



National Community Hubs Program



2025 in Review



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.



2025 IN REVIEW

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All photos in this publication have been shared with us from our hubs network or taken from previously-shared social media posts on Facebook and LinkedIn.

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CEO

As I reflect on this past year, I am proud of what our hubs, volunteers, communities and partners have accomplished together. In 2025, our community hubs proved to be more critical and transformative than ever, connecting with 13,775 families.

Community hubs are first and foremost about connection – creating welcoming spaces where everyone, regardless of background, can experience a sense of belonging. That's borne out in our latest census, where 92% of participants said they felt more connected by spending time in a hub. Importantly, these connections are not fleeting; they are the foundation for building stronger, more resilient communities where individuals and families flourish.

Over the last 14 years, we have seen time and again how hubs empower people. Whether it's a newly arrived mother learning English, a volunteer discovering new skills, or parents finding the resources they need for their children, these stories echo the purpose for which our hubs were founded.

This empowerment isn't just theoretical; it's deeply practical. Participants have found their first friends at hubs, supported their child's education and taken steps towards work. As an example, one family who had recently arrived in Australia, learned that playgroup in the hub was a great way to prepare for kindergarten. With her child due to start kindy the following year and no playgroup available in her local area, the mother would drive her child to her nearest hub, ensuring they were prepared for the year ahead.

There's also the story of Rabi, a single mother and refugee from Central African Republic. Rabi saw Australia as a place of opportunity and spent time in a hub to learn English, later volunteering in the hub and then at the school. Thanks to the skills Rabi gained through the hub, she has now secured employment as an educational support officer, providing an income for her family and enabling her to become a valued contributor to Australian society.

Such stories stand against the backdrop of increasing social tension in Australia and around the world. In hubs, difference is not a barrier but a source of strength and opportunity, where women and children of diverse backgrounds discover and learn together. We see participants not only building their own futures but weaving the fabric of a more inclusive Australia.

None of this would be possible without the multi-year support of our funders in the Scanlon Foundation and the federal and state governments, who share our belief – backed up by evidence – that hubs are essential and remarkably cost-effective. In 2025, we received \$6.45 million from the Federal Government to fund an additional 25 hubs, which means for the first time, hubs will open in the Northern Territory and Tasmania. At the state level, the Queensland Government has provided a further three years of funding for the Logan and Ipswich hubs, while a four-year funding commitment from the South Australian Government will see our 10 hubs continue to thrive. Hubs in New South Wales and Victoria continued to be funded by their respective state governments.

As we look ahead to 2026, we remain committed to building capacity and the capability needed to ensure hubs continue to make a meaningful difference. In 2025, we brought together the national network of 162 hub leaders, school leaders, support coordinators and support agency managers for our sixth national conference – Collaborate, Inspire, Celebrate – in Melbourne. Everyone was invited to connect and learn from one another, ensuring the incredible work that's happening at each hub could be shared and modelled across the network.

To every hub leader, school principal, volunteer, partner, participant and the team at Community Hubs Australia, thank you for playing your part. Together, you have created welcoming places of hope, empowerment, inclusion and community. As the stories shared in this report exemplify, connection and belonging are fundamental to human nature and evidence that grassroots community-driven change can be sustainable and life changing.

Bec Kotow

Chief Executive Officer
Community Hubs Australia

The Community Hubs Australia team:
back row (left to right) Linda Perugini,
Vincent Ngo, Maurice Syber.
Front row (left to right): Maia Nelson,
Bec Kotow, Julianne Gardiner.

*"Together, you have
created welcoming
places of hope,
empowerment, inclusion
and community."*



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Amidst the uncertainty and pressures of everyday life, community hubs are a safe, welcoming space where everyone belongs.

Hubs focus on providing connection and purpose. Tailored to meet the unique needs of local communities – and the ability to flex as those needs change over time – hubs consistently deliver outcomes that matter to children, families, schools and community.

Yet hubs are also quietly helping governments achieve big goals. In 2025, hubs have connected with 13,775 families, strengthening social cohesion, improving children's school readiness, supporting women's workforce participation and building stronger, more resilient communities. Hubs have also provided a vital bridge for those who might otherwise be less connected to one another, schools, services and opportunities, and are often the first trusted step into the education system. That's helping parents feel more confident in their child's education, giving their children a better start to school, enabling families to become more engaged in community life, and building resilience and connection within local communities.

We thank the federal and state governments in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria for their continued partnership and long-term financial support. At the local level, specialist support agencies have continued to play a critical role while local organisations have delivered programs and activities that have enriched the lives of participants, their children and extended families across the hubs network.

I'd also like to pay tribute to a long-standing champion of community hubs, Margarita Caddick, who has resigned from our Board. Margarita's 17-year involvement with the community hubs concept began in partnership with Hume City Council in Melbourne, where we designed and piloted the program. Margarita has served as a member of our advisory committee and in 2023, joined the Community Hubs Australia Board. On behalf of the Board, our national hubs network and the many hub participants who have benefitted from her insights and passion, I thank Margarita for her leadership and support.

Looking back on 2025, I am inspired by the commitment of the hub community to improving the lives of hub participants. Everyone, from hub and school leaders to support partners, volunteers and participants, have created places of empathy, understanding, friendship and learning. By working together to lift communities that need it most, they're helping build a better nation.

Dr Sonja Hood AM

Chair, Community Hubs Australia



OUR COMMUNITY HUBS NETWORK

Improving social and economic outcomes of families, particularly women with young children from culturally diverse backgrounds, is why community hubs exist. Hubs are based on a proven place-based and people-centred model that is uniquely tailored to the needs of local communities, providing a safe, welcoming environment where every participant feels a sense of belonging.

Across the network, community hubs are focused on four key pillars:



Engagement

Helping families connect and engage with their community.



Early childhood

Running playgroups and connecting families to local early years activities, to support the learning and development of pre-school aged children, improve children's social skills, build relationships between families, and prepare children for school.



English

Providing people from culturally diverse backgrounds with opportunities to learn and practise English together through both formal and informal programs.



Vocational pathways

Building pathways to employment by encouraging volunteering and providing adults with access to formal and informal training opportunities.



100
community hubs
including two
new hubs



13,775
families
spent time
in a hub



109
hub leaders



24
metro and
regional LGAs



11
support agencies



589
partners

"The hub operates as a bridge between families, the school and the wider community, promoting belonging, early support and meaningful engagement."

Hannah Patson, former hub leader,
Mount Archer State School, Rockhampton
(Queensland).

GROWING OUR NETWORK

Since community hubs were first trialled in Hume, Victoria in 2008 and then a pilot of nine hubs established in 2011, our network of hubs has continued to grow, strengthening social cohesion and reducing isolation for families from culturally diverse backgrounds. In 2013, the Federal Government provided funding for 30 hubs, marking the start of the National Community Hubs Program, with the first hubs opening in 2014¹.

2014 30 Hubs

First hubs opened in NSW, Queensland and Victoria.

2015 42 Hubs

Independent evaluation finds hubs have significant, positive impact on children, families, schools and communities².

2016 40 Hubs

Federal and NSW governments commit funding for 30 additional hubs. Independent review finds hubs help children from culturally diverse backgrounds become school ready³.

2017 63 Hubs

Hubs open in Wollongong (NSW). Victorian and Queensland Governments commit additional funding.

2018 74 Hubs

Hubs open in Adelaide (SA), Geelong and Shepparton (Victoria). Federal Government commits funding for English classes with childminding support.

2019 74 Hubs

Hubs open in Liverpool (NSW).



2020 76 Hubs

Hubs open in Rockhampton and Townsville (Queensland), Playford (SA), Casey and Wyndham (Victoria). COVID-19 lockdowns impact hub operations.

2021 94 Hubs

Deloitte Social Return on Investment evaluation finds the program (in 2019) returned \$2.20 for every \$1 invested⁴.

2022 96 Hubs

Hubs open in Coffs Harbour (NSW) and Toowoomba (Queensland).

2023 100 Hubs

Hubs network connects with more than 10,000 families for first time.

Deloitte Social Return on Investment evaluation finds the program returned \$3.50 for every \$1 invested⁵.

2024 100 Hubs

Federal Government commits to further four years of funding for English classes with childminding support.

2025 100 Hubs

Federal Government commits funding for a further 25 hubs in the Northern Territory, Tasmania and regional Queensland.



1 Hub numbers can fluctuate over time as schools join and leave the network.

2 Independent Evaluation of the National Community Hubs Program, Charles Sturt University, January 2015.

3 Exploring the impact of community hubs on school readiness, Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, March 2017.

4 National Community Hubs Program SROI Evaluation Report, Deloitte, 2021.

5 Social Return on Investment Evaluation of the National Community Hubs Program, Deloitte, 2023.

WHY COMMUNITY HUBS WORK

"The hub leader is always looking at ways to refine processes and practices and engage members of the wider community. This term has seen much needed support with families accessing allied health services which in turn, has supported learning back in the classroom."

**Alicia Hodges, Principal,
Primbee Public School,
Wollongong (New South Wales).**

Hubs connect families with each other, their schools, local services and support, and provide a gateway for people to access health, wellbeing and education services.

It begins with location. Every hub is embedded in a local primary school and managed by the school using existing school infrastructure. This helps bridge the gap between families and the wider community as every decision about how a hub operates and the programs and activities it

offers, is made at the local level. Hub leaders are also employed by their schools, ensuring they are uniquely placed to develop the space and offer programs that can flex and adapt to meet the needs of their host school and local community.

Across the hubs network, a variety of activities and programs are offered, from playgroups and parenting programs to conversational English, volunteering, vocational skills and connection to more formal training designed to build work-ready skills. This helps increase the confidence of participants and deliver improved social, educational and employment outcomes.

Hub participants enjoying playgroup at Fountain Gate Primary School, Casey (Victoria).



PROGRAM OUTCOMES



Children

Hubs increase school readiness through playgroups and early years programs, and by engaging parents in the school.



Families

Hubs are a point of connection and soft entry point to learning English or upskilling through informal and formal training activities. Learning English builds confidence, enabling participants to take a more active role in the community (including in parenting and by volunteering) and pursue further studies or employment.



Schools

Hubs play an important role in building school capacity to respond to the needs of culturally diverse families.



Communities

Hubs help connect parents and children to the services they need, including women-centred and community-centred health and wellbeing services, vocational training providers, paediatric outreach clinics and playgroup facilitators.



Hub participant Luda and her children as part of Fleetwood Primary School community hub's playgroup, Casey (Victoria).

"When I think about our community hub, I smile because it has brought so many special moments into my life. Since coming here, I've found real friendships, beautiful memories and a place where I truly feel welcome."

**Luda, hub participant,
Fleetwood Primary School,
Casey (Victoria).**

WHO COMES TO COMMUNITY HUBS AND WHY

In August 2025, we conducted a national census across 94 community hubs, with 3,581 hub participants taking part. The census provides a snapshot of who comes to hubs and why, with the findings making it clear that hubs matter.

- Almost all (92%) respondents indicated their hub helped them feel part of the community. This underscores the vital role school-based hubs play in fostering inclusion and a sense of belonging.
- Hubs contribute to enhancing children's readiness for school and increasing parent engagement in learning. Notably, 80% of parents with children at the school reported the hub supported their child's preparedness for school, with this figure rising to 87% among parents of pre-school aged children.
- Among overseas-born participants, 40% had a job before migrating to Australia but 24% are currently employed. This highlights the untapped potential of our hub participants, many of whom are women from culturally diverse backgrounds, and the skills that could be harnessed.

The census found hubs are increasing connection and reducing isolation, with 83% responding the hub helped them feel less lonely. This provides clear evidence that hubs are:

- giving families a trusted space to belong
- helping to build stronger communities by linking families with schools, connecting them to local services, and partnering with organisations that provide support close to home
- improving school outcomes by preparing children for the classroom and giving parents the confidence to support their child's learning
- supporting English language learning in practical, everyday ways that help women navigate life, education and employment
- contributing to productivity by helping women move from participation to volunteering and often, towards training and employment.

"The hub is a welcoming space and continues to support families to connect with the school and other community members."

Liz Balharrie, Principal, Deer Park North Primary School, Brimbank (Victoria).

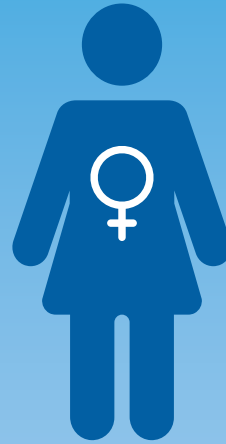
Hub participants completing the hub census at Parramatta West Public School (New South Wales).





52%

attend a hub to spend
time with other people.



93% of respondents
were women; of these, **75%**
were under 45 years of age.



87% have at least one
dependent child at home and
46% of this group have
pre-school aged children.



78 unique languages
were spoken at home*,
with the most common being
Dari, Arabic, Kurdish Kurmunji,
Hazaragi and Pashto.

*Visa category forms collected from new participants
attending DHA funded English classes in 2025.



41% of respondents come
to the hub for their children to
join in playgroup.



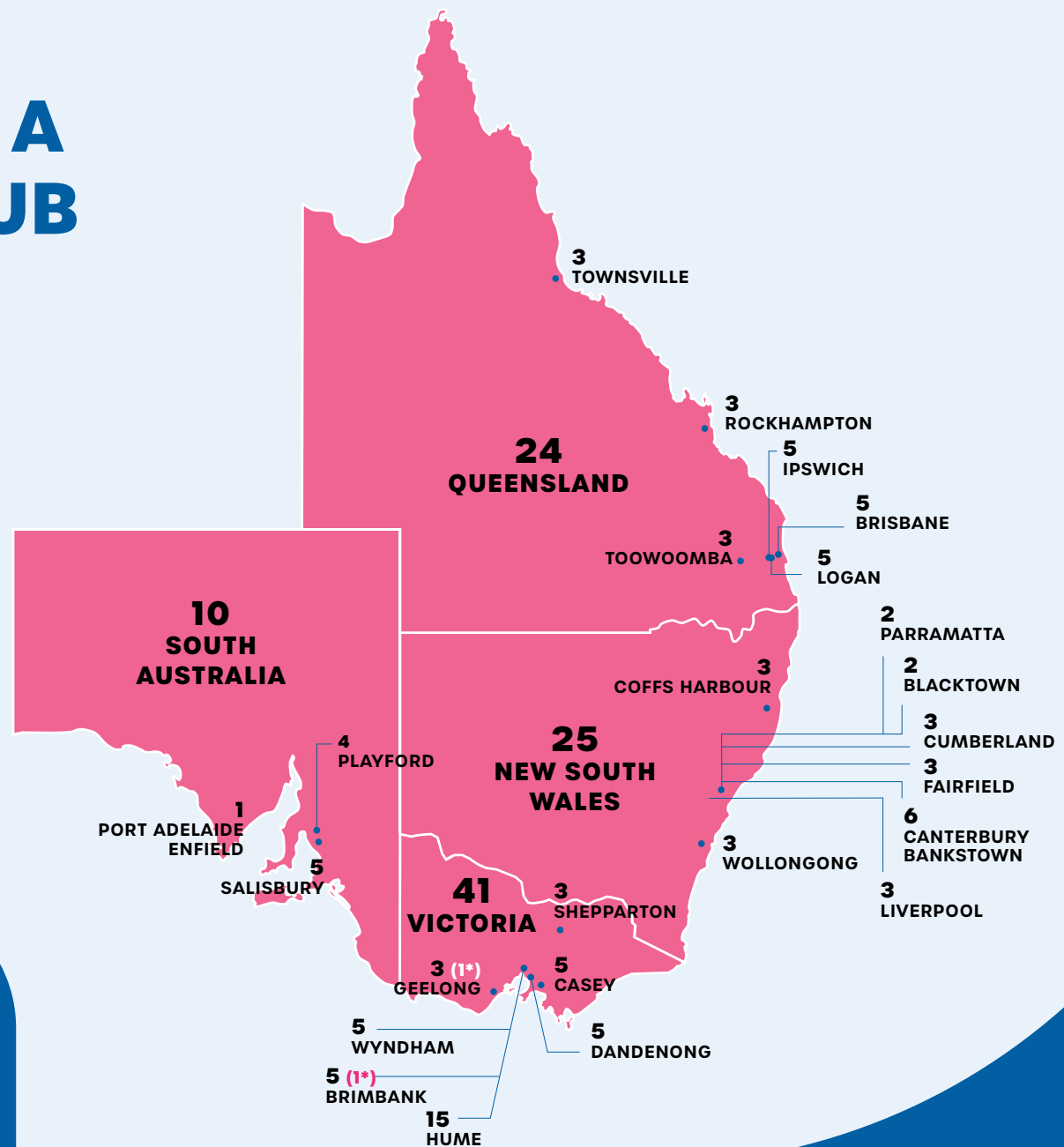
34% of respondents born
overseas who hold a qualification
are currently employed
in Australia.

More than half (52%) expressed
a desire to work more.

WHERE TO FIND A COMMUNITY HUB

Our network of **100** active community hubs is located across New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria.

In 2025, **two** schools opened their hub doors for the first time.



Find a community hub
in your local area

<https://www.communityhubs.org.au/hubs/>

*Hubs opened in 2025

WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OUR HUBS NETWORK

SUPPORT AGENCIES

In each local government area, specialist support agencies play a pivotal role in helping shape community hub offerings, sharing local knowledge and providing hubs with access to services and partnership opportunities. This helps ensure hubs meet the specific needs of their local communities.

Support coordinators in each local region encourage connection and bring local host schools and their hub leaders together to share knowledge and learn from one another. This ensures good practice which is shared across our national network of 100 hubs.



KARITANE®



"Support from Lutheran Care comes through Larni, our support coordinator. We're grateful for the consistent encouragement and guidance she provides."

Paula Burns,
Principal, St Brigid's School,
Port Adelaide Enfield (South Australia).

Our team of coordinators who provide hubs and their schools with guidance and support.



OUR HUB PARTNERS

Hub partners are critical to delivering programs and activities, as well as in-kind services to participants, their children and extended families. In 2025, hubs partnered with 589 organisations across four states and welcomed 136 new partners to our network.



New South Wales **150** partners



Queensland **177** partners



South Australia **89** partners



Victoria **259** partners



Participants from the 10 Casey and Dandenong hubs (Victoria) spent time at the beach with Black Rock Life Saving Club and Kidsafe Victoria to learn practical ways to keep safe around water ahead of the heat of an Australian summer.

HUDDLE UP FOR MEANINGFUL CHANGE

This year, through a federally funded partnership with The Huddle (community engagement arm of the North Melbourne Football Club), a pilot initiative was launched, engaging 200 women across 13 community hubs in Wyndham (Victoria) and in Western Sydney (New South Wales). The Play Our Way initiative provides greater opportunities for women and girls to access, participate and remain involved in sport and physical activity. By promoting health, connection and empowerment, participants are given the space to move freely, laugh and express themselves in the safe and inclusive environment of the hub.

Huddle Up participants at Hilltop Road Public School's community hub, Cumberland (New South Wales).



2025 IN REVIEW

"Another great session with Tanya from The Huddle... everyone is exhausted by the end, but the feedback says they feel fresh and free!"

**Catherine Gregory, hub leader,
Hilltop Road Public School,
Cumberland (New South Wales).**



Sarah Mitchell-Anyon, hub leader at Mount Archer State School, Rockhampton (Queensland), with Rebecca Farrow, health nurse for the hub.

PUTTING QUEENSLAND KIDS FIRST

As part of the Queensland Government's Putting Queensland Kids First initiative, child health nurses were assigned to three community hubs in Rockhampton. Initiated by Janine, the local support coordinator from Multicultural Australia, Child Health Nurse Clinics were piloted at Lakes Creek State School, Mount Archer State School and Waraburra State School. Each hub was assigned a nurse, allowing families to connect and gain trust, and encouraged two-way referrals between the hub and important child health services.

With the pilot now complete, the schools will implement clinics in 2026 based on the specific needs of each school. Mount Archer State School will run a weekly health clinic while Lakes Creek State School and Waraburra State School will start with a drop-in health clinic conducting general health checks and information sessions. Over time, this will evolve into more established clinics at the schools.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

ENGAGEMENT

Community hubs create a sense of belonging for their participants and families by helping them connect and engage with each other, their host schools, local support services and the wider community. For many families, hubs provide a connection into critical services. In 2025, the most referred to services were emergency aid, family support and community health services.

GOAL: help families connect and engage with their community.

■ **13,775** families
engaged with hubs

■ **10,961** referrals
made to external support services

■ **589** partnerships
with local organisations

CELEBRATING STORIES OF STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

The community hub at Prairievale Public School in Fairfield (New South Wales), celebrated the personal stories of refugee and migrant mums with the launch of their book, 'All About Us'. The book, written by participants, tells incredible stories of strength and resilience of their own

migration journeys to Australia. With the support of the school, 'All About Us' was launched, engaging the broader school community, other local schools and local government bodies. This was a celebration of the women's achievements in writing and producing the book and sharing it with the broader community.

Prairievale Public School community hub's book launch, Fairfield (New South Wales).



"The 'All About Us' book came from an idea, after the women of the community hub shared their very challenging experiences about migrating to Australia during an emotional coffee club gathering."

Nadia Brosque, hub leader, Prairievale Public School, Fairfield (New South Wales).

Citizenship ceremony for a family from Holy Child Primary School's community hub in Hume (Victoria).

SUPPORTING HUB PARTICIPANTS THROUGH LIFE'S BIG MOMENTS

A family who migrated from Iran as refugees found support and life-changing assistance through their local community hub at Holy Child Primary School in Hume (Victoria). The hub provided invaluable support and opportunities for the mum to develop personally and professionally by participating in activities and volunteering in school events.

After 10 years on a bridging visa, the family were seeking a permanent visa, primarily to gain access to life-changing surgery for their child. The hub encouraged the mum to connect with school staff and other parents to learn about the visa process. With the right information and the backing of a diverse support network, the mum was successful in gaining a permanent visa for her family and much-needed access to medical treatment for her child.

When the mum also expressed a desire to become an Australian citizen, the hub helped her practise for the citizenship test in her native language and English and through a referral to online study. Her husband also engaged with the



hub so they could achieve the goal together. In July 2025, they became Australian citizens.

Hub leaders also encouraged the mum to pursue her aspiration to work as a support worker in the NDIS, identifying specific areas of focus as part of her English activities. When she needed guidance applying for jobs, the hub referred her to agencies that could help her highlight her values and

strengths. A week after her citizenship ceremony, the mum started her first job in Australia.

This mum's experience highlights the hub's continued focus on the family in supporting them to take informed steps towards achieving their goals.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



EARLY CHILDHOOD

When children start school ready to learn, the impact is positive for the children, their families, the school and the local community. However, many families who come to a community hub are yet to access any other early childhood services. Embedding community hubs in primary schools supports school readiness and connects culturally diverse families to their local school communities.

GOAL: run playgroups and connect families to local early childhood activities, support the learning and development of pre-school aged children, improve children's social skills, build relationships between families and prepare children for school.

■ **99 hubs** delivered early childhood activities

■ **1,883 referrals** made to early childhood services

■ **68 hubs** ran targeted school-readiness programs

■ **161 partners** worked with hubs to deliver early childhood activities and programs

According to insights from our [Hub Census 2025](#), hubs enhance children's readiness for school and deepen parent engagement in learning.

Of those with children at the school:

- 80% agreed the hub helped their child be ready for school
- 87% agreed the hub has helped them understand the school better, and
- 85% agreed the hub helped them support their child's education.

Importantly, almost half (47%) of parents and carers who bring pre-schoolers to playgroup in a hub don't access similar services anywhere else.

The Deloitte 2023 [SROI evaluation](#) proved that hub activities have contributed to an improvement in outcomes and reduced development delays for children participating in hubs valued at \$7.3 million. This is through a combination of children accessing early years programs which contribute to their educational outcomes, plus the opportunity for their families to be better connected with the school.

In 2025, a survey of hubs in Queensland⁶ also found that parents and carers:

- were happy with hub activities (98%)
- felt supported (98%)
- felt more involved in their child's care and education (96%), and
- responded that their child benefited as a result of spending time in a hub (98%).

⁶ Community hubs work: Insights from the Hub Census 2025, Community Hubs Australia, October 2025.

"The hub has been a great support in running the Kindy Connections program for the school."

**Danica Marjanac, Acting Principal,
Marsden State School, Logan (Queensland).**



Playgroup at St Anthony's Catholic Primary School's community hub in Dandenong (Victoria).

KINDY CONNECTIONS

At Marsden State School in Logan (Queensland), the hub has been running the Kindy Connections program for the school to help pre-school aged children prepare and transition into primary school. As part of the program, the hub walks the children through the school, familiarising them with specific areas of the school, including the prep area and playground, and hosting trips to the library.

Kindy Connections run at Marsden State School's community hub in Logan (Queensland).

EMPOWERING FAMILIES

A success story from the Para Vista Primary School's community hub in Salisbury (South Australia) involves a local family of five – two parents and their three children. At the start of Term 2, the mother brought her young daughter to Toddler Playgroup. On their first day, they were very quiet, a little unsure and hesitant to engage. However, over just a few weeks, the transformation was remarkable. The family arrived prior to the session starting, with the mother

actively helping to set up the space. She enrolled in the hub's English classes and has attended classes regularly and with great enthusiasm. Her motivation to study English was deeply seeded in her desire to better support her children's learning and education. Recently, the mother began bringing her younger son to Toddler Playgroup. She genuinely enjoys coming to the community hub, feels welcome and safe, and is grateful for the opportunity to learn English again.

"This family's journey reflects the true purpose and potential of community hubs: provide a welcoming, inclusive space that empowers families, strengthens community connections and supports lifelong learning. This experience demonstrates the community hub's ability to connect with and uplift members of the wider community beyond the school."

**Nilukshi Cooray, hub leader, Para Vista Primary School,
Salisbury (South Australia).**



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

ENGLISH

Competency in English language gives hub participants the chance to connect with one another, engage with teachers and staff and better support their child's education. English competency also helps hub participants to volunteer, learn new skills, find work and become a part of their local community.

GOAL: provide hub participants with opportunities to learn and practise English through formal and informal classes.

■ **85 hubs**

delivered English classes

■ **1,437 participants⁷**

regularly attended English classes

■ **94% of English participants**

reported an improvement in English competency

■ **124 partners**

worked with hubs to deliver conversational and formal English programs

Community hubs are a safe space for participants to learn and practise their English skills together.

Participants who are ready to move from informal, conversational learning to more advanced learning opportunities, such as the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), are supported by their hubs. Over the past three years, referrals to the AMEP have remained consistent, reflecting the intentional efforts of hub leaders to strengthen partnerships with local AMEP providers and enhance learning pathways and opportunities. In 2025, hubs made 455 referrals to their local AMEP provider.

Participants spending time learning and practising English together in a community hub.



⁷ Based on the unique number of attendees who completed a progress evaluation in 2025.

English class participants at Stevensville Primary School community hub in Brimbank (Victoria) with facilitator Anthony (far right).



"We have small groups of students for beginner English class. Most of them are older grandparents and they want to learn to speak basic English to communicate with their grandchildren and engage more in the other hub programs to make new friends."

**Jaswinder Kaur, hub leader,
Stevensville Primary School, Brimbank (Victoria).**

JUST SAY G'DAY

At the Dandenong West Primary School community hub in Dandenong (Victoria), a newly arrived parent with no English skills attended conversational English classes, led by the school's crossing supervisor who was qualified to teach English. After attending the session, the crossing supervisor saw the parent with her children on the pedestrian crossing. As they passed, the parent looked up, smiled and said, 'G'day!'

"It was just one word, yet it represented a moment of courage, connection and social cohesion. This was a reminder of how powerful even the smallest of gestures can be in building community and belonging."

**Mercedeh Makoui, hub leader,
Dandenong West Primary School, Dandenong (Victoria).**



Conversational English class at Dandenong West Primary School community hub in Dandenong (Victoria).

LEARNING ENGLISH IN A SAFE SPACE

The community hub at Bass Hill Public School in Canterbury-Bankstown (New South Wales) provides parents with the opportunity to learn English in a safe and welcoming space. This makes it easier for parents and families to communicate with their children's teachers and enables them to feel more involved in their school community. Additional flow-on effects include improved trust and stronger relationships between home and school, benefitting student learning and their wellbeing in the longer term.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS



Hubs create supported, practical pathways into volunteering, training and employment, particularly for women with young children. For people born and qualified overseas, hubs also provide the opportunity to learn new skills (or build existing ones), volunteer and seize every opportunity to find a job in Australia.

GOAL: build pathways to employment by encouraging volunteering and providing adults with access to formal and informal training opportunities.

■ **2,189** people volunteered on 29,994 occasions

■ **1,231** referrals made to education and training services

■ **2,498** formal and informal training activities delivered

■ **142** partners worked with hubs to deliver work-ready skills

■ **375** jobs secured by hub participants

Moving from participation to volunteering and often, towards training and employment, contributes to productivity and increases a person's feelings of self-confidence and worth. By offering vocational training activities across the country, hubs help improve the job readiness of participants and better equips them to find work.

Hubs offer English language tuition and help with resumes, job applications and preparing for interviews. They also connect participants to vocational training and volunteering opportunities,

organisations that can help with skills and job readiness, and job opportunities in their host school and broader community.

With many participants seeking employment, in 2025, 82 hubs hosted practical accredited and pre-accredited programs to support pathways to employment. In some cases, schools provided placement opportunities, resulting in beneficial outcomes for both the participant and the school.

Across our hubs network, participants have opportunities to volunteer within the hub and often more broadly in the school, including helping with breakfast clubs, sports days and in the canteen.

A survey conducted in hubs in 2025⁸ found that 95% of respondents reported volunteering had contributed towards their sense of purpose while 95% felt better connected to other people, because of the community hub.

⁸ Survey of hub volunteers conducted in 2025 for the South Australian Department of Human Services.

Hub participant Shameema minding children at Truganina South Primary School's community hub in Wyndham (Victoria).

SHAMEEMA'S FULL CIRCLE MOMENT

Shameema has been part of the community hub at Truganina South Primary School, Wyndham (Victoria) since it opened five years ago. In 2022, Shameema started as a volunteer in their toy library and was later employed as a childminder in the hub's Conversational English classes for six months. In that time, Shameema also attended several hub activities. After conversations with the hub leader, Shameema studied as an education support officer, doing her placement at the school. Although she initially worked at another local school, she has now secured a position at Truganina South Primary School.



"Shameema is so happy! She called me as soon as she found out and I saw her in the school last week. You couldn't wipe the smile off her face. It was a full circle moment!"

Vicki Haynes, hub leader, Truganina South Primary School, Wyndham (Victoria).



Playgroup at St Mary Magdalene's School community hub with volunteer Mina to the right, Playford, (South Australia)

FROM VOLUNTEERING TO PAID WORK

At St Mary Magdalene's School community hub in Playford (South Australia), a youth and family intervention placement student fell in love with the hub. The student migrated from Japan a few years prior, however had struggled to find work. To improve her work skills, she studied at TAFE before doing her placement at the hub. By the end of her placement, the student didn't want to leave so continued as a volunteer. When an opportunity arose at the hub, she was hired as the playgroup facilitator and English class childminder. She has also found additional hours with My Time group as their new childminder for the hub and another nearby group.

CONNECT. SHARE. LEARN.

Throughout 2025, hub leaders, support coordinators and school leaders were encouraged to connect and share their learnings with one another.

■ COLLABORATE. INSPIRE. CELEBRATE. NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

Our sixth national conference welcomed 162 hub leaders, school leadership, support coordinators, support agency managers and special guests across the network to Melbourne. This was an opportunity to collaborate with one another, be inspired and celebrate learnings, challenges, and successes. Across three days, everyone spent time together learning from keynote speakers, guest facilitators, and their peers.

Hub leaders, support coordinators and school staff presented their programs and initiatives focusing on the pillars of the National Community Hubs Program: engagement, early childhood, English and vocational pathways.

The conference keynote speaker was the Minister for Multicultural Affairs Dr Anne Aly MP, the first Muslim woman elected to Federal Parliament. Dr Aly shared her story of arriving in Australia as a young child and the challenges faced by her family. Her mother didn't speak the language and found daily life isolating and unfamiliar.

"The part of my family's story that speaks to the importance of community and the impact that community has, is the essence of what you do."

**Dr Anne Aly MP,
Minister for Multicultural Affairs.**

Front row (left to right): Community Hubs Australia CEO, Bec Kotow, pictured with Hon Dr Anne Aly MP and the national community hubs network at their conference in May.





Sydney hub leaders at their professional development day hosted by support coordinators from Karitane, Liverpool City Council and SSI. CHA team members also participated.



Brisbane, Ipswich and Logan hub leaders at their professional development day hosted by support coordinators from Community Queensland and SSI. CHA team members also joined in the learning opportunity.

■ NATIONAL

In March, support agency STARTTS in New South Wales provided our national hubs network with training online, covering incidental counselling. This training gave hub leaders who are non-counsellors, practical skills in responding to trauma behaviours in schools. Hub leaders were then better prepared to respond to trauma disclosure, aggression, anxiety and tearfulness in the hub.

■ NEW SOUTH WALES

In October, hub leaders from across Sydney came together to connect, share and learn at a professional development day hosted by Karitane, Liverpool City Council and SSI. The day included a session on grant writing, collaborative problem-solving for common hub challenges, wellbeing and practical tips and tricks for marketing hub activities to gain community interest.

■ QUEENSLAND

At the commencement of Term 1, Queensland hub leaders from 15 hubs in Brisbane, Ipswich and Logan came together for a professional development day, jointly facilitated by support agencies Community Queensland and SSI. The day provided a valuable opportunity for hub leaders to deepen their practice, strengthen peer relationships and explore strategies to enhance community engagement in their hubs.

Key focus areas included:

- identifying and leveraging individual strengths to promote peer-to-peer knowledge sharing
- behaviour management strategies tailored to family-centred environments
- self-care and resilience practices as hub leaders
- child regulation techniques, supported by short-form video content for parents, and
- onsite mentoring guidance for social work students placed within hubs.

This collaborative learning environment enabled hub leaders to build their capacity, reflect on best practice and return to their respective hubs equipped with renewed confidence and new tools.

■ SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Support agency Lutheran Care delivered a professional development day for South Australian hub leaders in October, addressing compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and how to manage burnout. The day was facilitated by a facilitator from the Lutheran Care team, who specialises in family violence counselling and community training support.

SHARING HUB INSIGHTS TO HELP OTHERS

Throughout 2025, hub leaders and participants shared their personal insights and experiences through research and community consultations.



Hub participants in conversation with the team from Jean Hailes at Banksia Road Public School community hub in Canterbury Bankstown (New South Wales).

HELPING DEVELOP CULTURALLY SENSITIVE HEALTH RESOURCES FOR WOMEN

Hub participants from nine hubs across New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria participated in a community consultation process designed to help inform the development of relevant and culturally sensitive health resources for women. The conversations, focused on menstruation, were facilitated by Jean Hailes, a national women's health organisation.

For the women from the Banksia Road Public School hub in Canterbury Bankstown (New South Wales), it was an opportunity to share their experiences, what they didn't learn growing up, and what knowledge they believed would be useful for future generations. Jean Hailes provided free childminding, morning tea and a gift card for each participant, allowing women with young children to attend and have their experience valued. These conversations and shared knowledge set the foundation for the school and hub to co-design ways to support parents feeling underprepared to talk to their children about these important health topics.

By sharing their own personal experiences, the women quickly built ongoing friendships and strong connections.

"The women began opening up about their own personal health experiences, listening to each other, offering support, and sharing advice. That sense of connection flowed into our Parent Wellbeing program, where some of the women felt more comfortable speaking up and supporting each other. There's more trust, openness and a real sense of connection building. These are all amazing, unexpected outcomes from this consultation."

**Nivek Aoun, hub leader,
Banksia Road Public School,
Canterbury Bankstown
(New South Wales).**

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Across our network, hub leaders, support coordinators and partner organisations have been recognised for their outstanding contributions to their local communities.

New South Wales

- Hilltop Road Public School's hub leader Catherine Gregory in Cumberland was nominated for the 2025 Women of Western Sydney Award for Community, recognising female leadership in strengthening and supporting community.
- In Liverpool, Hoxton Park Public School's hub leader Silvana Lofaro received the Impact on Community Award as part of the New South Wales School Support Staff Award.
- Rydalmere Public School in Parramatta received a Community Recognition Statement from the State Member for Parramatta, Donna Davis MP, acknowledging the community hub's, and hub leader Seetha Srinivasan's work with school families and the wider community.

Silvana Lofaro, hub leader at Hoxton Park Public School's hub, excited to receive her award.



Linda Boelen (right), hub leader at Kelso State School with Natalie Marr MP (left) in being nominated for Queensland Women's Week Award.

Queensland

- Hub leader Linda Boelen at Kelso State School in Townsville was nominated for a Queensland Women's Week Award by State Member for Thuringowa, Natalie Marr MP.



Playgroup facilitators from the community hubs in Hume (Victoria) celebrating the 2025 Victorian Early Years Award with support agency, Hume City Council.

Victoria

- Hub leader Shazia Khanum at Cranbourne Primary School in Casey received a Hansard Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of her work from State Member for Cranbourne, Pauline Richards MP. The Certificate includes an official transcript from the Victorian Parliament.
- The Hume Community Hubs Playgroups program won the Victorian Government's 2025 Victorian Early Years Awards (VEYA) in the category of 'Supporting Parents to Build their Capacity and Confidence'.
- Dildar, a volunteer from Springvale Rise Primary School's community hub in Dandenong won the Sir John Reid Community Service Award from the Rotary Club of Melbourne. The Award recognises the services of a volunteer to the Victorian community.
- Volunteer Enas Hano from St Dominic's Primary School's community hub, was awarded the 2025 Toy Well Volunteer of the Year Award for their work in the hub's toy library throughout the year.

WELCOMING ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Each year, we extend invitations to Members of Federal and State Parliament to visit a hub as a way of seeing first-hand the impact of hubs in their electorate.

In 2025, 28 members of parliament and representatives from federal and state government departments spent time engaging with families, their hub leaders and school staff.



Federal Member for Cunningham, Alison Brynes MP (in red jacket) visiting the community hub at Primbee Public School, Wollongong (New South Wales).



State Member for Kororoit, Luba Grigorovitch MP spending time with playgroup mums at Deer Park North Primary School in Brimbank (Victoria).



Janelle Poole MP (right), State Member for Mundingburra visiting the hub at Aitkenvale State School, Townsville (Queensland).



Hub participants and hub leaders visiting Parliament House in South Australia, hosted by (centre back row, left to right) John Fulbrook, State Member for Playford and Natalie Cook, Minister for Human Services.

In the South Australian Parliament, the Member for Playford, John Fulbrook, shared how community hubs are helping to change lives in Adelaide's north by bringing families together, building confidence and creating opportunity.

"From playgroups to English classes, toy libraries to bush picnics, our hubs are full of warmth, welcome and connection. Their success rests on the teamwork between coordinators, hub leaders and school leadership."

Mr Fulbrook also celebrated the first anniversary of Karrendi Primary School's community hub toy library. "This toy library is more than just toys on shelves. It gives families a place to learn, laugh and grow together, free from financial strain."

To watch Mr Fulbrook's speech in full, go to <https://www.facebook.com/>

FUNDING OUR NETWORK AND GOVERNANCE

The National Community Hubs Program is funded thanks to the generosity of the Scanlon Foundation in partnership with the Department of Home Affairs, state and local governments and the education and community sectors.



The program operates within a rigorous governance framework:

- **Grassroots community level** – through school leadership and hub leader meetings, decisions are made on how to best respond to the unique circumstances and needs of the local community.
- **High-level strategy and business acumen** – the Community Hubs Australia (CHA) Board of Directors guide the sustainability, direction and evolution of CHA.



Community Hubs Australia is accredited under the Australian Service Excellence Standards, an accreditation that covers all corporate functions and services. This accreditation confirms CHA:

- operates confidently and efficiently
- actively applies sound management principles
- manages risks, and
- meets legislative, industry and government guidelines.



The CHA Board (from left): Kin Ho, Margaret Rutherford, Margarita Caddick, Bec Kotow (CEO), Dr Sonja Hood AM (Chair), Alex Scanlon, Belinda McLennan, and Rebecca Fry.





**Community
hubs**

Connect. Share. Learn.

"Sometimes people just need a safe space and a familiar face who's ready to listen. Our hub is not only a safe space, it's also a relationship builder, where families feel heard, supported and connected."

Shandella Sango, hub leader,
William Bayldon Public School,
Coffs Harbour (New South Wales).