

# SSI Integrated Report 2021-22

Settlement Services International

This report covers the financial reporting period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

In this Annual Report, SSI refers to SSI Group unless otherwise specified.

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## Acknowledgement of Country

Settlement Services International and its subsidiaries acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Ancestors have walked this country, and we acknowledge their special and unique place in our nation's historical, cultural and linguistic identity.

We will use our understanding of and commitment to cultural responsiveness as we welcome new cultures to Australia and implement our programs and services.

This report covers the financial reporting period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

In this Annual Report, SSI refers to SSI Group unless otherwise specified.

## Welcome to SSI

Settlement Services International (SSI) is a national not-for-profit organisation providing life-changing human and social services. With community at the heart of everything we do, our purpose is to help create a more inclusive society in which everyone can meaningfully contribute to social, cultural, civic and economic life.

The theme of our Annual Report for FY2022 is 'United for our Purpose'. It's a reflection of how we, as an organisation, have emerged from the global pandemic in a strong financial and strategic position.

Across the course of the year, we have worked with stakeholders including government, corporate partners, member organisations and communities to deliver value to our funders and to assist society's most vulnerable people.

SSI was founded in Sydney in 2000 with the aim of helping newly arrived refugees settle in Australia. Over time, our expertise in working with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds served as the foundation for a gradual expansion into other social services and geographical areas.

In 2018, we merged with Queensland-based Access Community Services, and in 2018 opened in Victoria providing an extensive footprint across the eastern coast of Australia.

SSI's network of 42 offices and co-location sites are based in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, regional NSW and Queensland, and our operations extend internationally.

SSI realises that no one organisation can achieve social change in isolation. We partner with federal and state government departments and agencies, community-minded businesses and individuals, and we build relationships with domestic and global human-service led organisations and NFPs.

We access federal and state funding as well as private philanthropy to provide pathways to employment and education as well as health and support services for our clients. Our own social enterprise operations complement our social service delivery areas and ensures we remain a client-centred organisation.

As well as those on humanitarian visas, SSI works with a wider group of people experiencing vulnerability, including refugees, people seeking asylum and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, people living with disability,

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, women, youth, families and children and LGBTIQ+ communities to build capacity and enable them to overcome inequality.

In FY2022, SSI supported nearly 50,000 clients across more than 49 programs and community-based services.

SSI employs more than 1000 staff. Our workforce reflects the communities with whom we work. More than half of our workforce are born outside Australia.

Fifty five per cent of our workforce's first language is a language other than English, deepening our understanding and ability to support the communities and clients with whom we work.

We are an umbrella organisation for 15 migrant resource centres, multicultural services and specialist human-service agencies that work together on program delivery, advocacy and sector development. SSI also leads the NSW Settlement Partnership, a consortium of 21 entities comprised of member organisations and nine community organisations located around the state to deliver settlement services in agreed areas of NSW under a Federal Government contract.

## Where we are

SSI has offices in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. Our head office is in the Sydney suburb of Ashfield.

We provide:

- 19+ programs in Queensland: Logan, Ipswich, Mt Gravatt, Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, Redlands, Gold Coast and Townsville
- 32+ programs in NSW/ACT: Sydney metro, Western Sydney, SW & SE Sydney, Illawarra, Hunter, Coffs Harbour, Armidale and ACT
- 5+ programs in Victoria: Hume, Moreland, Brimbank, Melton, Greater Dandenong, Casey and regional Victoria

## Explanation of the report

### How we report our social value

The purpose of this Integrated Report is to explain the key achievements that SSI Group made in FY2022 and to outline our plans for the future. The way we report on our achievements and goals is guided by the concept of integrated reporting – a holistic approach that aims to explain how our organisation adds value over time. As well as detailing our achievements to stakeholders and potential funders, this approach is also intended to encourage evaluation within our organisation of how each of our activities adds to the whole.

With the support of the Board and executive, we began our transition to an integrated approach in FY2020, with FY2022 marking the third step on our journey. This year, we have built on the work of previous years by introducing several new features. We have, for example, provided more detail on our approach to materiality – and how we determine which factors are likely to impact on SSI's strategy, governance, performance and future prospects.

We have looked more closely at what our key stakeholders expect from us and how our decision-making affects them. And we have expanded the number of capitals – the stocks of value we hold and use as an organisation – that we identify as relevant to us from three to five, with the inclusion of social and relationship capital, and manufactured capital. These moves are discussed in more detail below. For more information on the six capitals and the overall concept of integrated reporting, visit [www.integratedreporting.org](http://www.integratedreporting.org).

### Connecting internal metrics with integrated reporting

The move towards integrated reporting in recent annual reports has helped motivate SSI Group as an organisation towards accelerating the collection and interpretation of data about our activities.

Our fundamental value lies in our ability to deliver client-centred, culturally appropriate and efficient social services. We divide this social value into six categories, which we call outcome domains.

They are:

1. Economic participation
2. Learning and growth
3. Health and wellbeing
4. Safety and stability
5. Social inclusion
6. Capacity-building, advocacy and thought leadership

In this report, we have made efforts to connect how each of these six outcome domains corresponds to the five capitals of integrated reporting that we have nominated as relevant to our organisation. At the end of each domain section we introduce a Value Created box that links the outcomes of our work to the following capitals: financial; human; intellectual; social and relationship; and manufactured.

### Addressing materiality

Materiality is a key concept within integrated reporting. Material matters are those that relate to an organisation's strategy, governance, performance and future prospects, and the potential they have to impact on stakeholders. Communicating materiality involves explaining how an organisation creates value over time and how it manages its financial position and identifies risks, opportunities and potential outcomes.

The External Environment section of this year's report provides details of our work developing a Strategic Risk Register and identifying the 14 material issues determined to have the greatest impact on our ability to create value for stakeholders, the organisation and the broader communities that we serve. The Strategy section details our efforts to set goals not just for the coming year but for the medium term via a new strategy for the period up until 2026. And in the Stakeholder section of the report you will see a start to our work to better understand what each of our key stakeholder groups expects of SSI as an organisation. This work is ongoing and we expect to provide an even clearer statement of our process of determining materiality in next year's Report.

### More reliable data

Accurate data which can be compared year on year is a key aspect of integrated reporting. A dedicated data team was used to collate and analyse the data used in this report, with a view to eliminating duplication and standardising how each part of SSI reports its achievements. This work involves a degree of cultural change, as the different silos within the organisation learn to work in harmony with the IR approach. Education and support in this area will continue in FY2023. As we continue on our IR journey, we will also seek to improve data transparency and connectivity.

### Commitment to improvement

We want to excel in our communications to our stakeholders. Our FY2021 Annual Report received Bronze recognition from the Australasian Reporting Awards (ARA), which means it covered most of the ARA's requirements for effective reporting.

Our original hope that integrated reporting would encourage internal stakeholders to take a wider view of the organisation has been borne out. Our Board, Executive and staff support the journey towards clearer reporting, and we are determined to make further improvements over coming years. We will be working with an IR consultant in FY2023 to ensure our reporting moves even closer to the IR model.

A final note. We are aware of the requirements of the Global Reporting Initiative. Where possible we have included information required by the GRI disclosure standards, most directly in the People and Culture section, but we have not used the GRI reporting format.

## How we achieve social impact

### Our inputs:

- Financial capital
- Human capital
- Intellectual capital
- Social & Relationship capital
- Manufactured capital
- Natural capital

### Our value creation – SSI programs and activities

- Our purpose
- Our vision
- Our values
- SSI programs and activities
  - For asylum seekers, refugees & migrants
  - For children, young people & families
  - For people living with disability
  - Employment stewardship
  - Community engagement
  - SSI advocacy

### Our outcomes:

- Economic participation
- Learning and growth
- Health and wellbeing
- Safety and stability
- Social inclusion
- Capacity building, advocacy and thought leadership

### We create value:

- For asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, by helping newcomers find their place in Australian society
- For children, young people and families, by helping people from diverse backgrounds achieve their potential

- For people living with disability, by connecting individuals with the support they need to thrive
- Through employment stewardship, by helping people from diverse backgrounds find work and start businesses
- By community engagement, by fostering inclusion in social, economic and community life
- By SSI's advocacy, which speaks up for those who struggle to be heard in order to influence decision-makers

## About us

### Our purpose

To help create a more inclusive society in which everyone can meaningfully contribute to social, cultural, civic and economic life.

### Our vision and mission

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 reach their potential.

### Our values

**Social justice**

**Diversity**

**Compassion**

**Respect**

**Quality**

**Ethics**

**Innovation**

## Finance snapshot

SSI Group finished FY2022 in a strong financial position, as Australia emerged from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and operating conditions largely returned to normal. A record-high revenue figure of \$140.82 million was achieved by the Group in delivering an operating surplus of \$1.57 million for the year. The revenue figure represents a rise on FY2021, when a figure of \$129.57 million was achieved.

A key factor in the strong result was the reopening of Australia's international borders and the resumed flow of humanitarian entrants to the country following significant disruptions in FY2021. SSI is a major provider of the Commonwealth Government's Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) and the scheme is a major source of revenue.

Also contributing were ongoing efforts to broaden our revenue base continued to deliver results. The Local Area Coordination program secured in FY2020 provided an ongoing major source of revenue across the year, and SSI won a multi-million-dollar contract to upskill the nation's workforce in NSW and the ACT under the Commonwealth's Home Care Workforce Support Program.

Internally, a more cohesive and streamlined organisation contributed to the result through improvements in efficiency and performance. A new budgeting system implemented in FY2021 was used for all forecasting throughout FY2022.

The successful roll-out of a universal procurement system during the year meant the entire organisation was for the first time using the same budgeting, finance and procurement resources.

	FY2022 \$'000	FY2021 \$'000	FY2020 \$'000
Operating Revenue	140,819	115,120	121,617
COVID-19 Support	0	14,454	5,907
Total Revenue	149,810	129,574	127,524
Total Expenditure	139,251	121,044	119,445
Net Surplus for the year	1,568	8,539	8,079

	FY2022 \$'000	FY2021 \$'000	FY2020 \$'000
Total Assets	93,472	81,043	65,594
Total Liabilities	49,229	35,971	31,938
Net Assets	44,243	45,072	33,656

This year's strong financial result reflects our successful weathering of the challenges of the pandemic and our ability to now embrace new projects. The current backlog of humanitarian applicants to the country and the election of a new Federal Government in 2022 both point to a likely upturn in SSI's activity levels moving forward. The organisation has demonstrated its ability to scale up as needed, and this opens the way for further growth and increased revenues in the future.

## Highlights

- **49,000+** people accessed SSI Group services (down 7% from FY2021)
- **18,000+** people accessed initiatives including workshops, information sessions and consultations (up 49% from FY2021)
- **49** programs and initiatives were provided by SSI (up 32% on FY2021)

## Economic participation

- **11,000+** clients accessed employment services and **1,813** found work by the time they left the program.
- **13** businesses were established through the Ignite<sup>®</sup> Small Business Start-ups program.

## Learning and growth

- **37** scholarships were awarded to students from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.



- **3,000+** parents and children from refugee backgrounds supported to navigate the education system through Community Hubs.

## Health and wellbeing

- **900+** people accessed our mental health support services.
- **1000+** families participated in health awareness activities.
- **98%** of parents participating in the Health Impact Project in Queensland reported positive changes in their child's physical activity, healthy eating and food handling/preparation.

## Safety and stability

- **800+** asylum seekers in NSW and Queensland were provided with emergency relief support.
- **98%** of HSP (Armidale) clients report being treated fairly when accessing services and supports<sup>1</sup>.
- **97%** of HSP (Armidale) clients report their rights being adequately protected.

## Social inclusion

- **17,000+** participants with a disability were supported by Local Area Coordinator teams in NSW.
- **18,000+** people attended projects and events showcasing culturally diverse arts and artists funded by the Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre.
- **20,000+** people accessed refugee settlement services

## Capacity building, advocacy, thought leadership

- **3025** people in the general community received SSI diversity training
- **Over 90%** of participants considered Culture Ready training as relevant to their work
- **3** new Australian Research Council partnerships
- **89** citations of SSI research in academic journals

## From the Chair

### **Voula Messimeri**

FY2022 marked my second year as a member of the SSI Board but my first as SSI Chair, taking over from outgoing Chair Elisabeth Shaw. Over a long and impactful tenure, Elisabeth made a strong contribution to the board, providing leadership through a time of substantial growth for SSI but also of great change and challenges for the organisation. One of the defining changes for SSI during the financial year was the re-opening of Australia's international borders in February 2022, ending almost two years of uncertainty for offshore humanitarian entrants.

The resumption of refugee resettlement did predate this by a few months, after the Australian Government evacuated several planeloads of refugees to Australia in August and September 2021, following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.



During this time, staff across SSI pivoted from their day-to-day activities to engage in local, national, and international advocacy on behalf of the Afghan community, to drive and coordinate fundraising efforts, and to support the diaspora and our broader communities. This was particularly true of the Humanitarian Support Program (HSP) team, who were on the front line of the NSW response.

What made this pivot all the more impressive was the fact that it was taking place during a lockdown that affected both staff and clients. Because of the one-off nature of the arrival, refugees were also on a different class of visa, which created additional challenges to those we typically encounter with offshore arrivals.

Refugee resettlement is one of SSI's largest programs, so the re-opening of the borders marks the end of a challenging chapter for the organisation and the communities we support. In tandem with the international re-opening, we also resumed open travel across Australian states and territories during FY2022, reconnecting our organisation and staff located across the eastern seaboard.

Our strengthening Victorian operations were a particular highlight in FY2022, with a number of new funded services secured to solidify our position in this market. In Queensland, we have also undertaken work to streamline operations and bring our programs under united leadership to enhance service delivery.

At a board level, we are cognisant of the need to continually review and improve systems across all three states – focusing on developing more efficient ways of working. One example of this is in technology where, in FY2022, we migrated infrastructure to the cloud to establish a common IT platform and deployed new technology-enabled collaboration tools.

Innovation is not just about finessing systems and programs. It also extends to reflecting on how SSI operates within our wider environment and the impact we can have on communities. This year, the board approved SSI to progress with its first Reconciliation Action Plan. SSI has inroads into communities across the country. As such, we have the privilege and responsibility of using our voice to support and elevate Indigenous communities, with the ultimate goal of improving equity, access and achieving reconciliation.

Risk governance was a priority area for the board during FY2022, with progress made to mitigate 14 strategic risks approved by the board. Each of the risks was assigned key risk indicators, which are closely reviewed to ensure they are measurable, evidenced based and can be assessed against risk appetite. Already, this is providing better insights and clarity on how risks are being managed and the effectiveness of mitigation plans.

Another area of governance that experienced change during the year was member relations, where we approved an expansion of SSI's membership. As part of our member engagement plan, we welcomed new members Eastern Community Legal Centre, Yumba-Meta, Participate Australia and The Migrant Resource Centre North (Tasmania). This brings our membership base to 15 organisations and expands its reach into Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.

In addition to the departure of our former Chair during FY2022, SSI also welcomed to the board Tharani Jegatheeswaran, who leads Deloitte's Social Impact Consulting Practice. Just after the conclusion of the financial year, we appointed to the board former Fairfax CEO Greg Hywood.

Entering the new financial year, we are focused on resetting SSI's priorities for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. We have begun consultations with staff, workshops with the Board and Executive, and engaged an external consultant to streamline this process.

With the conclusion of FY2022, there is also a renewed sense of optimism as the world begins to shake off the lingering effects of the pandemic and adjust to the new normal. I would like to thank our CEO Violet Roumeliotis for her tireless and productive endeavours, recognised equally within SSI and by the communities that we seek to serve. I extend thanks and appreciation to the Executive team for their leadership and achieving quality outcomes under challenging circumstances.

While we are certain to be tested again, I am confident that SSI will rise to the challenge and continue its good work, delivering life-changing human and social services that help individuals and families realise their full potential.

## **From the CEO**

### **Violet Roumeliotis**

This past financial year has been one of renewal for SSI. The resolution of pandemic-driven border closures ended a period of prolonged uncertainty for our organisation. In tandem, the re-opening of Australia's internal borders meant we were able to come together as an organisation for the first time in almost two years – something that was a personal highlight for me as CEO.

In the spirit of coming together again, we also took the opportunity this year for an organisational transformation to streamline reporting lines where duplicates had arisen following our merger with Access Community Services in 2018.

With the completion of this realignment, all functions are now grouped together across all sites and states, with staff reporting to a single manager. This has brought teams together and created opportunities for learning, collaboration and growth that transcends state boundaries. Access is also now in a robust fiscal position and debt-free, meeting all contractual and industrial obligations, and moving forward with a renewed, local leadership approach.

During FY2022, some of our biggest achievements including the swift ramp up in resourcing to accommodate an influx of refugees from Afghanistan. This experience reminded me of just how agile our organisation is. We were very quickly able to mobilise settlement and bilingual staff, and form into working groups to deliver a whole of organisation response. In February 2022, we began working with Ukrainian nationals unable to return home due to the war with Russia, once again rising to the challenge of a unique and complex resettlement scenario.

During the year, the Canadian Government also extended its licensing of our Ignite® Small Business Start-ups Program by another two years while, closer to home, we expanded Ignite® into Victoria with the acquisition of a grant to support 200 entrepreneurs. In further positive news, SSI also diversified into home care, winning a \$27 million tender to recruit, train and place a homecare workforce in NSW and the ACT.

Internally, SSI also had a number of wins, including the approval of our first Reconciliation Action Plan as an 'innovate' RAP. Our RAP recognises SSI's commitment to creating opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities under three key pillars: Relationships, Respect and Opportunities.

We also reduced our gender pay gap from 2% to 1.8% - well below the national average of 13.4% - and signed on to the Climate Change Charter for Humanitarian Organisations, committing to influencing the sector and driving change nationally.

The year was not without its challenges – many of which stemmed from the pandemic's impact on our client groups. This was particularly apparent during the western Sydney lockdowns, where our LAC program, for example, responded to the prolonged lockdowns by establishing an innovative process for conducting wellbeing checks with almost 2,000 participants in affected areas.

Service delivery challenges were, however, exacerbated by feelings of inequality, with many newcomers indicating that heavy policing of their communities resurfaced trauma from persecution by government authorities in their native countries. SSI worked closely with clients to ensure their wellbeing, while also elevating these concerns to relevant government and civic leadership.

FY2022 was a time of great change but also one of renewal. Through our organisational transformation, we moved beyond siloes to reach a point of shared leadership, divisions and – importantly – a shared purpose.

We also had renewal in our leadership, with the year marking the final tenure of our departing Chair, Elisabeth Shaw. I would like to express my gratitude to Elisabeth for her leadership during both prosperous and challenging times. We have been fortunate to welcome our new Chair, Voula Messimeri, who brings a wealth of experience from the community and multicultural services sector, and a keen insight that has already been invaluable in her time as Chair.

I'm incredibly grateful to all our staff for their work this year. It has been particularly encouraging to see such great commitment to a common vision that has enabled us to work in a way that is more efficient, collaborative and – importantly – impactful for the clients and communities we support.

## Stakeholders

SSI is a not-for-profit social business. We differ from for-profit businesses in that we don't exist to make money for owners or shareholders. Instead, through our actions, we are working towards our purpose of creating a more inclusive society in which everyone can meaningfully contribute to social, cultural, civic and economic life. This involves creating value for the various stakeholders who interact with our organisation.

We see undertaking a formal materiality determination process as an important part of the journey to integrated reporting that we have been working towards over the past three years. By better understanding exactly who our stakeholders are and what their expectations of us are, we hope to fine-tune our delivery and achieve higher levels of satisfaction.

Below are the groups we see as our stakeholders and our current understanding of what they expect from SSI.

## Clients

We are a social business that supports individuals, children, families and communities of all ages to achieve their full potential. Our clients are at the centre of everything we do and include people who are refugees, people seeking asylum, people living with disability,

people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, First Nations people and people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

**Expectation of SSI:**

Help us find the best pathway to thrive in the Australian community.

## Communities

SSI develops relationships and supports collaborations with a range of people and their communities in an effort to help achieve client outcomes including LGBTIQ+ communities, people with a disability, First Nations and culturally linguistically diverse communities.

**Expectation of SSI:**

Work with us to build a richer, more inclusive Australian society.

## Consortium partners

SSI is the lead partner in the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP), a consortium comprising 21 bodies, including SSI and 11 members, and nine other NSW-based community organisations. This consortium delivers settlement services in agreed areas of NSW under the Department of Home Affairs' Settlement Engagement and Transition Support program

**Expectation of SSI:**

Work with us to deliver programs that create value in the community.

## Corporate partners

We work closely with the business community through a range of corporate partnership programs aimed at developing the entrepreneurial spirit, work readiness and financial nous of our clients. Our social businesses are supported by a wide spectrum of community-minded companies and pro-bono collaborations.

**Expectation of SSI:**

Help us to make a positive change in the communities where we operate.

## Government departments and agencies

Some 90 per cent of SSI's funding comes through federal and state government departments. Many of our activities are delivered in cooperation with local governments. SSI provides governments of all levels with a means of implementing their programs and achieving social change.

**Expectation of SSI:**

Efficiently deliver our programs and services and bring benefits to the community.

## Government policymakers

Federal and state parliaments develop laws and policies which have significant impacts on our operating environment, the scope of our work and the vulnerable individuals with whom we work.

**Expectation of SSI:**

Help us to understand community needs and strengths so we can plan for the future.

## Media

Close working relationships with media are integral to the success of our programs. Strategic partnerships with organisations such as SBS improve our ability to enhance our reputation, strategic priorities and client services.

### **Expectation of SSI:**

Help us to understand the needs of your clients and to campaign for change.

## Member organisations

SSI was formed in 2000 as the state-wide umbrella organisation for 11 Migrant Resource Centres and multicultural services across NSW. By working together, SSI's member organisations can achieve more than by working alone. In FY2022 we expanded our membership to 15 organisations.

### **Expectation of SSI:**

Work with us to deliver programs that create value in the community.

## Other NFPs

SSI regularly partners with other not-for-profit organisations with similar and complementary values and agendas to deliver services to vulnerable communities.

### **Expectation of SSI:**

Work with us to deliver programs that create value in the community.

## Private funders

Donations from philanthropists and foundations provide SSI with the means to develop and implement important self-funded programs, addressing needs and issues not covered by our main government-funded programs.

### **Expectation of SSI:**

Help us to make a positive change in the communities where we live.

## Staff

A competent, diverse workforce is crucial to the delivery of our services. We strive to be an employer of choice, with programs to create a safe and healthy working environment and develop the competence of individual staff members.

### **Expectation of SSI:**

Provide us with a healthy workplace through which we can help the vulnerable.

## Universities and research institutions

We are increasingly focused on the development and use of evidence to produce improved government policy in areas affecting our client communities. We actively collaborate with organisations to access Australian Research Council funding for specific research projects.

### **Expectation of SSI:**

Help us to understand your clients' needs and best practice in the sector.

## Volunteers and interns

Volunteers and student interns allow us to extend the scope of our work, to deliver additional services and to reach additional clients.

## **Expectation of SSI:**

Let us contribute to supporting and caring for individuals, families and communities.

## **External Environment**

### **Our context**

The Australian not-for-profit sector continued to be hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic during FY2022, with changes to funding practices undermining the resilience of many organisations and agencies. An escalation of the pandemic in the first half of the fiscal year also increased the risk to workers within front-line organisations. This created pressure for not-for-profits to find and adopt creative and innovative ways to better serve communities and forced a re-evaluation of many organisations' capabilities and capacities. At SSI, our mantra for the year (and the theme for this Integrated Report) was to 'Unite for our Purpose', as we worked to support our teams navigating the 'new normal'. We entered FY2022 from a base where total revenue (excluding JobKeeper) was down on the previous year by \$8.6 million. Revenue from our then-recent tender win for the NDIA's Local Area Coordination program only partially offset the loss of revenue caused by a major disruption to our delivery of the Commonwealth's Humanitarian Settlement Program. Operating result was \$9.5m worse off, offset by additional Job Keeper income and unrealised gains on investments.

Facing ongoing uncertainty around the duration and severity of international border closures, we made the difficult decision to restructure our delivery of the Humanitarian Settlement Program. As a result, some 50 roles were made redundant in Q1 FY2022. As the organisation ended FY2022, we had been grappling with uncertainty related to the pandemic for 27 months.

### **Risks and material issues**

As part of our understanding of the material issues and risks facing the organisation, we worked with an independent consultant to develop the SSI Group's Strategic Risk Register. The organisation's Board, identified 14 material issues, determined to have the greatest impact on our ability to deliver the FY2020- 23 strategy, create value for our stakeholders, the organisation and the broader communities that we serve.

During FY2022 the organisation's executive team, with the support of our Enterprise Risk Coordinator, worked to embed a risk culture across programs and teams, and strengthen risk governance to provide assurance to the Board and stakeholders that the strategic risks and material issues were being adequately managed. Our Key Risk Indicators provide us with a more robust mechanism. to manage, mitigate and report on strategic issues faced by the organisation.

Each of the 14 material issues are assigned an executive owner responsible for assessing cause and impact, and follows our risk matrix based on our risk appetite and tolerance. Each risk is regularly reviewed with the risk owner and reported to the Board through the Risk and Compliance Committee.

The partnership between the Board and the organisation's management in a structured review and assessment of the most important material issues has resulted in increased

transparency and confidence in the organisation’s ability to navigate the external and internal challenges of FY2022.

These material issues and the risk register will both inform planning and be updated during SSI’s business strategy FY2023-2026 and will be discussed in more detail in future integrated annual reports. For the purposes of this report, we are listing the risk areas as material issues as a first step in our longer-term plan to demonstrate connectivity. We also intend to demonstrate alignment with stakeholders in readiness for our FY2023 report, which will be the fourth on our journey to full integrated reporting.

## Strategic Risk & Materiality

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Issue / Risk Description</b>	<b>Impact timeline</b>	<b>Ability to control</b>
Political / Economic	Major political and/or economic policy changes by government and internationally in relation to the services that SSI delivers or is seeking to deliver, resulting in poor decisions and financial losses.	Long term	Low
Political / Economic	Suspended refugee settlement in Australia significantly impacting our revenue and overall profitability	Short term (closed)	Low
Management / Governance	An effective governance structure that reflects the organisation’s growth and diversification mission.	Medium term	Medium
Management / Governance	Adapting the organisational structure to deliver our business strategy.	Medium term	High
Management / Governance	Implementation of a business diversification strategy that enhances our ability to deliver.	Long term	Medium
Financial / Funding	Maintaining our financial sustainability to fulfil our strategic objectives.	Short and long term	Medium
Compliance / Legal	Due diligence and prioritisation of new opportunities, to maintain our reputation with key stakeholders and secure our financial reserves.	Short term	High
Compliance / Legal	Maintaining legal and regulatory compliance across all services.	Long term	High



Financial / Funding	Potential loss of an existing major contract resulting in significant revenue impacts.	Medium/ long term	Medium
Compliance / Legal	The impact of subcontractor performance on SSI's own contractual performance and reputation.	Medium/ long term	Medium
Human resources	Ability to attract, retain and develop capable staff to deliver our services and improve our performance.	Short, medium, long term	Medium
Human resources	The safety of our staff, clients, and communities.	Short, medium, long term	High
IT	Realising the benefits of the Digital Transformation Roadmap initiative to enable other strategic objectives.	Medium/ long term	High
Information Security	Potential breach of our IT systems - resulting in a loss of control of IT systems, or a privacy breach, and/or a loss of sensitive data.	Short, medium, long term	Low

## Opportunities for FY2023 and beyond

Looking towards the year ahead and beyond, SSI Group Board and senior leadership will continue to deliberate and assess the initiatives and strategies that proved to be most effective during the pandemic. If we have learned anything over the past two and a half years, it is to expect the unexpected.

The need in recent years to continually find new ways to add value while remaining true to our mission has reshaped us. This evolving mindset that has created an organisation that is flexible by design, rather than one that only pivots when the next crisis occurs. The pandemic has created a business environment with new and unpredictable challenges as well as new and unexpected opportunities.

In order to leverage and adjust to the different cadence of organisational life, in FY2021 SSI Group's Board and management took stock of strategic opportunities by asking the following questions.

All continued to be relevant in FY2022:

- Are there new or better ways of delivering services?
- Can technology be used to increase our impact and reach more people?
- How will we engage funding agencies?
- Are we positioned to acquire any other aligned organisations and expand our membership footprint?

- What opportunities are there to capitalise on any changes made to our workforce and how will we design our workforce
- of the future?

Throughout FY2022 our commitment to this approach was exemplified by our ongoing digital transformation and adoption of cloud-based systems that allowed us to use websites, social media, in-language videos and apps to reach and engage individuals, families and communities.

Such technologies enabled us to maintain our high standards of service delivery for the majority of clients despite the challenges of the pandemic. A challenging exception was in the area of our Multicultural Foster Care program, where not all carers or children were comfortable with the digital connections facilitated. Family face-to-face supervision during this time was reduced leading to levels of dissatisfaction for family members.

On the whole, we addressed stakeholder needs in- language and via technologies that demonstrated our ability to flex to meet the expectations of individuals. This was evidenced by the results of our newly introduced Net Promoter Score (NPS) initiative.

In terms of employees, FY2022 saw the provision of a new intranet. This enterprise-wide communication solution enhanced collaboration and supported our flex work model. The further use of cloud-based technologies was enabled, such as our Salesforce-enabled client management solution which led to major reduction in reliance on spreadsheets and emails.

Engagement with funding agencies during FY2022 produced opportunities to explore how SSI could unite for its purpose and ensure that communities were supported and safe. Full transparency about the challenges we were facing and regular two- way communication helped to maintain trusting relationships and kept everyone on the same page. Regular updates and client case studies were a welcome reminder to agencies of the needs and successes at the grassroots level.

FY2022 also saw us expand our membership footprint by four new members. These members, who are based in Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland and NSW, bring new subject-matter expertise to SSI in areas including legal services, homelessness and disability services.

Looking beyond FY2023, our analysis of the external environment has highlighted the importance of the climate-change debate in Australia.

The displacement of individuals, families and communities through weather and climate extremes should be intrinsically linked to any discussion of this topic. We have committed to influencing the sector and seeking opportunities to drive change nationally by signing the Climate Change Charter for Humanitarian Organisations. This marks an important first step as we now look for ways to have greater impact in this sector.

Meanwhile, we have entered into an agreement with the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) and UNSW's Sydney Poverty and Inequality Partnership for five years. This partnership will support the development, through quantitative and qualitative approaches, of the evidence base regarding poverty and inequality, and the impacts they have on the people SSI assists. These include migrants and temporary migrants and refugees.

Finally, our 2023-2026 Strategic Business Planning process is underway and aimed at helping us to harness our learnings and to position us for the future. We will focus on how our work puts clients at the centre of everything we do enabling a step-

change in outcomes and impact reporting. Drawing on feedback from the communities with whom we work, we are seeking to identify unmet needs and to invest in innovative initiatives to close the gaps. Moving ahead, we will strive to influence global and Australian policy on refugees and other vulnerable people, with initiatives underpinned by evidence-based research informing debate and making a positive difference.

## Our strategy

As SSI Group entered FY2022, the organisation faced a year of extreme uncertainty. With the COVID-19 pandemic still in full swing, international borders remained firmly closed to most humanitarian visa holders, raising questions around how much revenue we could expect to receive via the Humanitarian Settlement Program.

In the first quarter of the year we reviewed our strategy with the expectation of further financial constraints. A decision was made to consolidate business structures to maximise efficiencies, to review processes to promote workforce agility, and, above all else, to hold firm to our four strategic priorities.

Our four strategic priorities were developed by the Group in FY2019 as part of a three-year plan to ensure the sustainability of our service delivery and business through to the end of FY2022. They were:

- to remain a client-centred organisation. Clients and client-centred practices will always be at the heart of our organisation;
  - to improve organisational capability. SSI will build capability (people, processes and technology) to meet today's – and future – requirements;
  - to maintain sustainable growth. SSI will be a sustainable organisation by diversifying sources of revenue; and
  - to be a leading contributor to our sector and to society.
- SSI provides thought leadership, advocacy and policy influence.

Our work in these four key areas is discussed in detail below.

With SSI Group now entering FY2023, the executive and Board have begun work on developing a new strategy to cover the period up to FY2026, aimed at furthering impact and growth, while continuing to maintain a client-centred approach. At the end of FY2022, we conducted an open tender process to engage the services of a consultant to support us through the key stage gates of delivering this strategic plan. The Board's engagement in the process was key and culminated in a two-day Leadership and Strategic planning retreat in August to formally commence the design of our future strategy. This strategy will be a highlight in our FY2023 integrated report and will be available on [ssi.org.au](https://ssi.org.au) in the middle of the 2023 calendar year.

## Our strategic priorities during FY2022 were:

### **Remain a client-centred organisation**

In April 2022, SSI was one of six organisations chosen by the Morrison Government to help boost Australia's ability to provide care at home for senior Australians. Through the Home Care Workforce Support Program, we are helping to increase the number and skills of people providing Home Care packages in people's homes. The \$27 million tender win further solidified our ability to provide communities choice and agency in changing their lives for the better.

FY2022 was also our second year providing Local Area Coordination services in partnership with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) for people with disabilities in two areas of Sydney. We received high rates of client satisfaction during the year and continued to meet or exceed expectations of plan quality and KPIs, ensuring the best possible experience for Participants. This enabled SSI to achieve a 'low-risk' rating (high performing status) from the NDIA and placed the organisation in a strong position regarding our overall performance. LAC also received highly positive feedback from the NDIA on the new Community Capacity Building Plan for this financial year.

In FY2021 we introduced a Net Promoter Score (NPS) client-feedback system to enable clients to share their impressions and experience with our services. During FY2022, this enabled us to improve the quality of client experience and address individual concerns. The 171 responses received in September 2021 provided us with a NPS of 30; slightly below that of our August score of 36, but nonetheless, three points above the charity benchmark of 27. In September 2021:

- 78 per cent of respondents told us that it was easy to get support when they needed it;
- 83 per cent felt service staff listened to their needs; and
- 88 per cent felt they were treated with respect by staff.

The NPS survey has opened a channel of communication which both allows clients to provide compliments about staff service delivery. It also provides clients with the opportunity to raise complaints with someone outside the program.

The information relating to individual programs, and how we have addressed the feedback, is reported to the Board.

In FY2021 we reported on the development of a prototype for a smartphone application that will allow newly arrived clients efficient access to SSI Group services in their own languages. In FY2022 the prototype was completed in four languages and testing with a small client-base in the Humanitarian Settlement Program will take place in Q2 of FY2023. As reported last year, we are developing an end-to-end client operating model which will capture the full range of client interactions with our organisation, deepening our understanding of our clients and helping us to improve client experience. Ongoing work was disrupted by COVID-19 and staff resource constraints, work on the concept will resume in early 2023. The concept has been rebranded the Client First Model (CFM).

### Improve organisational capability

The ambitions set in FY2021 to improve our organisational capability through measures including a 'OneSSI' strategy were met with enthusiasm and support throughout FY2022, maintaining a pace that belied the external disruptions brought about by the pandemic.

Following the Board's endorsement of the budget in June 2022, the Executive team worked to modify their structures to implement the OneSSI strategy which centred on unifying operations and minimising duplications following the merger with Access Community Services Limited in December 2018. The implementation of OneSSI on 17 August 2021 saw all functions grouped together across all sites and states, with staff reporting to a single manager. This created an opportunity for learning and growth across state boundaries.

SSI developed a set of nine projects to measure performance against the OneSSI strategy to further enhance our integration. As well as the alignment of divisional plans to a OneSSI approach, the projects focused on: the development of integrated IT systems, such as a common email platform and managed cloud IT infrastructure for the entire SSI Group; implementation of common financial and accounting systems across the Group; a clear and transparent business development process; and the development of a standardised employee core competency framework. Other projects included: the development of a framework for stakeholder engagement mapping; operational governance via integrated processes, policies and systems; and further development of SSI brand strategy culminating in the launch of our first enterprise-wide staff intranet.

We had expected in FY2022 that we would have successfully implemented our Human Capital Management (HCM) system, moving six disconnected people and culture systems to a single platform. However, due to external disruptions the Executive extended the timeline to early 2023.

In further restructure decisions, our Client Operation and Insights function moved under our Corporate Services division on 17 January 2022. This function has three distinct functions: quality, risk and compliance; data analytics; and client insights. This change not only brings synergy to the corporate service function but also has resulted in cost savings. The integration of our Social Impact Framework continues to be a focus across all areas of the business.

## Maintain sustainable growth

A healthy financial position provides SSI with the means to achieve its vision and to meet its strategic and organisational goals. The final FY2022 year result for the SSI Group of \$1.57 million was better than anticipated when the FY2022 budget was prepared during the last quarter of FY2021. At this stage, a deficit of \$16 million was forecast due to the expectation that borders would remain closed.

The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) was one of the main contributor to our improved financial result, due to factors including delays in exiting clients due to the pandemic, the provision of additional services due to lockdown, and unbudgeted new client arrivals following the intake of humanitarian visa holders from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Our FY2021 focus to diversify into the aged care sector was realised in FY2022 with the successful \$26 million tender for the Home Care Workforce Support Program. Various governments recognised and supported SSI's additional supports to communities facing increasing social and human complexities brought about by the pandemic and lockdown. The Federal Government extended our HSP contract by 18 months to June 2024, while the NSW Government extended the domestic and family violence Building Stronger Families program by 12 months. The Queensland Government boosted funding of the 99 Steps program by \$164,500 to support cultural and linguistically diverse women and children affected by domestic and family violence.

## Be a leading contributor

to our sector and to society

Throughout FY2022, our advocacy, communications, government relations and settlement and humanitarian program teams increased engagement with sector leaders and

government representatives at federal and state level. The majority of activities centred around addressing the impacts of COVID-19 and its Omicron variant on our communities, and the evacuation and settlement of people from Afghanistan. Work was also undertaken in line with our longer-term government relations strategy around our key positions in preparation for the Federal Election in 2022.

We worked with the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) and UNHCR in communicating the impacts of Australia's border restrictions on both the settlement sector and on some 8,000 people from refugee backgrounds who had been granted humanitarian visas in Australia but were stranded overseas.

In Queensland, our advocacy focused on youth education, skills, training and employment issues. Activities included the attendance of the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs to a Youth and Government roundtable hosted by Access and Multicultural Youth Queensland. In NSW, we submitted 10 policy submissions. These included submissions on proposed reforms to the migration advice industry and Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) to the Department of Home Affairs and the National Anti-Racism Framework to the Australian Human Rights Commission. We also submitted evidence to the Senate Inquiry into Australian's involvement in Afghanistan in January 2022, and transcripts are available at [aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Hansard](https://aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Hansard).

And internationally, SSI signed to the Climate Change Charter for Humanitarian Organisations, committing to influencing the sector and driving change nationally. This was an important first step as we now look for ways to have greater impact in an area of growing concern.

### Agile support for Afghan refugees

The COVID pandemic saw Australia's international borders formally closed to humanitarian refugees from the start of FY2022 up until February 2022. But there were exceptions in cases of extreme need, such as following the fall of Kabul in August 2021. On the morning of 27 August 2021, SSI was told that a group of evacuees would be arriving from Afghanistan in the afternoon. At the height of Sydney's strictest COVID-19 restrictions, we went above and beyond to ensure that seven fully vaccinated staff, four of whom spoke three Afghan languages, were at the designated quarantine hotel that evening to help with the transition.

The team worked tirelessly with the Australian Defence Force, NSW Police, NSW Health Emergency Operations and Health Care Australia to orchestrate a safe and culturally appropriate quarantine experience. This included sourcing essential clothing and personal items for those who arrived with nothing more than the clothes they were wearing. We stand proud that we were able to welcome evacuees in language, that we could conduct daily wellbeing checks in language and provide over 20,000 pieces of clothing and other essential items in those first few weeks.

Once the COVID-19 quarantine period was over for NSW, where many of these newcomers will settle, our Humanitarian Settlement Program team moved into delivering our regular settlement services. Our community engagement, fundraising and corporate partnerships teams were instrumental in distributing the goodwill donated by the community and corporates and working with the HSP leaders to keep NSW Police and local Councils updated.



# Economic participation

Being able to participate in the workforce provides individuals with more than a source of income. It opens the way for economic independence, helps build identity and self-esteem, and deepens ties within the community.

SSI has clear goals for economic participation. We aim to help people get equal access to job opportunities, to gain paid work and to understand how to navigate and access employment support. Our goal for those with entrepreneurial ambitions is to help them understand the Australian business environment, and to access the skills, knowledge and support they need to establish a successful business.

Over the longer term, we want our clients to feel confident about the steps they are taking towards employment or running a business. We want them to gain sustainable employment and achieve financial security and resilience. One of the ways we help people achieve these outcomes is by facilitating partnerships and connections with employers and industry bodies to create employment opportunities. Ultimately, our goal is to help our clients achieve financial security, lead active and productive lives and to have opportunities to participate in and contribute to their communities.

## Highlights

In FY2022, our measured outcomes relating to Economic Participation included:

- Some 11,211 clients accessed employment services, with 16 per cent (1,813 people) gaining employment by the time they left the program.
- Some 13 businesses were established through the Ignite® Small Business Start-ups program.
- Some 1009 placements through our RESP, DES, JA and OPP programs were for three months or longer.
- Some 2,197 engagements with jobseekers were delivered by Jobs Advocates Victoria.

Following are examples of programs that contribute to the Economic Participation outcomes for our clients. Each of the programs below may also contribute to one or more of our other outcomes.

## Allianz SEP/Ladder

Owned by / Location / Funded by  
SSI / NSW / SSI Allianz

SSI collaborates with financial services company Allianz on two linked initiatives to create employment opportunities for people from refugee backgrounds in NSW. The Allianz Sustainable Employment Program (SEP) matches 'employment ready' refugees with available vacancies in Allianz. The Allianz Ladder, meanwhile, supports young refugees in transition from study to employment. Select candidates are supported with pre-employment training via a series of workshops to develop foundational business skills and leadership capabilities.

In FY2022, the programs were reviewed to examine the results they had achieved. The findings suggested they were realising the aims of developing the capacities of refugees.



A total of 23 (out of 36) refugees were offered employment as a direct result of participating in the SEP and Ladder initiatives.

Over half of these (58 per cent or 21 people) have taken up a permanent position with Allianz. The average tenure rate of graduates working at Allianz is 2.6 years, with 27 per cent promoted to a more senior role after two years.

## Disability Employment Services

Owned by / Location / Funded by  
SSI, Access / NSW, QLD / DSS

People living with disability have an enormous capacity to contribute to the community through work. The Federal Government's Disability Employment Services program aims to remove the barriers that stop them participating in the workforce, helping them to prepare for, find, and keep a job.

SSI and its subsidiary Access Community Services deliver DES services on behalf of the government in NSW and Queensland. We work with individuals who require both occasional and regular, ongoing support in the workplace to maintain employment.

Over 80 per cent of SSI's DES participants are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, with over 80 per cent of participants also having been assessed as having complex and multiple barriers to employment.

In FY2022, we had 524 unique clients in NSW and 677 in Queensland. Some 14 per cent of clients (71 people) in NSW secured employment, while in Queensland the figure was 12 per cent (84 people). Strong job retention was reflected in high numbers of long-term placements in both states, with 33 individuals employed at 52 weeks in NSW and 52 in Queensland.

## Ignite® Social Enterprise

Owned by / Location / Funded by

SSI NSW, VIC, Canada / SSI / DSS, DJPR, EGSC, Corporate and Philanthropic

Refugees to Australia face multiple barriers in securing mainstream paid employment. Yet many show an extraordinary aptitude for running profitable small businesses. Co-funded by SSI, the Ignite® Social Enterprise program helps people to make the leap into entrepreneurship. Fledgling small business operators receive one-on-one facilitation, business mentoring, and access to interpreters and networks.

Among the 88 entrepreneurs who completed the program in FY2022, some 31 per cent (27 individuals) graduated and 13 businesses were established. Graduates established their businesses in a range of industries including: creative and performing arts; agriculture; information media; food services; social enterprises; retail; floristry, construction; and auto repair and maintenance. Ignite® Small Business Start-ups' sister program IgniteAbility® facilitates business creation for people living with disabilities. During FY2022, the team worked with 24 clients, 17 of whom graduated. The Ignite® programs reach deeply into refugee, disability, First Nations and regional communities through workshops, training and business preparation. In FY2022, Ignite facilitated 177 entrepreneurs in Ignite® Educate workshops, providing fundamental education for starting a business.

## Jobactive

Owned by / Location / Funded by  
SSI / NSW / DESE

SSI is a member of CoAct, a national network of locally embedded community service providers working together to create social and economic opportunities for Australia's disadvantaged. In this capacity, we deliver the Federal Government's Jobactive service to job seekers living within the Sydney East Metro region. We work closely with employers to promote workforce participation, ensuring that they are connected with job seekers who meet their business needs. We do this through activities including candidate screening, paying wage subsidies, and providing work-preparation training as well as equipment. In FY2022, we supported 951 unique clients with employment and skills assistance (compared to 1060 in FY2021). Some 181 clients (19 per cent) secured employment. There were 151 placements at 13 weeks and 121 placements at 26 weeks.

## Jobs Victoria Advocates

Owned by / Location / Funded by  
SSI / VIC / VSG

Job Advocates help Victorians navigate employment and training services, and to find the information, advice and additional support they need via proactive outreach in communities. In FY2022, 2,197 engagements with jobseekers from CALD communities were delivered.

## Jobs Victoria Employment Services

Owned by / Location / Funded by  
SSI / VIC / VSG

Many people without jobs want to work, but struggle to overcome the barriers to employment. Funded by the Victorian Government, Jobs Victoria works to connect the unemployed with employers.

SSI caseworkers deliver Jobs Victoria services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Melbourne's Western and Southern regions.

Clients include people of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker background who are either long-term unemployed or at risk of long-term unemployment.

FY2022 was SSI's first full year delivering Jobs Victoria Employment Services. Across the course of the year, we supported 272 eligible job seekers with intensive case management.

## Local Jobs Program

Owned by / Location / Funded by  
SSI, Access / NSW, QLD / DESE

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's lives can be long lasting. The Federal Government's Local Jobs Program aims to reskill, upskill and develop employment pathways that assist people to move back into jobs as the economy recovers.

SSI provides employment facilitators services under the program across NSW's Sydney South-West region, and Queensland's Gold Coast and Wivenhoe regions. The program brings together people, services and resources needed in each employment region to respond to the labour needs of local employers.

In Wivenhoe, five joint initiatives between local job agencies and industry were undertaken to support job seekers to enter or retain their employment across industries including hospitality, food production, healthcare and social services and traffic management. Four similar initiatives were undertaken on the Gold Coast. In Sydney South West, one initiative was undertaken to support 40 job seekers into entry level roles within the disability care sector.

## Opportunity Pathways Program

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI / NSW / DCJ

Opportunity Pathways was a New South Wales Government employment-focused pilot program that helped people receiving social-housing assistance to access education, training and employment. It was aimed at those who wanted to improve their employment options and who were living in social housing or receiving a Rent Choice subsidy. The program concluded in February 2022. During the final year, 140 clients were supported, of whom 70 per cent were female. Some 23% of clients (32) secured employment in this period. Of these clients, 15 reached an employment placement of 3 months and 2 clients reached an employment placement of 6 months. A total of 34 per cent of completed female participants are from CALD backgrounds and 8 per cent from an Aboriginal background. Exited participants reported an uplift of 30 per cent in their financial wellbeing as they experienced a reduction in their reliance on government assistance. They also reported an increase in their overall confidence to find employment with a nine per cent uplift reported.

## ParentsNext

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI, Access / NSW, QLD / DESE

Caring for young children can be a full-time job. But by the time their children reach school age, many parents consider joining the workforce. The Federal Government's ParentsNext scheme aims to help them make the transition. SSI provides ParentsNext services at locations in NSW and Queensland, helping parents to create goals around employment, gain new skills and secure work.

In FY2022 in NSW, 1895 clients were supported with education and employment goals. This compared with 2330 in FY2021. Some 14 per cent of clients (256) gained employment. In Queensland, 1,455 clients were supported with education and employment goals, as compared with 1,505 in FY2021. Some 18 per cent of clients (263) gained employment.

For both states, research revealed a slight uplift across several outcome measures in health and wellbeing, confidence, work-readiness and knowledge.

## Refugee Employment Services Program

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI / NSW / DoE

The Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) is a five-year initiative by the NSW Government that is delivered by SSI and addresses the challenges experienced by refugees and people seeking asylum in finding suitable 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 to connect eligible refugees and people seeking asylum with training, support and jobs. The NSW Government extended the RESP until June 2022 with an additional \$5.5 million in funding provided and recently announced a further extension to December 2023.

In FY2022, 1000 unique and active clients were supported. Clients predominantly were born in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. Some 33 per cent of clients (330) secured employment with 286 unique employers in a diverse range of high-demand sectors from manufacturing, community services, aged care and hospitality.

## **Case study**

### **Turning Saif's dream into reality**

Some newcomers to Australia arrive with more significant barriers to employment and require a longer employment pathway journey including more supports. That's where the NSW Government's Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) and SSI's skilled employment facilitators step in to help. Saif Noori, a refugee from Iraq, came to SSI with the dream to re-establish his career in medicine.

Although having a bachelor's degree in medicine and surgery and four years working in Al-Iman Ali Hospital in Baghdad, Mr Noori, who came to Australia alone, needed to get his qualifications recognised and pass an English test.

With two years of hard study, and the support of his RESP employment facilitator, Mr Noori completed the Australian Medical Council exams, occupational English test exam, and his AHPRA registration. He is now an Emergency Resident Medical Officer at Royal Hobart Hospital.

RESP also provided financial support and educational courses that helped him pass the exams, and even get his driver's licence.

The strength of RESP also lies in its focus on delivering community-based solutions through a partnership of local employers, the community sector, state government agencies, and other non-government organisations to connect those with eligible training, support and jobs.

## **Work+Stay**

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI / NSW / SSI

For many years, regional cities and towns across Australia have experienced an exodus of population including key workforce to metropolitan hubs resulting in 90,000+ job vacancies. SSI's newest Social Enterprise, Work+Stay, creates employment pathways and real connections for anyone to thrive in regional Australia with a particular focus on advocating for skilled migrants. Our specialist recruiters provide interview coaching and resume adjustments to support this advocacy. And our settlement team provide an ecosystem of community touchpoints and connections to foster retention and growth in regions.

In FY2022, Work+Stay worked with 41 employers, achieved 16 job placements in 10 regional towns and cities across NSW and Victoria with a candidate pool of over 1300 candidates ready to build workforce capacity in regions.

## Yarrabilba Exchange

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

Access / QLD / Access

Run by Access Community Services, the Yarrabilba Exchange provides a link between residents of Yarrabilba near Logan, Queensland, and local jobs. The Exchange provides services for both employers seeking local staff and job seekers looking for work. Services include pre-screening and referring appropriate candidates to employers; and providing job seekers with information, advice and guidance to help them attain a job that suits their needs.

During FY2022, some 304 clients were assisted with employment support, 60 per cent of them female and 40 per cent male clients. Some 39 clients (13 per cent) secured employment.

### Our value outputs:

- We increased human, intellectual, and social and relationship capital by:
- Helping 1,813 clients find employment;
- Connecting humanitarian entrants with work skills and employers;
- Continuing to share our in-house- developed entrepreneurial programs with diverse groups;
- Expanding our operations in Victoria through Jobs Victoria Employment Services; and
- Assisting parents in returning to the workforce.

### Case study

#### A new country and a new career

Less than 18 months ago, Marwa Moeen was at University in Kabul, Afghanistan, dreaming of a career in business. Then, the Taliban took over the city forcing her, her fellow students, and her family to flee for their lives.

With good English skills and Australian connections gained through the family export business, Marwa was able to contact community activists, secure humanitarian visas and escape under the cover of night in a risky and daring journey through Pakistan and Dubai. A series of interviews with veteran political reporter Fran Kelly about the experience has now inspired the next phase of her life – to become a journalist.

Marwa, 21, is one of many refugees and asylum seekers who are assisted by SSI.

A key first step when someone arrives in Australia is to get them a job so they can support themselves and begin to settle into a new life.

Through the NSW Government's Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP), delivered by SSI, Marwa was able to attend a series of job- ready workshops. This helped her to understand how to go about finding a job in Australia, how to write a job application and to take part in interviews, as well as providing her with knowledge about workplace culture and norms.

With the support of RESP employment facilitator Ritta, Marwa was referred to a range of different job opportunities and was able to secure a position with the ANZ Bank.

At the same time, aware of her journalism ambitions, SSI introduced Marwa to not-for-profit organisation Media Diversity Australia and its CEO Mariam Veiszadeh, who helped

her to secure a scholarship to the University of Technology's Bachelor of Journalism. She starts the course in 2023 and will continue her job with the ANZ Bank on a part-time basis. Marwa is justifiably proud of what she has achieved. What she experienced in Afghanistan was traumatic, and Marwa says she is extremely grateful to the Australian Government and all of the people who helped her get to Australia and establish a new life in Western Sydney. She is especially thankful for the advocacy of human rights activist Craig Foster, former refugee and health and wellbeing advisor Tamkin Hakim, and the Addison Road Community Centre.

"It was a very horrible situation," she says. "When the Taliban came, we didn't even have time to lock the door – I grabbed my mobile, my charger and water, and escaped. I was initially studying a Bachelor of Business Administration at Salam University and looking to have a career in the business world. But since this bad thing happened, I asked myself – what can I do to help people? I can raise my voice to tell people 'You are not alone', and I can help other people to raise their voices to the world.

For more information about RESP visit the SSI website at [ssi.org.au/services/employment](https://ssi.org.au/services/employment).

## Learning and growth

Ongoing education and self-development can assist individuals to participate and contribute to the society in which they live. As well as providing the skills needed to join the workforce, learning provides an opportunity to grow as a person and to gain confidence, self-esteem and agency.

The ongoing education of staff and knowledge transfer across SSI enables our teams to leverage skills to better serve the needs of clients – and to problem solve more optimally. Our expected outcomes in this area are to help our people to support clients to understand and navigate educational and training pathways. We aim to improve our clients' language, literacy and other skills that are important for job readiness, and to help them gain recognition for their existing skills and qualifications to enable economic participation through employment.

In the longer term, we aim to help our clients attain the highest possible standard of knowledge and skills to make informed choices based on their needs and aspirations, and to help them develop active citizenship and an understanding of their rights and responsibilities. SSI works with communities to facilitate inclusion, such as participation in community events, and enable access to economic and social opportunities for people with disability.

### Highlights

In FY2022, our measured outcomes relating to Learning and Participation included:

- Some 37 scholarships were awarded.
- One hundred percent of recipients strongly agreed that scholarship funding had a positive impact on their studies or career in Australia.
- Some 3,193 parents and children from refugee backgrounds were supported to navigate the education system through Community Hubs.
- Some 92 per cent percent of NSP/SETS clients reported overall positive changes to their circumstances as a result of participating in the NSP/SETS program.



Following are examples of programs that contribute to Learning and Growth outcomes for our clients. Each program may also contribute to one or more of our other delivery outcomes.

### Access Education and Skills Development (RTO)

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

Access / QLD / DESBT

SSI business Access Education and Skills Development strives to assist those most disadvantaged to reach their potential through employment and training. Our Registered Training Organisation (RTO) works with clients who need encouragement and an opportunity to get qualified and work experience that will enable them to get a job. These include the long-term unemployed, parents returning to work, benefits recipients needing to meet job search obligations, migrants and school leavers. The team also works with clients who are already working who may be new to the job and require mentoring, support and training. Other clients may have been working for quite some time but are lacking formal qualifications that will enable them to progress in their occupation or be considered for promotion.

In FY2022, 137 students undertook training through the program.

### Community Hubs Program

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI, Access / NSW, QLD / DHA, DoE

Community Hubs is a national program that 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 Group is the designated Support Agency for Community Hubs in Sydney (where hubs are located in Blacktown, Fairfield, Parramatta, and Bankstown/Canterbury) and in Queensland (where hubs are located in Ipswich and Logan).

During F20Y22, there was strong engagement in the program, with SSI Group supporting 3,193 families (2,078 for NSW and 1,115 for Queensland). This represents an increase of 47 per cent in the client base from the previous financial year. There was a strong focus on building community awareness and engagement as a way of increasing participation numbers in some Hubs, largely due to the impact of COVID vaccination requirements, school closures and floods.

### NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) and Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS)

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI, Access / NSW, QLD / DHA

The Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program delivers settlement services across NSW and Queensland in agreed areas funded by the Federal Government's Department of Home Affairs. In NSW, SETS is delivered through the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) – a consortium of 21 community organisations, led by SSI. In Queensland, it is delivered by Access Community Services, and contracted to Multicultural Communities Council.



The SETS program builds on the foundation services of settlement support provided by the Humanitarian Settlement Program by delivering services that foster self-reliance, equitable participation in Australian society and, as a consequence, promotes social cohesion and productive diversity within the Australian community.

In FY2022, the SETS program maintained high levels of client engagement achieved in FY21 with 11,975 NSW and 1,865 Queensland clients supported across 33,020 casework and group sessions. NSP also delivered services through online, telephone and video sessions with a total of 25,274 attendees, indicating NSP's strong commitment to supporting SETS clients regardless of challenging situations, including the COVID-19 lockdowns by diversifying service delivery to meet client needs.

Some 92 per cent of SETS clients reported overall positive changes to their circumstances as a result of participating in the NSP/SETS program and 93 per cent also reported high levels of satisfaction due to the positive outcomes they received.

SSI Group also implement the Domestic Family Violence project this year, which saw an increase of resources in this important area across the partnership, leading to greater provision of support and services for clients. This resulted in a total of 2,684 sessions of Domestic and Family Violence service activities delivered, supporting 1,315 SETS individual and group clients across NSW. NSP partners provided support through 1326 casework sessions, created 1022 case plans and made 1509 referrals to family relationship services, counselling and mental health support, emergency housing, legal services and other mainstream services.

In FY2022, Queensland's SETS program continued to experience strong demand in referrals and requests for support. In total, 7536 low and medium intensity casework sessions were delivered to 1469 clients across Logan, Ipswich and the Gold Coast who needed assistance to meet their settlement needs and goals.

The Queensland SETS program includes the Youth Transitions Support Pilot helping young refugees participate in the community through work, education and sport. In FY2022, some 81 employment outcomes were achieved, along with 38 vocational outcomes, 72 educational outcomes and 130 sports outcomes.

## **Case study**

### **The power of community**

Parramatta West Public School Community Hub was established as a new hub in SSI's Community Hubs network in the middle of COVID-19. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, hub programs and activities flourished.

Parramatta West's programs and activities included yoga, Pilates, English classes, coffee and chat, financial assistance, food hampers and family assistance ... all online.

After eight months connecting online, the women finally were able to meet face-to-face in early 2022 for an International Women's Day event that celebrated friendship, happiness, hope and building connections.

Over 80 hub participants and school staff heard from guest speakers including Dianne Kersten from Parramatta College, speaking about courses the college offers, and Nicole Senior from the P&C, speaking about the meaning behind International Women's Day and how everyone could advocate for change.

The successful establishment of this hub highlights the power of community and passion in overcoming the challenges presented by the pandemic. Hub Leader Kristina Medak's

exceptional engagement and communication skills have helped create a hub space that fosters trust, friendship and belonging.

## Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW)

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

Access / QLD / DESBT

Not everyone in society has equal access to employment opportunities. The Queensland Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) scheme aims to help disadvantaged individuals to gain the skills, qualifications and experience they need to enter and stay in the workforce. SSI's subsidiary Access Community Services delivers SQW certificate courses in the areas of hospitality, tourism, business administration, conservation and land management, and construction. The Women in Transport course, for example, helps women gain a foothold in the rapidly growing transport and logistics industry.

In FY2022, 81 unique clients were supported with upskilling and finding employment. Some 43 clients completed Certificate 1 qualifications on exit. A total of 33 per cent of clients upskilled by completing a course.

## Scholarships

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / SSI, Allianz

People from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds can face considerable barriers to participating in Australia's education system.

Supported by financial services company Allianz, the SSI Allianz scholarship program aims to make things a little easier. Since 2016, the program has provided one-off scholarships of up to \$5,000 to students to encourage further study.

Thanks to additional scholarship funding from Allianz, the program expanded from NSW to both Queensland and Victoria. This combined with a streamlined application process online allowed a greater number of scholarships to be awarded for the 2022 academic year. Some 37 scholarships awarded across four streams: vocational education and training; university; secondary school; and skills and qualification recognition.

The number of scholarships awarded slightly increased from the previous year (increase of 12 per cent compared to last year in FY2021). Most of the scholarship recipients were women from Iraq. Other countries represented included Syria, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, Tanzania, and Karen communities.

Research has revealed that 80 per cent of recipients strongly agree the scholarship provided them with the confidence to continue with their studies or career. Meanwhile, 100 per cent of recipients strongly agree the scholarship had a positive impact on their studies or career in Australia.

## Home Care Workforce Support Program

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW, ACT / DOHAC

Funded by the Commonwealth Government, the Home Care Workforce Support Program aims to help boost Australia's ability to provide care at home and support more senior Australians to access Home Care Packages.

Launched in FY2022, SSI was selected to deliver the program in NSW and the ACT. Activities focused on recruiting and onboarding new program staff, establishing an online presence, scoping the data capture for the engagement platform, collateral development, and conducting initial engagement with target audience and stakeholders, including RTOs, personal care worker prospects, employment service providers, aged care providers and industry and community organisations. The program's outcomes will contribute to the reporting in FY2023.

### Our value outputs:

- We increased human, intellectual, and social and relationship capital by:
- Delivering programs that helped newcomers develop the skills needed to thrive in Australia;
- Facilitating scholarships that helped refugees and asylum seekers overcome barriers to education;
- Helping the Commonwealth to increase support for elderly Australians via the Home Care Workforce Support Program; and
- Upskilling vulnerable Australians to participate in the workforce and gain confidence.

## Health and wellbeing

Health and wellbeing play a crucial role in an individual's or family's ability to participate in society, to work and to achieve satisfaction and happiness. As well as physical health and having access to medical care, the concept takes in emotional and psychological wellbeing, too. Many of SSI's clients come to Australia from areas of conflict and may need support with both their physical and mental health. Others are living with a disability, and some face severe social stigma in relation to their sexuality and/ or gender identity. Our long-term goal in this area under our Social Impact Framework is to empower people through improved health, wellbeing and life satisfaction. Our goals in the interim are to support people to understand, navigate and access health and wellbeing services and to maintain improved physical and mental health.

### Highlights

In FY2022, our measured outcomes relating to Health and Wellbeing included:

- More than **900** people accessed our mental health support services.
- More than **1000** families participated in workshops and information sessions on health awareness and promotion activities.
- Some **98 per cent** of parents participating in the Health Impact Project reported positive changes in their child's behaviour.

Following are examples of programs that contribute to Health and Wellbeing outcomes for our clients.

Each of the programs below may also contribute to one or more of our other delivery outcomes.

## 99 Steps

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

Access / QLD / SSI, DCCD

Cultural and linguistic differences can present a barrier to individuals escaping family and domestic violence. Run by Access Community Services, the 99 Steps program aims to remove these hurdles, enabling women and children to leave environments that are physically unsafe and emotionally harmful. The program has an emphasis on improving access to support services and helping individuals transition out of crisis support to lead more stable lives.

Women and children are supported via culturally- tailored DFV counselling that helps them on their journey to recovery.

In FY2022, 154 women were supported with care coordination, crisis counselling, advocacy, safety planning, and referrals for legal and immigration advice. Support also included court support, referrals for safe emergency accommodation, and practical and emotional support.

## Child Health Pathways Pilot Program

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

Access / QLD / PHN

Commenced in FY2022, the Child Health Pathways Pilot Project is a collaborative partnership between SSI business Access Community Services, the Brisbane South Primary Health Network and Salvation Army. It supports families of children with developmental delays in accessing health services and aims, in particular, to remove some of the barriers to care faced by children from CALD backgrounds.

Referrals to the pilot are made through the Logan Community Hubs and the Health Impact Project.

During FY2022, 12 referrals were made to the Child Health Pathways program. This resulted in 10 children obtaining NDIS plans and therapy thanks to advocacy and practical support from an occupational therapist, speech therapist and a program coordinator. Two children were connected with other support services.

## Practice Management Unit (PMU)

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / SSI

SSI's Clinical Practice Unit provides mental health assessment and treatment and wellbeing support to people of all ages. Many clients have experienced trauma and stress due to forced migration and/or visa insecurity. The Clinical Practice Unit staff take a culturally responsive, multisystemic approach to supporting clients. The team also provides support to carers and young people in the Multicultural Child and Family Program.

Clients may present with a range of issues including depression, anxiety, domestic and family violence and, for younger people, behavioural challenges and school struggles. The unit also supports case workers across programs, helping them find appropriate services to address clients' specialised needs.

During FY2022, 1599 counselling sessions were delivered to 280 clients across SSI's various programs.

## Harmony Place

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
Access / QLD / PHN, DSS

People living with disabilities and those with mental health challenges face major barriers in accessing the help they need. The challenges can be even greater where cultural and language differences come into play. Run by Access Community Services, Harmony Place provides culturally sensitive services to connect people living with disability with the support they are entitled to under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It also provides psychosocial support and clinical care coordination for those managing mental health issues.

In FY2022, Harmony Place continued to deliver mental health supports to individuals aged 18 to 65 from CALD communities who were living with severe and complex mental health challenges. This

work was delivered through a team of psychologists and counsellors within the psychology clinic and mental health support facilitators within South-East Brisbane. Over the year, Harmony Place provided counselling, therapy and mental health support to 253 clients and conducted 1,972 service contacts.

Harmony Place also continued to experience growth in demand for NDIS supports, delivering psychological therapy, counselling and care coordination to 358 children and adults living with disability.

## Health Impact Project

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
Access / QLD / DHA, DoE

The first few years of an individual's life are critical to their long-term health and wellbeing. Based in Logan near Brisbane, Access Community Service's Health Impact Project is a grassroots program aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of children under five and their parents. Run through Community Hubs (see also Learning & Growth), the project provides health-related services implemented in the safe environment that the Hubs create. Services offered include pediatric first aid, clinical psychology, parenting information, and speech pathology and occupational therapy assessments.

In FY2022, 381 caregivers and children received support. This came in the form of services including 243 speech and occupational therapy assessments, and 71 sessions of therapy, 22 of which were with children. Some 1,199 families attended health promotion workshops and information sessions.

In studies into program participants, 98 per cent of parents interviewed reported positive changes in their child's behavior related to physical health, while 77 per cent of caregivers reported improvements in their knowledge of child development concerns.

Programs such as Community Hubs and the Health Impact Project support children and families to live their best lives.

## Multicultural Gambling Harm Prevention Service

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI / VIC / VRGF

Problem gambling affects all levels of Australian society. In refugee and migrant communities, the issue can be compounded by unique stressors such as language barriers, isolation from family or community, and stigma.

In February 2021, SSI Group launched a new multicultural support service for people experiencing gambling harm in Victoria. Services include 1:1 in-language counselling; referral support; online, mobile and in-person group and family therapy; and a range of other supports. The services are funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation as part of its ongoing commitment to provide treatment and support to people affected by gambling harm. MGHPS is available to all, but designed especially for migrants and their communities, family, and friends.

In FY2022, 32 community information sessions were provided around the state and 24 community awareness grants provided to community organisations to convey the message about gambling harm.

## NDIA Core Support

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

Access / QLD / NDIA

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides funding to support people with permanent and significant disability to lead normal lives. SSI business Access Community Services delivered NDIS Core Supports services in South-East Brisbane from 2019 to December 2021, helping individuals with their everyday activities, their disability-related needs, and to work towards their goals. Specific services included transport and assistance with household chores.

Over its course, the program provided services to 70 unique clients and employed a total of 47 casual staff. It delivered 35,320 hours of services in total and staff drove clients a total of 124,646 kilometres. Some 35,000 of the hours were dedicated to 'Assistance with Daily Personal Activities' and 'Access Community, Social and Recreational Activities' which were delivered by support workers. The other 320 hours were Domestic household services which included cleaning and yard work.

Problem gambling affects all levels of Australian society. SSI's Multicultural Gambling Harm Prevention Service currently provides support in Victoria.

## Our value outputs:

We increased human, intellectual, and social and relationship capital by:

- Sharing knowledge of early childhood help to create better outcomes for vulnerable communities;
- Connecting people with disabilities and mental health challenges to appropriate care and support;
- Addressing problem gambling in CALD communities through harm prevention measures;
- Delivering Core Supports services to help people living with disability to lead normal lives; and
- Helping individuals in CALD communities to address and escape domestic and family.

## Case study



### Early intervention pays off

Kassa\* was just an infant when he arrived in Australia with his family on a humanitarian visa in 2018.

At the age of four in 2021, he had been pulled out of childcare due to behavioural issues including risk taking, trouble listening and learning, and apparent behavioural delays. After meeting with members of the Health Impact Project (HIP) team in Logan, he and his family were provided with support including occupational therapy and speech therapy assessments, reports and strategies. The HIP team facilitated referral to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and made referrals to other organisations able to provide direct support.

With ongoing support from the Child Health Pathways Coordinator, Kassa child received approval for the NDIS and is successfully engaging with allied health services on a fortnightly basis. His family report being extremely satisfied with this outcome.

\* Name changed.

## Safety and stability

A sense of being free from danger and upheaval is crucial to an individual's ability to adjust to life in a new community and to embrace new challenges. It's particularly important for SSI's clients, many of whom have experienced trauma and conflict, or may face prejudice with regard to their race, sexuality or gender identity.

We aim to help people to live in safe, stable and affordable environments, and to have access to services that support safe, stable and secure lives. This includes individuals receiving education around their rights and the role of our justice system, and also receiving support to seek assistance when needed. Our interim goals are to help people understand, navigate and access safe, accessible and affordable housing or care. We also aim to support people to understand and identify threats to their personal safety.

### Highlights

In FY2022, our measured outcomes relating to Safety and Security included:

- Some **819** asylum seekers in NSW and Queensland were provided with emergency relief support. In Queensland, almost **14,000** instances of support were provided.
- Some **98 per cent** of Humanitarian Settlement Program clients in Armidale report being treated fairly when accessing services and support.

Following are programs that contribute to Safety and Stability outcomes for our clients. Each program may also contribute to one or more of our other delivery outcomes.

### Building stronger families

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / WNSW

No part of society is immune from the impacts of domestic and family violence. It puts vulnerable individuals at risk and creates a toxic environment that can scar children for life. Funded by WNSW and developed in cooperation with SSI and Relationships Australia, the Building Stronger Families program is an in-culture and in-language Men's Behaviour

Change program working with men who use violence. SSI provides community engagement and delivers the programs with Relationships Australia which are adapted for different language groups and related cultures, including Tamil, Arabic, Hazaragi and Farsi.

In FY2022 the program worked with 30 men and provided women and children's advocacy support to 40 women.

## Domestic and Family Violence Practice Management

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW, VIC / SSI, DCJ

The Domestic and Family Violence Practice Management Unit is responsible for promoting and monitoring best practice in managing DFV across SSI Group. It has a central focus on maintaining the safety and dignity of victim survivors, including children. In FY2022, the unit began working directly with clients across SSI Group programs to provide comprehensive risk assessment, safety planning, psychoeducation and referrals for DFV victim survivors, including children.

In FY2022, the number of clients referred into the unit was 65. All clients were victim survivors of domestic violence and 92 per cent of these were from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Between them, these women had 88 children in their care. Services provided included: case conferences with SSI Group program staff, such as case managers, (80 per cent of cases); risk assessments (68 per cent) of cases; safety planning (69 per cent); and exit planning, including assisting clients to move into safe accommodation (25 per cent).

### Case study

#### Keeping Sam from falling through the cracks

When asylum seeker Sam presented to SSI in NSW, he was experiencing major financial challenges. Health conditions meant that he was unable to maintain employment and he was not eligible for regular forms of financial assistance such as government subsidies or Centrelink.

With no family support, he was unable to pay for the medication that he required and was at risk of eviction due to late payment of rent.

The SSI team established that Sam was eligible for support under the local Emergency Relief for Asylum Seekers program. This allowed him to take some of the heat out of his financial situation. At the same time, we provided referrals to relevant community support services for further assessment and assistance with food and healthcare. As Sam is not eligible for Medicare, NSW Refugee Health was able to provide a medical screening and the necessary medication for his health conditions. Sam's SSI case manager maintained contact throughout the process.

## Emergency Relief for Asylum Seekers programs

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI, Access / NSW, QLD / DSS

Asylum seekers to Australia can often find themselves without a social welfare safety net while they wait for their applications for refugee status to be finalised. Events such as injury, the loss of employment and pandemics can leave them in a precarious position.

During FY2022, SSI and its subsidiary Access Community Services provided emergency relief payments and case management support to asylum seekers affected by COVID-19 in NSW and Queensland. This work also includes the provision of food and grocery items. Across the year, SSI provided emergency relief payments and case management support to 577 asylum seekers in NSW not eligible for any other government income support during COVID-19. In Queensland, 242 people were provided emergency relief support in the form of food parcels and food vouchers, accommodation and travel assistance, relief payments for utility bills, and other types of material goods and aid.

There was high demand for support in Queensland due to floods and the special intake of Ukrainian refugees impacted by the invasion of Ukraine. Due to the urgent and complex needs of clients, a total of 2,392 referrals were made to external providers.

## Humanitarian Settlement Program

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / DHA

The Federal Government's Humanitarian Services Program (HSP) aims to provide humanitarian entrants to Australia with the structured support they need to adjust to life in our country and successfully settle into our communities. SSI delivers HSP services on behalf of the government in a number of locations across NSW. Our case workers work closely with newcomers, connecting them with the skills, support and resources they need to find their feet and develop into independent members of society.

As reported in FY2021, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted HSP functionality. Despite the closure of borders in March 2021, some special humanitarian cases were allowed to enter the country, including Afghanistan interpreters and other locally engaged civilians who had worked for the Australian Defence Force and government agencies in Afghanistan. This took place under the Locally Engaged Employees (LEE) visa certification and processing program. From the fall of Kabul in August 2021 up to the end of FY2022, more than 1,500 Afghan evacuees and refugees chose NSW as their new home. Beginning in February 2022, more than 200 Ukrainian nationals were also supported by SSI in partnership with the Ukrainian Council of NSW. This followed the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. In total, and across the course of the year, SSI provided 3,256 individuals with support around orientation and transitioning from newly arrived status to settlement.

During the year, we also released Foundations for Belonging 2021: Insights on Newly Arrived Refugees, a study completed with the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University which aimed to deepen understanding of the social and civic dimensions of integration in the early stages of settlement with a focus on refugee women and digital inclusion.

Exited clients overwhelmingly reported that their neighbourhoods were safe places where people get along, and they reported high levels of trust in government and police. They had a high sense of being treated fairly when they access services and support, having their rights protected, and having equal access to services.

## Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / National / DHA

Families and individuals in financial distress or with complex needs can often find it difficult to apply for asylum. The Federal Government's Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme provided support for particularly vulnerable asylum seekers. SSI managed the process for the IAAAS and coordinated the delivery of services nationally.

In FY2022, 27 clients were provided with assistance, 314 enquiries were received and 10 referrals were made. This year, enquiries increased due to the launch of a social media campaign in March. The majority of the enquiries were from clients who were seeking support for visa cancellations and tribunal applications. SSI ceased to administer the program early in FY2023 after four years of operation and having helped 123 clients with assistance.

## Multicultural Child and Family Program

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / DCJ

Established in 2013, SSI's Multicultural Child and Family Program (MCFP) connects children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with foster carers who can help them maintain their cultural identity and sense of belonging. The program uses a client-centred, strengths-based, trauma-informed framework to guide service delivery and achieve sustainable outcomes for children, young people, families and carers.

In FY2022, 226 children in NSW were cared for, of whom 85 per cent were between the ages of 0 and 14. Over three quarters were characterized as having additional needs. This includes children with disabilities and children on health and NDIS plans. Children encompassed 23 different ethnic backgrounds, 14 different languages and 10 different connections to faith.

During FY2022, the average number of children in care with the program per month was 194; and the average number of carers in the program per month was 142.

The year also saw the continued establishment of the program in Victoria, with over 20 foster care families accredited or in training and assessment. Over 50 community engagements took place with leaders from CALD communities and over 300 enquiries were made from all areas of Victoria, with most queries from the northern, southern and western regions of Victoria.

## Status Resolution Support Services

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI, Access / NSW, QLD / DHA

People whose immigration status is undecided can find themselves in a state of limbo in Australian society, unable to work or access regular government services. The Federal Government's Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program is aimed at providing needs-based support for people in this situation, including financial assistance.

SSI delivers SRSS services that assist people who are: transitioning from immigration; living in the community under Residence Determination; or living in the community on a

bridging visa. Assistance areas include financial help, accommodation, healthcare and education.

In FY2022, some 202 asylum seekers were supported in NSW, and 163 in QLD. This represents a decrease of 76 per cent in NSW from 862 in FY2021 and a decrease of 41 percent in Queensland from 280 in FY2021. The falls reflect border closures due to the pandemic during FY2022. On average, 245 asylum seekers in NSW and 175 in QLD were supported each month throughout FY2022.

## Strong and Resilient Communities QLD

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / QLD / DSS

Disadvantage and social problems can stop communities from flourishing. Funded by the Department of Social Services, the Strong and Resilient Communities program aims to build robust, cohesive and harmonious communities where individuals and families can thrive. SSI business Access Community Services delivers the program in Queensland.

This year, Access facilitated four Community Connect Leaders Forums and four topic-specific forums focusing on social cohesion, family health and wellbeing, family and domestic violence, and employment. The forums provided a platform for community members to raise issues and concerns, and to network and collaborate. Harmony Day events during March were also delivered in Inala and Ipswich to celebrate cultural diversity, each attracting over 500 people from the local community.

Throughout FY2022, the program supported 72 clients through 141 sessions with low-intensity information, advice and referrals. The project team attended local and regional network meetings on an ongoing basis to keep up to date with new programs and referral pathways for clients. Across the year, seven clients reported improved ability to navigate the legal system and 11 clients were supported with housing related enquiries.

## Supporting U

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / WNSW

Eighty percent of women disclose their experiences of domestic and family violence (DFV) to family members, friends and/or community leaders.

Designed to leverage the strengths of women leaders within CALD communities, the Supporting U project trained 36 women from 16 countries of origin to be social responders to address issues of DFV. Between the women leaders, more than 25 languages were spoken. They attended three days of training in DFV and then participated in 23 learning circles between the Sydney and Coffs Harbour projects. Supporting U Leaders were able to drive change within their communities and work with other local leaders to get access to the tools, information and referral pathways to support the women seeking support.

Meanwhile, the 'In my Voice' initiative leveraged the insights of women leaders trained through Supporting U. Based on the experiences of these leaders, the communication tool enhances conversations around DFV among service providers and in multicultural communities. Six brief video clips depicting five regions of the world and an insight into working as a cultural worker in regional areas were developed across the year, featuring

voice-overs from the women themselves. The video clips were launched by the Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Natalia Ward MLC.

## Our value outputs

We increased human, intellectual, and social and relationship capital by:

- Delivering services that significantly improve the ability of newcomers to Australia to settle into the community;
- Providing services aimed at reducing domestic and family violence in our communities;
- Further rolling out the Multicultural Child and Family Program to new locations;
- Helping to build stronger communities; and
- Delivering services that ensure people with insecure status are able to access food and healthcare.

## Case study

### **An open home and mind How SSI helps to strengthen children through culture**

With six of her own children, Lisa\* had often thought about fostering a child in need but found herself questioning if her family would be suitable.

"I really didn't know if we were the right fit because I have zero experience in fostering kids from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds," says Lisa.

As it turns out, it wasn't prior experience or a culturally matched carer that was needed most, it was a safe home, a loving family with open minds, and a carer who could support a child build cultural connections.

"We have no cultural diversity at all in our household, but we're very open to other cultures. I've been conscious of making sure that my kids grow up with a strong social conscience.

"When I raised my concerns with SSI, they explained that as long as you are curious, understanding and want what is best for the child, it can definitely work," says Lisa.

After welcoming 11-year-old Amaia\* into the family, cooking was a way to help the young girl stay connected to her Pacific Island culture.

"English isn't her first language, so some of the ingredients she didn't necessarily know, and we would use Google Translate to find out what they were.

"We were going up and down the aisles until she spotted the right ingredients, then we came home and cooked it together," explains Lisa.

As manager of the Multicultural Child and Family Program for SSI across the Hunter Central Coast area, Tari Mapfumo knows finding a home where a child's identity is nurtured is crucial.

"When children like Amaia can't be placed with a family of the same cultural background, finding a way to maintain this connection is crucial to building a sense of belonging and identity.

"We're not asking a carer to change who they are; they just need to be open and culturally responsive," explains Tari.

Cultural responsiveness is the capacity to learn from other cultures, value diversity, and engage with people of different backgrounds. Tari says anyone can have this quality and it's one of the most important things a carer can bring to the table.



With a strong focus on placing children from CALD backgrounds, SSI has countless supports in place to keep culture at forefront for both carer and child.

In cross-cultural situations such as Lisa's, we ensure every child receives a cultural plan that outlines key family connection points on language, religion, and important holidays or festivals.

The SSI Multicultural Child and Family Program works closely to support foster carers and their family, checking in with them regarding cultural care plans and ensuring the children feel a sense of belonging.

For more information about becoming a foster carer, visit

[www.multiculturalfostercare.ssi.org.au/ about-foster-care](http://www.multiculturalfostercare.ssi.org.au/about-foster-care)

\*names have been changed to protect privacy.

## Social inclusion

It's one thing to live in a community, another to feel a welcomed and valued part of it.

Social isolation can limit an individual's ability to reach their potential, achieve happiness and participate in and give back to society.

Promoting social inclusion among our participants and clients and building initiatives and practices to improve social cohesion with the wider community are key principles of SSI's Social Impact Framework – and a foundational element of our mission.

SSI's long-term outcomes goals in this area are to give individuals the autonomy and freedom they need to develop as people and live the lives they choose. This includes having the ability to express themselves, enjoy a social life and achieve a greater sense of belonging. In the interim, our goal is to provide a platform for individuals to preserve cultural identity and values. We strive to link people to community-based organisations and activities that promote social cohesion and community participation. These activities help people develop social bonds, social bridges and social links integral to their sense of agency and empowerment. This in turn helps them develop a sense of their rights and social responsibilities.

### Highlights

In FY2022, our measured outcomes relating to Social Inclusion included:

- Staff in our LAC program supported some **17,800** participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- Events funded by the Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre attracted an audience of over **18,000**, with 292 artists and arts workers engaged.
- Supported **184** artists and engaged an audience base of **7,050** with arts and culture activities in NSW.

Following are examples of programs that contribute to social inclusion outcomes for our clients. Each program may also contribute to one or more of our other delivery outcomes.

### Arts and Culture

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / SSI

Arts and culture provide vulnerable people and newcomers to Australia with avenues for self-expression, maintaining cultural values, generating income, and linking with communities. SSI's self-funded Arts and Culture program encourages cultural engagement and nurtures artists and cultural practitioners from refugee and migrant backgrounds. It facilitates a range of events including festivals, cultural events, creative workshops and arts initiatives across Sydney and NSW.

In FY2022, the program delivered more than 20 activities and projects through its program framework. It supported 184 artists and engaged an audience base of 7050.

The focus on festivals and cultural events has been a core element of the Arts & Culture program since its inception in 2014. In 2022, festival and cultural events attracted an audience of 4,298 visitors and showcased performances from 52 artists. The program's flagship event, New Beginnings Festival, continued to attract the highest number of visitors with 3,000 in attendance.

## BEMAC

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

Access / QLD / Arts

Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre (BEMAC) is a producer of multicultural arts and has been staging the work of artists from different cultural backgrounds for almost three decades. Since 2015, it has been a subsidiary of SSI business Access Community Services. It provides employment to arts practitioners from diverse backgrounds and brings their work to a mainstream audience.

In FY2022, BEMAC delivered 147 culturally diverse projects and events across Brisbane and nearby Logan. These activities supported 292 artists and arts workers. Projects and events focused on building professional development and artistry skills and showcasing the innovative work of emerging and international musicians and artists through exhibitions and live performances.

Events funded by BEMAC attracted an audience of 18,789, representing an increase of 34 per cent (14,000) from FY21. Just over half (58 per cent) had previously not attended any events and 35 per cent attended these events from outside their local authority area.

In FY2022, the program supported the diverse practices of 66 artists and musicians from many different backgrounds, including 16 from First Nations and 50 from CALD backgrounds. It ignited partnerships with local councils in Brisbane, Ipswich and Logan, APRA, La Boite Theatre, West End Community Association (WECA), and the Regional Arts Services Network Community Business Hub.

The most common activities undertaken during the period included performances, exhibitions, conferences, workshops and training sessions, and mentoring.

Significant partnerships included: World of Music Ipswich, a major CALD festival in Ipswich in partnership with Ipswich City Council; a major song writing workshop series in partnership with the Australian Performing Rights Association; and delivery of five Songs of Our Homelands performances for Brisbane City Council.

## Community Engagement

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / SSI

It's one thing to live in an Australian community. It's another to feel welcomed and able to engage in it. The SSI Community Engagement team exists with the purpose of making it easier for humanitarian refugees, people living with disability and other key client stakeholders to settle into and engage in the communities in which they live.

The team does this providing community engagement advice and support across a wide range of SSI programs. Key milestones in FY2022 included coordinating the engagement of Ukrainian community organisations to increase the awareness of the HSP program amongst newly arrived individuals, and also leading a strategic working group with key Ukrainian community organisations.

A key piece of intellectual property is the Client and Community Voice consultation framework developed by the Community Engagement team.

The framework centres on a true 'community-led' and place-based approach to community engagement. Through community meetings and discussions with individuals and smaller groups, an understanding is developed of values, concerns and aspirations of the community in question. It offers a point in time account of their priorities in order to facilitate future initiatives that activate and build the community's assets to overcome their perceived challenges and supports them to work towards realizing their shared vision.

## Local Area Coordination

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI / NSW / NDIA

Since June 2020, SSI has delivered Local Area Coordination (LAC) services, acting as a National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) 'partner in the community' for the Sydney and South-Western Sydney service areas. We support people aged 7 to 64 years in accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and other services and supports in the community. This enables people with permanent and significant disability to lead meaningful and normal lives.

In FY2022, the LAC program supported approximately 17,800 NDIS participants. Participants were supported with employment and social participation goals. This involved developing 1,511 first plans and conducting 11,249 reassessments and 17,682 implementation meetings. In addition, 129 engagements with the community were held reaching an audience base over 4,000. The LAC program's Intake Officers responded to approximately 950 calls per month from the public. Some 97 per cent of these calls are completed with a solution in the first month.

Efforts are taken to ensure our LAC workforce represents the people for whom we work. Some 11 per cent of LAC team members identify as living with a disability, while 54 per cent identify as caring for someone living with a disability. Some 43 per cent of team members were born overseas, while seven staff identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

During FY2022, a pilot study was undertaken measuring employment outcomes among a small sample of participants. The pilot was initiated as part of the NDIA's ongoing review of the Local Area Coordination approach. Participants in the pilot nominated a series of sub-goals to complete that focused on helping them achieve their overall goal of finding or retaining employment. LAC staff worked with participants, almost three quarters of whom identified as having intellectual or learning difficulties, to help them work towards these goals. Early results from 19 participants who completed their first 8-week

check-in are encouraging with 47 per cent of overall steps towards employment goals completed.

## Volunteering

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / SSI

Volunteers play an important role at SSI, expanding our ability to engage the community while not drawing on finances in the way that salaried team members do. Volunteers also bring enormous life experience to the organisation and assist in the delivery of services including mentoring, entrepreneur coaching, housing assistance, teaching English, gardening, playgroups, and social enterprises. The duties of volunteers vary greatly and can range from helping with ticketing at events, sharing business knowledge with Ignite® program participants, or providing translation services for newcomers seeking jobs.

During the lockdowns of FY2022, the Volunteer Program embraced technology to enable virtual volunteerism. Video conferencing and remote volunteerism continued to allow us to exploit previously unexplored methods of working that reduced geographical barriers to engagement, training and networking events.

During FY2022, the Volunteer Program formally extended its reach to Queensland and Victoria. At the end of the year, the program's active base of volunteers was 163 people. On average the number of active volunteers per month is 158, which represents a very high retention rate of 97 percent.

An example of our work with volunteers is The Welcome Program which pairs newcomers from refugee backgrounds with volunteers in their adopted city in a bid to foster a sense of inclusion and build social bonds.

### Case study

#### Fruits of the consultation process

Coffs Harbour is home to a number of individuals from Myanmar who have settled into Australia after arriving on humanitarian visas. SSI provided settlement support to many of these people under the Humanitarian Settlement Program.

The community on the whole has settled very well, but there are tensions within it around perceived views that some individuals have more influence with Australian authorities than others. SSI undertook a Client and Community Voice consultation, from which emerged a clear message that the community shared a vision for growing their own food. They also voiced their concerns about employment exploitation and low wages at the local blueberry farms.

The community was supported through SSI's facilitation to set up its own farming enterprise. SSI engaged local experts and its Ignite® Program was used to support budding entrepreneurs. The result is a thriving business which empowers participants and helps create a sense of belonging and ownership.

### Case study

#### A major victory for Tal

When 26-year-old Tal arrived in Sydney as a refugee, he had no family support and few social connections. Eager to meet more people, he decided to take part in activities organised under SSI's Welcome Program.

Project coordinators paired him up with Sydneysiders of a similar age and with shared interests, and during a picnic lunch Tal took part in a friendly match of football. It was immediately apparent that he was an especially talented player.

Impressed by Tal's outlook and skills, one of the Welcome ambassadors asked him if he would join his local football team. Tal now has significantly expanded his social network to include people within the wider Australian community. This is not an uncommon experience for participants of The Welcome Program. Participants and ambassadors are living and breathing evidence of how accepting and welcoming Australia's communities can be.

## Our value outputs

We increased human, manufactured, social and relationship, and intellectual capital by:

- Connecting thousands of people living with disability with appropriate support under the NDIS;
- Increasing many individuals' sense of belonging and strengthening mental health from engagement in arts and culture;
- Building links between vulnerable individuals and wider community through the engagement of volunteers;
- Generating revenue through various events, festivals and exhibitions; and
- Lowering labour costs through the use of volunteers.

# Capacity building, advocacy and thought leadership

A challenge faced by many of the most vulnerable members of society is shifting the unfair and stubborn perception that they are somehow of less value than others.

While any human being can find themselves in a vulnerable situation, unconscious biases can lead society to vilify individuals in this position, assigning them labels like refugee, asylum seeker, unemployed, gender diverse, single mother or person with a disability, rather than acknowledging the nuanced and valuable human being within.

Our focus on capacity building, advocacy and thought leadership is based on developing and using evidence to engage with policymakers and program designers to more effectively promote the needs and strengths of people experiencing a period of vulnerability. Our interim goal is to directly help other relevant service providers to understand the barriers faced by individuals and families experiencing vulnerability. We also seek to familiarise governments with the voices, experiences and stories of the people with whom we work and to help policymakers understand their world. Our long-term goal is to help services better respond to the needs of vulnerable people and the individuals who SSI supports. We develop initiatives and networks to enable trust and collaboration. We partner with all levels of government, with multiple agencies and educational institutions, community organisations, service providers and advocacy groups.

## Highlights

In FY2022, key outputs included:

- Making **10** policy submissions on issues related to our mission to the federal government, various parliamentary inquiries and the Australian Human Rights Commission.
- Undertaking **61** meetings with representatives from local, state and federal government.
- Driving the narrative on vulnerable people through the publication of articles in The Sydney Morning Herald, The Conversation, and other publications.
- Facilitating **12** client and community leader consultations.
- Achieving **33** mentions of SSI by MPs and councillors.
- Achieving a **132%** increase in media and news coverage (online and broadcast) over two years. From a total of **551** articles in FY2020 the team grew the total number of articles to **1280** in FY2022.

Following are examples of initiatives that contribute to capacity building, advocacy and thought leadership. Each of the programs below may also contribute to one or more of our other delivery outcomes.

### Advocacy and Government Relations

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / SSI

Through our advocacy and government relations work, SSI aims to speak up for those who struggle to be heard. In order to provide optimal support to society's most vulnerable members and effectively deliver services that improve the lives of our clients, SSI's Advocacy, Research and Communications team campaigns to influence the public narrative, imprint upon decisionmakers and impact policy.

We do this by creating evidence-based media and awareness campaigns, government briefing tools, and social policy indices that support our thought- leadership agenda and outcomes framework.

During November 2021, SSI was invited to take part in the National COVID-19 Vaccine Taskforce led by Lieutenant General John Frewen advocating on behalf of the CALD communities with whom we work. And in April 2022, SSI was invited to submit evidence to the Senate Inquiry into Australia's engagement in Afghanistan. This contribution is documented in HANSARD.

### Diversity Training

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI, Access / NSW, VIC, QLD / DSS, SSI

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are under-represented when it comes to accessing National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support. The CultureReady program, developed by SSI Diversity Training, was designed to address this lower participation rate by developing the capability of disability service providers. The program recognised that by giving providers a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of diverse people with disability, engagement in the NDIS could be significantly improved.

The CultureReady program ran from April 2020 until November 2021. Through a series of workshops, it addressed the key four topics of: fundamentals of culturally responsive



practice; working with interpreters; engaging with CALD communities; and recruiting a diverse workforce.

In the period in which the program operated, we delivered 240 workshops to 3158 participants. The majority of people who received training were frontline workers and managers from NDIS providers in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. Some 90 per cent of participants saw the training as relevant to their work, and surveys showed that the program increased their confidence in working with people with disability from CALD backgrounds. An evaluation of the program by an independent consultant found that CultureReady was very well- received by participants, with the quality of training delivery highly rated across all modules.

The evaluation did not track changes in practice. However, it reported a strong motivation to change practice meaning a key outcome of the work is likely to be better NDIS accessibility for the target group.

### Domestic Violence Advocacy

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI / NSW, QLD, VIC / SSI

Domestic Violence staff across the SSI Group developed a strong advocacy platform against domestic and family violence (DFV) during FY2022. They responded to several government inquiries and were involved in the development of the new National Plan to end Violence Against Women 2022-2023. In October 2021, all settlement providers received DFV funding from the Department of Home Affairs in response to intensive advocacy led by SSI. The NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) and SSI's subsidiary Access Community Services employed staff to coordinate and resource DFV work across settlement services. An internal DFV strategy group was established to jointly improve our response to DFV and advocate for greater consideration of the needs of our multicultural communities. Education campaigns occurred during 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence.

### International Efforts

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI / NSW, VIC / SSI

As well as improving conditions for the vulnerable within Australia, SSI seeks to influence discourse and decision making at an international level. Our International Team takes part in international working groups, makes submissions to global peak bodies, develops cross-country partnerships, and works to develop capacity among individuals in other countries. In FY2022, the team was engaged in 14 working groups, largely in Asia and the Pacific, but also globally. These included: the UNHCR Partnership Section COVID-19 working group; the Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Working Group of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN); and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Beijing 25+ Advisory Committee. Our work on these groups and others helped shape the narrative around groups including refugees and played a key role in policy formation. The unit made four major submissions through the year, including contributing to the Statement to the UN Commission on the Status of Women 66th session (CSW) on Climate Change and Gender, and the International Migration Review Forum 2022 Statement, helping to influence decision makers on key global issues. It engaged with

12 new stakeholders, including five on climate change and three in response to the Afghanistan crisis, expanding further our reach and influence in the international arena. We formalised three new partnerships including with Ancestry and Development (A&D) in Colombia to support the integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants; and Asia Pacific Network on Refugees (APNOR) supporting new projects in response to Afghanistan.

## Multicultural Peer Network

Owned by / Location / Funded by:  
SSI / NSW / NDIA

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds living with disability face significant barriers in achieving independence and connecting with their communities. Funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and delivered by SSI, the Multicultural Peer Network (MPN) program aims to address these barriers by facilitating free, in-language, peer-led support networks. The overall aim of the networks is to increase the independence and social and community participation for people from CALD communities, people with disability, and their families and carers across NSW.

In FY2022, the MPN pivoted from face-to-face sessions to virtual sessions in order to overcome the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This enabled physically isolated group participants to maintain contact and access critical healthcare information during extended lockdowns.

Over the year, the MPN recruited and trained 16 lived-experience facilitators to facilitate community discussion on six topics, including self-advocacy, circles of support, NDIS access, volunteering, employment, and goal setting. Lived-experience facilitators gain up to 72 hours of employment in their role. Some 147 peer-support sessions were held over the year, reaching 452 people across greater Sydney and regional NSW.

Peer networks are facilitated in Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Greek, Farsi, Thai, Bhutanese, Nepalese, Kurdish Kurmanji and English. All lived-experience facilitators participate in an independently facilitated Community of Practice. The MPN is supported and informed by an external reference group that meets quarterly with representation from government, not-for-profit and disability-sector organisations.

## Case study

### Support through the lockdown's darkest hours

COVID-19 lockdowns in Sydney's south-west in 2021 left many vulnerable people isolated when they most needed support.

The timing of the four-month Delta lockdown in late June 2021 was particularly poor for the Multicultural Peer Network developed by SSI for the area's Vietnamese Community. Funded through the NDIS, the network aimed to bring together community members face-to-face to discuss shared challenges around living with disability, caring for loved ones with disability, and caring for children living with autism.

In response to restrictions on face-to-face meetings, SSI pivoted and negotiated with the LAC and the NDIS Community Engagement team to run a series of three sessions to support families and explain how they could flexibly use their NDIS funding during COVID-19. During the sessions, many participants disclosed their failing mental health, depression

and anxiety and we responded with ongoing weekly online catch-ups to help people stay connected.

Post lockdowns, the meetings continued online on a fortnightly basis through FY2022, helping participants to share their experiences, gain knowledge, and maintain a sense of community. The difference in community members' attitudes, their confidence, and their participation levels has been uplifting for all who have been involved.

## Raising Children in a New Country

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / Westpac

In FY2022, SSI undertook Raising Children in a New Country (RCNC), a pilot parenting project funded by major bank Westpac through its Safer Children, Safer Communities program. This pilot was unique in that it provided participants with content on gender equality, healthy relationships, DFV and e-safety and how they relate to and impact the wellbeing of children. The program was delivered in gender-separated groups and in Tamil and Arabic. Sessions took place both face-face and later online, due to COVID-19 shutdowns. Some 52 adults participated, with the wellbeing of 94 children in view.

## Research and Policy

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / SSI

Research into the effectiveness of our own programs helps us to make improvements and to share learnings with organisations with similar missions.

Meanwhile, studies of the strengths, challenges, lived experiences and health of vulnerable people in our communities allow us to better tailor our services and inform decision makers about community need.

In FY2022, we conducted the second phase of the Foundations for Belonging research in partnership with the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University.

Foundations for Belonging explores social and civic dimensions of belonging among newly arrived refugees and the second phase focussed on women and digital inclusion. The research, launched in partnership with ACOSS, found gender disparities in terms of social connections and digital skills, and found that refugee households with school-aged children had much lower access to the devices needed for home learning.

Policy initiatives included SSI's involvement in work led by the Open Society, Common Purpose Taskforce convened by the Sydney Policy Lab. The Taskforce, made up of stakeholders from civil society, academia, policy makers and business carried out a series of focussed consultations to inform the post-pandemic recovery. The resulting report, The Great Australian Renovation, included recommendations across three areas: children and young people, trust and social cohesion.

In FY2022, our current and past research partnerships resulted in research outputs including journal articles on topics including: the mental health of refugees and people seeking asylum; the experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum with disability; the relationship between subjective wellbeing and settlement among former clients of SSI who accessed the Australian Government's Humanitarian Settlement Services.

Another key output was a landmark research report on entrepreneurship among people with disability. Previously published articles were cited 89 times in academic journals and six times in research reports. We completed an evaluation of CultureReady (culturally responsive training targeting the NDIS workforce) and the SSI Allianz Refugee Scholarship Program.

Two new multiyear industry research partnerships commenced in FY2022 investigating domestic violence screening and response among refugee women (led by the University of Wollongong), and cultural connections among children and young people in care (led by Western Sydney University).

### Safety and Health after Arrival (SAHAR) study

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI / NSW / ARC

SSI is collaborating in a study led by University of Wollongong academic Professor Jo Spangaro. Funded by the Australian Research Council, the study is trying to determine the acceptability of screening for domestic and family violence (DFV) among refugees and other migrant groups. In FY2022, field work was undertaken in four settlement service locations: Auburn, Fairfield, Parramatta and Wollongong. Over 300 women were screened and then contacted later to perform a follow-up survey. Early results show a high level of agreement that screening for DFV would be acceptable for this population group.

### Women and Girls Strategic Plan

Owned by / Location / Funded by:

SSI NSW, QLD, VIC SSI

SSI is acutely aware that women and girls do not always achieve their full potential and may need targeted intervention to reach their goals. In FY2021, we developed a Women and Girls Strategic Plan 2021-2023 focusing on the advancement and protection of the rights of women and girls associated with SSI. The aim of the plan is to drive change towards equal choice, prosperity, and economic empowerment. It targets all women employed and supported by SSI, with a particular focus on women of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, who make up a significant proportion of our community.

During FY2022, we undertook a range of activities related to the plan. Several submissions for funding were made where women were the primary target group. These related to fields including intensive case work, entrepreneurship and women's leadership. Advocacy-and-research-related submissions focused on economic opportunities, digital literacy, DFV, and comparisons of outcomes between genders. Work-climate surveys also identified differences between genders to develop targeted strategies. Deep dives and targeted conversations occurred with many programs in the SSI Group to lift the focus on outcomes for women and girls.

### Case study

#### Aspiring teacher gains independence with SSI's support

After two years as a participant with SSI's Local Area Coordination (LAC) program, Sabrina Morini, a 22-year-old woman with autism spectrum disorder, is kicking goals and keeping her sights set on the future.

For years, Sabrina's ambition to gain her driver's licence and get a job seemed out of reach. But 2022 has seen her achieve both - she now works as a guest services agent at a Meriton hotel, and has passed her driver's test. Sabrina is also continuing to work towards her dream of high school teaching.

Sabrina's mum, Mercedes, credits these achievements to her daughter's hard work and the support provided by SSI's LAC program.

"I've noticed since you guys jumped on board that there's been a boost in her achievements and her self-esteem," said Mercedes.

The LAC program has supported Sabrina through facilitating driving lessons, home support workers, training in independent living skills, and transport to job interviews.

Mercedes praises their SSI coordinator, Jade, who has worked with them for two years.

"She's a miracle worker, that woman. She's been so supportive and just the backbone of this whole exercise. Every time Sabrina has a proud moment I get on the phone and share it with her."

A life-long love of history and geography has led Sabrina on a path towards high school teaching. Sabrina has completed the first year of a Bachelor of Arts majoring in teaching.

"I did history in high school, and it was the subject I got As in; I loved it."

For now, Sabrina is taking some time off university to focus on her new job.

Sabrina is looking forward to resuming university in March of 2023, and she is already setting her sights on the future.

"Now my only goals are to graduate, pay off my car and maybe, to move out."

Proud mum, Mercedes, is confident that now, with the support of SSI, Sabrina will continue to achieve her goals.

"I've always known that she had it in her, but she just needed a platform to exercise it and that has happened with this support."

SSI is partnered with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to deliver LAC services in NSW. As an LAC, SSI supports people aged 7–64 to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and other mainstream services in the community.

## People and Culture

In FY2022, the People and Culture team worked with leaders across the organisation to continue to navigate the ongoing implications of the pandemic and to respond to the challenges it presented, from both a professional and personal standpoint. The team remained agile and responsive to the constantly changing regulatory environment brought about by the responses to COVID-19 by various levels of government. Team members also looked for creative ways to maintain connections with their colleagues and the wider SSI workforce and found innovative ways to collaborate. The increased use of technology continued to help break down physical barriers, as exemplified by 'Tea Time with Violet', regular online meetings that allowed people from across all our offices to connect and chat with CEO Violet Roumeliotis.

Over the course of the year, work continued on consolidating the restructure of the People and Culture function implemented in FY2021, and efforts continued to strengthen our service offering to the business. The team also made significant progress on delivering on its three-year roadmap to develop SSI as a compelling value proposition for talent, and it designed and delivered a range of initiatives that align with SSI's strategic agenda.



## SSI's people at a glance

	FY2022	FY2021
Employees	1045	988
Female	755 (72%)	694 (70%)
Male	290 (28%)	294 (30%)
Casual	249 (24%)	214 (22%)
Full time	707 (68%)	692 (70%)
Part time	85 (8%)	82 (8%)
Back office	226 (22%)	140 (14%)
Front line	818 (79%)	848 (86%)
Pro bono	153	163
Volunteers	153 (100%)	149 (91%)
Students	0	11 (7%)
Interns	0	3 (2%)

## Diversity of new hires FY2021-2022

	Number	%
Total number of new hires	504	100
Female	372	74%
Male	131	26%
Non-binary	0	0%
Identify as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander peoples	29	5.7%
Born outside Australia	254	50.4%
First language other than English	228	45.2%
Identify as persons with disability	15	2.97%

## Talent and organisational capability

Our talent and organisational capability team works to ensure that SSI's workforce is equipped with the right capabilities to meet the needs of our clients and partners, both now and into the future.

In FY2022, the team implemented a range of initiatives to ensure that staff were able to work effectively and safely. This included inducting new participants in Mental Health and Suicide First Aid training sessions.

A new set of organisational guidelines, known as the SSI Leadership Behaviours, were developed to provide clarity and consistency around the expectations we have of current and future leaders. These include: Leading the Business; Accountability; Person-Centred; and One Organisation Mindset. Moving ahead, these four critical behaviours will serve as a foundation for Lead@SSI, our bespoke leadership development program.

Participation in Achieve@SSI, our annual performance management process, rose to 96 per cent from 58 per cent the previous cycle after the executive was incentivised to lift involvement via their KPIs. The process provided our people with the opportunity to reflect with their team leaders on the previous year and prepare for the coming year. The aim is



for conversations within the process to be well-rounded, affording people the opportunity to reflect on what they are most proud, their wellbeing, their performance against the SSI Core Competencies, and their priorities for the next phase. The performance data collected during the process also provides important information to the leadership group.

### Business partnering

The business partnering team continued to work with leaders and staff to support program strategic priorities and client needs across FY2022. Staff worked with leaders to onboard, upskill and transform teams for future growth and success.

This included providing support around resourcing structures and workforce planning. SSI programs are unique and complex and we tailor our business partnering offerings to meet program needs. The team work closely with People and Culture's Centres of Expertise to design bespoke initiatives to elevate organisational capability.

### Talent Acquisition

SSI, like most employers in Australia, faced an extremely competitive talent market in FY2022. To address the challenges this represented and help meet the diverse recruitment needs of our programs, our talent acquisition team defined a new, overarching strategic framework that included differentiated sourcing models, talent pool campaigns, targeted searches and a new team structure.

We worked with SSI's Newcomers Settlement, Local Area Coordination, Employment Services and Home Care programs to design and facilitate customised assessment centres, with the aim of optimising volume recruitment for recurring roles.

The talent acquisition team also partnered closely with programs such as Ignite® Small Business Start-ups to gain a deeper understanding of roles and enable targeted searches, customized advertising campaigns and diversity hiring. We recruited for key internal roles, including Head of Impact and Project Management Office (PMO) Lead to support our overall strategic goals, and strengthen our project management and outcomes focused approach.

Across the year, the talent acquisition team began to develop relationships and work closely with universities to create pathways for students wanting to join and build careers within our organisation. We also worked towards deepening our diversity hiring and considering early career programs for graduates and traineeships.

### People experience and transformation

The People and Culture team have supported change management for a number of strategic projects. As SSI's reputation and social impact continues to grow, so too does the need for our people to be technology and data literate. In FY2021, we defined the People and Culture Technology Transformation Roadmap, comprising human capital management, people service management, and employee engagement solutions. During FY2022, we took a first step in this roadmap, implementing a cloud-based software solution to replace six legacy systems that were in use. The aim was to help refine, automate and optimise our processes to increase efficiency, productivities and create better experience for our people.

## Culture, Inclusion and wellbeing

A highly diverse workforce has long been a strength of our organisation. Throughout FY2022, SSI continued its journey to grow an inclusive culture where all people are respected and valued for the diverse perspectives and contributions they make.

A particular focus across the year was engagement and deeper understanding. With this in mind, we participated in the Diversity Council of Australia Inclusion@Work survey for the first time. Our results revealed that our workforce was more diverse than national averages in most groups, and that our people also experience a strong sense of inclusion at work. This led to SSI being named as an Inclusive Employer 2021-22.

We also received recognition for our work in the LGBTIQ+ space, when we were awarded Bronze Employer for the third year running at the LGBTQ Inclusion Awards 2022. And we achieved Disability Confident Recruiter status for the fifth consecutive year through the Australian Network on Disability.

We continue to seek the thoughts and feelings of our people to shape our policies and initiatives. The Your Voice 2022 all-staff engagement survey results showed a response rate of 72 per cent and an overall engagement score of 75 per cent which is three percent above global average and represents a five per cent improvement since FY2019. We also learned about our people's unique and multi-faceted demographic identities, by measuring representation of their cultural and linguistic identities, gender and sexual diversity, and carer responsibilities. Some 71 per cent of respondents were born outside of Australia and 55 per cent stated that their primary language was something other than English. Some 10 per cent identify as living with disability, and five per cent identify as LGBTIQ+.

Measuring our workforce not only shapes future initiatives and drives processes, but also ensures our people reflect the diversity of the communities that we serve. Supporting diversity and inclusion continues through creating a culture of regular listening.

Across the organisation, 28 people took primary carer's parental leave. We recognised and celebrated key days of significance, including staff events for Wear it Purple Day, IDAHOBIT and International Day of People with Disability.

SSI's commitment to revitalising and better integrating a wellness agenda saw the launch of the Be Well 3.0 program. Aligned to an evolving conversation on wellness at work, Be Well involved a series of experiences and interventions throughout FY2022 designed to address the residual impacts of the pandemic as well as meeting the needs of our dispersed and hybrid workforce.

## Operations and Rewards

The framework and guiding principles for our remuneration and benefits policy were signed off by the CEO and Board in FY2021. Across FY2022, we deployed this framework to assist managers in benchmarking roles, budgeting for workforce planning, placing bids for new tenders, and supporting internal organisational restructures. People and Culture's shared-services team have continued to evolve their range of services and to improve our people processes.

## Work Health and Safety

Welcoming back our workforce to our offices following the worst of the pandemic was a key milestone for the health and safety team during FY2022. They ensured our workplaces

were equipped with COVID-19 sanitisation stations and relevant education materials and guidelines, creating a safe environment for staff to transition back.

Building a mentally resilient workforce also remained high on the agenda, as we sought to better understand how to safely deliver our resources to the community. We are developing and implementing early intervention programs to enable managers to understand, interpret and discover new insights about their teams' resilience and wellbeing levels during times of change.

As a result of the team's efforts around Work Health and Safety:

- some 83 per cent of the workforce feel comfortable reporting any safety concerns, no matter how small;
- some 83 per cent of the workforce agree
- that SSI is a safe place to work, learn and grow; and
- some 79 per cent of the workforce agrees SSI offers appropriate resources to support their wellbeing.

## **Case study**

### **Stepping into limelight with help from SSI**

Tyler Stackman has been passionate about art since an early age. Now, with help from SSI, he has transformed his substantial creative talents into a viable small business.

Tyler is a 24-year-old Thunghutti man from Walcha, a small town on the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales. After initially creating works with ink and paper, he progressed to acrylics, then later took up woodwork, crafting boomerangs and other cultural tools. His artwork uses bright, vibrant colours through to traditional earthy tones, dots, linework, ink drawings and carvings of traditional weapons and tools. He has recently finished a magnificent cloak made out of kangaroo skin.

During an exhibition at his local Aboriginal Culture Centre and Keeping Place, Tyler was introduced to the regional facilitator of SSI's Ignite® Small Business Start-up Program, Maggie Cairns. Ignite® aims to support First Nations people, those with disability, refugees, migrants and others from culturally and linguistically diverse communities to establish or expand a small business.

Tyler says Maggie took him "under her wing", supporting him to set up his online business, Garruka Arts, and connecting him to exhibition opportunities in Sydney. He was invited to showcase his artwork at SSI's annual New Beginnings Festival. In September 2022, Tyler was one of four Ignite® client artists to feature in the First Nations led exhibition 'Tribal Bloodline Connection' at the Stirrup Gallery in Marrickville. The exhibition was a partnership between Ignite® and Addison Road Community Centre.

The next step on Tyler's journey will be to take over as artist in residence at the Aboriginal Culture Centre and Keeping Place in Armidale, facilitating art exhibitions and running artist and culture workshops.

"The big thing that I want is to be able to make artwork and a living, but also to teach people about Aboriginal culture," Tyler says.

He loves talking to people about his paintings, drawings and objects and has plans to develop toolkits consisting of boomerangs, axes and other First Nations weapons made from local timber and stones, as a way to educate young people about traditional culture. The kangaroo cloak, on display at the culture centre, has also been a great talking point and an opportunity for people to learn more about the local Aboriginal people.

“I like to describe it as a multipurpose rug as well as a cloak,” Tyler says. “It’s a jacket, ground cover, it can also wrap up babies. In Aboriginal culture men made their own tools and weapons and you made your own cloak from scratch. It is practical in that it keeps out the sun and the cold, but it can be spiritual too and you can personalise it. It is a really good thing to teach people about because not a lot of people make them anymore.”

So far, the Ignite® Small Business Start-up program has helped establish more than 315 businesses. For more information about the program or to make an enquiry please visit [ignite.ssi.org.au](https://ignite.ssi.org.au)

## Our Reconciliation journey continues

SSI launched its ‘Innovate’ Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in December 2021. In February 2022, staff gathered to celebrate at our head office in Ashfield. A traditional smoking ceremony welcomed guests to the event. ABC International Affairs Analyst and Wiradjuri and Kamilaori man Stan Grant provided the keynote address, speaking about reconciliation and its meaning to First Nations people.

The First Nations Staff Network Yenmalibylia (the name means let’s walk together in the Dharug Language) is a space for our First Nations staff to come together and support each other in a culturally safe and appropriate way. SSI proudly recognises and celebrates Reconciliation week, Sorry Day, National Close the Gap Day and NAIDOC Week.

## Finance

SSI Group achieved a record-high revenue figure of \$140.82 million in FY2022 and delivered an operating surplus of \$1.57 million. The revenue figure represents a rise on FY2021, when a figure of \$129.57 million was achieved. This strong result reflects a gradual return to normal operating conditions for the organisation following the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. A key factor was the reopening of Australia’s international borders and the resumed flow of humanitarian entrants to the country following significant disruptions in FY2021. SSI is a major provider of the Commonwealth Government’s Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) and the scheme is a major source of revenue. Before the borders officially opened for travellers in February 2022, we had been working with humanitarian evacuees from Afghanistan for some months, and in the last two quarters of the year we supported HSP arrivals from the conflict in Ukraine and a range of other sources.

Simultaneously, our ongoing efforts to broaden our revenue base continued to deliver results. The Local Area Coordination program secured in FY2020 provided an ongoing major source of revenue across the year, and SSI won a multi-million-dollar contract to upskill the nation’s workforce under the Commonwealth’s Home Care Workforce Support Program. Unlike FY2021, during which JobKeeper payments were a revenue source, we received no revenue through COVID-19 support programs in FY2022.

A key internal factor influencing the result was work completed in FY2021 to create ‘One SSI’, a more cohesive and streamlined organisation across all the states in which we operate, and with duplicated roles and functions eliminated. The benefits of this work were felt in FY2022 in the form of improvements in efficiency and performance.

The net assets of SSI Group at the end of FY2022 stood at \$44.24 million, a decrease of \$829,000 from FY2021. The small net deficit recorded for the year is primarily a reflection

of how movements in the global investment market in the final quarter of FY2022 affected our investments. A weaker market, due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, lowered the value of these investments. Additionally, expenditure on several strategic initiatives – which had been deferred previously due to the pandemic – was undertaken in FY2022, as conditions largely returned to normal. These costs are also reflected in the result.

Looking at our performance over the past five years, there has been a clear upward growth trajectory in the revenue trend, with revenue rising from \$92.79 million in 2018 to \$140.82 million in FY2022. Government funding continues to be the organisation's major source of revenue, accounting for 96 per cent of revenue in FY2022.

Staff costs and client support costs continued, in line with the historical trend, to comprise a high proportion of the cost base. In FY2022, these components made up 87 per cent of total expenditure, a similar figure to FY2021.

The Statement of Financial Position shows an increase in current assets of nearly \$8.98 million, from \$35.09 million in FY2021 to \$44.02 million in FY2022. Our current liabilities rose \$13.76 million, from \$29.93 million in FY2021 to \$43.69 million in FY2022. The movement in these figures largely reflects upfront payments from the Commonwealth for the delivery of Home Care Workforce Support Program services. We anticipate delivering these services in FY2023.

The two graphs on the left show the expenditure mapped to program outcomes during FY2022. The outcomes reflect the goal of SSI Group to deliver specific and measurable results to improve the lives of both recently arrived clients and other cohorts in our broader communities. From FY2021 to FY2022, expenditure in the Safety and Stability domain rose from 39 per cent to 53 per cent of the total spend. This large rise reflects a return to near-normal levels of service provision through the HSP program, which was seriously disrupted in FY2021.

Both the Federal and various state governments' commitment to the program outcomes championed by SSI Group is reflected in the graph showing the outcomes by funding source.

### Improvements in budgeting

A new budgeting system aimed at increasing efficiency was implemented by SSI in FY2021. This was successfully used for all forecasting throughout FY2022. Meanwhile, the successful roll-out of universal procurement system during the year meant the entire organisation was for the first time using the same budgeting, finance and procurement resources.

It is pleasing to note that for the third year running, the audit of SSI's finances for the integrated report has been completed without audit adjustments. This is a positive reflection on the processes and systems that we have in place to manage the organisation's finances.

This year's strong financial result reinforces SSI Group's position as a leading provider of humanitarian settlement services and services for people with disability. We successfully weathered the challenges of the pandemic and have emerged eager to embrace new projects and with our highest revenue figure to date. The current backlog of humanitarian applicants to the country and the election of a new Federal Government in 2022 both point to a likely upturn in SSI's activity levels moving forward. The organisation has

demonstrated its ability to scale up as needed, and this opens the way for further growth and increased revenues in the future.

**2021–22 Annual Report  
Financial Summary**

	2021-22 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000
Revenue		
Operating Revenue	140,819	115,120
COVID -19 Support	-	14,455
Total Revenue	140,819	129,574
Expenditure		
Client Support Costs	42,351	25,500
Employee Benefits	79,553	78,942
Rents & Utilities	3,211	3,285
IT Expenses	1,205	1,975
Professional Fees	2,506	2,671
Depreciation Expenses	6,501	5,234
Finance costs	292	433
Loss on Sale of Fixed Assets	0	17
Other expenses	3,632	2,986
Total Expenditure	139,251	121,044
Net Operating Surplus	1,568	8,530
Revaluation of Property, Plant & Equipment	-	732
Market Movement in Financial Assists	(2,397)	2,153
Other Compressive Income	(2,397)	2,886
Net Surplus	(829)	11,416

**2021–22 Annual Report  
Statement of Financial Position**

	2021-22 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000
Assets		
Current	44,019	35,038
Non-current	18,025	17,830
Financial Assets	31,428	28,175
Total Assets	93,472	81,043
Liabilities		
Current	43,693	29,930
Non-current	5,537	6,041
Total Liabilities	49,229	35,971
Net Assets	44,243	45,072



## SSI Board

The SSI Board underwent change during FY2022, with Voula Messimeri elected as the new Chair and Tharani Jegatheeswaran joining as a new Director. The Board farewelled former Chair Elisabeth Shaw and Director Lucy Taksa.

### Voula Messimeri AM MAICD Chair

Voula's career has centred on building a stronger community and multicultural sector. She held roles including Chair of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, Deputy Chair of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, inaugural Chair of Women's Health in the North, and Chair of InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence.

As well as appointments on various ministerial state and federal advisory structures, she has been recognised under the Order of Australia for her contribution to refugees, migrants and women.

### Nathan Hagarty

Nathan Hagarty is a passionate advocate for Western Sydney. He is a Director of Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre, an SSI member organisation. He is a Councillor of Liverpool City Council and a Director of Active Super and Local Government NSW. Nathan has a Bachelor of International Studies from Western Sydney University.

### Tharani Jegatheeswaran

Tharani is a strong advocate for social impact, profit with purpose, corporate and social sector collaboration, and diversity and inclusion. She is a partner at Deloitte Australia and leads Deloitte's Social Impact Consulting Practice. Tharani has served on a number of boards, including as a Director of UNICEF Australia. She holds a Bachelor of Business degree from the University of Technology, Sydney and is a certified Chartered Accountant.

### Scott Machin

Scott Machin understands the key role finances play in managing not-for-profits. He is Chair of Metro Assist Limited, an SSI member organisation, and has extensive experience in the financial services industry. He is Chief Operating Officer at Deadly Science. Scott holds a Bachelor of Economics, Master of Business Administration, and a Graduate Diploma in Applied Finance and Investment.

### Alex McCauley

Alex McCauley's knowledge set stretches from entrepreneurship and international affairs. He is CEO and Executive Director of Australia's peak advocacy group for tech start-ups, StartupAUS. He is Chair of the Startup Advisory Panel for the Department of Home Affairs' Global Talent Scheme, and has advised policymakers at all levels of government. He represented Australia as a diplomat in Israel from 2012 to 2015.

### Elfa Moraitakis

Elfa Moraitakis' career has focused on developing the community sector for more than 25 years. She is the CEO of SydWest Multicultural Services, one of SSI's member organisations. Elfa has a degree in Sociology and Modern Greek (Honours) from the

University of NSW, and an Associate Diploma of Applied Management from the Australian Institute of Management.

## Frank Zheng

Frank Zheng has wide experience leading organisational change with proven positive outcomes. He is the CEO of Auburn Diversity Services, an SSI member organisation. He holds a Master of Applied Finance from Macquarie University Applied Finance Centre, along with significant experience in service delivery, case management, finance, HR, IT and operations at an organisational level.

For more information on Board Directors, visit [ssi.org.au/about-us/board-members](https://ssi.org.au/about-us/board-members).

## Governance

SSI recognises that a commitment to strong corporate governance, to transparency and to accountability is essential to our long-term performance and sustainability.

We achieve the best outcomes for our members, clients and other stakeholders when the actions of our people are subject to suitably high levels of scrutiny.

With this in mind, we regularly review our governance arrangements in line with good practice, expectations and regulation.

SSI's operations are overseen by a Board comprising up to four Independent Directors and up to four Member Directors. Member Directors are currently drawn from the boards and senior executive of SSI's Member organisations and, like our Independent Directors, are recruited based on merit. To that end, the Board actively seeks to ensure that it has a diverse directorship to effectively discharge its responsibilities and equip SSI for good governance. To assist in identifying areas of focus and maintaining an appropriate experience mix, the Board has developed a Board skills matrix that is regularly reviewed. The CEO reports directly to the Board, and the Board, in turn, is accountable to SSI's member organisations.

The Board has adopted a charter that details its role and responsibilities and Board appointments are made in accordance with our Constitution available on [ssi.org.au](https://ssi.org.au). A total of 7 Board meetings were held during the 2022 calendar year. On average, the Board Committees meet 6 times a year.

The work of the Board is supplemented by the meetings of the following committees of the Board: Finance and Audit; Risk and Compliance; Governance, Nominations and Remuneration; and Member Relations. Each committee performs 'deep dives' into particular areas of focus and concern, to enable the Board to meet its full obligations in an efficient way.

While the Governance, Nominations and Remuneration committee examines each of these focus areas in depth, the whole Board is required to be familiar with all aspects of governance and to be satisfied that members are informed and making the best possible decisions.

Our committee structure also plays an important role in allowing the Board to monitor operational, financial and risks across the organisation.

Meanwhile, complaints and compliments are routinely recorded and presented in a report to FY2021 AGM, November 2021 the Risk and Compliance committee and also to the Board. The Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee completes the

ACNC's self-evaluation tool on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance with the ACNC Governance Standards as well as a charity's other obligations.

One of the tasks of the Committee for Member Relations is to examine how SSI connects with its membership and how the membership model may be enhanced. Due to recent growth of the SSI membership, the Board is now able to draw Member Directors from an even wider pool, expanding the depth of experience on the board and further enhancing our governance structure. The Board also actively seeks to ensure that it has a diverse membership to effectively discharge its responsibilities and equip SSI for good governance.

Innovation is an important part of how SSI responds to community needs and, as a consequence, the Board has endorsed an innovation strategy.

In addition, any innovation requiring significant investment comes to the Board. We welcome and endorse the executive's creativity and ingenuity in seeking new ways to solve community problems.

Following the requirements of the ACNC Governance Standards, Corporations Act and our Constitution, Directors must declare any conflict of interest and abide by the Conflict of Interests Policy, including, in certain circumstances, abstaining from participating in discussions or votes.

The performance of the Board, associated committees, Directors and Chair is constantly reviewed, and the findings and recommendations of this review are provided to the Board. The Board and its committees have each adopted a Charter that sets the purpose, scope, key duties and membership in line with our Constitution. These Charters are supported by related governance policies that are approved and reviewed by the Board. The Board and committees are made aware of new or changing compliance requirements which may have a significant impact on business operations, service delivery or staff or client welfare.

## Membership and Partnership

Partnerships and collaborations with other organisations are crucial to SSI's operations.

The need for the services we deliver is so great and the opportunities to assist so large, that working together to pool skills, access complementary resources and extend into new areas is both smart and necessary.

SSI is itself the umbrella organisation for 15 migrant resource centres and multicultural services across NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland. We also lead the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP), a consortium of 21 entities comprised of 11 member organisations as well as nine community organisations located around the state. The NSP delivers settlement services in agreed areas of NSW under the Department of Home Affairs' Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program.

In FY2022 we expanded our membership to include four organisations, expanding our footprint and reach outside our migrant resource centre base.

## SSI member organisations

- Accessible Diversity Services Initiative Ltd
- Advance Diversity Services
- Community Migrant Resource Centre Inc.
- CORE Community Services
- Eastern Community Legal Centre

- Focus Connect
- Illawarra Multicultural Services Inc.
- Metro Assist
- Migrant Resource Centre (Northern Tasmania) Inc.
- Northern Settlement Services Ltd (name changed to Mosaic Multicultural Connections in 2022)
- Participate Australia Limited
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd
- Yumba-Meta Ltd

## NSW Settlement Partnership

### Consortium members

- Accessible Diversity Services Initiative Ltd
- Advance Diversity Services
- Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc.
- Community Migrant Resource Centre Inc.
- Community Northern Beaches Inc.
- Connecting Community Services
- CORE Community Services
- Focus Connect
- Gymea Community Aid and Information Services Inc.
- Illawarra Multicultural Services Inc.
- Lebanese Community Council of NSW
- Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services Inc.
- Melkite Catholic Welfare Association Inc.
- Metro Assist
- Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency Inc.
- Nepean Multicultural Access Inc.
- Northern Settlement Services Ltd
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd
- Northern Settlement Services Ltd
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd

## Glossary

Allianz	Allianz Australia
ARC	Australian Research Council

Arts	Arts Queensland
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
DCCD	Queensland Government Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
DCJ	NSW Department of Communities and Justice
DESBT	Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
DESE	Federal Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence program
DHA	Federal Government Department of Home Affairs
DoE	NSW Department of Education
DOHAC	Federal Government Department of Health and Aged Care
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
DSS	Federal Government Department of Social Services
EGSC	East Gippsland Shire Council
LAC	Local Area Coordination. A contract to deliver disability services to NDIS participants living in a particular area
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex, queer, asexual and questioning
LEAP	Leadership Empowerment Aspiration Participation program
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency The NDIA is the organisation that administers the National Disability Insurance Scheme
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NSP	NSW Settlement Partnership program
OPP	Opportunity Pathways program
PHN	Brisbane South Primary Health Network aims to improve accessibility to primary health
PiTC	Partners in the Community is an NDIA supplementary program comprised of Local Area Coordination and Early Childhood services
VRGF	Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
VSG	Victorian Government Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
WNSW	Women NSW

### **How can you help?**

**get in touch with SSI to volunteer, donate, fundraise or collaborate**

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[ssi.org.au](http://ssi.org.au)

@settlementservicesinternational @SSI\_tweets  
Settlement-Services-International @SSI\_news

**Volunteer:**

t: 1800 912 823

e: [volunteer@ssi.org.au](mailto:volunteer@ssi.org.au)