

What are community hubs?

Community hubs build social cohesion in Australia. They are welcoming places where families from diverse backgrounds, particularly mothers with preschool children, come to connect, share and learn.

The community hub model is a proven place-based and people-centred way of building connections and social and economic capital within culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Hubs are embedded in primary schools and help bridge the gap between families and the wider community. They connect families with each other, with their school, and with local services and support.

Families take part in a variety of activities in the hubs, ranging from playgroups and social 'coffee and chat' sessions to learning conversational English and vocational skills. Attending a local hub helps improve participants' confidence, social connection, educational outcomes and employment potential.

The National Community Hubs Program

The program is funded through a partnership between philanthropy (Scanlon Foundation), all tiers of government, and the education and community sectors.

Locating hubs in primary schools makes them safe and easily accessible places for women to visit with their young children.

The primary goal of the program is to improve the social and economic outcomes of migrant families and individuals.

The hubs focus on:

- **Engagement** – helping families connect and engage with their community.
- **Early childhood** – running playgroups and connecting families to local early years activities, to support the learning and development of preschool children, improve children's social skills, build relationships between families and prepare children for school.
- **English** – providing migrants with opportunities to learn and practise English through both formal and informal programs.
- **Vocational pathways** – building pathways to employment by encouraging volunteering and providing adults with access to formal and informal training opportunities.

Each hub is managed by the school in which it is based. Decisions about the way the hub operates and the programs it offers are made at the local level. This flexibility enables each hub leader to develop the space and the program offering to address the needs of their host school and the local community.

Hubs are clustered within local government areas (LGAs). Within each LGA, a local organisation serves as the support agency, providing coordination and connection.

Community Hubs Australia, a non-profit organisation committed to helping improve social cohesion in Australia, is responsible for overseeing the delivery, reporting and continual improvement of the program at the national level.

“I note CHA’s long standing role in delivering the National Community Hubs Program and acknowledge the valuable contributions this program has made to the lives of migrants settling into life in Australia.”

The Hon Andrew Giles MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Summary of hub activity: Term 1 and Term 2, 2023



- **9,426 families** engaged with hubs
- **3,890 referrals** to external support services (e.g. education and training, family support, preschool, and community health services)
- **323 local organisation** partnerships across the hub network



- **97 hubs** delivered early years programs, either place-based, online or offsite
- **591 referrals** to early childhood services, such as preschools
- **23 hubs** ran targeted school-readiness programs
- **103 partners** worked with hubs to deliver early childhood activities and programs such as playgroup, music, literacy, toy libraries and many more



- **89 hubs** delivered English classes, place-based, online or offsite
- **1,021 participants** attended English classes and activities*
- **43 hubs** referred participants to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)
- **93% of English participants** reported an improvement in English competency*
- **58 partners** worked with hubs to deliver conversational and formal English classes

* Based on regular attendees in CHA-funded English classes.



- **224 jobs** were secured by hub participants
- **1,095 people** volunteered in a hub
- **542 referrals** were made to education and training services
- **1,166 informal and formal training sessions** were delivered
- **77 partners** worked with hubs to deliver work-ready skills

Our social impact

In early 2021, Deloitte Access Economics undertook a comprehensive social return on investment (SROI) evaluation of the community hubs network, concluding that it generated almost \$34 million in social benefits to Australian society in 2019. This represents an SROI of 2.2 – a return of \$2.20 for every dollar invested.



The study demonstrates the significant benefits and positive long-term impacts that hubs provide for children, families, schools and communities across all four pillars of the program: engagement, early childhood, English and vocational pathways.

A major finding was the hubs' contribution to improved quality of life of hub participants, which was assessed as returning more than \$20 million in social value. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the overall monetised impact.

Deloitte described the SROI finding as a conservative estimate of the hubs' impact, as it reflects only those benefits that could be reliably monetised at the time of the analysis.

CHA is looking at ways to improve data collection across the network so other benefits, such as providing families with better access to health and support services, can also be measured.

The full report is available on our website: communityhubs.org.au/impact-evidence.

“One of the most remarkable findings for us was how universal the benefits of the hubs were – it didn’t matter how long a hub had been running, or where it was located.”

Luke Condon, Partner,
Deloitte Access Economics

Summary of findings - Deloitte SROI evaluation



Figure 1: National Community Hubs Program SROI evaluation - summary findings

What the network tells us about the program

“The workshop helps strengthen the relationship between parents and teachers as they work together for the child’s learning and education. Teachers learn about the barriers and struggles facing families while parents learn about the curriculum and how to support their children’s education. Parents are also given support in developing daily routines (especially minimising screen time and going to bed early) learn about the importance of healthy eating habits and encouraged to pack a healthier lunch box for their kids.”

Salwa Salem, Meadow Heights Primary School hub leader, Hume, Victoria

Photo: Mother and son learning together in readiness for school at Chester Hill Public School, Canterbury Bankstown, New South Wales.

“Souaad, a new member of the school community, signed up for English classes to develop her language skills, particularly her confidence in using English every day. Souaad is more confident in talking to school staff and no longer needs support from a bilingual staff member. She now independently liaises with her rental property manager, without the support of her children.”

Jordon Keipert, Elizabeth Vale Primary School hub leader, Playford, South Australia

“Some of the ladies had never been in the water before and had a great fear. With encouragement and guidance from the instructors, they were able to push through and go from being scared, anxious, nervous with some in tears, to smiling, singing and dancing in the pool and on the way home.”

Nivek Aoun, Marsden Road Public School hub leader, Liverpool, New South Wales



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