

Insights from The Hive

Overview of our Insights Series

June 2022

*The Insights Series is a collaborative effort
of the Together in 2770 Collective.*



About The Hive

We are one of Australia’s most established and effective place-based collective impact initiatives, with an approach centred in connection with community.

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The Hive has a goal for all children in Mount Druitt to start school well, with equal opportunity to learn, be healthy and participate in quality community life.

Since 2015, we have been embedded in the Mount Druitt community, helping bring community aspirations to life. Our staff live and work in and around the community and are committed to long-term change. The Hive is part of United Way Australia (UWA).

The Hive provides a community backbone that identifies local priorities, collaborates on innovative solutions and advocates for system-wide change.

What we do:

Collaboration and partnership building

- Facilitating collaboration between all stakeholders to drive a shared purpose and “collective impact”
- Capability building with partners
- Convening working groups on early education and health

Planning and innovation

- Management and incubation of on-the-ground delivery projects
- Project and resource planning

Leadership and advocacy

- Advocating for change at a local, state, federal and sector level
- Leading strategy and securing investment

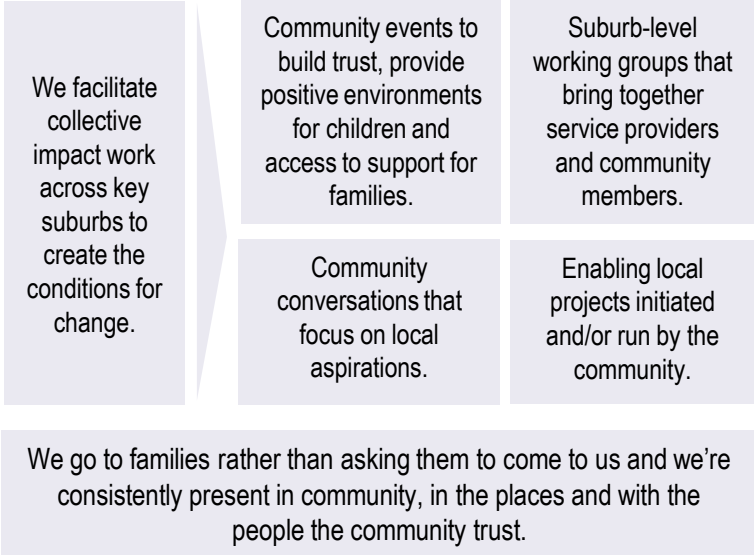
Learning

- Collecting data, commissioning independent evaluations and leading continuous quality improvement

Our approach is centred in our connection with community

Sustained change only happens when communities are empowered, and initiatives are driven by what really matters to people.

Our community development informs and drives all our work.



We have been operating in Mount Druitt since 2015 and have learned a lot along the way. Our new Insights Series will capture what we know and share our insights into the critical steps towards sustainable change.



Working on the ground in Mount Druitt, we hear consistent themes from the community and our partners. They tell us about:

- The barriers they face in accessing child health and early learning services – and what would help overcome them
- The impact that poor public transport networks have on access to the services their children and families need to thrive
- The value of empowering and engaging residents and building community voice
- The barriers to economic security families experience



We want to capture and share what we've learned and contribute to sustainable systemic change. Our Insights Series will:

- Distill our knowledge and insights about what works to increase access to services and help grow empowered families and communities
- Be evidence-based and solutions oriented
- Build a case for system-level change and support real change – so all children in Mount Druitt are supported to start school well

The Hive's Insights Series

An early learning system that makes a difference for Mount Druitt's children and families

- Synthesising the barriers that make it hard for children to access and attend early learning – particularly in culturally diverse communities like Mt Druitt
- Identifying tangible solutions to removing those barriers and what we've learned about improving access and quality

Together in 2770: A Collective approach to community development

- Demonstrating value of empowering residents and growing the voice of communities to transform intergenerational disadvantage
- Unpacking why our approach has been effective – and what it takes to build trust and enable local voices

How Check Ups Before School (CUBS) is helping kids start school well

- Outlining the design of our innovative CUBS program and how it increases the accessibility of health services for children who would otherwise miss out
- Synthesising what we've learned about what makes it effective and what it would take to embed and sustain the approach

Allied health: why it matters and how to break down barriers to access

- Unpacking the causes and consequences of poor access to allied health services – and how those access gaps play out for our community
- Outlining practical strategies to reduce or remove barriers to access and increase the number of children getting the specialist support they need

How improving economic security for families pays dividends

- Exploring the barriers to employment for families in Mount Druitt – and the impact this has on their economic security and children's wellbeing
- Outlining practical ways to get more people into employment.

Released in 2022

Released in 2023

Insights Paper 1: Early Learning

Improving access to quality early learning will make a real difference for our children and families.

We have a shared aspiration for how our families *should* experience the early learning system:



Awareness of early learning

- **Families know and value early learning:** Families are aware of early learning centres and understand the value of early learning. They feel confident and safe to use it.
- **Information about early learning is easily accessible:** Families can easily access information about early learning centres such as how much it costs and the nearest location.



Enrolling in early learning

- **Places are available locally:** There is sufficient supply of high-quality early learning places to meet demand and family/community needs.
- **Enrolment is smooth and trauma informed:** The administration process for enrolment is streamlined, accessible and assistance is available when needed.



Sustaining enrolment in early learning

- **Early learning is affordable:** The cost of early learning is not a barrier to access and bond costs are reasonable and fair.
- **Early learning is accessible:** Families have access to transport to send their children to an early learning centre.
- **Families trust their teachers and educators:** High quality early learning services build trust with families and provide culturally safe and inclusive learning environments in which children thrive.



Currently, families experience barriers at every stage. This contributes to rates of developmental vulnerability that are more than double the national average

And we have clear ideas about how to get there

There are cross-cutting solutions that address multiple barriers



Sustain and scale the use of Linkers to meet levels of need in target communities: Early learning Linkers provide one-on-one support to help children and families experiencing multiple and complex challenges overcome barriers to early learning. They are a proven model that increases access for the children most likely to miss out on early learning.



Resource and equip early learning services to engage with families: Services in communities like ours are often too stretched to build and sustain the kinds of relationships and flexible approaches that we know are most effective at engaging our families and sustaining their participation. We are seeking:

- ✓ A trial increase in equity funding to equip services to invest in specialist family engagement staff.
- ✓ A scoping study on the full cost of delivering quality early childhood education in communities experiencing disadvantage – to inform future funding model development.

... and a number of quick wins that would remove or reduce specific barriers



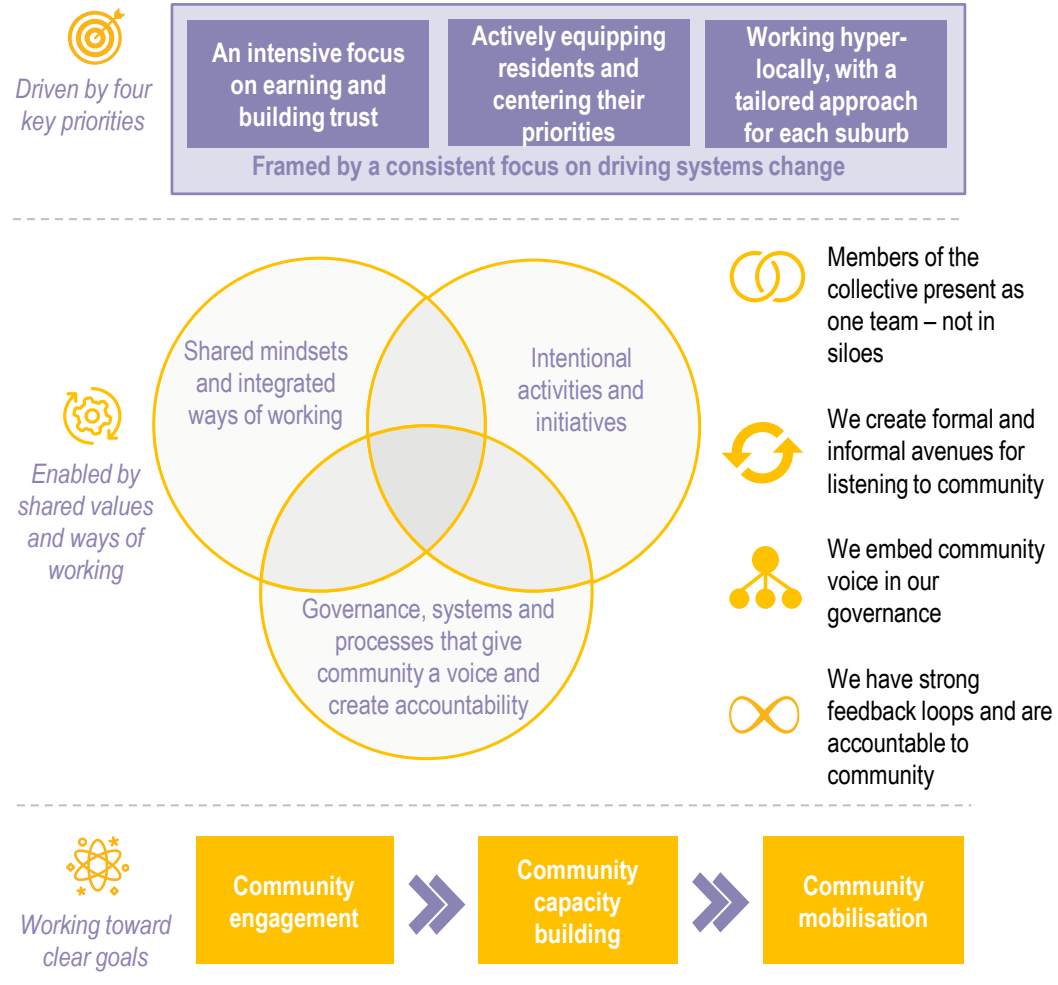
- ✓ Adopt a flexible approach to birth certificate requirements
- ✓ Make subsidies easier to understand and access
- ✓ Ensure all children can access a minimum of two days of early learning
- ✓ Establish equitable bond and enrolment fee policies
- ✓ Develop sensitive and flexible arrears policies and practices
- ✓ Design an effective community transport solution
- ✓ Local councils take up a leadership role in early learning planning and delivery
- ✓ Develop professional learning networks for early childhood leaders, teacher and educators
- ✓ Develop micro-credentials and online training on key issues relevant to early learning in communities experiencing disadvantage

Insights Paper 2: Together in 2770's Collective approach to community development

Our approach to community development allows us to embed local knowledge that is needed to bring change. Community development is important because we see community as a resource; and can build local capacity and mobilise community.

Our approach

Together in 2770 takes a Collective approach to community development. The Hive plays a backbone role to support this approach. The approach is...



Why take we focus on community development

Problems with the current service system are well known and entrenched:

- A fragmented and poorly coordinated system
- A program focus instead of a client focus
- Services that fail to consider a client's family circumstances
- A traditional welfare approach that focuses on crisis support and stabilisation
- A focus on solving problems, rather than anticipating and preventing them*

But we know community are the most powerful agents of change

- Community members are a resource – they are experts in their own lives, they are not 'the problem'
- Local knowledge is needed to bring change and design effective solutions
- Building local capacity and mobilising community is necessary for sustainability
- Building capacity creates opportunities and pathways

These issues further entrench disadvantage.

A community development approach aims to instead create a cycle of empowerment.

Embedding and sustaining our approach

There are critical changes to the way services are commissioned, funded and delivered that would help embed and sustain an effective community development approach:

Ensuring adequate time for community development in -

- Timeframes for grant applications so community has a voice
- Expectations for roll-out, so time for relationship/trust development is built in


Valuing and better leveraging the local knowledge and relationships held by place-based initiatives – particularly to support local adaptation of program design


Outcomes set by community and flexibility to deliver what's needed to achieve them


Insights Paper 3: Check Ups Before School


The Check Ups Before School (CUBS) program has enabled hundreds of children in Mount DrUITT to receive developmental assessments, with the goal of ensuring they start school well.


In Mount DrUITT, there is a high level of unmet need for developmental assessments:

 Developmental assessments are essential tools for ensuring children start school well.

 However, Mount DrUITT families face significant barriers to accessing developmental assessments.

 We also know that children in The Hive's target suburbs are significantly less likely to be developmentally on track by the time they start school.

 The current system has many limitations, and can be challenging for families to navigate.

 As such, we know that there is a high level of unmet need for developmental assessments in the Mount DrUITT community – and a new approach is needed to address this.

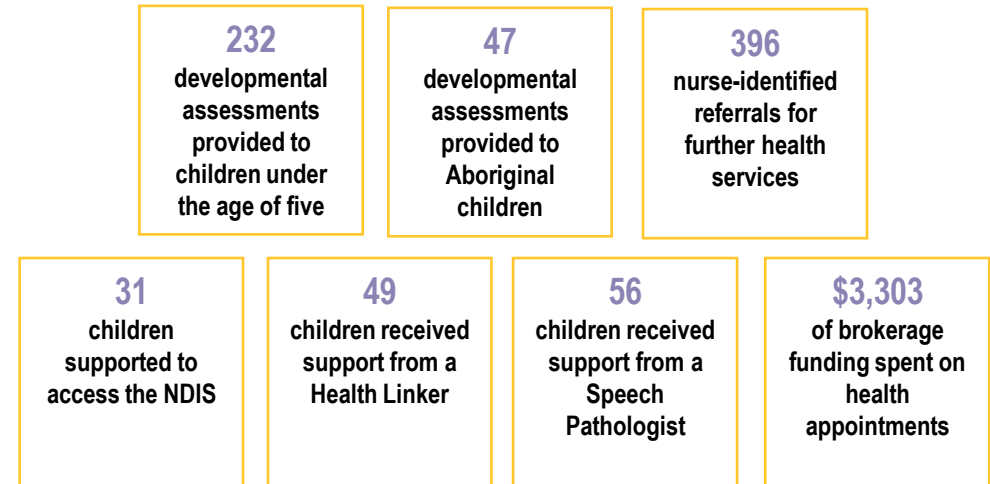
Since 2019, The Hive has been delivering CUBS to address this need:

Key features of the CUBS program:

- ✓ Operating in Mount DrUITT since 2019 as a partnership between The Hive and Western Sydney Local Health District and Priority Populations teams at NSW Health
- ✓ A multi-disciplinary team – consisting of a Nurse, a Speech Pathologist and a Health Linker (social worker) – delivers developmental assessments and associated health supports to enable children to start school well
- ✓ The program is *place-based*, with services provided at early learning and community sites (rather than health centres)
- ✓ Given the needs in the Mount DrUITT community, the program is also designed to be *flexible, collaborative, relational* and *trauma-informed*

The CUBS program has helped hundreds of children in Mount DrUITT to receive developmental assessments and other health supports.

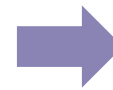
Since 2019, the CUBS program has delivered the following:



The success of the CUBS model in Mount DrUITT since 2019 offers several important opportunities moving forward:



The lessons learned through the delivery of the CUBS program may have application for service providers operating in other communities with high levels of unmet need.



NSW Health has the opportunity to mainstream the principles of the CUBS program into nursing and allied health service delivery in Mount DrUITT (and potentially other communities with high levels of unmet need).