

NATIONAL COMMUNITY HUBS PROGRAM 2017 YEAR IN REVIEW



WHAT ARE COMMUNITY HUBS?

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

Our hubs operate under the evidence-based National Community Hubs Program (NCHP) and the vast majority are embedded in primary schools. They focus on:

- engaging families in culturally diverse communities
- connecting preschool children into playgroups and preparing them for school
- helping women and children learn and practice English, and
- building pathways to volunteering and employment.

Hubs bridge the gap between migrant families and the wider community. They connect women with the school, with each other and with organisations that can provide education, health and settlement support.

Without a community hub to go to, many of these vulnerable women and children would stay at home and be isolated from the wider community.

Who funds the hubs?

The NCHP is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS), in partnership with the Scanlon Foundation, state and local governments and Community Hubs Australia (CHA).

Local schools and a growing number of private and community sector organisations provide additional financial and in-kind support.

Our program is one of Australia's largest and most effective partnerships between philanthropy, government, and the corporate and community sectors.



"On day one of kindergarten each year, you can easily identify the students and parents who participated in the school readiness program. They are happy, confident, familiar with their surroundings, and already have friends."

– **Lina Mourad**, Hub Leader, Chester Hill Public School Community Hub

"It's nice to know that people you hardly know care so much about you."

– **Hilal Kirmizi**, participant, Kitchen Garden Program

"We've met more people by coming here. Syrian people, Malaysians, Burmese, Africans, Sudanese, Sri Lankan, Indians, Australians – people from the community. It's a big help because we have to talk to them in English, so we are learning English."

– **Tamil Women's Focus Group participants**, Queensland community hub

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

"We are incredibly lucky to be able to run services where no-one is ever turned away because of their visa category, country of birth or how long they have lived in Australia. We will work hard to ensure that we keep that ability."

– **Dr Sonja Hood**, CEO, Community Hubs Australia

"My sense is that if these mums can feel happy and settled, that will help their families feel happy and settled."

The Hon Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria

"The Hubs are good because you can come here, like your house, and the kids can play. I met my very best friend, from Thailand, at this hub. She's amazing."

– **Ethiopian mother**, Queensland community hub



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Opposite: There was a wealth of passion, commitment and experience in one room when the National Community Hubs Program team attended the CHA conference in September.

DELIVERY & IMPACT

2017 SUMMARY

NETWORK GROWTH

63 hubs

based in 3 states:
NSW, Qld & Vic

South Australia
7 to come



55% growth in 12 months



22 new hubs joined
the program



61 host schools



2 host community
centres

Geelong
3 to come

Hume
opened 3 hubs

Western Sydney
welcomed 11
more hubs

Ipswich
opened 5 hubs

Shepparton
3 to come

First regional hubs
announced in
Wollongong
3 now open

Sydney: 23

OPEN

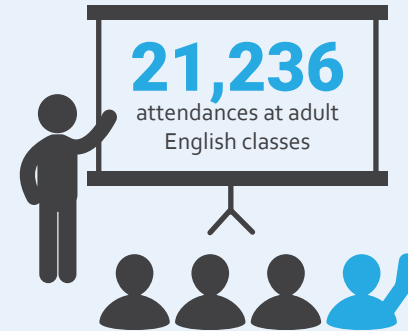
OPEN

OPEN

OPEN

Brisbane: 11

ENGLISH LANGUAGE



(Many of these people have
nowhere else to learn English)



More than 1/3

of adults attending hubs cannot
speak or read English well, if at all

76%

speak a language other than
English at home

Those without English are
significantly less likely to be in
paid employment

PARTICIPATION

Hubs engaged

 **29,386**
families

through in-depth activities,
festivals, and events

8,714
came regularly to hub programs

Adults and children
attended hub activities



358,955
times

Hub families come from



119
nations

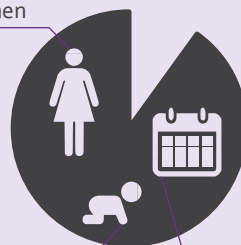


and speak over

80
languages

Over 90%
of hub attendees:

are women



have dependent
children

visit the hub
at least once
a week

PARENT/ADULT ENGAGEMENT

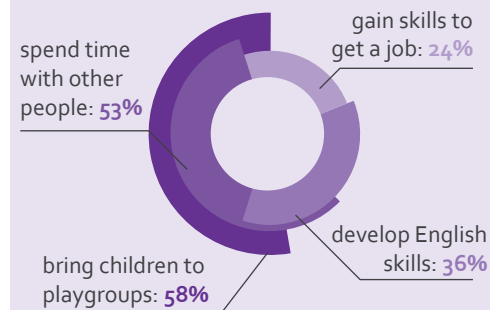


Parents were engaged

74,742

times through hub programs, including
art, craft, cooking, gardening, English
conversation, yoga and Zumba.

Hub attendees selected the main
reasons they visit their hub:



EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS



There were

75,919 attendances

by children at playgroups and early years sessions

Children accessed language and literacy programs

31,313 times



69%

of parents are not taking their preschool children to any services other than the hub

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Only

22%

of hub attendees are in paid employment

Hubs provided

8,068

volunteering opportunities

Hub attendees with post-school qualifications are

3 times more likely

to be in paid work

197 jobs

were found as a result of being connected with a hub

Hubs facilitated

5,604 attendances

at formal training courses and

6,439 attendances

at informal training sessions

HUBS CONNECT PEOPLE WITH SERVICES



8,699

referrals were made to additional services and support (e.g. family support, maternal child health services, preschool and community health services)



Hubs forged

505

partnerships with external organisations and services

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR YEAR



February New NSW community hubs open

Host schools for 11 new community hubs were announced in the western Sydney local government areas (LGAs) of Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland and Fairfield early in Term 1.

The first hubs opened before the end of Term 1, with all hubs established by the end of the year.



February Kitchen Garden Program, Government House Victoria

A group of 20 women from three Melbourne hubs arrived at Government House Victoria to begin the first 8-week Kitchen Garden Program.

By the end of the year, over 70 women from 12 hubs had shared stories, meals and laughs, and made new friends through the program.

February Sydney hubs highly commended

Twelve community hubs in Sydney's western suburbs were highly commended in the 2017 ZEST Awards, which celebrate community, innovation and achievement in Sydney's Greater West.

May Victorian Government funding

The Victorian Government committed \$820,000 over 2 years in the State Budget to fund up to six new regional hubs in Geelong and Shepparton. The hubs will open in 2018.

June Wollongong program underway

Illawarra Multicultural Services joined the community hubs network as the support agency for our first regional hubs. Three Wollongong primary schools were selected to host the hubs, which are due to open at the start of the 2018 school year.

July
Queensland Government funds
hubs through Department of
Education



July
Ipswich and Hume hubs opened

The City of Ipswich in Queensland joined the national program, with five community hubs opening in local primary schools.

And our founding LGA, the City of Hume, commissioned three new early years hubs in local communities, expanding its primary school hubs network to 15.



August
Duck libraries open in Hume hubs

'Duck libraries' for borrowing children's books opened in each of the 12 Hume hubs.

The libraries were made possible with support from Park Royal Melbourne Airport and Telstra's Broadmeadows store. The borrowing libraries reinforce the Hume hubs' resources to support early years development and literacy skills.



September
CHA National Conference

Around 70 members of our national hubs team came together for the first time in over two years at the National Conference on the Gold Coast.



October

Melbourne Art Tram celebrates hubs

A Melbourne tram took to the streets wrapped in an artwork created by St Albans Heights Primary School Hub families.

Their design, which celebrates the diversity of their local community and Melbourne in general, later won the People's Choice Award in the 2017 Melbourne Art Tram Project.

November

Our first hubs Census

Fifty-one hubs across three states participated in our first ever hubs Census.

The findings shed a brighter light on who is attending our hubs and why, so we can improve how we engage with families and design future programs.



December

Federal inquiry endorses hubs

In the final report of the Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes¹, the Australian Government's Joint Standing Committee on Migration described the National Community Hubs Program as 'a very good model of delivering settlement services'.

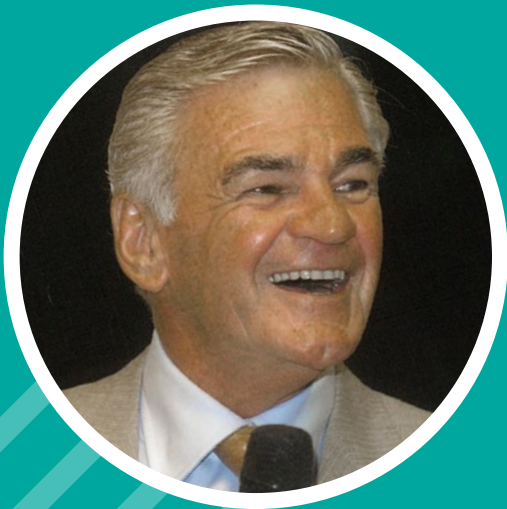
The Committee recommended the federal government provide additional funding to expand the program nationally and increase the flexibility of service delivery.

South Australia here we come!

As the year drew to a close, Lutheran Community Care was appointed as our first support agency in South Australia, in readiness for the commissioning of seven hubs in Port Adelaide Enfield and Salisbury in 2018.



1. Joint Standing Committee on Migration, *No one teaches you to become an Australian: Report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*. Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia. pp 20–23.



FROM OUR CHAIR

When the philanthropic, public and private sectors work together to deliver services to the community, they achieve far greater impact than taking an individual siloed approach.

This is evident in the social and economic benefits of the National Community Hubs Program. Our partnership is improving settlement outcomes for thousands of migrant and refugee families and strengthening social cohesion in many of Australia's most culturally diverse communities. The program is driving lasting change at the neighbourhood level. Our hubs are thriving and helping local communities to thrive. They are also opening up more opportunities for migrant families to participate in the wider community.

I wish to extend my appreciation to our main partner, the Australian Government and its Department of Social Services; as well as the New South Wales, Queensland and Victorian governments; participating municipalities and schools; service partners; and our philanthropic and corporate supporters.

For every dollar invested in the national hubs program by the federal government, we estimate the program attracts another three dollars worth of support from other sources.

Many thanks to the passionate people working in Community Hubs Australia, our support agencies and schools, and all who contributed to making the past year one of the best yet for our hubs and the families they support.

Peter Scanlon AO
President
Community Hubs Australia

FROM OUR CEO

The national community hubs network experienced steady and measured growth in 2017. We are working closely with local councils, schools and support agencies in each location to quickly embed new hubs into their local communities and service ecosystems.

As the number of hubs grows, so does the number of hub leaders and support staff working across our network. We brought the team together for the first time in two years in September for a national conference. The joyful sense of shared purpose and camaraderie among our frontline and national support staff belied the fact that their numbers had almost doubled since the last national gathering.

The hubs continue to have far-reaching impacts on women, children, families, schools and communities. Many hubs are operating at capacity, with continuing high demand for their services. In particular, the hubs' role in helping migrant women to learn and practice English cannot be overstated. This will be a priority for the coming year.

Our first Hubs Census revealed that most families rely on their local hub as the sole source of early years support for their preschool children

and that only one fifth of adults visiting the hubs have paid work. In response, our hubs will continue to strengthen early years programs and offer activities that open up vocational and volunteering pathways for parents.

It was pleasing to see so many third party endorsements for our community hubs delivery model in submissions to the federal government's Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes. We were delighted to read the recommendation in the inquiry's final report, released in December, that our funding be increased to further expand the program across Australia.

I am immensely proud of the quality and commitment of our workforce and delivery partners. The results of their work are evident when I visit our hubs to meet with women and families and hear their stories.

Dr Sonja Hood
Chief Executive Officer
Community Hubs Australia

“Put simply, the hubs model works. Our mission is to keep it working for many years to come.”



HAPPENINGS ACROSS THE HUBS

Nineteen new hub communities

The national community hubs network continued to experience steady growth, with 19 local communities opening primary school-based hubs during the year:

- 11 hubs opened in the western Sydney LGAs of Canterbury Bankstown, Cumberland and Fairfield, taking the total number of hubs in Sydney to 22.
- The City of Ipswich in outer metropolitan Brisbane joined the program, opening five hubs.
- Our founding LGA, the City of Hume in outer north western Melbourne opened three new hubs, taking the total number of early years hubs in that municipality to 15.

South Australian hubs coming soon

The NCHP is poised to expand into a fourth state in 2018, with the anticipated opening of seven hubs in Port Adelaide Enfield and Salisbury.

Lutheran Community Care has been appointed as our South Australian support agency, and expressions of interest will be sought from potential host schools in the nominated communities early in the year.

Community hubs go regional

Three schools were selected to host hubs in Wollongong, NSW, during 2017, marking the national program's first move into a regional centre.

The schools are: Wollongong West Public School, Wollongong Public School and Warrawong Public School. Illawarra Multicultural Services was appointed as our regional support agency.

In 2018, with funding support from the Victorian Government, we will continue our expansion into regional communities with six new hubs planned for the Victorian cities of Geelong and Shepparton.

CHA National Conference

The first national Hubs Conference in more than two years was held on the Gold Coast in September.

Around 70 CHA team members, hub support coordinators, and funding and service partners attended the two-day event. The main goal was to give everyone working and collaborating across the hubs network an opportunity to meet and learn from each other's experiences.



Far left, top and middle: Brimbank community bus tours.
 Bottom left: Bass Hill Public School Hub opening.
 Bottom right: CHA National Conference.

There was a strong sense of being part of a shared vision and a joint commitment to the welfare of local communities. Attendees eagerly shared their knowledge, initiatives and resources.

Accolades from others

Community hubs in Sydney's western suburbs were highly commended in the 2017 ZEST Awards in February.

The 12 hubs were among finalists in the 'Exceptional Community Partnership Across a Region' category of the awards, which celebrate community, innovation and achievement in Sydney's Greater West.

Maureen Leahy, one of our original hub leaders, was awarded the 2017 Robert Kumar Community Award by Banksia Gardens Community Services for her outstanding contribution to the Hume community. Maureen is based at the Meadows Primary School and Early Learning Centre Community Hub and is a tireless role model, mentor and advocate for the families she supports through the hub.



“We don't *have* a community hub – we *are* a community hub.”

Karen Nicholls, Principal, Coolaroo South Primary School, Victoria



Women's Health Conference

Hubs in Greater Dandenong participated in the In Touch Project, aimed at preventing family violence in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. This included delivering a Women's Health Conference attended by 56 women and 53 preschool children.

Conference sessions were delivered by In Touch, Beyond Blue, WHISE (Women's Health in the South East) and the Australian Muslim Women's Association. Topics included anxiety and depression, exercise and nutrition, drumming therapy and dealing with stress.

Childcare and children's activities were provided and the event was delivered with support from volunteers from schools and partner organisations.

Brimbank community bus tours

The five hubs in the City of Brimbank, Victoria, held their first city and local area tours as part of a new Community Orientation Tour Project.

Fifty parents and preschool children participated in the first city tour in May, which included a visit to the Melbourne Multicultural Hub, the Victoria Market, and the National Gallery of Victoria.

For some hub families, it was their first experience of being in Melbourne's CBD.

Preparing children for school

The Chester Hill Public School Community Hub in NSW has chalked up its sixth free annual School Readiness Program.

The program is jointly funded by the school and non-profit organisation, Uniting.

Parents bring their children to early learning sessions at the hub once weekly for a year to prepare them to enter kindergarten. The comprehensive program includes visits from specialists such as speech pathologists, and educational sessions for parents on parenting, supporting children's learning and health.

“At the start of the school year you can easily see which of the new students have been through our School Readiness Program – they're not the ones crying or clinging onto mum; they already have friends to start school with; they're comfortable in the school and are ready to start their formal education.”

– **Lina Mourad**, Hub Leader, Chester Hill Public School Community Hub

Supporting transitions to further study

Many migrant women face multiple barriers to accessing further study. Yagoona Primary School Community Hub worked closely with a local TAFE college during the year to enable 14 women from CALD backgrounds to gain their Certificate III in Education Support (Teacher's Aide).

The hub used TAFE's RUReady English and Maths skills assessment tool to determine the capability levels of each course participant. Tailored support was then provided to help each woman successfully complete the certificate, including extending the 6-month course to one year, providing additional teachers, and holding the classes in the hub during school hours.

Last year's graduates are now pursuing further vocational study, volunteering in their school or seeking paid work as teacher's aides.

Photo by Fiona Basile



OUR IMPACT: WHO USES HUBS & WHY



The first comprehensive survey of community hub participants, the 2017 Hubs Census, was conducted in November. Over 1500 responses were received from adults attending 51 hubs.

The census data is being analysed to improve planning across the network; discussions with host schools, funding bodies and services; and help hub leaders and their support coordinators to better understand their local area participants, tailor activities and reach more families.

CHA and Deloitte Access Economics jointly developed the census survey with support from hub support coordinators and stakeholders. Careful consideration was given to the language and questions used, and to providing options for submitting online or written responses, given the diverse backgrounds of hub families.

The census was supported by a \$50,000 contribution from DSS and will become an annual fixture in the hubs calendar.

2017 Census results: Who visits the hubs?



95% are female



76% are 25–44 years of age



92% have dependent children



60% are Australian citizens



22% are in paid employment



25% don't have a child at either the hub or the school

How often do they visit and why?

93% visit the hub at least once a week

Almost half (48%) hear about the hub through their school / 31% hear about the hub through family or friends

69% of participants said the hub is the only service their preschool child attends

Reasons people visit community hubs:

58%	For child(ren) to participate in playgroup
53%	To spend time with other people
36%	To develop English skills
24%	To gain skills to get a job
18%	Other

What are their language skills?

76% speak a language other than English at home

80 'main languages' were recorded

3 most common languages: **Arabic, Assyrian, Vietnamese**

38% cannot speak English well or at all

35% cannot read English well or at all

Almost **one third** of those who are Australian citizens also have poor or no English skills

Only **22%** had attended English classes outside the hub

What is their education and employment status?

47% have school-level education

5% have had no education

18% have a bachelor degree, 8% a masters degree, and 14% a trade certificate

22% have a **paid** job

Hub adults with a degree/trade qualification are **three times more likely to be in paid work** (e.g. 1 in 3 with post-school qualifications compared with 1 in 9 with school education or no education)

People with post-school education/training are less likely to attend the hub for English skills (e.g. 14% of those with a bachelor degree, compared to almost **one third** of those with only school education).



OUR IMPACT: HOW & WHY HUBS WORK

The findings of two separate research activities were released in 2017, adding to the growing evidence base that underpins the Community Hubs Model and how it is being applied in practice.

Hubs are improving school readiness

The Centre for Community and Child Health at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute conducted a qualitative study into the impacts of four Victorian community hubs on school readiness during 2016. The full research report was released in March 2017.

The concept of 'school readiness' among preschool children incorporates three major components:

1. children's readiness for school
2. schools' readiness for children, and
3. the capacity for families and communities to provide the necessary opportunities, conditions and supports to optimise children's development and learning.¹

¹ Rushton, Sophie et al. *Exploring the impact of Community Hubs on school readiness: Full report*, Version 1.1. Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute/The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, p.2

² Ibid. p.32

Data suggests that children from CALD backgrounds are among the most developmentally vulnerable in the Australian community and that it is important to intervene early before differences in ability gaps become fixed and difficult to close. Any interventions should focus on all three components of school readiness.²

The researchers reported that the four hubs are providing interventions that mean children arrive at school ready to take advantage of the educational and social opportunities available.²

Hubs are having deep impacts

The Smith Family, our support agency in the Victorian LGAs of Greater Dandenong and Brimbank, conducted a feedback survey among Dandenong hub stakeholders. The research confirmed the far-reaching impacts hubs are having in Greater Dandenong, which is Victoria's most diverse LGA, with residents from 151 nations.

Survey participation:

- 56 responses from staff in host schools
- 88 responses from hub participants
- 16 responses from external service agencies





School staff

95% of staff were aware of the hub's activities in the school

70% said the hub had helped improve families' English skills

68% said the hub had improved their relationship with families

64% reported families appeared to be more aware of their child/ children's learning

Hub participants

96% had made new friends through the hub

86% had opportunities to practice their English through the hub

86% had been introduced to new activities

86% knew more about activities that help their child(ren) learn

84% felt more connected to the school

71% knew more about local services for families

49% had attended skills training

Service agencies

94% found that more families are informed about their service in hub communities

94% reported working in partnership with the hub-supported service delivery

75% reported it was easier engaging with families through the hub

69% found an increase in families accessing their service through the hub

“(The hub) provides support for all families in a number of areas with lots of opportunities for preschoolers to become familiar with the school, teachers and friends. It's great for parents to become more confident with socialising, and job skills and parenting skills.”

Survey response from hub participant

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN SYDNEY

The number of schools with community hubs in western Sydney was doubled during 2017 after the program received funding from the DSS and the NSW Government's Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Eleven new hubs opened in the LGAs of Fairfield, Cumberland and Canterbury Bankstown, taking the number of hubs in Sydney's west to 22. The expansion was in response to the increasing number of migrants and refugees arriving in those communities, particularly from Syria and Iraq.

The hubs opened progressively during the year and offered playgroups, cooking classes and craft activities to engage with women and children. The newly appointed hub leaders focused on establishing relationships within their host schools, connecting with local service providers, and getting to know local families and their needs.

Established hubs collaborated with new hubs to offer joint programs, including cultural cooking classes hosted by the Yagoona and Bass Hill Public School hubs, and a vocational training program in floristry offered by St Brendan's Catholic School Community Hub and the new hub at Bankstown Public School.

Some schools held major events to officially open their hub to the community. For example, Bass Hill Public School in Canterbury Bankstown held a whole-of-school event with students across all year levels wearing national dress and performing. Over 80% of students at the school are from CALD families.'

Opposite: Bass Hill Public School's Community Hub opening. Photo courtesy Settlement Services International.

“We have the wholehearted backing of our school principal, who has truly embraced the hub concept. She's been wonderful in supporting and promoting all our hub activities, including our launch event, which really put the hub on the map within our school community and let people know that we're here for everyone.”

– **Francesca Marinos**, Hub Leader, Bass Hill Public School Community Hub, NSW

“The hub provides a warm and welcoming place where I feel supported and valued, and where I am able to build new friendships and skills.”

– **Mother** attending a new hub in Canterbury Bankstown, NSW



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

KITCHEN GARDEN PROGRAM – GOVERNMENT HOUSE VICTORIA

Over 70 migrant and refugee women participated in the inaugural Kitchen Garden Program at Government House.

Each school term, a new group of women visited Government House once a week for eight weeks. They harvested fresh produce from the large 'Peace and Prosperity' Garden, prepared and shared meals, and participated in storytelling, cultural and craft activities.

The program was initiated by Her Excellency the Hon Linda Dessau AC, the Governor of Victoria and her husband Mr Anthony Howard QC, in partnership with Community Hubs Australia.

The women who participated spanned 22 different nationalities and came from 12 community hub schools in the cities of Hume, Brimbank and Dandenong.

The Governor and Mr Howard are personally sponsoring the Kitchen Garden Program to open up the property to a more diverse range of community members and uses. The Governor particularly wanted to support a program for women who have recently moved to Australia.

The program demonstrates the importance of providing opportunities for women to come together in a safe environment, free from family commitments, where they can broaden their social networks, improve their English language skills and build confidence. It was an outstanding success for everyone involved and will continue in 2018.

Opposite: Victorian Governor, The Hon Linda Dessau AC (holding sunflower) and her husband Mr Anthony Howard QC, hosted a formal reception for women from 12 community hubs who participated in the 2017 Government House Kitchen Garden Program. Photo by Fiona Basile.

“There is a communal element to gardening and cooking that brings strangers together. As we eat, we talk, and as the weeks progress we’re no longer strangers but a group of greatly diverse women coming together over gloves, spades and a plate of food in the garden of Government House ...

Our program may have ended, but for each of us this was an experience to remember. Our group plans to catch up; we want to visit each other’s schools and do some activities together. We now have a bigger community with which to share our lives.”

– Hilal Kirmizi, program participant



ACTIVITY SPOTLIGHT:

IPSWICH SWIMMING PROGRAM

Hundreds of adults and children learned potentially life-saving skills through an intensive summer program of swimming lessons offered through the five new Ipswich community hubs.

Many members of Ipswich's CALD community cannot swim. Some come from dry places where creeks only run during dangerous floods, while other residents who were born in refugee camps had never swum before this program.

Local mothers attending the hubs voiced their concerns and asked for swimming lessons for adults and children. Ipswich Council funded the program, which was promoted through the hubs and host schools.

The free lessons began in December 2017 and were immensely popular, with some sessions attracting around 100 participants.



“My brother-in-law drowned in Aqua Lakes so this is close to my family. My kids need to be used to water and learn safety.

It's a brilliant program – it's water safety, getting confidence and also it has a social element. They come together and enjoy themselves.

One of my kids used to be scared getting into the water, but here they are jumping in independently after only two or three lessons!”

– **Abraham**, Ipswich hub father of five children, aged 2–10



ACTIVITY SPOTLIGHT: MELBOURNE ART TRAM PROJECT

Families from St Albans Heights Primary School took their pride in the diversity of their local community to the streets with a winning entry in the 2017 Melbourne Art Trams Project.

The hub families' creative endeavours earned their tram-sized artwork the People's Choice Award and a \$5,000 cash prize.

The school and its community hub cater for families from 38 different cultural backgrounds. The families involved in the Art Trams Project submission chose to create a series of self-portraits that represent their community's diversity of age, gender, cultural heritage and language.

Because this local diversity mirrors the wider Melbourne community, the faces are left blank so the portraits cannot be defined by skin colour and any Melburnian can imagine that they are being depicted on the tram. The portraits, created through a combination of photography, stencil tracing and painting, appear in brightly coloured squares inspired by Andy Warhol's pop art.

The playful and engaging artwork was one of eight finalists chosen to be transferred onto vinyl and wrapped around a Melbourne tram. It began its 6-month journey along Routes 6 and 19 in October.

The hub community is putting part of their prize money towards designing and creating a mural in their school grounds.

Opposite: Members of the St Albans Heights Primary School in front of their winning Art Tram. Photo credit to James HH Morgan, courtesy of Melbourne Festival.

“Winning the People's Choice Award is particularly significant given the meaning behind our tram design. It observes similarities between the school community and the wider Melbourne community – that Melbourne is proudly diverse.”

– Sophie Jamieson, Hub Leader





THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY HUBS PROGRAM

The NCHP operates a network of place-based, family-focused community hubs that leverage existing school infrastructure and government and community services.

Hubs are embedded in primary schools and community centres in neighbourhoods with high migrant and refugee populations and high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage. In particular, hubs focus on reaching and supporting migrant women with preschool children as they are among Australia's most vulnerable and isolated residents.

Each hub has a hub leader who is supported at the LGA level by a support coordinator from a contracted specialist support agency.

The evidence-based Community Hubs Model was developed during an award-winning pilot of early years hubs in the City of Hume in outer Melbourne. The national program was established in 2013.

About Community Hubs Australia

CHA delivers the national hubs program on behalf of our funding partners in government and philanthropy.

We are a non-profit organisation dedicated to improving social cohesion and community connectedness by achieving positive settlement outcomes for Australia's newest residents.

Core program outcomes

The NCHP exists to achieve 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.

To achieve these outcomes, hubs focus on four priority areas where feedback from local communities and independent evaluations indicate we can achieve the greatest impact:

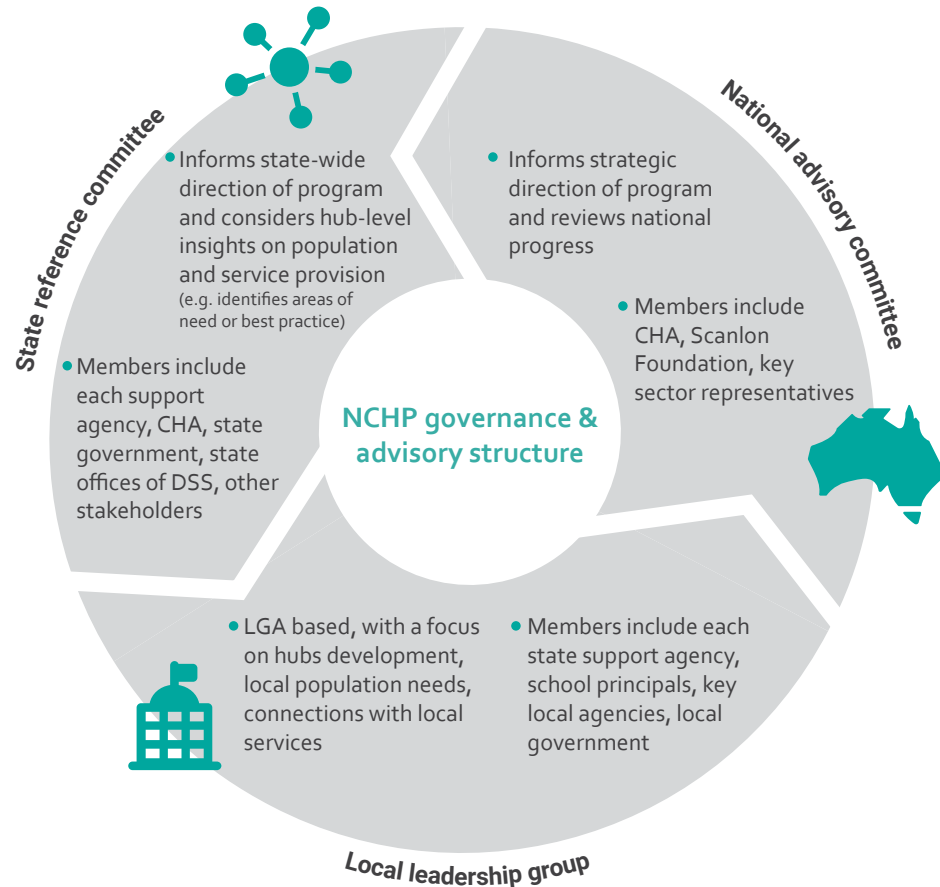
- engaging and connecting families
- preparing children for school
- building English language skills, and
- opening up pathways to volunteering and employment.

We are committed to continually monitoring, evaluating and reporting how the hubs are performing against these intended priorities and outcomes.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

The NCHP is guided by three-tiers of advisory groups.

The three tiers comprise a local leadership group in each hub community, a state reference committee of project partners and stakeholders at the state level, and a national advisory committee of senior representatives from CHA, the Scanlon Foundation and key stakeholders.



PROGRAM FUNDING

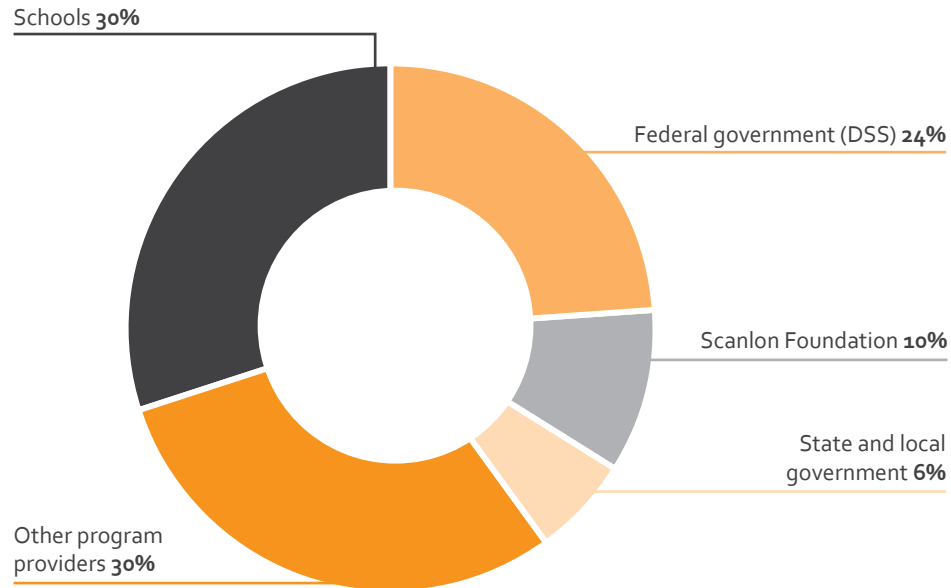
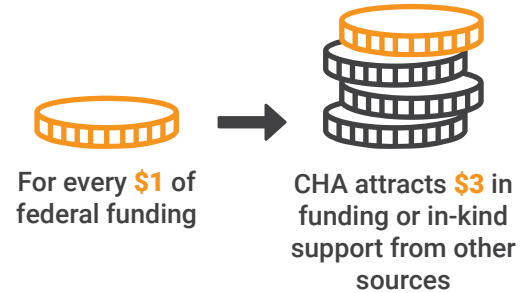
The NCHP is funded, supported and delivered by one of Australia's most effective partnerships between philanthropy, all tiers of government and the community and corporate sectors.

CHA estimates that the full program costs over \$12 million in direct and indirect costs to run across one year. For every dollar provided by the federal government (through DSS), the program draws in another three dollars from other sources, either as direct funding or in kind.

Government, 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 quadruple 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 original investment.

The program's current funding model aims to secure the future of established hubs and build a solid base from which to sustain and grow the network.



THE YEAR AHEAD

Reaching new communities

The reach and impact of the community hubs network will be increased when the national program expands into South Australia and more regional communities during 2018.

Up to 13 new school communities will be welcomed into our network with:

- planning underway for seven hubs to open in the Adelaide metropolitan area later in the year
- three hubs planned in the Victorian regional city of Geelong, and
- three hubs in the pipeline for Shepparton in regional Victoria.

Keeping the original hubs operating

As new hubs continue to open across our network, others are coming to the end of their federal government funding allocation.

Operational funding for our 38 original (Phase 1) hubs expires at the end of June 2018. Keeping these hubs operating is of critical importance to their local communities. We are negotiating with DSS to provide funding to sustain the operations of these original hubs.

Phase 2 hubs, which opened in 2016, are funded until December 2019.

Broadening English language support

Helping migrants, particularly women, to learn and practice English has become a focus for community hubs. Developing English skills is one of the most important motivations for visiting a hub, second only to attending a playgroup.

The demand for English tuition and practice is not only high among newly arrived families; we have women enrolling in classes who have been living in Australia for 20 years and still speak no English.

Hubs recorded over 21,000 attendances at adult English classes during 2017. Unfortunately, some hubs are still not sufficiently resourced to respond to the level of need in their local communities. Expanding the capacity of the network to support families with English will be a focus in the coming year.

Removing barriers to participation

Offering playgroups, English language classes and other programs that align with the needs of each local community is critical to each hub's success.



However, many women find it difficult to attend regular classes and activities, especially if they are caring for young children or don't have access to convenient, affordable transport.

We will continue to find ways to remove barriers to participation in hub programs, such as providing on-site child minding services. For example, Intrapac Property contributed financial support in 2017 to help five Dandenong hubs provide child-minding services and additional structured playgroups. We will seek similar support for other hubs throughout the network.

With less than a quarter of hub attendees in any form of paid employment, we will also investigate how hubs can help to address barriers to migrants entering the workforce.

OUR SUPPORTERS & DELIVERY PARTNERS

We wish to acknowledge the ongoing support and contributions of:

Our funding partners

Australian Government Department of Social Services
Scanlon Foundation
Victorian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet
NSW Government Office of Multicultural Affairs
Queensland Government Department of Education
Queensland Government Department of Health
Hume City Council
Besen Family Foundation
Lentara UnitingCare
KS Environmental Group
Intrapac Property
Dymocks Children's Charities
Park Royal Melbourne Airport
Telstra Broadmeadows Store
Woolworths (Hume Region)

Our support agencies

Access Community Services, Qld
Settlement Services International Ltd, NSW
Illawarra Multicultural Services, NSW
Hume City Council, Vic
The Smith Family, Vic
Lutheran Community Care, SA



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Our schools and community centres

NSW

Blacktown

All Saints of Africa Centre
Bert Oldfield Public School
Blacktown North Public School[^]
Colyton Public School

Canterbury Bankstown

Banksia Road Public School
Bankstown Public School
Bass Hill Public School
Chester Hill Public School
Georges Hall Public School
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
St Brendan's Catholic Primary School
Villawood East Public School
Yagoona Public School

Cumberland

Granville Public School

Fairfield

Bossley Park Public School
Fairfield West Public School
Prarievale Public School
Smithfield Public School

Parramatta

Information and Cultural Exchange Centre
Rydalmere Public School
Westmead Public School
Maronite College of the Holy Trinity
Toongabbie East Public School

Wollongong (hubs opening in February 2018)

Warrawong Public School
Wollongong Public School
Wollongong West Public School

QLD

Ipswich

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

Logan

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

VIC

Brimbank

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

Greater Dandenong

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

Hume

Bethal Primary School
Broadmeadows Valley Primary School
Campbellfield Heights Primary School
Coolaroo South Primary School
Craigieburn South Primary School
Dallas Brooks Community Primary School
Good Samaritan 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

Banyule

Himilo Community Connect

[^] Farewell to Blacktown North PS, which left the network in May 2017 and welcome to the 19 schools that opened hubs during 2017.



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On our cover: 2017 Melbourne Art Tram design by St Albans Heights Primary School. Photo by Aaron Cullen Photography.

