



MID-YEAR UPDATE

2026

National Community Hubs Program



The National Community Hubs Program is a place-based initiative that supports families from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly women with pre-school aged children. Based in primary schools and grounded in four key pillars – engagement, early childhood, English and vocational pathways – community hubs help families build social connections, engage with their school and local community, access learning opportunities and support, and participate in community life.

Midway through 2026, we reflect on some of the stories of impact emerging from our national network of hubs and the important role they continue to play in supporting children, families, schools and communities.



98
active hubs



9,899
families engaged

WHY HUBS MATTER

Everyone that visits and uses the hub is better off.

– Louise Cameron-Venning, hub leader,
Paralowie R-12 School, Salisbury (South Australia)

For many families, settling into a new community can feel overwhelming. Understanding unfamiliar systems, building confidence, making social connections and knowing where to seek support often takes time.

Community hubs help make that journey easier. Through trusted relationships and practical opportunities to participate, families can connect with others, access support, develop new skills, and build a sense of belonging within their local community.

Whether it's attending playgroup, learning and practising English, volunteering, joining in a school event or taking part in a parenting program, every interaction helps strengthen confidence, connection and participation.

Importantly, the impact extends beyond the families who attend. Hubs help strengthen relationships between schools and families, create pathways to local services and contribute to more connected and inclusive communities.

At the heart of every hub are relationships – creating stronger, more connected communities one conversation at a time.

MID-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS



3,480 early childhood activities



468 organisations partnered with hubs



1,137 participants regularly attended English classes*



5,082 referrals made to external services and support



1,005 people volunteered in a hub



229 jobs secured by participants as a direct result of their connection to a hub

To learn more about the impact of community hubs, watch this video from Prairievale Public School in Fairfield, (NSW)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmwJuL7k8Ec>

**Based on regular attendees in CHA-funded English classes in Term 1 and 2, 2026.*

UPDATE FROM OUR CEO

The first half of 2026 has highlighted the important role community hubs continue to play as trusted gateways for children, families, schools and communities across Australia. So far this year, 9,899 families have engaged with a community hub. By meeting families where they are – within primary schools – hubs create safe, welcoming spaces that strengthen connection, participation and belonging, while also helping families access the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

This year, we were pleased to receive continued support from governments across Australia, including further funding from the New South Wales and Queensland Governments.

We also acknowledge the enduring support of the Scanlon Foundation, whose belief in creating opportunities for culturally diverse families in Australia has helped sustain the hubs model for 15 years.

With the support of the Federal Government, we are excited to expand our hubs network in the coming years to include an additional 25 hubs in new areas, including Tasmania and the Northern Territory.



■ Governor-General Sam Mostyn AC attends an official engagement with King Frederik X and Queen Mary of Denmark wearing an outfit featuring artwork created by women from Chester Hill Public School's community hub in Canterbury Bankstown (New South Wales).

One of the highlights of the year was seeing Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC wear an outfit featuring artwork created by women from Chester Hill Public School's community hub in New South Wales during an official engagement with the King and Queen of Denmark. The project brought together women from diverse backgrounds to share stories through their art and clothing design in partnership with The Social Outfit.

Alongside the great connections being made in hubs, we have continued contributing research and evidence to important policy discussions at both a federal and state level, including the Commission of Inquiry into Child Safety's final report handed to the Queensland Government. It was encouraging to see our hubs in Queensland recognised as a model "embedded in local schools, with the aim of connecting families to local services and support tailored to needs of local communities." This recognition reflects what hubs are about.

Thank you for your continued support of community hubs across Australia. Together, we are creating welcoming places where children and families can connect, share and learn – strengthening schools, communities and local organisations along the way.

Bec Kotow

Chief Executive Officer

Community Hubs Australia

STORIES OF IMPACT ACROSS FOUR KEY PROGRAM AREAS

ENGAGEMENT

At its core, engagement in community hubs is about creating opportunities for families to connect – with each other, their child’s school, support and services they need, and with the wider community. Sometimes this happens through everyday conversations over tea and coffee, support completing an enrolment form, joining a school celebration, or learning a new skill together. These small moments of connection help build trust, confidence and a stronger sense of belonging.

In our recent hub participant survey*, most (88%) respondents reported feeling better connected to others because of time spent in a hub, allowing them to benefit from the opportunity to make new friends, learn and practise English together, develop new skills, and join in playgroup with their children. The survey results also told us that just over half (56%) of participants reported being connected

**South Australian Government’s Community Neighbourhood Development Survey, May 2026.*

to other services, such as a speech therapist, migrant settlement support or Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) classes, through the hub. Whether they’re new to the hub or have been coming for years, participants feel better connected to others as well as to services and opportunities because of the trusted and welcoming space that hubs provide.

As part of supporting families, so far this year, hub leaders have made 5,082 referrals to external services. The most common referral categories were emergency aid, community health services and family support. Hubs also worked alongside 468 partner organisations to deliver programs, host workshops and connect families with local opportunities.



■ Parents and caregivers participate in a Cyber Safety workshop at St Brigid’s School community hub in Port Adelaide Enfield (South Australia).

At St Brigid’s School community hub in Port Adelaide Enfield (South Australia) families participated in a Cyber Safety workshop delivered in partnership with Families Growing Together from the Department of Human Services. The workshop provided parents and caregivers with practical information and strategies to help navigate the online world and support children growing up in a digital age.

Topics included online safety, social media, gaming, cyberbullying and positive online behaviour.

The workshop gave families the opportunity to ask questions and build confidence in supporting their children online. One parent said it changed the way they thought about online safety and that they would no longer share photos of their child on social media.

This story highlights how hubs connect families with trusted information and create welcoming spaces where parents can learn from professionals and each other.

The online world is always changing, so we love creating opportunities for parents to feel informed and confident as they support their children online.

– Bonnie Creek, hub leader, St Brigid’s School, Port Adelaide Enfield (South Australia)

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early childhood activities, such as playgroup, play an important role in helping children feel confident, connected and ready to learn.

Across the community hubs network, early childhood activities create welcoming spaces where families can build relationships, access support and participate in their child's learning from the very beginning.



■ A mother and her child talk with a health nurse at a drop-in session at Waraburra State School community hub in Rockhampton (Queensland).

In the first half of 2026, hubs across the network delivered 3,480 early childhood activities in partnership with 132 organisations. These activities included playgroup, story time, kindergarten and prep transition programs as well as language and literacy activities designed to support children's early development and school readiness.

Our Early Childhood survey* conducted in May found that all parents bringing their children to early childhood activities in the hub reported they were happy with the activities, felt supported as a parent/carer, were more involved in their child's care and education or that their child had benefited from hub activities. This highlights the important role hubs play in connecting children to activities that prepare them well for kindergarten and school, and connecting parents to the information and support they need to help their children thrive.

At Waraburra State School community hub in Rockhampton (Queensland), a growing partnership with Child and Family Health Services, Queensland Health is helping more families access support and information during the early years of their child's development. In response to community need, a community health nurse now attends the hub's regular playgroup activities every month, providing families with the opportunity to seek advice and raise concerns about their child's health in a familiar and welcoming environment.

**Early Childhood Survey conducted in Ipswich and Logan hubs and designed in collaboration with the Queensland Department of Education (Early Childhood division), May 2026.*

The informal drop-in sessions have helped attract new families into the hub, many of whom also participate in playgroup and become more connected to the school community. For some families, these conversations have led to early identification of developmental concerns and referrals to additional support services, helping children and families access assistance earlier in their journey.

The partnership has also strengthened links between families, health services and the school community, while creating opportunities for parents to build confidence, connection and trust in local support systems. Together these efforts are helping children arrive at school better prepared and ready to learn.

The children who go from playgroup to our kinder are very much ready for school.

*– Julie Previtera, wellbeing leader,
Holy Child Primary School, Hume (Victoria)*

ENGLISH

English classes delivered in community hubs help participants build confidence, connection and independence in everyday life. Whether through structured classes, conversational learning or informal practice with others in the hub, participants are supported to strengthen their communication skills in a safe and welcoming environment.

In the first half of 2026, hubs delivered 2,858 English classes, with 1,137 participants attending classes regularly*. English classes in the hub are a chance for participants at all levels of English proficiency to build their skills and confidence in a familiar environment. For those participants wanting to do further study, hubs continued to strengthen pathways into more formal English learning opportunities such as the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), reflecting the trusted relationships hub leaders build with families and the important role hubs play in encouraging ongoing learning outside the hub.

English classes delivered through hubs are often designed to support practical, everyday communication skills – helping participants navigate local services, communicate with schools and teachers, build social connections, and take steps toward employment or further study. Some classes also take participants on excursions, giving them the chance to apply their skills in real-world settings, such as applying for a library card or using public transport.

At Craigieburn South Primary School community hub in Hume (Victoria), families are building confidence and connection through the Learning Together Program delivered in partnership with VicSEG New Futures. The weekly classes focus on developing practical conversational English skills while also creating opportunities for parents to connect with each other and their local community.

Delivered within the welcoming environment of the hub, the program supports participants to practise English in real-life situations, navigate local services, and build confidence engaging with schools and early learning settings. While parents attend classes, children are cared for onsite by a childminder, helping families feel more comfortable participating in learning opportunities outside of the home.



■ Participants in the Learning Together Program at Craigieburn South Primary School community hub in Hume (Victoria).

The English classes not only provide participants with language skills but also directly support their children's learning. When parents develop their English proficiency, it strengthens home learning, communication with teachers, and overall engagement in their child's education. These classes can also open meaningful opportunities for future employment and greater independence for families.

– Donna Barrera, Principal at Craigieburn South Primary School, Hume (Victoria)

*Based on regular attendees in CHA-funded English classes in Term 1 and 2, 2026.

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Vocational pathways activities in community hubs help participants build confidence, develop practical skills and explore pathways toward volunteering, further education and employment. For some participants, this begins with volunteering in the hub or school community. For others, it may involve informal workshops, accredited training, or support to take the next step toward work or study.

What starts as a small opportunity to get involved can grow into so much more. We've seen participants build confidence, develop new skills, pursue further education and take meaningful steps towards employment.

- Sharon Ramunno, hub leader,
Sunbury Heights Primary School, Hume (Victoria)

In the first half of 2026, 1,005 people volunteered in a hub, with 229 jobs gained across the network. Hubs also delivered 1,381 vocational training activities and made 549 referrals to education and training providers, helping participants access opportunities to build skills, confidence and independence.

All respondents to our volunteer survey* run in May agreed that volunteering in the hub contributed to their sense of purpose. From helping set up playgroup to reading with children during story time, these everyday contributions helped volunteers feel valued, connected, and part of something meaningful. In this year's survey, almost a third (29%) of respondents cited seeking employment pathways as their primary reason for volunteering, demonstrating that providing the opportunity to volunteer is an important way the hub connects participants into training and employment.

Women from nine hubs across Bankstown and Fairfield (NSW) recently came together at Chester Hill Public School to participate in Women on Wheels – a practical workshop designed to build confidence around car safety, maintenance and road rules. Developed in response to conversations with women in the hub community, the workshop also included childminding and catering to remove barriers to participation.

More than 50 women attended, learning practical skills while building confidence and connecting with others. One participant shared that the experience had "boosted my confidence".

This story reflects the important role community hubs play in listening to local needs and connecting families with practical learning opportunities that strengthen confidence, independence and community participation.



■ Participants take part in a Women on Wheels workshop delivered at Chester Hill Public School in Canterbury Bankstown (New South Wales).

*South Australian Government's Community Neighbourhood Development Survey, May 2026.

BEYOND THE HUB: STRENGTHENING SCHOOLS, COMMUNITIES AND CONNECTIONS

The stories shared throughout this update reflect what community hubs do best: create safe, welcoming spaces where families feel supported to build confidence, connection and belonging. The impact of hubs also extends beyond the women and children who participate directly. Hubs help schools build stronger relationships with families from diverse cultural backgrounds, support children to feel more connected as they transition into education, and create opportunities for local organisations to engage families in trusted and familiar environments. They also strengthen local communities by fostering social connection, participation and support during times of need.

It is these everyday interactions - grounded in trust and community - that show how hubs act as connectors, meeting families where they are and creating opportunities for schools, services and communities to thrive together.

To learn more about the National Community Hubs Program, visit www.communityhubs.org.au



■ Families connect through playgroup activities at Parramatta West Public School community hub in Parramatta (NSW).

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



Acknowledgement of Country

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