



## **EXPLANATORY INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS TO ASSIST IN RESPONDING TO THE ANNOUNCED EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

### **GLOSSARY**

CHA: Community Hubs Australia is the lead agency facilitating the funding relationship between the Commonwealth Government and the support agencies that manage the hubs.

Support agency: Local support agencies (in Wollongong: Illawarra Multicultural Services or IMS) support the host primary schools to run their hubs.

Support coordinator: Employed by the support agency, a dedicated resource to support the hub network.

Host school: Hubs are hosted in primary schools in specific local government areas.

Hub leader: IMS will employ a hub leader for each hub, who will be responsible for managing the programs and referrals of the hub.

New South Wales State Government: A key supporter and partner of the New South Wales Community Hub Network.

### **THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY HUBS PROGRAM**

Community Hubs Australia Incorporated (CHA) works 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 social cohesion.

The National Community Hubs Program is currently based in primary schools in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Hubs engage culturally isolated women and pre-school children, providing a gateway to early education and local services. In addition to engagement activities, hubs offer: playgroups or pre-school (often with an intensive language component); English classes and opportunities to practise the language; vocational training; and a host of other services depending on need (such as referrals to health services, domestic violence support, counselling and more). Independent research has demonstrated that hubs have strongly positive impacts on families, schools, services and communities.

Hubs aim to:

- improve settlement outcomes by engaging with isolated newly arrived mothers
- increase the learning outcomes for children and reduce the strain on the education system
- bolster social cohesion through enhancing the capacity of primary schools to reach out to and fully service new communities
- improve language, literacy and learning outcomes for isolated migrant mothers, and provide early learning activities for their children.

The Federal Government recently announced funding to expand the existing network of 40 hubs, to particularly support those communities likely to be receiving Syrian and/or Iraqi refugees. We are currently seeking expressions of interest from primary schools (state or independent) in the City of Wollongong, NSW.

## **HOW DOES THE NATIONAL PROGRAM WORK?**

Community hubs are supported at three levels: within their local school (by the principal and the school community); within their local government area (by a hubs coordinator, and by the other local hubs); and nationally, by Community Hubs Australia. At the heart of the network is the hub itself. Critically, each hub is different, depending on the needs of its local community, available services, and characteristics of its host school.

Community hubs are mainly based in primary schools (state and independent schools). Although there are two hubs based in community centres, we are not seeking expressions of interest from community centres at this stage.

Each individual hub is managed by a hub leader, for at least 25 hours per week. The hub leader acts as a conduit between the primary school's staff, women and children and their families, other community organisations and key stakeholders, such as local migrant resource networks, to create the best possible interface between families and services. Hub leaders are employed by Settlement Services International and hosted by the hub schools.

In Wollongong, hubs are coordinated by IMS, who will appoint a coordinator to facilitate activities for hub leaders, providing training, facilitated workshops, coaching, and advice on building hub capacity and linking with the local service system around the hub, as well as providing material to support network meetings and quality improvement activities. The hub coordinator will work closely with each school principal.

Community Hubs Australia supports professional development of hub leaders and support agencies, and provides opportunities for support and engagement of principals across the hubs network.

## **BENEFITS FOR SCHOOLS**

A recent evaluation of the hubs program found that having a hub embedded within a primary school led to a number of benefits for both the school and the local community. It showed that the hub enhanced the schools' capacity to have collaborative partnerships with families, and to respond to the needs and aspirations of families.

Principals and school staff also reported that their awareness of, and connections to, early years and other community services has increased as a result of having a hub. Furthermore, most local community service staff and principals reported that as a result of the hub the school and community services were working collaboratively to develop shared plans to work with migrant communities.

## **HUBS FUNDING**

For this round, funding is currently available until the end of 2019.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS**

The following are key to the success of a community hub:

- Your school principal and leadership team must be committed to actively supporting the hub, the broader hubs program and the hub leader.
- Your local community must have a diverse population, and have received (or have a reasonable expectation of receiving) Syrian and Iraqi refugees.
- You must be able to provide a designated space such as a classroom for the exclusive use of the hub. The space must be big enough to run group activities, and be accessible to the community during the day (subject to normal school visitor processes). The hub leader should be able to access other spaces in the school where possible and within reason (e.g. a kitchen, library or hall).
- You must be able to commit to contributing to the hub funding in year 3 (and beyond if the program is extended).
- Your school principal must be committed to attending quarterly principal meetings to be hosted by your local support agency, and to releasing your hub leader to attend regular network meeting and professional development events.

## **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS**

Primary schools within the City of Wollongong are being invited to submit an Expression of Interest to be considered for inclusion in the National Community Hubs Program.

Please go to <https://scanlonfoundation.smartygrants.com.au/NCHP2017Wollongong> to access, complete and submit your Expression of Interest.

The EOI covers such aspects as:

- whether your school meets the compulsory eligibility criteria of:
  - being a primary school
  - having a dedicated space available
  - committing to co-fund the community hub after two years
- whether you commit to attending regular principals' meetings
- your current activities to engage with newly arrived migrant families
- whether you agree to actively advocate for the community hub within your school, and to create an inclusive environment for your hub leader
- the diversity of your school's local community, including whether there is now or likely to be a Syrian or Iraqi population, as well as other refugees, and what are the top three geographic regions represented.

**FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES**

Please email [eo@communityhubs.org.au](mailto:eo@communityhubs.org.au) with the details of your enquiry.