

Neighbourhood Centres Queensland

2023 Sector Impact Report

Key data and insights from the largest
Queensland-wide census of the
Neighbourhood Centre sector.





Neighbourhood Centres Queensland acknowledges the
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional
custodians of Country; we pay our respects to their
Elders, Ancestors, land and seas.

Sovereignty has never been ceded.

It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

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info@ncq.org.au
www.ncq.org.au

Abstract

Key data and insights from the largest Queensland-wide
census of the Neighbourhood Centre sector.

Data Collection and Analysis

Chris Mundy

Designed by

Melanie Maher and Tet Kelly

Edited by

Melanie Maher and Sally Foreman

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Foreword

This year's Sector Impact Report comes at a time when Neighbourhood Centres across the state are responding to community members experiencing crisis. Rising inflation, global instability, workforce and housing shortages are impacting individuals and households.

Many Queensland communities have also recently faced simultaneous or cascading disasters such as bushfire, floods, severe storms. For those impacted by recent weather events, additional daily stresses associated with the cost of living, recovery efforts and displacement have led to compounding and exacerbated impacts and many people have been left vulnerable. These issues have disproportionately affected First Nations communities, with some communities in the far north having their entire townships decimated from Cyclone Jasper.

These ongoing challenges emphasise the vital importance of the place-based, community-led work of Neighbourhood Centres. Across Queensland's vast landscape, these organisations are building on community assets and addressing local expressions of emerging social challenges. They offer support, services, and referral pathways for those in need and work towards reducing social vulnerability through building community resilience to future threats. They offer frontline supports during the cost of living crisis through extensive emergency relief and financial resilience programs and honour the voice of lived experience for those seeking housing. They respond to the complex issues associated with youth crime by crafting tailor-made local programs whilst simultaneously supporting victims and promoting community safety. Additionally, their extensive community activities reduce social isolation and loneliness and increases health and wellbeing, reducing the burden on the health system.

As this report demonstrates, Queenslanders are seeking Neighbourhood Centres now more than ever. Together, Neighbourhood Centres in Queensland supported over 2.4million visitors in 2023, reflecting a steady and significant increase from 1.6million in 2021. This report also demonstrates the exceptional return on

investment that Neighbourhood Centres offer -- for every \$1 invested by the Queensland Government, the sector produces \$4.09 in Community Value.

This remarkable impact has been achieved through the combined efforts of 155 Neighbourhood Centres, of which 128 which receive Neighbourhood Centre Program funding, and 27 who do not.

This report captures the impact of the sector during a time of change and sector reform. The work of the Strategic Repositioning Committee is now complete, and as of December 2023 the sector has a new Shared Vision it holds with the Queensland Government and Neighbourhood Centres Queensland (NCQ).

Despite an uplift in Neighbourhood Centre Program funding in 2022, this report shows adequate resourcing and recognition remain crucial issues for the sector, as rising populations and increasing social challenges increase demand on each Centre. The argument for funding of new Neighbourhood Centres for communities who are currently without has also become increasingly obvious.

Overall, the 2023 Sector Impact Report demonstrates the incredible contribution of Neighbourhood Centres to creating equitable, inclusive and regenerative communities.

I'd like to wholeheartedly thank all Neighbourhood Centres for their tireless commitment. I'd also like to acknowledge the 102 Neighbourhood Centres who were involved in the Sector Impact Census for 2023, without whose time and effort this report would not be possible.

Warm Regards,



Chris Mundy

Interim Chief Executive Officer,
Neighbourhood Centres Queensland

Together, Neighbourhood Centres
in Queensland supported over

2.4 Million Visitors

in one year alone.

This was achieved through:

155



Neighbourhood Centres

Of which 128 receive NC Program funding from Qld Gov, and 27 do not receive this funding

1,547



Staff Members

Working a total of 1.64million hours over the year

2,454



Volunteers each week

Working a total of 727,850 hours over the year. Worth over \$37.6m

\$258,680



Median Funding Per Centre*

Calculation based only on the *128 Centres who receive NC Program funding

805



Funding Applications

to maintain operations

1,598



Community Projects Run

Over the year, and supported 917 Community Projects run by others

Making an Impact

For every **\$1** invested by the Queensland Government,
the sector produced **\$4.09** in Community Value.

Food Relief



1,285tne

Equating to \$25.8 million in Community Value

Frozen Meals



162,042

Equating to \$1.6 million in Community Value

Non-Food Emergency Relief



\$3.85m

Equating to \$3.85 million in Community Value

Programmed Activity Participants



1,193,350

Equating to \$39.6 million in Community Value

Referrals to Other Services



299,800

In one year alone

Social Enterprises



\$2.78m

Worth of income, as well as \$10.28 million income from fee-for-service activities

Reference: Mundy, C. (2023) Neighbourhood Centres Queensland 2023 Sector Impact Report. Neighbourhood Centres Queensland. To download the full report, visit ncq.org.au.

Introduction

i. Background and Purpose

Since the release of the first NCQ Sector Impact Report in 2020, Neighbourhood Centres (Centres) across Queensland (Qld) are being ever more widely recognised as crucial social infrastructure which provides local community-led responses to social isolation and loneliness, disaster response and recovery, and financial hardship. The issues addressed by Neighbourhood Centres are almost limitless, as each adapts and responds to the emerging needs of the local communities in which they are embedded. Centres offer belonging, support, and refuge to all people. They provide universal and ongoing support, regardless of age, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, gender, or circumstance.

Purpose and value of the Sector Impact Report

The Sector Impact Report captures data and insights from the largest Queensland-wide census of the Neighbourhood Centre sector, providing a comprehensive and reliable source of information that is not captured anywhere else. The Sector Impact Report is valuable for Neighbourhood Centres individually and collectively, as well as for local, state and federal governments, partner organisations, funding bodies, researchers and communities.

Because the sector is community-led and place-based, Neighbourhood Centres are reliant on expanding their partnerships to leverage both financial and non-financial resources to carry out their work. Data collection and evidence captured through the NCQ Annual Sector Census is an integral part of recording and demonstrating value, workforce needs, social impact and demographic reach into the future. The findings from this census inform the NCQ Sector Impact Report.

The Neighbourhood Centres Queensland 2023 Sector Impact Report (Sector Impact Report) indicates that Centres are growing in reach, capacity, and number. As the recognition of our sector increases, NCQ has been approached by numerous community leaders and organisations who are either operating an unfunded

Neighbourhood Centre, or, are wanting to establish a new Neighbourhood Centre in their community. Six additional Centres have been identified this year, bringing the total number of Centres across Queensland to 155. Numerous Centres have expanded to operate across multiple sites and many more Centres have been identified as being in various stages of early development and growth.

Now in its fourth year of publication, the Sector Impact Report has gathered extensive data, enabling us to analyse, understand and reveal trends, changes, trajectories and challenges in the sector (and community) over a four-year period. This includes the ability to track the impacts of disasters and other traumatic events, the COVID-19 pandemic, cost-of-living and housing crisis, and the Neighbourhood Centre sector funding uplift.

Each year, the Sector Impact Report highlights the depth and diversity of Neighbourhood Centres' work, their reach into communities and the benefits of place-based community-led initiatives. The process of producing the Sector Impact Report has itself been a sector building exercise, as Centres have improved their data collection and reporting techniques for the purposes of impact measurement. This report is intended to be a mechanism which Centres across the state can now use to communicate the value of their work amidst a wide range of local challenges.

A pivotal year for the sector in Queensland

The 2023 Sector Impact Report occurs at a pivotal time for the sector after a significant funding uplift in the 2022-2023 financial year (FY) and the refinement of policy and frameworks. A rearrangement of Qld Government departments also took place, resulting in the separation of the Department of Housing, and the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships combine with the Department of Communities and the Arts (DTATSIPCA).

Two key documents developed during the period were:

Neighbourhood Centres: Our shared vision for a

vibrant Neighbourhood Centre system in Queensland¹ (Shared Vision) launched by DTATSIPCA in collaboration with NCQ and the sector.

Neighbourhood Centres Initiative Guideline, Specifications and Requirements².

Through an innovative co-design process, the Strategic Repositioning Committee formed a new agreed purpose, program logic, investment and reporting framework for Neighbourhood Centre funding which was integrated in new Neighbourhood Centre Program contracts after the period. This is the biggest reform for Centres in Qld's history. NCQ is working with DTATSIPCA to support the sector to implement these reforms, including the formation of data collection processes that complements, rather than duplicates, the Sector Impact Report data so all stakeholders may gain a robust understanding of the work Centres across the state undertake, including those unfunded Neighbourhood Centre sites.

New data collected

This year's 2023 Sector Impact Report is the first to collect new data on digital assistance, self-help groups, and fee-for-service activities.

This year's 2023 Sector Impact Report is also the first to explore the nature of First Nations engagement through Neighbourhood Centres. The 2022-2023FY saw the furthering of the Pathway to Treaty in Qld and the national Voice Referendum. The role of Centre's in engaging with First Nations peoples and Traditional Custodians of the lands on which they operate is highlighted in the new Shared Vision for Neighbourhood Centres³. This Sector Impact Report presents data on current First Nations engagement by the sector and highlights opportunities for further development.

National Neighbourhood Centre context

As NCQ further develops our Sector Impact Report and conducts this evaluation work, we are conscious of its wider implications to Neighbourhood Centres,

Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres across Australia. The Sector Impact Report was developed with the support of Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) which has been conducting a comprehensive annual census of their 400 Centres since 2012. Through NCQ and NHVic's participation in the national peak body, the Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Network (ANHCA), our respective methods are being shared with more than 1,000 Neighbourhood Centres across Australia as a way to demonstrate impact at a federal level. In the future, census and survey data consolidation will play a key role in demonstrating the reach, impact, and depth of Neighbourhood Centres across Australia.

Key Terms in this Report

ANHCA The national peak body for the sector, Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association

Centres refers to Neighbourhood Centres

DCHDE refers to Department of Communities, Housing and the Digital Economy

DTATSIPCA refers to Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts

Funded Centres refers to Neighbourhood Centres who receive Neighbourhood Centre Program funding from Qld government

NCs refers to Neighbourhood Centres

NCQ refers to Neighbourhood Centres Queensland, the peak body for Queensland's Neighbourhood Centres

NHVic refers to Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, the peak body for Victorian Neighbourhood Houses

Unfunded Centres refers to Neighbourhood Centres who do not receive Neighbourhood Centre Program funding from Qld government

ii. Methodology

The data period for this fourth annual NCQ Sector Census in Qld was the financial year of 2022-2023. Data was mostly collected from the May-June quarter of 2023. This particular period was selected as it is consistent with the same time period that data was collected in 2022 and 2021, enabling accurate data comparison between each year. Weekly and monthly statistics were gathered from Centres depending on activity type.

The census consisted of 36 questions about the core characteristics of Centres, such as governance, services, locations, participants, resourcing, emergency relief (ER), partnerships, workforce, community engagement and volunteers. The census was distributed to the primary contact email address of each Centre on NCQ's database via Salesforce and SurveyVista integrated IT platforms.

Data was gathered through the census as well as the Qld Government's Open Data Portal, directly from DTATSIPCA and Australian Charities and Non-Profits Commission (ACNC).

'Community values' are calculated using data obtained through the census. We use the term 'community value' because the valuations incorporate a range of methods depending on the available evidence. These include methods such as social return on investment (SROI), return on investment (ROI) and replacement cost. All valuations are conservative and based on existing research⁴ by reputable organisations using widely used and/or well documented methods together with benchmarked market values for replacement cost valuations. Community value calculation and extrapolation methods are outlined in the **Appendix A and B**.

Census participants are also issued an individual community value report based on their Centre's data for 2022-2023.

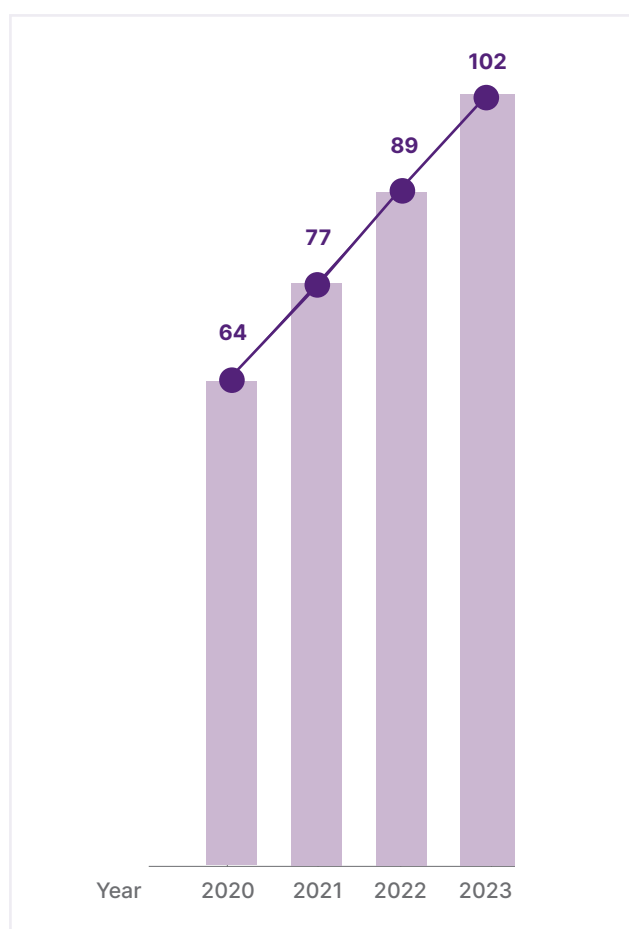
In the 2022-2023 State Budget, the Qld Government announced an increase in base funding for funded Centres across the state to \$230,000 per Centre.

This uplift in funding was applied in late 2022. It is highlighted that this census and the data used within occurred during the commencement of the funding uplift. All data included in this report and the attached Community Value on Investment calculation reflect funding levels for the 2022-2023 financial year.

Note that rounding of totals are typically used throughout this report when commenting on relevant datasets.

FIGURE 1

Number of Neighbourhood Centres who completed the Annual Sector Impact Census each year, 2020 to 2023



1. Scope and Reach

1.1 Number of Centres

NCQ has identified 155 Neighbourhood Centres in Qld. This is an increase of six Centres from the year prior, five of which are operating without Neighbourhood Centre Program funding from state government, and one new funded Centre at Yarrabilba. These newly identified Centres provide a community focal point, and a range of community development and social inclusion opportunities, activities, and services.

During the 2022-2023FY, 128 Centres received funding from DTATSIPCA while 27 other Centres operated without any core Neighbourhood Centre Program funding. Unfunded Centres now comprise of 17% of the Neighbourhood Centre sector in Qld.

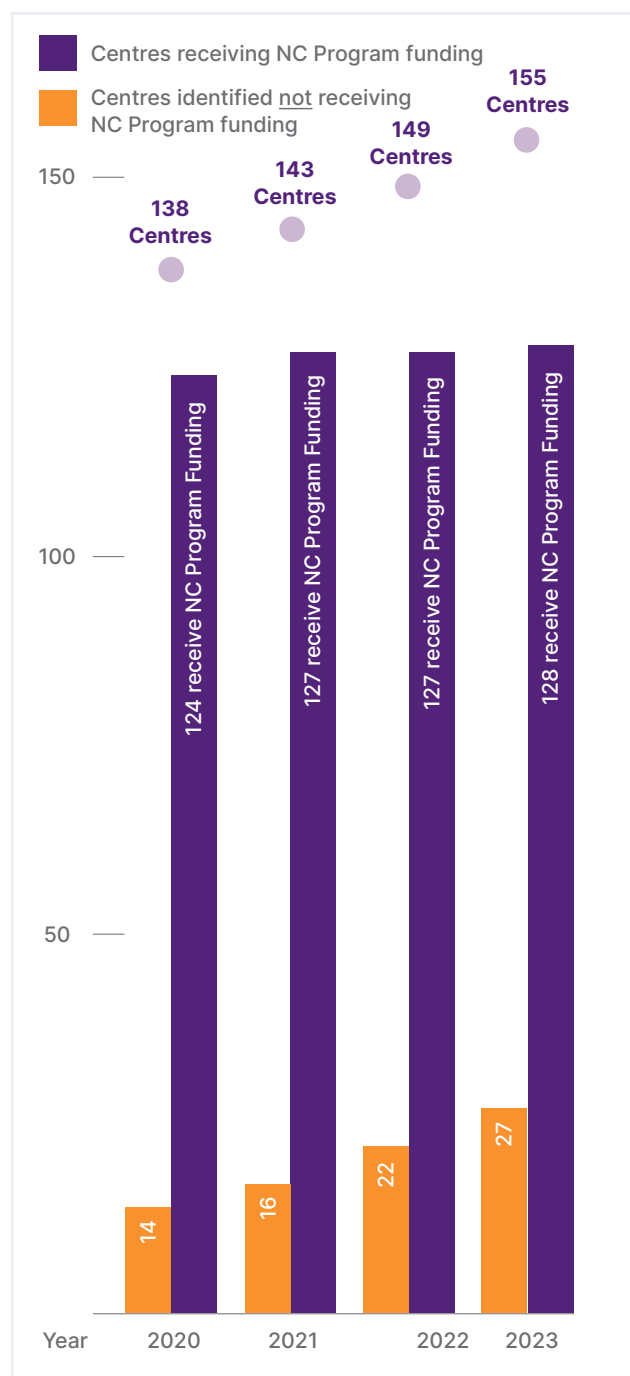
Of the funded Centres, 15 operate a second, third or fourth site within in their general catchment area. While further sites are not funded by DTATSIPCA, they are supported using DTATSIPCA Neighbourhood Centre Program funding from the primary site and have not been counted as additional Centres. This is explained in further detail below. The actual number of overall Neighbourhood Centre sites therefore is expected to be 181.

NCQ is also aware of several locations where the community is actively working towards establishing their own Centre. In addition to these community-led initiatives, there are Community centres that have been established in greenfield developments which receive some funding from other sources. While these Community centres are limited to community activities, there is potential for them to develop into NCs and may be included in future censuses. A mapping project of unfunded NCs across Qld would yield more accurate information on the size of the unfunded sector and identify sites for future funding and development.

A total of 102 Centres participated in the 2022-2023FY census, representing 66% of the entire sector. This included 73% of DTATSIPCA funded NCs (94 participants) and 8 unfunded NCs. NC participant numbers based on community type and associated data extrapolation techniques are expanded upon in **Appendix A**.

FIGURE 2

Number of Neighbourhood Centres from 2020 to 2023, both those receiving and not receiving NC Program Funding



From 2020 to 2023, the number of Neighbourhood Centres receiving Neighbourhood Centre Program funding has increased by 4 Centres.

TABLE 1

The 27 unfunded Neighbourhood Centres identified for the purposes of calculation

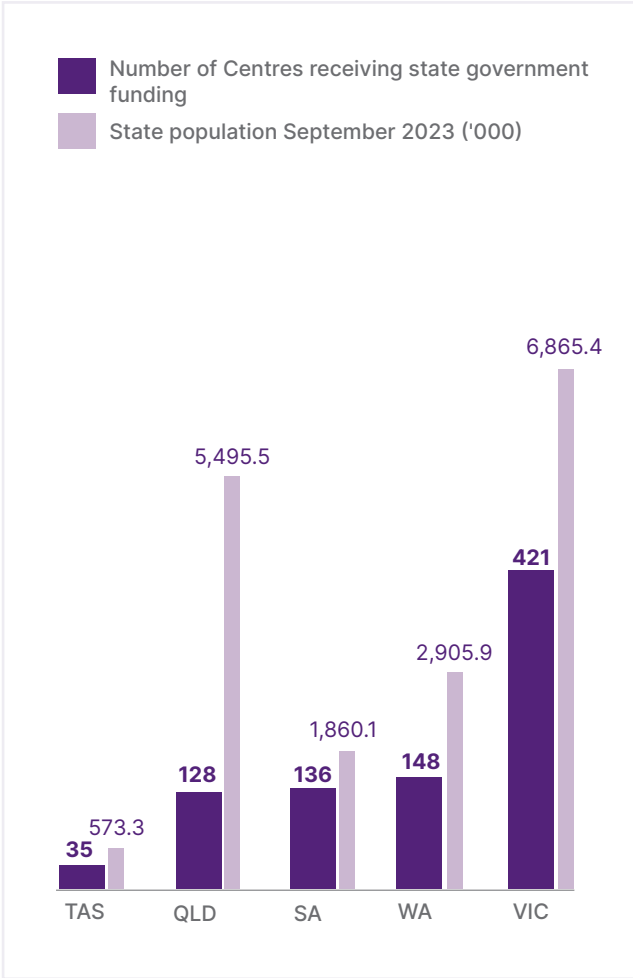
ADRA Community Centre
Babinda Taskforce
Balmoral Uniting Community Centre
Bethania Community Centre
Bulimba Community Centre*
Burrum Heads Neighbourhood Centre
Camira Springfield Community Centre
Clermont Community Housing and Other Services
Dalby Family Support
Dimbulah Community Centre
Donald Simpson Centre
Eagleby Community Centre*
Flagstone Community Centre
Glasshouse Mountains Neighbourhood Centre
Jeays Street Community Centre
Kin Kin Community House*
Logan Village Community Centre
Loganlea Community Centre
Mooloolah Community Centre
Morris House, Landsborough
Northshore Community Centre
Open Hands Community Care*
Oxenford & Coomera Community Youth Centre
Rainbow Beach Community Centre
Redbank Plains Community Centre
YMCA Springfield Central Community Centre*
YMCA Springfield Lakes Community Centre

*Newly identified Centres in 2023.

Queensland has less state government funded Neighbourhood Centres than any other state in Australia, with the exception of Tasmania.* Queensland has 128 Centres who received Neighbourhood Centre Program funding from state government in 2022-2023FY, while the state has a population of 5,495,500. This equates to 1 Centre per 209,543 people.

FIGURE 3

Number of Neighbourhood Centres receiving state government funding in Australian States in 2022-2023FY



*300 Centres in NSW are supported by diverse state government funding arrangements..

1.2 Geographic Spread

Neighbourhood Centres are located across Qld, from Thursday Island to Stanthorpe spanning over 2250kms. Qld is the only state in Australia located adjacent to the Torres Strait Islands and because of such, has a unique connection with Torres Strait Islander traditional custodians.

While 155 Neighbourhood Centres have been identified as fitting the criteria for the census, 15 Centres indicated they operate from more than one location. These 'hub and spoke' models utilise Neighbourhood Centre Program funding from the Qld Government to operate external hubs from a central organisation. In high population areas these Centres tend to operate only one external hub whereas Centres located in remote towns can operate up to four hub sites in neighbouring small communities. Considering these extra sites, it is estimated that Centres are operating in 181 locations around the state. This figure does not include the many halls that Neighbourhood Centres are often contracted to hire to

external groups on behalf of local councils, or further outreach to external locations.

NCQ and its networks provide support to community-based initiatives that are keen to establish a Neighbourhood Centre using participatory development methods. In some cases, community-based organisations are ready to immediately open a Centre with additional financial resources, whilst in other areas key community leaders are identified to form an initial steering committee. The establishment of new Centre sites, with or without Qld Government funding, requires community readiness, along with developmental work to ensure the Centre is embedded in the locality and promotes community ownership.

In 2023, a new Centre in Rockhampton was under construction by the Qld Government for procurement in 2024.

FIGURE 4

Geographic Spread of the 155 Neighbourhood Centres across Queensland in 2023

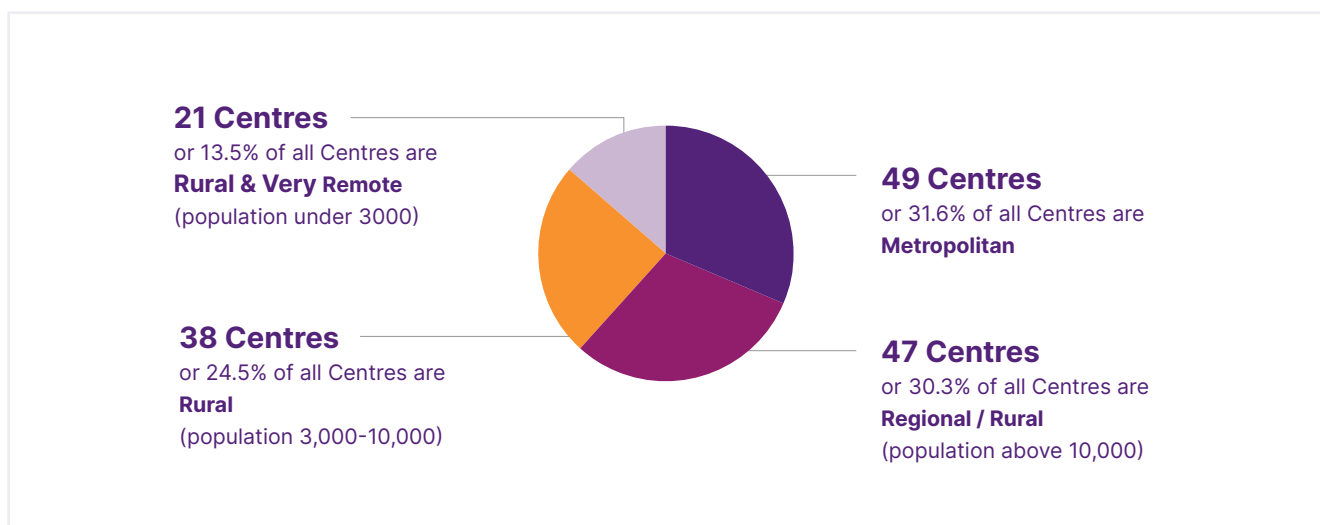


FIGURE 5

Map of Queensland with location of 155 Neighbourhood Centres Identified in 2023

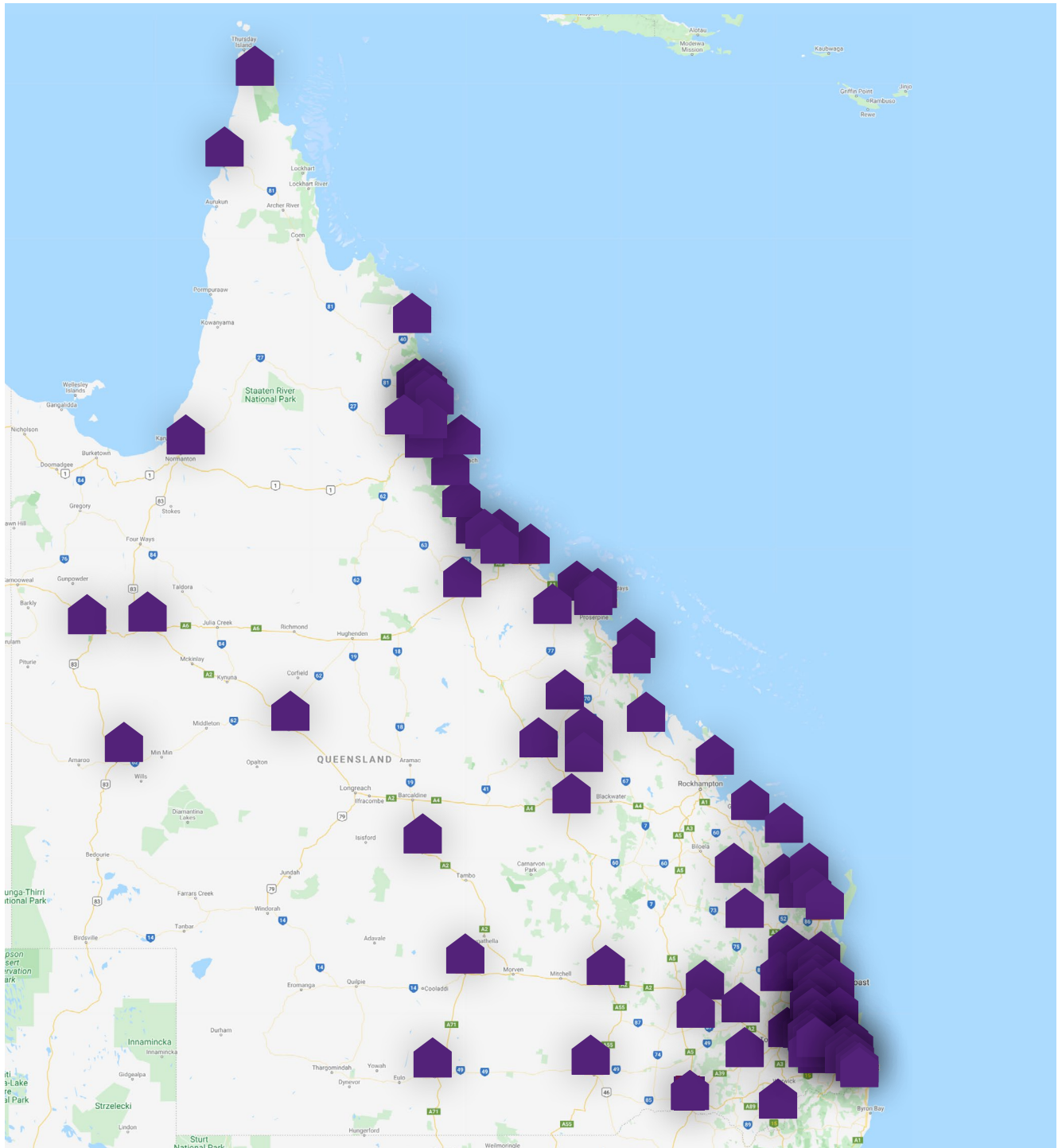
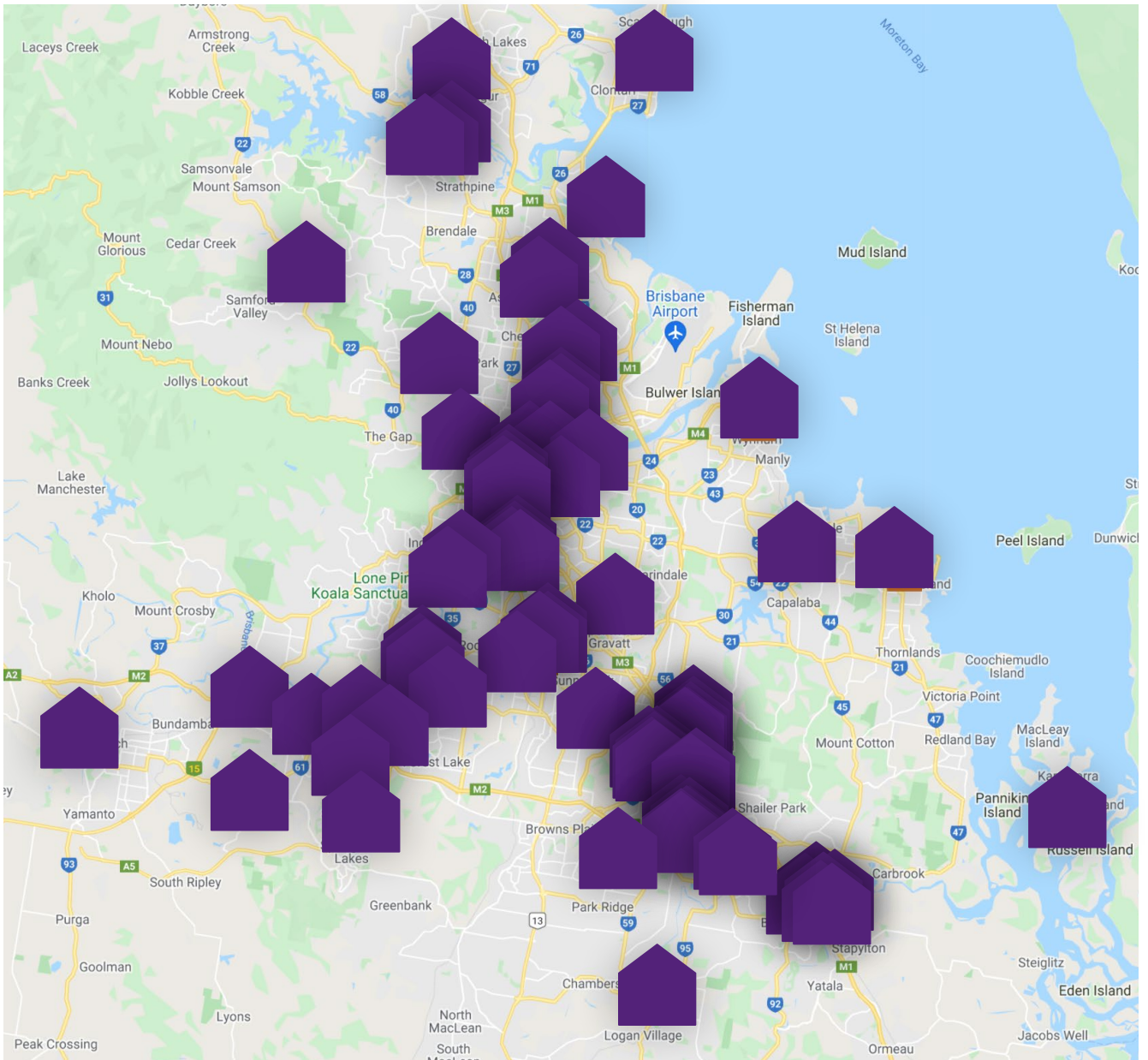


FIGURE 6

Map of South-East Queensland with Neighbourhood Centres Identified in 2023



1.3 Community Reach and Participation

Neighbourhood Centres have experienced a 16% increase in people using Centres for general purposes from 2022 to 2023.

Centres were asked to provide weekly figures of people using the Centre in the second quarter of 2023, including programmed activity participation and referrals. Medians were calculated for each population demographic and extrapolated to the entire sector of 155 Centres weekly and annually. Using data obtained from previous censuses, NCQ have been able to provide a four-year snapshot of community participation in Centres in the state. The results are recorded in **Table 2** below.

Extrapolated to yearly attendance, the sector saw the average number of users per Centre increase to 352 people per week over the year compared to 313 in 2022. Centres saw a decrease in users during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the number has risen over the past two years to an extrapolated 2.4million visitors in 2023. Metropolitan sites are now responding to a median of 356 people per week, 235 in large regional areas, 161 in smaller rural and regional locations and 200 in very small rural and remote locations with populations under 3,000 people.

After 3 years of relative stability, the weekly number of people attending programmed activities in NC's has greatly increased since the 2021-2022FY by over 4,500

people to an estimated 23,855 per week. Extrapolated to a yearly amount, 1.19 million participants attended activities for the 2022-2023FY. An average of 184 people participated in programmed activities per week in each Centre (median number 95).

Referrals to other services by the sector have also increased to a median of 5,996 referrals per week (299,800 per year) in 2022-2023FY, up from 5,203 per week (260,150 per year) in 2021-2022FY.

Overall, these datasets highlight that there has been an increase in people visiting Centres, an increase in programmed activities and an increase in referrals across Centres. At meetings between NCQ and Centre networks in 2023, Centres reported a dramatic increase in community members experiencing cost of living and housing issues. While only a small number of Centres are formally funded to deliver specialised housing support services, the lack of referral options often means community members affected by housing issues visit Centres to seek assistance. In addition to housing issues, increased cost of living pressures means that Centres are providing large amounts of ER as detailed later in this report. The funding uplift delivered to Centres in the last quarter of 2022 has greatly increased Centres' capacity to respond to increased demand in community need during this difficult period.

TABLE 2

Extrapolated Weekly Community Participation in Neighbourhood Centres from 2019 to 2023

	2019	2021	2022	2023
Participants attending Centres	35,245	32,157	41,676	48,462
Participants in Programmed Activities	19, 616	19,122	19,343	23,855
Participant Referrals to Other Services	Not Collected	5,798	5,203	5,996

However, there has also been significant increase in community members participating in programmed activities to its highest level in four years. NCQ meetings with Neighbourhood Centre networks indicate that many Centres used the funding uplift to employ community engagement and development workers. Extra staffing in Centres has led to increased community activities and therefore further community participation.

Another factor which has likely contributed to the findings, is the impact of widespread flooding events in early 2022 across Southeast Qld. Centres in the region played a key role in responding to these events with some designated as Recovery Hubs stood up by DTATSIPCA's Community Recovery, resulting in increased traffic at those locations. Following these events, a disaster related Service Navigator program was implemented in 11 Centre locations to assist affected community members with access to grants programs, building programs and other practical assistance. Centres were also involved in responding to bushfires and the Wieambilla shooting event. It is apparent that an increase in disasters and other traumatic events leads to an increase in Centre user numbers in affected regions.

Using the same methodology employed by Deloitte Access Economics in its Social Return of Investment Study of Morwell Neighbourhood House in Victoria⁵, the estimated social value of participation in Neighbourhood Centre programmed activities across Qld is \$39,651,186. See **Appendix B** for these social value calculations.

FIGURE 7

Median Number of people visiting each Neighbourhood Centre per week in 2022-2023FY

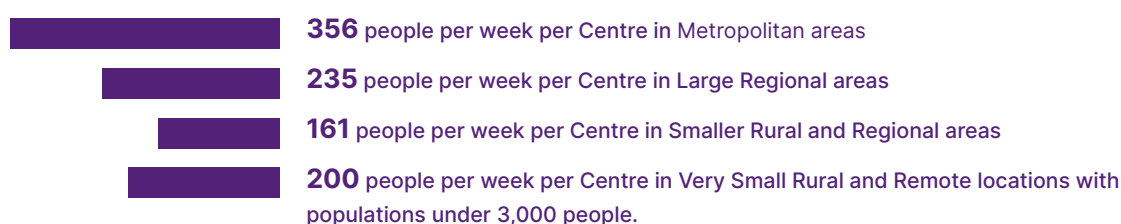


FIGURE 8

Number of Participants in Programmed Activities at Neighbourhood Centres each week, from 2021 to 2023

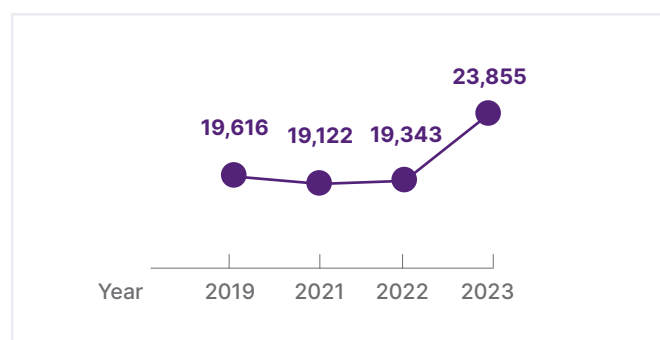
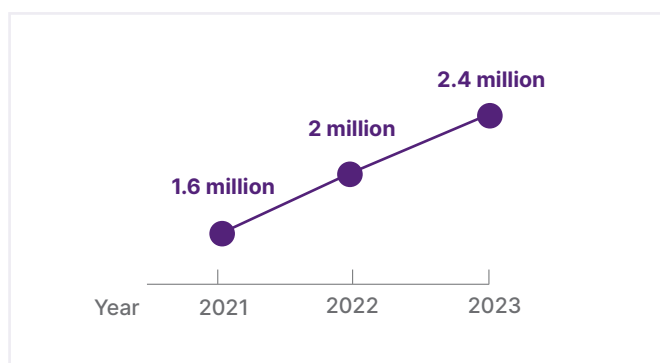


FIGURE 9

Total number of visitors to Neighbourhood Centres in Qld each year, from 2021 to 2023



2. Individual Impact

2.1 Services Provided by Neighbourhood Centres

Building on baseline data obtained from 2020 to 2022, Neighbourhood Centres were again asked what services they provided to the local community in the 2023 census. The results are outlined in **Figure 20**.

Responses to these questions about services offered remained generally consistent with the data gathered in 2021-2022FY (0-10% change).

Two new service areas were offered as responses in the 2023 census, in addition to new areas introduced in the 2022 census (Financial Resilience, Community Transport Schemes, Justice of Peace services, Repair Cafes, Playgroups and Social Prescribing programs).

New data was gathered on digital assistance and self-help groups. 68% of Centres are offering digital assistance to community members with mobile phone use, MyGov website access and other online services and forms. Feedback from Centres indicates that staff are spending a considerable amount of time assisting community members with accessing and registering for Government websites such as MyGov and Centrelink. Assistance was also being offered to apply for housing and bond applications, utilities, banking and other online portals. During COVID-19 restrictions, Centres assisted community members to set up check-in mobile apps and immunisation records which has continued in the form of

general mobile phone problem shooting and instructions. Will kits are also provided online which Centres have assisted people in accessing.

41% of Centres provide self-help groups. In 2021, NCQ met with Support Groups Queensland (formerly Self Help Qld) during which a number of Centres providing self-help groups were identified through sector mapping. Self-help groups are often the first step in community development activities provided by Centres as community members affected by mutual concerns come together for support. Community-led advocacy by affected individuals often result from support group initiatives.

While the percentage of Centres delivering some services appear lower in 2023 than 2022 (public computer/internet access, reception for hubs and resume services), a comparison with 4 years of data reveals a spike in these percentages in 2022 in an immediate post-COVID context compared with the current and previous years.

The percentage of Centres offering services in emergency preparedness and resilience remains high (64%) after jumping from 47% in 2021 to 63% in 2022. This demonstrates that Centres are continuing to play an increased role in responding to disasters.

FIGURE 10

% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Digital Assistance in 2023

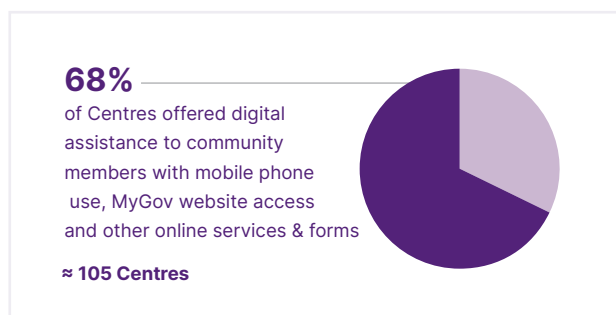
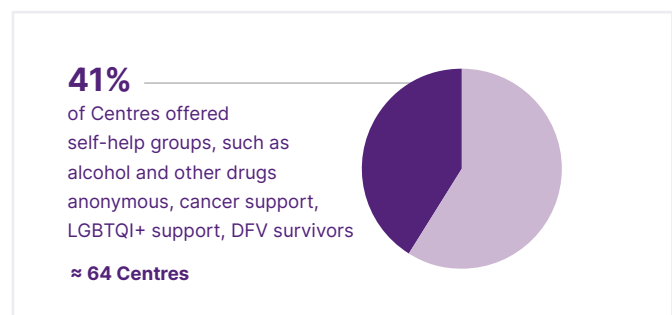


FIGURE 11

% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Self-Help groups in 2023



There has been a considerable increase in the number of Centres offering Centrelink services, reaching the highest level in four years at 34% and a decline in Centres offering services such as auspicings, community consultation, resume services and public computer access. Some Centres have indicated that the cost of living and housing crisis means that their services have become inundated with these acute issues. The extreme levels of ER (as expanded upon in the following section) and increase in Centrelink agencies and access points supports these experiences. As Centres become more “crisis” focused, there is less availability for staff and volunteers to focus on community initiatives and development.

Financial resilience programs are provided by 52% of Centres. In 2022, NCQ formed a partnership with Good Shepherd Australia to enhance financial resilience activities in the sector. Good Shepherd have worked with Qld’s Centres for over 30 years, establishing the Nerang Neighbourhood Centre in 1987 and providing No Interest Loans Schemes (NILS) and other financial resilience products across the state over the following decades. During 2022, they placed financial resilience workers at Centre locations in the state as part of the Qld Financial Resilience Program (QFRP) funded by the Qld Government.

This program has supported many community members experiencing cost of living issues, with workers offering budgeting assistance, investigating Centrelink issues, undertaking financial hardship negotiations, and payment plans for bond and rent arrears. Data obtained from Good Shepherd demonstrates that 1,910 community members were provided with 5,142 hours of support in the last quarter of 2023, 74% of which were female, 83% were receiving welfare benefits, 77% were unemployed and 27% identified as indigenous⁶. Recipients of this assistance have experienced less reliance on ER, are better able to manage housing matters, and appear to have improved wellbeing due to the alleviation of fear and stress regarding financial concerns i.e. having their electricity disconnected or losing their car registration. The program has particularly been successful in locations where a range of financial assistance is offered at the Centre.

The new datasets introduced in 2022 have seen little change in the current census, with the exception of community transport schemes rising from 8% to 15% of Centres. Community transport programs are funded by DTATSIPCA, however some Centres offer a fee-for-service model. These schemes are particularly important in rural locations where there are no public transport system between neighbourhood towns that host vital medical, shopping and other services.

TABLE 3

Self-help groups operating in Neighbourhood Centres

Alcoholics, Narcotics, Gamblers and Overeaters Anonymous

Carers of children with a disability

Support for people affected by medical conditions such as Parkinson’s, Huntington’s Disease, Dementia, Aphasia and Vision issues

ARAFMI, Mental Health and Bipolar groups

Support after suicide including specific groups for First Nations people.

LGBTQI+ support

Brain Injury and Stroke Support

Cancer Support

Divorce and separation

Managing Autism

Men and Dad’s support

Groups for defence personal and veterans

Domestic Violence and sexual assault survivors

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and refugee groups

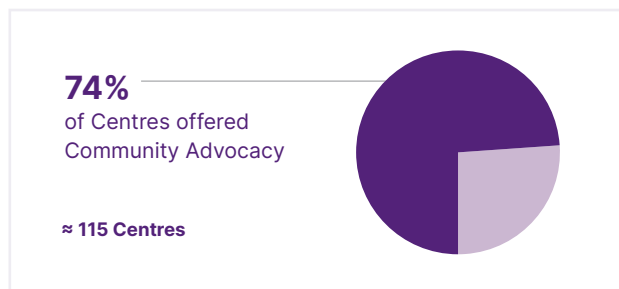
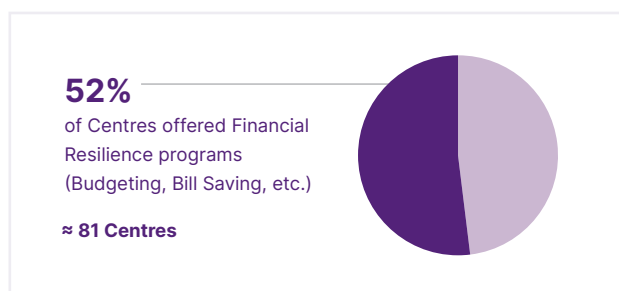
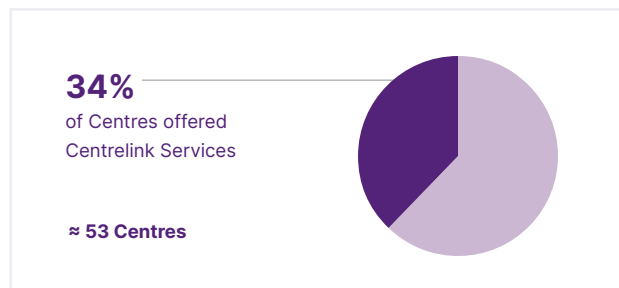
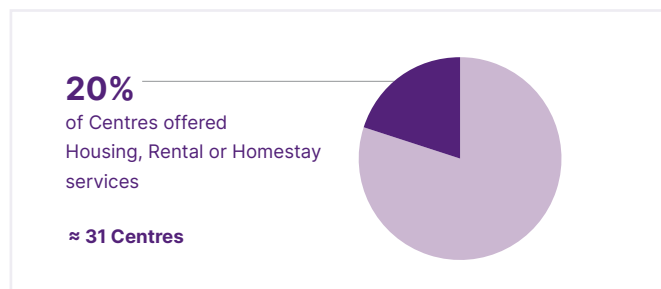
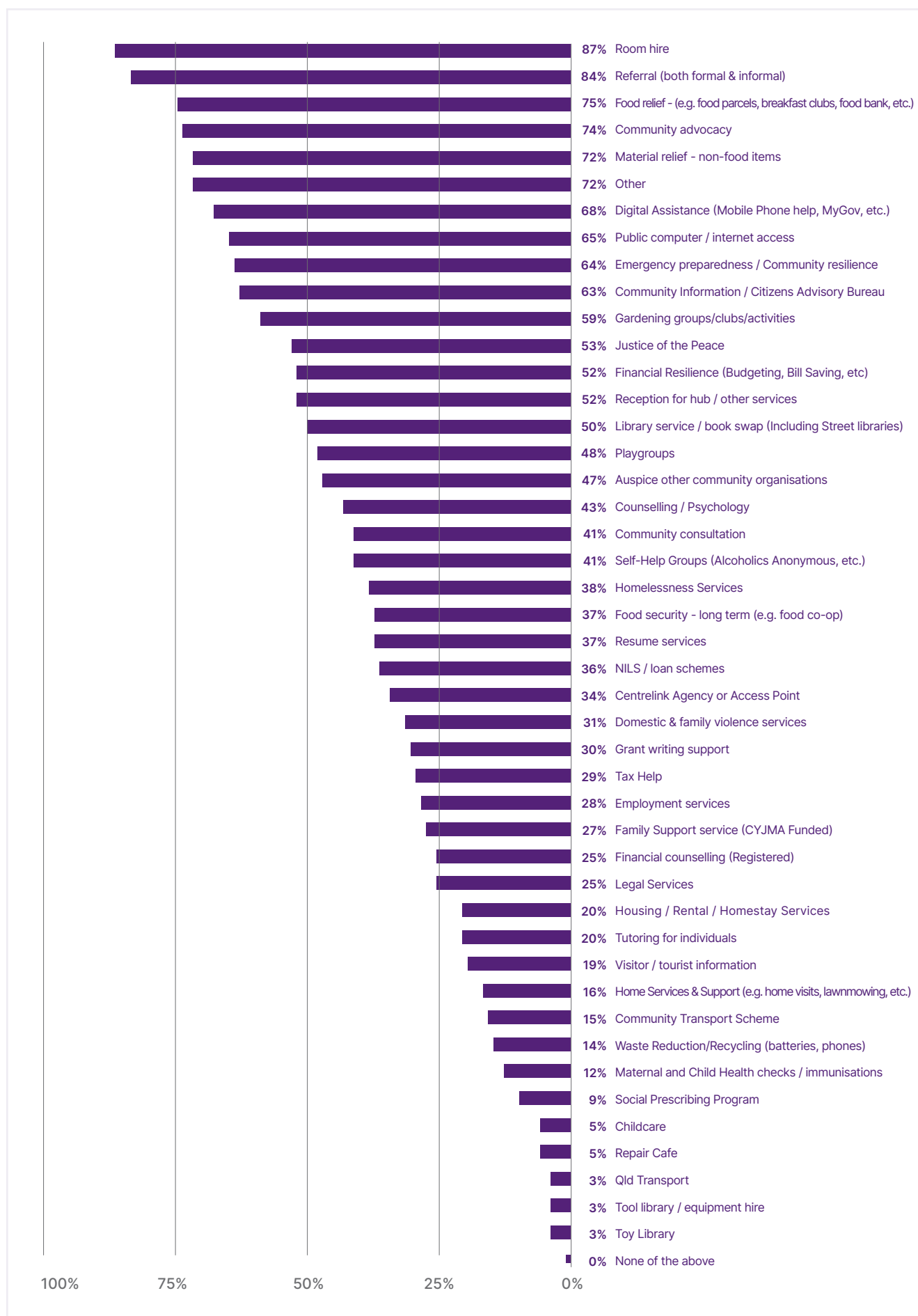
FIGURE 12**% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Community Advocacy in 2023****FIGURE 16****% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Material Relief in 2023****FIGURE 13****% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Financial Resilience Programs in 2023****FIGURE 17****% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Counselling & Psychology in 2023****FIGURE 14****% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Centrelink Services in 2023****FIGURE 18****% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Domestic & Family Violence services in 2023****FIGURE 15****% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Homelessness services in 2023****FIGURE 19****% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Housing, Rental or Homestay services in 2023**

FIGURE 20

% of Neighbourhood Centre respondents providing these services to community in 2023



2.2 Emergency Relief

75% of respondents indicated that their Centre delivers food relief and 72% deliver non-food relief (clothing, cash, bill payments, public transport cards, fuel cards, food vouchers etc). The percentage of Centres providing food relief has seen a minor decline from 79% in 2021-2022FY. Non-food relief has remained consistent with 2021-2022FY.

Despite this slight drop in the number of Centres distributing food, the amounts of food being distributed has dramatically increased. The 102 census recipients reported a combined monthly distribution total of 85,349kg (1,024,188 kg a year). The median amount of food per Centre has increased from 100kg in 2019 to an incredible 720kg a month in 2023. Extrapolated to the entire sector this equates to 1,285,536kg of food distributed per year, almost half a million tonnes greater than 2022. Using Social Return on Investment (SROI) calculations developed by Foodbank Australia⁷, the social value of this food distribution across the sector in 2022-2023FY is estimated to be **\$25,774,997**. A further explanation of social value calculations used in this report is found in **Appendix B**.

Responses also indicate increasingly larger amounts of non-food material relief, including bill payments, cash/prepaid gift cards, food vouchers, fuel vouchers and public transport cards being distributed to

community members. This totalled a yearly amount of \$2,145,888. Two additional ER values were gathered from Centres in the 2023 census – clothing and personal care & hygiene items, totalling \$99,774 per month. When all non-food related material relief was extrapolated to 155 Centres it equated to \$3,857,532 across the sector. When combined with food relief, the total amount of ER value being distributed by Centres on a yearly basis is over **\$29.6 million**.

In addition to the above, the number of frozen meals being distributed to community members was 10,269 per month equating to 162,042 meals distributed by the entire sector annually, an increase from 140,076 meals in 2022.

These high levels of ER indicate that Centres are on the front line of the cost of living crisis. Consultation with the sector across the state indicates they have seen considerable increases in not only low-income families accessing food, but middle-income families

FIGURE 21

% of Neighbourhood Centres delivering ongoing Emergency Food Relief in 2023



FIGURE 22

Median amount (in kg) of Emergency Food Relief Distributed per Centre per Month

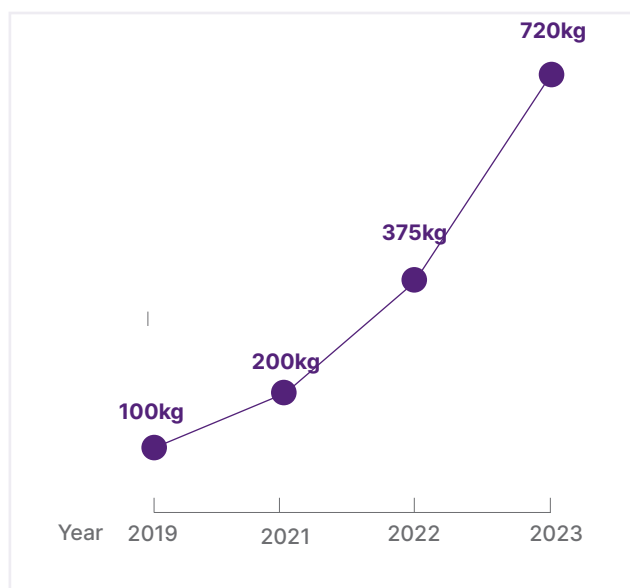
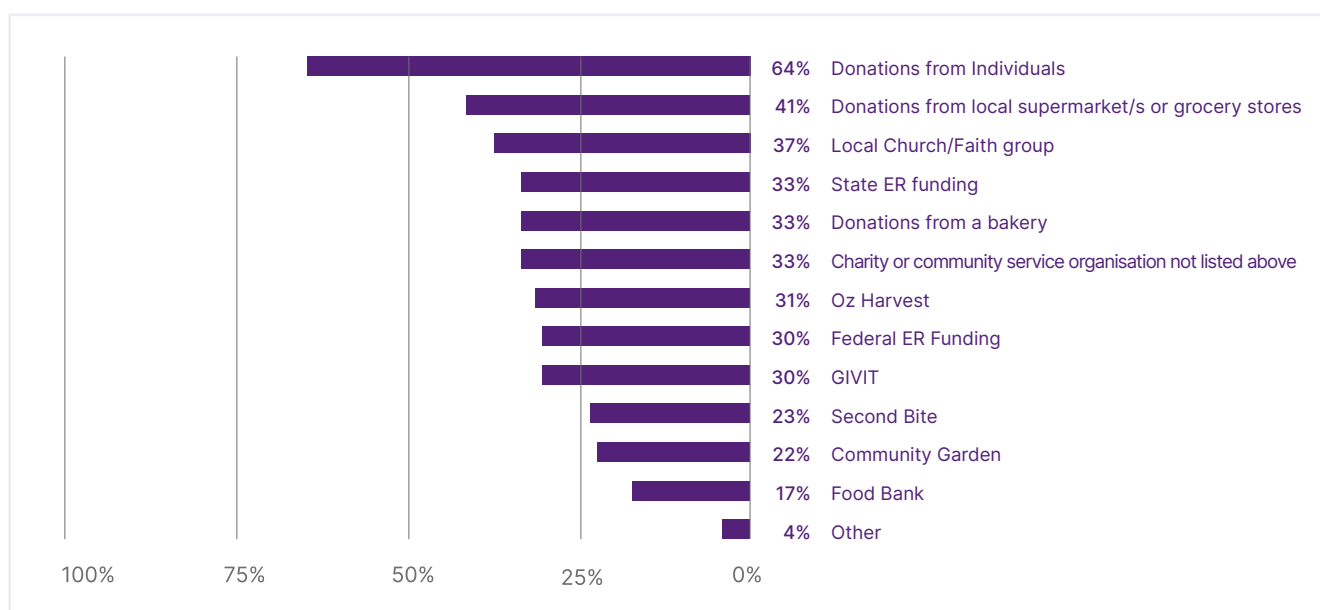


FIGURE 23

Sources of Emergency Relief Resourcing - % of Neighbourhood Centres receiving funding from organisations



needing to access ER due to inflationary increases and housing costs. While Centres are responding daily to food requests, they do not receive funding to deliver (or staff) these ER services and often utilise funding from other programs for staff or recruit ER volunteers. These staff often provide additional referral options for assistance which can take a considerable amount of time depending on the complexity of individual need. ER interactions also create the opportunity for wrap-around financial assistance in the form of budgeting and financial resilience measures, NILS loans, advocacy and financial counselling.

Centres were also asked to indicate how ER products were being resourced with the results detailed in **Figure 23**.

The 2022 census demonstrated that 58% of ER resourcing came from the local community and businesses – the highest percentage of options available. The 2023 census has expanded this field to pinpoint where in the community the ER resourcing has originated. 64% of Centres indicated that donations come from individual community members, 41% from a local supermarket and 37% from local churches

or faith groups. This was closely followed by bakeries and other charity groups.

There has been a slight drop in the percentage of Centres accessing GIVIT (30% in 2023, 38% in 2022) and OzHarvest (31% in 2023, 37% in 2022) however Food Bank has remained consistent and there has been a marginal increase in Second Bite (23% in 2023, 19% in 2022). While GIVIT has seen a drop since 2022, it saw a significant increase from 23% in 2021 to 38% in 2022 for the reasons expanded upon in the previous Sector Impact Report.

These results indicate that the significantly high amounts of food and other ER being distributed by Centres are predominately coming from individuals in the community rather than charity organisations. Being embedded in local communities, Centres are experts at accessing local resources to meet the needs of vulnerable community members. This community-based ER response is especially important during disasters. During disaster events, transport routes are often cut to external providers, meaning that Centres are the first to activate emergency

food distribution using their existing local community networks until further external recovery support can be provided.

State and federal funding for ER has remained consistent with previous years however it must be noted that a more recent State Government ER funding boost has not been included in these census results. In August 2023, the Qld Government announced a \$3.3million ER investment in which all funded Centres in the state received a one-off boost of up to \$10,000 to assist community members. Centres have indicated their desire to disperse this \$10,000 boost on a yearly basis to respond to cost of living issues in communities. Smaller ER funding boosts have also been provided to NC's when they have been established as recovery hubs during disaster responses.

FIGURE 24

% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Emergency Preparedness each year, from 2021 to 2023

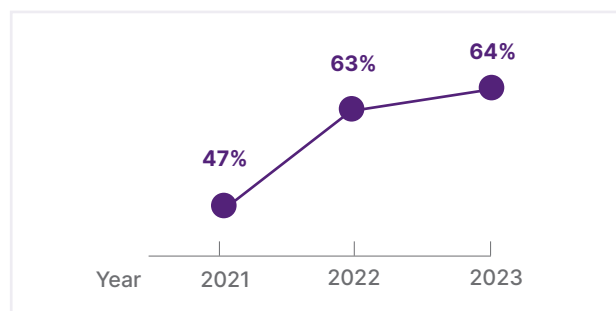


FIGURE 25

% of Neighbourhood Centres offering Emergency Preparedness and Community Resilience in 2023



2.3 Responses to disasters and other traumatic events

The Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Disaster Resilience 2023-2026⁸ released by NCQ in June 2023 highlighted the increasing role Neighbourhood Centres are playing in community-led disaster resilience. 64% of Centres in this census indicated they were involved in emergency preparedness/community resilience.

Recovery Hubs have recently been stood up and located in Centres after a range of disasters in the state including South East Qld Flooding (2022), the Wiembilla shooting event (2022), Northern and Central Qld Monsoon Flooding (2023), Southern and Western Downs Bushfires (2023), Cyclone Jasper (2023), Christmas Day Thunderstorms (2023) and Cyclone Kirrily (2024).

In 2023, 11 Service Navigators were funded in Centres in flood affected Local Government Areas to assist community members to access grants, including structural assistance as a response to extensive flooding in 2022. Centres have also been active in delivering community-led disaster projects as part of the Category C recovery program for severely affected areas as part of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements between Commonwealth and State Governments. While these programs have offered funding for staff in Centres to assist community members recovering from disasters, the restrictive nature of this funding has also created challenges for Centres to deliver these programs including no funding for the purchase of basic infrastructure items such as mobile phones and laptops, administration, and management costs. These operational costs are absorbed or are managed through alternative means, furthering pressure on Centres' limited resources.

3. Community Impact

3.1 Volunteering

Neighbourhood Centres could not operate at the capacity they do without volunteers from the local community contributing their time to assist others. Volunteering also demonstrates further ways Centres reduce loneliness and social isolation in communities by creating opportunities for participation and connection. Volunteering is mentioned as a key component in DTATSIPCA's Communities 2032 Strategy.⁹ Volunteer numbers have remained relatively consistent for Centres over the four years of census data, with an average of 18 volunteers per Centre each week in 2022-2023FY, 20 in 2021-2022FY, and 19 in previous years. An estimated combined total of 2,454 people volunteer at the 155 Neighbourhood Centres each week. This overall estimate sees a drop of 275 volunteers from 2021-2022FY to 2022-2023FY. This is likely due to a decrease in the median number of volunteers per Centre in rural areas under 3,000 people, from 20 in 2022, to 7.5 in 2023.

Despite this drop in volunteer numbers, volunteer hours have increased from a median of 60 in 2022 to 64 in 2023. The average number of volunteer hours have also increased to 112hrs per Centre per week. Variations have occurred due to a decrease in average volunteer hours in small rural areas (56hrs in 2023, 91hrs in 2022) but an increase in volunteer hours in regional locations with populations above 10,000 people (72hrs in 2023, 58.5hrs in 2022). Extrapolated to the entire sector, it is estimated that volunteers contributed 14,557 hours per week (an increase from 10,752 in 2022) equating to 727,850 hours for the entire year.

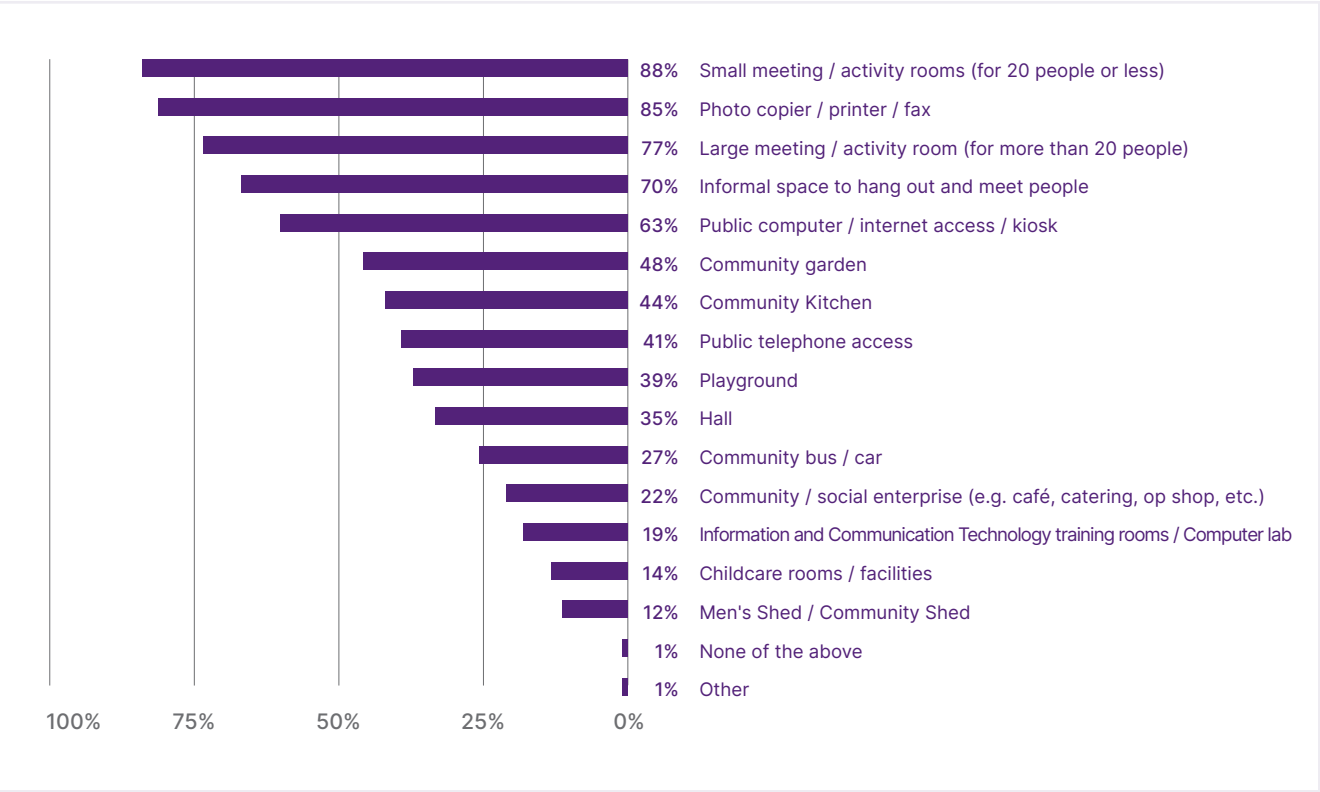
The estimated annual economic value of volunteers to NC operations in Qld in 2023 is \$37,590,832 per year. See **Appendix B** for volunteer labour replacement cost methods.

3.2 Community Facilities

Neighbourhood Centres offer a range of community facilities, projects and supports vital to local communities as indicated in **Figure 26**.

FIGURE 26

% of Neighbourhood Centres offering these Community facilities in 2023



3.3 Digital Inclusion and Literacy

63% of Neighbourhood Centres surveyed stated they provided public computer/internet access/kiosks (a decrease from 72% in 2022), however, there has been an increase in extrapolated hours of individual computer/internet per month (5,980 in 2023, 4864 in 2022). This has an estimated value of \$143,520 per year. See **Appendix B** for community value calculations.

There has also been a decrease in the number of Centres offering IT training rooms and computer labs from 27% to 19%. One possible explanation for the decline in computer support may be explained by the increasing use of other devices, such as mobile phones, being used by community members. As 68% of Centres indicated they were offering digital assistance as a service in the new dataset (Figure 28), this indicates that Centres are offering digital inclusion beyond traditional computer and internet hubs.

Recent consultation with the sector revealed that Centres are responding to extensive digital exclusion,

especially in rural locations. Large mobile phone black spots exist in rural areas and when combined with the discontinuation of 3G networks, lead to community members needing to upgrade mobile phone devices and plans during cost-of-living pressures. It has also been noted that disasters have affected digital and telecommunication connectivity leaving community members vulnerable without any mobile phone or internet services. Older populations need support to access apps for basic medical, banking, pension and utilities payments yet also experience increased fear of online scams. Several Centres including East Creek Community centre, Tara Neighbourhood Centre, Chinchilla Community centre and Care Goondiwindi offer specialised digital support to their affected communities to address these identified issues.

Digital connectivity is a key component of the DTATSIPCA Communities 2032 strategic plan by the Qld Government.¹⁰

FIGURE 27

% of Neighbourhood Centres Providing Public Computers in 2023

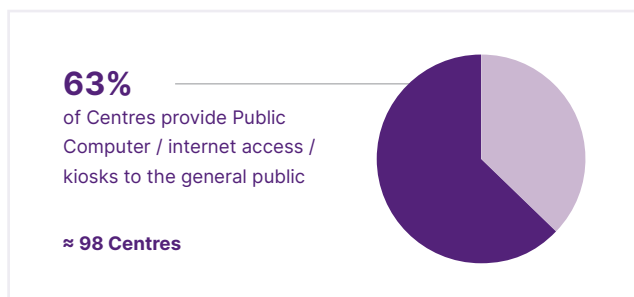
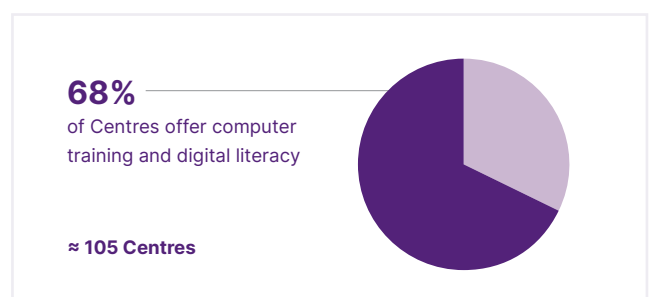


FIGURE 28

% of Neighbourhood Centres Providing Digital Training in 2023



3.4 Supporting Community Groups and Projects

NCs provide important meeting spaces for local communities particularly in rural communities where this type of infrastructure does not exist. 88% of NCs offered small meeting rooms and 77% offered large meeting spaces. NCs provide these spaces to local businesses, training organisations, community groups and social services. These not only build connection, support and opportunities for locals but can also be transformed into community recovery hubs during a disaster. During such events, NCs host various services such as Community Recovery officers, Red Cross and Lifeline as well as NC staff providing specialised local knowledge.

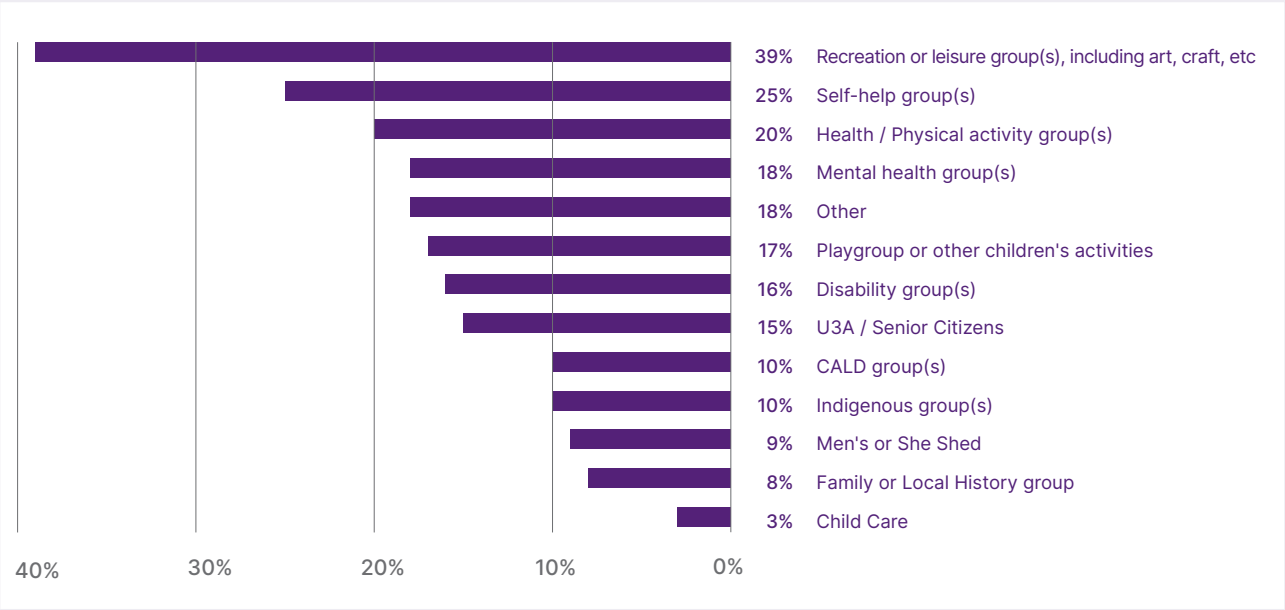
The number of hours of building use has been steadily increasing after seeing a drop to an average of 48 hours per week during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. The 2023 census has seen this level increase to an average of 54 hours per week, an increase of four hours from the previous year. Likewise, the number of community groups using NCs per month have increased to an extrapolated 1,644 groups in 2023 (1,388 in 2022). The median number of community groups using Centres has increased from seven in 2022, to 10 in 2023 with median increases seen across all demographics. According to a recent census by DTATSIPCA, 80% of funded Centres have been able to employ additional staff with the funding uplift received in 2022 with many employing workers to increase community activities. 90% of Centres have been able to increase the frequency or range of activities or services offered to the community also as the result of the uplift. The data indicates that the uplift has had a direct impact on the number of community groups and hours that use NCs for activities. This enhances individual wellbeing, community connections and increases social capital.

NCs often provide room hire for free or low cost to these community groups and other hirers depending on the capacity of the group, community need and strategic vision of the Centre. From the census in 2022, Centres have been asked to record the full value of room hire being provided to the community. Extrapolated to the entire sector for 2022/23, the sector offered an estimated 24,723 hours of room hire per month (296,676 hours per year) valued at \$10,703,448 annually. This is an increase in annual hours from 274,812 and value from \$8,518,944 in 2022, indicating over \$2.1million dollars of extra community value being generated by the sector in the past year.

NCs also auspiced 182 unincorporated community organisations each month including men's sheds, CALD groups, First Nations groups, self-help groups, health/physical activities, recreation, senior citizens groups, play groups and childcare (Table 5). Auspicing involves the NC receiving the funds on behalf of the community group and providing public liability insurance for the group. Such groups further leverage community connections and increase the capacity of many other local community-based organisations that lack formal governance structures and highlight that NCs are often the "social incubators" of new programs in communities. The sector primarily auspiced recreational or leisure groups (39%) and self help groups (25%). 10% of Centres also indicated they auspiced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. Based on the value of providing public liability insurance to these organisations, this has an estimated value of \$115,108 per year. See **Appendix B** for community value calculations.

FIGURE 29

Sector Auspicing by group type



In addition to auspicing, the data revealed that, per month, another 632 community groups were supported by Qld Neighbourhood Centres through a variety of other means.

The sector has seen a slight decrease in community projects per year from 1,715 in 2021-2022FY to 1,598 in 2022-2023FY and the average number of projects per Centre has dropped from 14 to 12. Likewise, the number of partnerships has dropped from an average of 15 to 12 per Centre totalling an estimated 1,509 partnerships

per year statewide. As previously referenced, as Centres have become more focused on responding to overwhelming cost-of-living and housing issues in their community, this results in less capacity to foster additional community relationships and projects. Despite this, the sector saw a slight increase of involvement in projects managed by external organisations to an estimated 907 projects over the 2023 financial year compared with 835 in the 2022 financial year.

3.4 First Nations Inclusion in Neighbourhood Centres

The 2023 Sector Impact Report introduced a new set of questions to gather some broad data on the nature and extent of First Nations inclusion in Neighbourhood Centres. The Communities 2032 Strategic Plan¹¹ supports the Qld Government’s First Nations reform agenda, including reconciliation, the Path to Treaty and commitments to improving outcomes against the targets of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.¹² The Shared Vision¹³ for Neighbourhood Centres between the Qld Government, NCQ and the sector acknowledges that Centres respond locally to First Nations people as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which they operate. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 4.6% of Qld’s population¹⁴ and the state is uniquely positioned geographically with the Torres Strait Islands and its people. There are over 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups in Qld, reflecting a huge amount of diversity of First Nations people in the state.

There are three Centres in Qld that are operated by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Controlled organisations. Qld’s first First Nations controlled Neighbourhood Centre was funded in 2001 after a review of unfunded Centres in 2000. NPA Family and Community Services is located at Bamaga in the Northern Peninsular

Area. In 2021, a new Centre was established on Thursday Island and is operated by Mura Kosker Sorority, a Torres Strait Islander based organisation that has been operating for over 30 years. Locally named “Buai Mudh”, it means “Family House”. 2022 also saw the procurement of the Normanton Neighbourhood Centre to Bynoe Community Advancement Cooperative (Bynoe CACS). In addition to these, two Centres are operated by North West Indigenous Catholic Social Services under the governance of Catholic Social Services Limited with a majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local board. They operate a Centre in Boulia as well as the Brilla Brilla Centre in the heart of the Yallambie Indigenous Reserve. Other Centres with high First Nations engagement include those based in Cooktown, Kuranda, Weipa, Mareeba and Mossman. Over 30% of NCs in the 2022 census stated they offered community development programs determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Census participants were asked about different types of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation at their Centre with the responses listed in **Figure 30**.

The data reveals that that the many Centres have connections with First Nations people.

TABLE 4

Neighbourhood Centres operated by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Controlled organisations in 2023

NPA Family and Community Services, located at Bamaga
Buai Mudh, operated by Mura Kosker Sorority, located on Thursday Island
Normanton Neighbourhood Centre, operated by Bynoe CACS, located at Normanton

TABLE 5

Neighbourhood Centres with a Majority First Nations Local Board in 2023

Boulia Neighbourhood Centre, operated by North West Indigenous Catholic Social Services, located in Boulia
Brilla Brilla Neighbourhood Centre, operated by North West Indigenous Catholic Social Services, located in Mt Isa in Yallambie Indigenous Reserve

Almost 70% of Neighbourhood Centres stated they have relationships with local elders or traditional owners. As NCs are place-based and community-led in nature, emphasis in the sector is placed on a relationship with local custodians of the country on which the Centre is located.

64% of Centes also indicated involvement in NAIDOC Week, and 54% of Centres have First Nations resources available such as literature, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, welcome or acknowledgments to Country and other resources. In addition to this 28% of Centres have yarning circles or physical spaces especially for the gathering of First Nations people.

Centres indicated they include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the operations and governance of their Centre. Almost 50% of NCs across the state have First Nations staff or volunteers at the Centre with 11%

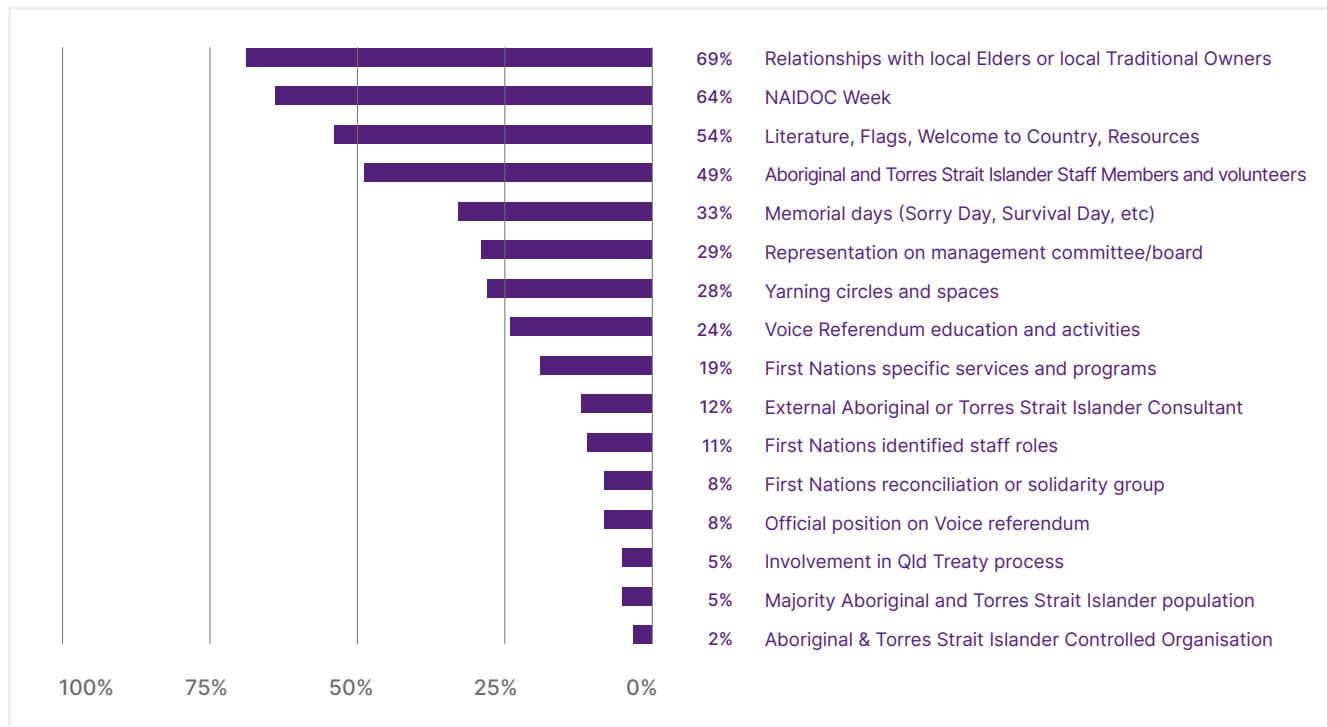
of Centres having identified First Nations roles within their organisations. Almost 10% of Centres have a First Nations person on their management committee or board and 12% employ the services of an external Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander consultant.

Only 8% of Centres indicated they had a formal position on the Voice Referendum. Consultation by NCQ of the sector in 2023 revealed that some Centres formally supported a strong “Yes” position for the referendum, while other Centres took an intentional neutral position on the advice of local First Nations representatives and Elders. Regardless of position, Centres across Qld undertook referendum and First Nations education in the local community during the lead up to the referendum and some provided local “healing” events after the referendum result.

While there is much to celebrate about First Nations

FIGURE 30

Different types of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in Neighbourhood Centres



engagement in the sector, some statistics reveal there is still much work to be done. Only 20% of Centres offer programs especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Additionally, only 8% of Centres ran a First Nations reconciliation or solidarity group and only 5% had any involvement in Qld's Treaty process. There are only 5% of Centres operating in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander majority demographics, highlighting the potential to expand Centres into First Nations communities.

There is enormous opportunity for the sector to grow in their knowledge and engagement with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Centres need to be guided by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders about the most appropriate way to engage and advocate for local mob, in accordance with place-based community-led principles. This may mean that engagement will look different for each Centre according to local customs, traditions, history, groups, and the capacity of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be involved.

FIGURE 31

% Of Neighbourhood Centres with Relationship with Local Elders and Traditional Owners 2023



FIGURE 33

% of Neighbourhood Centres with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff and Volunteers in 2023

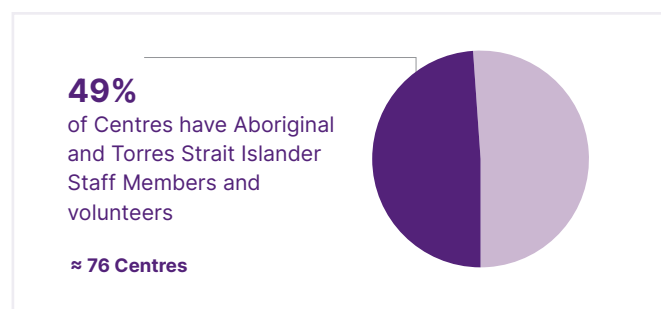


FIGURE 32

% of Neighbourhood Centres have Yarning Circles or spaces especially for the gathering of First Nations People in 2023

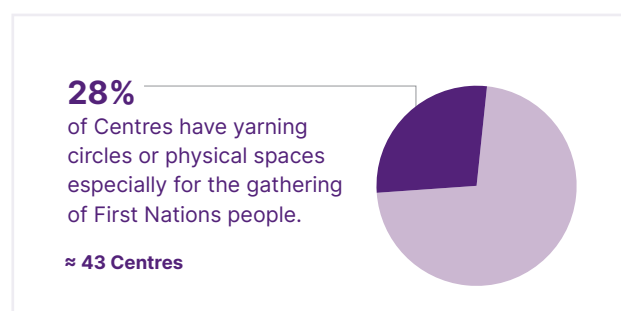
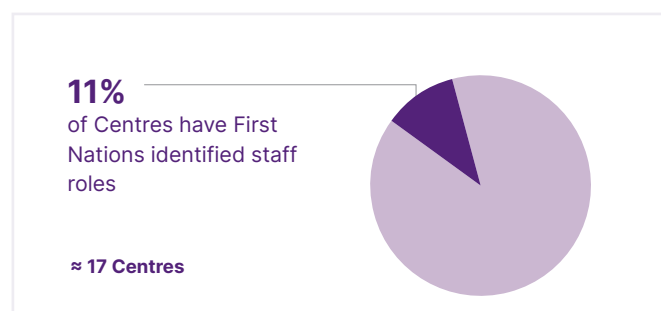


FIGURE 34

% of Neighbourhood Centres with First Nations identified staff roles in 2023



4. Neighbourhood Centre Resourcing

4.0 Overview

The impact of Neighbourhood Centres in local communities relies on appropriate resourcing. This resourcing includes adequate funding, effective community governance structures, qualified and experienced staffing, and a Centre/building that is conducive to conducting Centre activities.

While Centres use community development methods to leverage local community resources and assets, the availability of these resources differs from community to community, depending on location, remoteness, community demographics and economic environment.

In 2021, the Qld Government formed a Neighbourhood Centre Sector Repositioning Committee, with a key activity being the development of an investment framework for both recurrent and capital funding that is robust, fair and equitable¹⁵.

In preparation for these reforms and due to the advocacy of NCQ, Centres and other stakeholders, the Qld Government announced a significant investment into Neighbourhood Centres resulting in an uplift in funding for the majority of Neighbourhood Centres in the 2022-2023 financial year.

4.1 Funding

Neighbourhood Centre Program funding amounts from DTATSIPCA for both the 2021-2022FY and 2022-2023FY were obtained and are outlined in **Table 6**.

As **Table 6** indicates, before the funding uplift the median amount of DTATSIPCA funding per Centre was \$126,502 and an average of \$138,133 per Centre. This created significant challenges for the sector.

In June 2022, the Qld Government announced a funding increase for the NC sector across the state which included:

- 127 NCs moving to a new baseline funding amount of \$230,000
- An extra \$20,000 a year to Centres based in non-state Government buildings
- \$9million in existing Centre upgrades
- \$39million to construct 6 new Centres
- 20 additional Community Connect Workers
- \$4million innovation fund

This funding pre-empted widespread sector reforms implemented in all Neighbourhood Centre contracts from October 2023 featuring an increase in indexation rates aligning more closely to the consumer and wage price indices. Through the new strategic reforms, a clear program logic was co-designed with the sector featuring a framework¹⁶ of the three common activities that Centres deliver:

1. Linking people with formal and informal support
2. Creating social connections and inclusion
3. Integrating local community action

As noted in **Table 6**, the new funding demonstrates more equity across the sector with a reduced range between the highest funded and lowest funded Centres. The funding baseline for Neighbourhood Centres including the CPI increase has been raised to \$238,680. Standard

TABLE 6

Neighbourhood Centre Program Funding Data for 2021-2022FY and 2022-2023FY

	2021-2022 FY	2022-2023FY
Number of funded Neighbourhood Centres	127	128
Average funding per Centre	\$138,133	\$253,549
Median funding per Centre	\$126,501	\$258,720
Yearly Funding range	\$121,952 to \$492,827	\$238,680 to \$537,813
CPI increase	1.5%	5.07%
Total Neighbourhood Centre Program funding	\$17,681,035	\$32,454,267

Deviations revealed less distribution from \$44,693 in 2022 to \$29,716 in 2023. While most Centres are now funded between \$238,680 and \$277,016 depending on private rental allocations, two Centres are funded in excess of \$369,000. Centres are required to deliver operational hours depending on their funding level.

For most Centres, NC Program funding from the Department of Communities is not the only source of funding utilised. Data was gathered for the 2023 Sector Impact Report to identify the variety of funding streams that organisations access to operate their Centres. The results are as follows in **Figure 35**.

Whilst 91% of Centres censused obtained funds from DTATSIPCA, a variety of Centres receive funds from other Qld Government departments. The most notable of these is the 25% of Centres that receive funding from the Department of Children/Child Safety. The Neighbourhood Centre sector has historically featured a strong focus on Family Support programs funded by the Qld Government, with many moving to intensive family support programs over the past 10 years. Funding from the Department of Justice and Attorney General also features (15%) providing Family Violence programs, JP's, legal initiatives and the Community Gambling Benefit fund. Employment, Small Business and Training is also notable (14%) as

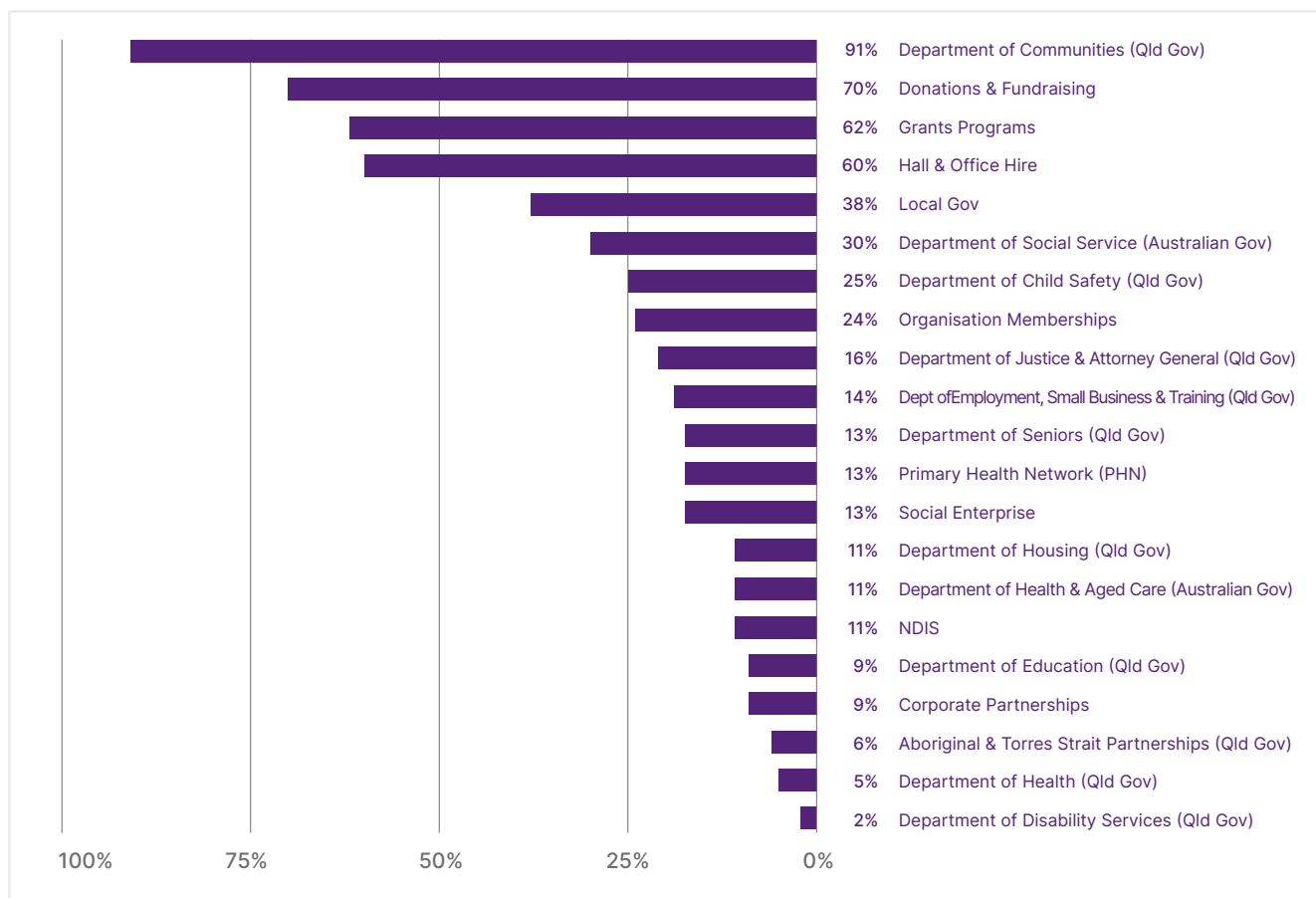
many Centres participate in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program to support vulnerable community members into employment.

When compared with data from the 2022 census, the only mentionable variations are a decrease in the number of Centres accessing corporate partnerships and an increase in donations and fundraising. The variations are minor with an 8% drop in corporate partnerships and a 9% increase in donations and fundraising.

Other notable funding streams include Local Government (38%), Department of Social Service (30%), Grants programs (62%), and Hall & Office Hire (60%). These figures do not indicate the values associated with these funding streams, but rather the number of Centres accessing these streams to bolster the range of activities they provide to local communities. It is significant that higher numbers of Centres leverage internal and local resources such as hall hire, fundraising, donations and grants programs highlighting the community-based nature of these organisations than heavily depending on more formal Government funding contracts. Census data indicates that the sector submitted an estimated 805 funding submissions in 2022-2023FY, 206 fewer than the year prior. This drop may be explained by the funding uplift received by Centres, demonstrating less

FIGURE 35

% of Neighbourhood Centres receiving these Funding Streams



need to apply for additional project funding to operate their Centre programs. Funding applications are also dependent on the suitability of the grants on offer for identified community needs and aspirations, along with a range of other criteria including geographic location. Centres each apply for a median of 5 funding applications per year.

4.2 Unfunded Neighbourhood Centres

NCQ has become aware of an increasing number of Neighbourhood Centres operating in Qld that are not receiving Neighbourhood Centre program funding from the Qld Government. While commonly referred to as “unfunded” Neighbourhood Centres, some of these Centres are supported by infrastructure from faith-based organisations, non-profit organisations, property developers or local councils while others operate purely as community governed organisations with an exclusive volunteer workforce. These organisations can also be supported with funds from once off Government grants, social enterprises or other State and Federal Government Departments.

Unfunded Centres included in the census were limited to Centres that provide universal access from a community focal point and a range of community development and social inclusion opportunities,

activities and services from that location. 27 Centres were identified, 5 more than 2022.

A comparison of median outputs of funded and unfunded Centres was conducted.

The results outlined below in **Table 7**.

Only 8 unfunded Centres participated in the census including 4 Metropolitan Centres, 1 regional Centre, 1 rural Centre with a population between 3,000 and 10,000 and 2 Centres in a rural location under 3,000 people. The low participation rate can be attributed to the lack of funding for staff to collect, compile and report data to the census. The data that was able to be collected demonstrated a considerable amount of variation in unfunded Centres. Both the number of responses and wide variation creates challenges for calculating medians and averages for this portion of the sector.

The median number of people using unfunded Centres

TABLE 7

Median Outputs of Funded compared to Unfunded Neighbourhood Centres in 2023

Datapoint (weekly)	Funded Median	Unfunded Median	Difference
Volunteers	12	9	-3
Volunteer Hours	64	49	-15
People Using Centre	231	485	+254
Activity Participants	90	375	+285
Building Use hours	48	97	+49
Referrals	31	4	-27
Committee Members	7	5	-2
Committee Hours (Monthly)	22	54	+32
Kg Food Relief (Monthly)	720	8	-712
Fee-for-Service	\$11460	\$43486	+32026
Community room hire (Monthly Hours)	97	25	+72
Community hire value (Monthly)	\$2387	\$5400	+3013

and participating in activities is much higher at unfunded Centres than funded Centres. These high amounts come from unfunded metropolitan Centres, two of which are operated by the YMCA and two with a more senior demographic. These Centres attracted between 750 and 1710 people per week with many community members participating in activities. These are some of the highest figures in the entire sector, producing much greater medians than funded locations (70% higher visitors, 123% higher participation). This high amount of participation is also reflected in the median number of hours of building use per week at 97 hours (49 hours higher than funded Centres). While the median number of hours for room hire to community groups appears lower per month, huge variation appeared in the data with one Centre providing 882 hours in a single month.

Because of the lack of Neighbourhood Centre Program funding, many of these Centres survive through room hire and fee-for-service models, both of which are higher than funded Centres. Despite increased income in these measures, unfunded Centres continue to have unique challenges. NCQ's consultation with the unfunded Centres network in Qld indicates the following challenges:

- Lack of funding for qualified staff to respond to complex issues in communities
- Pressure of managing and maintaining a volunteer base when there is little or no staffing
- Maintaining and leasing physical infrastructure including building repairs, utilities, maintaining tenancy, insurances, etc.
- Safety risks to volunteers when dealing with escalated community members
- Lack of access to professional development and training
- Succession planning for management committees
- Responding to increased community need during cost of living and housing crisis

Concerns around the safety of volunteers and qualified

personnel are reflected in the considerably lower referral rate for unfunded Centres, due to lack of funding for professional development and little opportunity to build local referral pathways with external organisations. Unfunded Centres also distribute significantly lower amounts of food relief. Overall this highlights reduced capacity to respond to community members needing specialised support. Instead, unfunded Centres generally have more of a focus on community participation activities in order to maintain a basic level of operations.

As referenced above, unfunded Centres also have challenges maintaining their volunteer workforce due to lack of staffing with slightly lower median volunteer numbers (3 fewer) and hours (15 fewer) than funded Centres, however unfunded Centres have 32 more committee hours per month. Due to a lack of operational staff within these organisations, it is common for management committee members to give a greater number of volunteer hours in governing the association.

Extrapolated to 27 unfunded Centres, this portion of the sector contributes per year estimates of 492,750 people using Centres, 291,000 people involved in programmed activities and 118,550 volunteer hours. Based on data gathered from this census the community value of unfunded Centres is estimated to be at least \$19,277,609. This is a conservative estimate as extrapolation techniques were not applied to numerous services datasets due to the uncertain nature of unfunded Centres. Further mapping and research of unfunded Centres around the state would highlight further opportunities for investment and sector growth.

Key Term in this Report

Funded Centres refers to Neighbourhood Centres who receive Neighbourhood Centre Program funding from Qld government

Unfunded Centres refers to Neighbourhood Centres who do not receive Neighbourhood Centre Program funding from Qld government

4.3 Social Enterprise

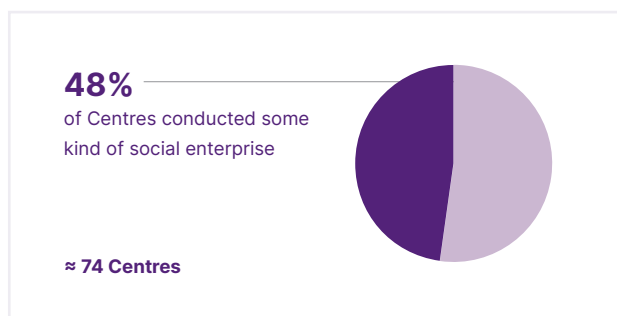
A Social Enterprise is a business that operates for direct social benefit. Neighbourhood Centres are becoming increasingly involved in conducting social enterprises for a number of reasons, including:

- Providing employment opportunities for community members experiencing employment barriers due to disability, disadvantage or lack of job skills
- As a complementary arm of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program
- An income stream for the Centre to conduct flexible programs that cannot be funded through grants programs
- To target a specific gap in local services
- Increasing economic participation in local community
- Building partnerships with local business and suppliers
- To create social and economic inclusion
- As a community development response to local issues
- A number of innovative social enterprises conducted by NCs exist in Australia, including golf courses, caravan parks and affordable funeral services.

Participants were asked what type of Social Enterprise they conducted in the 2022-2023FY with the results in Figure 36.

FIGURE 36

% of Neighbourhood Centres conducting Social Enterprises in 2023



52% of respondents stated that they did not run a social enterprise, indicating that 48% are involved in some kind of business for direct social good in their communities. Op shops are the most common social enterprise undertaken by the sector (11%) closely followed by cafes (10%). 6% of Centres are also involved in offering human services training and resources.

As previously referred to, the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program is often used to complement social enterprise activity in Centres. Through this program, Centres can offer job skills and training to vulnerable community members accessing ER, social programs, financial assistance or other services. While working at the Centre's café or catering business, these community members may also gain a certificate qualification in catering or commercial cookery. During the transition to employment, the Centre may offer a number of other services or referrals to the individual in the form

FIGURE 37

Total income generated statewide by Neighbourhood Centres from Social Enterprises and Fee-for-Service activities in 2022-2023FY

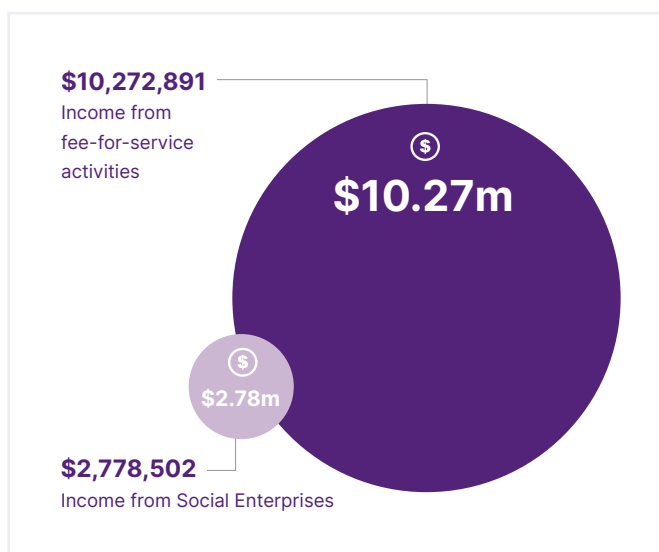
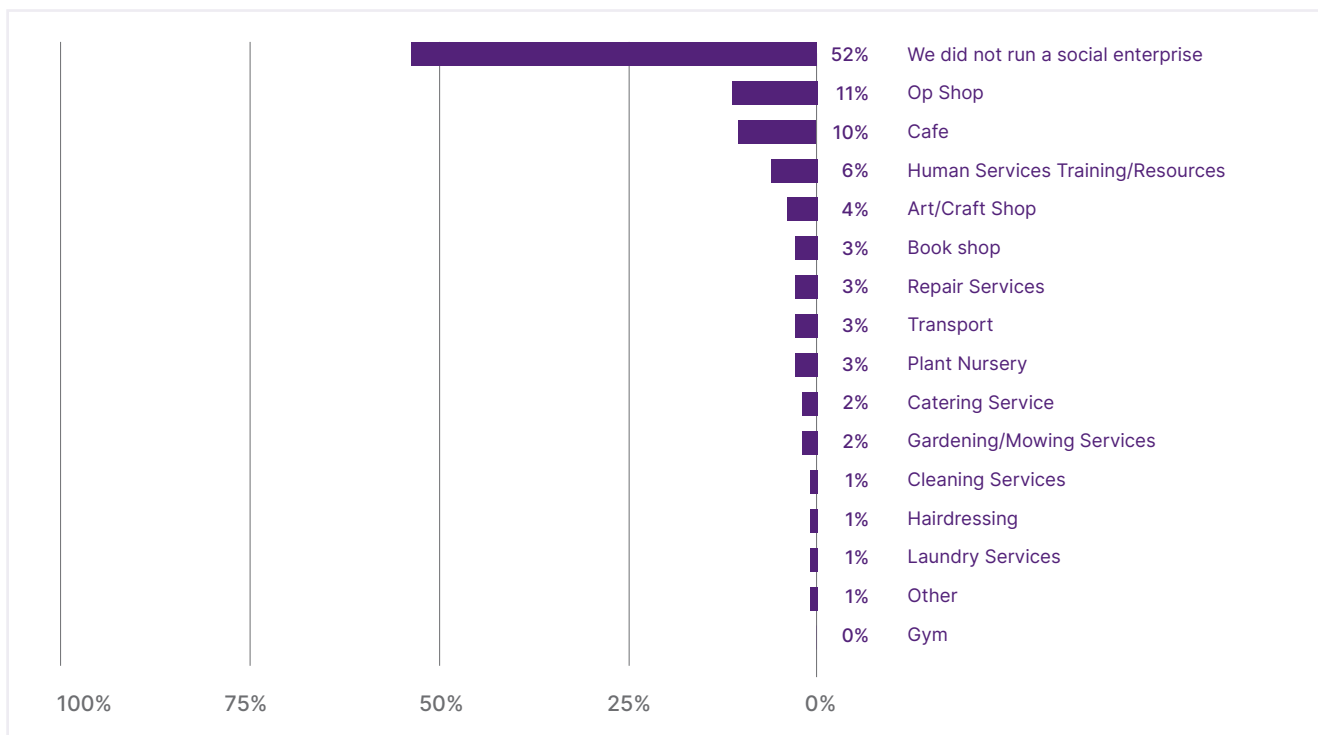


FIGURE 38

% of Neighbourhood Centres conducting these Social Enterprise Types in 2022-2023FY



services or referrals to the individual in the form of counselling, domestic violence support, social connection activities or family support.

Participants were asked to record their total sales in the 2022-2023FY, financially recording the additional community value Centres are providing to area through social enterprise goods and services.

A total of \$1,839,977 was calculated. When extrapolated using demographic medians and the number of Centres conducting enterprises, this equates to a total sector estimate of \$2,778,502 in social enterprise value.

In addition to social enterprise income, a new dataset was introduced in the census which requested Centres to submit their income from fee-for-service activities. Fee-for-service indicates the value community members place on activities and services offered by the Centre to

local people.

Participants recorded a total income of \$9,395,207 in fee-for-service activities, equating to an overall sector estimate of \$10,272,891.

There is great variation in the amount that Centres generate from fee-for-service activities, ranging from \$220 to \$5.9million per year.

4.4 Main Premises

Neighbourhood Centres operate out of a wide range of building types including purpose-built Centres, converted residential housing, shopfronts, converted church halls and government owned buildings. Traditionally known as “Settlement Houses”, the Neighbourhood Centre movement worldwide concentrates on creating a non-clinical “homely” feel to its infrastructure to complement their welcoming and warm approach to local communities. 35% of census respondents in our 2021 census stated their main premises type was a purpose-built Neighbourhood Centre building.

A number of Centres were established under the Queensland Neighbourhood Centre Program in 1987 in which the State Government purchased dwellings to lease to community organisations at a peppercorn rate.

According to Qld Government datasets, the ownership of the 128 Centre funded by the DTATSIPCA is outlined in **Figure 39**.

41% of Centres that receive Qld Government funding are located in buildings owned by the Qld Government. The organisations that lease these buildings have access to subsidised “peppercorn” rents. Leasing arrangements

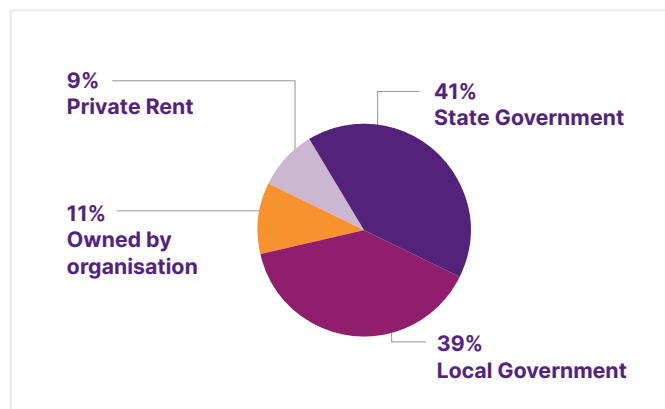
with local councils (39%) also generally have access to heavily subsidised rental arrangements. 20% of Centre infrastructure (almost one quarter) are not owned by local or state Government. 11% are owned by the organisation and 9% pay private rent.

The funding uplift for Centres in 2022 included a \$20,000 subsidy for those organisations based in non-state government buildings. This has greatly supported Centres that are required to cover costs for private rental or building ownership including repairs and maintenance. Additionally, it has been of benefit to Centres based in local council facilities that attract additional costs not covered by State Government infrastructure arrangements.

As Centres are being increasingly utilised as community recovery hubs during disasters, consideration will need to be made to equip Centres with infrastructure to respond during power and network outages, clean water supply, cooling systems and rooms for disaster recovery stakeholders. This is in addition to spaces required to undertake the new Neighbourhood Centre activity dimensions under the Qld Government Shared Vision for the sector¹⁷.

FIGURE 39

Funded Neighbourhood Centre Building Ownership breakdown in 2023



4.5 Governance

Rather than ask how Centres to self-identify Governance structures, Centre names and organisations were compared with ACNC information, organisation annual reports and NCQ membership information.

68% of Centres are general incorporated associations however it is noted that other structures such as First Nations-led organisations (2.3%) are also registered as incorporated organisations. Incorporated Associations are registered with the Qld Department of Fair Trading and are overseen by a management committee of elected members.

9% of funded Centres continue to be operated by local councils as well as 9% by larger NGO's or faith-based organisations. Local councils operate Centres

located in regional Centres where social infrastructure is lacking and fewer community organisations exist. While larger organisations provide increased financial and organisational infrastructure, it has been noted by NCQ that some staff operating Centres within these structures experience some internal challenges with a shared of understanding of Centres, auspicing external community organisations, Centre communications, branding and flexibility in program design. DTATSIPCA's Communities 2032 plan emphasises the key role of NCs in delivering place-based community-led initiatives.¹⁸ Essential to this success is Neighbourhood Centre funding that supports local community governance structures that guide the vision, mission and direction of each Centre.

TABLE 8

Funded Neighbourhood Centre Governance Structures

General Incorporated Associations	88
Local Government	12
Faith Based/NGO organisations	12
Companies Limited by Guarantee	10
Indigenous Controlled	3
Other	1

TABLE 9

Median Number of Board Members and hours in June 2022 by Demographic Type

Location	Median Board Members	Median Hours per Month
Rural (population below 3,000)	5	21
Rural (population between 3,000 and 10,000)	7	28
Regional/Rural (population greater than 10,000)	6	30
Metropolitan	7	21

10 sites (8%) are also managed by companies limited by guarantee. This is a company structure registered under the Federal Corporations Act 2001 and often used for not-for-profit and charitable organisations that reinvest any profit towards the organisation's purposes. The company structure is overseen by a board of directors which may or may not constitute members of the local area.

Taking into account companies limited by guarantee, local councils, faith-based organisations and large non-profit organisations, 26.5% (over a quarter) of funded Centres may not be governed by a committee made up of elected local community members. This is consistent with previous censuses in which 72% of census respondents stated their committees were exclusively comprised of members of their local community.

Centres which are governed by local government structures, professional boards based in large cities or by national organisations reduce the opportunity for local community participation, vision and capacity building through community boards.

Centres were also asked how many board members were on their committee and the total number of committee hours contributed in June 2023, the median results documented in Table 9.

There has been a decrease in the number of median board numbers and hours for Centres in rural populations below 3000 people, from 7 to 5 committee members and 38 to 21 hours per month. Rural locations experience considerable challenges with not only qualified staff recruitment but experienced board volunteers. Board members in rural locations with low populations often volunteer in multiple organisations due to sparse governance expertise in remote regions. There has been an increase in median volunteer hours by board members in populations between 3,000 and 10,000 by 8 hours per month from 2022.

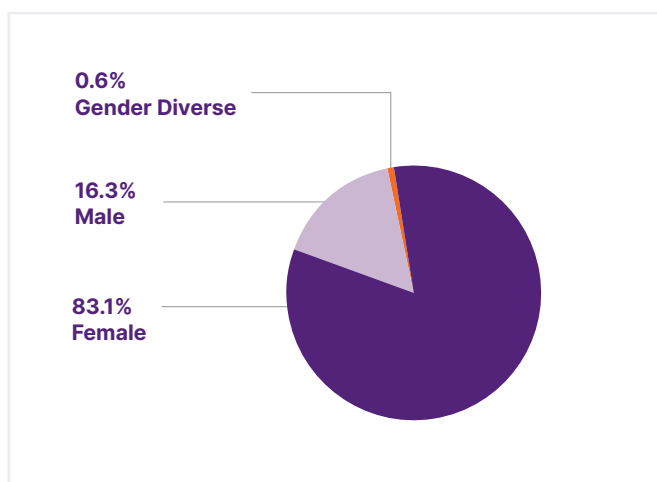
4.6 Workforce

Neighbourhood Centre respondents employed a total of 1042 staff members in June 2023. Of these, 24% were fulltime employees, 48% part time and 18% casual. 2% were casual tutors and 8% contactors. There has been an increase in median staff hours per week per Centre from 114 (2022) to 127 (2023). The total staff hours provided by all respondents was 25,466 per week. Medians for each type of employment (FT, PT, Casual, etc) have increased by 1 staff member.

As these census respondents made up 66% of the sector, the estimated workforce of 155 centres is 1,547 employees working an estimated total of 31,594 hours per week (1,642,888 hours per year). This is an increase from 1533 staff and 25891 hours per week in 2022. While the number of employees demonstrates only a marginal increase, a comparison of employee types suggests that the sector decreased the number of contractors and increased the number of part-time employees (**Table 10**).

FIGURE 40

Identified Gender breakdown of staff of Neighbourhood Centres in 2023



This is consistent with a funding uplift survey conducted by DTATSIPCA in late 2023, in which 80% of Centres employed more staff and 76% of Centres increased hours for existing staff. The data indicates that the sector was involved in less contracting of employees and casual tutors, and more secure forms of employment in full time, part time and casual positions.

Additional census questions were added for the first time in 2023 to gather data on the gender of Centre employees. Census respondents were asked how many staff identify in the categories of female, male, gender diverse, and prefer not to say, with the responses indicated in Figure 40.

It must be noted that this question does not directly ask employees how they identify their gender but asked

the census respondent (usually the Centre coordinator) to provide data about how their staff identify. The data gathered is generally consistent with other datasets gathered on the human services sector with women making up the majority at 83% of the workforce. Data obtained from the first census in 2020 indicates that 79% of managerial positions in Centres are also made up of women. These percentages indicate that the funding uplift for the sector has resulted in increased employment and managerial opportunities for women supporting the Queensland Women's Strategy¹⁹. Further exploration of workforce diversity could be explored in future censuses, including an analysis of workforce pipelines.

TABLE 10

Number of Staff Working in Neighbourhood Centres in 2023, Organised by Employment type, Extrapolated Weekly

Employment Type	Extrapolated Weekly 2022	Extrapolated Weekly 2023
Full Time	295	330
Part Time	576	687
Tutors - Casual or Sessional	128	97
Casual/Fixed Term Project Staff	264	278
Contractors	270	166

4.7 Student Placements

Census participants recorded 338 student placements in 2022-2023FY, with the source of student placements coming from the following:

- High School 30%
- Registered Training Organisation 14%
- Tafe 9%
- University 47%

Student placements are an essential component of developing workforce pipelines for Neighbourhood Centres. Extrapolated to the entire sector, NCs undertook an estimated 435 student placements over the year, providing significant mentoring and training to potential new staff members. This includes an estimated 210 student placements at a university level with Centres attracting many placements from degrees such as Human Services, Social Work, Social Science and Community Services.

Centres across all demographics saw increases in the median number of student placements. Metropolitan areas saw the largest increases from high schools and universities, increasing from a median of 1 high school student and 2 university students in 2022. Other demographics saw an increase of at least one student across student types with the exception of small rural locations that saw a decrease in Tafe and University placements.

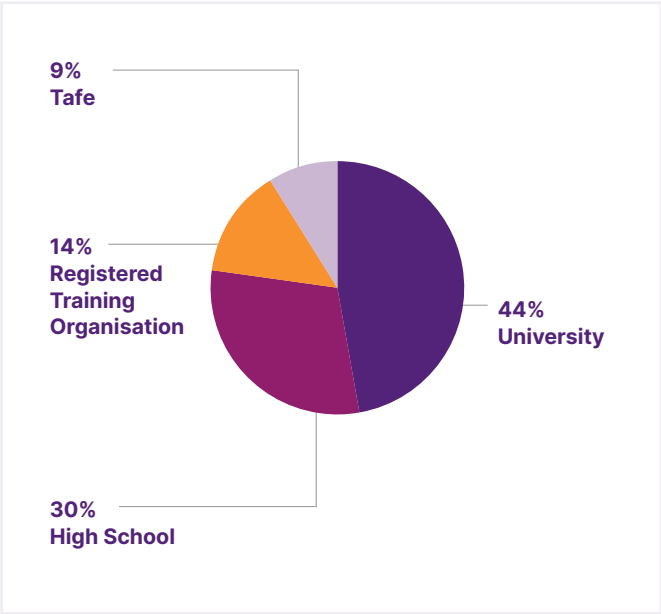
TABLE 11

Median student placements per Neighbourhood Centre in 2023

Location	High School	RTO	Tafe	University
Rural (population below 3,000)	2	2	0	0
Rural (population between 3,000 and 10,000)	2	2	1	1
Regional/Rural (population greater than 10,000)	2	2	2	2
Metropolitan	3	2	2	4

FIGURE 41

Source of Neighbourhood Centre Student Placements in 2023



This is consistent with feedback from Centres in small rural and remote locations that struggle to recruit both students and staff due to geographical location, limited housing options and access to tertiary education.

5. Calculable Community Value of Sector

5.0 Summary

Before attempting a community value calculation on the sector, it must be acknowledged that the most important aspect of Neighbourhood Centres and their impact on individuals and communities is immeasurable. This census cannot fully measure a warm welcome and community pride, nor can it capture a sense of belonging or local leadership development. It cannot measure an otherwise silent community voice that is heard through advocacy. It does not scale increased personal independence. The importance of local governance, community resources, being embedded in neighbourhoods and fostering community resilience cannot be numbered or costed. The worth of human connection and neighbourhoods implementing resident-led action is quantifiably intangible. The immediate help offered during a weather-related or personal disaster has meaning beyond the dollar value of ER.

With this in mind, Community Value from Participation, Volunteering, ER and community services were combined and extrapolated to 155 funded and unfunded Centres in accordance with calculations developed by Neighbourhood Houses Victoria and listed in **Appendix B**.

The overall community value produced by the Qld Neighbourhood Centre sector annually is estimated to be over \$135 million.

These calculations are conservative estimates on the overall work of Centres in Qld and do not reflect all Centre activities or their flow on economic or social benefits.

This year's calculations included new added Fee-for-Service Values. This makes Qld's value calculations consistent with Neighbourhood Houses Victoria.

Centre community values that received funding from DTATSI PCA were measured against their Qld Government funding amounts for the 2022-2023FY.

TABLE 12

A Breakdown of Overall Community Values from Queensland Neighbourhood Centres in 2023

	Community Value
Participant Activities	\$39,651,186
Volunteer Replacement Value	\$37,590,832
Food Value	\$25,774,997
Social Enterprise & Fee for Service Value	\$ 13,051,394
Community Room Hire	\$ 10,703,448
Other services (IT, resumes, lunches, frozen foods)	\$ 4,515,880
Non-food ER Value:	\$ 3,857,532
Tax Help Services	\$ 170,100
Auspicing Value	\$115,108
TOTAL	\$135,430,476

HIGHLIGHT

Overall Community Value: \$135 million

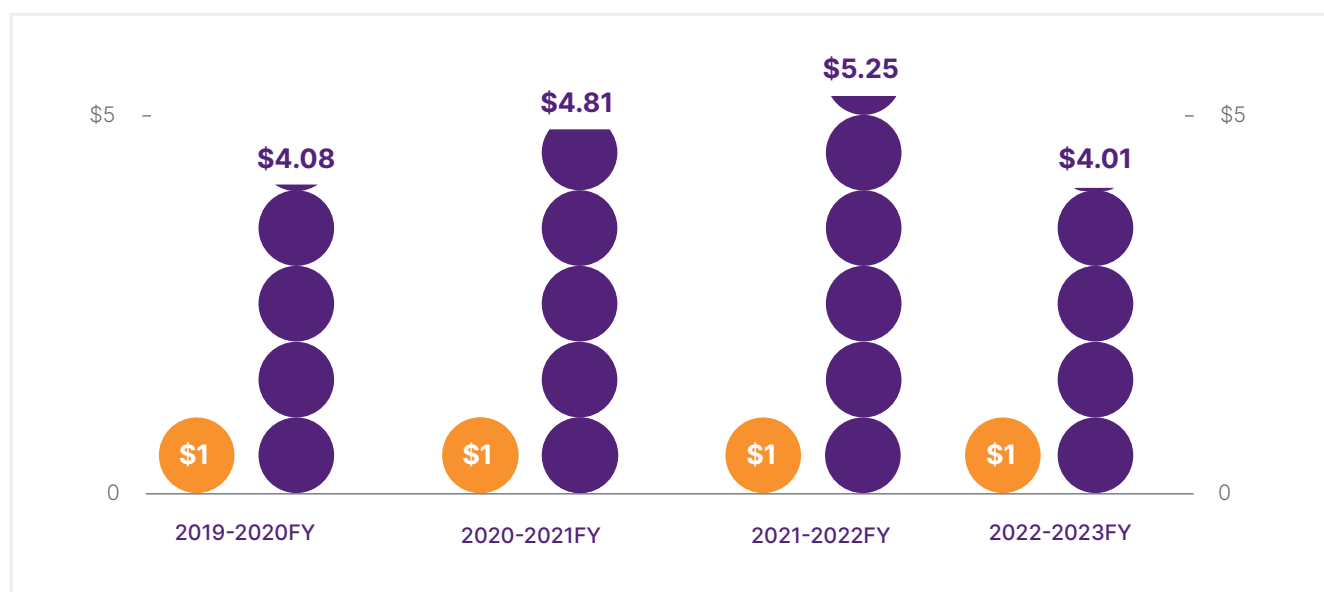
The overall community value produced by the Queensland Neighbourhood Centre Sector annually is estimated to be over \$135 million.

For every \$1 invested, \$4.09 produced

For every \$1 of investment in Neighbourhood Centre Program funding, \$4.09 is produced in community value.

FIGURE 42

Community Value (\$) delivered per \$1 invested into the Neighbourhood Centre Program by the Queensland Government each year from 2020 to 2023



While this is a reduction from the value of \$5.25 in 2023, attention is drawn to the funding uplift received by Centres during this period. Despite an almost double in funding for the sector, social returns have increased dramatically producing a return of a similar level of \$4.08 in the first sector census in 2020.

Appendix

Appendix A: Census Participant types and Extrapolation Techniques

In order to obtain an estimate of the entire Neighbourhood Centre sector across Qld, census data was extrapolated to the total number of Centres using medians. Medians for census results were calculated in the following four categories and expanded to Centres that did not participate in the census. It is noted that these numbers can vary from year to year depending on which NCs participate in the census.

TABLE A.1

Number of Neighbourhood Centres by Population Type in 2023

Population	Survey Responses	Missing Responses	Total NCCs
Metropolitan	30	19	49
Regional/Rural (above 10000)	29	8	47
Rural (3000-10000)	23	16	38
Rural (Under 3000)	7	10	21
TOTAL			155

For the purposes of this census, it was determined that these population categories were a preferable measure in comparison to the Remoteness Index of Australia. Volunteer and participant numbers are more accurately predicted by local community size rather than the communities' access to services by geographic location, as measured in the Remoteness Index. This also noted that some Neighbourhood Centre populations sizes have changed from 2016 figures in the 2021 ABS census data as well as slight variation in how Centres self-identify.

Appendix B: Community Value Calculation Methods

Social Connection

In 2018, Deloitte Access Economics produced a report²⁰ that determined a monetary value for the community connection work of Morwell Neighbourhood House. The method, detailed in the report, uses existing research to calculate the contribution of community connection to a Quality-Adjusted-Life-Years (QALYs)²¹. Quality-Adjusted-Life-Years is the most widely used approach for estimating quality of life benefits in economic evaluations²².

Different methods have been used to estimate the number of people who may potentially obtain social connection benefits. The 2018 report assumed that 50% of the unique visitors to the Neighbourhood Centre were one off or infrequent for the purpose of their calculations. Appendix C of their report outlines the detail of their method.

The \$ Values are expressed in 2023 equivalents, i.e., Quality Adjusted Life Year value of \$227,000²³, which is consistent with Deloitte's method.

The value of increased social connection is calculated using this formula:

Number of participants in activities and volunteers X 1 QALY (\$227,000) X percentage of people identifying a social connection benefit (56.8%) X contribution of social connection to a QALY (3.84%) X the extent to which contribution of social connection to a QALY can be attributed to attending the Neighbourhood Centre (28.57%).

The use of the participants in programmed activities as the basis for the calculation is conservative as it excludes regular attendees that receive a connection benefit through drop in, food relief or other non-program activities.

Deloitte further calculate the value of increased connection through increased participation in the broader community due to participation at the Neighbourhood Centre. This was calculated using the formula above for 10% of the participants.

Emergency Relief

Food and groceries

The value to community of emergency food relief is based on work undertaken by Foodbank in Australia. Their social return on investment analysis determined that food relief was valued at an average \$20.05 per kilogram of food in 2014 dollars. This valuation included the value of:

- Improved physical health (children)
- Better performance at school (students)
- Better social relationships
- Increased sense of self-worth
- Improved standard of living
- Improved physical health
- Increased emotional wellbeing
- Reduced waste and greenhouse emissions

While the cost of food has increased since 2014, the change in value of the social benefits is unclear. For this reason, we have retained the \$20.05 figure making this a conservative evaluation.

The formula for calculating the community value of food and groceries is:

$$\text{Number of Kgs distributed for an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)} \times \$20.05$$

Food vouchers

Based on the dollar value of vouchers given out. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the benefit derived from accessing food such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children etc.

The formula for calculating the community value of food vouchers is:

$$\text{Total \$ value of food vouchers distributed in an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)}$$

Cash/prepaid or gift cards

Based on the dollar value of cash or gift cards given out. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the benefit derived from items purchased such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children, added value to the economy etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of cash/prepaid or gift cards is:

$$\text{Total \$ value of cash/prepaid or gift cards distributed in an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)}$$

Fuel Vouchers

Based on the dollar value of vouchers given out. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the benefit derived from increased access to transport or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for transport such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children etc. It also does not include benefits to the local economy.

The formula used for calculating the community value of fuel vouchers is:

$$\text{Total \$ value of fuel vouchers distributed in an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)}$$

Bill payments

Based on the dollar value of bills paid by the Neighbourhood Centre for individuals in need. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the benefit derived from increased access to services for which bills were paid or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for transport such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children etc. It also does not include benefits to the broader economy.

The formula used for calculating the community value of bill payments is:

$$\text{Total \$ value of participants' bills paid in an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)}$$

Public transport cards

Based on the dollar value of public transport cards given out. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the benefit derived from increased access to transport or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for transport such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of public transport cards is:

Total \$ value of public transport cards distributed in an average month X 12 (months)

Clothing

The community value of providing clothing is based on the dollar value of clothing given out. New clothing is valued at replacement cost whereas second-hand clothing is based on resale value such as in an opportunity shop. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the benefit derived from increased access to clothing such as improved confidence and sense of wellbeing or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for clothing such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of clothing is:

Total \$ value of clothing distributed in an average month X 12 (months)

Personal hygiene items

The community value of providing personal hygiene items is based on the dollar value of personal hygiene items distributed. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the benefit derived from increased access to personal hygiene items such as improved confidence and sense of wellbeing or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for personal hygiene items such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of personal hygiene items is:

Total \$ value of personal hygiene items distributed in an average month X 12 (months)

Tax help

Based on the cost of the cheapest commercial tax service found online at \$100 per tax return. This is a conservative valuation as many tax help clients have multiple and/or complex returns which attract additional fees at commercial tax service providers. The formula used for calculating the community value of Tax Help is:

Total number of tax returns lodged in 2023 x \$100

Community lunch, frozen or other meals

The community value of offering community lunch, frozen or other meals is based on the cost of purchasing a meal commercially, this has been benchmarked at \$10 per meal. This is benchmarked based on the prices quoted by ING, and numbeo.com²⁵ ranging from \$13 to \$25. This is discounted to \$10 per meal to account for regional price variation.

While many meals provided at community lunches are likely to be a form of ER, participants may attend community lunches for other reasons such as for company or a lack of cooking skills. Because we are unable to distinguish between the two, meals provided are not valued as ER.

The formula used for calculating the community value of community lunches, frozen or other meals is:

Total number of individual meals served/provided in an average month x 12 months x \$10

School aged breakfast clubs

The value to community of food provided through school breakfast clubs is based on work undertaken by Foodbank in Australia²⁶. Their social return on investment analysis determined that school breakfast clubs were valued at an average \$110 per kilogram of food in 2014 dollars. This valuation included the value of:

- Improved physical health (children)
- Better performance at school (students)

Based on data from their report, the average breakfast is valued at \$31.40 in 2014 dollars. While the cost of food has increased since 2014, the change in value of the social benefits is unclear. For this reason, we have retained the \$31.40 figure making this a conservative evaluation.

The formula used for calculating the community value of school aged breakfast programs is: Total number of individual breakfasts served/provided in an average month x 10 months x \$31.40

Volunteering

Volunteering value is based on the replacement cost of volunteers' labour. This is valued from the "Volunteer Replacement Cost Calculator" for volunteers aged 55 -64²⁷. According to Volunteering Queensland's calculator, 1 hour of volunteering per week extrapolates to \$2582.32 annually.

The formula for calculating the community value of volunteering is:

Number of volunteer hours undertaken per week X \$2582.32

The valuation does not include the value of the services provided as a result of volunteering or the contribution to the economy and taxation from participating in volunteering, e.g. cost of travel to the place of volunteering.

Services

Except for school breakfast clubs, service valuations in this section do not include additional benefits from the service such as improved health, job prospects or employment nor the auspiced community groups' outcomes. This is due to the absence of appropriate research that quantifies these benefits.

Facilities Usage

The community value of facilities usage is based on the number of hours of room use by external groups and organisations per month and the cost of hiring an equivalent space locally as determined by each Neighbourhood Centre. This figure reflects value provided to the community rather than income received as rooms and facilities are often made available to community groups at heavily discounted rates or gratis. The value also does not include the benefits to community of the room use activity e.g., improved health, improved access to information or services, reduced cost of services, increased economic activity etc relative to the activity type provided.

The formula used for calculating the community value of room hire is:

Total number of hours of room hire X 12months X cost per hour of local equivalent (either supplied or \$30).

Internet/computer usage

The community value of internet/ computer usage is based on the number of hours of internet or computer use by individuals in an average month. This is benchmarked to the cost of a commercially available equivalent i.e., internet kiosk regardless of whether a commercial alternative is available. Note that free Wi-Fi is not an equivalent as there is no support or equipment made available. Commercial rates from \$3-\$5²⁸ have been benchmarked. The lower rate is used to account for the variation in the equipment and software provided. The rate does not include non-market benefits such as family connection, benefits from accessing or managing government services, etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of internet/computer use is:

Total number of hours of internet/computer in average month x 12 months X \$2

Resume assistance

Based on the cost of a resume service for a fee. The fee was benchmarked at the median price of \$50 on airtasker.com.²⁹ The value was discounted to \$30 to account for the fact that NCCs may provide a participant with assistance in developing a resume rather than creating a full resume as a service.

The formula used for calculating the community value of resume assistance is:

$$\text{Total number of resumes assisted with in an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)} \times \$30$$

Auspicing other organisations

The community value of auspicing other organisations is based on the cost of purchasing public liability cover which groups would have to take out if they were not covered by the Neighbourhood Centre under auspicing arrangements. The price is benchmarked at over \$632.46 for annual cover provided by Local Community Insurance Services for a unincorporated community association.³⁰

The formula used for calculating the community value of auspicing other organisations is:

$$\text{Total number of organisations auspiced} \times \$632.46$$

Social enterprises

The community value of running social enterprises is based on the value of sales over the financial year from goods and services through Neighbourhood House run community enterprises. This reflects the market value of the goods and services provided. It does not include additional value generated such as avoided landfill, value of training and work experience, economic multipliers or the value of services or activities any profits support.

The formula used for calculating the community value of auspicing other organisations is:

$$\text{The formula used: Total \$ value of social enterprise sales}$$

Fee for service activities

The value to community of fee for service activities is based on the actual fees paid for activities undertaken by community members where the activity was not subsidised by grants or third parties other than NDIS. Many Neighbourhood Centre activities are provided at low cost and therefore the value is conservative as it is likely less than the replacement value if the activity was undertaken with a commercial or for-profit provider. The formula used for calculating the fee for service activities is:

$$\text{Total value of fee for service activities from the period covered by the applicable annual report}$$

Community value relative to inputs

Community value for every \$1 of Neighbourhood Centre Funding

Shows the total calculable community value from the organisation for each dollar of Neighbourhood Centre funding received. The Neighbourhood Centre program funding provides the platform to develop and attract funding for the various activities the organisation undertakes.

The formula used for calculating the community value for each dollar of DCHDE Funding is:

$$\text{Total community value} / \text{total Neighbourhood Centre funding for 2022/23}$$

Community value for every \$1 of income

Shows the total calculable community value from the organisation for each dollar of income received.

The formula used for calculating the community value for each dollar of Neighbourhood Centre Funding is:

$$\text{Total community value} / \text{total annual funding for 2022/2023}$$

End Notes

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Thank you

Neighbourhood Centres Queensland would like to thank the people and Centres who participated in the survey, without whom this report would not have been possible.

Participating Centres

Annerley Community Service	Cooktown District Community Centre
Bay Islands Community Services	Darra Community Centre (Vietnamese Community in Australia)
Beaudesert Community Centre (Beaucare)	Discovery Coast Community Service
Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre	Donald Simpson Community Centre Ltd
Belong Acacia Ridge Community Support	Dysart Community Support Group Inc
Benarrawa Community Development Association	East Creek Neighbourhood Centre
Better Together Atherton Tablelands	ECHO Malanda Empowering Services
Birch Street Community Hub	Elorac Place
Blackall Neighbourhood Centre	Fassifern Community Centre
Bowen Neighbourhood Centre	Gailes Community House
Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre	Garbutt Community Centre
Buai Mudh Neighbourhood and Community Centre	Gladstone Neighbourhood Centre
Bulimba Community Centre	Glasshouse Mountains Neighbourhood Centre
Bundaberg and District Neighbourhood Centre	Graham House Community Centre
Burdekin Neighbourhood Centre Association	Granite Belt Neighbourhood Centre
Caboolture Neighbourhood Centre	Gympie Community Place
Caloundra Community Centre	Hambleton House Community Centre
Cannon Hill Community Centre	Harlaxton Neighbourhood Centre
Care Goondiwindi Association	Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre
Centacare Community Connections Kingaroy	Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre
Charleville Neighbourhood Centre	HUB Neighbourhood Centre
Childers Neighbourhood Centre	Kallangur Community Centre (Encircle)
Chinchilla Community Support Service	Kin Kin Community House
CO.AS.IT. Community Services Ltd.	Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre
Collinsville Community Association	Kyabra Community Centre
Community Support Centre Innisfail	

Laidley Community Centre	Proposect CommunityServices
Leichhardt One Mile Community Centre	Proserpine Community Centre Association
Livingstone Community Centre	Rainbow Beach Community Centre
Logan East Community Neighbourhood Centre	Redcliffe Neighbourhood Centre
Logan Village Community Centre	Rosewood and District Support Centre
Maleny Neighbourhood Centre	SANDBAG Community Centres and Services
Manoora Community Centre	Sarina Neighbourhood Centre
Mareeba Community Centre	Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre
Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre	Springfield Lakes Community Centre
Millmerran Community Support Service	St David's Neighbourhood Centre
Monto Neighbourhood Centre	Tara Neighbourhood Centre
Mossman Community Centre	The Community Place
Mt Gravatt Community Centre	The Neighbourhood Hub (George Street)
Mt Isa Neighbourhood Centre	Upper Ross Community Centre
Nambour Community Centre	Varsity Lakes Community Resource Centre (Jim Harris Park)
Nerang Neighbourhood Centre	Village Community Services Inc
New Farm Neighbourhood Centre	West End Community House
Normanton Neighbourhood Centre	Whitsunday Neighbourhood Centre
North Burnett Community Service	Wilsonton Heights Community Centre
North Townsville Community Hub (NOTCH)	Winton Neighbourhood Centre
North West Brisbane Community Hub	Wynnum Community Centre
Northside Connect	Yarrabilba Community Centre - The Buzz
Palm Beach Neighbourhood Centre	Yeronga Community Centre
Picabeen Community Centre	YMCA Springfield Central Community Centre
Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre	Zillmere Community Centre
Port Douglas Community Services Network	

