



National Community Hubs Program

2020 Year in Review

What are community hubs?

Community hubs are welcoming places where migrant families, particularly mothers with young children, come to connect, share and learn.

Hubs serve as gateways that connect families with each other, with their school and with existing services that can provide health, education and settlement support.

In 2020, the National Community Hubs Program (NCHP) comprised 76 hubs in 19 local government areas across four states. The program has been recognised as a leading model for engaging and supporting migrant women and their families.

Each hub is attached to a school, so the hub can leverage existing school infrastructure and strengthen connections between families, schools, government and community services.

Community hubs:

- engage and connect families in culturally diverse communities
- connect preschool children into playgroups and prepare them for school
- provide opportunities to learn and practice English, and
- build pathways to volunteering and employment.

In 2020, in response to the impacts of the global coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), our hubs quickly shifted from place-based programming to offering extensive online and outdoor programs and activities.

Online and offsite delivery in no way replaces the benefits of bringing families together inside a physical hub space. However, it enables families to still connect with each other and with their hub leader even when their mobility or school access is restricted.

Who funds the hubs?

Community hubs are funded by a longstanding partnership between the Scanlon Foundation, host schools, the Australian Government and state and local governments. Private and community sector organisations also provide support.

About Community Hubs Australia

Community Hubs Australia (CHA) delivers the NCHP in partnership with specialist support agencies in each state.

We seek to develop greater social cohesion in Australia by helping culturally diverse people to integrate into Australian communities.

We work in partnership with government, businesses, philanthropy, other not-for-profits, and community organisations to fund and facilitate locally generated programs that reduce isolation and increase connection.

“Thank you for everything, it still feels like we are in the hub.”

Hub participant,
St Georges Road Primary School Hub, Shepparton, Victoria
(end of Term 2)



Photo: A toddler on his way to join a COVID-safe 'Playgroup in the Park' session run by Salisbury Primary School Hub in South Australia.

Contents

2020: The year that redefined the meaning of 'place'	06	What we do: Volunteering and employment pathways	29
What we do - at a glance	08	What we achieve for children	32
What we achieve - at a glance	10	What we achieve for families	34
From our CEO	11	What we achieve for schools	37
Reflections from across the hubs network	13	What we achieve for communities	41
The 2020 hubs network and who it reached	15	Program governance	45
Expanding our network: new hubs and agencies	16	Program funding	46
Additional support due to COVID-19	19	Our supporters and delivery partners	47
What we do: Engagement	21	Our hub schools during 2020	52
What we do: Early childhood	24	New hubs opening in 2021	53
What we do: English	26		



Photo: Image created by Gokhan, hub participant, Meadows Primary School Hub, Victoria.

2020: The year that redefined the meaning of 'place'

In early 2020, due to the sudden and pervasive impacts of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), our proven community hubs model faced its greatest ever test.

Our host schools had to restrict access to hub participants and uphold social distancing requirements. So, how could place-based programs be delivered when the 'place' is no longer accessible? Against a difficult backdrop of major change, uncertainty, heartache and fear, our hub leaders had to rapidly innovate to find new ways to engage with and support vulnerable migrant families.

Working together, thinking outside the square – and outside the hub – hub leaders expanded the reach and activities of their hubs into a wide range of online, outdoor and offsite delivery spaces. In doing so, they redefined the concept of 'place' within the hubs model and ensured that the need for 'social distancing' did not also lead to social isolation.

The 2020 Year in Review is also - like 2020 - different from anything we've done before. From a data insights perspective, due to the way in which COVID-19 dramatically impacted hub operations nationally, it is not meaningful to present comparisons between how hubs performed in 2020 and the previous year.



Photo: An outdoor playgroup takes flight at a South Australian hub.

This Year in Review and the timeline on the next page illustrate how this unprecedented year unfolded across our network.

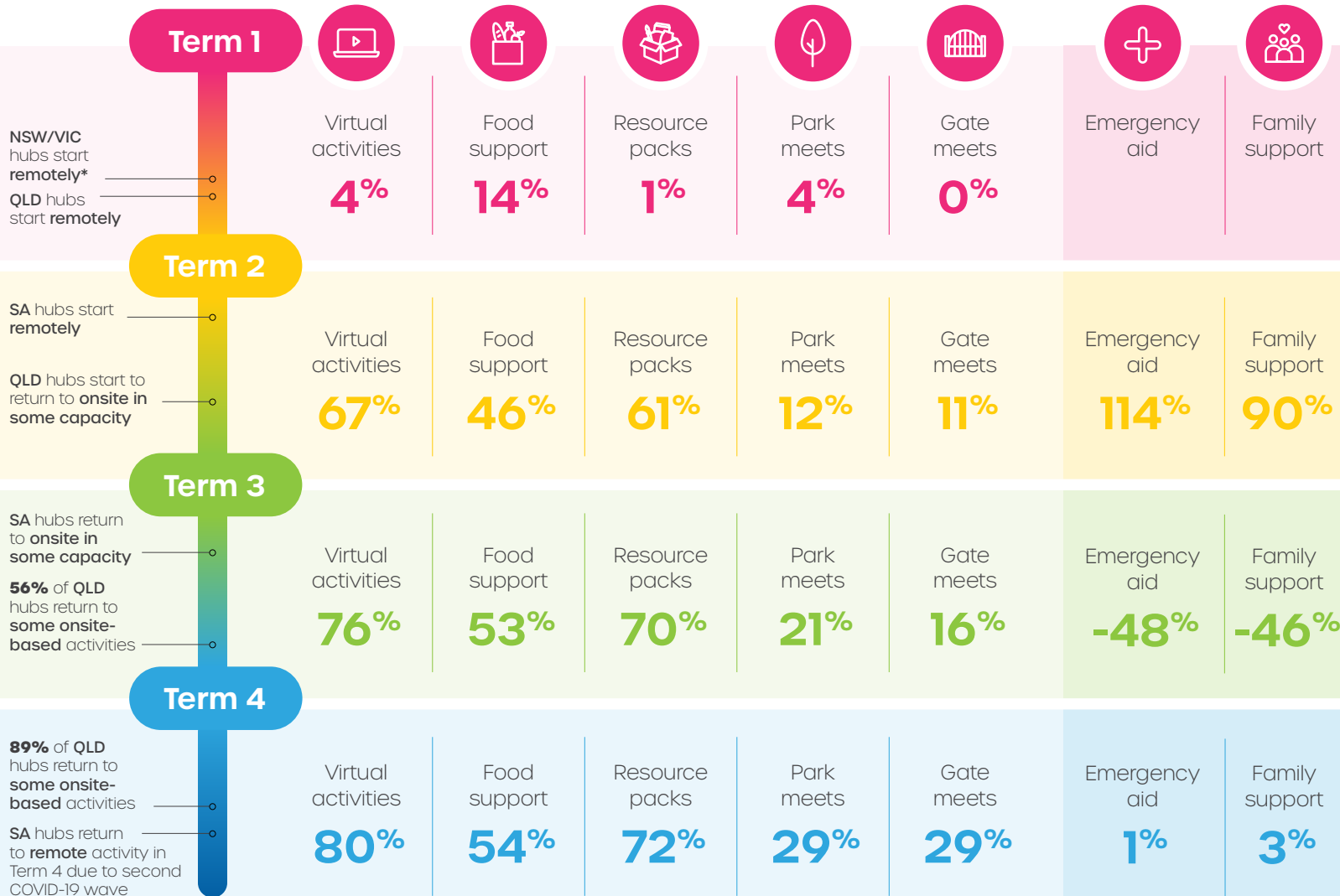
"I am blown away by the resilience and resourcefulness of the women who run our hubs across the country. What they managed to achieve in 2020 is nothing short of heroic."

Dr Sonja Hood,
CEO, Community Hubs Australia

2020 – The hubs and COVID-19

% OF HUBS RUNNING ACTIVITIES OFFSITE:

% OF REFERRALS COMPARED TO PREVIOUS TERM:



PROGRAM TYPES:

-  Parent engagement
-  Playgroup
-  English class
-  Formal training
-  Informal training
-  Healthy lifestyle program
-  Yoga

What we do – at a glance

2020 participation



Engagement

The hub is a place where communities connect and engage with one another. It can start simply by sharing a conversation over coffee, learning a new craft like sewing or knitting or even joining a gardening group. The diversity of each community makes each hub unique in the way it creates those connections.

7,880 families engaged with hubs throughout the year.

Hub families come from **118 nations** and speak **80 languages**.

The number of families supported by hubs ranged from 4 (for brand new hubs) to 433. This meant that on average, each hub connected with 106 families in 2020. The majority of engagement activities in Terms 2, 3 and 4 were delivered remotely – either online, offsite or outdoors.



Early childhood

In facilitating playgroups and children's activities, hubs enable schools to build relationships with families which have lasting positive impacts for all involved.

4,225 playgroup and children's language/literacy activities were delivered in 2020.

Over a third of hubs continued to deliver their programs, in line with COVID-19 restrictions, online, offsite or outdoors. The majority of all playgroups took place remotely from Term 2 onwards, as well as 'transition to school' support sessions that were delivered online by 30 hubs.



English

We know from previous research that over a third of hub participants become involved in hubs to improve their English. In 2020, our hubs found ways to continue this important program despite the impacts of COVID-19.

3,340 English sessions were delivered across the network, with **67 hubs running English classes** and English conversation programs.

Over half of these hubs continued to run English, during the year, with the majority of sessions being delivered remotely in Terms 2, 3 and 4.



Volunteering and employment pathways

Hub leaders are at the heart of the community and often their connections, or those of their support agency, provide participants with a range of opportunities for volunteering and potential employment.

58 hubs ran vocational training programs in 2020, with more than three quarters of these hubs providing the training after Term 1.

241 jobs were secured by hub participants as a result of hubs providing support to develop written communication skills for job applications, role-playing of interview techniques and creating connections with prospective employers.



7,880

families engaged with hubs throughout the year



4,225

playgroup and children's language/literacy activities were delivered



3,340

English sessions were delivered



241

jobs were secured by hub participants

What we achieve – at a glance

The National Community Hubs Program aims to strengthen social cohesion and inclusion in targeted Australian communities by achieving four core outcomes:



Child outcomes

Migrant children enjoy and succeed in school and achieve optimal health, development and wellbeing.



Family outcomes

Migrant families function well, have the capacity, confidence and skills to nurture child learning, and are connected, active participants in the community and workforce.



School outcomes

Schools respond to the needs and aspirations of migrant children and families.



Community outcomes

Community services respond early and effectively to migrant child and family needs.

Key outcomes in 2020

For children

- **Playgroups continued to be one of the main reasons people came to a hub.**
- Many hubs provided **remote early years programs and school readiness support** to help minimise the detrimental impacts of COVID-related restrictions.
- **Referrals** were made to a range of external early years services such as preschool/kindergarten and maternal child health services.
- From previous research, we know that **two thirds of hub parents** with a child under 5 years old **have not taken their child to any other early years services** outside the hub.

For schools

- School-based hubs **continued to help keep CALD families connected** with the school and with each other. This role was amplified during school access restrictions due to COVID-19.
- **63** government schools, **11** Catholic schools and **2** independent schools with hubs were **better connected into their communities** and equipped to respond to the needs of culturally diverse families.
- **Migrant children** are arriving at kindergarten with English, literacy and numeracy skills. They **are well socialised and ready to learn.**
- **Migrant parents are more actively engaged in school activities** as volunteers, leaders and participants.

For families

- Hubs **enabled 7,880 culturally diverse families to safely connect, share and learn** during COVID-19 lockdowns and social distancing restrictions.
- Hubs served as **effective conduits for conveying food relief and public health information** to vulnerable families during the pandemic.
- Hubs continued to **improve parents' English proficiency and job skills**, thereby increasing confidence – and success – in looking for work.
- **241 jobs were secured** within hub families during 2020 as a result of being connected with a hub. Hubs also facilitated **12,203 volunteering** opportunities.

For communities

- **76 hubs served as bridges between culturally diverse families, schools and government agencies** during COVID-19 lockdowns and school shutdowns. Hubs conveyed important public health information and provided consistent support to hard-to-reach migrant families.
- **6,769 referrals were made to external support services** (e.g. emergency relief, financial counselling, domestic violence, community and maternal child health, early childhood intervention, preschools).
- **114% increase in emergency aid referrals** and **90% increase in family support referrals** in Term 2 compared to Term 1.
- Hubs **partnered with 236 external organisations** to expand and enrich the programs and support available to migrant families.

From our CEO

Everyone across the national community hubs network began 2020 full of optimism and anticipation.

The Federal Government had committed funding in 2019 to sustain and expand the program. We were geared up to meet the challenge of establishing 32 new hubs across five states. Our existing hub leaders were also buoyed by this strong sense of consolidation and growth and ready for a busy year engaging with their hub families, schools and local communities.

Then coronavirus arrived. Suddenly, we were faced with an entirely new challenge: how to deliver place-based programming when there is *no place*? We needed to rapidly re-invent how community hubs operated.

The Department of Home Affairs moved quickly to reassure us, in early April, that our funding and network were secure. The Department recognised the essential support our hubs provide to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families and wanted to make sure our local hub leaders could continue to provide this service during and after the pandemic.

A critical success factor in our community hubs model is that it gives each hub leader, working with her school principal, the flexibility to respond to the specific needs of her local community.

Despite the incredibly uncertain circumstances and the temptation to come up with “one size fits all” solutions in the national office, we stayed true to the model, supporting each hub leader to find the best response for her setting.

It is impossible to do justice here to the many innovative and compassionate community-centred responses that followed. Each hub leader planned and delivered her own local-level response and continually adapted it as the situation in her community evolved. Many overcame personal fears of using technology to shift to delivering programs and services online.

Our national support team and the regional coordinators from our support agency partners provided the resources, advice and, on many occasions, emotional holding space that enabled them to keep going.

In homes where English is spoken as a second language, the unfolding crisis was particularly confusing and distressing. We were hearing heartbreaking stories of parents losing their jobs and struggling to put food on the table.

Hub leaders distributed weekly food donations and craft and learning packs to families; held online English classes and coffee and chat catch-ups; phoned families to check in on their welfare; produced heartwarming videos; started walking groups; and, when permissible, relocated playgroups and other activities to parks and playgrounds.



Our hubs also became vital conduits for translating and conveying timely public health information and COVID-related updates to vulnerable CALD families.

Looking back on the year, I am blown away by the resilience and resourcefulness of the women who run our hubs across the country. What they managed to achieve in 2020 is nothing short of heroic. The fact that they were still able to connect with almost 8,000 families during the year is a remarkable reflection of their efforts.

However, hub leaders could not have achieved all of this without the unwavering support of their school. Despite having to change entirely the way children were taught, principals remained steadfast in their commitment to hub activity continuing given the critical role they played in connecting hub families with their school.

In 2020, the national support team kept our network expansion commitments on track, opening new hubs in Victoria and South Australia as well as securing locations for 19 new hubs, which are opening in early 2021.

FROM OUR CEO

As we adapt to the harsh realities of living in a world battling COVID-19, it is evident that our community hubs are needed more than ever. This is reflected in the [findings of the Victorian Government's inquiry into early childhood engagement for CALD families](#), which were released in September. It was pleasing to see the Inquiry's recommendation that the Victorian Government continue to fund community hubs in Victoria, 'in recognition that they are a well-established and evidence-based model, to improve the engagement of culturally diverse communities in early childhood services'.¹

I extend our appreciation to the Australian Government; the New South Wales, Victorian, Queensland and South Australian governments; and Scanlon Foundation for their funding and support during 2020.

We were delighted to receive a further \$1 million in federal funding to support the continued provision of conversational English in our hubs. Many thanks also to our host schools, local councils and other program partners for sharing this extraordinary journey with us.

I also extend our appreciation to the team at Our Community. In February, our national support team was lucky enough to be the focus of their *Datathon for Social Good*. An army of volunteers spent an entire weekend in February looking at our hub data and discovering new insights that we have incorporated into shaping the future of our programs.

We have entered 2021 as a wiser, more resilient and cohesive support network for culturally diverse communities throughout Australia. No matter what new challenges the coming year brings, we will all rise to meet them together.

Dr Sonja Hood

Chief Executive Officer,
Community Hubs Australia



"2020 was a year that none of us will forget. And, while we may not be through this pandemic yet, we are learning how to live with it.

To everyone in the hubs network around Australia: thank you for your commitment and your determination to stay connected with hub families against a backdrop of ever-changing rules and great uncertainty.

You haven't just ensured that families stayed connected with services, their school and each other, you've also ensured that your hubs are ready to re-open – even in a modified way if need be – in 2021."

Peter Scanlon AO,
Chairman,
Community Hubs Australia

¹ Parliament of Victoria, *Inquiry into early childhood engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse communities*, Recommendation 8, page xxiii (<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lsc-la/inquiries/inquiry/971>)

Reflections from across the hubs network

"I am terrified of technology and hate having to work on my computer. However, when COVID-19 became very real and very scary, I realised I needed to help create some 'normal' for our hub families. One way of doing this was to share story time with them each week. So, I sat down and began recording myself reading my favourite stories and sharing it on our community hub Facebook page.

The feedback that I've had from families has been awesome and my playgroup kids love to see 'Miss Sonya' and get very excited!"

Sonya Morrissey, Hub Leader, Riverview State School Hub, Ipswich, Queensland

"COVID is keeping us more connected than pre."

Hang Bui, Hub Leader, St Albans Primary School Hub, Victoria

"A remarkable thing that happened this term was that even though we didn't have groups, programs and activities happening in the Hub, we had 13 new families connect to the Hub through the playgroup, wellbeing and English packs who hadn't previously been connected to the hub at all."

Hayley Wilmer, Hub Leader, Karrendi Primary School Hub, Salisbury, South Australia

“Across the national community hubs network, we’re definitely ‘people people’, not ‘technology people’.

Our hub leaders thrive on engaging directly with the families who come into their hubs. I feel the same about getting around to visit our hubs across the country and being able to meet hub leaders and support coordinators in person.

Amazingly, even though I wasn’t able to physically visit many of the hubs in 2020, I feel even more closely connected to our hub leaders after the way we all supported each other during such a difficult year.

Being able to meet together regularly online as a dispersed team and helping each other work through our professional and emotional responses to what was happening around us, had a lot to do with that.

We’ve learned to harness technology to connect, share and learn from each other in new and wonderful ways.”

Hiranthi Perera, Program Manager, Community Hubs Australia

“One of the highlights for me this term has been creating different video resources for the hub/school families with the help of school teachers.”

Isabel Tong, Hub Leader, Yagoona Public School Hub, NSW

“Staying connected with each other is key during these times. We are missing each other and can’t wait for this to be over.”

Caroline Menassa, Hub Leader, St Dominic’s Primary School Hub, Hume, Victoria

The 2020 hubs network and who it reached



** 74 hubs were active at the end of 2020. Two hubs left the network during the year.*

Expanding our network: new hubs and agencies

With ongoing funding secured from the Federal Government in the previous year, including funding for network expansion, our intention in 2020 was to welcome an additional 32 hubs to the network.

The arrival of COVID-19 midway through Term 1 put a stop to that. The virus completely disrupted life as we then knew it.

From a hub perspective, no one could visit schools and schools were frantically trying to work out how to work remotely. In response, our team focused on supporting hub leaders to shift program deliver online, offsite and outdoors.

As restrictions eased in Term 4, the CHA team again kicked off expansion plans with a call for expressions of interest from prospective hub locations. However, due to restrictions on domestic travel, a revised online selection process was used to replace in-person site visits. By December, 19 new host schools were contracted to run their hub in 2021.

Welcoming five new hubs

By the end of the school year, five new hubs had opened in Victoria and South Australia:

Victoria: two hubs in the City of Wyndham and one in the City of Casey.

South Australia: two hubs in the City of Playford.

Replacement hub locations

Three hubs left the network at the end of 2019 (one each in NSW, Queensland and Victoria), and two more left in mid-2020 (one in South Australia and one in NSW).

As a result, four replacement hub locations were also selected during 2020 and are scheduled to open in early 2021.

Photo: Welcoming families to a Victorian hub.



19 hubs to open in 2021

New hubs are scheduled to commence operations in Term 1, 2021 in:

New South Wales

- City of Blacktown (1)
- City of Parramatta (1)

Queensland

- City of Brisbane (5)
- City of Ipswich (1)
- City of Rockhampton (1)
- City of Townsville (2)

South Australia

- City of Playford (2)

Victoria

- City of Casey (4)
- City of Wyndham (2)

New support agencies

Three support agency partners came on board in October to work with nine new hubs scheduled to open in Queensland during 2021. As a result, CHA now partners with 10 specialist support agencies to manage the hubs' regional and local program delivery across Australia.

The new partners are:

- **Communify**, supporting new hubs in the City of Brisbane.
- **Multicultural Australia**, supporting new hubs in Rockhampton.
- **The Smith Family**, extending their support in Victoria to new hubs in Townsville.

Existing support agencies in Victoria (The Smith Family) and South Australia (Lutheran Community Care) had their roles extended to support the new hubs in Casey and Wyndham in Victoria, and Playford in South Australia.

Building the capability of our support coordinators

Given the critical leadership role support coordinators play in guiding and connecting hubs to the programs and services they need, it is important to continue to build on their leadership capability as individuals and, importantly, as a cohort.

Pollyanna Lenkic, a leading Australian coach, mentor and facilitator, and author of *Women & Success*, was engaged to deliver a tailored leadership development program for support coordinators based within each of our partner support agencies.

The program included blended learning, online webinars, and individual and group coaching sessions. It has been designed to evolve into a sustainable, internally delivered leadership program.

“Pollyanna’s leadership coaching really helped build my leadership capability as a support coordinator. It challenged me personally, which I loved, and has helped me grow as an individual. It’s also brought our team of support coordinators closer together from a place of trust.”

Poonam Rani, Support Coordinator,
Lutheran Community Care, South Australia

Network expansion - hubs and agencies

The 2020 hubs network

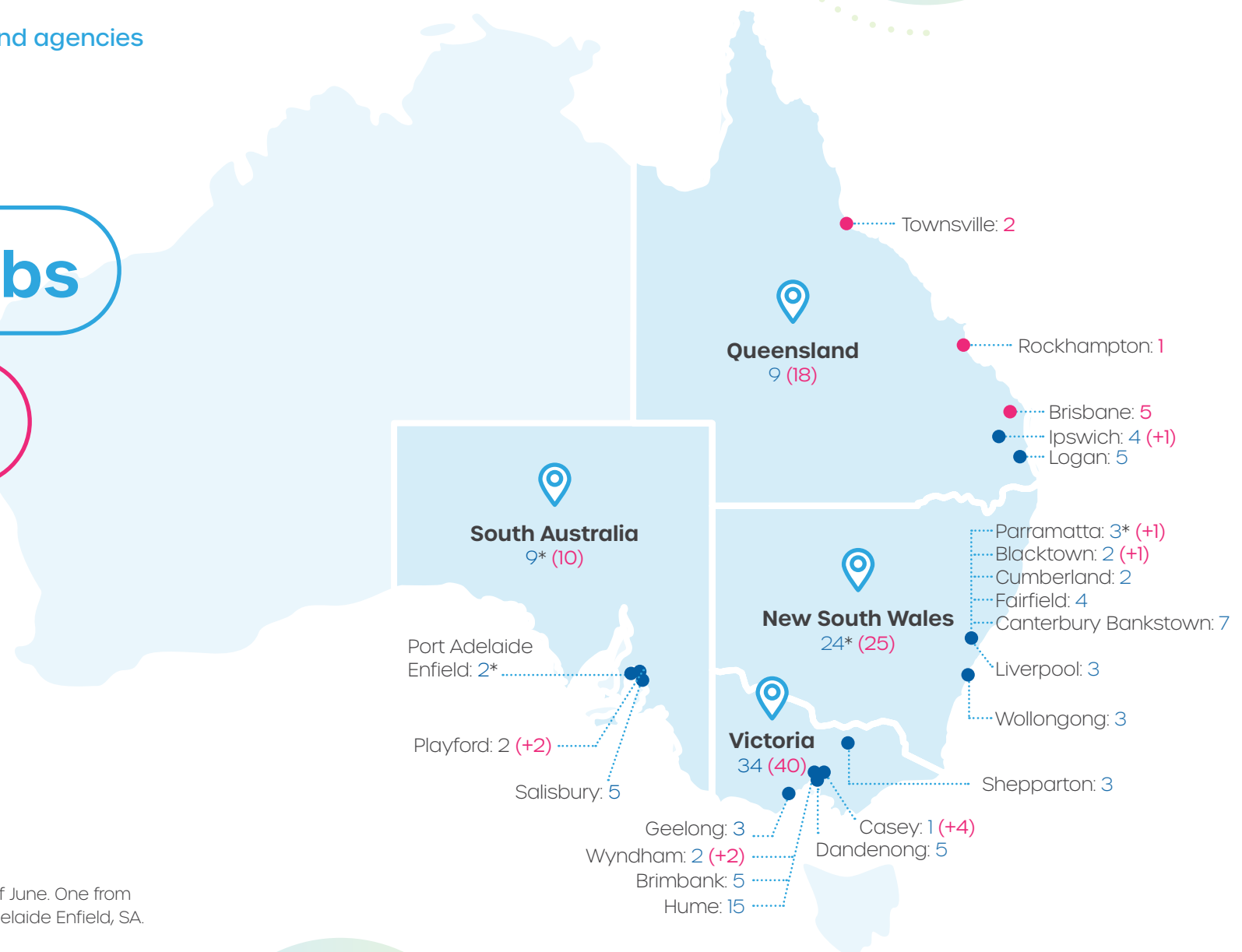
 **76*** hubs

 **+19** hubs for 2021

 A total of 93 hubs heading into 2021

● 2020
● 2021

* Two hubs left the network at the end of June. One from Parramatta, NSW and one from Port Adelaide Enfield, SA.



Additional support due to COVID-19

Hub Central

Hub Central was launched in late April as a rapid-response initiative to support hub leaders as they shifted to delivering programs remotely, including creating 'virtual hubs'.

The online collaboration tool enables hub leaders to share, access and rate resources and information covering four key program areas: Early Years, English, Health and Wellbeing, as well as Coffee and Chat. The site also features a 'How to' toolbox with tips and guidance on using technology and engaging online. Importantly, it guides hub leaders through how to re-open their hub safely, including a COVIDSafe plan.

Hub Central was developed by the national support team in collaboration with a working group of hub leaders from each state. The site was used by 92% of hub leaders in Term 2 to support their engagement with families, with Early Years content the most used category.

National Coffee and Chats

The use of group video conferencing quickly became a major way of keeping CHA's growing and widely dispersed network connected during months of unpredictable social distancing requirements, staged lockdowns and interstate and intrastate travel restrictions.

Four 'National Coffee and Chat' online gatherings were held for the full team of hub leaders,



Photo: The national hub network spent time connecting with one another online.

support coordinators and CHA staff between May and October. The live sessions helped bring people across the network together, so everyone felt connected and able to share positive stories and ideas, discuss challenges and feel part of a supportive and caring team.

Promoting wellbeing and resilience

Team members across the hubs network were under considerable personal and professional

strain, particularly during Terms 2 and 3. Hub leaders were often supporting distressed members of hub families, while also having to deal with their own fears and changed work and home situations due to COVID-19.

Several live online self-care events were provided on topics including resilience, mindfulness, Hatha and chair-based yoga as well as art therapy.

What we do: Engagement

Meaningful engagement with hub families and fostering a sense of belonging are central to everything we do within each community hub. Hubs aim to help parents become more engaged in their children's education and with their local community.

Engaging in a COVID-19 world

Rather than weakening our people-centred community hubs model, the arrival of COVID-19 highlighted its greatest strength – the strong, trusting relationships between hub leaders and local families.

As hubs across the network had to close their physical doors and shift to delivering programs remotely, hub leaders experimented with a wide variety of engagement approaches and tools to find out what worked best for their community.

Emergency supplies and food relief parcels were delivered to struggling families impacted by the pandemic's effects on business and the resulting job losses.

Families were able to attend playgroups, English classes, wellbeing sessions and COVID-19 Q&A forums via video conferencing. Videos and social media posts shared joyful messages of

encouragement and support. When engaging online wasn't feasible, hub leaders telephoned those families instead, or delivered packs to homes.

As restrictions eased in some states, the hubs also moved programs outdoors into parks and playgrounds and met mums at the school gate to head out for walking 'coffee and chat' sessions.

A hub is where the heart is

Despite having to work from home, staff and volunteers at St Georges Road Primary School Hub in Shepparton, Victoria, banded together to hand sew 120 felt hearts in two and a half days so they could be delivered to mums for Mother's Day.

Each diminutive heart was gifted to mums who usually attended the hub and the Shepparton English Language Centre, together with a written message of support and a learning pack for their child.

Hub Leader, Liz Arcus, says that although the team members weren't physically together, they were united by their shared purpose.

Photo: St Georges Road Primary School Hub in Shepparton, Victoria received many phone calls and messages from happy mums after receiving their handmade hearts.



7,880

families engaged with hubs

While all of our hubs started 2020 running face to face programs, almost all parent engagement activities were remote (either online, offsite or outdoors) from Term 2 onwards.

More than:



80% of hubs engaged families via online activities (e.g. video-conferencing).



72% of hubs distributed resource packs direct to homes.



54% of hubs were involved in food security activities.



29% of hubs conducted walking activities; held activities in parks (e.g. park playgroups); and engaged with parents at the school gate.

“A wonderful moment for me and our hub community this term was the engagement of our Karen and Chin families with technology.”

Louise Holley,
Hub Leader, Wyndham Park Primary School Hub, Victoria

Walking and talking

The number of weekly walking groups stepped up significantly across the hubs network during 2020. For many, walking became the only way to catch up and connect with each other, while also providing a welcome break from home.

Westmead Public School Hub in NSW launched its Thursday walking group in May. The school's principal occasionally joined the group to chat with the mums as they walked.

"We walk and talk and laugh together, and that one and a half hour walk is a stress reliever for everyone," says Hub Leader, Ri Aryal.

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School Hub in Victoria launched a 'Walk on Wednesday' group, which has become so popular it will continue in 2021. "Everyone is so happy to see each other and talk about their experiences during lockdown," says Hub Leader, Kirsten O'Connor-Smith. "They are all enjoying the gentle exercise too."

Top photo: Women and children enjoy a 'Walk on Wednesday' session with Broadmeadows Valley Primary School Hub in Victoria.

Bottom photo: Westmead Public School Hub Leader, Ri Aryal takes a selfie with hub mums during their weekly walk.

"We walk and talk and laugh together, and that one and a half hour walk is a stress reliever for everyone."



What we do: Early childhood

A major focus of hub programs is ensuring that preschool children from CALD backgrounds have access to quality early learning and school readiness programs.

One of the main reasons people come to hubs is to join playgroups and participate in early years programs. Playgroups offer parents and children an invaluable source of support, learning and connection with other families.

Our research indicates that two-thirds of hub parents with children under the age of five don't take their children to services other than those offered through their local hub. Minimising the negative impacts of COVID-19 restrictions on young children's exposure to early learning opportunities was therefore a major focus across all our hubs during the year.

Supported and informal playgroups, children's yoga and other activity sessions were offered online or in outdoor locations. More than three quarters of all playgroups held from Term 2 onwards took place remotely, either online or outdoors.



Photo: A hub mum and daughter after attending a playgroup session in Fernbrooke State School Hub in Ipswich. The session was delivered by Queensland's First 5 Forever family literacy program including food relief supplies donated by a local charity.



4,225

playgroups and children's language/literacy programs

More than three quarters of playgroups were delivered remotely (online or outdoors) from Term 2 onwards.

30 hubs ran 'transition to school' and similar sessions online.

Types of activities:



supported playgroups via video conferencing or in parks and playgrounds



home-based activity sessions, for e.g. cooking, art and craft



craft and learning support packs delivered to homes



children's yoga sessions delivered remotely



referrals to early intervention, health and other child support services.

Playgroups in parks and playgrounds

When lockdown and social distancing requirements – and weather – permitted, hub leaders moved playgroup sessions into local parks and school playgrounds.

Meeting outdoors opened up opportunities to engage children in different types of learning and gross motor-play activities such as flying kites and birdwatching. Parents also enjoyed the ability to connect with each other in a relaxed, picnic-style environment.

Salisbury Primary School Hub in South Australia ran a popular 'Park Playgroup', pictured in both photos in Carisbrooke Park, Salisbury. Playgroup children also participated in the Aussie Backyard Bird Count in October, spotting eight different types of birds followed by an activity making birds nests.

"I hosted an informal playgroup at a great little park just around the corner from the school. I brought a big washable picnic blanket, a washable tablecloth for the table and a few gross motor toys such as big balls and some balancing beams.

I also brought my guitar to sing songs with the kids and a book to read. Towards the end of term I also brought some playdough and cookie cutters.

The vibe was really good and, in some regards, having the big open space was more fun than being inside our building."

Silja McIvor, Hub Leader, Woodridge North Primary School, Queensland



Marsden Road Public School Hub in NSW, ran its outdoor playgroups in partnership with an early years' service provider. Hub Leader, Jina Dwaraknath, describes the stringent COVID-safe procedures they followed:

"Before entering the school, families were required to complete and sign a form ... stating that they were not ill and did not have COVID-19 or had been in contact with anyone with the virus. Hand sanitiser had to be used before joining the group and any equipment touched was wiped down with disinfectant immediately.

We laid a large tarp on the ground and strict 1.5 metre social distancing was observed, with a maximum 10 adults per session. Families were booked in prior with no drop-ins. Two 40-minute sessions were available with a 20-minute break in-between each session, which allowed all the families to leave before the next session started. This ensured no one was turned away and there was no overcrowding.

Each child was given a craft pack in a sealed envelope to prevent any cross contamination. The pack included paper, activity books, crayons, pencils."



What we do: English

Helping parents and children from migrant backgrounds learn and practise English is at the heart of all the programs offered in our community hubs. We endeavour to provide a safe, welcoming and supportive environment in which to learn English.

Attending formal and informal English sessions in hubs has enabled many parents to undertake vocational training and go on to secure employment.

In Terms 2, 3 and 4, the English classes and conversation programs usually offered inside hubs had to be delivered online or in local parks due to the impacts of COVID-19.

For example, our five hubs in Logan ran a successful program of free English classes in partnership with TAFE Queensland during the year. While some classes were able to be held inside the hubs, others were provided online and in a local park.

Funding boost for English programs

The development of English language proficiency among diverse hub communities is a core strategic service provided across the national hubs network.

Increases in targeted government funding for English programs in recent years have enabled the hubs to significantly grow the number and variety of English tuition and conversational practice programs available.

In October, the Federal Government announced an additional \$1 million commitment to support the continued provision of conversational English in our community hubs. The announcement was part of a larger package of measures to improve English proficiency for migrants, including increased access to the Adult Migrant English Program.

Photo: Families from Rydalmere Public School Hub, NSW, learn English at their local park.



3,340

English sessions delivered

67 hubs offered English programs.

Almost all sessions were delivered remotely (online or outdoors) from Term 2 onwards.

Types of activities:



formal beginners, intermediate and advanced English classes



English conversation programs



informal English practice sessions



'Cook and learn' English sessions.

Learning to talk to teachers

Many hub families feel an immense sense of achievement when they have learned sufficient English to be able to have a conversation with their child's teacher.

When Rydalmere Public School in NSW, switched to conducting parent teacher interviews online, the school's Hub Leader, Seetha Srinivasan, took the opportunity to use this as a practical learning example in the hub's weekly conversational English class.

Parents practised using the online tool and the questions they wanted to ask their child's teacher. This simple exercise helped participants improve their digital skills, English conversation skills, and the ability of each parent to connect with their child's teacher.

*Photo: Seetha Srinivasan,
Hub Leader at Rydalmere
Public School Hub, NSW*



Learning a new word: "Snake!"

Learning about Australian snakes and how to react when you see one is potentially life-saving knowledge for migrants.

With the help of Snake Catchers Adelaide, Salisbury Primary School Hub in South Australia turned one of its Intermediate English classes into a venomous snake awareness session. Participants learned about venomous snakes, snake safety and snake bite treatment, while also learning and practicing many new English words.

**"I hope everyone feels more confident about what to do if they encounter one of these deadly snakes in future ...
Hint: leave them alone and back away very slowly!"**

Liesl Shipard, Hub Leader,
Salisbury Primary School Hub,
South Australia

Shaza's story

"My name is Shaza, I am from Syria. I have been here for one year. I want to stay here; I am very happy. My country was beautiful but there is war. It is a beautiful place, Syria. My language is Arabic. In Syria I was an Arabic teacher in secondary school.

I came to Australia because I want my children to learn here, to get an education. And I want to learn here. I want to complete my study and to live here safely ...

All my family are still in Syria - my Mum and Dad, brothers and sisters ... I came to Australia with my husband, and my five children. Australia is very beautiful. It's very big, very far from my country. Everything in Australia is new to me - roads, weather, houses, the people. I like that the people are friendly.

Coming to the hub has been very useful - I can practise my language. It has made me strong, because at first I was very scared, it's made me friendly. I have new friends; I made my best friend in the hub. And I learn more things, sewing, cooking and the best thing, the language. Without the hub, I would be sitting at home. It has helped me learn about Australia... it makes me happy.

I came to the hub because I wanted to learn English, but I've joined in the sewing and gardening ... I also bring my youngest son to the hub; he is three years old and he is very happy at the hub. Thank you to everyone in the hub, it makes us very happy."

Shaza is a hub participant at St Georges Road Primary School Hub in Shepparton, Victoria



What we do: Volunteering and employment pathways

Many of the women who come to community hubs are eager to work as soon as all of their children are old enough to go to school. However, our 2018 Hub Census revealed that only one in five hub attendees are in any form of paid work.

Hubs connect adults into a wide range of volunteering and vocational training courses to build confidence and open up pathways to employment. Hub leaders also provide encouragement, advice and support during the job seeking process.

COVID-19 restrictions impacted hubs' ability to offer training opportunities during the year. However, from Term 2, 44 hubs continued to run training programs, most of which were delivered online.



1,063

formal and informal training sessions were delivered

Most hubs provided some sort of vocational training program across the year with almost all formal training sessions delivered remotely after Term 1.

Types of activities:



formal vocational training courses and certificate programs in partnership with TAFEs and registered training organisations



computer skills, first aid and sewing training



volunteering and paid work opportunities with hubs and host schools.

Hub participants find pathways to work

Here are just three of the 241 good news stories from hub participants who successfully gained employment during 2020, with help from their local hub.

Mu and several other women from the local Northern Bay College Hub in Geelong, in regional Victoria, were employed by local company, Etheridge ACS Property Services.

The company reached out to the hub for help with recruiting cleaning staff for schools. Socially distanced job-readiness sessions were held prior to the job interviews and half of the women who were interviewed got jobs.

“Mu is doing an absolutely wonderful job at all sites that she cleans for us,”

Ben, Etheridge ACS Property Services

Madhura migrated to Australia with her family in 2019, which meant they were going through a crucial settling in period when COVID-19 hit. Needing to find work, Madhura applied for a housekeeping position and turned to her local Hub Leader, Soneya Tonima, at Para Vista Primary School Hub in South Australia, for help.

Soneya coached her about interview techniques, occupational health and safety and COVID-safe cleaning practices – and Madhura got the job!



Photo: Mu, a participant at Northern Bay College Hub in Geelong, Victoria, says that some of the money she earns in her new cleaning job will support her nephew and niece to attend school in Burma.



Photo: Madhura found work as a housekeeper.

Wouter Wolput came to Australia from Belgium with his young family in 2017. His youngest child attends Karrendi Primary School in South Australia, and Wouter joined an English class at the school’s community hub in late 2019. He wanted to improve his English speaking and conversation skills to increase his chances of finding work.

Wouter was invited back to help as a volunteer in the hub’s English program during 2020. While he was volunteering, Hub Leader, Hayley Wilmer, helped Wouter organise his resumé and look for work. She connected him into our South Australian support agency, Lutheran Community Care, which led to a role as a volunteer mechanic and, finally, a full-time job as a security technician – exactly the kind of job he was looking for.

NSW hub leader helps 59 find jobs

Westmead Public School Hub in Western Sydney helped 59 people secure paid employment during 2020.

This outcome reflects Hub Leader, Ri Aryal's, passion for supporting hub mums to be proactive about starting new careers.

"If you just empower one mum, her whole family gets empowered and her friends are inspired to find work as well," says Ri, who migrated to Australia from Nepal with her husband and young son in 2017 to study a Masters in Social Work. She uses her own experience of migration and becoming a working mum to motivate other hub women to do the same.

Ri says migrant families comprise 98% of the school's enrolments. Most come from India and arrived under the skilled migrant scheme. Many of the wives have been to university and held skilled jobs in their homeland, however they usually stop working when their first child is born.

"These women have so much to offer our community, but they just don't have the confidence on how to move forward because they may not speak English very well and have been out of the workforce for so long," Ri explains. "It's really just a matter of connecting the dots and opening up that network for them ... Once they get a job, these women just fly from that point on."

One of these women, Santha, moved to Australia from India in 2012 with her husband Amit, who came here as a skilled migrant. Santha's tertiary qualifications are not recognised here. She wanted to find work but after several years as a stay-at-home mum and with no professional connections in Australia, she didn't know where to start.

Santha volunteered in the Westmead Public School Hub and Ri connected her with a local TAFE to study a Certificate III in Business Administration. Ri then helped her to successfully apply for a position as COVID-19 Administration Support Officer at Bankstown Hospital.

"The word of mouth among local families around here is so strong," says Santha. "Every new mum or new arrival is told straight away to go and talk to the community hub leader, as she is so welcoming and will always help you out."

Other types of jobs Westmead mums obtained during the year include: playgroup helper, COVID-19 support roles, cleaning, IT support, human resources, interior design, providing student support at a local training college, and establishing art-making and catering businesses.



Photo: Santha with her family.

What we achieve for children

OUTCOME: Migrant children enjoy and succeed in school and achieve optimal health, development and wellbeing.

- Playgroups continued to be one of the main reasons people came to a hub.
- Many hubs provided remote early years programs and school readiness support to help minimise the detrimental impacts of COVID-related restrictions.
- Referrals were made to external early years services such as preschool/ kindergarten and maternal child health services.
- Hubs continued to fill a major service gap: two thirds of hub parents with a child under 5 years old have not taken their child to any other early years services outside the hub.



Individual activity kits for making paper plate tambourines, ready for distribution by a South Australian hub.

Delivering activities door-to-door

Across the majority of the network, hub leaders and volunteers worked together to prepare playgroup and early learning packs during Terms 2, 3 and 4 to support home-based activities including art, craft, cooking and gardening.

The packs were delivered direct to family homes or handed to parents at the school gate. A facilitator from the hub guided the children and their parents through the activities during online video-conferencing sessions via Zoom or Webex.

How to make a hub leader smile

We don't always recognise the positive impacts we have on others.

Julie Raciti, our Hub Leader at Springvale Rise Primary School Hub in Victoria, tells this story about delivering playgroup packs to families during the pandemic:

"One of the families who has been attending playgroup for the last three years has a little girl who had never spoken a word to me.

During my last visit to drop off the playgroup pack, she saw me and came running out her door shouting my name: "Julie!".

I was so touched and stunned. I thought she didn't know my name!

This made me realise how important it is to keep these connections and remember the impact of what we are doing in our hub during this time."



"Our daughter Olivia has flourished under the care and education provided by the hub at Wollongong Public School.

She is learning to read and identify words and eagerly anticipates her Tuesday teaching session via Zoom. The weekly packs have been a lifesaver with having two kids stuck at home full time.

As soon as we get home with the packs, Olivia dives in to start the fun activities the hub has provided for her and her younger brother. We can tell lots of time, effort and thought has gone into the weekly packs and we are forever grateful."

Joyce, Hub mum, Wollongong Public School Hub, NSW

Varunya learns to cook

Mums, dads and children from the Bert Oldfield Public School Hub in NSW, were treated to an afternoon of art, craft and cooking in Term 4, which was facilitated by the hub, online through Zoom.

Four year old Varunya and her family joined other families from a range of cultural backgrounds and were encouraged to share their artistic and culinary skills.

“All the parents encouraged their children to participate and get involved in the activities, which they enjoyed.”

Hub Leader, **Sivananthini Suresan**

Even though many hubs had to run programs remotely during the year, online activities like this one enabled thousands of hub families to stay connected with one another while also giving young children valuable early learning experiences.

Photo: Varunya, 4, proudly displays the mini fruit cake she prepared during Bert Oldfield Public School Hub's (NSW) online home-based activity afternoon.



What we achieve for families

OUTCOME: Migrant families function well, have the capacity, confidence and skills to nurture child learning, and are connected, active participants in the community and workforce.

- Hubs enabled 7,880 culturally diverse families to safely connect, share and learn during COVID-19 lockdowns and social distancing restrictions.
- Hubs served as effective conduits for conveying food relief and public health information to vulnerable families during the pandemic.
- Hubs continued to improve parents' English proficiency and job skills, thereby increasing confidence – and success – in looking for work.
- As a result of being connected to a hub in 2020, 241 jobs were secured by hub families.

Food relief for families in need

Many families in our hub communities are among those worst affected by the job losses and lockdown restrictions caused by COVID-19. Some families have been left struggling to put food on the table.

At Heckenberg Public School Hub in NSW, staff from the hub and the school partnered with Foodbank to give out hampers of milk, bread and other essentials to more than 100 families.

When Penny Dearlove, our Hub Leader at Marsden State School Hub in Queensland, heard about the desperate circumstances among many of her local hub families, she reached out to her Support Coordinator at Access Community Services (ACS) to discuss how to help them. ACS connected Penny with volunteers from the Brisbane Sikh Temple (Gurdwara Sahib) who generously offered to provide pantry food parcels for those in need.²

Every fortnight for several months, Penny provided these parcels to many families. She also used the opportunity to stay in touch with each family and provide referrals to other support services where needed.



Photo: Hub Leader, Penny Dearlove, receives one of many regular food donations for local families from Surinder and Tejpapal from the Brisbane Sikh Temple (Gurdwara Sahib).

² Sikh gurdwaras (places of worship) around Australia give free food to anyone every day, all year round, to honour the Sikh concept of 'Nishkam Sewa', which means selfless service to humanity without the need for recognition or honour.

Providing early intervention referrals

Hub leaders build trusting relationships with hub family members, particularly women, and are well placed to identify situations where early intervention support may be beneficial.

For example, in Term 4, St Francis College Hub in Queensland, made 55 referrals to early intervention services such as GPs, paediatricians and mental health support practitioners. These interventions were mostly to assist people experiencing poor mental health, and families struggling with parenting issues or with children experiencing developmental delays or disability.

Chatting online with The Governor

The Peace and Prosperity Kitchen Garden Program, a partnership between Community Hubs Australia and Government House Victoria, has been running since 2017.

The program was initiated by Her Excellency the Hon Linda Dessau AC, the Governor of Victoria and her husband Mr Anthony Howard QC to open the property to a more diverse range of community members and uses. Groups of hub women visit Government house for several weeks to harvest fresh produce from the garden, prepare and share meals and join in social and craft activities.

In September, The Governor, Mr Howard and Government House staff joined a video-conference session to reconnect with women from the Geelong community hubs, who had participated in the program during Term 1. Two further Zoom sessions were held with a Government House staff member, who gave the women further tips on how to have flourishing kitchen gardens.



Photo: Hub mums from Geelong swap gardening tips with the Governor of Victoria and Mr Howard.

Mindfulness resources for migrants

Many online and app-based resources are available nowadays to support mindfulness and meditation practices. Unfortunately, few of these resources are available in languages other than English.

During 2020, funding was secured from the Scanlon Foundation to enable CHA to partner with Smiling Mind, Australia's leading non-profit web and app-based mindfulness program, to develop a range of mindfulness resources in multiple languages.

Many of our hub leaders use the Smiling Mind app to support their own mental wellbeing and asked whether it would be possible to produce translated mindfulness recordings so people from non-English speaking backgrounds can experience their benefits.

As a result, during 2021, CHA and Smiling Mind will produce mindfulness and meditation resources in Arabic and Dari. Hub leaders and volunteers from two Victorian hubs – Dandenong South Primary School and Roxburgh Rise Primary School are collaborating with the team at Smiling Mind to create mindfulness scripts and recordings and ensure that the resources are culturally appropriate and well translated. The recordings will be pilot-tested before being loaded into the Smiling Mind app.

If this project is successful, the aim is to evolve this model to continue to expand Smiling Mind's resources into other languages.



Asking for help leads to helping others

Ying Ying reached out to her local hub at Dandenong Primary School Hub in Victoria because she needed help looking after her son while completing her nursing studies.

Hub Leader Alison Rogers took her request to the school principal and arrangements were made to care for her son while she was studying.

Through this arrangement, Ying Ying strengthened her relationship with the school and was later asked to record a reading of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in her native language, Mandarin, for use in the school and the hub. This rippled out to families who shared the same language and were able to enjoy the book with their children.

What we achieve for schools



OUTCOME: Schools respond to the needs and aspirations of migrant children and families.

- **School-based hubs continued to help keep CALD families connected with the school and with each other. This role was amplified during school access restrictions due to COVID-19.**
- **63 government schools, 11 Catholic schools, and 2 independent schools with hubs were better connected into their communities and equipped to respond to the needs of culturally diverse families.**
- **Migrant children are arriving at kindergarten with English, literacy and numeracy skills. They are well socialised and ready to learn.**
- **Migrant parents are more actively engaged in school activities as volunteers, leaders and participants.**

School readiness benefits recognised

The findings of the Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into early childhood engagement in CALD communities, released in September, recognised that CHA's community hubs serve as proven conduits for promoting school readiness, and emphasised 'the need for continued funding for them across Victoria.'³

From the report: "The Committee was fortunate to visit community hubs at the Wilmot Road Primary School in Shepparton and the Northern Bay College Community Hub in Geelong. The Committee found these spaces to be welcoming and nurturing for culturally diverse families, particularly those from refugee backgrounds, and was pleased to see how service providers worked together to promote and support the hubs in the local community. Visiting the hubs also allowed the Committee to better understand the value of placing community hubs in schools, where families could feel safe and be provided with a seamless transition into school life for their young children. The Committee met with principals of both primary schools, both of whom were highly complimentary of the community hub model. This was consistent with the evidence received from Daniel Riley, Principal of Dandenong Primary School, who told the Committee that the hub located in his school was 'a welcoming

Photo: Children from the Northern Bay College Hub, Victoria spend time sharing and learning together.

place where migrant families with young children come to connect, share and learn'.

The Committee is very supportive of the community hub model and the role of existing hubs in supporting culturally diverse families, through direct service provision and referrals, in addition to building social connections. The Committee strongly believes that the Victorian Government should continue to fund CHA to facilitate the establishment of additional hubs in areas of need."⁴

³ Parliament of Victoria, *Inquiry into early childhood engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse communities*, p330 (<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/1sic-la/inquiries/inquiry/971>)
⁴ Ibid, p62.

What principals say about their hubs

Feedback received from the principals of our host schools during 2020 indicated that they were extremely impressed with, and proud of, the achievements of their hubs during such a challenging year. Here are a few examples:

“The difference hubs make can’t be measured directly using NAPLAN data, but the results are extraordinary and so valuable in connecting our hub families with the school and their community.

I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Laban Toose, Principal, Wyndham Park Primary School, City of Wyndham, Victoria



“This term, we had lots of great things planned for our school – and almost all of them have been cancelled – not by us, but by services and organisations who just couldn’t make it in.

But the hub hasn’t cancelled, it’s just kept going, and we are so grateful to Community Hubs for allowing that to happen, and to the hub for providing that little bit of glue that has helped keep our community together.”

Ben Kirkham, Principal, Heckenberg Public School, City of Liverpool, NSW



“We are really proud of Pam ... she has so successfully managed to bring our hub to life despite the COVID-19 challenges.”

Liz Davey, Principal, Hampton Park Primary School, Victoria, which joined the hubs network in 2020. Liz is referring to the efforts of Hub Leader Pam Cooper, who began the role delivering all programs outdoors or online.



“We are all very much looking forward to bringing the buzz back to our Hub – we have really missed the beautiful faces of participants coming in for their sessions.”

**Leonie Fitzgerald, Principal,
Dandenong South Primary School, Victoria**



“The community hub has been a big benefit for our school in terms of expressing the welcome philosophy and connection to community.

For example, the playgroups have brought in parents from outside the school neighbourhood onto the site and this has increased enrolments. Even though this was not the purpose, it showed us how positive parent relationships were built from the early years activities...

Our hub makes all of these connections real and sustained and our school is committed to the hub continuing.”

**Jeff Parker, outgoing Principal,
Holy Eucharist Primary School, St Albans
South, Victoria**



Woodridge North opens new hub space

One of the original hubs in the national community hubs network, Woodridge North State School Hub in Queensland, secured matched grant funding to build a dedicated new space for the hub.

The new building is located closer to the school's entrance and directly alongside a kindergarten. It opened midway through Term 4, just as COVID-19 restrictions were lessened. This allowed families to enter the school grounds as long as they stayed at the hub.



Photo: School Principal, Michael McMahon (cutting ribbon), and Hub Leader, Silja McIvor (far right), invited hub partners and former hub leaders to help launch the hub. The school showed a slide presentation of the hub's evolution since opening in 2014, and local families spoke about how the hub has impacted their lives.



Photo: A prep transition group being held inside the spacious new hub in November.

What we achieve for communities

OUTCOME: Community services respond early and effectively to migrant child and family needs.

- Every hub served as a bridge between culturally diverse families, schools and government agencies during COVID-19 lockdowns and school shutdowns. They conveyed important public health information and provided consistent support to hard-to-reach migrant families.
- **6,769** referrals were made to external support services (e.g. emergency relief, financial counselling, domestic violence, community and maternal child health, early childhood intervention, preschools).
- Hubs partnered with **236** external organisations to expand and enrich the programs and support available to migrant families.
- In Term 2, there was a 114% increase in emergency aid referrals and a 90% increase in family support referrals.

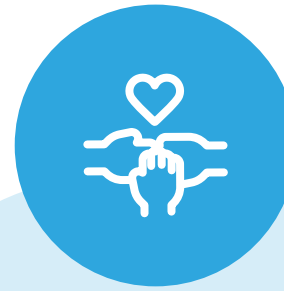


Image: CHA developed a series of visual infographics, designed to be shared on social media, to educate hub families about the right and wrong ways to wear face masks.

“We kept the communication between school and home flowing by creating different ethnic group chats, for example a WhatsApp group for all Arabic and Assyrian speaking families; another group for Turkish speaking families.

This enabled us to get parents online and get remote learning happening successfully. Being available reduced anxiety for parents.

We also organised financial aid and distribution of food packs. Weekly distribution of food boxes were made at the school gate. Donations were made to the school by the community, which were then used to purchase Coles gift cards. These were then distributed to families in need.”

Fay Yilmaz, Hub Leader, Coolaroo South Primary School Hub, Victoria

Photo: By partnering with local organisations, Coolaroo South Primary School Hub in Victoria, was able to organise much needed food packs for families in need.

“Food relief has had great success in Ipswich with hubs being able to meet the high need for relief through partnerships with OzHarvest and others.”

Grainne Taia, Support Coordinator, Access Community Services, Ipswich/ Logan LGAs, Queensland



Parliamentary inquiry validates hubs model

The Victorian Parliament's Legal and Social Issues Committee looked into the efficacy of our community hubs model while conducting its inquiry into early childhood engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This included visiting hubs in the regional cities of Greater Geelong and Shepparton.

The important role our community hubs play in increasing engagement with families was also reinforced by a number of other organisations that made submissions to the inquiry, including the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project and The Bethany Group.

The report includes a recommendation that '... the Victorian Government continue to fund community hubs in Victoria, in recognition that they are a well-established and evidence-based model, to improve the engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in early childhood services'.⁵

A ground-level COVID-19 response

All the communities in which our hubs are embedded were impacted by the coronavirus pandemic during the year.

Every hub school and community experienced some degree of lockdown, with our 28 Melbourne hubs continuing to operate remotely during Stages 3 and 4 lockdown periods across Terms 2, 3 and 4.

The continually evolving COVID advice and restrictions in different states and regions posed a serious problem for CALD families and public health authorities trying to reach them. Many of these families have limited or no access to the English language information provided on official websites and in mainstream media.

Our hubs were able to bridge the gaps in the emergency communications chain to provide timely and reliable information to families in community languages, using the channels and messaging our hub leaders knew would reach them.

Hubs also partnered with other support services to broaden their response. In Term 1, the hubs worked with 115 different partners. In Term 2, despite hubs shutting down their place-based operations, an additional 75 partners were added. The significant increase reflects the changing focus for hub leaders as the COVID-19 emergency unfolded. There was a noticeable increase in partnerships with emergency aid and food donation organisations.

Similarly, service referrals increased between Term 1 and Term 2, with a noticeable shift in the types of referrals being made. Referrals to family support services, emergency aid and accommodation services doubled. Referrals to community health services and financial counselling also increased.

"The ability of hub leaders to shift their focus to respond to the changing - and often acute - needs of their community as COVID-19 unfolded, was remarkable."

Dr Sonja Hood, CEO,
Community Hubs Australia

⁵ Parliament of Victoria, Inquiry into early childhood engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, p62 (<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/lsic-la/inquiries/inquiry/971>)

Helping Hume through a hotspot

The City of Hume is the birthplace of the national hubs program. The first nine early years hubs were piloted in Hume in 2011-13. The City now has hubs in 15 local primary schools and Hume City Council is one of CHA's support agency partners, coordinating hub operations and programming at the local level.

In June, Hume was one of several Melbourne municipalities to be declared a COVID-19 hotspot. Three of our hub schools recorded cases of the virus and had to temporarily close. Hub leaders swung into action to connect their families with reliable public health advice and support.

WhatsApp language groups

Kirsten O'Connor-Smith, the Hub Leader at Broadmeadows Valley Primary School Hub set up language-based WhatsApp groups to communicate information to families in their languages. This involved summarising important messages, such as newsletter content, identifying key speakers of main community languages and arranging the voice recording of translated messages.

COVID-safety education for men

When St Dominic's Primary School, had to close because of positive COVID-19 cases, the school's Hub Leader, Caroline Menassa, recognised that hub families needed direct access to reliable public health information.

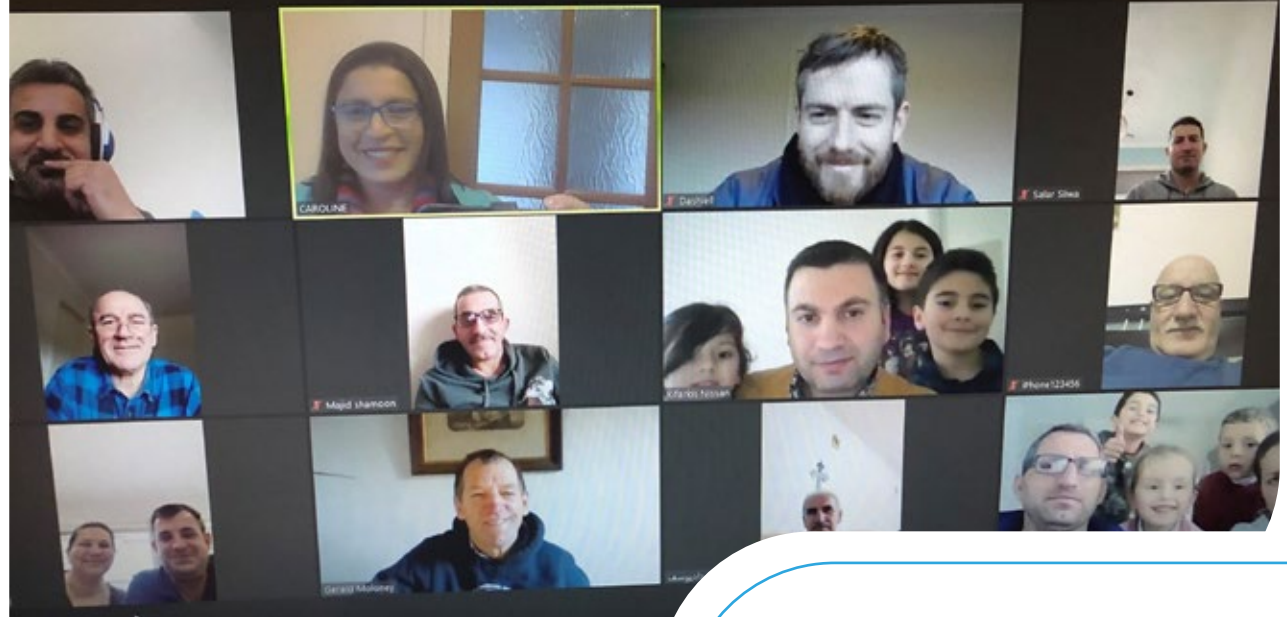


Photo: Members of St Dominic's Primary School Hub's men's group and their families join Hub Leader Caroline Menassa and health experts to learn about COVID-19.

Caroline harnessed the power of video-conferencing to connect members of the hub's men's group with medical experts, so they could ask questions about the virus.

She then partnered with Foundation House and Uniting Vic. Tas to run a weekly online parents' group focused on mental health and how to stay positive during lockdown.

The group also took part in conversational English activities and received further information about COVID-19. Each session was translated into Arabic so everyone received the information in a way they could understand.

“Having the hubs’ consistency of connection and insights was absolutely vital during this time... Hubs are a constant, known and trusted support within the community and without that connection and intel from hub leaders and community members our council and government funded programs would not have been as quick to respond and transition how that support was delivered.”

Julie Andrews, Coordinator Community Capacity Building, Hume City Council, Victoria

Program governance

A cohesive, multi-level governance framework has underpinned the success of the community hubs program model since our partnership with the Australian Government began in 2013.

The framework has evolved as the program has been steadily scaled across Australia, however the proven three-tiered approach remains. It combines high-level strategy and business acumen at national Board level with specialist academic and sectoral expertise in the middle tier, and on-the-ground delivery knowhow in the third tier.

National Community Hubs Governance Framework 2020

Top Level



Community Hubs Australia Board of Directors

Mid Level



National Advisory Committee

The Board has delegated policy development to this Committee.

Ground Level



Local Leadership Groups

Local leadership groups are facilitated by support coordinators from CHA's partner support agencies. The groups comprise school principals, government and key services, provide guidance for the development of hubs in local government areas.

Program funding

The National Community Hubs Program is funded and delivered by a highly effective partnership between philanthropy, all tiers of government and the education and community sectors.

The program is now entering its thirteenth year of operation. Increasing federal and state government investment, combined with consistent year-on-year funding from Scanlon Foundation, has enabled the hubs network to be steadily scaled across four states and hub programs to be significantly expanded. In 2021, the network will be more than three times the size of the original 30 hubs, which opened in 2014.

CHA estimates that, in 2020, the overall program cost close to \$17 million per annum in direct and indirect costs. For every dollar provided by the Australian Government, the hubs program draws another two dollars from other sources, either as direct funding or in-kind.

Governments, host schools and philanthropy provide direct funding for hub operations, staffing and program administration; host schools and community centres provide support with facilities and overheads; partnerships with service providers, corporate and non-profit supporters attract funding and in-kind support for hub programs; and host schools and partner support agencies contribute in-kind management support.

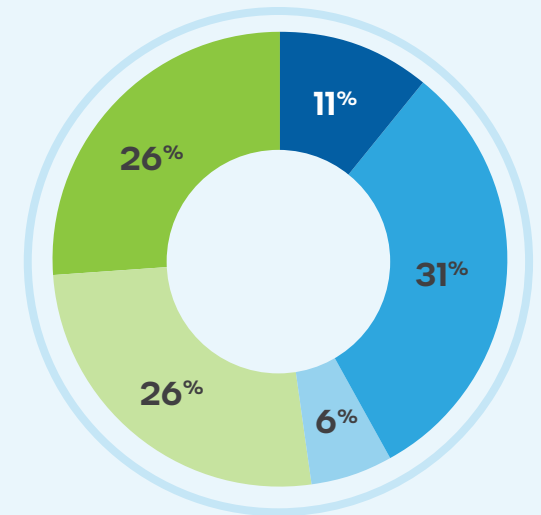
This ability to triple our core operational funding by attracting additional support is one of the program's critical success factors and delivers excellent value for the Australian Government's investment.



For every **\$1** provided by the federal government*

The CHA program draws another **\$2** from other sources, either as direct funding or in-kind.

** In 2020, this was from Department of Home Affairs and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.*



- Scanlon Foundation
- Federal government
- Other government
- Schools
- Services

Our supporters and delivery partners

We wish to acknowledge the ongoing support and contributions of:



Australian Government

Australian Government –
Department of Home Affairs

Australian Government –
Department of Prime
Minister and Cabinet



Queensland Government

Queensland Department of
Education



Supported by
**Government
of South Australia**

Department of Human
Services

South Australian
Department of Human
Services



Victorian Department of
Premier and Cabinet



NSW Government



Scanlon Foundation

Our support agencies

NEW SOUTH WALES

Illawarra Multicultural Services – Wollongong hubs

Liverpool City Council – Liverpool hubs

Settlement Services International –
Western Sydney hubs

QUEENSLAND

Access Community Services – Logan and Ipswich
hubs

Community – Brisbane hubs (opening 2021)

Multicultural Australia – Rockhampton hubs
(opening 2021)

The Smith Family – Townsville hubs (opening 2021)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Lutheran Community Care – Port Adelaide Enfield,
Salisbury and Playford hubs

VICTORIA

Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project –
Shepparton hubs

Hume City Council – Hume hubs

The Smith Family – Brimbank, Greater Dandenong,
Greater Geelong, Wyndham hubs

Delivery partners in NSW



A Start In Life
Ability Links NSW
Act For Kids
Addison Road Community Organisation
Afford
Aldi Mini Roo's
Anglicare
Arab Council Australia
Ask Izzy
Auburn Diversity Services Inc
AusRelief
Australian Early Development Census
Australian Red Cross
Awaken Church Wollongong Central
Bankstown Child and Family Health
Bankstown Community Resource Group Inc
Bankstown Council

Big Fat Smile
Boronia Multicultural Services
Bunnings
Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre
City of Canterbury Bankstown
City of Parramatta Council
Coles
Community Migrant Resource Centre
Communtiy First Step
Creating Links
Cumberland Council
Department of Education & Training
Department of Housing
Department of Human Services NSW
Eat Up
Ermington Library
Ethnic Communities Council of NSW
Fairfield City Council
Fairfield Women's Health Centre
Farm Aid Australia
Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW
Foodbank Australia
GKR Karate
Greenacre Community Centre
Healthy Cities Illawarra
Illawarra Multicultural Services
Illawarra Swim School
Information and Cultural Exchange

Karabi Community Services and Development Inc
Karitane
Kiama Community College
Learning Links
Liverpool City Council
Liverpool Community Hub and Kitchen
Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections
MacArthur Community College
Merrylands Youth Centre
Metro Assist
Mission Australia
Mita Wellness Centre
Mobile Minders
Multicultural Network
National Heart Foundation Australia
NSW Health
Oz Harvest
Parramatta Artist Studios
Parramatta College
Partners in Training
Playgroup NSW
Rotary Club Wollongong
Royal Life Saving Society - NSW
Services NSW
Settlement Services International
Sing and Grow
St George and Sutherland Community College

Sweet Cinnabun
Sydney Community College
SydWest Multicultural Services
TAFE NSW
TAFE Outreach
The One Box
The Salvation Army
The Smith Family
The Song Room
Transcultural Mental Health Centre
Uniting
WeAve Parramatta
Wentworth Library
Woodville Alliance

Delivery partners in QLD



- Access Community Services
- Brisbane Sikh Temple (Gurdwara Sahib)
- CentreLink
- Childrens Health QLD
- Department of Education & Training
- Eat Up
- Ethni
- First Five Forever
- Foodbank Australia
- Gamblers Help
- Griffith University
- Happy Feet
- Head Start
- Helping Hands

- HIPPY
- Kambu
- Logan City Council
- Logan Together
- Oral Health
- Oz Harvest
- PCYC
- Phoenix Learning
- Playgroup Queensland
- Queensland Government
- Queensland Health
- Queensland University of Technology
- ReLink
- Refugee Association of Logan
- Refugee Connect
- Riverview Community Centre
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- TAFE Queensland
- The One Box
- The Smith Family
- The University of Queensland
- West Morton Health
- YMCA
- Zonta International

Delivery partners in SA



- Anglicare
- Australian Early Development Census
- Belgravia Leisure
- Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide
- Catholic Education South Australia
- Communities for Children
- Department of Education South Australia
- Family Zone Ingle Farm
- Foodbank Australia
- Fruitbox
- Kickstart for Kids
- Lutheran Community Care
- Morella Community Centre
- My Time Playgroup
- Playgroups SA

- Port Adelaide Enfield Council
- Raising Literacy Australia
- Save the Children
- SecondBite
- Sing and Grow
- Snake Catchers Adelaide
- The Australian Refugee Association
- The Smith Family
- Uniting Care Wesley Bowden
- University of South Australia
- Victoria University

Delivery partners in VIC



123Read2Me
AB Corporate Fitness
Act For Kids
Active Therapy
Aldi Mini Roo's
Alfred Street Kindergarten
Ambulance Victoria
AMES Australia
Anglicare
Ardoch
Arthur Mawson Children's Centre
Asthma Australia
Australian College of Optometry
Australian Council for Health,
Physical Education and Recreation
Australian Muslim Women's Centre
for Human Rights
Australian Red Cross
Australian Vietnamese Women's
Association
Banksia Community Garden

Barwon Child, Youth and Family
Berry Street
Bethany Community Support
Big Group Hug
Blooming Buckets
Brimbank City Council
Broadmeadows Leisure & Aquatic
Centre
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Bunnings
Careworks
Centre for Multicultural Youth
CentreLink
CoHealth
Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Communities for Children
Country Women's Association
Cultivating Communities
Dallas Neighbourhood House
Dandenong Neighbourhood House
Dental Health Services Victoria
Department of Education and
Training Victoria
Department of Transport Victoria
Diversitat
DPV Health
Duke Street Community House
Eat Up
Family Haven Mooroopna
Foodbank Australia
Foundation House
Geelong City Council

Government House of Victoria
Greater Dandenong Council
Greater Dandenong Library
Greater Shepparton City Council
Greater Shepparton Lighthouse
Project
Helping Hands
Hume City Council
Hume Homestead
Hume Whittlesea Local Learning
and Employment Network
Indiancare
IPC Health
Keysborough Learning Centre
Kickstart for Kids
Kids World Geelong
Korayn Birralelee Family Centre
KS Environmental
La Trobe University
Learning Together
Legal Aid
Lentara Uniting Care
Lifesaving Victoria
MacKillop Family Services
Meadow Heights Education Centre
Melbourne City Football Club
Melbourne City Mission
Migrant Resource Centre
Monash Health Community
Multicultural Centre for Women's
Health
Multicultural Health

National Heart Foundation
of Australia
Norlane West Kindergarten
Northern Community Legal Centre
ParentsNext
Partners in Training
Playgroup Victoria
Positive Partnerships
Primary Care Connect
Reading Out of Poverty
Reclink
River Connect
Royal Automobile Club of Victoria
Safe Steps
Save the Children
SecondBite
Shepparton Sailability
Sheriff's Office Victoria
Sing and Grow
Smiling Mind
South East Community Links
Spectrum
Springvale Learning and Activity
Centre
Springvale Neighbourhood House
St Vincent de Paul Society
Sussex Neighbourhood House
Tenants Victoria
The Achievement Program
The Fruitbox Group

OUR SUPPORTERS AND DELIVERY PARTNERS

Delivery partners in VIC continued...

The One Box
The Pasefika Hub Inc.
The Salvation Army
The Smith Family
The Water Well Project
Uniting Church in Australia
University of Adelaide
VicRoads
VICSEG New Futures
Victoria Police
Victorian Multicultural Commission
Visy Care Learning Centre
WAYSS
West Justice
Wyndham City Library
Wyndham Community Education Centre
Wyndham Park Community Centre
Zonta International

Photo: Hub families enjoy spending time together in a 'Walk and Talk' session at a Victorian hub.



Our hub schools during 2020

NSW

Blacktown

Bert Oldfield Public School
Colyton Public School

Canterbury Bankstown

Banksia Road Public School
Bankstown Public School
Bass Hill Public School
Chester Hill Public School
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Villawood East Public School
Yagoona Public School

Cumberland

Granville Public School
Westmead Public School

Fairfield

Bossley Park Public School
Fairfield West Public School
Prairievale Public School
Smithfield Public School

Liverpool

Heckenberg Public School
Hoxton Park Public School
Marsden Road Public School

Parramatta

Information And Cultural Exchange
Rydalmere Public School
Toongabbie East Public School

Wollongong

Warrawong Public School
Wollongong Public School
Wollongong West Public School

QLD

Ipswich

Fernbrooke State School
Riverview State School
Staines Memorial College
Woodlinks State School

Logan

Marsden State School
St Francis College
St Paul's Primary School
Woodridge North State School
Woodridge State Primary School

SA

Playford

Playford College
St Mary Magdalene's School

Port Adelaide Enfield

Blair Athol North School
St Brigid's Primary School

Salisbury

Karrendi Primary School
Paralowie R-12 School
Para Vista Primary School
Salisbury Primary School
St Augustine's Parish School

VIC

Brimbank

Deer Park North Primary School
Holy Eucharist Primary School
St Albans Heights Primary School
St Albans Primary School
Stevensville Primary School

Casey

Hampton Park Primary School

Dandenong

Dandenong Primary School
Dandenong South Primary School
Dandenong West Primary School
Springvale Rise Primary School
St Anthony's Primary School

Geelong

Bell Park North Primary School
Northern Bay College - Goldsworthy
Northern Bay College - Peacock

Hume

Bethal Primary School
Broadmeadows Valley Primary School
Campbellfield Heights Primary School
Coolaroo South Primary School
Craigieburn South Primary School
Dallas Brooks Primary School
Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School
Holy Child Primary School
Meadow Heights Primary School
Meadows Primary School
Mount Ridley College
Roxburgh Park Primary School
Roxburgh Rise Primary School
St Dominic's Primary School
Sunbury Heights Primary School

Shepparton

Gowrie Street Primary School
St Georges Road Primary School
Wilmot Road Primary School

Wyndham

Truganina South Primary School
Wyndham Park Primary School

● Left at the end of June 2020

● Joined 2020

New hubs opening in 2021

NSW

Blacktown

Kings Langley Public School

Parramatta

Parramatta West Public School

QLD

Brisbane

Acacia Ridge State School

Inala State School

Indooroopilly State School

Watson Road State School

Zillmere State School

Ipswich

Kruger State School

Rockhampton

Waraburra State School

Townsville

Aitkenvale State School

Kelso State School

SA

Playford

Elizabeth Vale Primary School

Pinnacle College - East Elizabeth campus

VIC

Casey

Cranbourne Primary School

Fountain Gate Primary School

Holy Family Primary School

St Therese's Primary School

Wyndham

Davis Creek Primary School

Dohertys Creek P-9 College

Photo: Welcoming our new hubs as they open in 2021. Photo courtesy of Heckenberg Public School, NSW.





T: 03 8614 3430

E: info@communityhubs.org.au

W: www.communityhubs.org.au

“It was beautiful to see all the women’s happy faces at yesterday’s end-of-year celebration. They were laughing, they were dancing, they were just so happy to be there and to be together again.”

Julie Raciti,

Hub Leader, Springvale Rise Primary School, Victoria

Cover image – Created by Amna, hub participant, Bass Hill Public School Hub, NSW.