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what is SSI?

SSI is a community organisation and social business that supports newcomers and other Australians to achieve their full potential. We work with all people who have experienced vulnerability, including refugees, people seeking asylum and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, to build capacity and enable them to overcome inequality.

SSI draws on its expertise and experience to advocate for the people and communities it serves. Through the work we do, we empower people to change their lives. Through our advocacy and representation, we influence ideas and policy.

our vision

To achieve a society that values the diversity of its people and actively provides support to ensure meaningful social and economic participation, and to assist individuals and families to reach their potential.

our mission

We support newcomers and other vulnerable Australians to prosper. We build our sector's capacity and create positive social outcomes with government, corporations and communities.

Violet Roumeliotis CEO

Violet Roumeliotis AM is a social entrepreneur who champions the strengths of our diverse communities. Through her C-suite and board roles, Violet uses innovation and collective impact to promote social justice and inclusion.

She is the CEO of Settlement Services International, a community organisation and social business that supports newcomers and other vulnerable individuals to achieve their full potential. During her eight years as CEO, Violet has taken SSI from a Sydney-based organisation with 68 staff to an 800-plus workforce that supports more than 37,600 people nationally each year.

Violet is committed to achieving equity, and advancing diversity and inclusion in all forms. In 2020, she was made a member of the **Order of Australia** for outstanding service to the community. Violet is also a former **Telstra Australia Business Woman of the Year**, has been named one of **AFR's Top 100 Women of Influence** for 2018 in the category of Diversity & Inclusion and was awarded the title of **Community Fellow** from Western Sydney University for outstanding service to the community.

Violet sits on the board of the Australian Council of Social Service, Family Planning NSW and the NSW Domestic and Family Violence, and Sexual Assault Council. Her other appointments include the SBS Community Advisory Committee, the Leadership Council on Cultural Diversity, the UTS Business MBA Advisory Group, the Council on Economic Participation for Refugees, the International Metropolis Steering Committee, the Australian Defence Force's Chiefs of Service Committee's diversity and inclusion panel, and the NSW government's joint partnership working group overseeing refugee resettlement.

Violet writes a regular [blog here](#) and you can follow her on Twitter [@CEO_Roumeliotis](#).

For Violet to speak at events or conferences please email ceo-invitations@ssi.org.au



fast facts

in a single year:



SSI staff met

4,900+
humanitarian
entrants

at the airport to begin
their settlement journey.



SSI hosts approximately

100 training
workshops

with employers to better enable
employment of CALD communities.



SSI linked

5,200+
families

with the community through
Community Hubs activities.



SSI supported over **1,500 people**
to **secure employment** through the Refugee Employment
Support Program (RESP), Disability Employment Services
(DES), Opportunity Pathway Program and ParentsNext.



An additional **250**
job seekers
gained valuable experience at
SSI social enterprises.



SSI supported over

170 children

every day through its **Multicultural Child**
and Family Program, matching children
with carers who share the same language,
culture or religion.



SSI supported

10,870

people with disability
and their family members
and carers.

The **NSW Settlement**
Partnership held over

25,000

individual and group sessions
to **support migrants.**



recent awards

Violet Roumeliotis

- 2020 Member of the Order of Australia for outstanding service to the community
- 2018 One of The Australian Financial Review 100 Women of Influence
- 2018 Instyle and Audi Women of Style Award recipient: 'Community Champion'
- 2017 Telstra Australian Business Woman of the Year



Carolina Triana

- 2017 Premier's Multicultural Community Medal – Arts & Culture

Adam Bujairami

- 2017 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards – Case Worker of the Year



Allianz for partnership with SSI

- 2020 NSW Premier's Multicultural Community Medals - Business Excellence
- 2017 Australian Human Rights Awards – Business Award
- 2017 AHRI Cross Cultural Management Award



EmployAbility

- National Finalist in the 2017 NES Awards



The Staples Bag

- Zest Award for Exceptional Project within a Not-For-Profit Organisation

Ability Links NSW & FutureAbility

- Employability National Finalist: Disability Industry Innovation Awards – Excellence in promoting cultural competency

SSI

- 2019 Australian Human Rights Institute Inclusive Workplace Award
- 2017 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards – Settlement Innovation

Access Community Services

- 2019 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards – Settlement Innovation



newcomers, refugees & migrants

what we do

SSI supports individuals and families through a mix of government and self-funded services and initiatives. We work hand-in-hand with partners in the academic and corporate sectors, and with community organisations and their members through community engagement, capacity building and advocacy.

We have broken away from a traditional not-for-profit model in order to operate like a social business. We use efficiency to generate a surplus from our funding streams, which we then reinvest in projects that deliver broader social outcomes for the individuals and families we support. Drawing on feedback from these communities, we have identified unmet needs and invest our surpluses in innovative initiatives to close these gaps.

Humanitarian Settlement Program

The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) supports refugees from the moment they arrive at the airport, where SSI's culturally and linguistically diverse workforce ensures the first words new arrivals hear are 'welcome to Australia' in their preferred language.

SSI's HSP services enhance self-reliance with a focus on English language skills, education and job readiness. These services don't just respond to one particular need – they provide a whole spectrum of quality support to help new arrivals settle successfully in Australia.

Upon arrival to Australia, refugees are supported with airport pickup, short-term accommodation, community orientation and health assessments. They are also assisted with making links to their community, a basic household goods package and finding affordable long-term accommodation.

For six to 18 months, individuals receive tailored case management support that improves refugees' social and economic participation and, ultimately, sets them up to live independent lives in Australia.

NSW Settlement Partnership

The NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) is 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.

SETS includes client services that provide clients with settlement-related information, advice, advocacy, and assistance to access mainstream and other relevant services; particularly in facilitating acquisition of English language skills, supporting engagement with education and training, and building employment readiness.

SETS also helps new and emerging community groups and organisations support their specific communities. Support may include development of leadership and governance skills, linkages to the broader community, interaction with government and local stakeholders, and access to resources and facilities.

The NSP consortium comprises 20 organisations, including SSI and its 11 member migrant resource centres and multicultural services, as well as eight community organisations located around the state.

newcomers, refugees & migrants continued

Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS)

The Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program provides support to people seeking asylum who are living in the community on temporary visas while their immigration status is assessed.

SRSS includes temporary accommodation, income support and case management. 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 until their visa status is resolved.

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 while they await the outcome of their visa application. This program is funded by the Australian government Department of Home Affairs.

Ignite® Small Business Start-ups

SSI's Ignite® and IgniteAbility® programs have supported over 250 entrepreneurs with disability or from refugee background to establish and expand small businesses.

Funded by SSI and through corporate support, the Ignite® initiative has a unique model based on an ecosystem of support for each entrepreneur, driven by passionate facilitators, industry experts and a resource team made up of volunteers from local businesses, councils, chambers of commerce and other individuals who can share their business knowledge and skills.

Many recently arrived refugees face significant barriers to employment in Australia, in particular during the early stages of their settlement. With support to overcome settlement challenges, refugee entrepreneurs become independent and self-sufficient and create employment for others contributing to the Australian economy.

Ignite is now focusing on expanding the model and assisting host countries such as Canada in meeting the challenges of refugee and newcomer settlement.

children, young people and families

Community Hubs

Community Hubs is a national program that primarily supports migrant and refugee parents and children as they navigate the education system. It builds parenting and family skills and resources, and promotes links between families and local services and networks.

SSI is the Support Agency for 18 Community Hubs in western Sydney, where Hubs are located across five local government areas.

Located within easy reach of their communities, the Hubs use a place-based community engagement approach to address the needs of families and children at a local level. They provide a safe, welcoming, family friendly place, 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.

They welcome people by offering easily accessible programs, such as gardening groups, playgroups, exercise classes and morning teas.

Youth Collective

The Youth Collective is a collaborative initiative that aims to improve service delivery outcomes for multicultural young people in NSW through the delivery of activities that build confidence, resilience and leadership skills in migrant and refugee youth.

Led by youth, for youth, the Youth Collective fosters innovation and information sharing among service providers and provides a voice for young people from multicultural backgrounds.

Drawing on the collective expertise of young people and multicultural organisations in NSW, the Youth Collective provides a platform for young people to participate in activities at the local level and play an active role in informing service delivery planning, implementation and outcomes. It also provides an avenue for youth workers and multicultural organisations across NSW to share ideas and work collaboratively to develop innovative solutions to minimise gaps in service delivery.

Multicultural Child and Family Program

Multicultural Foster Care

SSI Multicultural Foster Care is a specialist out-of-home care service for children from CALD backgrounds aged 0–18 years. The service operates in parts of metropolitan Sydney and the Hunter-Central Coast area.

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 than those who are not supported in this way. These connections help children to understand where they have come from and to develop their sense of belonging and identity.

Helping children stay connected with their culture, language and religion also helps children settle if and when they are returned to their birth parents through the process of family restoration.

SSI aligns its work with NSW Department of Communities and Justice's Permanency Support Program in prioritising keeping children safely together with their families wherever possible through family preservation and family restoration.

children, young people and families continued

Family preservation

SSI works to support families to care for their children who have been found to be at risk of harm and/or potential risk to come 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. Supports can include child and family counselling, parent coaching/training, in-home supports and services to address specific identified risks. Services for family preservation are usually provided for periods of six months to two years.

Family restoration

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. The services work intensely with parents, family members and, as relevant, community to identify the needs of children as well as the strengths and challenges for their parents. These are all considered in developing and implementing plans to help improve parents' approaches to caring for their children. Services for restoration are usually provided for up to two years.



people with disability

NDIS Local Area Coordinator services

SSI delivers Local Area Coordinator (LAC) services for the NDIS to over 16,000 people living in Sydney and South West Sydney areas.

Through the LAC, SSI provides support services to people with disability, their families and carers, so they can pursue their goals, exercise choice and control, and engage with the NDIS.

SSI's LAC support services are provided in 14 local government areas in Sydney (Ashfield, Burwood, Canada Bay, Leichhardt, Marrickville, Strathfield, Sydney) and South West Sydney (Bankstown, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Winge-carribee, Wollondilly).

The foundations for SSI's delivery of LAC services were the strong community ties, industry expertise and reputation established through its delivery of Ability Links, FutureAbility and Our Voice – programs that ended on June 30, 2020.

IgniteAbility® Small Business Start-ups

IgniteAbility® Small Business Start-ups was established by SSI to facilitate business creation for people with disability who want to establish a small business or expand an existing one.

As a leader in disability reform, SSI creates opportunities for people with disability to contribute in all aspects of life – economic, social and civic.

ABS data highlights that people with disability have a higher rate of entrepreneurship than people without disability. As a result, SSI has developed a groundbreaking program that taps into an individual's ambitions and motivations for a future of sustainable self-employment.

IgniteAbility® has been inspired by the success of the Ignite® Small Business Start-ups model, which assists people of refugee background. IgniteAbility® is tailored to address barriers and meet the specific needs of entrepreneurs with a disability, providing an ecosystem of support for aspiring entrepreneurs.

employment

SSI Employment and Enterprises provides recruitment services, pre-employment planning and training, and work experience opportunities to help people establish suitable career pathways.

Meaningful employment is an important component of a stable, secure and independent future. SSI works with long-term unemployed people, newly arrived refugees, people seeking asylum, migrants, young people and people with disability to achieve this.

Social enterprises

As a jobactive provider, SSI utilises partnerships with employers and job-ready programs to support job seekers to acquire new skills and to find and maintain a job.

SSI's social enterprises – The Staples Bag and Humble Creatives – offer job seekers the opportunity to get hands-on work experience in a retail and commercial environment, and to learn and develop vocational and personal skills that increase their employment opportunities.

Disability Employment Services

A tailored recruitment service for people with disability is provided through Disability Employment Services (DES), the Australian government's employment service that helps people with a disability, injury or health condition to find work and keep a job. DES builds on SSI's EmployAbility program, which was recognised as a National Finalist in the 2017 National Employment Services Awards for Innovation in Disability Employment. This program is delivered together with six delivery partners.

Youth Employment Program

SSI supports young people aged 15 to 24 to overcome barriers to employment through the government-funded 'Smart, Skilled and Hired' Youth Employment Program (YEP). Through an in-house work experience centre, participants receive relevant, hands-on experience in administration, and retail and customer services within SSI and its social enterprises.

ParentsNext

Together with six delivery partners, SSI also delivers ParentsNext in 17 sites across Sydney East Metro and Sydney South West areas.

ParentsNext is an Australian government initiative to help parents prepare for employment by the time their youngest child reaches school age.

Opportunity Pathways

SSI is also the provider of the Opportunity Pathways program for western Sydney, offering employment support for people in social housing, and the provider of the Transitional Pathways and Placement Service. Funded by the iCare Foundation, this service assists in preparing participants for returning to the workforce following a workplace injury.

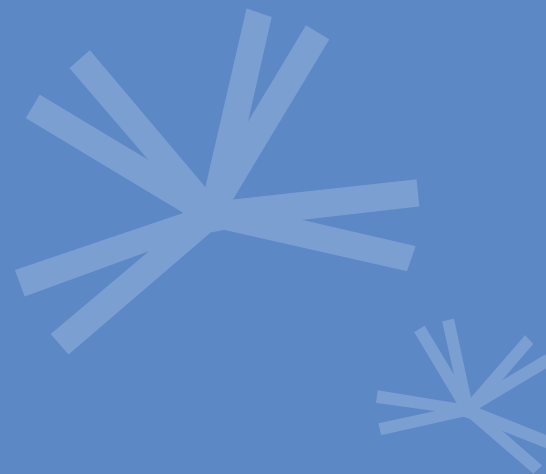
employment continued

Refugee Employment Support Program

The Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) addresses the challenges that are experienced by refugees and people seeking asylum in finding sustainable and skilled employment opportunities.

The program is focused on community-based solutions to employment through the involvement of local employers, organisations and other non-government organisations (NGOs) to connect eligible refugees and people seeking asylum with training, support and jobs.

The RESP program is available to people in western Sydney and the Illawarra who are underemployed or who are unemployed and require extra support — in addition to other government-funded employment services — to enable them to contribute productively to the Australian community and workforce.



community engagement

The SSI Community Engagement unit fosters the inclusion and participation of newcomers in social, economic and community life.

Community Engagement recognises the important role of community in achieving SSI's vision and collaborates with SSI programs to build capacity, foster inclusion and influence perceptions in society. It is informed by community voice and achieves its goals through community-based initiatives, developing community leadership and building capacity, stakeholder engagement, multicultural disability inclusion, an arts and culture program and a volunteer program.

Community-based initiatives develop the capacity of communities to influence change and create pathways to meaningful engagement and inclusion.

The volunteer program builds the organisation's capability to engage the broader community in SSI's mission.

Through robust stakeholder engagement, community engagement work applies community inclusion, arts and culture and volunteer program principles in SSI's regional NSW locations.

Examples of SSI's community engagement and intercultural work include:

- New Beginnings Festival
- Community Innovation Fund
- Welcome2Sydney
- Indigenous Engagement
- Community Kitchen
- disability training for community leaders
- school music programs
- art exhibitions
- workshops
- culturally responsive practice training
- volunteer capacity building
- supporting community-led events
- community leader forums
- panel discussions in NSW schools
- CommuniTea in Coffs Harbour
- community consultations on program design,
- intern and student placement design and implementation, and more.

SSI Arts & Culture

Underpinned by SSI's vision that everyone should have opportunities for creative development and cultural expression and participation, SSI's arts and culture program runs activities ranging from community-based arts projects to the flagship New Beginnings Festival.

This self-funded program aims to harness the positive roles that arts and cultural 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.

SSI Arts & Culture embraces the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted by UNESCO in 2005 and ratified by Australia in 2009, and ensures that artists, cultural practitioners and citizens worldwide have the right to cultural practice and preservation.

Access Community Services

In 2018 SSI merged with leading Queensland multicultural organisation Access Community Services Limited.

Access is a community based, not-for-profit organisation committed to community development and capacity building.

Services are delivered right across Queensland with a particular focus on the South East, including Logan City, Ipswich City and the Gold Coast.

Access is one of Australia's leaders in multicultural issues, with over 30 years of experience in providing support services for migrants, refugees and Australian born clients in the areas of settlement, employment, training, youth support services, housing and social enterprise opportunities.

The alliance builds on the already strong collaboration between the organisations and enables them to work together to deliver programs and services for clients and the community.

www.accesscommunity.org.au



For media inquiries please email press@ssi.org.au

SSI advocacy

As a leader, SSI is an advocate for the individuals and communities that it works alongside.

With a long history of unmatched expertise and experience working with CALD communities, newcomers, refugees and people from vulnerable communities, SSI is an effective voice and strong advocate for policy approaches that allow individuals to overcome inequality and that focus on inclusivity.

corporates and organisations

SSI Diversity Training

SSI Diversity Training offers learning solutions that support organisations to work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and create more culturally responsive and inclusive workplaces.

SSI Diversity Training is able to customise learning across industries such as settlement, out-of-home care, disability, youth and employment because it is grounded in SSI's experience as a leading provider of a broad range of services to CALD communities.

Services include in-house workshops, customised training and provision of speakers with lived experience.

Corporate partnerships

Settlement Services International works closely with businesses and institutions to help them identify and understand opportunities to help refugees and other individuals facing vulnerability in Australia. Corporate partners can play a vital role in creating employment pathways for SSI clients, tailoring goods and services to meet client needs, and raising awareness about SSI's work among their staff and customer base. In addition, employees can commit time and expertise to SSI's corporate volunteering and skilled mentoring initiatives, as well as contributing crucial funds to SSI's non-government funded programs.

international

The 'international' in Settlement Services International is a reflection of the work we do collaborating with peers in other countries and with advocates for innovative solutions to refugee and migration challenges.

SSI is committed to contributing to the sector globally through influencing and developing policy to improve the protection of people affected by forced displacement.

At a time when the UN has called for responsibility sharing to support refugees around the world, SSI has engaged in international dialogue, participated in the development of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and engaged in the Global Refugee Forum, submitting pledges that showcase SSI's commitment in implementing the GCR.

For a comment or
to understand SSI's position
on a particular public policy issue, contact:

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