





# celebrating 20 years in 2020

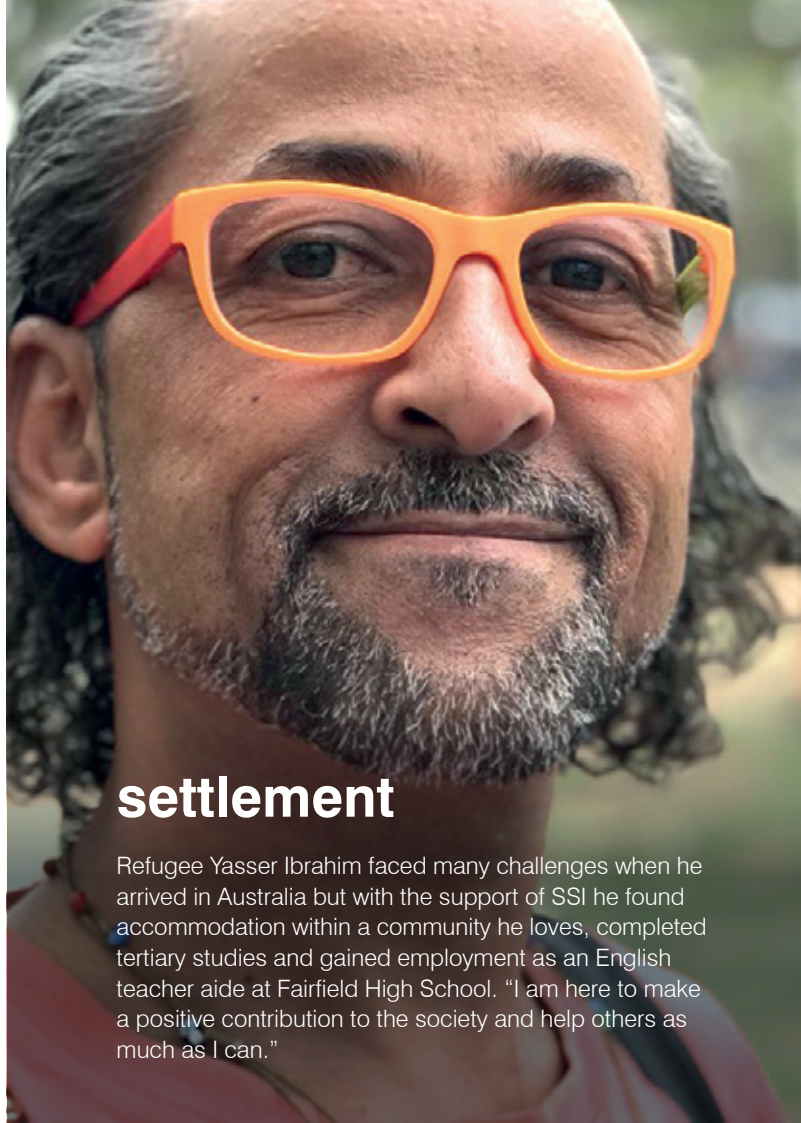
SSI's history is inextricably linked to its membership base of multicultural and migrant resource centres, whose aims and community roots remain at the core of SSI's approach to delivering quality services and support for vulnerable communities. Respecting human rights and social justice and the principles of people meeting their full potential underpin all SSI programs and service delivery frameworks.



## international impact

In June 2019, **SSI Youth Collective** steering committee member and refugee advocate Arash Bordbar was elected Chair of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, a growing network of more than 340 civil society organisations and individuals from 28 countries committed to advancing the rights of refugees in the Asia Pacific.

SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis said achievements like Mr Bordbar's amplified refugee voices. "Arash is a great example of a young person who has referred to his own lived experience to advocate for others."



## settlement

Refugee Yasser Ibrahim faced many challenges when he arrived in Australia but with the support of SSI he found accommodation within a community he loves, completed tertiary studies and gained employment as an English teacher aide at Fairfield High School. "I am here to make a positive contribution to the society and help others as much as I can."

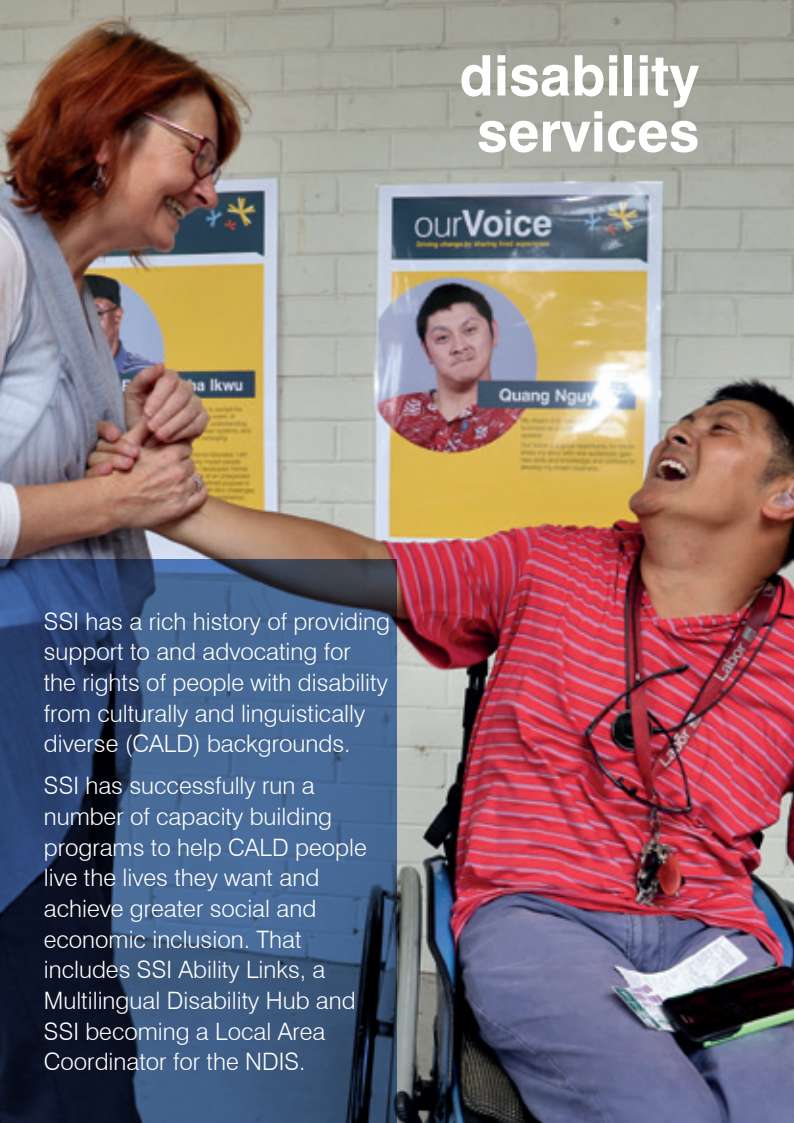
## social inclusion

From 2015 to 2019 the **Friendship Garden** at the Auburn Centre for Community blossomed from an SSI Community Engagement initiative to a community-run project.

The garden welcomed many people from diverse backgrounds, languages and abilities who worked together to build an inclusive and cohesive community. The social interaction allowed participants to improve their English skills, enhance their self-confidence, make friends and establish support networks, attain TAFE certification through courses, and for some, secure employment.







## disability services

## partnership and collaboration

Partnership and collaboration have been in SSI's DNA since its formation with member organisations two decades ago. It continues today with partnerships with community and corporate organisations, and SSI's leadership in the **NSW Settlement Partnership**.

By being in trusting relationships that foster collaboration, SSI has been able to offer ground-breaking, innovative social models of service delivery, very often in partnership with member organisations, sector partners and other civil society organisations.

SSI has a rich history of providing support to and advocating for the rights of people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

SSI has successfully run a number of capacity building programs to help CALD people live the lives they want and achieve greater social and economic inclusion. That includes SSI Ability Links, a Multilingual Disability Hub and SSI becoming a Local Area Coordinator for the NDIS.



## children and families

In 2013 SSI became the first multicultural not-for-profit contracted to develop and deliver a culturally appropriate model of foster care in NSW. The establishment of **SSI Multicultural Foster Care** was the result of years of developmental work by SSI after long recognising the need for a culturally appropriate model of foster care services for CALD children and young people. In 2020, SSI expanded its foster care service into Victoria.

## employment

One of the best ways to excel at your job is to start from the bottom and work your way up. SSI's Chris Blackwell knows this well. He started with the **SSI Work for the Dole** program before moving on to coordinating market research and supervising the performance of job seekers at candle making social enterprise, **Humble Creatives**. Most recently, Chris has taken on managing SSI's low-cost grocery store **The Staples Bag**.





## entrepreneurship



Hedayat Osyan is a former refugee from Afghanistan who was supported by Ignite® Small Business Start-ups to found Nick Tiling Services, which has trained and supported more than 43 people from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to establish their new lives in Australia.

SSI developed Ignite® to facilitate small business creation for people from a refugee background who want to start their own business or expand an existing one.



photograph • Anna Kucera

## regional settlement

A unique approach to regional refugee settlement is delivering strong results in Armidale, offering insights that will guide other regional centres seeking to welcome newcomers as long-term members of their communities.

SSI provides new arrivals from Iraq and Syria with services under the Federal Government's **Humanitarian Settlement Program** in addition to an integration model that includes community engagement, arts and culture, volunteering, project management, and marketing and communications.



## volunteering

SSI volunteer Lewis Klipin's unwavering commitment to volunteering is an inspiration to others, having contributed at least two days a week for over 20 years since entering retirement. "It feels great to be part of an organisation that is concerned about the welfare of people in a vulnerable situation and in need of help."



## arts & culture

SSI's innovative Arts & Culture program was inspired by the belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to develop their creative potential and participate meaningfully in Australia's cultural life – no matter where they come from, what language they speak, or their level of ability.

From humble beginnings, this self-funded program has grown to become the catalyst for a number of significant festivals, cultural events, creative workshops and arts initiatives across Sydney and NSW, adding greater diversity and richness to Australia's cultural landscape.



## inclusion

In June 2020 SSI achieved a special milestone in its work around **diversity and inclusion** when it was awarded Bronze Tier in the 2020 Australian LGBTQ Inclusion Awards. Having an inclusive environment where each person can be their best unique self, and be valued for the perspectives and contribution they bring, enables everyone to effectively respond to the diverse needs of people they work with and achieve better outcomes for all.



## creating opportunities

With the support of IgniteAbility® Small Business Start-ups, high-achieving entrepreneur and autism advocate Haydn Payne launched his own pilot program, PRISM, for job prospects in Blacktown. IgniteAbility® is tailored to address barriers and meet the specific needs of entrepreneurs with a disability, providing an ecosystem of support. With firsthand lived experience, Haydn applies astute insight to deal with the unique challenges facing adolescents on the spectrum who are integrating into mainstream social, workplace and relational environments.

## preparing for a secure future

Saira\*, an asylum seeker from Sierra Leone, is one of nearly 2,000 individuals from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds supported by the NSW Government's **Refugee Employment Support Program** to gain employment. With the support of RESP, delivered by SSI and partners, she was able to map out a career plan to become job ready, find employment and start saving.

\*Name has been changed.



## community solutions

After fleeing Syria with her family, Sophie Bejok had been in Australia for only six months when she applied for SSI's **Community Innovation Fund** to run community cooking classes. Twelve months later, she joined some of the country's most prestigious chefs at a dinner to help raise funds for the UNICEF Syria Crisis Appeal.

The Community Innovation Fund enables the newcomer community to have a voice in the settlement process by harnessing their knowledge about their assets, strengths and opportunities, and to get their ideas funded.







## welcome

When Iraqi refugee Rami Alsaberi gained his humanitarian visa for Australia, he worried about what his new home would be like. Those fears were short-lived as his family felt instantly welcomed by the SSI team who received them at the Sydney airport. "SSI helped us with our luggage, took us to our new home and provided us with two years of case management support," said Rami, now a PhD student at Western Sydney University. "We felt very happy in Australia."

## reconciliation

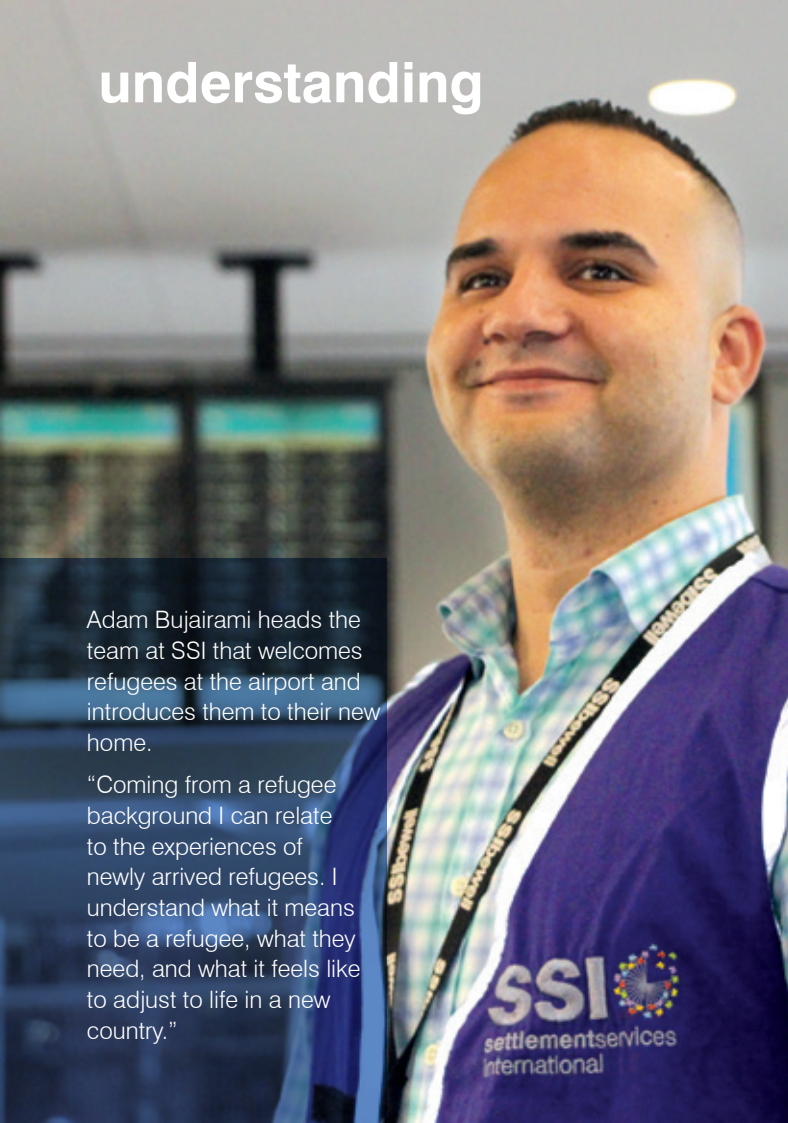


photograph • Anna Kucera

For the past two years, SSI has embarked on a journey of reconciliation, built on community consultation, organisational reflection, and the promise of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

As it develops its Reconciliation Action Plan, SSI's vision is of multicultural Australians and First Nations communities walking hand-in-hand to collaborate and support each other in the pursuit of the best interests of all Australians.

## understanding



Adam Bujairami heads the team at SSI that welcomes refugees at the airport and introduces them to their new home.

"Coming from a refugee background I can relate to the experiences of newly arrived refugees. I understand what it means to be a refugee, what they need, and what it feels like to adjust to life in a new country."



## youth

Access Community Service's **Multicultural Sports Club** uses sport-based programs to build relationships with newly arrived youth to ensure their needs are met and each person is offered a new opportunity to grow and seek further pathways to successfully settle in Australia. For Tresor Ruzangiza, "Working at the MSC is more than just a job – it is a chance to serve and unite my community."