

# ssi news

SETTLEMENT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



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## From the CEO Violet Roumeliotis



The biennial FECCA conference held November 7 and 8 on the Gold Coast, was based on the theme 'Breaking down the barriers: A strength-based approach for a just society'.

SSI presented two papers, highlights of which are detailed in the newsletter. It was a great chance to meet new people within the sector and catch up with old friends.

I particularly enjoyed listening to the panellists on barriers to employment for CALD communities and, in particular, the President of the ACTU, Ged Kearney. Ged is a passionate advocate for CALD communities and pledged support from her organisation to collaborate and address these issues at a local level.

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) Annual General Meeting in Canberra was a great success with Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services, addressing the gathering followed by a robust presentation from the President of the Australian Local Government Association, Felicity Ann Lewis, and Professor Andrew Jakubowicz from the University of Technology Sydney, who spoke on the importance of settlement and social cohesion. As an executive member of SCOA, SSI has the opportunity to be heard in Canberra on important policy and program issues relevant to our clients and communities.

We were fortunate to have Senator Fierravanti-Wells spend some time with SSI and its membership at our Ashfield office on November 21. Each SSI member organisation presented a snapshot of its service delivery achievements and challenges, while SSI outlined its broad range of service delivery programs. It was wonderful to see SSI and its members showcasing what they do best and it was a reminder of just how much we can achieve and overcome through consolidation.

During the past month, an issue of concern has been the proposed changes in the area of hate speech. In relation to this issue SSI has endorsed a letter from the Human Rights Law Centre being sent to the Attorney-General urging the Federal Government not to repeal these important protections against racial vilification in the Racial Discrimination Act.

It's hard to believe another year is almost over.

SSI has had a tremendous year of growth and change and I'd like to take this opportunity, in our last newsletter for the year, to wish you a very happy and safe holiday season, and all the best for 2014.

# Reframing leadership from the ‘margins’

## Presentation highlights of FECCA 2013 CALD Women & Leadership panel session by CEO Violet Roumeliotis



SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis presenting CALD women and leadership

“It is easy to sit up and take notice, what is difficult is getting up and taking action.”

*Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850)*

Taking the opportunity to reframe and add to the panel discussion on leadership, Ms Roumeliotis said that ‘roles’ and ‘positions’ are important dimensions of leadership, however the focus of her paper was on leadership as an activity and, in the case of SSI, an activity that involves CALD women in the community sector.

She shared the stories of three women within the SSI community who demonstrated leadership in action on a daily basis.

The leadership traits of the women described by Ms Roumeliotis ranged from quietly committed, through to publicly recognised and awarded achievements, however in their own ways, each had contributed significantly to the groups they work with and, as a result, to the wider community.

Ms Roumeliotis cited Ronald Heifetz’s *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, where he argues that real leadership is not about dominance and control. Real leadership is also not about persuading people to follow and buy into something they are not ready for. At the same time, real leadership is not simply maintaining the status quo or being fixed about a way of seeing the world and its problems.

Using his perspectives on real leadership helps to reframe what leadership for CALD women is in a useful way.

What came through these stories was that leadership requires bravery, and that often this bravery is a result of experienced loss or pain, creating a strong motivating force.

Whether it is fundraising, cooking, leading an exercise class for the elderly, or speaking publicly on behalf of their community, the three stories beautifully demonstrated women whose actions, rather than their roles and positions, set them apart as women exercising leadership.



# Innovative settlement service delivery

## FECCA 2013 presentation highlights by Manager, Humanitarian Services, David Keegan & HSS Service Delivery Manager, Yamamah Agha

The partnership between SSI and its member Migrant Resources Centres and Multicultural Services was presented as a unique model of service delivery, providing a 'one-stop shop' for settlement services.

The partnership has created a stronger support mechanism for both clients and their case managers, with the key outcome being better integration of settlement services at a local and macro level. This approach also leads to better outcomes for staff and clients.

During 2012-2013, SSI supported 7,164 individuals under the Humanitarian Settlement Service program.

The relationship supports both organisations to build their organisation, meet organisational aims, and better meet the needs of clients by leveraging the reputations and infrastructure of each partner.

While the benefits of this model of service delivery are numerous, three key areas were outlined during the presentation.

Client benefits include a seamless service transition to the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) on exit from HSS, saving on travel costs due to one local office location, access to eligible SGP and other community support services during HSS, and already being familiar with their local provider, post HSS.

Benefits for SSI include the integration with MRC infrastructure, such as meeting rooms, reception, and office space, local support and mentoring for staff, partnering on local community events, and increased engagement in local interagency networks.

Partner benefits include increased referrals to SGP, additional support for community development activities aimed at newly arrived communities, reduced administration costs, and access to SSI networks, planning information, training and support.

Ms Agha concluded that overall this service delivery model had proven to be a great success.

Fluctuations in the humanitarian program had been a challenge, but as with any partnership, effective and regular communication and planning had ensured that the partnership remained of mutual benefit. She added that it had also achieved the overall outcome of providing supported and resourced staff who, in turn, could provide a better service for clients.



*SSI information stand at FECCA 2013*

*L-R Manager Business and Community Development, Joseph Ferrer;  
Community Integration Coordinator, Tabitha Chepkwony;  
Manager, Humanitarian Services, David Keegan*



# NEWS AND EVENTS



## Supporting Families Symposium - call for abstracts

SSI is hosting a symposium on supporting migrant and refugee families and is calling for abstracts for workshops and presentations.

Manager, Early Intervention and Capacity Building, Thanh Nguyen says the symposium will address the challenges facing families during settlement and adjustment.

“Adjusting to a new life in Australia can place families under significant pressure, and the symposium will highlight successful strategies, programs, services, and models for providing assistance and building strength and resilience,” says Mr Nguyen.

The event, to be held on June 5, 2014 in Parramatta, will bring together a wide cross-section of presenters and participants from migrant, settlement and refugee services, mainstream child and family services, the government sector, and academics specialising in the area.

Completed [Abstract Submission Form](#) can be emailed to [family\\_symposium@ssi.org.au](mailto:family_symposium@ssi.org.au) by COB December 20, 2013.

For enquiries, contact Thanh Nguyen, SSI, at the above email or on 0402 771 390.



Heavy rain on November 18 resulted in the cancellation of the Police vs. SSI Client futsal game, but Ryde Local Area Command still came along to participate at the SSI Community Kitchen. Officers observed the food preparations in the kitchen and shared a meal with 200 clients, staff and volunteers.

SSI clients were in charge of the hotplates for the day, cooking a fantastic Persian-inspired feast for their friends and staff.

Following lunch, Refugee Advice & Casework Service presented information about the Federal Government’s proposed Temporary Protection Visa policy. With the aid of interpreters, the information was delivered in Arabic, Farsi and Tamil.



## NEWS AND EVENTS cont...



SSI was pleased to have Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services, Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells spend the morning with us at the Ashfield head office.

SSI senior management presented their program areas, followed by short presentations from nine of the 11 SSI member organisations.

SSI is the representative body for Migrant Resources Centres and Multicultural Services across NSW.



The SSI Enterprise Facilitation team is currently working with four SSI clients whose enterprise projects are at an advanced stage of development, and another four projects are being worked on intensively.

The speed at which these projects has progressed is testament to the passion and commitment of the entrepreneurs, but also demonstrates the role that SSI case managers play in identifying interested and motivated clients, and referring them to the Enterprise Facilitators Rita Wilson and Dina Petrakis in head office.



The 2012-2013 SSI Annual General Meeting was held on November 25, with the current board re-elected.

Returning Board Members are:

Chair - Kamalle Dabboussy

Vice-Chair - Karin Vasquez

Treasurer - Rosa Loria

Secretary - Litsa Nossar

Board members - Tia Roko, Esta Paschalidis-Chilas and Om Dhungel



Rain did not deter the crowds at the Pacific Unity Festival held in Auburn on November 16.

The SSI Multicultural Foster Care Service (MFCS) was kept busy at the information stall it shared with a number of other out-of-home Care (OOHC) service providers.

SSI has been commissioned by Fostering NSW to conduct a recruitment campaign to promote awareness of, and generate interest in fostering within Pacific communities.

Manager OOHC, Multicultural Foster Care Service, Ghassan Noujaim is pictured with Jacinda Wing, Recruitment and Panel Manager, Key Assets at the festival stall.

The November winner of the CEO Wellness Award is Bibek Shrestha who is based in SSI's Campsie office. For his birthday this month, Bibek bought himself a pushbike with the money he has saved from not smoking during the past 12 months.

His birthday present to himself last year was to quit smoking - a habit of 12 years.

Bibek says he mentally prepared himself by watching documentaries on the ill effects of smoking, and by gradually cutting down on cigarettes, until he gave up completely on his birthday last year.

"To be honest, I'm proud of myself, because I have tried many times before but not been successful," said Bibek.

"I have a lot more energy, I feel healthy and happy, and I've even convinced my roommate to also give up."

Congratulations Bibek. The rewards from quitting smoking are already evident and the Be Well team believe there will be more to come.

This month we introduce *Give Well* - building on the culture of appreciation and gratitude at SSI, where team members feel valued and help others and themselves.

### **Give Blood, Give Life: SSI's blood donation days**

The Australian Red Cross has arranged a bus service to pick up staff from the Parramatta office and to drop them back after they have donated blood. Donation days are scheduled for December 16 and 18. Please email Nils Bethke to secure a place.

### **Walk Mate movement**

Enjoy exercise as part of your work day. Here are some simple ways you can get moving.

**Walking meetings:** If you have a meeting with just one or two other people why not choose to walk and talk rather than sitting down. You might like to have a brainstorm on your way to a local park, then jot down your great ideas once you are there.

**Lunchtime power walk:** If you want to feel energised after lunch, then try a brisk 15 minute walk. You could team up with a wellness buddy or pop on your headphones and play some great music. Pick a safe place for your power walk and keep your eyes open for cars.

**Walk to work:** Even if not all the way, part of the way is a great start to the day.

**For more information on any of the above, SSI staff can visit: [bewellssi.org.au](http://bewellssi.org.au)**



*Colleague Janet Ghedelela presenting Bibek Shrestha with his CEO Wellness Award*