

annual report

2011-2012

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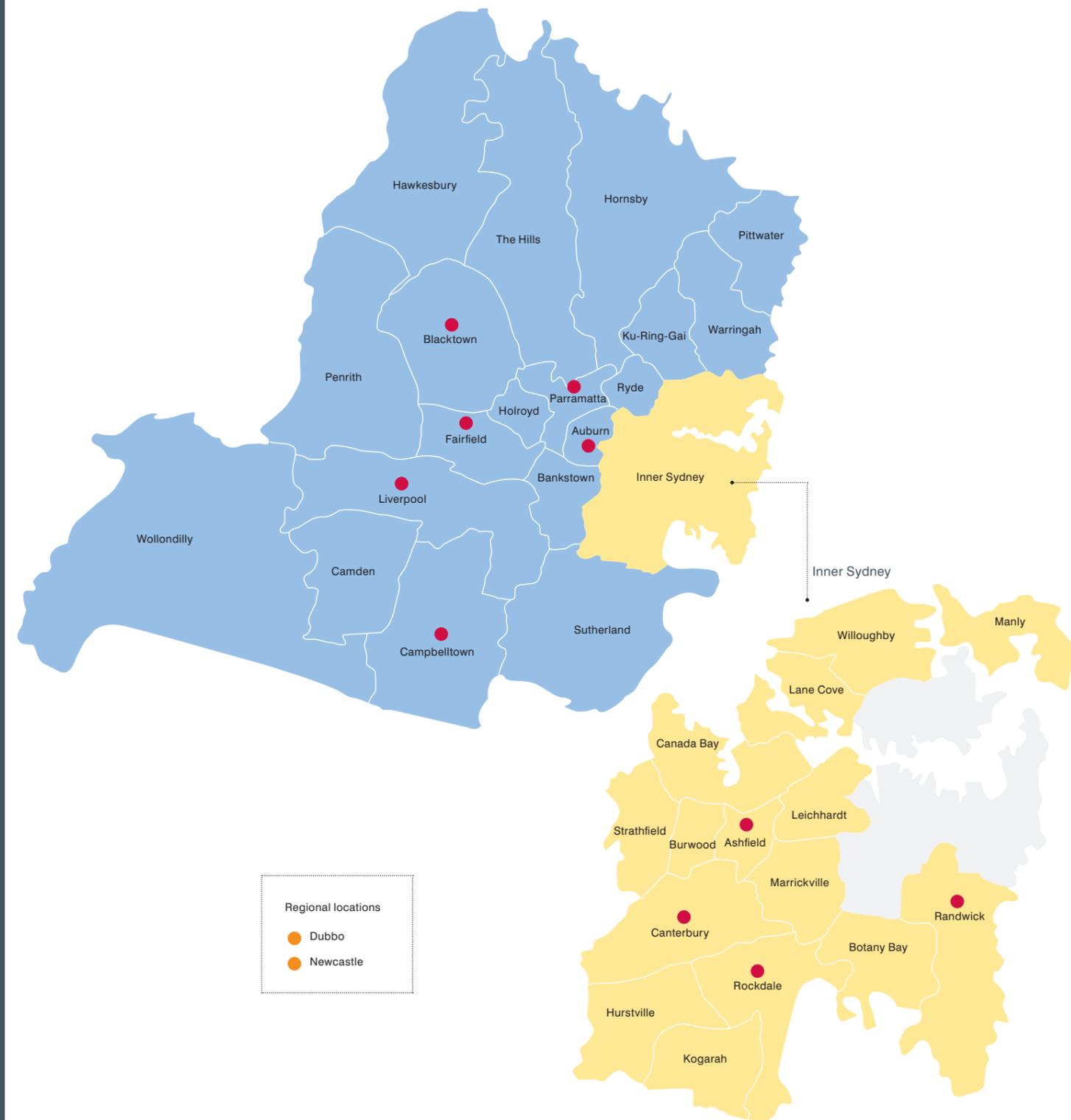
vision

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.**

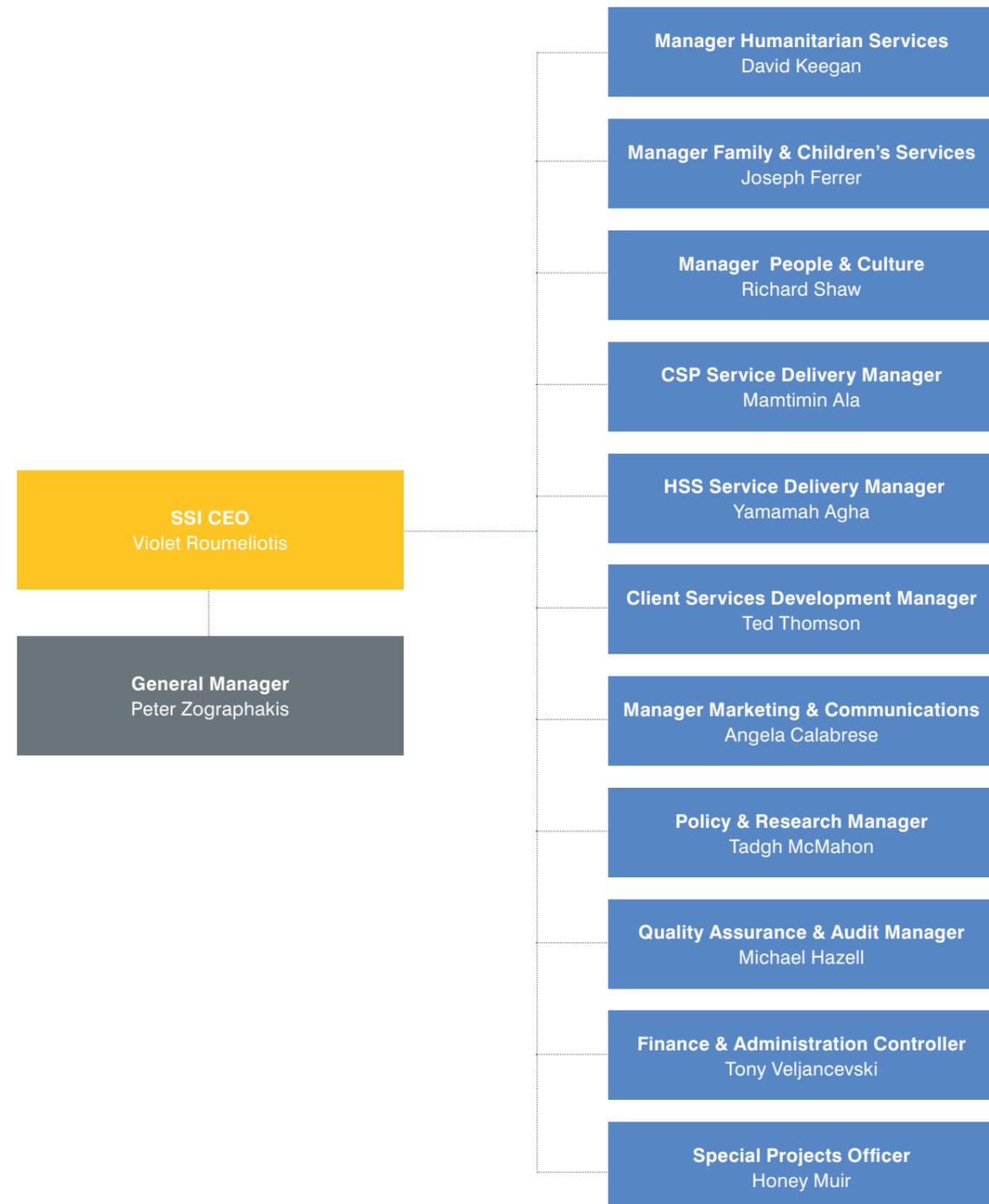
mission

To be a leader in the settlement sector through the provision of settlement and support services that achieve independence for refugees and migrants.

where we are



organisational structure



strategic plan

An organisational Strategic Plan 2012-2017, provides a clearly stated vision, strategic aims and directions which will take Settlement Services International (SSI) forward for the next five years.

The Strategic Plan builds on SSI's unique ability to provide a coordinating role in the settlement sector through its capacity and existing relationships. The five-year plan reflects not only the organisation's capacity to deliver consistent quality services but also the ability to inform the development of settlement planning and program design in an innovative and strategic way.

The planning process that led to the final document enabled SSI to revisit the organisation's mission and refocus on the core purpose of its work. It also helped to reinforce the commonalities that bind SSI employees, volunteers and members, namely, the values of social justice, a commitment to our refugee and humanitarian clients and a fundamental belief in a multicultural society.

SSI Strategic Aims

During the period 2012-2017, SSI will work with its members towards:

- Developing stronger and more effective stakeholder relationships to facilitate settlement of refugees into Australia;
- Enhancing organisational capacity and governance to ensure a fair, dynamic and effective organisation and an innovative and effective service model;
- Achieving organisational sustainability through enhancing the service set and relevance of SSI to refugees;
- Facilitating a client voice in representation, advocacy and evaluation;
- Developing leading practices that address the needs of disadvantaged children.

chair's report

SSI has achieved 18 months of growth and significant client outcomes in a politically challenging environment and for this I congratulate the organisation. These achievements have been sustained in cooperation and collaboration with our membership, the NSW MRCs, whose infrastructure has reaped immeasurable positive results for recently arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants.

The public discourse on refugees and asylum seekers is a great disappointment to say the least. However, anecdotes and testimonials from our staff and community leaders tell a different story to what the media and others will have us believe. Thousands have been settled and integrated into welcoming communities. We play an important role but there are many significant players: government, the media, the broader community and their approach is influential in the experiences our clients have in their new homeland.

I feel great pride in the professionalism and resilience of staff at SSI who have worked without parallel to establish and help grow the services of the organisation. The previous 18 months have been remarkable with SSI achieving a turnover in excess of \$20 million with more than 300 staff.

This unprecedented growth involves not only the Humanitarian Settlement Service (HSS) program being consolidated, but also the additional

stewardship of the CAS and ASAS services in the Sydney Metropolitan area alongside the existing services offered by the Australian Red Cross. The successful implementation of our programs, in what has been an extremely difficult and constantly changing environment, has only served to highlight the ability, skill and dedication that exists in our member organisations and that this ability is among the best that can be found anywhere. It is extremely satisfying to have this increasingly recognised.

In addition to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) funded programs of HSS, CAS and ASAS, SSI also has been involved in the youth services area through MYAN, with the sponsorship of the NSW operation. This has now been supported beyond its first phase and we are proud of our ability to continue this association. SSI has also been successful in seeking accreditation for out-of-home care placement. This process was started with the encouragement of the late Mary Dimech and completed with

the help of a skilled team. We now have 21 young people in our care and this is set to grow.

It is important to note that this phase of growth is a team effort, and I would be remiss not mention that we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Pino Migliorino whose counsel and support has been invaluable. I am also grateful to the CEO Violet Roumeliotis, whose wisdom is gratefully acknowledged by all those who work with her. I must also thank Joseph Ferrer for his skill and dedication in establishing our Multicultural Foster Care Service, David Keegan, Yamamah Agha, Mamtimin Ala, Peter Zographakis, Honey Muir and many other staff too numerous to mention.

I am indebted to the highly skilled and experienced Board members who have supported my role as Chair and driven the strategic vision and financial growth of SSI.

I would also like to thank DIAC and NSW Family and Community Services for supporting the organisation in the

delivery of services. They have in SSI a professional partner that delivers and that cares for clients.

I am proud to be associated with SSI, but also with a group of people whose dedication and commitment is the best that I have ever witnessed. I look forward to the future.

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SSI Chair Kamalle Dabboussy

ceo's report

It has been an extraordinary 18 months at SSI. Throughout my career I have worked on organisational change in large and small organisations but I have never before experienced the level of transformational change that SSI has achieved during this time.

In the 2012-2013 financial year SSI faced new and rewarding challenges and is now at a point where it can consolidate its position. In the 2012 financial year, 99% of SSI's income was derived from one source, the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program. The 2013 financial year will indicate a marked difference in this ratio with the advent of the CAS/ASAS program, which began in September 2012, and the Multicultural Foster Care Service, which was funded from January 2013. Income for the 2012-2013 financial year to March 2013 was \$19,242,580. The provisional surplus to end of March 2013 was \$2,142,319 indicating a significant difference over the previous financial year's result. This result was due, in part, to the optimisation of service delivery programs, economies of scale and cost minimisation.

A shift in public policy and a volatile global economy has impacted on our organisation bringing many challenges and an abundance of opportunities. The recent shifts in public policy in community detention coupled with an increased refugee intake, allowed SSI the opportunity to offer services

to this vulnerable group. SSI has in a short timeframe provided services to almost 2000 asylum seekers. The opportunity to assist in the transition to the community from detention is a formidable task yet one accepted with professionalism and optimism by our case managers who aim for the best possible outcomes for their clients.

The HSS program well exceeded expectations with outstanding outcomes for many of the recipients. The 2012 financial year was the first full year of operation for SSI and brought with it many challenges such as determining optimum staff levels (both permanent staff and bilingual staff) to cope with the volume; the provision of facilities to house staff at Auburn, Parramatta and Ashfield head office and at MRC offices; the scoping and planning for IT and communications requirements across the organisation as well as maintaining financial sustainability during periods of high growth. At a human level, SSI also experienced some great moments. I would like to share some positive feedback from an exited HSS client, Mr Seyed Mojtaba Azadi, in a note to his case manager:

Provisional Accreditation from the Office of Children's Guardian and the awarding of the tender to provide foster care for 50 children, allowed SSI the honour of being the first core multicultural agency in NSW to be funded and to offer a multicultural model of service delivery.

"Human beings are born to disappear, but life will continue. Life is like an old turtle, who will continue to follow her path.

What can shed light and colour to all this is humanity, which can ease off the pain of the sorrow and it can give depth to joy.

My dear Carlota, you have been guiding me for the past three months. During this time, you have shared my pain, my joy and my sorrow. I have found the love of a mother in your eyes. What a great joy it is, when you are assured that you have someone who cares for you, and will extend a hand when you need it... I do appreciate your efforts and your energy you have been trying to help me. I am forever, grateful to you."

The additional challenges of housing people in NSW and in particular Sydney's tight rental market has stretched our capacity but once again SSI staff has found solutions to a vexing problem. As part of our regional development strategy, SSI has developed new partnerships in the Hunter, Dubbo and Illawarra regions.

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of the tender to provide foster care for 50 children, allowed SSI the honour of being the first core multicultural agency in NSW to be funded and to offer a multicultural model of service delivery.

Our *Be Well* Program was tailored to the specific needs and requests of our staff and I have witnessed during the past six months of its implementation high levels of employee engagement and participation. If I were to hazard a guess not more than 1% of organisations globally are investing in an innovative program that is bringing the latest science of the mind into the work setting.

New initiatives include the roll out of an IT strategy that will result in all SSI employees connected to a Wide Area Network linked by high speed lines by the end of June 2013. This will facilitate productivity and improve communications across the organisation. In addition, the development of an intranet will ensure all staff is connected and has the ability to share and disseminate information.

The aim in all our work, of course, is a genuine desire to facilitate economic and social participation for

our clients as swiftly and as practicably as possible with the collaboration of the vital and generous local communities that our clients settle into. Our role, across our service in all our teams, has been to support the goals of our clients and to ensure that we meet our strategic goals for settlement, support and independence. This report is evidence that we are achieving these strategic goals.

I would like to warmly thank Pino Migliorino an extraordinary leader and resource to us, the SSI Board and in particular the Chair Kamalle Dabboussy, my colleagues, our member agencies the MRCs and our sub-contractors, our funders and partners, the Federal and State Governments and in particular our community stakeholders and our resilient clients.



SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis

treasurer's report

financial year 2011-2012

The financial statements and specific disclosures included in this financial statement have been derived from the audited financial report for the year ended June 30, 2012.



SSI Treasurer Rosa Loria

Income and Expenditure Statement

SSI has realised a surplus of \$20,561 from operating activities for the year.

The 2012 financial year is the first full year of operation for the HSS program. A comparison of the 2012 and 2011 financial year results indicates significant differences in SSI's financial position.

SSI's revenue for 2012 was \$9,436,512. The majority of the revenue was derived from the HSS program (\$9,331,590), with additional income derived from the Anti-Tobacco Grants Program (\$45,454), interest received (\$47,217), Multicultural Foster Care Service (\$11,250) and membership fees (\$1,000).

The HSS program income was derived from fees for services outlined in the contracts for two regions – Central & South West Sydney and North West Sydney & Western NSW. The HSS program experienced unprecedented referrals and this was reflected in 8,721 client services invoiced to DIAC in the 2011-2012 financial year.

Summary of HSS Services

Service	Service Payment Point (No. of cases)
Case Management Plan (CMP)	2000
CMP (Exits)	687
Youth Sub-Plan	506
Transit Assistance	527
Reception	848
Essential Registrations	1921
Orientation	562
Health	1656
Other	12

Operating costs for 2012 were \$9,415,951. The high level of some operating costs highlights the challenges faced in the first full year of operations. Most costs were in line with expectations however costs such as wages for bilingual guides were 55% above forecast.

The influx of client numbers and the high workload for case managers necessitated the use of bilingual guides for tasks outside the standard duties. This is no longer the case.

Balance Sheet

The total Current Assets have increased by \$477,365 over the previous year. This increase was predominantly an increase in Trade and other receivables (DIAC invoicing \$585,811) and a decrease in cash.

Non-Current Assets increased by \$122,193. The increase reflects substantial expenditure in the area of IT, Head Office fit-out, and furniture and fittings.

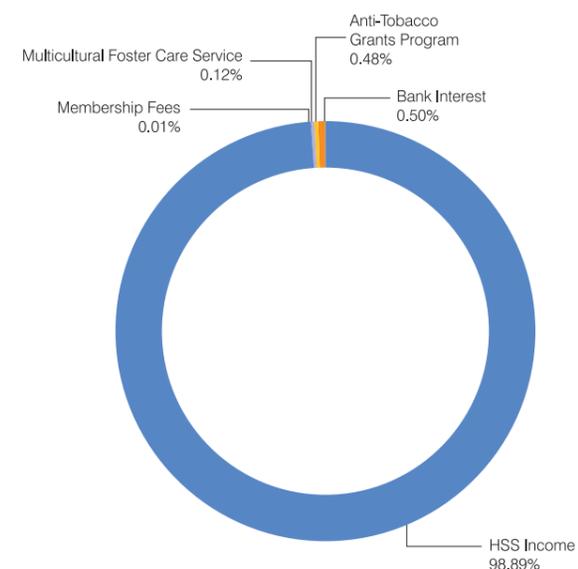
The year saw an increase in Current Liabilities of \$578,999. Provision for leave increase was \$188,905, reflecting the number of new staff employed during the year. In addition, Payables increased by \$390,094. The increases in Payables were, in the main, superannuation and PAYG payments due for payment in July 2012.

Overall, the organisation held a strong position, with an increase in net assets (assets less liabilities) over the previous year of 1.2%.

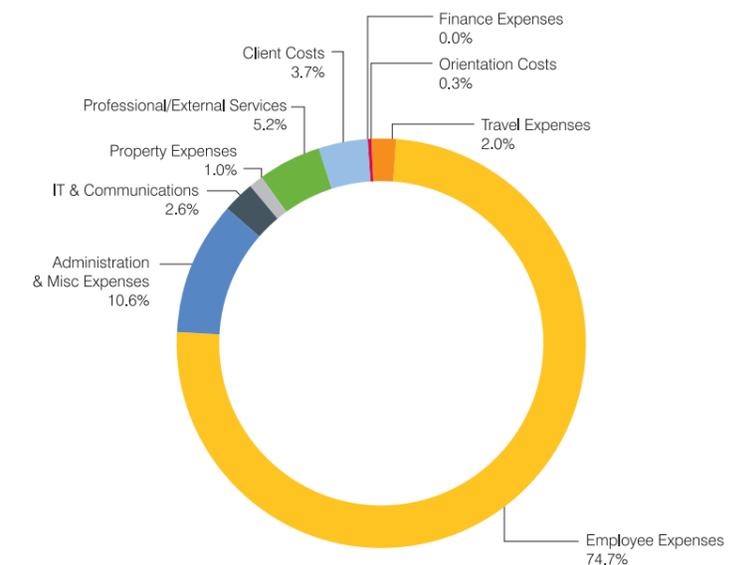
Statement of Cash Flows

	\$
Cash at the beginning of the year	315,274
Operations	
Net Cash Flow from Operations	62,116
Investing Activities	
Net Cash Flow from Investing Activities	(177,723)
Financing Activities	
Net Cash Flow from Financing Activities	-
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash	(115,607)
Cash at Bank 30 June 2012	199,667

Revenue by Source



Expenditure by Source



Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2012

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	196,844	315,527
Trade & Other Receivables	2,640,985	2,054,920
Prepayments	32,579	22,593
Total Current Assets	2,870,407	2,393,040
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant & Equipment	200,936	78,744
Total Non-Current Assets	200,936	78,744
Total Assets	3,071,344	2,471,784
Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors & Other Payables	1,131,962	741,867
Provisions	200,007	11,102
Total Current Liabilities	1,331,969	752,969
Non-Current Liabilities	-	-
Total Non-Current Liabilities	-	-
Total Liabilities	1,331,969	752,969
Net Assets	1,739,375	1,718,815
Funds		
Retained Funds	1,739,375	1,718,815
Total Funds	1,739,375	1,718,815

Summary Profit & Loss Statement for the year ended 30 June 2012

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
HSS Income	9,331,590	2,185,667
Anti-Tobacco Grants Program	45,454	-
Membership Fees	1,000	1,100
Multicultural Foster Care Service	11,250	78,750
Bank Interest	47,216	34,072
Total Income	9,436,510	2,299,589
Client Costs	349,408	34,611
Scholarships	-	6,000
Grants	-	29,500
Association Expenses	-	1,000
Multicultural Foster Care Service Expenses	-	61,000
Orientation Costs	32,331	-
Travel Expenses	184,542	16,823
Employee Expenses	7,029,881	644,625
Administration & Misc Expenses	996,385	303,457
IT & Communications	244,885	24,789
Property Expenses	89,902	12,328
Professional/External Services	486,598	765
Finance Expenses	2,018	2,085
Total Expenses	9,415,950	1,136,983
Net Profit/(Loss)	20,560	1,162,606

humanitarian services

Many will be aware that 2012 was an enormous challenge for SSI but has brought great opportunities and produced significant outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers in NSW.



Manager Humanitarian Services
David Keegan

Early in the year we launched the HSS program after 12 months of challenges in getting the program operational with large referral demands. In our first year of regaining the HSS contract we provided services to more than 5,100 clients. We are grateful to the MRCs who were instrumental in supporting staff to implement the service model.

The HSS program has gone from strength to strength providing integrated settlement case management support to newly arrived refugees who have been granted a permanent Protection visa in Australia. It has been a privilege to be in a position to provide refugees with a healthy start to life in Australia and as an organisation, we are proud to have successfully supported 2,675 families (4,723 individuals) in the 2012 calendar year.

In August 2012 we were also given the opportunity to provide community-based casework and financial support to asylum seekers who are released on a Bridging visa from Australian detention centres under the CAS and ASAS programs. This was a great opportunity for SSI to expand on its successes but did not come without its significant challenges. In the first three months of operation we received nearly 700 individuals into our care and had to recruit many new case managers as well as establish a new housing

team to support asylum seekers in their transition in to the community.

As a result of this rapid growth, SSI's Auburn office was soon outgrown and HSS operational staff and all CSP staff were relocated to new offices in Parramatta CBD. HSS staff has also expanded but remains based in the 10 MRCs around Sydney.

These challenges have been met with a commitment to SSI's core values and mission as well as professionalism and continuous improvement. It has enabled SSI to spread its influence and strengthen its expertise in the delivery of support services to refugees and asylum seekers and I am grateful to the 200 staff and 300 volunteers who have given more than we could have expected in order to make SSI what it is today.



In August 2012 we were also given the opportunity to provide community-based casework and financial support to asylum seekers who are released on a Bridging visa from Australian detention centres under the CAS and ASAS programs.





Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) Program

The HSS program now employs more than 50 case managers and another 20 operational staff who are based in 11 sites throughout Sydney. At the core of our work is the desire to see humanitarian entrants receive the best start to their new life in Australia by getting the right information and support at the right time and in a way that promotes independence.

In 2012 our focus was on consolidating the significant growth of the first year of the contract and broadening our focus to strengthen and expand partnerships with other services and community groups. This included doubling our volunteer base, establishing a triage-style, client priority system and developing a specialisation in services to youth and women at risk. As part of this focus, SSI worked with the MYAN (Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network) NSW to develop a resource for youth workers to support young people from a refugee background and which is part of a training program.

By the end of 2012, the organisation had based staff in the following

locations and strengthened our integration with these MRCs:

- Auburn Diversity Services
- Community Migrant Resource Centre (formerly The Hills, Holroyd and Parramatta MRC)
- SydWest Multicultural Services (Blacktown and Mt Druitt)
- Metro Migrant Resource Centre
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- St George Migrant Resource Centre
- Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre
- Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre
- Macarthur Diversity Services

The partnership with the MRCs has seen HSS staff work with the MRCs to implement local activities and events aimed at promoting a positive multicultural community that is accepting and encouraging of new arrivals.

The client orientation program was also strengthened to include an additional session of health that is run in partnership with NSW Refugee Health. Existing sessions on money management, tenancy rights and

responsibilities, Australian laws and customs and employment and education were all reviewed to ensure relevance to our clients. SSI now runs five sessions per week for HSS clients aimed at providing essential information and to learn how to source further information if needed.

The following data provides an overview of the referral numbers and demographic mix of clients in the 2011-2012 financial year.

Community Support Program (CSP)

The CSP began in late August 2012 in response to the Federal Government's expansion of support services available to asylum seekers in the community. The CSP provides support to asylum seekers who have been released into the community on a Bridging visa while they await the assessment of their claim for asylum and seek a refugee visa. The clients we work with at SSI have all arrived by boat from various parts of the world.

From August 28, 2012 till the end of April 2013 we have supported nearly 2,000 asylum seekers in the community. Most of these clients are unaccompanied and aged between 18 and 45 years. The majority originate from Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The establishment of this program has included the expansion of SSI's accommodation services due to the need to provide subsidised housing for asylum seekers for a six week period upon release from detention. To achieve this we have successfully formed partnerships with corporate

and social housing providers to provide group housing in western Sydney. We have also employed a small housing team with expertise in real estate which has enabled us to develop strong relationships with real estate agents in the area.

The political climate surrounding these clients has also brought more media attention to the work of SSI which thanks to the recruitment of internal communications staff, has been handled well. We have also ensured that staff and clients are well informed about potential media interest. To counter negative media reporting we have worked hard to ensure that positive stories about refugees and asylum seekers appear in the media. We also regularly work with the Refugee Council of Australia and other advocacy groups.

We are also working closely with NSW Police around Sydney and have been meeting with the Local Area Commanders in each region to discuss a coordinated approach to the presence of asylum seekers in the community. This has led to better responses to policing matters involving asylum seekers and has seen police

get involved in orientation sessions with clients.

A key achievement for the program has been the establishment of a client payments system to provide basic financial support to CSP clients on a fortnightly basis. This has been a phenomenal task and is still a work in progress due to the significant administrative demands of managing a Centrelink-style payments system.

The CSP now employs over 70 casework staff based in our new premises at Parramatta. CSP staff meets with approximately 150 clients per day in our offices and off site in the community. SSI staff members are from diverse professional community service backgrounds and language groups and show a strong commitment to ensuring that asylum seekers are adequately supported to live in the community in the hope of receiving a permanent Protection visa.

As part of this program we regularly run events in partnership with community groups which have included a Harmony Day BBQ, Clean Up Australia Day, information seminars, Meet and Greet BBQs, English classes and more.



SSI volunteer program

friends of refugees

The SSI Volunteer Program has 297 volunteers who are actively involved in ensuring that families and individuals are assisted to start their new life in Australia.

Volunteers provide support with cultural food shopping, local area orientations including use of public transport, assisting children with activities such as homework, organising and participation in excursions, other social activities and providing long term friendship. The volunteer program also provides valuable opportunities for Australians from all backgrounds to obtain vocations skills and experience in order to help them gain employment.

The program has successfully assisted refugees and asylum seekers by adopting a unique age, gender, language and culture mix among our volunteers and by encouraging volunteer participation in a range of activities that have included administration support, interpreting assistance, event organising and social activities.

The following are some of the programs within the volunteer services provided by SSI:

The Sisterhood Program is aimed at ensuring female clients are linked to female volunteers. The program recognises female clients face many barriers while negotiating settlement in Sydney and therefore there is a need for a female bi-lingual volunteer within the first six months of arrival to assist with English language practice, attending appointments and local area orientation.

The Mateship Program links male clients with male volunteers to assist in their settlement journey and to encourage local friendships. Many of the volunteers in this program have been refugees and want to support others in their settlement journey.

The Family Program aims to recruit Australian families who are willing to be linked to a refugee family for support and friendship.

In the Community Program groups and organisations are encouraged to participate and engage refugees in various activities that ensure refugees participate in a multicultural Australia. This year we have undertaken partnerships with various church and

charity groups to provide value-added support to clients from a refugee background.

Achievements of the volunteer program during the past 18 months include:

- recruitment of significant numbers of volunteers from diverse backgrounds and the successful linking of clients to bi-lingual volunteers
- engagement of new and emerging communities, such as the Tamil, Afghan, Rohingya, Bhutanese, Arabic and Assyrian, on various issues in relation to assisting NSW-based refugees in their communities
- former SSI clients taking up opportunities through the program to use their skills to assist newly arrived refugees as well as gain local workplace experience
- the employment by SSI of more than 20 former volunteers during this program year while STARTTS has employed six volunteers as bi-cultural facilitators. A number of volunteers have also gained employment with other organisations
- providing participants with training in core concepts on working with people from refugee backgrounds, Accidental counselling, reporting child abuse and neglect, communication skills, workplace safety and mental health
- the Community Program's successful consultations with community leaders who have previously provided food for new arrivals, organised events and advocated on behalf of clients.



The program has successfully assisted refugees and asylum seekers by adopting a unique age, gender, language and culture mix among our volunteers and by encouraging volunteer participation in a range of activities that have included administration support, interpreting assistance, event organising and social activities.



Volunteer Program Coordinator
Tabitha Chepkwony

SSI multicultural foster care service

During the annual reporting period, SSI engaged in an accreditation process and was provisionally accredited by the NSW Children's Guardian as a provider of out-of-home care services in NSW. This was a significant achievement by the organisation and was the culmination of more than five years of incremental development work.

SSI was also successful in being selected through a NSW Government tender process as a preferred provider of out-of-home care services in the Community Services Metro South West, Metro West and Hunter Central Coast regions.

The combined result was the establishment of the SSI Multicultural Foster Care Service. The service provides foster and kinship carers and case management for children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) in out-of-home care services. The service is staffed by bilingual workers with cross cultural and technical out-of-home care services casework skills and knowledge, including staff from Vietnamese, Arabic-speaking and African backgrounds.

The service operates from SSI's head office in Ashfield and from the offices of Northern Settlement Services (a member agency) in Hamilton, near Newcastle.

A priority for our service has been the transfer of foster carers and case management responsibility from NSW Family and Community Services (FaCS). To date, SSI has received case management responsibility for 21 children and young people with further transfers in progress.

The service accepts referrals from NSW FaCS of children and young people from all multicultural backgrounds. We have a strong representation within our client group of Vietnamese children and young people residing in metropolitan Sydney and children from African

backgrounds in the Hunter-Central Coast area.

Key activity areas for our staff are ongoing case management and support for children and carers, and active recruitment, assessment and training of new carers.

The establishment of the Multicultural Foster Care Service addresses many of the barriers to providing effective services to CALD children in care. These include language and cultural barriers, providing culturally appropriate casework, difficulties in recruiting, assessing, training and retaining foster carers from CALD backgrounds, and limited opportunities for cultural matching of children and carers.

Being the first of its kind in NSW, where a multicultural organisation has been

contracted to provide out-of-home care services specifically designed for CALD children and young people, there is a unique opportunity to evaluate and generate significant learning about providing services to this client group.

The service ensures CALD children and young people in care are strengthened through knowing about and having connections with their cultural heritage. These connections play an important role in identity development and sense of belonging. It can take many forms and includes being supported to learn about and participate in their culture, community, language, and religion. This belief is strongly reflected in the support the service provides to children, young people and carers.



Manager Family & Children's Services
Joseph Ferrer



Being the first of its kind in NSW, where a multicultural organisation has been contracted to provide out-of-home care services specifically designed for CALD children and young people...

initiatives

New partnership provides legal services for CALD communities

A partnership established in 2012 between Legal Aid NSW and SSI, allows people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to be connected to accessible legal services for the first time in Australia.

Under the arrangement launched in Parramatta in March, civil and family lawyers from Legal Aid NSW will provide legal advice services on site to clients at MRCs as well as offer regular education workshops about the Australian legal system.

A memorandum of understanding was signed by SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis and Legal Aid NSW CEO Bill Grant. With increased Commonwealth funding under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, NSW CALD communities can now access free family and civil law advice at regular outreach clinics held at MRCs.

The alliance was formed in response to a report released in 2012 by the Family Law Council (FLC) of Australia, which found that the failure to address issues faced by CALD clients at an early stage was having detrimental effects on the long-term welfare of migrants.

Legal aid lawyers will be on site at eight MRCs across Sydney, Central Coast and Wollongong, to provide early legal help in immigration and other civil law matters as well as family law matters relating to separation, children and property.

SSI's clients face myriad challenges while they are settling in Australia, and providing them with free legal advice in a familiar environment and with an interpreter, may help alleviate some of their conflicts or migration issues.

SSI is committed to ensuring that all migrants in NSW are supported so as to be able to fulfil their potential as members of the Australian community. Legal Aid NSW shares that commitment and together the organisations strengthen the community and set a precedent for a first rate service delivery model.

SSI acknowledges the foresight of key stakeholders within NSW Legal Aid, including Kylie Beckhouse and her team, who are responsive to the needs of local communities and who promote innovation in programs aimed at developing social capital and enhancing local communities.

Be Well - a boost to staff health

The health and wellbeing program tailor-made for SSI staff was launched at a special event in April 2013.

Be Well is strengthening SSI through a focus on mindfulness and personal productivity, physical and nutritional health, as well as stress management and communications.

Be Well has been enthusiastically embraced by staff for its holistic approach to work-life balance. *Be Well* has been enthusiastically embraced by staff for its holistic approach to work-life balance. This is reflected in satisfaction rates. Of the 82% of participants who completed feedback surveys, over 90% were satisfied/very satisfied, with 93% reporting that the program has prompted behaviour change. The program was developed for SSI by Sharon Longridge and Sharyn Coughlan of Worklife Wellness, following a survey of staff in October 2012. A *Be Well* committee made up of SSI staff has been appointed to drive the program and there is also a dedicated website to promote activities. *Be Well* is designed to be a fun, dynamic and engaging program, aimed at meeting health and wellness needs across the organisation. There are five separate programs under the *Be Well* umbrella, each focusing on a different area of wellness: *Move Well*, *Eat Well*, *Work Well*, *Speak Well* and *Give Well*.



Be Well is strengthening SSI through a focus on mindfulness and personal productivity, physical and nutritional health, as well as stress management and communications.



How do I quit? Program supports newly arrived refugees to stop smoking

When rates of smoking among refugees and asylum seekers were observed to be higher than in the rest of the Australian community, particularly for clients recently released from detention centres, SSI's program managers decided to combat the problem. In October 2012, SSI partnered with NSW Refugee Health Service to host information sessions for clients wanting to quit smoking. Sessions aim to inform clients about the health risks that smoking presents to themselves and those around them, as well as highlighting the financial burden of purchasing cigarettes. The sessions also offer various Nicotine Replacement Therapy options to support clients wishing to quit.

Sessions are delivered by trained bilingual community educators in a variety of languages including Arabic, Tamil, Farsi, Dari and Rohingya. SSI case managers have also been trained in strategies to support their clients to quit smoking.

It is a project for newly arrived refugees however the steering committee expanded the the program to include asylum seeker clients. Sessions started in October 20, ending June 30, 2013. The project was a joint initiative of SSI and NSW Refugee Health.

Fresh food donations from Oz Harvest

Given the high cost of living in Sydney and the challenges many of SSI's clients face in accessing affordable food, SSI made contact with Oz Harvest, the food rescue not-for-profit

organisation. SSI began receiving weekly donations from August 2012.

Since then, we have been able to provide food for approximately 30-50 people per weekly delivery. While open to all SSI clients, priority is given to large families, single mothers, young people and the elderly. Deliveries of rice and non-perishable items are always appreciated however not always available. Fruit and vegetables donated by local vendors have been a weekly staple in SSI's food bank and have provided clients with important supplementary nutritional items.

Since the end of 2012, SSI has been working more closely with asylum seekers living in the community. This group faces many barriers to settlement and the food bank has been a reliable source of nutritious food, with many clients returning weekly. Recently,

the collection point for donations was moved from the warehouse in Auburn to a site where clients are being accommodated. This, coupled with some larger than usual deliveries, has resulted in around 50 clients per week gaining access to fresh fruit and vegetables, bread and dairy, as well as long shelf-life items including rice and oil.

Young refugees develop storytelling skills

Many young people who arrive in Australia as Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHMs) have compelling stories. Not only do they have to endure the journey to Australia alone, but upon arrival they are faced with other challenges, namely loneliness, isolation and sometimes homelessness.

SSI has partnered with a team of professional filmmakers to offer workshops in storytelling, performance-making and digital production for young refugees who have travelled to Australia without their parents or guardians. Participants will have the opportunity to develop digital and filmmaking skills. They will also get the chance to participate in the production of a short, dramatised digital film that explores the experiences of refugee youth and homelessness.

The project will be overseen by a steering committee with representatives from SSI, Yfoundations, and MYAN in addition to filmmakers experienced in working with CALD communities. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts funding and advisory body.

Winter Warmers

With the colder weather fast approaching, April 2013 saw the start of SSI's Winter Warmers Campaign. Aimed at collecting donated clothing, shoes and bedding during the winter months for SSI's predominantly male clients, the campaign targeted SSI staff, members of the community and the organisation's 300 volunteers.

Within the first weeks of the campaign SSI received enough bedding for more than 100 clients. This was in addition to 150 jumpers, jackets and hoodies, 60 pairs of long pants, and many pairs of shoes, gloves, beanies and scarves.

One couple, Lia and Robbie (pictured below), generously delivered an entire van full of winter clothing and bedding.



...we have been able to provide food for approximately 30-50 people per weekly delivery. While open to all SSI clients, priority is given to large families, single mothers, young people and the elderly.

events

New friends celebrate day of harmony

SSI celebrated Harmony Day 2013 with many clients and guests, including local Gladesville police officers, who gathered for a barbecue and live music in Ryde and picnics at Parramatta Park and Rooty Hill.

Introducing themselves to the newly arrived Hazara, Iraqi, Iranian and Tamil clients at Ryde were Acting Superintendent Scott Davis and Crime Prevention Officer Senior Constable Shane Carne from Gladesville Local Area Command and a number of their colleagues.

The gathering was also addressed by former SSI refugee clients who offered words of support for the new arrivals, and who commended the assistance they had received from SSI and Ryde-Epping Hub, as well as the benefits of learning English as a Second Language at Meadowbank TAFE.

Live music, sporting activities and great food featured prominently at all three Harmony Day events.

HSS launch event

SSI launched its HSS in April 2012 with around 300 members of the community, local MPs, refugee advocates, case workers and refugees who attended the event at Old Government House in Parramatta.

Launched by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator Kate Lundy, the Federal Government funded program provides eligible refugees with initial settlement support on arrival with the aim of assisting them to successfully settle in Australia. Helping refugees become independent members of the community by focusing on individual needs is at the heart of the program.

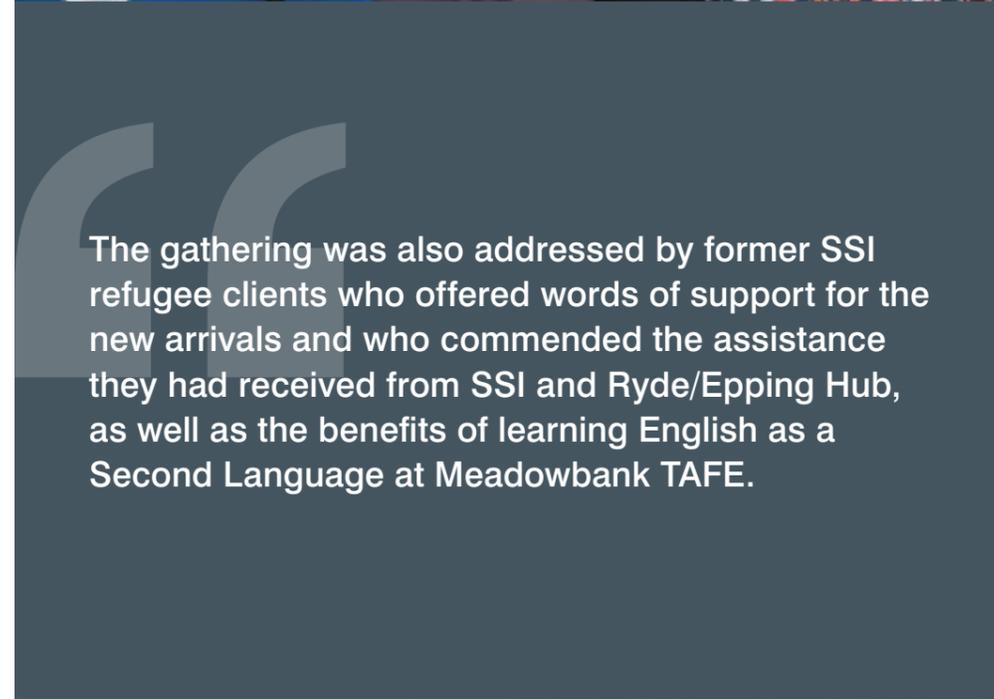
Speaking at the event, refugees from Sri Lanka, Liberia and Afghanistan, recounted the circumstances of leaving their homeland, their new life in Australia and hopes for the future.

SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis told the gathering the HSS program offered a robust approach that focused on building up the strengths of refugees and humanitarian entrants referred by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Community consultations

During the past 12 months SSI has held four Quarterly Community Roundtables at Parramatta organised by the organisation's Volunteer Program coordinator Tabitha Chepkwony. The gatherings have offered insights into the many issues impacting clients and outlined how the community would like to assist SSI.

A meeting was also held in April for members of the Tamil community, which highlighted some of the vulnerabilities of Bridging Visa clients as well as a number of potential activities that SSI hopes to undertake with community groups.

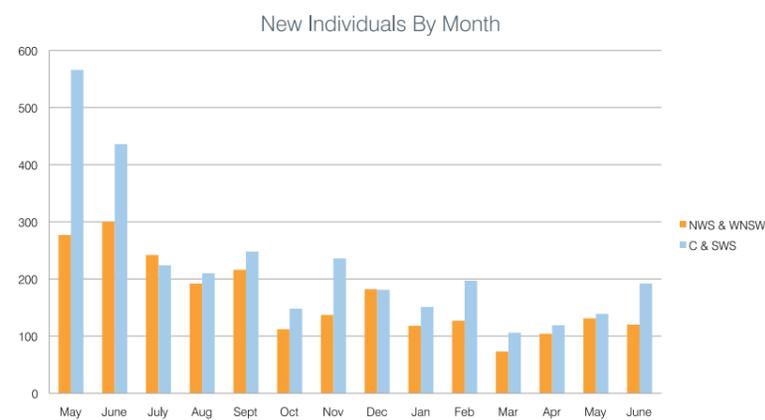
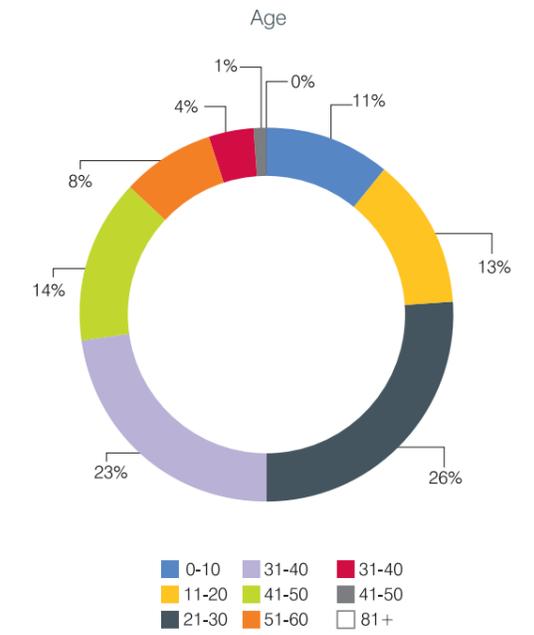
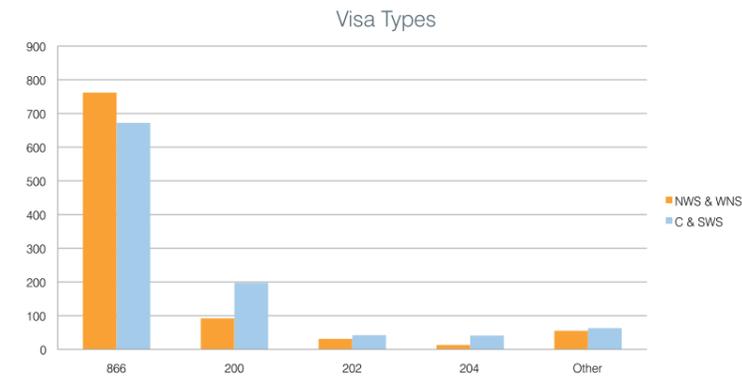
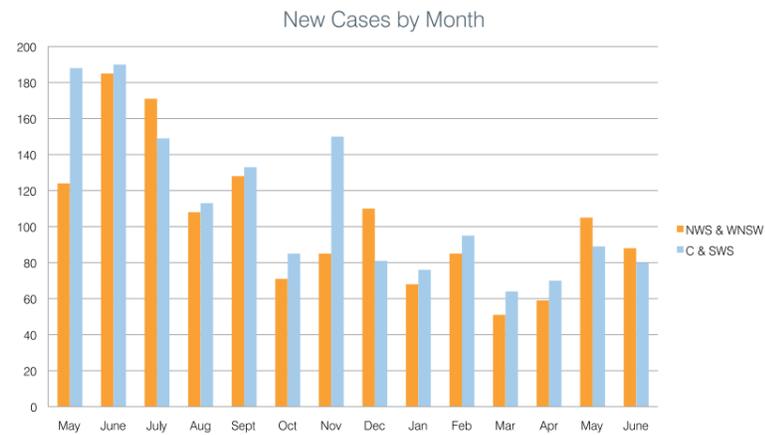


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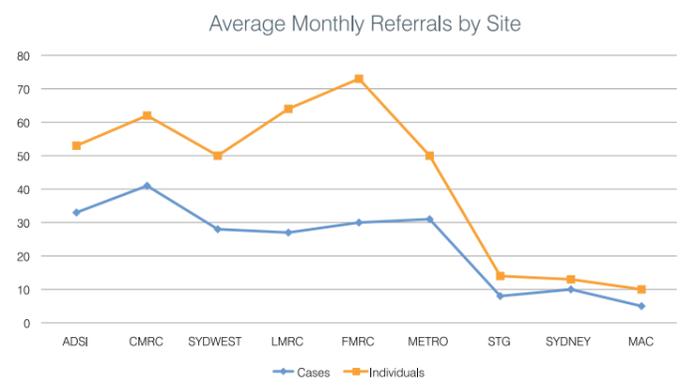
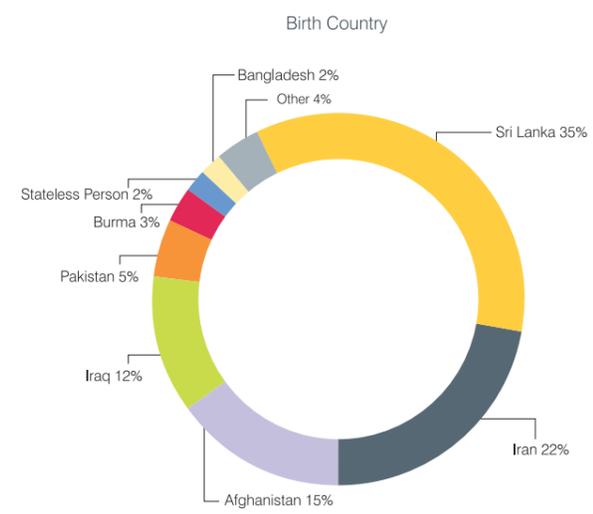


statistical overview

Humanitarian Services Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) Program

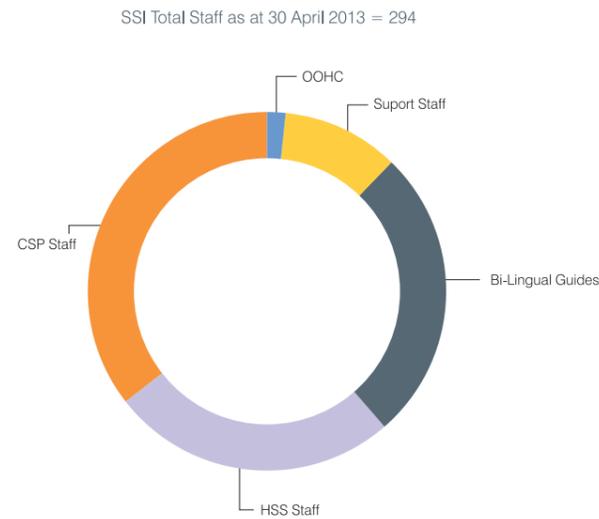


Community Support Program (CSP)



statistical overview

Staff and Volunteers



the board

Chair	Kamalle	Dabboussy
Vice Chair	Tia	Roko
Secretary	Litsa	Nossar
Treasurer	Rosa	Loria
Public Officer	Ricci	Bartels
Other members	Esta	Paschalidis-Chilas



SSI Board, pictured from left, Litsa Nossar, Esta Paschalidis-Chilas, Rosa Loria, Tia Roko. Absent: Kamalle Dabboussy and Ricci Bartels.

acknowledgements

As part of its strategic aim to develop stronger and more effective stakeholder relationships to improve services to refugees and asylum seekers, SSI has engaged with numerous community organisations, services, local groups and government bodies. A close working relationship with its member MRCs continued to reap benefits for SSI's clients. SSI also continued its involvement in the Sydney Alliance through the volunteer work of Violet Roumeliotis, Honey Muir and Tabitha Chepkwony.

The redesign of SSI's IT and communications infrastructure has been a major focus for the organisation during the past 12 months which was only made possible with the close collaboration and dedication of IT consultants Syncomp, specifically Senior Partner Chris Tsolakis and Information Systems Consultant Paul Douglas. Another team member who has played an invaluable role in this challenging project is SSI's IT Support Officer Jude Dilip.

Committee participation:

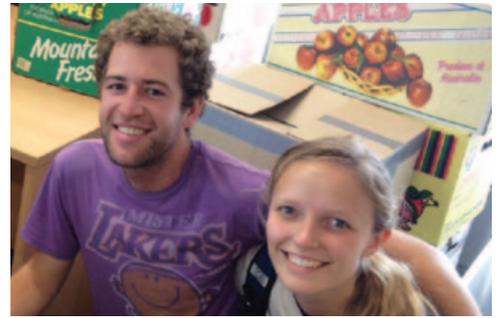
- ACWA Carer Recruitment and Retention State-wide Reference Group
- Asylum Seeker Advisory Committee
- Asylum Seeker Interagency
- Auburn Council Employment Working Group
- Community Relations Commission Asylum Seeker Working Party
- Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Advisory Committee
- Federation of Non-Government Associations (FONGA)
- FONGA Working Party Measurement & Evaluation
- LAC (Local Area Coordination)
- MYAN Australia executive
- NSW Family and Community Services CALD Working Group
- NSW Family and Community Services Multicultural Advisory Group
- NSW Legal Aid and SSI Project Steering Committee
- NSW Multicultural Tobacco Control Network
- NSW Police Force Police Multicultural Advisory Council
- OOHC Regional Implementation Groups for Metro South West Region, Metro Central Region, and Hunter Central Coast Region

- PILCH (Public Interest Law Clearing House)
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre MOSAIC Project Steering Committee
- Refugee Services Network
- Settlement Council of Australia
- South West Sydney Legal Centre
- Sydney Alliance Board
- Sydney Alliance Political Engagement Team
- Sydney Alliance - Parramatta District
- Yfoundations
- Youth Employment and Training Initiative

Migrant Resource Centres:

- Auburn Diversity Services
- Community Migrant Resource Centre
- Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre
- Illawarra Multicultural Services
- Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre
- Macarthur Diversity Services
- Metro Migrant Resource Centre
- Northern Settlement Services
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- SydWest Multicultural Services Inc.
- St George Migrant Resource Centre





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