Club's The Huddle. Designed to bring inclusive, community-driven physical activity to 13 hubs across Western Sydney and Wyndham,



*Bec Kotow and Minister Dr Anne Aly at our recent conference, joined by our hubs network.*

the program creates safe, supportive spaces for migrant and First Nations women to connect through movement. Following the pilot, the program is set to expand to 50 hubs over the next two years.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we are building stronger, more connected communities - one hub at a time.

### **Bec Kotow**

Chief Executive Officer  
Community Hubs Australia



## STORIES OF IMPACT ACROSS FOUR KEY PROGRAM AREAS

### ENGAGEMENT

**At its core, engagement in community hubs is about fostering relationships between families, schools and the wider community, through activities that build trust, confidence and connection.**

In the first six months of the year, this looked like greetings at the school gate, morning teas, family excursions, school events including celebrating Harmony Day and Mother's Day, recipe sharing and informal drop-ins that turned into meaningful conversations. Hubs continued to foster these everyday moments of belonging - and through them, opened the door to deeper engagement.

As part of supporting families, so far this year, hub leaders have made 5,869 referrals to external services, including family support, emergency aid, and education and training. Hubs also worked alongside 458 partner organisations to deliver programs, host workshops, and connect families with local opportunities.

At Dandenong Primary School (Victoria), one such opportunity came in the form of a 'Learn to Ride' program delivered in partnership with Brainwave Bikes.

For many of the women who participated, it was their first time learning to ride a bike.

With gentle encouragement from their hub leader and each other, the women practised week after week - slowly building not only their riding skills, but also their confidence and independence. Some now cycle with their children; others use their bikes to get around their neighbourhoods for the very first time.

This story is one of many that show how hubs are helping participants build practical skills, foster social connections, and take small but powerful steps toward fuller participation in community life.



*Participants in Dandenong Primary School's hub, 'Learn to Ride' program (Victoria), gaining confidence, independence and a new way to connect with their community.*

**Engagement isn't just about who walks through the hub doors - it's also about hubs stepping out into the community. Whether it's joining school events, collaborating with local groups, or attending community meetings, hub leaders are constantly **building bridges that connect families, schools and services** in meaningful ways.**

*- Mandy Cox, support coordinator,  
Communiify, Brisbane, (Queensland)*

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

**Playgroup is often the heart of a hub. It's a regular session where families with pre-school aged children come together to play, learn and connect. Children build social skills and confidence, while parents and carers find support, share experiences and build friendships.**

In the first half of 2025, hubs across the network delivered 3,607 early childhood activities, supported by 124 partner organisations. These activities ranged from playgroups and story time to targeted school readiness activities, helping children grow in confidence and develop the social and emotional skills they need for a strong start to school.

Our recent Early Childhood survey\* told us early childhood activities including playgroup, transition to school, and language and literacy are making a difference to parents and their children with:

- **99%** of parents reported feeling happy with hub activities.
- **97%** felt supported as a parent or carer.
- **95%** said the hub helped them feel more involved in their child's care and education and,
- **100%** of parents said their child had benefited from the activities.

At Chester Hill Public School hub in Canterbury-Bankstown (New South Wales), a supported playgroup delivered in partnership

with Creating Links helped make a difference to parents and their children. The 'Parent and Child Play' group was co-designed with families and steadily grew after its launch in the hub in mid-2023. While the first year saw challenges with regular attendance, 36 families were registered by the end of 2024, with 11 new families joining this year alone.

The program offered more than just play – it created a safe and welcoming environment that nurtured parent-child relationships and fostered a sense of belonging. Parents connected with the hub, engaged with their school community, and in some cases accessed wider support services such as counselling, domestic violence support, and speech pathology. The hub and its partners continually adapted the activities to meet the changing needs of families, working closely with them to ensure the program reflected what they needed most.

Together, these efforts helped more children arrive at school ready to learn – and supported more families to feel connected and cared for.



*Children explore textures, colour and creativity during a playgroup session at Chester Hill Public School hub in Canterbury-Bankstown, (New South Wales).*

**// I love taking my daughter on little adventures, but it can be challenging on my own. Bush playgroup is perfect because there's an ease knowing you have friendships and support. It gets us out more and helps us make magical memories together. //**

*– Hub participant, Karrendi Primary School, Salisbury (South Australia)*

*\*Early Childhood survey, designed in collaboration with the Queensland Department of Education, was conducted in Ipswich and Logan, May 2025.*



## ENGLISH



**Whether it's a conversational English class, a beginner group or simply practising with a new friend, informal and formal English classes are a core part of hubs.**

In the first half of 2025, hubs delivered 2,677 English classes, with 1,126 participants attending regularly\*. These classes provide a safe, welcoming space for participants to build their skills and confidence - empowering them to engage more fully in everyday life, connect with others, and take steps toward future goals.

Over the past few years, hubs have also played an increasing role in supporting participants to access more formal learning opportunities such as the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) - a free, government-funded program that helps eligible migrants improve their English and build pathways to work or further study. This year, 257 referrals have already been made to AMEP - a reflection of the trust participants place in their hub leaders and the tailored, one-on-one support hubs provide.

*\*Based on regular attendees in CHA-funded English classes in Term 1 and 2, 2025.*

At Playford College hub (South Australia), one participant has been learning English through hub programs since 2021. Despite living in Australia for the past 13 years, the participant lacked confidence in her English skills and felt discouraged. With encouragement from her teacher and hub leader, she slowly found her voice.

Now, she not only communicates with ease but also actively supports the hub - assisting with childminding and taking pride in being part of the community. Her story is one of many that reflect how learning English at a hub can open the door to new possibilities - including the opportunity to feel more confident and give back.



*Hub leader Zeenat (right) with a participant at Playford College hub (South Australia). With time and encouragement, many women in the hub build confidence in their English and go on to support others.*

**Our hub leader's superpower is collaboration and connection. Through English programs, she's helped families feel part of the school and community and more confident navigating it.**

*- Nicki Chaffey, Principal,  
Narranga Public School,  
Coffs Harbour (New South Wales)*

## VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

**Hubs help people take meaningful steps toward their goals - whether that's finding a job, gaining new skills, or contributing to their community through volunteering.**

Already this year, 191 participants have secured jobs as a result of spending time in a hub, and 1,251 have volunteered in hubs and their schools, demonstrating how local, accessible support can open new possibilities.

In the first half of 2025, hubs also delivered 1,149 vocational training sessions and made 692 referrals to education and training providers. These opportunities often start with a small action - attending a short course, helping at the school's breakfast club, or learning first aid - but can grow into lasting pathways to employment.

A volunteer survey\* we ran in May this year found that 100% said volunteering at their hub gives them a greater sense of purpose. The survey also found that 32% are seeking employment and 100% reported feeling better connected to others.

At St Paul's Catholic Primary School in Logan (Queensland), two mums began their involvement in the hub through playgroup.

*\*South Australian Government's Community Neighbourhood Development Survey, May 2025.*

Despite having limited English, they started volunteering at breakfast club and volunteering at hub events. Over time, their confidence and skills grew - and both stepped into paid work through the hub's Mum's Cultural Cooking program.

Today, one of the mums has moved into full-time employment outside of the hub and recently bought her first car - a milestone made possible by years of connection, encouragement and community support. Both were also nominated for the Jim Chalmers MP 2025 Local Legends Award, recognising their contribution to school and community life.

These examples show how hubs create tailored pathways to employment, with each step - no matter how small - building toward independence and opportunity.



*From volunteering to valued voices in the school community - two mums from St Paul's Catholic Primary School hub in Logan (Queensland), were once shy playgroup participants, now proud local legends.*

**“ One of our participants recently found part-time work and told me she couldn't have done it without all the support she received through the hub. ”**

*- Kristina Medak, hub leader,  
Parramatta West Public School  
(New South Wales)*

## ACKNOWLEDGING OUR FUNDERS

**Across the four pillars - engagement, early childhood, English, and vocational pathways - the stories shared reflect what hubs do best: they provide safe, welcoming spaces where people feel supported to take the next step.**

Whether it's a parent finding the confidence to speak in English, a family connecting through playgroup, new arrivals forming friendships over a shared meal, or volunteers stepping into paid work - each moment matters. It's these everyday interactions, grounded in trust and community, that lead to real and lasting change.

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



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Queensland  
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Supported by  
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human  
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“ Moving to Australia was overwhelming. Everything felt so different—the culture, language, education system, even daily life. On top of that, I had to figure it all out while caring for my children. Meeting these wonderful ladies has been such a blessing. **Their warmth and support made me feel at ease and helped me settle here.** Talking with them improved my English, and they encouraged me with job opportunities, resume help, and community activities. Through them, **I’ve met amazing people and learned so much about the cultures here.** I’m so grateful for their kindness and generosity.”

– Hub participant,  
Sunbury Heights Primary School, Hume (Victoria)

### Acknowledgement of Country

Community Hubs Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their enduring connection to the land, water and community on which we connect, share and learn. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.