

2015 2016



SSI Annual Report



Safi
Office
Manager

Yatto
Team
Leader

Pascale
Project
Officer

Shanan
Case
Manager

Hannah
Social
Media

Pat
Team
Leader

Roopa
Recruitment

Bintu
Regional
Coordinator

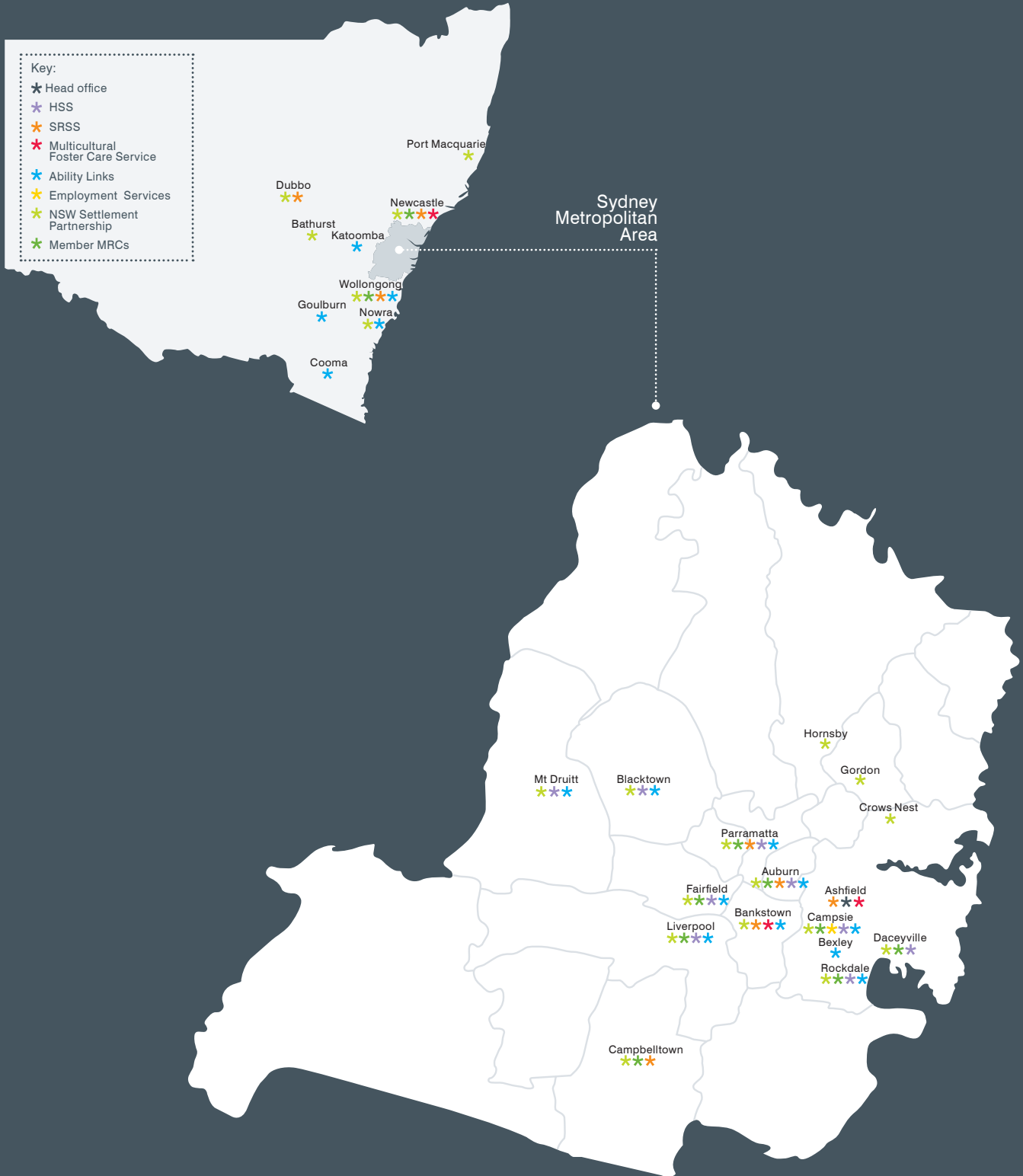
Seema
SSI Linker

Settlement Services International (SSI) is a community-based, **not-for-profit humanitarian organisation** providing a range of services in the areas of humanitarian refugee and migrant settlement, accommodation, asylum seeker assistance, multicultural foster care, disability support, employment services and youth support in NSW.

2015 2016

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Where we are



8615

the number of refugees, humanitarian entrants and people seeking asylum who were supported by SSI

33 small businesses started with the support of **Ignite Small Business Start-ups**

3,709

people secured a home through the support of SSI Housing

24

SSI office locations throughout NSW

SSI employs

150+

bilingual and bicultural staff to support its program areas

1,785

the number of people supported by SSI who found a job

300

volunteers supported SSI during 2015-2106

3,000+

people attended New Beginnings Festival events



Vision

To achieve a society that values diversity of its people and actively provides support to ensure meaningful social and economic participation and to assist individuals and families reach their potential. Our vision is also captured in our brand:

settlement
support
independence



At SSI we value

Social Justice Equity and access for all

Tolerance Diversity and being non-discriminatory

Compassion Caring, empathy and respect for the dignity of others

Respect Co-operation and mutual respect



In delivering SSI services, we value

Quality Dynamic, flexible and responsive service

Ethics Professional practices and accountability

Innovation Commitment to partnerships and excellence

SSI currently offers nine **services** to a range of clients

Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS)
for refugees and humanitarian entrants

Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)
for asylum seekers living in the community

Housing Services
for HSS and SRSS clients, people at risk of homelessness and who need affordable long-term housing

Settlement Services Program (SSP)
NSW Settlement Partnership delivers SSP for migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants

Multicultural Foster Care Service
for children from CALD backgrounds who are in out-of-home care

Ability Links NSW
to support full and active participation of people with disability in their communities

Ignite Small Business Start-ups
a self-funded enterprise facilitation initiative for refugees

SSI Employment
for HSS and SRSS clients; and jobactive, ParentsNext and SSI Youth@Work participants

Youth Services to support young people from refugee, asylum seeker and migrant backgrounds

Highlights from the year



July 2015 • Women Empowering Refugee Women donations

Volunteers from 'Women Empowering Refugee Women', a joint initiative of Knox Grammar and Ravenswood School for Girls, donated hundreds of toys and food packages for families supported by SSI. The group of volunteers has supported several of SSI's regular initiatives including SSI Playtime and Community Kitchen.



October 2015 • FutureAbility launch

FutureAbility was launched by the Hon. John Ajaka MP at SSI's Ashfield head office. FutureAbility supports CALD communities and organisations to get ready for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which started to roll out nationally in July 2016.



November 2015 • Thank you event for Vietnamese Students' Association

SSI held a lunch celebration for the generous donation from VSA of \$12,000 for children supported by SSI Multicultural Foster Care. The donation was distributed as \$100 book vouchers to all children and young people in SSI Multicultural Foster Care.



November 2015 • SSI 15th Anniversary & AGM

A big celebration was held to celebrate SSI's AGM and 15th anniversary. This significant milestone brought together staff, members, founders, friends and partners, who enjoyed food, music, dancing, speeches and an anniversary video at the recently opened Bankstown offices.



December 2015 • TechFugees Hackathon

SSI was part of The TechFugees Hackathon, an event where refugees, developers and entrepreneurs collaborated on solutions for some of the challenges faced by people settling in a new country. Ten tech solutions were created over the two-day event.

October 2015 • CuriousWorks photography workshop

A group of SSI clients learned visual storytelling techniques to tell their stories at a photography workshop delivered by CuriousWorks. The works produced by the 10 participants were showcased at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre's Refugee exhibition in July 2016.



December 2015 • New Roots launch

The New Roots Project has been developed to build the health and wellbeing of recently arrived men, aged 18-45, from Arabic, Farsi and Tamil-speaking backgrounds. The project was launched with partner beyondblue and project funder Movember Foundation. Cricketer Hameed Kherkrah (pictured with case manager Jess Harkins) is one of the ambassadors for the project.



March 2016 • NSW Premier welcomes first Syrian family

NSW Premier The Hon. Mike Baird welcomed the Kaky family from Syria as part of Harmony Day celebrations. The Kaky family was supported by SSI during the first six months in Australia. The family was part of the additional refugee intake announced by the Federal Government in September 2015.

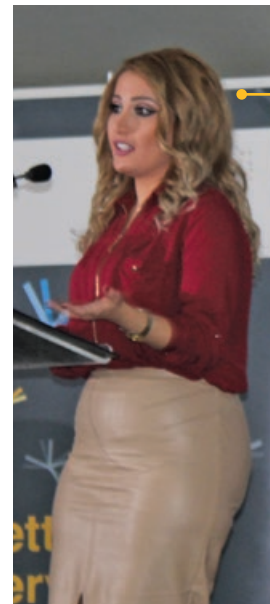
March 2016 • Craig Laundy visit to Community Hubs

Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Craig Laundy and Community Hubs Australia CEO Dr Sonja Hood paid a visit to the Community Hub Westmead, where they got an insight into Community Hubs and joined parents in their English class.



May 2016 • Mothers' Day celebration

SSI's Mothers' Day lunch event celebrated the transcultural importance of motherhood with children and mums from different backgrounds who are in Australia seeking asylum or as refugees. The day included a sound healing session by the HeartDancers.



June 2016 • Refugee Week launch

SSI, in partnership with the Refugee Council of Australia and STARTTS, launched Refugee Week 2016 in NSW, an annual week of celebrations to acknowledge contributions refugees make to Australian society. Ania Kebabjian, pictured, was a guest speaker at the event. Ania was supported by SSI when she arrived in 2015. She now works in the NSW Premier's office.



June 2016 - New Beginnings Festival

The second New Beginnings: Refugee Arts & Culture Festival included three separate events that attracted over 3,000 participants. An art exhibition and a premiere film screening were two new events as part of the week-long festival, now a feature of Refugee Week celebrations in Sydney.

A message from the Chair

SSI has had another successful year, reaching major milestones for the organisation, with many hard-earned achievements to be proud of. The past year has also seen sizeable growth and great results in the area of partnerships and government relations.

Joining the Board at a time of meteoric growth and development has been an invaluable experience for me, both personally and professionally. However, this year's report marks a personal historic moment as I step down from the SSI Board after six years as a Director and five years as Chairman.

The 2015-2016 period marked SSI's first year as a Company Limited by Guarantee, featuring a new governance structure and Board of Directors comprising skilled independent members, and directors from member organisations. While it was a considerable change for the organisation, it has been a successful transition from the previous incorporated structure, which was in place from SSI's inception 15 years ago. The success of the transition is due in large part to the expert advice offered by consultant David Rosenbaum from Optimum NFP, who led the process and the contribution of the management team.

Hard work has seen SSI become a leader and innovator in engaging partners across a range of new programs and initiatives in 2015-2016. Our first foray into a corporate partnership with Allianz Australia has borne fruit with the establishment of an internship program resulting in the full-time employment of refugee

recruits. The partnership will also see Allianz contribute \$100,000 towards a scholarship program over two years to benefit students and support skills recognition, beginning next financial year.

During the past year, almost 1,800 people supported by SSI have found work, which is a solid achievement and one to be proud of. As a result of the dedication and innovation that has become so engrained in our work, SSI, as a member of the national network of local job providers CoAct, launched its employment services program, which was recognised as a Five-star jobactive provider in its first year of operation. This means we have developed an impressive record of placing people into work and helping them to retain employment, which has a dramatic impact on their lives in Australia. We also embarked on two major new projects with the support of the Federal Government – ParentsNext and Youth@Work – giving SSI a solid start to supporting a broader client base to be job-ready, and to seek and stay in work.

The NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP), established in 2015 and led by SSI, has seen the successful collaboration of 21 highly experienced settlement providers, including member organisations and locally based services, in delivering services for recently arrived migrants and refugees. In its first year of operation, the NSP has provided more than 7,500 clients with settlement information and advice through casework sessions. Partners have also delivered more than 900 group sessions attended by more than

6,100 clients on topics ranging from domestic violence and family relationships to health issues and information on how to access and use services, and immigration information and assistance.

Now in its third year, SSI's Ignite Small Business Start-ups initiative is continuing to achieve much success, with 58 refugee entrepreneurs now having set up businesses and more than 90 other businesses about to start. The program has been evaluated with highly positive outcomes for entrepreneurs and the initiative itself, which has received accolades from business and government.

Growing links with our member base through The Strategy Group has led to rewarding partnerships and a closer working relationship. The advantages for members are that while they maintain their independence, they contribute to the development of public policy, sector representation, public events and campaigns, community needs identification, and multicultural sector leadership initiatives.

The past year has, like most, also seen significant challenges. The ongoing challenge of working with changing government policies and regulations, and their impact on client service provision, as well as the decline of the SRSS program, has been met with resilience by the SSI Executive, leadership and staff. There also appears to be a disconnect in the rhetoric about humanitarian settlement that is not in line with the generosity of the Australian people, and the ever growing contributions made by business.

Nonetheless, the achievements of the past year, while not limited to numbers alone, included providing support to more than 8,000 individuals in the HSS and SRSS programs, showing a year-on-year consistency in quality service delivery.

As I reflect on my time as Chairman, I want to highlight some of the achievements put in train during the past few years as part of our Strategic Plan, that are now showing results. These include the change to company structure and the renewal of the Board, which will reach a major milestone this coming year with the election of an independent chair; increased partnership with our members; SSI's international humanitarian work continuing with our attendance for the third year at the UNHCR NGO consultations in Geneva; and Sydney's selection as the host for the 2018 International Metropolis Conference. The past year also saw a strong commitment by the NSW Government after earlier encouraging statements by Premier Mike Baird that he wanted his Government to play a significant role in the area of refugee settlement.

In listing these significant achievements during my time as Chairman, it is important to acknowledge the impressive leadership that SSI has shown with our partners over the past year, which allows us to consolidate our efforts in the sector. Of course, we recognise these achievements are made possible by the staff members, who are the real champions of SSI.

The objectives of the SSI Strategic Plan were also achieved through the dedication of my fellow Board

Directors, both past and present. As work begins on the next three-year Strategic Plan, we look forward to entering a new phase with a broader outlook to our future and new possibilities and challenges on the horizon.

I have reserved the biggest thank you for SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis and General Manager Peter Zographakis, whose support has been invaluable over the years. I thank my fellow Board members of today: Elisabeth Shaw, Lucy Taksa, Louise Petschler, Lou Bacchiella, Om Dhungel and Antoinette Chow, and past board members, from whom I have learnt a great deal.

Under the stewardship of the evolving and developing board, I am sure SSI's success will continue, and I wish the organisation every success in the future.

Kamalle Dabboussy
Chair



An update from the CEO

SSI began this year with growth and diversification, including the start of two contracts that have taken the organisation into interesting new territory.

The first contract saw SSI, as a CoAct member, start delivering the jobactive program – an employment service for job seekers. Within nine months we were awarded a 5 star rating from the Department of Employment for performing 30%, or more, better than the national average of jobactive providers!

The second new contract – the Settlement Support Program – sees SSI as the lead organisation in the NSW Settlement Partnership consortium, selected to deliver settlement services for refugees and migrants in NSW.

The NSP's unique and innovative settlement services delivery model would not be possible without our member Migrant Resource Centres' and locally based partners' long history of delivering settlement services to migrants and refugees.

Both wins represented big opportunities for both SSI staff and the people we support. But they were just the first of many new developments over the course of the year.

SSI began supporting new parents to get prepared to return to the workforce as part of the ParentsNext initiative. We partnered with member organisation Metro Assist to help parents identify goals and develop skills that will enable them to transition back to work more easily when their youngest child starts school.

SSI also expanded into youth employment. SSI's Youth@Work uses mentoring to address some of the unique challenges young refugees and migrants face in the workplace – an innovative approach the Department of Employment recognised when it awarded the program funding under its Empowering Youth Initiatives.

Another new addition to the range of services and initiatives that SSI provides is the New Roots project. Along with our partners, beyondblue and the Movember Foundation, SSI has developed a tailored app for newly arrived male refugees. The app helps to smooth the settlement process, acting as an easily accessible supplement to the support offered by settlement providers such as SSI.

While the past year has been characterised by growth, we are not just growing for growth's sake. We have expanded into areas that are in keeping with the SSI values and that complement our existing services and integrate well with them.

A good example of this is the Ability Links NSW program. SSI recently celebrated one year of delivering services to people with disability through this program, and the numbers achieved over that period were staggering. In just 12 months, 3,235 people contacted the program, resulting in almost 15,500 new links with community services, activities and people. SSI will soon be capitalising on the expertise we have developed in this area to launch a specialist employment service and entrepreneurship program for people with disability and their families and carers.

This is just one of many ways that SSI is finding alternative employment pathways to ensure people can live a life of dignity with a sense of achievement. This year, we have expanded our social enterprise initiatives to help more job seekers obtain experience in the local market, which is particularly important for refugees, migrants and people seeking asylum. We have also recently partnered with the insurer Allianz Australia to provide permanent employment opportunities and educational scholarships for newly arrived refugees. In the past 12 months 30% of the refugees we settled found jobs! This is an extraordinary outcome.

In a similar vein, SSI's Ignite Small Business Start-ups initiative is going from strength to strength, supporting dozens of refugee entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. During 2015-2016, the merits of the approach were recognised in an evaluation report by Professor Jock Collins, who assessed Ignite as an innovative model for supporting refugee entrepreneurs.

Another area of growth during the reporting period was SSI Multicultural Foster Care, which the Office of the Children's Guardian accredited as a designated agency in November last year. Our unique model recognises how important it is for carers to understand each child's cultural context – something that is reflected in the fact that 73% of our children and carers share at least two cultural elements.

Notwithstanding the growth across the organisation, SSI is also devoting a lot of time and energy to ensuring



We have expanded into areas that are in keeping with the SSI values and that complement our existing services and integrate well with them.

we remain a leader in the area of humanitarian support.

Already one of the largest service providers of the Humanitarian Settlement Services program, the number of refugees and humanitarian entrants that SSI supported spiked towards the end of the financial year, due to the first arrivals under the additional intake of 12,000 refugees from Iraq and Syria.

As the Co-Chair of the NSW Joint Partnership Working Group, I have been involved with the high-level coordination of the NSW component of this intake and, as the CEO of SSI, I also see the work that goes on at the coalface to ensure new arrivals have a smooth transition to life in Australia.

The positive settlement experiences refugees are having in Australia,

however, have contrasted with an increasingly grim global picture.

The need for innovative solutions to this situation formed a core part of discussions when SSI actively participated in the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Re-settlement (ATCR) and the UNHCR's annual NGO consultations in Geneva in June. These meetings remind us we have an important role to play in the mass movement of peoples and in offering sustainable strategies particularly in our Asia Pacific region. There is no silver bullet for such a complex, multifaceted issue, but opportunities for advocacy, knowledge sharing and learning will bring the global community closer to the solutions required.

While 2015-2016 has been a time of change and growth at SSI, one

thing that has remained consistent is the extraordinary work of our staff, leaders and volunteers. Their diligence and commitment is surpassed only by their passion for the work they do. My gratitude also goes to our funders and supporters. SSI Chair Kamalle Dabboussy finishes his term on the Board and I thank him for his diligence and commitment over the past six years and the Board of Directors, who have all contributed enormously to SSI's success this year.

With many new opportunities on the horizon, the year ahead looks set to be just as exciting.

Violet Roumeliotis
CEO

7:30am

Airport arrivals

SSI staff members are at the airport to pick up refugees and humanitarian entrants, greeting them with a smile and 'welcome to Australia' in each new arrival's language.



9:00am

Taking clients to their new home

Newly arrived refugees and other vulnerable individuals are supported with short- and long-term accommodation so they can focus on getting on with their lives without risking homelessness.

10:40am

Open for business

Shiraz Ice Cream & Juice, operated by restaurant owner and former refugee Mohammed Reza, was one of 33 small business start-ups assisted by the Ignite initiative.



11:30am

Community Kitchen

People seeking asylum prepare and eat lunch at Community Kitchen. They meet other people in the community and enjoy sports and creative activities, which reduces social isolation.

1:45pm

Staples Bag pop-up

The Staples Bag pop-ups ensure that low income or isolated people have easy access to affordable and high quality nutritious food.



2:30pm

Building inclusive communities

An SSI Linker goes on an outing with Kumar to help boost his confidence. Together they attend an event where Kumar can meet new people and improve his social skills.



3:45pm

Youth leaders forum

Young people of refugee background tackle the major issues facing refugee youth at a young leaders' forum supported by the Youth Collective and organisations in the NSW Settlement Partnership.



4:15pm

Home visit of case worker to foster carer

Together they help children and young people with SSI Multicultural Foster Care stay connected to their culture, religion and language.



Humanitarian Services

Through the provision of Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) and the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS), SSI continues to play a significant role in assisting refugees and people seeking asylum to achieve social and economic integration in Australia.

In conjunction with the delivery of case management support during 2015-2016, HSS staff were also involved in preparing for the additional humanitarian intake of 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees announced by Prime Minister Tony Abbott in September 2015.

During 2015-2016, HSS provided support to 2,366 individuals who were predominantly part of family groups. Of these arrivals, 52% were born in Iraq, 29% in Syria and 9% in Afghanistan. Consequently, the predominant language for 82% of new arrivals was Arabic.

The HSS program was also characterised by the significant number of new clients arriving in the last three months of the year, with more than half of arrivals for the full year coming between April and June.

SRSS supported 5,675 people seeking asylum at its peak and in total but 2015-2016 was characterised by the increasing number of people exiting the program and the subsequent reduction of the program's size. This led to challenges for management of the program and for staff; however, we continue to achieve both contractual KPIs and maintain our support of clients.

Provision of SRSS continues to highlight a successful and reliable business partnership with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection managing all aspects of the program and effectively implementing changed policy and practice requirements throughout the year.

During the year, a number of clients were offered Temporary Protection Visas or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas, and 1,064 clients with work rights found employment through the support of SSI Employment and Ignite Small Business Start-ups initiative. However, for some clients, negative outcomes of visa applications have increased mental health concerns and potential risks of self-harm. SSI continues to be vigilant in this regard and has assisted clients and staff through the SSI Clinical Support team and the provision of comprehensive training and tools on suicide and mental health assessments.

In response to the high number of children and family arrivals, and to ensure that their specific needs were met, SSI established a specialised Family and Children team during 2015-2016. This change has successfully assisted SRSS case managers to better meet the diverse needs of children and families and to ensure the necessary expertise and resources are available. In conjunction with the Child and Family team, SSI continues to offer specialist adult support.

Staff wellbeing has been paramount in 2016, giving high priority to each case manager's learning, resilience





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We feel human for the first time, and we feel welcomed. We are the lucky ones to live in Australia when other parts of the world are suffering.

SSI client



The New Roots Project is trialling innovative strategies to rebuild the mental health of men who have recently arrived in Australia as refugees or to seek asylum.

and skills, and the development of the humanitarian services teams.

A special mention goes to Manager Humanitarian Settlement Services Yamamah Agha, Manager Asylum Seeker Services Mamtimin Ala, SSI Housing Manager Patrick Yeung, and Community Engagement and Capacity Manager Trina Soulos, whose continued support has contributed to our success.

Volunteer Program

SSI volunteers have continued to make an invaluable contribution to the experience of our clients in the community. They help increase SSI's capacity to provide quality services that assist individuals and families to reach their full potential. During 2015-2016, approximately 300 volunteers generously donated their time, energy

and expertise across the breadth of SSI's service delivery.

SSI's Volunteer Program connects individuals, community groups and corporate partners with opportunities to support our important work in the community.

During 2015-2016, volunteers have:

- Assisted refugees to access local services, build their social networks, use public transport, and understand Australian cultural practices, in addition to which they have offered community language assistance
- Assisted at the Community Kitchen to prepare and serve hot meals, spend time with participants, and participate in or lead recreational and cultural activities
- Supported SSI's Emergency Relief Food Program by accepting, sorting, distributing and delivering donated food
- Mentored refugees with entrepreneurial talent by helping them to develop networks that support their goals to establish small businesses in Australia
- Assisted with the work of the Friendship Garden through permaculture-related activities, lunch preparation and connecting participants with each other

- Supported the delivery of multicultural playgroups for women and pre-school-aged children and connected with participants while children took part in activities
- Supported the effective delivery of SSI events including the New Beginnings Refugee Arts & Culture Festival

The year ahead promises to be an exciting time for SSI volunteers. Plans are underway to significantly grow and diversify volunteer engagement across the organisation's program offerings. During 2016-2017, we will also see an expansion of SSI's corporate volunteering program, which will focus on opportunities for our partners to engage in events and activities that will have a lasting impact on our work with clients and communities.

New Roots

The New Roots Project is trialling innovative strategies to rebuild the mental health of men who have recently arrived in Australia as refugees or to seek asylum. The project, developed by SSI in partnership with *beyondblue* and funded with donations from the Movember Foundation, is implementing three integrated strategies:

82% of newly arrived refugees speak Arabic

3,600+ downloads of the New Roots app

300 volunteers supported SSI during 2015-2106

- A smartphone app in English, Arabic, Farsi and Tamil
- An online toolkit for frontline settlement staff
- Workshops with community leaders

The launch of the pilot phase in NSW in December 2015 generated extensive mainstream, ethnic and online media interest. Key outputs to date include:

- More than 3,600 downloads of the app
- Almost 150 frontline SSI staff has completed online training or workshops
- More than 90 Arabic, Farsi and Tamil-speaking community leaders attended workshops

The mid-point evaluation report indicated strong acceptability of the pilot strategies.

App users, drawn from SSI's humanitarian programs, liked the structure of the app, found it easy to navigate in their language, trusted the information and would share the app with others.

The final evaluation report will inform a potential roll out of New Roots at a national level in 2017.

Acting Chief Operating Officer
Stephen O'Neill



Meet Naila...

Naila Yousid and her husband arrived in Australia in 2013, after the couple was forced to flee their home country of Iraq.

An accountant by trade, Naila is retraining to work in community services and, having completed two TAFE qualifications, she is volunteering at SSI while finishing a third.

For Naila, her time as a volunteer has changed her life.

"I visit homes, I also take refugees to register with Centrelink and Medicare, and I show them how to get transport around. I also sometimes help when they want to go to the doctor or they want to enrol in TAFE," she said.

"When I sit with them and ask, 'how are you?', if I see that they are not feeling good, I tell them, 'no – look at me!' I tell them about my story and that I am new like them but I was encouraged by other people to do something good for myself."

"For me, volunteering is a way to give back to Australia and say thank you for giving me a place where I belong."

SSI Housing

The year was marked by several key milestones, including becoming a registered Community Housing Provider, launching long-term housing assistance (LHA), managing a portfolio of residential properties, and building capacity following the announcement of an additional refugee intake from Syria and Iraq.

The growth of SSI Housing has been driven successfully by the divisional business plan, which prioritised the delivery of quality services, the provision of housing options, and an increase in capacity to cope with higher demand. The capacity for service efficiency, cross-programming support and effective management has been strengthened by the development and implementation of the housing management system, in combination with more training for staff and a high retention rate among our experienced and skilled staff members.

SRSS Residential Care for Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs)

The essential core of the UAM program is to provide quality care for young people who are seeking asylum and waiting for the outcome of their visa application. This includes day-to-day care, such as cooking and cleaning, as well as support with school work, health needs, and familiarisation to their local environment.

To date there have been zero incidents reported to the Department

of Immigration and Border Protection since SSI took over the service.

During the past year, one young person obtained his HSC and three are completing theirs at the end of this year. One client is on course to be admitted to a university, after a successful search for a scholarship.

Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) Housing

Under the SRSS Housing program, SSI supports eligible asylum seeker clients with emergency, transitional accommodation and helps recipients to source and secure independent accommodation.

During the reporting period, we supported more than 300 people seeking asylum (both singles and families), including 80 who stayed in SSI accommodation.

Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)

EHA has experienced rapid growth during the reporting period and provided more than 700 beds for people at risk of homelessness.

From March 2016 EHA numbers increased to accommodate more than 100 people on a monthly basis. Almost 20% of people accommodated were under 18 years of age as part of family groups.

During the reporting period, we achieved the target of managing 50 properties and have worked with 36 service providers. Providing furnished properties to external organisations and government departments under

fee-for-service agreements has been a huge success, demonstrated by the rapid increase in demand since its introduction.

In the new financial year, we are committed to expanding our capacity to deliver crisis accommodation in the western and south-western Sydney regions.

Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) Housing

The program continued to centre on the provision of short-term accommodation (STA) on arrival, assistance to secure long-term accommodation (LTA), and Basic Household Goods (BHG) packages to eligible clients. As in previous years, we continued to strengthen and add value to the service beyond the minimal program obligations. A key focus for the HSS Housing business plan was to enhance the quality and cost effectiveness of client services.

This included requests to tender in the major housing support contracting areas, the most notable being the BHG suppliers. Some of the BHG improvements we achieved through this process included improved quality of household items, the addition of some value-add items identified from client feedback surveys, the implementation of an online ordering system, and the addition of BHG information brochures in client languages. The new arrangements also achieved significant cost savings for SSI.

395 refugee client families assisted with STA

LTA sourced for 427 families

700 places were needed in EHA



Property Management

Exploring and delivering long-term accommodation solutions was another key divisional priority in 2015-2016. SSI achieved registered community housing provider status in January 2016. This led to the launch of our long-term housing assistance (LHA) program and property management services for landlords in March 2016.

The program continues to develop innovative ways to help people access appropriate and affordable long-term accommodation.

The team also collaborates with other NGOs and SSI programs to provide tenancy brokerage services. This includes property head-leasing arrangements to assist people who have found it difficult to access the private market independently such as Women at Risk humanitarian entrants and people with disability.

By the end of the year, the LHA team had assisted 20 families to secure long-term accommodation.

The past year has also seen major achievements from our committed and hard-working housing staff, who truly deserve a big thanks and congratulations on a job well done.

Housing Manager
Patrick Yeung



Handing over the keys to a new home is the most rewarding part of our job.

SSI Housing Officers

SSI Employment

From a new office located in Campsie, SSI commenced delivering the jobactive program in July 2015. During 2015-2016 SSI also developed its capacity to provide employment services for SSI clients as part of an integrated service delivery model, as well as providing recruitment services for corporate organisations.

SSI Employment operates a range of social enterprise projects that offer hands-on work experience, and is collaborating with other SSI programs to provide employment services to all our client groups. In 2015, the Department of Employment recognised SSI as a Five-Star jobactive provider due to our impressive record of placing people into work and helping clients retain employment.

More important than the numbers we've achieved is the way that SSI Employment works. We understand the challenges that many people face when looking for work and regularly go above and beyond to understand our clients' employment goals in order to place them into meaningful and sustainable employment.

Our innovative and unique approach is exemplified in our social enterprise initiatives. These initiatives were developed to help resolve the key challenge facing many of our refugee, asylum seeker and migrant clients: a lack of Australian work experience. These initiatives also assist people

who are long-term unemployed and who need support to re-enter the work force. Our social enterprises give participants the opportunity to develop work experience in a hands-on professional environment, while also benefitting consumers. Through these social enterprises, we have assisted more than 200 people into employment.

One such social enterprise is The Staples Bag. We identified food insecurity as a growing issue in Australia, especially for many of the refugees and people seeking asylum that SSI supports. With this in mind, in 2015 we opened The Staples Bag store in Campsie, where we offer a range of affordable staple groceries. We also operate an outreach model that is unique among food pantries, with 20 pop-up grocery stalls every week at locations across Sydney, including social housing, aged care facilities and with other local community organisations that we partner with. The Staples Bag has grown to provide groceries to more than 750 families and individuals every week. We are also proud to have employed six participants as Staples Bag team members.

We are also very proud of our other social enterprises including Humble Creatives and the SSI Catering and Kitchen initiative. Humble Creatives gives clients experience in a small arts start-up, where job seekers are involved in product development, customer service, sales and digital

marketing, and operating market stalls. All income from this project goes into supporting SSI initiatives.

Our catering and kitchen services have also grown. In January, we commenced our own range of affordable healthy frozen meals that we distribute to people in need through The Staples Bag. So far, we have sold more than 3,500 meals.

We also developed a catering business, using the hospitality skills of clients and participants, and have catered for numerous government departments and private sector company functions.

ParentsNext

SSI commenced delivering the ParentsNext program in April 2016 in partnership with member organisation Metro Assist.

Based in two offices servicing the Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA), ParentsNext is an Australian Government initiative to help parents prepare for employment by the time their youngest child reaches school age.

Specialised teams work with parents to identify their education and employment goals and develop skills to increase their capacity so that they can enter the workforce.

The program also works with parents to link them to activities and services in the local community as pathways to achieving their goals.

3,500+ frozen meals have been sold through The Staples Bag

200 people found employment

750 people shop at The Staples Bag for their weekly groceries



SSI Youth@Work

The SSI Youth@Work mentoring project began in June 2016 to support young workers from migrant and refugee backgrounds to adapt to the Australian job market, stay in work, and set the foundations for future career goals.

Youth@Work participants will be supported through tailored mentoring plans including support in areas such as English language confidence, industry specific knowledge, organisational structure information and tailored career advice.

Employment & Enterprise Manager
Terry Wilson

Meet Marcel and Brad...

Before taking part in The Staples Bag social enterprise, Marcel Tawbeh would never have considered working in retail.

“I was shy and lacked confidence, and thought I would only be able to work in the background,” Mr Tawbeh said.

“The SSI Staples Bag is a great program that has given me experience in different things, and I’ve discovered that working with people and in retail is really fun and much easier than I thought it would be,” Mr Tawbeh said.

After only three weeks with The Staples Bag, Brad Reed had already been for five job interviews; more than he had had in the past eight years of unemployment.

“Working with the Staples Bag team is helping to keep me busy, learn new skills and meet new people, and it gets me closer to bringing my boys to Sydney to join me.”

Both men are extremely motivated and happy to find any employment, and attribute this motivation to SSI.

Settlement Services Program

SSI is the lead organisation of the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) – a consortium of 21 organisations comprising of SSI, its 11 member Migrant Resource Centres and nine locally based organisations. The partners deliver settlement services in specific areas of NSW, under the Department of Social Service’s Settlement Services Program (SSP).

The NSP represents a unique and innovative settlement services delivery model and provides an opportunity for organisations that deliver settlement services to migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants to work collaboratively to meet the aims and objectives of the SSP.

In its first year of operation, the NSP delivered a variety of services to support newly arrived refugees and migrants to become self-reliant and participate equitably in Australian society.

Achievements during the reporting period included:

- Providing more than 7,500 clients with settlement information and advice through casework sessions. More than 15,000 referrals to access further services were also provided
- Delivering in excess of 900 group sessions to more than 6,129 clients. Topics included domestic violence and family relationships, health issues, how to access and

use services, and immigration information and assistance

- Conducting more than 187 promotional activities to promote settlement services to clients and service providers
- Delivering more than 362 education and employment sessions to newly arrived refugees and migrants
- Supporting 40 people to gain employment

SSI has established an NSP Settlement Innovation Fund to develop and test new approaches to delivering settlement grants activities and to build capacity to respond innovatively in areas of emerging and unmet need. During 2015-2016 20 projects were funded to address settlement issues related to employment, housing, prevention of family violence, civic participation and social cohesion.

A communications strategy to promote the work of NSP was also implemented in 2015-2016, starting with unified branding, a website with information about the program, and a Facebook page that highlights partner activities and achievements. Distribution of a monthly NSP newsletter to partners, key stakeholders and supporters also began during the reporting period.

From July 2016 two additional organisations will join the NSP: Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency and Manly Community Centre and Services.

Youth Collective

An initiative of SSI and its member organisations, Youth Collective is a network of multicultural organisations and young people focused on service delivery outcomes that reflect the needs and aspirations of multicultural youth in NSW

Youth Collective engages young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds at the local level to inform service planning, implementation and outcomes. The collective also coordinates cross-regional efforts of youth workers within the multicultural youth space with a focus on the settlement sector.

During 2015-2016 a key focus of Youth Collective was ensuring that refugee youth contributed to the Global Refugee Youth Consultations in Geneva. More than 200 young people in regional and metropolitan NSW shared their pre- and post-arrival experiences and views that were presented in Geneva by the SSI Youth Projects Coordinator, Dor Akech Achiek.

National Youth Week activities focused on building young people’s leadership skills. Activities included a Youth Leaders’ Forum organised by SSI for refugee youth in the HSS program; the ‘MY LIFE’ Youth Camp hosted by the Community MRC; the Hunter Refugee Youth Event for young people in the Newcastle area, which Northern Settlement Services supported; and the Auburn Diversity Services-led Youth Summit.

20 projects received funding under the NSP Settlement Innovation Fund

Community Hub activities have generated 6,791 contacts with families since it commenced

200 young people contributed to the Global Refugee Youth Consultations in Geneva

Other key activities organised by the collective included:

- My Kitchen Rocks – a multicultural social event that celebrated young people's talents and strengths
- Amazing Race – events designed to increase young people's confidence and capacity to live independently in Australian society
- The Western Sydney Employment Symposium 2015 – a youth employment expo that provided the impetus for a pilot employment training and placement initiative, the Gateway to your Future project.

Community Hubs

In 2015, SSI entered into an agreement with Community Hubs Australia to provide support agency functions for the delivery of the

National Community Hubs Program in NSW from January 2016 to June 2018.

The program supports families as they navigate the education system and helps strengthen their connection with local communities.

There are 12 Hubs in NSW, located in Bankstown, Blacktown and Parramatta. In the six month period to June 30, Hub activities generated 6,791 contacts with families. Common activities organised at the Hubs include: mother and child English-language programs, breakfast clubs, homework clubs and parenting support programs. These programs seek to reduce isolation, especially among newly arrived mothers; increase social cohesion; and improve learning outcomes for children.

SSI played a vital role in the transition of the Hubs from the previous support agency, ensuring program objectives were met. SSI provided management support to Hub leaders and recruited three new Hub leaders, ensuring they were matched with an appropriate school. SSI also organised and delivered regular professional development activities to advance the skills and knowledge of Hub leaders. Further, SSI convened principal meetings, and Hub leader meetings within and across Local Government Areas to facilitate information sharing and activity design.

Settlement Services Manager
Loukia Zinopoulos



Meet Alice...

The war in Syria interrupted Alice Keswany's architectural studies and eventually forced Ms Keswany and her family to flee their home in Damascus. They lived in Lebanon for two years before resettling in Australia in June 2015.

Upon her arrival, the first English conversation Ms Keswany had was with her SSI case manager who connected her with a number of SSI's youth initiatives, including a pilot employment project from the Youth Collective: Gateway to Your Future.

Ms Keswany and 10 other newly arrived young people received specialised employment training, work experience opportunities and one-on-one mentoring support to help them identify and achieve their employment goals.

After a six-week placement with eyewear manufacturer Dresden Optics, she was offered a job, which enabled her to take an industrial design course before applying for university.

Ms Keswany credited finding work so quickly and working towards future employment goals to her involvement in SSI initiatives that serve to extend beyond the HSS program obligations.

SSI Multicultural Foster Care

Safety, stability and connection to family, community and culture continued to underpin the work SSI Multicultural Foster Care (MFC) does with children, carers and families.

In its third full year of operation, MFC continued to embed high standards of practice and steadily expanded its capacity. In November 2015, MFC was accredited as a designated agency by the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG), demonstrating its capacity to meet NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care. In 2016, MFC subsequently met the OCG initial compliance and monitoring review requirements successfully.

The multicultural practice model recognises the critical importance that language, age, ethnicity, history, socio-economic, political, religious and other lifestyle traditions can have on the wellbeing and care of a child or young person.

SSI has cared for children and young people from more than 40 CALD backgrounds and many children and young people identify with more than one cultural background, which they may share with a parent and/or a sibling/s.

During 2015-2016, MFC sustained its focus on culturally aligning children with carers. With the support of carers from more than 31 CALD backgrounds, we have matched children and young people to carers who share the same ethnicity, language and/or faith. As at June 2016, 73% of children, young people

and carers share at least two cultural elements. Only 8% of children were placed with a carer who did not share a specific cultural element, and of those children, 100% had the support of a bilingual caseworker and/or a bicultural support worker.

Carers and caseworkers have remained committed to understanding each child's family's migration, refugee or asylum experience. The program expanded its clinical expertise to assist children and young people responding to trauma. It also maintained strong links with ethnic-specific and community representatives to facilitate opportunities for engaging with cultural activities and maintaining relationships with community.

MFC has remained focused on all aspects of the developmental needs of children and young people and, in particular, it has committed to ensuring the life story work for all participants is 100% reflective of their circumstances and family.

Anecdotal evidence continues to support the value of life story work and the importance of working collaboratively with birth families and carers.

During the April school holidays, MFC worked with a professional photographer and Ignite entrepreneur to take portraits of children and young people with their carers and birth families. For many children and young people, their life story work now includes unique point-in-time photos with both of their families.

Positive family relationships are critical to supporting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people, and can have a significant impact on placement stability and long-term identity and self-esteem. MFC's work with children, birth families and carers was strengthened in 2016 with the addition of a new family contact worker position. The new role has focused on ensuring that family time is a meaningful and positive experience for all involved before, during and after contact. In the five months since this role began, MFC has facilitated and provided guidance for at least 110 family contact sessions.

While restoration and family reunification might not be the goal for every child or young person in care, MFC has supported 28 restorations and one young person who turned 18 is living independently.

SSI has continued to support carers through four language-specific carer support and training groups, as well as through individual peer-to-peer support. Caseworkers, many of whom are bilingual, continued to support carers with regular home visits and phone calls.

In 2015, SSI commissioned an independent review of the MFC model and has implemented recommendations to strengthen the program's operations. SSI remains committed to reviewing and learning from its practice.

In April 2016, MFC was the only agency that contributed to NSW Department of Family and

Foster children supported by SSI come from 40+ CALD backgrounds

28 children have returned to their birth families

40+ family portraits were taken of children, carers and birth families



Community Services (FACS) consultations designed to uncover the views young people from CALD backgrounds hold about out-of-home care. Young people from six different cultural groups contributed to the publication, titled 'What young people thought about the statutory OOHC Quality Assurance Framework', and informed the spiritual and cultural wellbeing measures, which in turn have informed the FACS Quality Assurance Framework, currently being piloted.

SSI is also building its evidence-based outcomes for early intervention models and permanency casework.

SSI strives to drive and lead innovation and best practice in out-of-home care and, in particular, to improve responses to cultural diversity practice.

Multicultural Out of Home Care
Program Manager
Kathy Karatasas



Our lives have changed for the better since we started being foster carers and we are blessed to have them in our lives.

SSI foster carer

SSI Ability Links NSW

It has been a busy year with many accomplishments and positive outcomes for participants and community. SSI is the largest provider of Ability Links NSW in Sydney Metro and Southern NSW and SSI Ability Links NSW (ALNSW) has done an outstanding job in ensuring its workforce is reflective of the communities we support. As a result we have been able to work with communities that have not previously engaged with disability support programs.

Linkers have utilised their skills in community development to change community conversations for a more inclusive and welcoming society, while also working with individuals, families and carers to link them in meaningful and fulfilling goals.

The program has rapidly expanded over the past year with an increase in referrals and the number of people supported. There has also been an increase in staffing and office locations. ALNSW has established a Linker workforce across all 44 local government areas covered by our organisation and reaches out to those communities from 21 offices covering the Sydney Metropolitan area and Southern NSW.

Linkers have been busy supporting people and promoting the program within communities and support is being given to more than 540 people per month, including information, referral and facilitated support.

Since July 1, 2015 ALNSW has provided 4,189 people with facilitated support. Seventy five per cent of support has been provided to people with disability, with another 25% of support to family members and carers.

In December 2015 ALNSW, in partnership with the Department of Ageing, Disability and Homecare, developed innovative reporting descriptors to capture the impact of the work ALNSW is making with participants and the community.

A participant outcome is a 'link' facilitated by the Linker for an individual, and since December 2015, SSI Ability Links has achieved 911 participant outcomes:

- 433 new social connection goals
- 314 service supports and other related mainstream goal
- 82 employment goals
- 82 education goals

A community outcome is where Linkers have achieved broader social inclusion outcomes by working with community organisations or individuals such as business owners. We have achieved 62 community outcomes:

- 8 improving physical access for people with disability
- 22 business practices improved to ensure they are inclusive and accessible for people with disability

- 32 leadership outcomes where, as a result of interaction with SSI ALNSW, organisations are actively raising awareness and promoting social inclusion in their business and the wider community

Since July 2015, SSI ALNSW has made 46,786 community connections, which includes promotion of the program and increasing awareness of inclusion of people with disability to the wider community.

The ALNSW program emphasises genuine consultations and conversations with participants and stakeholders. Their feedback provides SSI with insight into community and individual expectations, which in turn shape our program and organisation.

In September 2015, SSI ALNSW attained third party accreditation (TPV) under the NSW Disability Services Standard (DSS), an accreditation for SSI to deliver disability services.

The SSI ALNSW Facebook page started in April 2016. The page was launched to increase access for people with disability, family members and carers to the program and increase program awareness. The SSI Ability Links Facebook page helps us share and promote the great work that the program achieves. The page includes profiles about our dedicated Linkers, success stories about Ability Links participants, information about events and opportunities.

4,189 people provided with facilitated support

22 business practices improved

46,786 community connections since July 1, 2015

Since April 2016, ALNSW has completed 69 focus groups across three major community groups (participant, community and formal stakeholder groups). The completed focus groups have resulted in 89 actions for review and implementation where appropriate.

Another 34 focus groups are scheduled for the coming financial year, which will provide more worthwhile information, feedback, and ideas for joint community projects and initiatives.

Between May and June 2016, the SSI ALNSW team completed a series of workshops that addressed community development and helped

staff build their skills and knowledge in relation to how to engage individuals and the wider community in facilitating change to a more inclusive and welcoming society.

SSI's Linkers are now working on projects that have been identified in their communities as areas in need of change. For example, Linkers in North East Sydney are in the early stages of working with public housing residents to support them in opportunities to connect and engage with their communities in more meaningful and empowering ways. This has so far included connecting residents with SSI's The Staples Bag social enterprise to support healthy living and organising community

barbecues to increase social opportunities.

There are many projects that are underway that highlight SSI's commitment to meaningful inclusion of people with disability. Ignite Ability will allow people with disability who have entrepreneurial aspirations to work with specialist enterprise facilitators. Likewise, specialist employment services will support people with disability and their families and carers to become job ready.

Ability Links Operations Manager
Steve Gholab



Meet Jaffar...

Seeking refuge in Australia from inland Syria, Jaffar had never been to a beach before. This is why he will never forget the day he spent surfing in Gerroa on the NSW South Coast.

Jaffar is vision impaired and was invited by his SSI Linker to participate in a Surf Together program. Despite his initial fears, local surfers encouraged him on a board and took him out into the waves.

Despite not being able to see, he was soon able to catch a wave and after a few attempts, Jaffar was able to assess whether the wave was going to break, or if he could float safely over.

"It was great being in the water and feel that I could do the same as a person with sight," he said. "I didn't feel like I had a disability; it was like I could see again. It was one of the happiest days of my life."

FutureAbility

The FutureAbility: Multicultural Communities Getting NDIS Ready project began in May 2015 and was launched in November 2015 in Ashfield head office by the Hon John Ajaka, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Multiculturalism.

FutureAbility is designed to help CALD organisations and communities prepare for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The project aims to enhance engagement of CALD organisations and groups in the new disability services system, and improve outcomes for people with disability from CALD backgrounds in NSW.

The project began by commissioning two scoping studies. One examined the prevalence of disability in CALD communities, while the other was an assessment and mapping of the CALD sector's readiness for the NDIS. The results from the scoping studies informed the two implementation stages of the project: firstly, supporting the CALD services sector to become NDIS ready, and secondly, educating and informing CALD communities about issues affecting people with disability and how to access services and support the NDIS offers.

The CALD disability data study found that potentially up to one in four people eligible for the NDIS will be from a CALD background. The data demonstrated the heterogeneity of disability and ethnicity across NSW and provided a solid insight into specific demographics at local

government area and Health District levels. It also highlighted the need for a range of access strategies to enter the NDIS and ensure choice and control for people with disability, their families and carers.

FutureAbility used the results from the data to determine the languages and localities in which community education sessions would be delivered.

All the organisations surveyed indicated a need for capital funding and support to enter the NDIS space. Key gaps in knowledge and competence were identified in terms of working in the disability area, but few resources are available to help organisations address these gaps.

Organisations indicated a desire for culturally appropriate and meaningful information about the NDIS in simple English and in-language.

There is a critical need for people with disability from CALD backgrounds to understand the NDIS and its relevance to them so that they can access the range of support services potentially available to them.

FutureAbility is due for completion at the end of 2016, and despite its short term, there have been many highlights and achievements during 2015-16 including several presentations and national conferences, the distribution \$800,000 in Business Development Initiatives grants to 16 CALD organisations, and the coordination of NDIS information sessions for SSI member Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), senior management and the SSI Board.

FutureAbility Manager
Georgia Zogalis



25% of people eligible for the NDIS will be from a CALD background

Delivered 24 half-day Community Education Sessions to 13 language groups

Five full day NDIS forums held for CALD organisations

The Strategy Group

The Strategy Group initiative is a result of an important relational commitment its members have made to ensure the continued development of effective working relationships with each other and between SSI and its 11 member Migrant Resource Centres.

The Strategy Group was initiated at a planning retreat organised in mid-2015 for SSI and its member organisations. Together with facilitator Marlina (Sue) Basser, SSI members, SSI Executive and all Boards of Management were invited into a critical relational conversation. While the relationship between SSI and its members is well established and ongoing, a regular forum for strategic discussion did not exist.

It was identified that it was important to maintain effective collaborative relationships informed by a changing political, economic and technological environment. The Strategy Group provides a coordinated and confidential forum for strategic thinking, sector enhancement and partnership development. Some key areas of focus for The Strategy Group are disability, families, aged care and employment services.

The Strategy Group members maintain their independence and unique community connections, service diversity and management structure, but as members of the group, they also participate in shared activities. These include: community needs identification, multicultural sector leadership initiatives, and contributing to the development of public policy, sector representation, public events and campaigns.

It is important to note that SSI is represented at The Strategy Group by the CEO, Violet Roumeliotis, and the Government and Member Relations Manager, Esta Paschalidis-Chilas. The 2015-2016 Chairperson is Karin Vasquez, CEO of Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative, and the Secretariat is managed by Ms Paschalidis-Chilas. Ms Basser plays a key role in holding members to purpose and intent.

The vision

All Australians are supported and resourced to fulfil their potential as members of their communities.

The mission

To increase our capacity, individually and together, to improve the social and economic outcomes for vulnerable and CALD people. We achieve this by maximising our industry position, sharing knowledge and resources, identifying and acting on opportunities, and developing more innovative, efficient and effective services.

The intention

By participating in The Strategy Group, member organisations become stronger, more transparent and accountable, more financially sound and efficient, and better equipped to offer high-quality services.

Members and Supporters

- Advance Diversity Services
- Auburn Diversity Services
- Community Migrant Resource Centre
- Core Community Services
- Illawarra Multicultural Services
- Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre
- Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative
- Metro Assist
- Northern Settlement Services
- Settlement Services International
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- SydWest Multicultural Services

With the collective strength and expertise of these organisations, it is expected that The Strategy Group will make a positive impact in addressing the needs of multicultural communities in NSW and beyond.

Government & Member Relations Manager
Esta Paschalidis-Chilas

SSI Initiatives

SSI funds and delivers a number of initiatives which enhance social interaction and community engagement with the aim of supporting and building the capacity of the communities we work with.

With many years experience delivering humanitarian and migrant settlement services, SSI recognises how self-sufficiency and connecting with community are key elements to a positive settlement journey.

Ignite Small Business Start-ups, SSI Arts & Culture, Community

Engagement and the newly established Partnerships & Fundraising are core SSI initiatives that help our clients achieve financial and social independence and wellbeing.



Meet Mohammed...

Like his father before him, Mohammed Reza is bringing smiles to people's faces with his freshly made Iranian inspired sweets, ice cream and juice from his shop, Shiraz Ice Cream in Merrylands.

Mr Reza started learning the trade from an early age, helping in his father's shop in Abadan, Iran, and dreamt about one day owning his own shop and exporting Iranian products to the world.

Mr Reza came to Australia with his wife and three children in 2013 and was supported by SSI's HSS program.

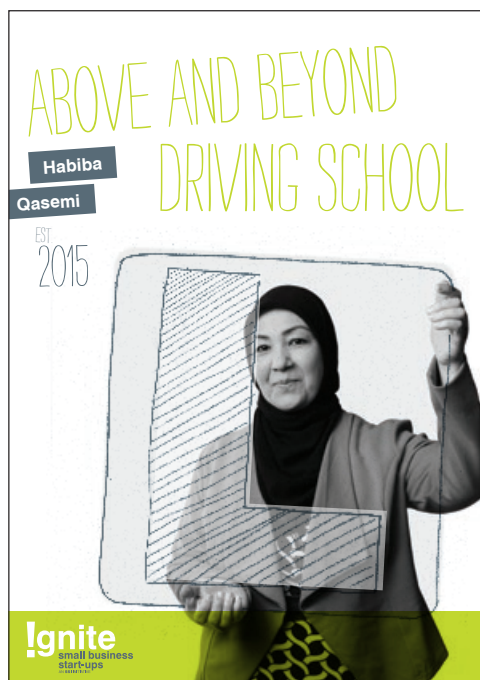
Given his passion and determination to start a small business, Mr Reza was introduced by his case manager to SSI's Ignite Small Business Start-ups initiative.

"Everything in the shop is handmade, and people come from all over Sydney to eat them," Mr Reza said.

"My dream is to expand into catering, and then start exporting to the USA."

Ignite

Small Business Start-ups



The Ignite Small Business Start-ups initiative has achieved a number of important outcomes in its third year of operation. An interim evaluation report written by Professor Jock Collins (School of Business, University of Technology Sydney) heralded the Ignite initiative as having developed an innovative, good practice model for supporting refugee entrepreneurs.

In 2015, new premises were established for the Ignite initiative at the Addison Road Community Centre

in Marrickville, in Sydney's inner west. This welcoming community space provides access to a variety of produce and craft markets, where refugee entrepreneurs test and sell their products in a safe and supportive environment. Entrepreneurs from the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program – people seeking asylum who have work rights – continued to make up the bulk of the referrals to the Ignite initiative in 2015-2016, albeit with a slight drop from the previous year to 70%.

Twenty-five per cent of Ignite entrepreneurs have a tertiary qualification that they gained overseas, while 29% reported that secondary school was their highest educational attainment.

Since 2013, the majority of start-ups have been in two key areas: the food and catering sector, comprising 17.8% of new businesses, and the cultural services sector (artists, photographers and film-makers), which accounted for 16%. The gender breakdown of Ignite participants is 70% male and 30% female.

The Ignite team has supported 100 potential entrepreneurs in the past year and helped 33 entrepreneurs start their businesses. Since 2013, Ignite has supported the establishment of 54 business start-ups. While most are sole trader

operated businesses, there are seven companies that employ 20 staff between them. One small female-owned cleaning company was successful in winning an SSI cleaning contract and now has three teams of cleaners. Another entrepreneur, a young Afghani man who was keen to establish an export business, was introduced to the relevant Resource Team members and was able to start his business just six weeks later.

The Ignite received a grant in early 2016, enabling it to expand access to people with disability. This is an acknowledgement that the model developed by SSI to support entrepreneurial refugees can be extended to other groups of people requiring similar support.

The establishment of each new business is a testament to the support provided by the Ignite Resource Team, whose members volunteer their knowledge, skills and experience. These achievements also would not have been possible without the work of enterprise facilitator Ben Benazzouz and program support officer Tatjana Lukic-Co, who joined the Ignite program in August 2015.

Ignite Program Coordinator
Dina Petrakis

33 entrepreneurs started a small business

Seven successful start-ups together employ 20 people

It took just six weeks for one ignite start-up

SSI Arts & Culture

SSI has been at the forefront of nurturing talent and promoting artists and performers from refugee and asylum backgrounds by offering opportunities to collaboratively showcase their wealth of talent. The second full year of operation for the self-funded Arts & Culture Program saw a flurry of workshops, excursions and exhibitions that enabled both beginners and experienced artists to express themselves and hone their artistic practice. These activities also provided a relaxed environment for refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia to improve their language skills, confidence and social networks.

One of the more notable developments in the Arts & Culture Program was the ambitious expansion of the New Beginnings: Refugee Arts & Culture Festival, which has now become one of the biggest events on the SSI calendar. This fun, family-friendly event invited members of the general public to interact with the refugee community and, in the process, gain an appreciation for all the positive contributions refugees make to Australian society.

All arts and culture initiatives were free of charge for participants, and some of this year's highlights included:

Photography workshops

A group of people seeking asylum and refugees joined a series of photography and digital media

workshops facilitated by community arts organisation CuriousWorks between August and November 2015. The workshops aimed to develop the creative potential of the participants who had varying skill levels. The outcome of the workshops was a portrait and landscape photography exhibition showcased at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in November 2015.

SSI travelling exhibition Home: Between Here and There

The Home: Between Here and There exhibition followed a series of professional development workshops for visual artists held between April and June 2015. The resulting exhibition showcased eight large scale works by artists who are seeking asylum in Australia. The exhibition was launched at the Bankstown Arts Centre in August 2015 and toured to Newcastle's Adamstown Arts (Sept–Oct 2015) and the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Canberra, in February 2016.

My Story project

In partnership with the Sydney Writers' Festival (SWF), SSI organised a series of workshops during the September 2015 school holidays. The workshops gave voice to our youngest clients, offering a unique, first-person insight into the lives of children who are refugees or currently seeking asylum in Australia. My Story workshops were facilitated by well-known children's book authors, with the support of a dedicated and experienced group

of SWF volunteers. A selection of the children's stories was published on the My Story website as part of the Children's Festival of Moving Stories in November 2015.

Skills development workshops for visual artists

Professional development workshops help visual artists to continue their artistic practice while seeking asylum or during the early stages of settlement. Between March and June 2016, refugee and asylum seeker artists were given access to studio space and materials with the aim of creating new work, under the guidance and mentorship of artist, educator and curator Miriam Cabello. The workshops provided opportunities for artists to improve their social wellbeing and language skills, and to further develop their artistic skills and techniques.

New Beginnings: Refugee Arts & Culture Festival 2016

This year saw the expansion of SSI's arts and culture festival to two venues, attracting more than 3000 attendees. The Festival was held between June 18 and 26, during and after Refugee Week 2016, and featured three main events:

- An all-day celebration at Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour, showcasing live music and dance performances by more than 40 artists from refugee backgrounds, along with interactive workshops for children, and market and food stalls.

'Home' exhibition travelled to three cities

3,000+ people attended New Beginnings Festival events

280 people attended SSI Speakers' Series



“

Art says what words can't convey. I am grateful for the artists sharing their stories and encouraging me to consider their individual journeys.

'Home' exhibition attendee



Meet Maher...

There was hardly a dry eye when the credits rolled for Maher Jamous's powerful documentary, *Faraway... So Close to Homeland*, which profiled 10 Syrian refugees as they adjusted to life outside their home country.

The premiere screening of the documentary was a highlight of the New Beginnings festival and was held at the Chrissie Cotter Gallery in Camperdown.

Maher came to Australia in March 2015 with his wife and three children, and was supported on arrival by SSI.

"I have a Degree in Law but my passion is film. I focus on producing documentaries about Syrian people, their struggle for freedom and salvation. I rebel against injustice and the Syrian Revolution is the inspiration for my films."

Maher is also establishing a business as a documentary maker and videographer with the help of Ignite Small Business Start-ups.

- A one-week art exhibition at the Chrissie Cotter Gallery in Camperdown, as part of Inner West Council's Open Marrickville initiative, and an exhibition closing event for the exhibition that saw Sydneysiders come together with artists from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds for an afternoon of art and live music, and food provided by Ignite caterers.
- The premiere screening of Maher Jamous's powerful documentary, *Faraway... So Close to Homeland*, which profiles 10 Syrian refugees as they adjust to life outside their home country. The screening was facilitated by the Ignite initiative which has supported budding entrepreneur Maher.

SSI Speakers' Series

The year's events attracted a number of informed speakers to discuss issues relevant to the communities with which SSI works.

Topics included:

- New arrivals – opportunity or threat? Second generation Australians and their views on race, migration and asylum seekers (September 2015)
- In our name? Civil society's influence on refugee and asylum seeker policy and debate in Australia (October 2015-this session was presented at Adamstown Arts, Newcastle)
- Inspiring stories of former refugees who have made Australia home (March 2016)
- Multicultural Australia: are we taking a backward step? (May 2016)

Arts activities for women and children

A number of activities in the Arts & Culture calendar targeted children and women supported by SSI's humanitarian services. These included a creative excursion to SSI's Friendship Garden during the April school holidays and dance and art therapy workshops for women.

Special thanks to all the volunteers, artists and organisations that have contributed to the development and growth of the SSI Arts & Culture Program. Thanks are also due to SSI's Corporate Communication team for their support in promoting the program's activities and outcomes to the wider community.

Arts & Culture Coordinator
Carolina Triana

Partnerships & Fundraising

SSI launched its Partnerships and Fundraising arm this year to provide a diverse range of supporters with avenues to better connect with us. The objectives are to develop new revenue streams to support and grow our value-added, self-funded programs; to increase engagement with existing and new supporters; and to bring awareness of the work SSI does to a wider audience.

Corporate partnerships

A highlight during the reporting period was our innovative \$200,000 partnership with Allianz Australia, launched in March, which includes the placement of 20 recent arrivals into full-time employment with the insurer, as well as the funding of refugee scholarships over a two-year period.

Allianz and SSI both have a vision of playing a key support role in the community in the areas of education, employment and addressing social justice issues.

Increasing access to education and employment opportunities ultimately increases social participation, independence, and economic and personal wellbeing for people from a refugee background. Large corporates such as Allianz have enormous potential to create jobs, open access to education and basic services, and deliver innovative solutions.

IT organisations have also come to the forefront in offering support to SSI, with Google and Atlassian regularly sending volunteers and developing IT solutions for our new social enterprises. WorkVentures also provided IT Bootcamp training to clients interested in working in the IT sector.

Community fundraising

Individuals and community organisations are now able to easily donate to SSI and host their own fundraisers through our new online fundraising platform. An example of this is David Wise, who undertook a five kilometre swim challenge and raised almost \$2,000 for SSI through friends and family. SSI ran online appeals for the first time at Christmas and during winter using this new donation system, and a film fundraiser event was held thanks to community supporter Peter Chandran, Event Cinemas and Transmission Films.

Family foundations have also supported the work of SSI, including funding SSI's Surfing Without Borders project, while the Curtis Foundation generously funded a three-month job-readiness course for clients who came to Australia on Woman at Risk visas.

Students have played a significant role in fundraising for SSI's programs. The Vietnamese Students' Association, for example, raised more than \$12,000 at a gala ball, while Sydney Grammar Preparatory School

held a Zumbathon and Bethlehem College hosted a fundraising and awareness community event. The Northern Beaches Refugee Initiative – a coalition of 30 churches and community members – has raised money to help subsidise rent for several newly arrived families.

Educational scholarships

In 2015, SSI launched a suite of 36 educational scholarships to directly support people from refugee backgrounds by minimising the financial barriers experienced as they participate in the NSW education system.

Scholarships were awarded at all levels of education, ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for students undertaking study in primary school, secondary school, vocational education and training, and university, as well as for skills and qualifications recognition.

Refugees who come to Australia face many challenges during settlement, such as financial hardship, dealing with experiences of torture and trauma, and family separation. The SSI scholarships provided targeted support to those who are in most need of assistance to overcome social and economic challenges.

Partnerships & Fundraising Manager
Naushin Rahman

146 donors gave funds to support SSI initiatives

36 educational scholarships awarded

\$12,000 raised for SSI through one event

Community Engagement

In our community-based programs, we have witnessed the hope, resilience, courage and determination of refugees and people seeking asylum, which means that we speak from the heart when we talk about the capability and contribution they bring to Australia. We have also seen the community extend a warm welcome through volunteering, donations, and project collaboration.

Community Kitchen

In recognition that individuals and families who flee their homeland in fear of persecution arrive in Australia a long way from their kin, community and familiar support networks, the SSI Community Kitchen offers a space of welcome and an opportunity for refugees and people seeking asylum to build social networks and develop a sense of belonging.

In 2015-2016, the Community Kitchen – which operates on the good will of community, volunteers and donors – offered freshly made lunch to 2,830 community members. Participants were encouraged to get involved in social, recreational and skill development activities in whatever way they were most comfortable – be it leading an activity, participating or just observing. The only requirement at the Community Kitchen was that people had some fun!

Playtime

SSI's Playtime has offered women and their pre-school-aged children a

space to socialise and learn through structured play and special interest activities. During Playtime, we have:

- listened to, supported and empowered women
- supported the social and emotional development of children
- helped mothers to build connections so that the effects of social or cultural isolation and loneliness are reduced
- invited external specialist stakeholders to contribute to curriculum development and outreach to core or complementary services

In 2015-2016, Playtime offered two programs for refugee and asylum seeker parents and pre-school-aged children:

- Multicultural playgroup in Parramatta
- The Rohingya Women's Group with facilitated childcare in partnership with Lakemba School as Community Centre

SSI is looking forward to collaborating with Playgroup NSW to develop a trauma-informed playgroup designed specifically for families who have experienced trauma as a result of their refugee experiences and to offer strategies to re-introduce play in the parent-child relationship.

Since Playtime was introduced in 2014, it has supported more than 250 recently arrived refugee or asylum seeker families, with 864 individual visits in 2015-2016.

Friendship Garden

In partnership with Cumberland Council (previously Auburn Council), the Friendship Garden in Auburn is a space where the local community comes to find friendship, learn about permaculture and grow organic vegetables. Gardeners from a range of backgrounds and at different stages of their settlement journey in Australia have come to call this garden their very own 'Aussie backyard'.

Throughout 2015-2016, weekly sessions were offered to keen gardeners, and 23 skill development workshops were led by community garden specialists on topics such as composting, balcony gardening and growing tomatoes from seed. Six excursions to established community gardens fuelled inspiration and helped influence the evolution of the garden, with permaculture plans and co-design ideas with Cumberland Council.

Each school holidays, the garden became a site for sensory learning and creative activities. A particularly creative group of children built the Friendship Garden scarecrow, some participated in a fairies and trolls miniature garden construction activity, while others got busy with the giant pea teepee.

The Friendship Garden also became a popular outdoor space for artists to be inspired and creative. Creative arts sessions averaged 20 members per session and included mosaic, carpentry and tapestry workshops.

There were 864 visits to Playtime

2,830 meals served at Community Kitchen

30+ people seeking asylum learnt to surf



“

When my client says ‘I woke up happy today because it is Community Kitchen’, I know it’s a good thing we are doing. The day is about relationships – the connections they make and fun they have.

SSI Case Manager



International Women's Day in the Friendship Garden

In its first year, the Friendship Garden has blossomed into a welcoming space, where Auburn locals and SSI clients alike bond over the shared experience of gardening.

That growing sense of community was demonstrated when the Auburn Centre for Community hosted a colourful International Women's Day celebration.

More than 150 community members, refugees, and women seeking asylum spent a sunny morning bonding over craft and gardening, and taking tours of the Friendship Garden.

There was a natural jewellery making workshop, while the Friendship Gardeners put their green thumbs to use teaching participants to make succulent gardens out of re-purposed containers and decorations such as marbles and ribbons.

The event was a great chance for a diverse mix of women from all ages and backgrounds to celebrate International Women's Day, interact with other women, and enjoy being outdoors.

The October 2015 Spring Garden Party attracted more than 200 visitors and the 2016 International Women's Day attracted 180 women to the site. In the 2015-2016 period, community members accessed the Friendship Garden in 1,252 instances.

Surfing Without Borders

Settlement encompasses finding a connection to people, communities, pastimes and the land. The Surfing Without Borders program introduced refugees and people seeking asylum to the iconic Australian sport of surfing at beautiful Bondi Beach. Instructors from Bondi surf school, Let's Go Surfing, taught participants about ocean awareness, how to read the rip current, and how to stand up on the board and ride the wave.

Surfing Without Borders has been a fun program where participants typically arrive nervous but leave exhilarated with big smiles and a sense of accomplishment.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Volunteering

Many refugees and people seeking asylum are curious about the unique Australian natural environment and continue to volunteer regularly with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife service at Middle Head in Sydney Harbour National Park. The team worked with local volunteers and staff to help restore the historic WWII forts at George's Head, regenerate the site's native bushlands and learn about native Australian flora and fauna. For many of the participants,

it was their first experience of the Australian bush and an introduction to all that comes with it; be it kookaburras, snakes or spiders.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife staff is grateful for the hard work of the volunteers and regularly gives tours of the site to visitors as an example of what can be achieved.

In the 2015-2016 financial year, refugees and people seeking asylum volunteered 864 hours in bush regeneration as part of this collaboration at Middle Head National Park.

Community Engagement
& Capacity Manager
Trina Soulos

Be Well

There is a well-documented connection between the health status of employees and their productivity. The Be Well program encourages staff to make positive lifestyle choices, introduce effective work practices and build a culture of focus – all of which is underpinned by the need for sustained good health. Be Well takes a multi-pronged approach to building and sustaining employee engagement and performance.

In 2015-2016, there was an impressive response from staff to Be Well's team-based competitions and related campaigns. Highlights included:

- The #SSImindfulteams competition effectively engaged 31 staff teams across all business units and prompted some powerful self-reflection about mindful team behaviours. It confirmed that the Be Well ethos is being effectively integrated into work practice at SSI
- The high rate of staff participation in Be Well activities highlighted the essential role the Be Well Committee plays in driving communications. The addition of short audio practices to the eight-week Mindfulness at Work micro training program were well received, indicating the SSI workforce is responsive to the idea of online training. We learned that easy access to the files, and the ability to download them to a mobile device, is paramount. Making these learning assets available to a widely dispersed workforce, who are routinely on the move, will optimise their ongoing value

- The first recruitment of Be Well Champions occurred during the #SSImindfulteams campaign in 2015-16. SSI can harness the strength of this group of self-nominated Be Well supporters to sustain and grow the Be Well ethos in individual teams

The insights offered in this year's Be Well impact survey provided SSI with further evidence of the efficacy of the health and productivity program. The vast majority of respondents (between 75% and 93%) reported they have adopted positive lifestyle behaviours, boosted their mental capital and improved their work performance.

In 2015-2016, the Be Well program built on the results of the 2013 behaviour change survey to include all Be Well participants and improve the scope of the data. The 2016 behaviour change results focused on respondents' increased capacity to:

- manage workloads by using Be Well's productivity strengthening techniques
- focus on the task at hand, listen attentively, be organised and meet deadlines
- manage stress at work and at home by focusing on wellness and self-care
- build confidence, optimism, perseverance and resilience

Analysis of the survey data suggests the program is having an impact on the way employees think about themselves and their health, and what this means for the way they perform their jobs and engage with others in the workplace. Some highlights of the results staff reported included:

- 89.89% of respondents practised sitting less and moving more
- 75.82% of respondents focused on restful sleep
- 86.81% of respondents were better organised
- 85.23% of respondents were better able to meet deadlines
- 88.89% of respondents were better able to collaborate with colleagues
- 91.11% of respondents were better able to communicate effectively

Survey responses:

"I'm just generally being aware of my needs more than ever before in my career, making them a priority and shifting long held poor behaviour..."

"I gained a deeper sense of gratitude towards SSI and their staff for making life at work so pleasant and balanced."

"You can teach an old dog new tricks!"

SSI Financial Overview

In the 2015 – 2016 financial year, SSI experienced growth with the addition of new services. Levels of revenue base were maintained despite lower than forecasted levels of client referrals in the Humanitarian Settlement Services program.

The audited financial statements for the financial year highlight a sound revenue base of \$70.5 million that is in line with the \$71.3 million recorded for 2014-2015. This decrease is largely due to the reduction in activity in our support services for newly arrived refugees and people seeking asylum. With the exception of these services, each program recorded increases in revenue over the previous year.

The reduction of revenue in Humanitarian Settlement Services is due to the delay, and some reduction, in the Federal Government's annual intake allocation for SSI. The revenue base, however, benefited from growth in existing services and the addition of new programs in the areas of employment and other migrant settlement services.

As in previous years, SSI's income includes a component of direct cost recovery of support payments made to clients in the SRSS program. After adjusting for these direct payments, the net revenue for 2015-2016 is \$67.7 million, compared to \$53.9 million for the 2014-2015 financial year. Also included in income is a component of

both federal and state capital funding amounting to \$5,000 and \$788,000, respectively. Federal funding accounts for 79% of the total revenue base compared to 86% last year.

The expansion of services has seen operating costs increase from \$67.6 million to \$71.8 million. Included in these figures is the reduction in recoverable payments for client support costs received as income from the SRSS program, which decreased from \$17.4 million for 2014-15 to \$2.9 million in 2015-16.

Staffing levels continued to grow throughout the financial year due to new and expanding programs, increasing from 440 to 483 staff members, in addition to a pool of casual bilingual guides. As a service delivery organisation, labour continues to represent a significant portion of overall costs at 49% of total expenditure and 50% of total revenue.

Current assets have decreased by \$2.6 million compared to the previous year due to the reduction in cash held in advance for funded services. Despite this, the current ratio remains a solid 1:2. After allowing for the increase in capital infrastructure, the net decrease in total assets was \$2.2 million. At the same time, total liabilities decreased by \$0.9 million, resulting in net assets of \$8.2 million. This represents a \$1.3 million decrease over the previous year.

The outlook for the 2016-17 is optimistic, with further growth and consolidation of programs underpinned by improved integrated systems for financial reporting, human resources and payroll management, business intelligence and client data management systems.

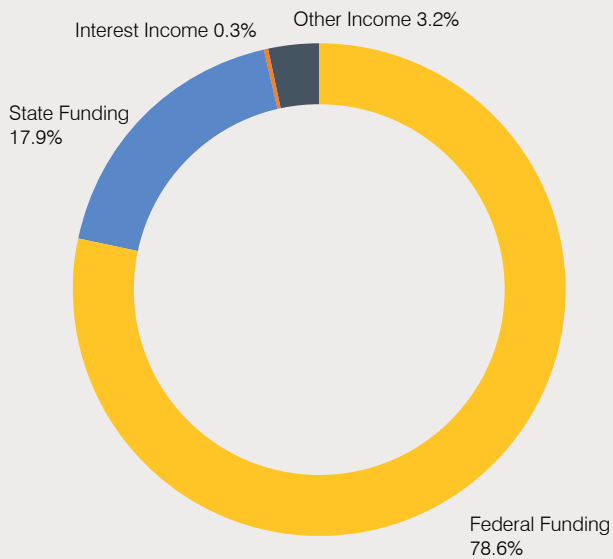
Chief Financial Officer
Wayne Sankey

**\$70.5m – revenue base
for 2015-16**

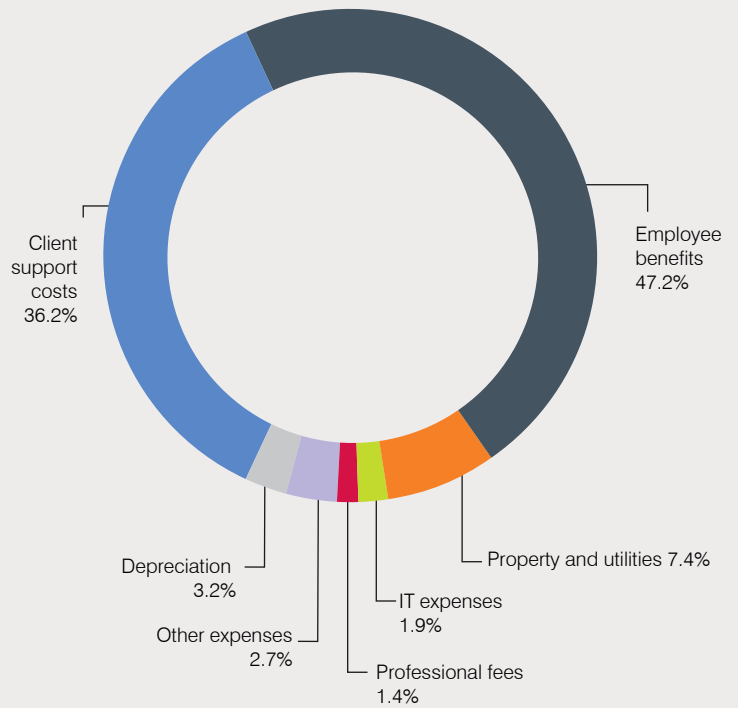
**\$0.8m – capital funding
in the Ability Links program**

**\$8.2m – net assets
for 2015-2016**

Income



Expenses



June 2016 Annual Report Financial Summary

	2016	2015
Income		
Federal Funding	55,424,608	61,211,711
State Funding	12,628,985	9,024,575
Interest Income	234,556	236,125
Other Income	2,258,586	849,326
Total Income	70,546,735	71,321,737
Expenditure		
Client support costs	26,024,408	29,631,322
Employee benefits	33,926,028	29,125,367
Property and utilities	5,286,298	4,243,728
IT expenses	1,349,313	1,086,394
Professional fees	984,839	821,551
Depreciation expense	2,300,179	1,523,093
Other expenses	1,957,493	1,220,773
Total Expenses	71,828,558	67,652,228
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,281,823)	3,669,509

Statement of Financial Position

	2016	2015
Assets		
Current	16,266,878	18,905,181
Non-Current	5,982,913	5,530,260
Total Assets	22,249,791	24,435,441
Liabilities		
Current	13,588,268	14,690,929
Non-Current	414,957	216,123
Total Liabilities	14,003,225	14,907,052
Net Assets	8,246,566	9,528,389
Accumulated Funds	8,246,566	9,528,389

Acknowledgements

SSI would like to thank the following organisations, businesses and individuals for their support during the 2015-2016 financial year

AMP Limited
Adamstown Arts, Newcastle
Afghan Australian Noor Association Inc
Afghan Youth (AYANA)
Allianz
Amnesty International
Anglicare
APX Apartments
Arab Council Australia
Aruna Gandhi
Asthma Foundation
Asylum Seekers Centre
Atlassian
Auburn Centre for Community
Auburn District Cricket Club
Auburn Girls High School
Audrey Rhoda
Australia 21
Australian Afghan Hassanian Youth Association (AAHYA)
Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture; Rev'd Susanna Pain and Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard
Australian College of Applied Psychology
Australian Iranian Community Organisation
Australian Red Cross
Australian Relief Organisation
Australian Taxation Office
Bakers Delight
Bankstown Arts Centre
Bankstown Community Health Centre
Bankstown Community Resource Group
Baptist Care
Bethlehem College
beyondblue
Blacktown Community Centre
Blacktown Library
Blacktown Women's and Girls Health Centre
Bourke Street Bakery
Breakfree Bankstown International
Breakthru
Breast Cancer Institute Westmead
Brother International
Brother Sewing Machines
Cake Mania
Cancer Council Australia
Care South
Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
Catholic Care
Catholic Care Refugee Service
CEB Inc
Centre for Refugee Research at UNSW
Chester Hill Anglican Church
Chintaro
Chris Taylor
Church Resources
Cityfood2U
Comfort Inn Hunts Liverpool
Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Community Greening
Community Housing Ltd
Community Hubs Australia
Concord Baptist Church
Connect Child and Family Services
Constitution Hill
Cover Me
Creating Links
Cremeria De Luca; Luigi and Virginia De Luca
Curious Works
Curtis Family Foundation
Dandelion Support Network
Darband Restaurant
Disability Services Australia
Don Bosco Parish
Dr. Munjed Al Muderis
Dubbo Neighbourhood Centre Inc
Dundas Neighbourhood Centre
Edible Kids Garden
Ethnic Communities Council of NSW
Ethnic Community Services Corporation
Event Cinemas Parramatta
Evolve Housing
EZY Green Clean
Father Rod Patteden
Fitted for Work
Foodbank
Freemantle Media
G Group Investments
Google
Granville Men's Shed
Granville Youth and Community Recreation Centre
Great Lakes Agency for Peace & Development
Greening Australia
Greenway Be Well Centre
Greenway Social Housing
Grill'd
Habitat for Humanity
Hameed Kherkhah
HEQS Wholesale Group
Heartdancers
Hillsong Church
Holroyd Rangers Soccer Club Inc
House of Welcome
Hume Community Housing Association
Hunter New England Health Refugee Health Program
Immigrant Women's Health Service
Information and Cultural Exchange
Inspire Community Services
Jesuit Refugee Services
Jews for Social Justice
John Northcott
Josephite Community Aid
Karabi Community and Development Services Inc
Kimbriki Resource Recovery Centre
Kinchela Boys Home
Knox Grammar
Lakemba Schools as Community Centres
Legal Aid
Lifestyle Solutions
LikeMind
Little & Rabie Betta Electrical
Liverpool Community Kitchen
Liverpool Hospital
Liverpool Women's Resource Centre
Luke Priddis Foundation
Macquarie University
Maitland Neighbourhood Centre
Mandaeen Synod of Australia
Manly Community Centre
Mantra Group
Marist Youth Care

Mazi Mas	NSW Health	Sydney Shuttle
Meli's Cleaning	NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service	Sydney Story Factory
Members of the Ignite Resource Team including: Rosanna Barbero, Yateender Gupta, Peter Scott, Tony Mamo, Sandy Haig, Jorge Perez, Steven Rix, Mark McCulloch, Dominic Demasi, Antonia Urso, Paul Luccinelli and Eddie Takchi	NSW Police	Sydney Writers' Festival
Members of SSI: Advance Diversity Services, Auburn Diversity Services, Community Migrant Resource Centre, Core Community Services, Illawarra Multicultural Services, Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre, Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative, Metro Assist, Northern Settlement Services, Sydney Multicultural Community Services, SydWest Multicultural Services	NSW Refugee Health Service	Synapse Medical Services
Merewether Uniting Church Community Kitchen	Old Knox Grammarians Association	TAFE NSW
Michael Clarke Recreation Centre	On the Move	Tamil Meet and Greet Committee
Michael Wenden Aquatic Leisure Centre	Opal Dental	Tasman Munro Design
Michel's Patisserie Westmead	OzHarvest	Telopea Family Services
Miriam Cabello, MLC Gallery	Parliament on King	The Addison Road Community Centre
Mission Australia	Parramatta Salvation Army Hall	The Ansaar Project Halal Food Bank
Mission of Hope	PCYC Wollongong	The Embroiderers' Guild NSW Inc
Monaro Crisis Accommodation Service, Cooma	Play With a Purpose	The Movember Foundation
Monster Mouse Studios	Playfair Visa and Migration Services	The Samaritans Foundation
Mosaic	Playgroup NSW	The Song Room
Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency	Poet's Corner	The Wayside Chapel
Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association	Productivity Bootcamp	Thuy Hot Bread Westmead
Multicultural NSW	Prospect Area Christian Services	Transmission Films
Mums 4 Refugees	Pulse Childcare	Uniting
Music For Refugees	Quest for Life	Uniting Church of Australia
My Choice Matters	Red Cross Parramatta	University of NSW
Nabi Akram Islamic Centre	Refugee Council of Australia	University of Sydney
Narrabeen RSL Lifecare	Relationships Australia	UrbanGrowth NSW
National Australia Bank	Rosy Painting	University of Technology Sydney
National Disability Services	Rotary Club of Morisset	VETA
National Ethnic Disability Alliance	SAHELI South Asian women's network	Vietnamese Students' Association
National Maritime Museum	Salvation Army	Waitara Family Centre
Nature's Fresh 4 Less	Sampa The Great	Walk to School Safely
NCA National Training Group	Schwarz Bakehouse, Seven Hills	Way Ahead Mental Health Association
Neo Studios	SecondBite	Welcome to Australia
Nepean Migrant Access	Secret Garden	Wentworth Community Housing
Newington Gunners Soccer Club	Self Advocacy Sydney Inc	Wesley Mission
Northern Beaches Refugee Initiative	Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Centre	Western Sydney University
NSW Federation of Housing Associations	Smith Family	WESTIR LTD
	Soroptimist International	Westmead Hospital Florist
	Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)	Westmead Public School
	St George and Sutherland Community and Mental Health Services	Whitlam Centre Liverpool
	St John Bosco, Engadine	Women's Housing Company
	St Saviours – Liverpool	Woodville Alliance
	St Vincent de Paul Society	WorkVentures
	STARTTS	Wrap With Love
	Stretch a Family	Youth Community Multimedia Centre
	Sydney Grammar preparatory school	Zam Zam Supermarket
	Sydney Opera House	Zouki

Meet Damon & Jenny

The cover photo of the annual report was taken by Damon.

From Iran, Damon is seeking asylum in Australia and has been supported by SSI since he arrived in Sydney in 2013. Damon met visual artist Jenny Papalexandris in 2014. With the support of Ignite Small Business Start-ups, Damon has established Studio Carbon Photography, a commercial photography studio with Jenny as his business partner.

Damon:

I'm a criminal in my country because I'm an artist. Art is one of the biggest crimes in Iran. How can I live in a land where my skills, my art, my emotions are crimes?

I feel like [the artist community in Australia has] welcomed me. Even in the detention centre I found new hope about being part of the art community because I met an artist – someone

who listened to me, even though I didn't have artwork to show. I couldn't have a camera in detention.

After leaving detention, it was hard to be in a new land with nothing. I'd had the best quality of photography equipment back in Iran. It was very hard to be in a new land with nothing.

But I made some artist friends who helped me get a camera, helped me in this new situation.

Jenny has been more than a best friend to me; I like her knowledge, manner, support and her great friendship. We definitely inspire each other in our art practice and we are working on some art projects and also on some photography contracts together.

Jenny:

I met Damon at my exhibition 'Constellation' held at the Chrissie Cotter Gallery in Camperdown in 2014. He did not realise that I was

the photographer in the exhibition. We immediately had a lot in common, as he was also a photographer.

What I admire most about Damon are his strengths as an artist, his great technical skills and sense of patience. He works very methodically to capture the very best from each image. He is also a great person who genuinely cares about others.

Our business Studio Carbon Photography is a commercial studio. We work very closely together on all aspects of the business. Damon always inspires me to strive for the best technical and aesthetic results for our clients. I am always learning from him. Without Damon's skills behind the camera we simply could not do what we do.

My personal photography is very different to Damon's, yet I can always rely on his great eye and support of my fine art photography.



How can you help?

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 www.ssi.org.au

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 [@SSI_tweets](https://twitter.com/SSI_tweets)

Become an SSI Volunteer

e: volunteer@ssi.org.au

t: 1800 912 823

Become a foster carer

e: fostercare@ssi.org.au

t: (02) 8713 9200

Join the Ignite

Resource Team

e: ignite@ssi.org.au

t: 0478 103 290

Support SSI

with a donation

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Fundraise for SSI

visit: www.ssi.org.au/support-ssi/fundraise-for-ssi

settlement support independence



Iqbal
Case
Manager

Myo
IT support

Chris
Team
Assistant

Rekha
Communications

Ghassan
Program
Manager

Hanin
Case Worker

Mereani
Coordinator

Fatima
Program
Manager