



PROGRESS REPORT 2023

JULY - DECEMBER


BELCONNEN – A VILLAGE FOR EVERY CHILD

Vision

All children in Belconnen are physically healthy, socially, and emotionally strong and ready to engage fully in learning and life.

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1

Prioritising equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

2

Supporting Aboriginal self-determination.

Commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

The Village initiative, including individual Leadership Group and Working Group members, commit to embed the following principles in our work so that they are central to our practice.

3

Listening to and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and responding through designing actions together.

4

Sharing and celebrating together.

5

Working together to share the cultural load.

Village is proud to partner with Yerrabi Yurwang to deliver the Commonwealth Government's Connected Beginnings Program. Together we are strengthening the way we work for self determination of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Collective change only happens because of the contribution and commitment of everyone involved. Village has been proud to work alongside these participating organisations.

Participating organisations



Glossary

ABS

Australian Bureau of Statistics

ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

AEDC

Australian Early Development Census

AIHW

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

ARACY

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth

Best Start

ACT Government's Best Start For Canberra's Children Strategy

CECA

Childrens Education and Care Assurance

CHS

Canberra Health Service

CRSC

Capital Region Community Services

CSD

ACT Community Services Directorate

CYPS

ACT Child and Youth Protection Services

Imagination Library

Dolly Parton Imagination Library Australia

ED

ACT Education Directorate

ECEC

Early Childhood Education and Care

MEL

Monitoring Evaluation and Learning

NDIS

National Disability Insurance Scheme

UCK

UnitingCare Kippax

Village

A Village For Every Child

Yerrabi Yurwang

Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation

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1. Executive Summary

This progress report presents the activities facilitated by Village from July to December 2023. Over the last six months there has been a shift to implementation of several key actions across the Working Groups. This reflects the initiative's ongoing growth and capacity to transition from planning agreed actions to delivering solid programs and products. Many of these are having an impact beyond Belconnen, showing that with the right investment, what is being delivered can be scaled.

The achievements demonstrate how the work of Village, as a community partner, can assist the ACT Government to deliver on its cross-directorate strategies, including the Best Start and Set Up for Success, Future of Education strategies.

In its three-year evaluation, Clear Horizon recommended three priorities for Village to continue its progress to scaling up as a place-based collective impact initiative:

- ✓ Deepen community inclusion, participation, and leadership.
- ✓ Ramp up the mutually reinforcing activities.
- ✓ Update the shared learning approach with evolving goals, prioritise outcome level evaluation for the high impact activities, and streamline data collection tools to continue reflective learning and monitoring.

The activities described in this report, specifically the work with ECECs and the ADHD Action group, demonstrate steps towards increasing the opportunities for people with lived experience to be involved. The implementation and delivery of projects, such as delivering the Community of Practice (CoP) and disseminating co-designed products such as the Pathways Map, is evidence of tangible and valued fruit of the collective activities.

In the last six months, Village has implemented data capture tools, including output and impact logs linking key activities to outcomes and focus areas. This has enabled Village to report and communicate using infographics to show the reach and impact of its efforts.

In addition to being able to begin to tell the story and show the value of investing in a place-based community partnership approach, the work of Village has been publicly acknowledged by ACT Ministers and the Chief Minister.

This progress report contributes to the many Village artefacts that show the value of investment in a place-based collective approach to systems change. Alongside the Village Community Change Proposal, submitted to the ACT Government in December, the team trusts that these pieces of work will contribute to the Government's future cross-directorate systems change policy and investment strategies.





A Village for Every Child

Village believes that children are the heart of our community, and they deserve the best possible start to life.

It takes a Village to Raise a Child



Our Vision

All children in Belconnen are physically healthy, socially, and emotionally strong and ready to engage fully in learning and life.

2. Who we are

A Village for Every Child (Village) brings families, community members, child and family support organisations, education providers and government agencies together to improve:

- ✓ Awareness about early years development
- ✓ Connections between families and early years services
- ✓ The transition between early childhood education, preschools and schools

Village began its work in Belconnen in 2021 and uses a place-based collective impact approach. On the ground this looks like people across the early years ecosystem working together to understand what is happening for children and families and together generate actions that will create a more cohesive system that responds to their needs. By working together, the community is stronger, and therefore children have the best start to learning and life.

Village is funded by the Directorate of Education until 30 June 2024. It is supported by partners from across the early years sectors, including the Directorates of Health, Community Services, Canberra Health, and ACT Libraries. Village has attracted funding from philanthropic organisations to support Imagination Library. Village works closely with the Belconnen Community Services Network Coordinator and Southside Initiative.

These relationships and the investment in a dedicated coordinating backbone team has seen Village products, resources, and learnings scaled beyond Belconnen to the wider ACT region.

3. Linking the outcomes to action

Three outcomes

For children in Belconnen to be physically healthy, socially, and emotionally strong and ready to engage fully in learning and life, sectors involved in working with families and children need to work together to develop actions targeted to achieve specific outcomes. These actions will create changes in the eco-system that translate into positive outcomes for children, families, and the sector.

The Village backbone team and its supporting structures host, hold, and enable collective activity that contribute to creating three outcomes. Village's work seeks to create the systems change required to see these outcomes achieved.

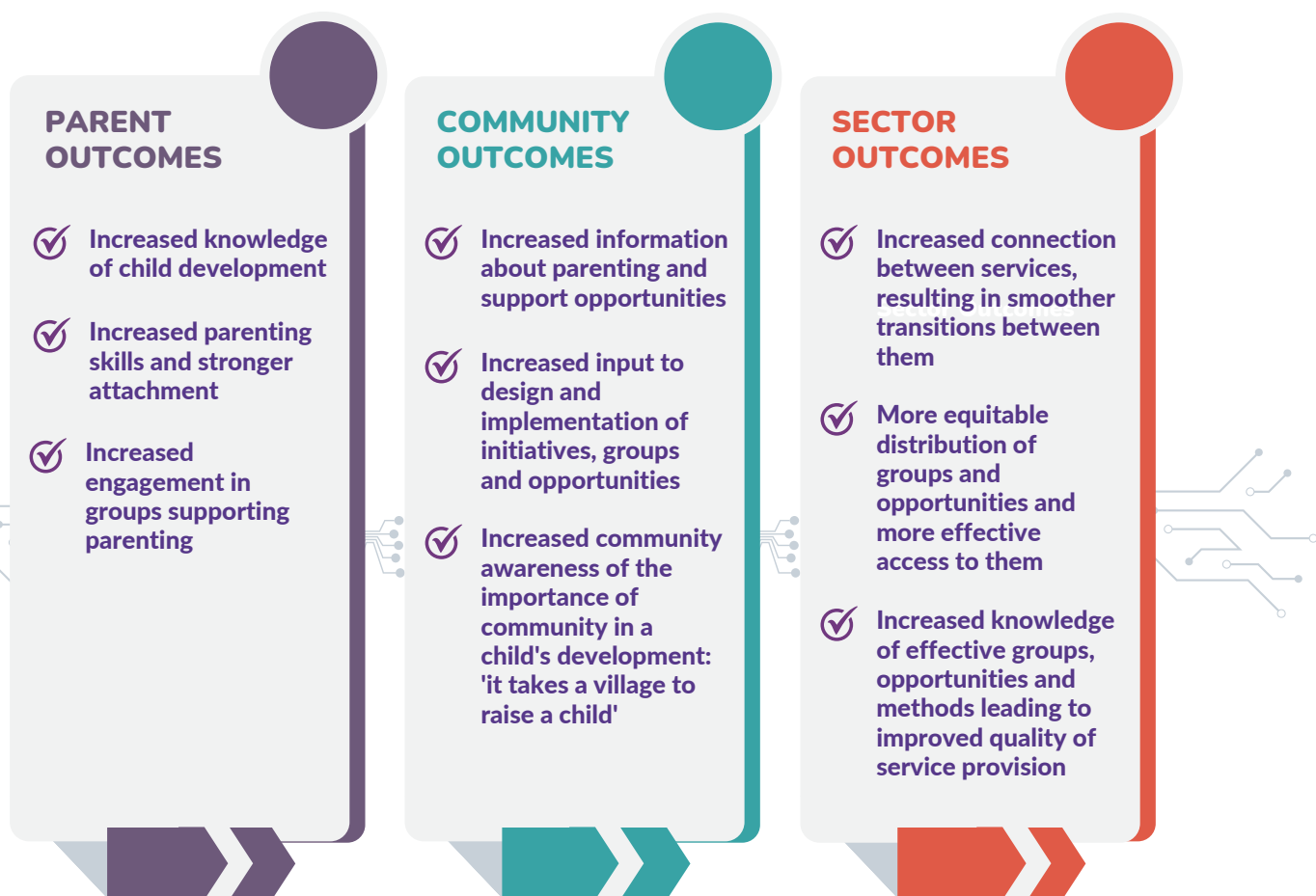


Diagram 1: A Village for Every Child Outcomes.

Four focus areas

Activities designed to deliver on these outcomes have been arranged into four focus areas.

- ① Improved service and school connection with families
- ② Improved transition to schools
- ③ Better data collection
- ④ Facilitating the conditions for change



4. Activity reports

The diagrams and accompanying narratives show the focus areas, objectives, and a snapshot of the key Village activities. The outcomes of some activities will map to more than one focus area. This shows the complexity of the issues that are being targeted. The activity reports are included in the focus area that most aligns with the activity's primary objectives.



Fourteen people from thirteen organisations participated in the Connections Working Group in the reporting period.

The infographics on pages 34-42 shows the early-stage impact of increased connections across the early years sector in Belconnen through Village activities including:

- ✓ Visits to early childhood education centres across Belconnen to share resources and collect qualitative information about the sector's needs and challenges.
- ✓ Facilitating the Early Years Community of Practice and Forum.

Actions that relate to this focus area that show early signs of impact include the work of the Village/Yerrabi Yurwang ADHD Action Group, the Early Years Community of Practice, Village visits to ECECs.

These are showcased below in snapshots that illustrate how they address the following Set Up For Success indicators:

- ✔ Increasing ECEC's use of transition practices for children transitioning out of their services.
- ✔ Increasing ECEC's capacity to support the diversity of needs in the community.
- ✔ Increasing early childhood educators access to professional learning and development.
- ✔ Increasing sharing of information between ECECs and schools.
- ✔ Demonstrated partnerships between ECEC services, schools, ACT Government services and community organisations.

They also contribute to the implementation of the Valuing Educators Values Children strategy, with the ECEC visits and report addressing the following strategy outcomes and indicators:

- ✔ Understanding of the sector including workforce pressures and needs.
- ✔ Increased access to learning and development opportunities.
- ✔ Improved partnerships information sharing and collaboration across the sector.
- ✔ Enabling professional learning network to increase learning and development opportunities, and collaboration across the profession.

ADHD Action Group

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ Over 100 survey responses providing rich data to inform an understanding of the issues and possible responses.
- ✓ Commitment of the group to act so that families are supported outside of the therapeutic and diagnostic response, including engaging community in co-design of the response.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ The range of people involved in the action group, across sectors and government directorates. Participants can see how they fit into the system and have bought into the shared agenda. This has moved to an ACT wide approach.
- ✓ Engagement of families through the survey response rate showing that this is an issue that people want to address.
- ✓ Three Child Family Centres will be the central sites to engage families in the codesign.

What are the opportunities for 2024?

- ✓ Moving into co-design and looking to authentically involve families with lived experience.
- ✓ Planning and implementing responses.
- ✓ Exploring research opportunities to partner with UC.

Early Years Community of Practice (CoP)

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ The first Community of Practice events with 40 attendees.
- ✓ Strong appetite from ECECs, schools, health, and community sector for a CoP.
- ✓ Implementation team (CSD, EACH, AEDC, Network Coordinator) committed to ensuring that the CoP is well structured, topical, professional, and fit for purpose.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ Acknowledgement by Minister Berry and Minister Stephen-Smith that the Community of Practice is meeting actions in the Best Start Strategy, Best Start Interim Action Plan – First 1,000 Days.
- ✓ Positive response from attendees.

What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ Commitment by the implementation team to offer bi-monthly CoP's with topics selected by attendees.
- ✓ Structure will provide information and opportunities for networking, sharing ideas, expertise and creating a supportive space for practitioners to reduce some of the load they experience in their workplaces.
- ✓ The next two CoPs will do a deep dive into understanding the causes and experience of children with complex behaviours, as well as learn about strategies and approaches to effectively support children experiencing these behaviours. These sessions will be led by a Lecturer in Occupational Therapy, an Occupational Therapist, both from the University of Canberra, and an early years Educator.

Village facilitated the formation of a partnership between Village, CSD and the Network Coordinator for Belconnen, CRCS to facilitate the CoPs. The CoP has a focus on holistic child development including wellbeing, education, disability, and the social determinants of health.

The first Community of Practice was delivered to over 40 teachers, educators, community service providers and health professionals. The topic - Courageous Conversations, focused on Child development and tips to effectively communicate concerns with families – spoken to by guest speaker Community Capacity Building Lead, EACH ACT.



Village plays an important role in delivering the ACT Government's Best Start First 1000 Days Strategy particularly in the areas of health literacy, support and connection through the CoP and collective impact across multiple sectors.

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Engaging the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector in Belconnen

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ Connections with over 21 Belconnen ECECs.
- ✓ The welcome received from the ECECs and support for the work of Village (including resources and activities). Some meetings went overtime due to the level of engagement.
- ✓ Hearing the sector's incredible commitment to supporting children and families in the best way they can, and therefore their strong appetite to learn, understand and be involved in initiatives like Village.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ The resources were well received and are being used and shared with families.
- ✓ Several ECECs that were not aware of or using the Directorate of Education Continuity and Transitioning Statement resources are now using them.

What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ Release of the Village report drawing together the themes from the conversations with ECECs and providing to stakeholders to contribute on the ground findings to the implementation of the Directorate of Education's ECEC workforce strategy.
- ✓ Looking at the opportunity to respond to the needs analysis to support ECEC workforce.

“This is like Christmas” ECEC Director’s response on receiving the information pack.



In the second half of 2023, Village initiated contact with the 33 ECECs across Belconnen, establishing connections with 22 ECECs by end of November. The goal of these conversations was to share information about Village resources and opportunities and gather insights from ECECs into the challenges being faced by children, families, and Educators, specifically relating to child development.

This process enabled relationship building, by listening to what ECEC managers and educators are seeing and experiencing locally, across the system and beyond, including the impact of recent reforms. Understanding the experiences of those within the system is core to ensuring Village can be responsive to community needs and effectively inform and direct its efforts to improve connections between families and services and transitions to school.

Listening to the voices of ECEC managers and staff, including what they recommend for creating the most positive impacts in their work with families and children, is critical for connecting government policy with on-the-ground reality. Village has brought together this qualitative information with a needs assessment in a report, *Engaging the ECEC Sector in Belconnen*.

The conversations highlight the rising pressures experienced by ECECs, and the rich opportunity afforded by Village to connect ECECs for learning and networking purposes and provide relevant and timely information about services available (e.g., through Village Resource Packs).

The report explores the following themes:

Needs of staff, such as support and training/ upskilling across a range of areas e.g.,

- ✓ Managing difficult conversations with families about the developmental needs of their child.
- ✓ Strategies for identifying and managing ADHD in children.
- ✓ Strategies for identifying early signs of neurodiversity in children.
- ✓ Understanding AEDC data/information.

Needs of children, such as:

- ✓ Support for children with health, development, social/emotional and disability challenges, and complex behaviour, including for children with ADHD and autism spectrum disorders.
- ✓ Resilience building.

Needs of families, such as:

- ✓ Information on the AEDC results.
- ✓ Understanding child development to assist with recognition and acceptance of a child with additional needs.
- ✓ Emotional support for separated or separating parents, and children who are transitioning between separating/ed parents.

Imagination Library

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ Attracted funding from three funding partners to the value of more than \$15,000 for 169 children to participate for a minimum of two years (of which \$5,000 was secured by an enrolling health partner).
- ✓ Strong and committed implementation group and enrolling partners.
- ✓ Strategy adopted to target children and families that will most benefit from involvement and develop a wraparound approach.
- ✓ The launch was attended by the Minister for Education, government officials, philanthropists, Village partners and Belconnen families.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ 112 children enrolled.
- ✓ Catalysing new support offerings for families including playgroup and Story Time sessions at the library.

What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ Expansion into more suburbs across Belconnen and beyond.
- ✓ Formation of a fundraising group to assist with attracting further resources.
- ✓ Articulating and evaluating the wraparound service model.



For more information and stories about Imagination Library and the launch please visit [village website](#).

2.6 M

CHILDREN REGISTERED WORLD WIDE

218 M

BOOKS GIFTED WORLD WIDE

05

COUNTRIES

10

YEARS IN AUSTRALIA

146

CHILDREN REGISTERED IN KIPPAX

14

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

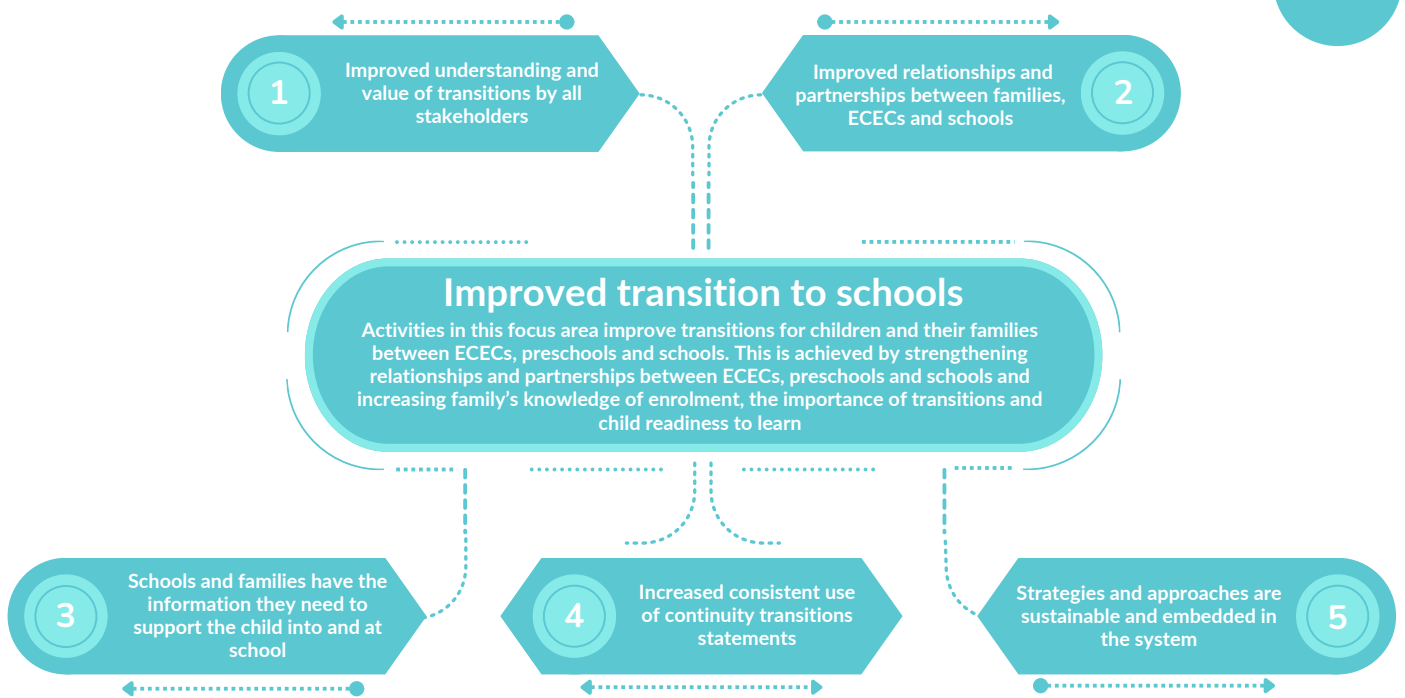
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SUBURBS IN BELCONNEN

10

ENROLLING PARTNERS

Focus Area Two



Eleven people from seven organisations participated in the Transitions Working Group in the reporting period. There has been a change in membership, with a champion school leader leaving at the end of 2023. However, this member brought his replacement to the last meeting to give a handover. This shows the value of the working group to those involved.

The infographics on pages 34-42 show the early-stage impact of improved transition to schools across the early years sector in Belconnen through Village activities including dissemination data for the child development poster and the families pathways map. Village has approached the Directorate of Education for data to measure increased use of transitions resources in Belconnen. Downloads of the resources from the Directorate's website could be a proxy indicator for the effectiveness of visits to ECECs and education about the resources. This data has not been made available for this report.

Actions that relate to this focus area that show early signs of impact include the transitions network and the transitions campaign products.

These are showcased below and address the following Set Up For Success indicators:

- ✓ Increasing ECEC's use of transition practices for children transitioning out of their services.
- ✓ Increasing sharing of information between ECECs and schools.
- ✓ Demonstrated partnerships between ECEC services, schools, ACT Government services and community organisations.

The child development resources that are being developed and disseminated as part of the improved transitions campaign are also meeting strategic objectives of the Best Start Strategy.

The Improved Transitions Campaign

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ Co-design of products across experts, lived experience and policy areas to create a suite of child development and transitions resources informed by and relevant to the local community.
- ✓ Mobilising the skills across sectors to produce quality products in a timely way.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ Village relationships and networks, particularly with ECECs, have enabled a broad dissemination to services and families.
- ✓ Inclusion of the poster and pathways map in the ACT First 1,000 Days Conference attendee packs in November. This resulted in a 164% increase in website views in November.
- ✓ Dissemination of products across health, education, community services and beyond. CECA included Village resources in its alert.
- ✓ Positive feedback from users of the products.

What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ Consolidating a way of approaching cross sector and cross directorate awareness campaigns that engage families, communities, experts, and policy areas.
- ✓ Creating a community campaign strategy to guide the dissemination of the child development products and resources.

The aim of the Improved Transitions Campaign is to improve transitions for children and families into formal schooling. The campaign was developed in response to insights from partner ECECs and schools about the experience of families and knowledge gaps. Emerging from these conversations were three clear themes which were developed into three phases, each having a video and accompanying resources which are available on the Village website and were disseminated through the partner ECECs communication platforms.

The three phases are:

- ✓ Enrolment
- ✓ Transitions
- ✓ Child development

Village has received the following feedback from ECEC's and schools in Belconnen about the transitions resources disseminated in 2023. These stories show that Village's engagement and facilitation of the campaign has resulted in changes in the way ECECs work and how they understand the importance of connecting with schools about transition. We have heard that:

- ✓ Several were not aware of the Continuity and Transitioning Statement and resources.
- ✓ One large ECEC provider has changed the reporting requirements of directors to capture information about transitions on a monthly basis.

The child development resources have been released as they are finalised. The infographics show the breadth of dissemination. Village has also recorded the informal sharing of the child development poster and family pathway map. We have heard stories from the following stakeholders in the education, health and community sectors which demonstrate the value of the products.

- ✓ An emergency doctor requested a copy of the family pathways map and has suggested it be made available across the hospitals and walk in clinics.
- ✓ A program director in integrated care reached out to access the family pathways map for distribution to the Paediatric Liaison and Navigation Service team.
- ✓ Canberra Health Services shared the families pathways map to families on its waiting list.
- ✓ The families pathways map will be included by a local school in its family induction pack.
- ✓ A nurse in the maternal child health team noticed the development poster in a child and family centre and contacted Village for 30 copies to display in all maternal and child health clinics across Canberra.
- ✓ Educators at a local ECEC fed back to a Leadership Group member that having the child development poster helped them to educate parents about the Blue Book.

Improved Transitions Network

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ The Working Group is engaged and committed to designing meaningful events that meet the interests and needs of ECECs and schools.
- ✓ Two network events were held attracting 60 staff from schools, ECECs and the Preschools Pathways Program.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ Acknowledgement of the need for transitions networking as until now, there has not been activities to connect sectors for better experience of transition to school for families and children.
- ✓ Increased connection between schools and ECECs.
- ✓ Willingness to share what is working between schools and ECECs, increasing understanding and value of the work that ECECs do to support transition, increasing mutual respect between schools and ECECs.
- ✓ Increased connection of Village to ECECs and primary schools which has enabled increased opportunity to provide suite of education and child development resources.
- ✓ Appetite and appreciation of breadth and quality of resources.

What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ Increase sharing of what is working, including sharing examples from ECECs.
- ✓ Planning the year and responding to the needs of ECECs and schools to support transition across the year. For example, the first event will include reflecting on the experience of transition for ECECs and schools.
- ✓ Involving families in the conversation about what supports them to transition.

Since late 2022, Village has hosted a quarterly networking event, bringing together ECEC Educators and primary school teachers. The key goals of the events are to:

- ✓ Foster relationships.
- ✓ Form partnerships.
- ✓ Share the role of supporting children and families in the transition process.

Some of the impacts and highlights we have heard include:

- ✓ An increase in schools and ECECs reaching out to each other resulting in collaborating with other staff and making new connections.
- ✓ Appreciation that the events provide an opportunity to hear perspectives from and understand the challenges that schools are facing and what their requirements are for transitioning children.
- ✓ The opportunity for networking and sharing resources, practices that ECECs and schools have introduced to support transitions.
- ✓ Making a connection with Preschool Pathway Partners and an increased understanding of their role.
- ✓ The opportunity for schools to see and value how much knowledge ECECs have about children transitioning.



Participants at one of the Transitions Network event

The most useful thing I gained from the network was getting an understanding from schools as to what information would be useful to know in the transition statements and learning that some schools already have social stories established and that we can access them.

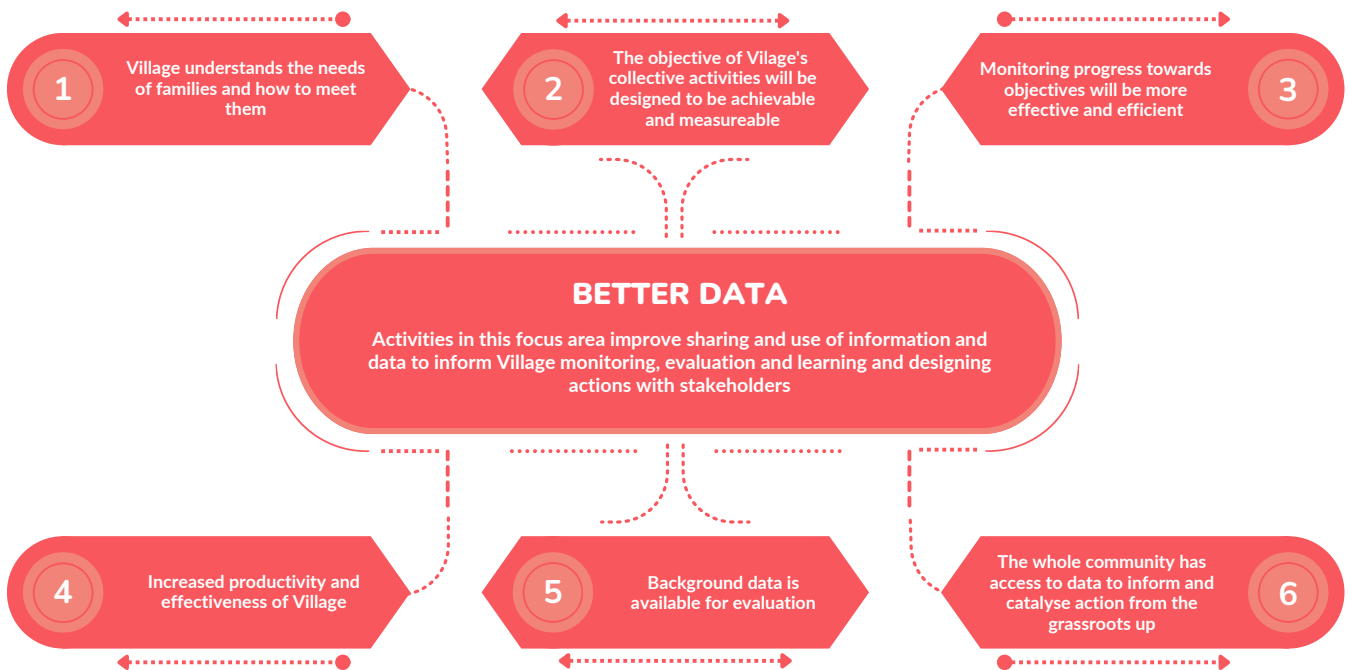
ECEC Educator



It was great, I was able to meet teachers from schools I had no connection with and two of them rang me the next day to organise to visit our centre to meet and discuss some of the children transitioning to their school.

ECEC-Preschool Educator

Focus Area Three



In this reporting period, over 200 community members have contributed to the qualitative data collection exercises. The Better Data Working Group farewelled three of its members and welcomed a new representative from ARACY. The Working Group is now focused on finalising the community profile.

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ Over 100 responses to the community conversations activities and survey and over 100 responses to the ADHD Action Group's survey.
- ✓ Conversations with data custodians and policy makers about why community access to data is critical for systems change.
- ✓ Completing mapping of data for the indicators and working through what data is available publicly.
- ✓ Seeing the community profile coming to life.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ Community members indicating on the survey that they would like to be more involved in Village's work.
- ✓ Accessing the ACT Kindergarten Health Check data that hasn't been released at place level before.

What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ Launching the community profile and community conversations report.
- ✓ Partnering with CSD to raise the profile of the importance of the AEDC census.

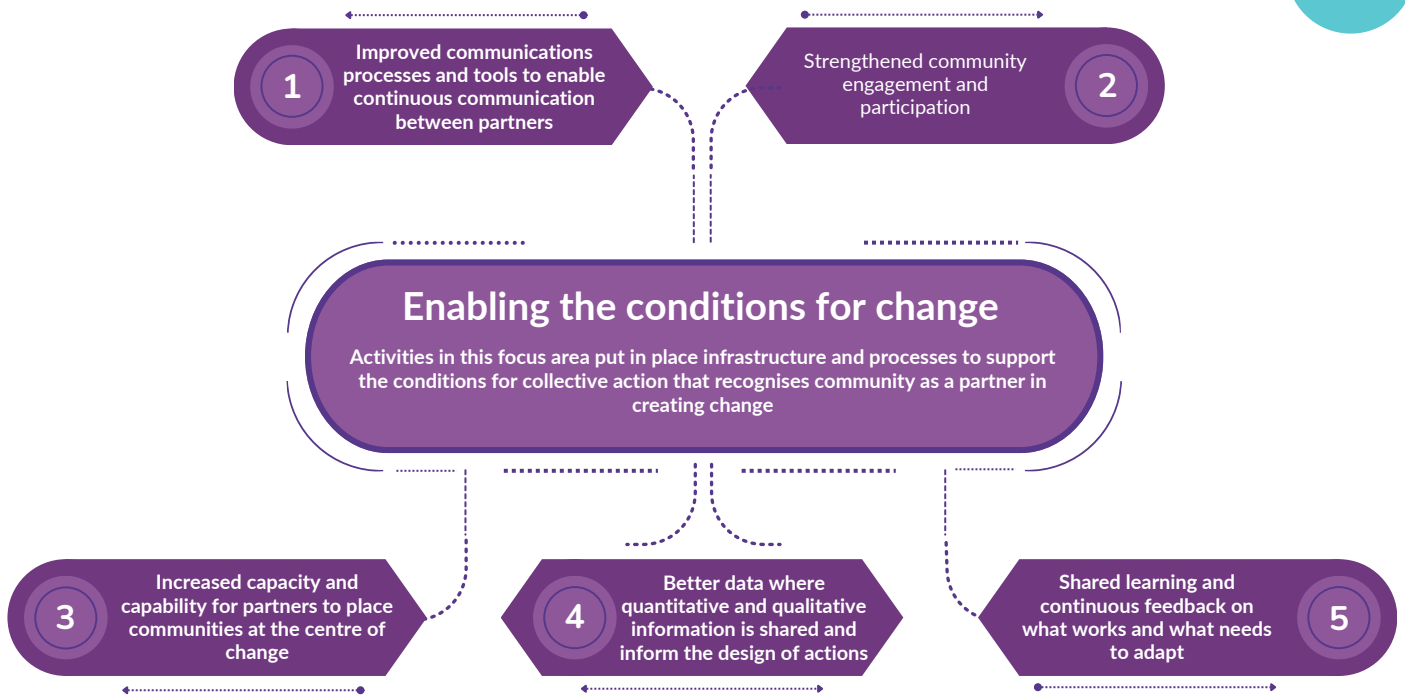
Community conversations



Village has spent the last five months surveying the Belconnen community to deepen our understanding of what aspirations and concerns families hold for their children. These insights will allow Village to represent the community voice and demonstrate Village's efforts to strengthen community engagement this reporting period.

Village's Community Conversations survey captured over 100 voices, opinions and concerns relating to the wellbeing of Belconnen's children. 95% of the survey responses were from community members living within Belconnen and 73% were parents of a child 5 years old or younger. Additionally, 45% of survey respondents were from a diverse cultural background other than 'Australian'. The team is currently reviewing the data, pulling out common key themes, quotes and statistics which will be used in the community profile.

Focus Area Four



Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ Expanding networks to contribute Village's learning and impact to national conversations including data democratisation and the Commonwealth's Tackling Entrenched Disadvantage (TED) Taskforce.
- ✓ Making connections with other place-based collective impact initiatives through Connected Beginnings and other national programs, including Uniting NSW/ACT and United Way.
- ✓ Engaging with community through events, both at UCK and beyond.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ Increased visibility and understanding of Village's efforts to create change which has led to increasing the number of people being involved.
- ✓ Village team members have been invited to present in various capacities and these opportunities have led to participating in other contexts, increasing the profile of Village's work, and bringing back best practice from other initiatives.

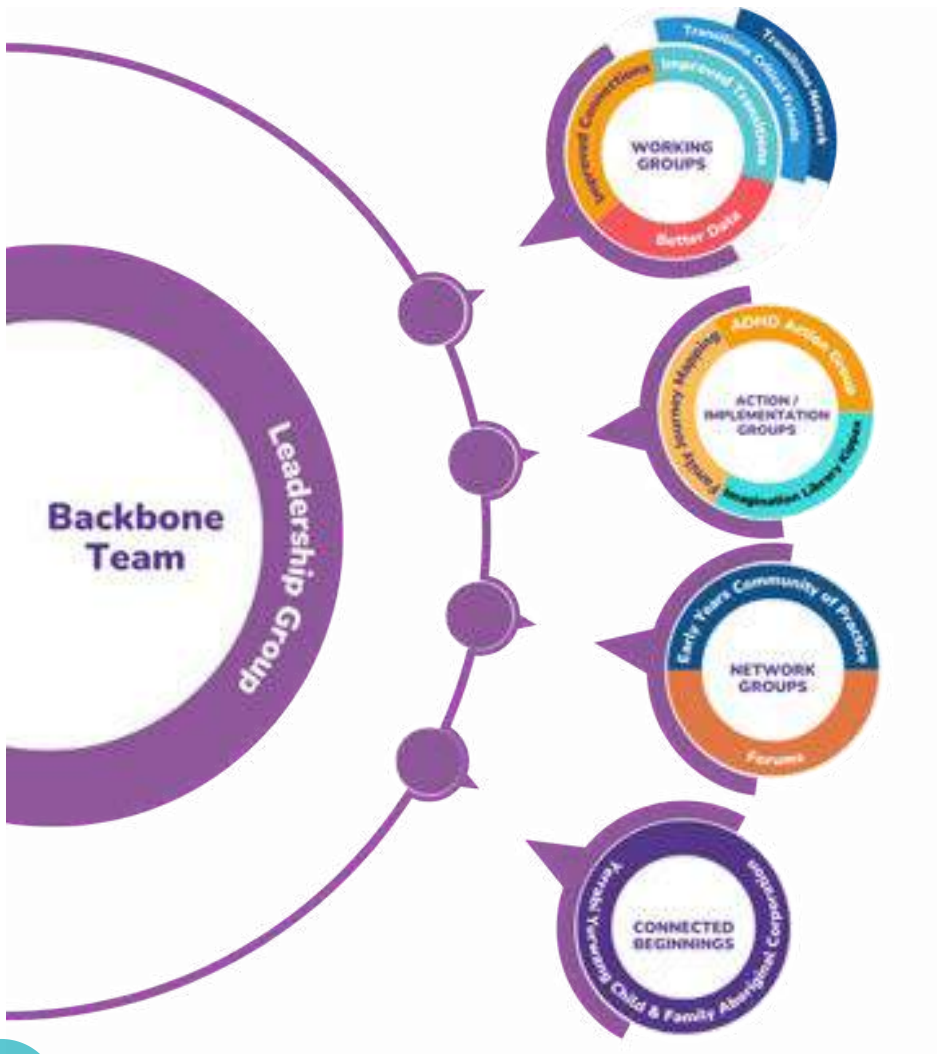
What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ Involving community members in co-design processes.

Participation

The structure of Village provides a container for people to participate and contribute to shared action. The structures to support the relationships between the various groups need to be flexible to respond to emerging needs while also providing clarity of roles and accountability pathways. The growing networks have enabled opportunities to invite more people to participate and the events and network meetings have attracted new people to engage with Village. The output in the last six months would not have been possible without the ongoing personal and organisational commitment and in-kind resources that partners are willing to invest in the work.

The diagram below shows the various groups that create the structure for activity.



Partnership with Yerrabi Yurwang

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ Introduction of cultural reflection at Leadership Group meetings.
- ✓ Codeveloping the Village Commitment principles.
- ✓ Working with Yerrabi Yurwang to establish the ADHD Action Group, showing what can happen when the skills and resources of both organisations come together.
- ✓ Contributing to the celebration events at Yerrabi Yurwang.

Where have we seen the most impact?

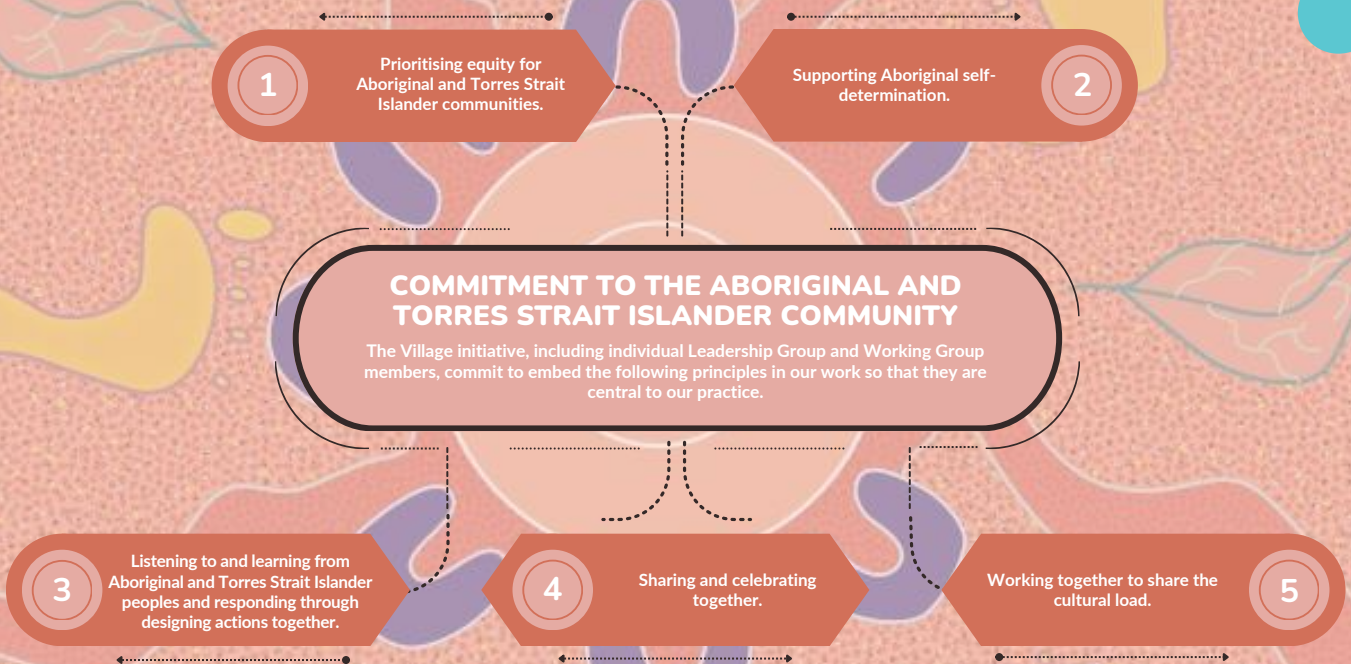
- ✓ Co-locating a community engagement officer at Yerrabi Yurwang two days a week to build connections between Village, Yerrabi Yurwang and UCK programs.

What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ Transitioning the Connected Beginnings Program to Yerrabi Yurwang.
- ✓ Continuing to support implementation of the Commitments in Working Groups.

Commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

In 2023, the Yerrabi Yurwang Leadership Group members introduced a cultural reflection as a standing agenda item for the Village Leadership Group meetings, fostering deeper understanding and appreciation for our traditional custodians. Leadership Group members designed the Village commitments. Our focus remains on creating synergies between mainstream systems change work and ensuring that actions promote equity and meet the cultural needs of the Aboriginal families. Village will support the implementation of the commitments in the Working Groups, fostering ways of working that encourage alignment between the action and shared values.



Connected Beginnings

UCK is the host organisation for the Commonwealth's Connected Beginnings program. Village and Yerrabi Yurwang partner to implement the program. In the last six months momentum has increased. In the spirit of self-determination, now that Yerrabi Yurwang is fully operational, UCK will transition the project from the end of June 2024.

Highlights July-December 2023?

- ✓ Establishment of Yerrabi Women's Circle and playgroup every Wednesday and second Sunday.
- ✓ Move to Yarramundi Cultural Centre as site for Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Aboriginal Corporation.
- ✓ Partnered with ACT Playgroups – PlayFEST.
- ✓ Celebrated Indigenous Literacy Day as part of the Women's Circle and Playgroup.
- ✓ Attended SNAICC Conference in Darwin.
- ✓ Attended and presented at the Connected Beginnings National Gathering on the relationship between UCK and Yerrabi.

Where have we seen the most impact?

- ✓ Engagement from community seeking support across accommodation, domestic violence, CYPS matters - increased referrals.
- ✓ Growth in community engagement via events and Women's Circle and play group.

What are the opportunities as we plan for 2024?

- ✓ To build on the successes of 2023 in continuing to grow our service by increasing Women's Circle to weekly on the Sunday.
- ✓ Look to establishing a separate Koori Play group in 2024.
- ✓ As new staff onboards, establishment of Youth Groups and other support groups as directed by community.
- ✓ Celebrating significant cultural events including Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Children's Day and Indigenous Literacy Day.
- ✓ Participating in the ADHD Action Group and contributing to its outcomes.

Village Leadership Group and Working Groups

The Leadership Group membership remains consistent with 14 members from 11 organisations representing different Directorates, services, and other stakeholders. At the end of 2023 there has been a number of people standing down, in most cases, a replacement representative will attend meetings.

Participation survey results

The backbone team revised the Clear Horizon partnership survey and sent it to all Working Group members and people who have been involved in the events over the last six months. 17 people responded. Generally, the results show an improvement from previous surveys conducted as part of the external evaluation. Free text comments reflect the sentiment of the impact statements reported in the activity snapshots.

The majority of people agreed or strongly agreed that the work of Village is of value to stakeholders. A trend to note is that only slightly more than half felt that their organisation sees the value of Village. Were Village to continue, future stakeholder engagement strategies would need to include connecting with leaders of key organisations.

- ✓ 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that what Village does is of value to the community, services and agencies involved in the partnership.
- ✓ 70% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed and that the work of Village supports their organisation to achieve its goals and strategies.
- ✓ 76% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they, personally and/or professionally, value being part of Village.
- ✓ 59% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the management of the organisation they represent sees value in being part of Village.

Village plays an important role in delivering the ACT Government's Best Start First 1000 Days Strategy particularly in the areas of health literacy, support and connection through the CoP and collective impact across multiple sectors.



Survey Respondent



I have been able to connect my students and families to support and resource services. This has improved outcomes for the children and their families, which has then seen an improvement in our service.

Survey Respondent

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Village creates the conditions that enable collective action.

- ✓ 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that there is a clear goal for the work among the partners they are involved with.
- ✓ 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that there is trust between partners.
- ✓ 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that there is a willingness to share ideas, resources, influence, and power to achieve the goal.

- ✓ 88% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that partners are involved in planning and setting priorities for action.
- ✓ 88% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that administrative support is effective.
- ✓ 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the communication loops are effective.

The role of the Village is very aligned with my role. Being able to show how being a part of Village impacts positively on my work, including reportable outputs, helps me be able to be involved.



Survey Respondent



Honesty, integrity, respect, and passion are all fundamental to successful collaboration. It has been my observation that these are all upheld by the partner organisations.

Survey Respondent

Backbone Team

The last six months, with a focus on implementation and expanding engagement with community, have provided increasing clarity about the functions provided by the backbone team to support groups to make decisions about action and create results.

The diagram below shows the functions delivered by the backbone team. The value of the graphic design and communications role has underpinned many of the achievements. The Village Cycle of Action illustrates when these functions come into play to enable action to flow from understanding the issues facing children and families.

The increasing clarity about the role that Village plays enabled Village to develop the proposal for investment in community change that could form the basis of a model that leverages and scales the achievements of the initiative.



Continuous Communication

Quality design and use of communication platforms such as websites, social media and newsletters underpin the collective impact condition of continuous communication.

The Village website attracts an average of 418 unique visitors and generates approximately 1,730 page views each month. On average, there are 628 sessions per month, with users spending about 1.5 minutes per session. In terms of traffic sources, 74% comes from direct search, 16.5% from organic search, 6.5% from social media, and 4.6% from referrals. This data will inform the use of the website to support the Service Directory and the Child Development Campaign.

The Village newsletters are produced every quarter and feature updates on our projects, partnerships, and Working Groups. There were three editions in the reporting period, July, September, and December. It was distributed to 191 Village partners and 'friends of Village'. Members of the Leadership Group forward the newsletter to their networks, raising the profile of Village throughout relevant Directorates. The newsletter is also used as briefing materials for relevant Ministers with an interest in cross systems collaborative work.

The Village continues to use Facebook, with a solid number of followers. Facebook is being used strategically, linking posts to community education, sharing information about what is happening in Belconnen with partner services. It is used to launch Village activities and outputs, for example the Directory and the Transitions Campaign. All posts link back to website changes to create a consistency of messaging and information flow.



Measurement, Evaluation and Learning

In its evaluation (June 2023), Clear Horizon recommended Village update the evaluation and learning approach with evolving goals, prioritise outcome level evaluation for the high impact activities and streamline data collection tools to continue reflective learning and monitoring.

Due to the expiry of the funding agreement, the Directorate agreed that funding allocated to continue the external evaluation could be used internally to implement this recommendation. This increased Village's internal capacity and the team designed and implemented data capture tools, including output and impact logs linking key activities to outcomes and focus areas. Village also facilitated reflection on action processes with the Leadership Group and Working Groups. These improvements have enabled Village to report and communicate using infographics to show the reach and impact of its efforts.

Population level indicators identified to measure long term outcomes remain problematic to report against. The leading indicators for long term change for child development, the end goal, are the AEDC domains. A new census will be conducted in 2024 with reports not available until 2025.

Another key indicator is change in preschool enrolment. Village's anecdotal evidence is that preschool enrolments in Government schools are trending down. This data is not an accurate indication of the effectiveness of Village's efforts over the last three years as the rates have been affected by systemic issues outside of Village's influence. These include investment in early years system reform whereby both the ACT Government and the Commonwealth are incentivising three-year-old preschool delivery through the ECEC system and a decreasing birth rate pre-COVID. For a true measure, enrolment data from Government, nongovernment and ECECs would need to be combined. Village understands that the Directorate does not hold this data asset.

Village has approached the Directorates of Education and Health to get access to data that would provide proxy indicators for effectiveness of the transitions products. This data has not been released and therefore Village can't report a baseline or any changes, other than its own internal tracking that is published in the infographics.

5. Conclusion

The activity and milestones achieved in the last six months continue to demonstrate the value of Village in bringing a growing number of people and organisations together to act for children and families in Belconnen. This progress is possible because the collaboration that has been formed over the last three years has translated into the creation and dissemination of tangible outputs, including new network activities, programs, and products. This evolution to action demonstrates that the initiative has matured.

As Village delivers tangible and practical products and actions, new people and organisations have been attracted to the work and are participating. The community conversations and engagement of people with lived experience in the ADHD action group's work are evidence that in the last six months Village has deepened community inclusion, participation, and leadership.

The activities outlined in this progress report directly support the ACT Government to implement strategies relating to the early years. They address the following Set Up For Success indicators:

- ✔ Increasing ECEC's use of transition practices for children transitioning out of their services.
- ✔ Increasing ECEC's capacity to support the diversity of needs in the community.
- ✔ Increasing early childhood educators access to professional learning and development.
- ✔ Increasing sharing of information between ECECs and schools.
- ✔ Demonstrated partnerships between ECEC services, schools, ACT Government services and community organisations.



They also contribute to the implementation of the Valuing Educators Values Children strategy, with the ECEC visits and report addressing the following strategy outcomes and indicators:

- ✓ Understanding of the sector including workforce pressures and needs.
- ✓ Increased access to learning and development opportunities.
- ✓ Improved partnerships information sharing and collaboration across the sector.
- ✓ Enabling professional learning network to increase learning and development opportunities, and collaboration across the profession.

The outputs and activities in this report are examples of how Village has brought together shared agendas to inform the design and implementation of mutually re-enforcing activities. They show the role of Village's structure, particularly the function of the Backbone team to hold the processes and ways of working to enable the groups to respond and move through action to implementation.





VILLAGE WORKING WITH ECECS & SCHOOLS IN BELCONNEN

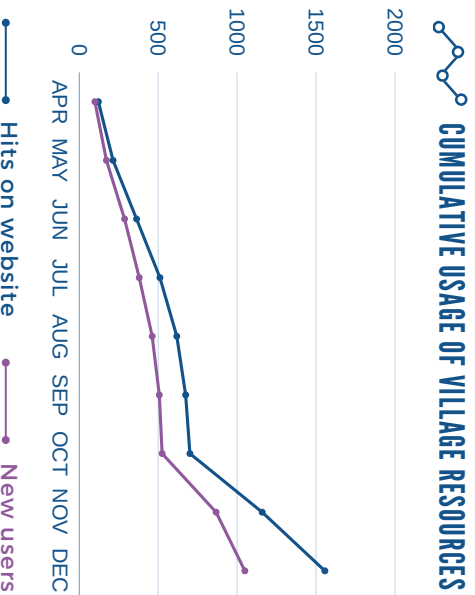
Over **19,700** children in the ACT aged 0-5 (59%) are enrolled in early learning centres. Strengthening the connections and capability of this sector will support these children to be ready to transition to school.

Data as at 31 December 2023



COMMUNITY EVENTS
25+ ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED
80+ FAMILIES ATTENDED

30+ ENROLMENT CHILD DEVELOPMENT TRANSITIONS
RESOURCES PRODUCED



Impact ★★★★★

An ECEC director noted she has been using the transitions campaign to shift the mindset of her educators, empowering them to contribute to the transition process.

Centre Director
ECEC in Belconnen

Impact ★★★★★

An ECEC educator noted that the day after the network event two of their feeder schools (who also attended) reached out to make connections and set up meetings with the centre.

ECEC Educator
ECEC in Belconnen



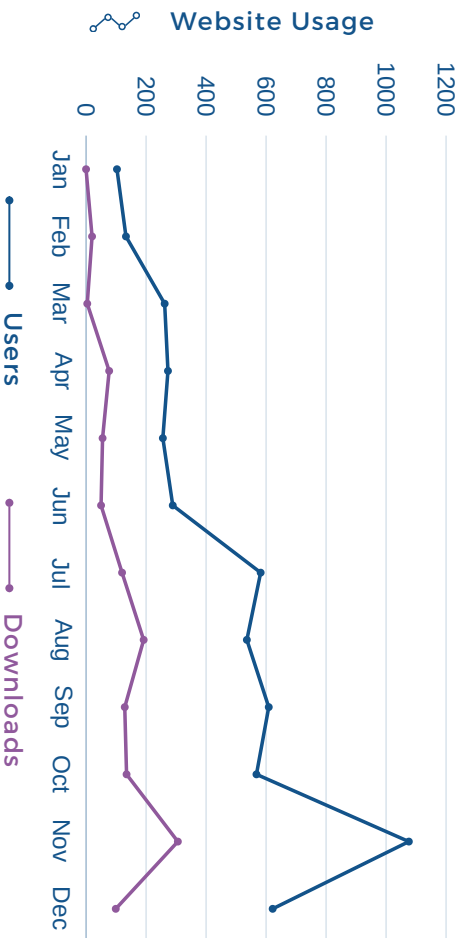


VILLAGE COMMUNICATIONS IN FOCUS – 2023

Infographic insights that capture the highlights of the Village's strategic communications and accomplishments in 2023

communications and accomplishments in 2023

Data as at 31 December 2023



There is so much great information on the Website. Having access to information services (including Health Literacy) was a key need that came out of the community consultation for the Best Star-First 1000 days strategy.

Center Director
EGEC in Belconnen

Village has done a great job connecting the pieces, identifying those scattered in pockets, and presenting them in a more cohesive way. Village has been able to scale its impact because of being able to connect things outside of Village.

Member
Leadership Group



CHECK THE BLUE BOOK. ACT EARLY. SEEK SUPPORT.

Your Blue Book helps record your child's health, illnesses, injuries, growth and development from 0-5 years. Keep up to date with your child's health and development checks for each age below.



SOME THINGS I MAY BE DOING WHEN I AM:



0-4 Weeks



- crying to tell you I need something
- calming when you hold me
- looking at your face and eyes
- grasping your fingers when placed in my hand

6-8 Weeks



- making sounds like I am 'telling you something'
- becoming quiet when someone is talking to me
- smiling
- moving my head towards different noises

4 Months



- making new sounds
- lifting my head and shoulders when laying on my tummy
- following people and objects with my eyes
- rolling
- playing with my hands and feet

6 Months



- standing with support
- bringing things to my mouth
- passing things from one hand to the other
- babbling lots
- rolling over

12 Months



- saying 1 or 2 words, waving, pointing, clapping
- pulling to stand
- responding to my name
- crawling and exploring
- trying to get things out of reach

18 Months



- saying 20 or more words
- pointing to body parts or toys
- having big emotions
- walking on my own and feeding myself
- using my imagination when playing

2 Years



- saying 50 or more words & putting two words together
- having rapid changes in feelings
- copying what you do, like sweeping the floor
- listening to simple stories and songs
- climbing, dressing up and playing make believe

3 Years

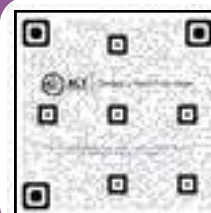


- speaking simple sentences
- understanding most of what you say
- asking lots of questions
- drawing, joining the dots
- running and learning to climb stairs

4 Years



- counting 10 or more objects
- playing with other children
- starting to tell the difference between real and pretend
- wanting to do more things by myself
- catching a ball



SCAN ME

Contact **Central Health Intake** to make an appointment for your child's health and development checks.

☎ 5124 9977

If you have concerns or questions, call the **Early Parenting Support line**, ☎ 5124 1775 to speak with the maternal and child health team.

or drop in to your local **Child and Family Centre**. Scan here for locations.

✉ childandfamilycentres@act.gov.au

Contact **Winnunga Nimmitjyah Aboriginal Health and Community Services**

☎ 6284 6222

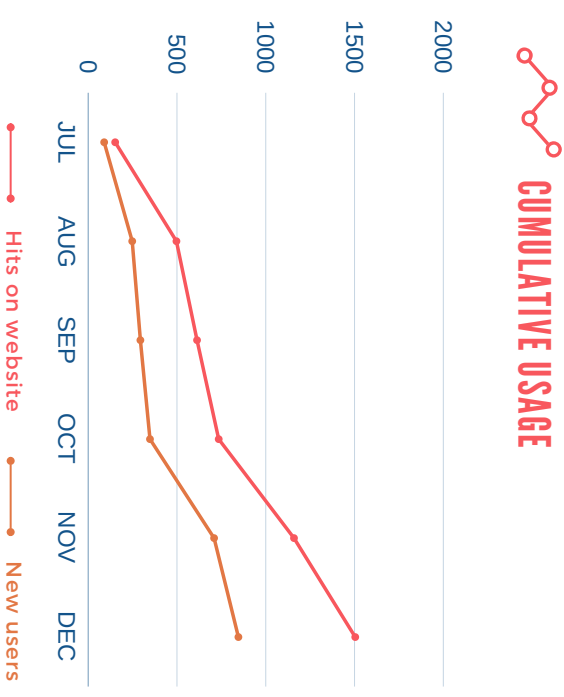
Contact **Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family Aboriginal Corporation**

☎ 0400 123 258



FACTS AND FIGURES CHILD DEVELOPMENT POSTER

Data as at 31 December 2023



“
I love tracking my children’s development through the blue book. It’s such a great tool to empower parents and assist communications with health professionals.”
Parent
Belconnen Community

“
We would love to be able to put [the posters] up in all our clinics across Canberra.”
Clinical Nurse
Maternal, Child and Family Health Team

“
Families are eager to learn more about child development, and the Village’s resources have made a significant impact by addressing real needs for Early Childhood Education Centres, families, and children.”
Centre Director
Not-for-profit Organization for Children and Young People

“
There is a decline in parental involvement in child development, and we see Village’s Child Development Poster as a valuable solution. We plan to feature Village resources in the next parent information session and prominently display them on the centre’s walls.”
Centre Director
Early Learning Centre



A VILLAGE FOR EVERY CHILD

Keep up to date on the latest parenting information



@BelconnenVillage



village@kippax.org.au



belconnenvillage.com.au

PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR CHILD

IF YOU HAVE A CHILD DEVELOPMENT, DISABILITY OR HEALTH CONCERN

- Birth to adulthood
 - Case management
 - Early intervention
 - Group programs
 - Therapeutic services
 - Advocacy & referral
 - Collaboration with other services (specialists, community stakeholders and networks)
 - Drop-in supports
 - Contact: **6296 8900**
- For families & children 0-8 years
 - Playgroups
 - General parenting guidance
 - Childrens behaviour support
 - Drop-in clinics and other services
 - Contact: Tuggeranong **6207 8228**
Gungahlin **6207 0120**
Belconnen **6205 2904**
- Assessment, support, and information for developmental concerns (0-6 years)
 - Early intervention therapy (24-36 months) not accessing NDIS
 - Autism assessment (aged up to 12 years)
 - Speech Pathologist
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Physiotherapist
 - Drop-in clinics
 - Contact: **6207 8884**
- For children 0-5 years old
 - Early Parenting Support Line **5124 1775**
 - New parent groups & online videos
 - Breastfeeding & emotional support
 - Child health & development checks (Blue Book)
 - Contact: Central Health Intake **5124 9977**



Scan here for an interactive version of this poster and links to services.

- Child & Family Centres
- Child Development Service
- Maternal, Child & Family Health Service
- Injury or illness
- Child health and development checks (Blue Book)
- Immunisations
- Referrals to specialists

GUGAN GULWAN YOUTH ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

WINNUNGA NIMIMITYJAH ABORIGINAL HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

FREE

Bulk bill

CHILD & FAMILY CENTRES

YERRABI YURWANG CHILD & FAMILY ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

FREE

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

EACH (NDIS partner delivering the Early Childhood Approach)

FREE

MATERNAL, CHILD & FAMILY HEALTH SERVICE

FREE

LIBRARIES ACT

FREE

GP/DOCTORS

Cost/bulk bill

ACT PLAYGROUPS

FREE

- Holistic culturally appropriate healthcare service for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people
- Child health nurse drop-in
- Immunisation program
- Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program
- Transport available
- GP/Doctors
- Phone: **6284 6222**

- Women's Circle
- Culturally appropriate support and services
- Health, wellbeing and development of Aboriginal children and families
- Contact: **0400 123 258**

- For children 0-9 years
- Disability and development assistance, advice and access to local disability supports
- Phone: **1300 003 224**

- For children 0-5 years:
- Giggle and Wiggle (in person/online)
 - Storytime (in person/online)
 - Bilingual Storytime
 - Sensory Storytime
 - Online literacy activities, books & videos
 - Reading resources & tips
 - Book suggestions for 0-3 years
 - School holiday programs
 - Contact: **6205 9000**

- Playgroup is an informal session where parents, carers, babies, and children aged birth to school age come together for fun and learning through play.
- Contact: **1800 171 882**

* This resource is produced through A Village for Every Child

SPECIALIST AND ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD

YOU MAY BE REFERRED TO THESE SERVICES BY A GP, NURSE, OR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL.

PAEDIATRICIAN

Paediatricians are doctors who provide specialist medical care to infants, children and adolescents.

Paediatricians assess, diagnose, and provide health care for medical and developmental concerns.

To see a paediatrician, visit your GP and discuss your concerns with them first. They will assess your child and make a referral to an appropriate paediatrician.



Community Paediatric and Child Health Service

GPs can make a referral by contacting



Central Health Intake
02 5124 9977

COSTS

Government services are usually free or low cost if you hold a concession health care, pension or Medicare card. Private services will have a cost dependent on which service your child needs and if you have any concessions. Medicare, a health care plan or private health insurance. Ask about costs when you book into any service.



Healthdirect Service Finder



Raising Children Network (Online Resource)

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

An occupational therapist helps people with physical, sensory, or cognitive challenges to participate in activities they find meaningful.

An occupational therapist can help you and your child with:

- ✔ self-care (toileting, sleep)
- ✔ play skills
- ✔ gross and fine motor skills
- ✔ self-management skills (emotional regulation, behaviour, sensory)
- ✔ learning skills (attention, concentration, executive functioning)
- ✔ social skills (engaging with others, play, making friends)

To find an occupational therapist, check out



Child Development Service



Occupational Therapy Australia

SPEECH PATHOLOGIST

A speech pathologist or therapist diagnoses and treats communication issues or swallowing difficulties.

A speech pathologist can help you and your child with:

- ✔ speaking
- ✔ listening
- ✔ language
- ✔ social skills
- ✔ stuttering
- ✔ voice
- ✔ swallowing
- ✔ feeding

If you are on a speech pathology waiting list you can visit the NSW Health website for ideas to help you and your child while you wait.



NSW Health Website

To find a speech pathologist, check out



Child Development Service



Speech Pathology Australia

NUTRITIONIST OR DIETITIAN

Nutritionists or dietitians help people to understand the relationship between food and health.

A dietitian can help you and your child with:

- ✔ eating for good health
- ✔ fussy eating
- ✔ introducing solids
- ✔ food allergy and intolerance
- ✔ vegetarian eating
- ✔ weight management
- ✔ disordered eating, and healthy eating during pregnancy and breastfeeding

Tuckatalk handouts are factsheets that provide nutrition support and advice for infants and children up to 12 years of age.



Tuckatalk handouts

To find a nutritionist, check out



Women, Youth and Children - Nutrition



Children's Hearing Service



Hearing Australia

PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Physiotherapists diagnose and manage conditions with the bones, muscles, cardiovascular system, nerves and other parts and systems of the body.

A physiotherapist can help you and your child with:

- ✔ balance, coordination and gross motor skills
- ✔ joint, muscle or nervous system problems that are causing weakness, pain or movement difficulties
- ✔ weight and physical activity advice
- ✔ growth or injuries
- ✔ recovery after surgery or illness to improve strength, movement, function and independence

To find a physiotherapist, check out



Child Development Service



Early Family Support Physiotherapy



Community Care Physiotherapy



Early Childhood Immunisation



Dental - Child and Youth

OTHER SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF YOU AND YOUR CHILD:



Early Childhood Education and Care Services



Starting Blocks



Parentline ACT



Early Literacy Resources and Services



Children's Hearing Service



Hearing Australia



Early Childhood Immunisation



Dental - Child and Youth

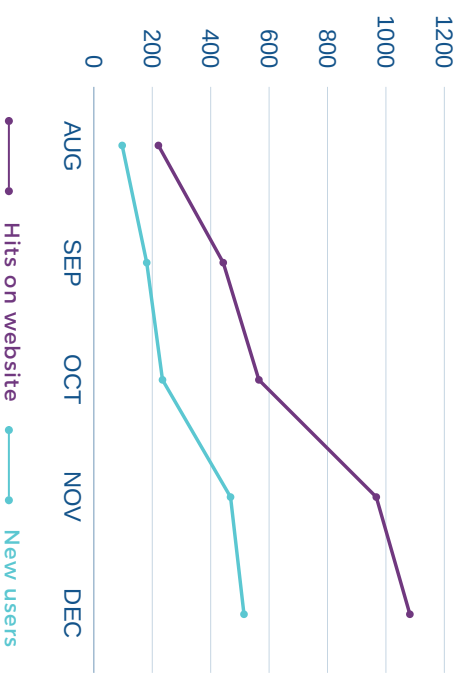


FACTS AND FIGURES FAMILY PATHWAYS MAP

Data as at 31 December 2023



CUMULATIVE USAGE



Impact ★★★★★

“We are using this in every enrolment pack for new families and every executive teacher in the school has a copy which they were thrilled about sharing with their families”

Executive Teacher
Belconnen Primary School

Impact ★★★★★

“This is amazing, just amazing, thank you”

Doctor
Canberra Hospital

Impact ★★★★★

“The First 1000 Days Committee will use Village resources, specifically the Family Pathways Map, Child Development Poster, and Community of Practice Flyer, as part of the collateral pack in the First 1000 Days Conference Showbags.”

First 1000 Days Team
Community Services Directorate

Impact ★★★★★

“There is a need for better training in identifying early signs of neurodiversity among educators. In the absence of such training, the Family Pathways Map is a valuable resource that can alleviate pressure on educators and facilitate challenging conversations with families when guiding children displaying concerning or challenging behaviors.”

Centre Director
Child Care Centre

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village@kippax.org.au

belconnenvillage.com.au

**BELCONNEN CHILD AND FAMILY
PROGRAM AND SERVICE**

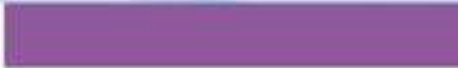


DIRECTORY

SCAN ME

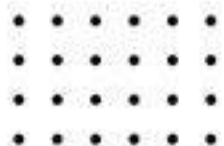


belconnenvillage.com.au



Inside the Directory you will find child and family information on free services and programs that operate across ACT, with a particular focus on Belconnen.

2023



**A VILLAGE FOR
EVERY CHILD**
Belconnen

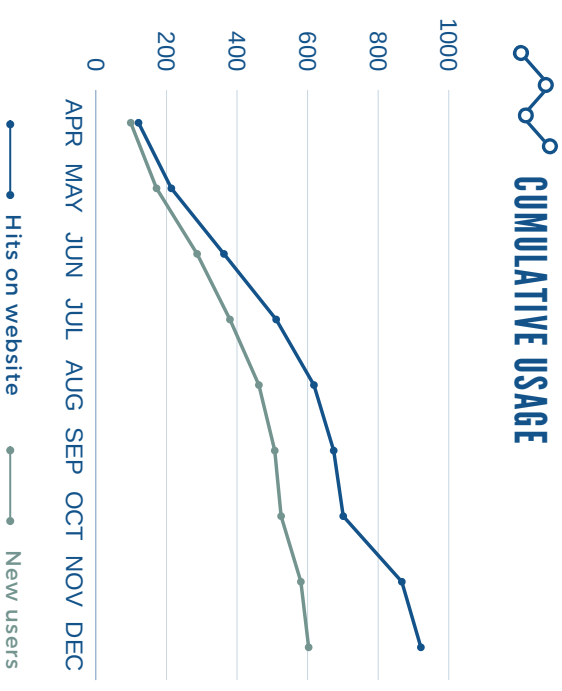




FACTS AND FIGURES

BELCONNEN SERVICE DIRECTORY

Data as at 31 December 2023



Impact ★★★★★

[The Directory] is an excellent resource. Is there one for each area of Canberra? [Has shared with approximately 200 of her staff]

Director
Community Services Directorate

Impact ★★★★★

I noticed your program directory on CD NET I must say, you have done an exceptional job with the document. It's truly impressive!

Community Development Coordinator
Community Organisation

Impact ★★★★★

It is great to have such a comprehensive list of available services, that must have been a lot of work! I think it will be of great use to educators and frontline workers - the hard part will be getting them to realise it is available and how much it can help them!

Family & Community Liaison Co-ordinator
A Good Start in Life for Young Children

Impact ★★★★★

The directory allowed me to respond to the immediate needs of a family by supporting them to find the services they needed. It is easy to use and has a comprehensive list of programs and services tailored for children and families, all offered at free or low-cost.

Community Development Officer
Community Organisation

A VILLAGE FOR EVERY CHILD



@BelconnenVillage



village@kippax.org.au



belconnenvillage.com.au

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 village@kippax.org.au

 02 6254 1773

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