



social justice  
diversity  
compassion  
respect

**our vision:  
to achieve a society that  
values the diversity of  
its people and actively  
provides support to ensure  
meaningful social and  
economic participation**

Settlement Services International (SSI) is a community organisation and social business that supports newcomers and other Australians to achieve their full potential.

We take an integrated approach to supporting people to prosper. Through collaboration and innovation, our services wrap around individuals and families to capitalise on their strengths, identify their priorities and meet their current and future requirements. In 2018, SSI merged with Access Community Services. We now operate locally, nationally and internationally, with offices in metro and regional Queensland, NSW and Victoria.

As a values-driven organisation, we look beyond the immediate needs of individuals and communities and invest in their aspirations. Drawing on feedback from these communities, we have identified unmet needs and invest in innovative initiatives to close these gaps. In the past five years, SSI and its partners have invested more than \$5 million in initiatives that add value to contracted programs.

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# Refugees

SSI provides crucial support to refugees and humanitarian entrants that focuses on developing the skills and knowledge required to become self-reliant, active members of the Australian community.

This begins upon arrival to Australia, where the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) provides refugees and humanitarian entrants with essential settlement support and information for up to 18 months after their arrival in Australia. HSP supports the development of skills and knowledge that build the social and economic wellbeing of newcomers. Upon exiting HSP, refugees who continue to need support are connected with one of the 21 organisations that comprise the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) — a consortium, led by SSI, that provides settlement support to recently arrived migrants and refugees across much of Sydney and parts of regional NSW (see page 8).

Starting a business is a great way to achieve economic empowerment for new arrivals who face barriers to gaining employment in Australia. Through SSI's self-funded Ignite® Small Business Start-ups initiative, we support refugees to establish or expand small businesses. Inspired by the success of the Ignite® model, our IgniteAbility® Small Business Start-ups program assists people with disability in the same endeavour (see page 11).

For newcomers, community plays a critical role in building a sense of belonging in Australia. SSI self-funds

a Community Engagement team whose work fosters the inclusion and participation of newcomers in social, economic and community life (see page 18). One example of this work is the Community Innovation Fund, which provides grants of up to \$10,000 to enrich the capacity of community leaders and groups to build stronger, more vibrant and resilient communities in south-west Sydney.

Settlement is not something organisations like SSI can achieve in isolation. We work hand-in-hand with community and corporate partners to help refugees reach their full potential. Through a partnership with Allianz Australia, for example, we provide scholarships to help refugees minimise financial barriers to accessing education.

Another example is the newly launched refugee settlement location of Armidale, where we work alongside community and civic structures like Armidale Council. These partnerships ensure newcomers are welcomed to their new homes, know how to navigate local services and feel a part of regional community life.

Influencing positive social justice policies in Australia and overseas also requires engagement with international organisations and networks. Through the work of our International Protection team, SSI gains a global perspective and contributes to international dialogue on refugee and migration issues. We also ensure that those who come to Australia as refugees are represented in international policy making.

## Meet Raghda

Raghda and her family arrived in Australia in 2011 after fleeing persecution in Iraq. On arrival, SSI provided Raghda with essential support and information to navigate local services, gain independence and build strong connections in the community.

After settling into the country, Raghda began volunteering with SSI, assisting other new arrivals to adjust to their new homes.

In 2018, Raghda successfully sought funding from SSI's Community Innovation Fund. Developed with the Chaldean League of NSW, her project aims to help newly arrived refugees to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to navigate online forms in English for services that are crucial to their everyday lives, such as online banking or Centrelink.

Raghda said the support from SSI has given her the confidence to continue to work towards changing the lives of people in her community.

### In a single year:

**4,200+**

refugees supported in early settlement, including just under 500 in regional NSW

**100+**

entrepreneurs supported to establish or expand small businesses

**\$90,000+**

in educational scholarships awarded by SSI and Allianz Australia







### Meet Chris

Chris first became involved with SSI when he undertook work experience with what was then known as the Work for the Dole program in August 2015.

“I began working in the SSI Community Kitchen, but soon they started giving me experience with the Humble Creatives program, and that is how I got here.”

After Chris finished his compulsory work experience hours, one of his supervisors encouraged him to interview for an upcoming position.

When the social enterprise Humble Creatives started growing, Chris was a perfect fit for the Team Assistant position. He has been there ever since. One of his main responsibilities is conducting market research to explore products that provide new skills for job seekers.

Chris is also responsible for supervising the performance of job seekers, making sure they arrive on time, sign their timesheets, and learn new skills each day. Chris attributes his fate to the personal connection he first felt with the SSI program and its staff.

## People experiencing unemployment

Finding a job is a crucial step in the journey towards social and economic independence, but many of the vulnerable communities SSI works with require support to overcome barriers to securing sustainable, meaningful employment.

The SSI Employment and Enterprise Services team provides individually tailored employment support that generates real outcomes for refugees, people seeking asylum, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, long-term unemployed job seekers, people with disability, and parents of young children. Our funded employment programs include Jobactive, Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP), Disability Employment Services (DES), Opportunity Pathway Program and ParentsNext.

SSI also works closely with employers to source the right person to meet their business needs, offering everything from resume screening to post-employment support. In a single year, we worked with more than 100 employers. These partnerships are a win-win for all parties: job seekers secure meaningful, sustainable employment, while employers gain access to a diverse and often untapped talent pool.

SSI recognises that innovation is key to supporting individuals to secure sustainable employment. An example of this is our portfolio of social enterprises. In addition to providing a service or product, each social enterprise also offers work experience, enabling people to break the cycle of unemployment. Our low-cost supermarket The Staples Bag, for example, reduces food waste, provides affordable groceries to low-income earners and also offers job seekers experience in warehousing, merchandising, retail and customer service skills.

In a single year:

**1,100+**  
people supported  
to secure employment

**350+**  
job seekers gained valuable  
work experience at SSI  
social enterprises

# Migrants

Support during settlement is as critical for migrants as it is for refugees. SSI offers a number of programs and initiatives to help people achieve their full potential after migrating to Australia.

The Community Hubs Program is part of a national initiative that serves as a gateway to connect families with each other, with their school, and with services. SSI is the support agency for 18 hubs in the South West and West Sydney regions.

Located within easy reach of their communities, the Hubs are welcoming, family friendly places, where people can meet, learn, and build trusting, supportive relationships. Hubs provide a holistic approach that supports the whole family, offering early learning programs, building social networks, providing access to services, and creating pathways to education, training and employment.

SSI also supports newly arrived migrants through the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) — a consortium of community organisations, led by SSI, delivering settlement services in agreed areas of NSW under the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program (see page 4). Among other things, NSP supports migrants to improve their English language skills, engage in education, and get ready for training or employment.

As a leading service provider working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, SSI also offers a training program that is grounded in our extensive experience. SSI Training supports organisations to work with CALD communities and create more culturally responsive and inclusive workplaces. Workshops cover aspects of working with diversity in areas including foster care, disability, young people, volunteering, housing and child and family.

In a single year:

100

SSI Training workshops delivered to more than 1,300 participants

9,992

families connected with Community Hubs activities

30,000+

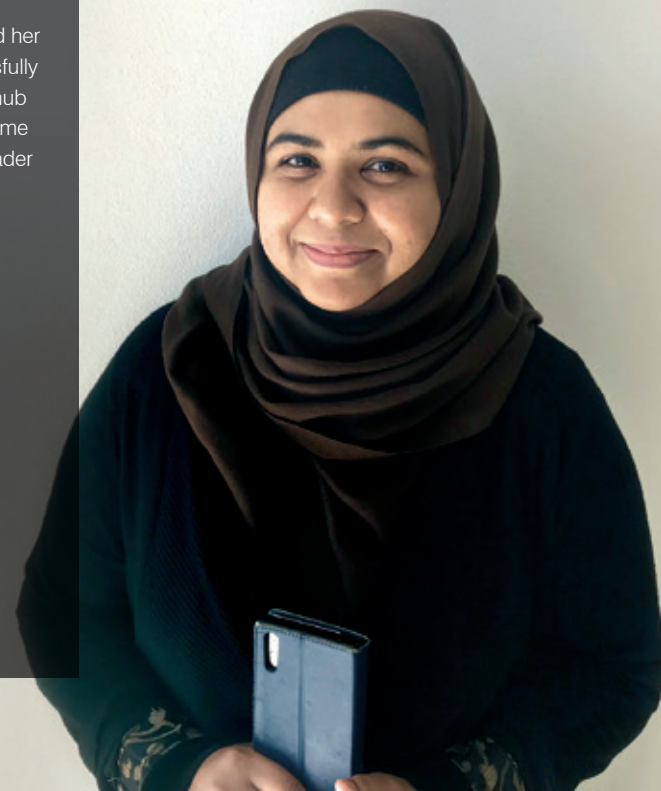
individual sessions held with migrants and refugees through the NSP

## Meet Farhat

After migrating to Australia 10 years ago, Farhat was having difficulty navigating the health system to get her son support. She connected with SSI, where she received support with her son's diagnosis and identifying her own career goals.

Farhat soon began volunteering with SSI at Colyton Public School's Community Hub, where she gained experience in administration and provided all-round support for families in the community.

In 2018, SSI launched the Multilingual Disability Hub to connect culturally diverse communities with information on disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Farhat capitalised on her experience with Community Hubs and her fluency in three languages to successfully apply for a position as a multilingual hub specialist. She has also gained part-time employment as a Community Hub leader with Westmead Public School.







### Meet Jubran

Jubran came to Australia as a refugee. A car accident as a young adult left Jubran in a wheelchair, so along with the settlement support he received from SSI, Jubran was referred onto SSI's Ability Links program and RESP (see page 7).

With collaboration from staff in these three areas, Jubran has secured long-term accommodation, enrolled to study English, applied for disability support, obtained a driver's licence, found casual employment, connected with a local community table tennis team and engaged with the Diversity Disability Alliance (DDA), where he has undertaken training and now mentors other people with disability.

As a DDA mentor and now an ambassador for Ability Links, Jubran is on the path to achieving his goal of supporting people with disability to access employment and education opportunities.

"My life has changed totally. I am more independent. I know my rights. SSI's support has increased my wellbeing and helped me to become more resilient. It has enabled and empowered me to gain experience and knowledge to reach my goal of supporting other people with disability and working in the sector," he said.

## People with disability

SSI is a leader in disability reform, creating opportunities for people with disability to contribute in all aspects of life: economic, social and civic. One example of this is IgniteAbility® Small Business Start-ups — a program that facilitates business creation for people with disability who want to establish a small business or expand an existing one. To date, IgniteAbility® has supported the establishment of 30 businesses.

Since 2014, SSI has also delivered the Ability Links NSW program, which supports people with disability, their families, carers and communities to access opportunities, build supportive relationships, enhance family life and enable people with disability to participate and contribute as valued members of their communities.

Through another SSI initiative, FutureAbility, we support people with disability from CALD backgrounds to access information on disability and the NDIS in their language.

SSI has also established the Our Voice project to provide mainstream disability service providers with an opportunity to build their capacity in responding to the needs of people from CALD backgrounds.

In a single year:

# 4,737

people with disability and **1,006** family members and carers were supported towards their goals through Ability Links

# 100+

entrepreneurs with disability or from refugee backgrounds were supported to establish and expand small businesses

# 2,400+

people attended in-language theatre plays run by FutureAbility

# 24

community leaders worked with SSI in co-design, training and commitment to inclusive practice for people with disability

# Children and young people in foster care

SSI's long history of working with CALD communities has given us the expertise to identify and respond to gaps in the current support available to these individuals and families.

SSI's Multicultural Foster Care (MFC) program was established to ensure children from CALD backgrounds who are unable to live with their families are placed with foster carers who value connections to culture, religion and language. These connections help to build a sense of belonging and identity.

At SSI, we believe children in care who are supported to learn about and maintain a connection to their culture, religion and language have better outcomes as they grow up. These connections help children to understand where they have come from and to develop their sense of belonging and identity.

SSI supports families to care for children who have been found to be at risk of harm or at risk of coming into care. The services are home-based, working with children, parents, family members and other services, including the community, to provide guidance to parents to change

behaviours, to improve the child's safety and care and to keep the family together.

If it is safe to do so, SSI works towards reuniting children in its out-of-home care service with their parents or kin. In these cases, SSI continues to work with foster carers to support families to strengthen their capacity to care for their children safely.

Each day

**165+**  
children  
are cared for by SSI  
foster carers

## Meet Peter and Roz

Shortly after they became foster carers in 2018, Peter and Roz became the first foster carers to become guardians for the children placed in their care by SSI's MFC program.

MFC matched Peter and Roz with children from the same religious background as the couple, who offered respite care, in addition to caring for the siblings full-time from birth.

Peter and Roz continue to engage with the children's biological family and community, including gathering for the children's milestone celebrations such as birthdays.





# People seeking asylum

SSI provides support to people who are living in the community while their immigration status is assessed. One of the ways we do this is through the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program.

SRSS include temporary accommodation, income support and case management for eligible people seeking asylum. People seeking asylum are assisted to connect with essential services in the community and are supported to secure their own long-term accommodation in the private rental market. Case managers support individuals and families while they remain eligible for SRSS under the government's criteria.

Through information workshops and community engagement activities, SSI aims to equip people seeking asylum with the life skills needed to adjust to their new community. People are connected with local community groups and volunteers, and are supported to establish themselves independently within the Australian community.

SSI also nurtures the creativity of artists who are seeking asylum in Australia through our self-funded arts and culture program. SSI Arts & Culture works with artists from all walks of life to harness the positive roles arts and culture

activities can play during settlement. It also nurtures and promotes artists and cultural practitioners from refugee and migrant backgrounds to continue their practice and professional development in Australia (see page 18).

SSI coordinates the delivery of the Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS), which provides government-funded access to professional immigration advice and application assistance for protection visa applicants who have entered Australia lawfully and meet the eligibility criteria or are minors under the care of the Immigration Minister.

in a single year

3,932

people seeking asylum  
were supported to live  
in the community

327

people were supported  
as artists or participants in  
SSI Arts & Culture project



## Meet Damon

A talented photographer and visual artist, Damon sought asylum in Australia in 2013. Damon worked as a photographer in his native country of Iran, before he was forced to seek safety in Australia.

Damon said it was hard to begin life in a new country as an artist but, with support from SSI, he was able to pursue his passion. Damon has now displayed his

work at different galleries and festivals, including the Bankstown Arts Centre, Casula Powerhouse Centre, SSI's New Beginnings Festival and Light Eye Mind Gallery in London.

In 2015, SSI's Ignite® initiative supported Damon to launch his fine art and photography business — Damon Art Studio.





### Meet George

George first came in contact with SSI when he and his family were greeted by HSP staff on arrival in Sydney in 2017. Since then, George has worked with a number of SSI programs to share his story and develop his leadership skills, including participating in the Youth Collective's 20Voices Leadership Program, where he advocated for young refugee people.

When he was forced to flee his home in 2015, George was in his final year of a Bachelor of Mechatronic Engineering at the University of Aleppo. George held strong to his dream of becoming a Mechatronic Engineer and, in October 2018, he successfully applied for an SSI Allianz University Scholarship, which he will put towards an Extended Diploma of Engineering at Western Sydney University.

"Yes, I've lost a lot. I lost four years of studying, I've lost my home but I have never lost my hope. Here, in Australia, your future is in your own hands. Every dream you have, you can make a reality if you work hard, are patient and don't give up," he said.

## Youth

Today's young people are tomorrow's leaders, teachers, professionals and parents. They have the potential to shape the future social and economic landscape of Australia. But, along with opportunity, youth also brings challenges that require support in order for young people to get the best start in life.

One way SSI offers this support is through the Youth Collective. Established by SSI and its member migrant resource centres in 2014, this youth-led organisation engages multicultural young people in NSW in projects that build their confidence, resilience and self-empowerment. It bridges gaps in service delivery and provides guidance and opportunities for young people to grow into tomorrow's leaders.

For many young people, the hardest job to get is the first one. When combined with additional barriers such as language difficulty, disability or unstable living circumstances, this places young people at risk of long-term unemployment.

SSI supports young people aged 15 to 24 to overcome barriers to employment through the government-funded Youth Employment Program (YEP). The successful outcomes of SSI's youth employment programs hinge on strong collaboration with employer partners and corporate trainers who facilitate a range of industry-specific training and employment opportunities.

### In a single year:

**190** young people engaged with Youth Collective activities

**115**

job seekers gained valuable work experience at SSI social enterprises

**80** disadvantaged youth undertook paid work experience with YPPP



# SSI's commitment to community

## Arts and Culture

Underpinned by our vision that everyone should have opportunities for creative development and cultural expression and participation, SSI self-funds an arts and culture program that runs activities such as the New Beginnings Festival. With the backing of our partners and sponsors, we supported 88 artists, craft makers and entrepreneurs to showcase their talents to 1,800 Sydneysiders for the 2018 festival. Through community arts and cultural development projects, we encourage participation in the arts to improve the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals.

## Inclusion and belonging

Facilitated by the Community Engagement team, SSI's community-based initiatives enable newcomers to establish social and cultural connections in the wider community and participate in social, economic and community life. In a single year, 128 intercultural and inclusive community events were supported by volunteers, 3000+ meals were shared at Community Kitchen and the Friendship Garden was tended on 2520+ occasions.

# The company we keep

## Our members

SSI is the state-wide umbrella organisation for 11 migrant resource centres and multicultural services across NSW. SSI delivers a number of programs in partnership with our member organisations, which enables us to provide tailored, local services to the individuals and families we support.

## Corporate partners

SSI is supported by community focused organisations from the corporate and academic sector, providing in-kind and financial support to our activities and programs. One example is a partnership with White Pages Australia, known as the Connective Collective, through which we have connected newcomers with small business owners, recognising they are often leaders in their communities and can help link newcomers into their local area.





# how can you help? get in touch with SSI to volunteer, donate, fundraise or collaborate

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