How to Hub Australia

Evidence and advice for policy makers, school leaders and designers involved in schools as community hubs









Building Connections Schools as Community Hubs









Partners



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How to Hub Australia

Introduction, journey map & framework

Is your local school a community hub?

Could it offer more to students, families, and community members as critical neighbourhood infrastructure?

In the next decade, to match population growth, Australia will build hundreds of new schools and extend existing ones.

How can we improve the design of school facilities and extend their use to support stronger communities and better education?

Building Connections

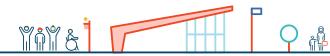
Supported under the Australian Research Council's Linkage Projects funding scheme from 2019-2022, *Building Connections: Schools as Community Hubs* [LP170101050] has advanced understanding of how to design, implement and sustain **schools as community hubs** (SaCH).

A cross-disciplinary research team from architecture, education and urban planning collaborated with partners from government, the design industry, and the education sector to investigate how schools can operate successfully as 'more than a school', creating more resilient and connected communities. The Building Connections team produced *How to Hub Australia*. This easy-to-read resource offers the latest evidence and advice for policymakers, school leaders, and designers involved in SaCH. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Australian Research Council.

Contributors

Contributors were based at The University of Melbourne, unless indicated otherwise.

- Dr Philippa Chandler, Research Fellow
- Rebecca Colless, Research Communications
 Coordinator
- Associate Professor Benjamin Cleveland, Lead Chief Investigator
- Sarah Backhouse, Project Manager
- Associate Professor Ian McShane, Chief Investigator (RMIT University)
- Professor Janet Clinton, Chief Investigator
- Hayley Paproth, PhD Candidate
- Natalie Miles, PhD Candidate
- Carolina Rivera Yevenes, PhD Candidate
- Robert Polglase, PhD Candidate (RMIT University)
- Dr Ruth Aston, Research Fellow
- Associate Professor Clare Newton, Chief Investigator
- Simon LeNepveu, Clarke Hopkins Clarke
- Laurence Robinson, Brand Architects





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How we made this resource

With a broad research agenda, the multidisciplinary Building Connections project employed mixed methods that enabled academics, industry partners, and other stakeholders to contribute their insights and expertise. Based on the following research activities, *How to Hub Australia* draws on perspectives from education, urban planning, architecture, evaluation, human geography, wellbeing sciences and educational facility planning.

International academic literature review

The project began with a literature review to create a bibliography of the most salient publications from around the world.

Case studies and site visits

The project team visited dozens of Australian examples of successful SaCH. These informed the case studies in *How to Hub Australia*.

International Conference

The Schools as Community Hubs International Conference 2020: Building Connections for Community Benefit explored wide-ranging issues relevant to the field of inquiry. 130 delegates from around the world attended. The published <u>conference</u> <u>proceedings</u> informed How To Hub Australia.

Workshops

Three workshops brought together over 70 international experts from schools, industry, government, and academia to identify the opportunities and constraints associated with SaCH. The published <u>workshop reports</u> informed *How To Hub Australia*, particularly the Journey Map and Development Framework.

PhD Research

Four PhD projects funded under Building Connections all informed *How to Hub Australia*. The literature reviews, interviews, focus groups, workshops, impact models, and other fieldwork activities undertaken by Carolina Rivera (lived experiences of schools as community hubs), Hayley Paproth (evaluative thinking and schools as community hubs), Rob Polglase (policy settings for schools as community hubs) and Natalie Miles (schools and social infrastructure networks) and their supervisors all contributed to new understandings.

National Survey of Schools

The <u>Connecting Schools + Communities</u> <u>Survey</u> collected input from 600+ Australian schools on how and why they share their facilities with their community, or why they don't.

SaCH book

The Building Connections team authored and edited the book <u>Schools as Community</u> <u>Hubs: Building 'More than a School' for</u> <u>Community Benefit</u> with chapters by many other Australian and international experts, which have informed How To Hub Australia.

Value-focussed thinking

How to Hub Australia was also informed by a series of workshops with Dr Ruby Lipson-Smith about value-focussed thinking, a structured methodology suited to decisionmaking in complex settings where the needs of many different stakeholder groups must be considered. This helped the research team identify what is fundamentally important when developing, implementing, and sustaining schools as community hubs.

The SaCH journey

While each hub is uniquely shaped by the school's context and culture, our research has identified common choices and actions that help schools as community hubs survive and thrive (or falter) as represented in our **Journey Map for SaCH** (overleaf).

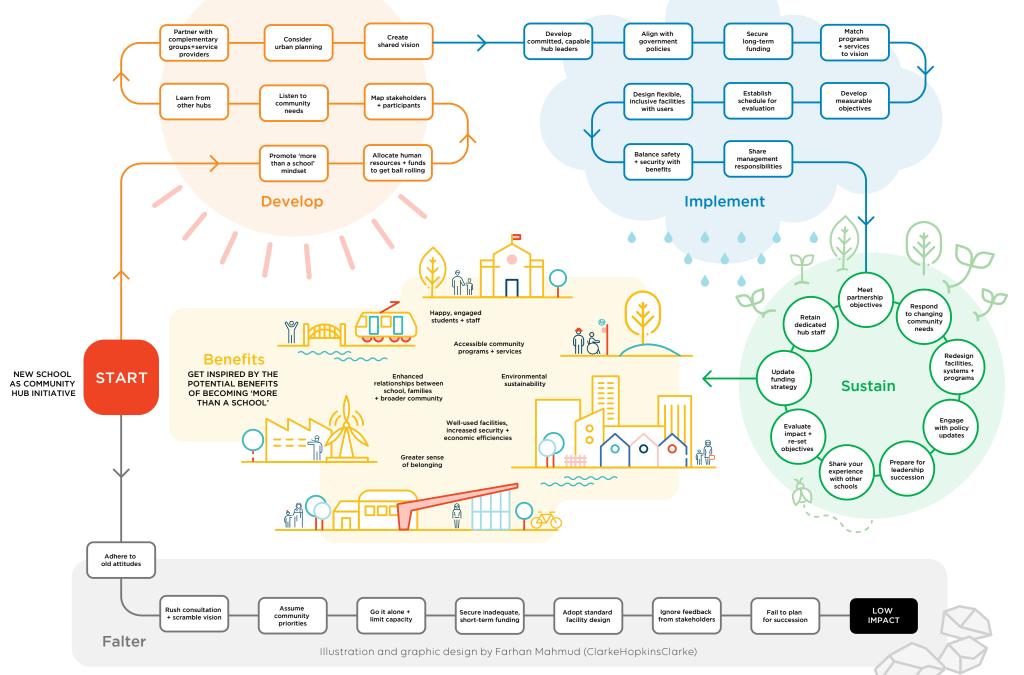
The benefits of a successful hub are shown at the centre of the map, to inspire new starters, or reinvigorate seasoned travellers. The path to low impact should be avoided. The ideal hub journey involves three phases: **Develop, Implement** and **Sustain**.

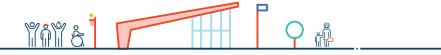
How to Hub Australia: A journey map for schools as community hubs

Click here for a larger version: https://doi.org/10.26188/19669710

Building Connections

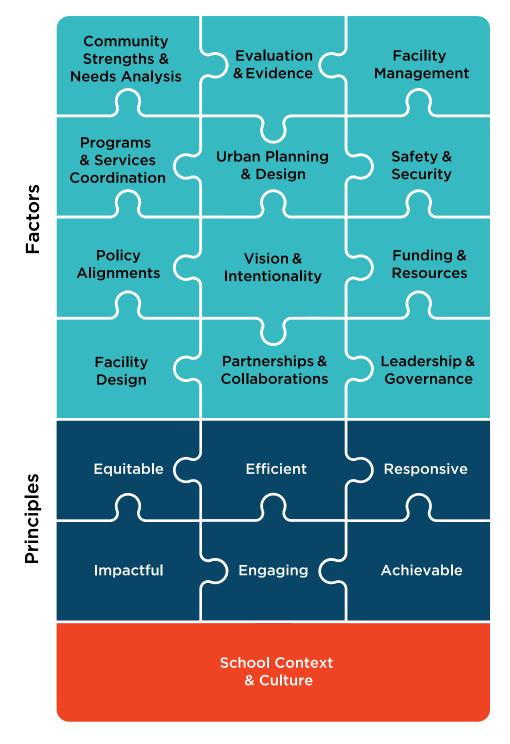
Schools as Community Hubs





How to Hub Australia:

A development framework for schools as community hubs



See explanatory text overleaf.

Cleveland, B., Backhouse, S., Chandler, P., Colless, R., McShane, I., Clinton, J.M., Aston, R., Miles, N., Paproth, H., Polglase, R., Rivera-Yevenes, C. & Lipson-Smith, R. (2022). *How to Hub Australia Framework*. University of Melbourne. <u>https://doi.org/10.26188/19100381</u>. <u>v5</u>

Elaborated in Cleveland, B. (2023) <u>A Framework for Building Schools as Community Hubs: If It Were Simpler Would It Happen</u> <u>Everywhere?</u> In B. Cleveland, S. Backhouse, P. Chandler, I. McShane, C. Newton & J. Clinton (Eds.), Schools as Community Hubs: Building 'More than a School' for Community Benefit. Springer Nature.

Graphic design by Farhan Mahmud (ClarkeHopkinsClarke).

Development framework for schools as community hubs (SaCH)

School context & culture

The success of a SaCH depends on responding appropriately to its unique socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural situation.

Principles

Six overarching principles should shape SaCH initiatives:

Engaging

Maximising stakeholder engagement is critical to fostering initial interest, connection, and long-term contributions to hub operations. Developing and sustaining partnerships that promote a sense of ownership and belonging is foundational to ongoing success.

Achievable

Maximising the feasibility of SaCH initiatives requires diligence, with a view to the future. Hub initiatives and activities should be tangible, attainable, and based on a clear vision.

Equitable

Maximising access to hub activities, programs and services means providing equitable and inclusive opportunities supporting education, health, and wellbeing.

Efficient

Maximising the efficient use of hub resources means ensuring outcomes are assessed relative to the emotional investment, funding, labour, and spatial assets contributed. If intended investments or outcomes change, so should assessment of efficiency.

Responsive

Maximising alignments between hub offerings and community strengths and needs is essential when initiating new hub projects. Adapting hub models to new locations requires close attention to local needs. Responding to changing contexts, such as demographic shifts, should keep hub activities, programs, and services relevant.

Impactful

Maximising the positive and lasting impacts of SaCH depends on regular patronage. This requires attention to the quality and longterm sustainability of activities, programs, services, and facilities.

Factors

Twelve factors guide the development of successful SaCH. Each factor is explored in a *How to Hub Australia* advice sheet, linked below.

- Community strengths & needs analysis
- Evaluation & evidence
- Partnerships & collaborations
- Vision & intentionality
- Urban planning & design
- Facility design
- <u>Safety & security</u>
- Leadership & governance
- Policy alignments
- Funding & resources
- Programs & services coordination
- Facility management