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KINHUB TO REVOLUTIONISE QUALITY OF CARE FOR ‘SCHOOL CAN’T’ STUDENTS.

A new Inner West Sydney not-for-profit is seeking to provide opportunities for the growing number of children and young people experiencing ‘school can’t’ and marginalised homeschooling families.

Founded by parent Corinne Smith, *“KinHub emerged from my own families ‘school can’t’ journey and the recognition of a growing need for connection within the homeschooling community.”* In NSW alone there were [more than 12,000 students registered for homeschooling in January 2023](#), which is in itself an increase of 37% from 2022. We know the numbers are far larger when you consider students who are not registered too. *“A significant number of these learners are neurodivergent and while the learning style of homeschooling is much better suited, there’s no denying the missing piece that is collaboration and connection with peers”* Smith said.

Through the free to use, volunteer led service, families can access a safe and welcoming space where they are free to explore their interests and develop connections leading to improvements in wellbeing, sense of belonging and of course, learning. The service offers workshops with expert mentors, individual and group activities and community-building initiatives such as group outings, events and peer support networks.

Last year, data revealed that [two in five Australian families](#) are experiencing ‘school can’t’, a number which demonstrates the scale of the problem is far larger than originally thought. *“We’re seeing an alarming number of people across Australia reaching out for support because their children are experiencing a mental health crisis”* says former school psychologist and administrator of the School Can’t Australia Facebook page, Genevieve Rowney. *“Offerings like KinHub are critical to supporting the growing number of children and young people at greater risk of social isolation and disengagement”* says Rowney.

“If the offerings available through services like KinHub were recognised and supported by governments around the country we have the potential to change the lives of [hundreds of thousands of children, young people](#) and families” says Smith. *“We can’t interrupt the crisis of ‘school can’t’ by only investing in clinical services, because you can’t ‘therapy’ your way into community, meaningful connections and a sense of belonging which is what KinHub delivers”* says Lauren Stracey, Child and Adolescent Psychologist and KinHub Board Member.

In its 3 short months of weekly meetups, KinHub has already supported over 50 children, young people and their families and impacts are being felt fast with noticeable shifts in confidence, social and emotional wellbeing and willingness to participate. *“Since starting at KinHub a few weeks ago, my son has gone from anxious and disengaged to happier and more willing to give things a go. He’s even wanted to re-join activities outside of KinHub that he’s long given up. It’s given me a glimmer of hope for the future”* says KinHub participant Lisa Rathbone.

Australians for Mental Health Executive Director, Chris Gambian, said services like KinHub were an essential example of the interventions needed in Australia to combat the growing crisis in the mental health of younger Australians. *“To fully tackle this growing youth mental health crisis, we can’t simply focus on increasing care once our children have become mentally unwell – we have to invest in services like KinHub to support and foster good mental health.”*