

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.

Today, the National Community Hubs Program (NCHP) comprises 92 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.

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 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.

Like to learn more? Please call Hiranthi Perera, Head of Programs on 0401 444 814.

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.

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.