

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 culturally diverse 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, Member for Scullin and Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Who comes to community hubs?

Community hubs are critical for connection. This year, the hub network completed a national census, providing a picture of the people coming to hubs, the programs they attend and the impact of the hub on individuals and their host school. Over 3,000 responses were received providing a snapshot of who comes to hubs and why.

In 2023:



92%
hub participants
are women



77%
aged under 45



79%
speak a language other
than English at home



88% have at least
one dependent child at
home, and 40% have
pre-school aged children.

The main reason people come to hubs:



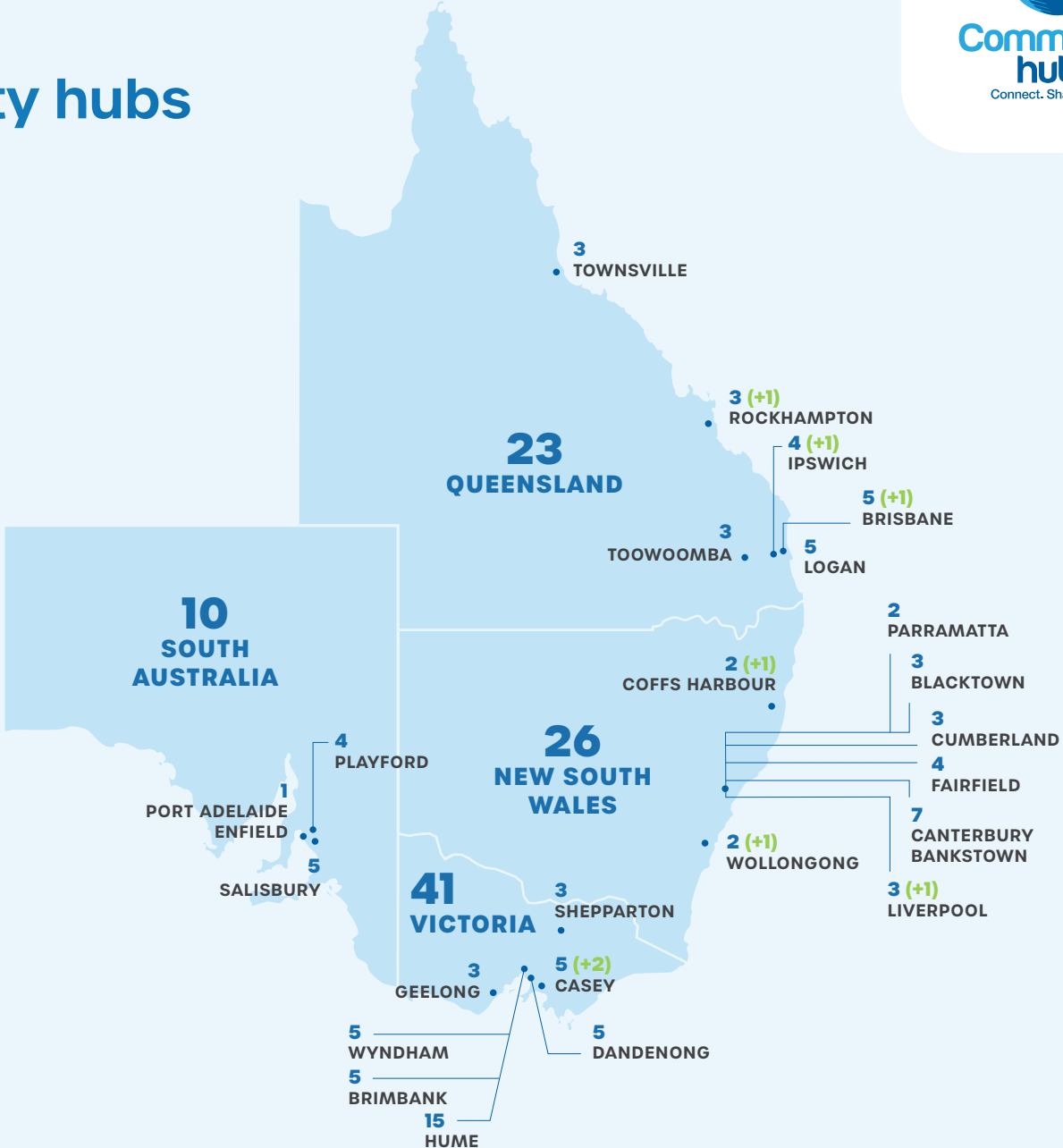
Where to find community hubs

100 active community hubs in 2023

+8 new hubs



Find a community hub in your local region - communityhubs.org.au/hubs



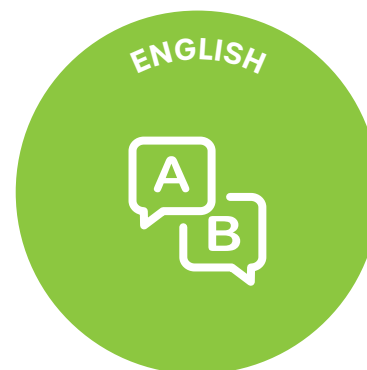
Summary of hub activity 2023



- **14,061 families** engaged with hubs
- **8,952 referrals** to external support services such as family support, education and training, preschool, community health services, and emergency aid
- **489 local organisation** partnerships across the hub network



- **99 hubs** delivered early years programs
- **1,997 referrals** to early childhood services including maternal child health and preschool services
- **64 hubs** ran targeted school-readiness programs
- **151 partners** worked with hubs to deliver early childhood activities and programs



- **92 hubs** offered English classes
- **1,540+ participants** attended English classes and activities*
- **59 hubs** referred participants to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)
- **100 partners** worked with hubs to deliver conversational and formal English classes



- **422 jobs** were secured by hub participants
- **1,799 people** volunteered in a hub
- **1,154 referrals** were made to education and training services
- **2,663 informal and formal training sessions** were delivered
- **134 partners** worked with hubs to deliver work-ready skills

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

Our social impact

In 2023, Deloitte Access Economics undertook a comprehensive social return on investment (SROI) evaluation of the community hubs network, concluding that it generated approximately \$65.7 million in social benefits to Australian society in 2023. This represents an SROI of 3.5 – a return of \$3.50 for every dollar invested.



Deloitte’s evaluation demonstrates the significant benefits and positive long-term impacts for participants across all four pillars of the program – engagement, early childhood, English, and vocational pathways. Major findings of the evaluation included:

- A 1.1% improvement in participants’ quality of life, valued at \$40.9 million
- improved English skills and confidence of participants to engage in society
- improvements in educational outcomes for children, valued at \$7.3 million, and
- economic contribution of hub participants who gained employment (through community hub involvement) of \$17 million.

The evaluation followed the SROI framework developed by Deloitte and CHA in 2021 and was undertaken using quantitative and qualitative evidence to identify the net social benefit of the National Community Hubs Program.

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

“The National Community Hubs Program has continued to generate significant social benefits, not only to culturally diverse families, but to their broader communities leading to a range of positive social outcomes.”

Luke Condon, Partner,
Deloitte Access Economics



Photo: Learning and singing songs together in community hubs in Logan, Queensland.

Summary of findings - Deloitte SROI evaluation 2023



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

What the network tells us about the program

“The artwork reflects a deep connection to the land, community and cultural traditions. It’s wonderful to display such a meaningful representation that celebrates and honours our First Nations People and their contributions to the school and community on the front of our very own Community Hub.”

Jean Barnett, hub leader, Kelso State School, Townsville, Queensland

“Families have grown in confidence and advocacy and can now ask for what they need.”

Alan Smith, Principal, Holy Child Primary School, Hume, Victoria

Photo: Mother and children enjoying playgroup at Wyndam Park Primary School, Wyndam, Victoria.

“The whole school model of having a community hub within the school is very effective. There is a reciprocal relationship of information, participation and collaboration that occurs from this. This lends nicely to the community being able to support one another and increase each other’s capacity.”

David Jenkins, Principal, Westmead Public School, Cumberland, New South Wales

“The sessions are presented in a relaxed, friendly style that includes video clips, activities, discussion and a shared lunch. The ‘Being a Dad’ workshop looks at the special role dads and male caregivers play to support their child’s wellbeing and development. A strong connection and good communication help build a relationship of trust, creating a foundation for positive learning.”

Nina Swinkels, hub leader, Elizabeth Vale Primary School, Playford, South Australia



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Australian Government



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human
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**Queensland
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