



annual report 2016-17

our vision

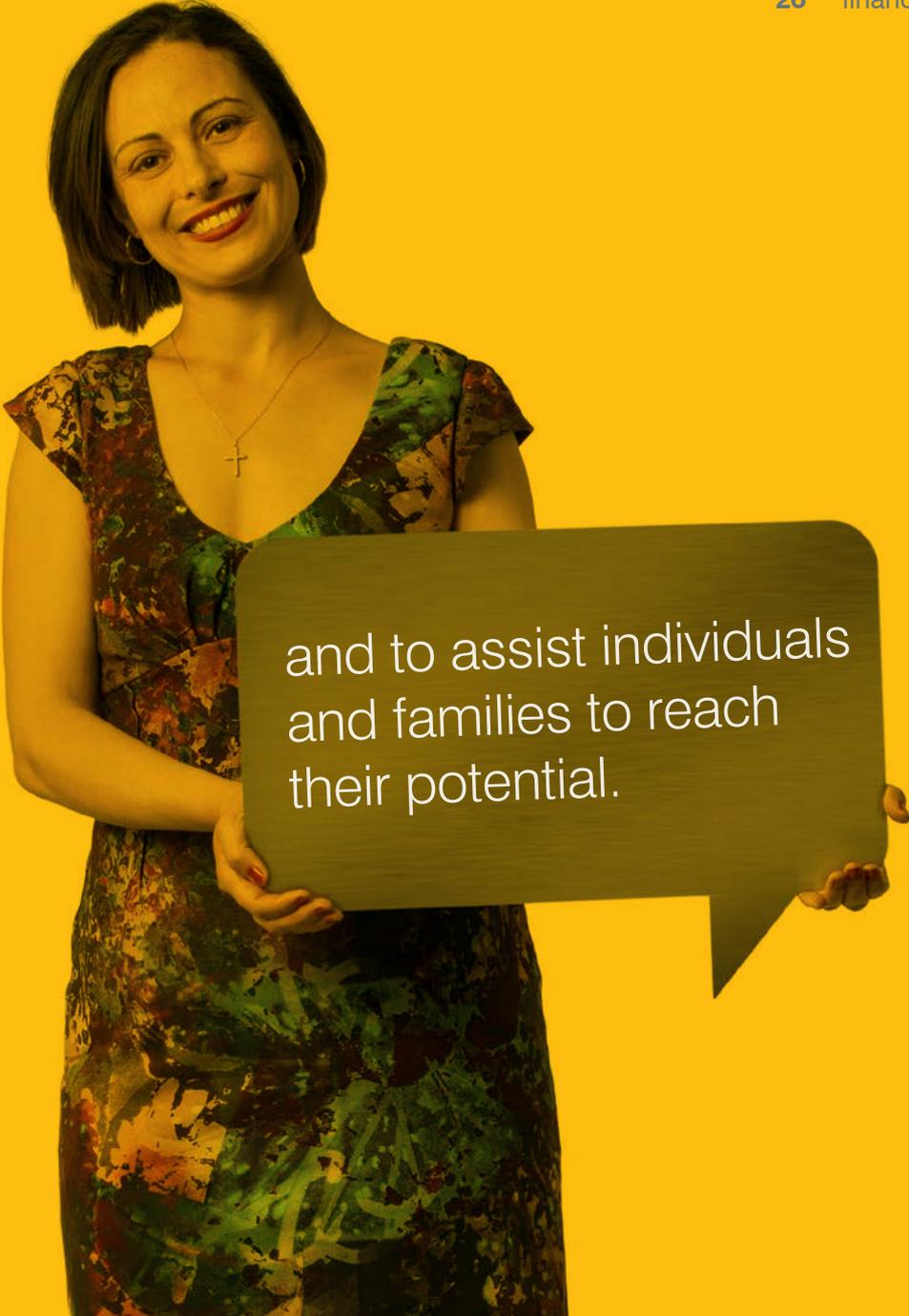
to achieve a society
that values the diversity
of its people...

and actively provides
support to ensure
meaningful social
and economic
participation...



annual report 2016-17

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A woman with short dark hair, wearing a floral patterned dress and a necklace with a cross, is smiling and holding a large, dark green speech bubble. The background is a solid yellow color.

and to assist individuals
and families to reach
their potential.



10,000+
refugees

supported by SSI
to settle in Australia

SSI supported
1,083

refugees and people
seeking asylum and

135

people with disability
to find a job



2,064

households secured
long-term accommodation
through SSI Housing



2016-17 impact

27

people supported
by SSI to start their own
small business



1,500+

people gained work experience
through SSI's
social enterprises



20,000

nights of emergency
accommodation provided
by SSI

800+

media stories about SSI
reached up to
416.2 million people





\$90,000+

in educational scholarships awarded to refugees by SSI and Allianz Australia

216 young refugees' views shared with UNHCR by the Youth Collective, in collaboration with the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network



19,520

clients came through the doors of SSI offices



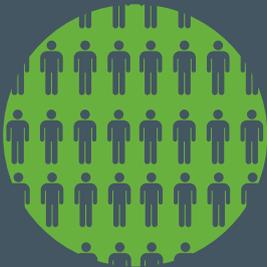
18



people seeking asylum participated in the iconic City2Surf, supported by SSI

10,820+

families connected with their community during Community Hubs activities



1,500+

blankets provided to individuals and families during winter, with support from SSI, Wrap with Love and Hillsong

50+

artists developed their craft through SSI Arts & Culture activities



400 community members and

100 corporate employees volunteered their time

highlights



August 2016 | Team Strong and United run City2Surf

A team of staff, volunteers and people supported by SSI participated in the City2Surf for the first time, raising \$10,000 by undertaking the 14km run.



September 2016 | SSI Allianz Refugee Scholarships launched

Partnering with Allianz Australia, SSI offered 46 scholarships to help refugees minimise barriers to participating in education.



November 2016 | National Multicultural Women's Conference

SSI and the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia amplified the voices of women from diverse backgrounds by co-hosting the inaugural National Multicultural Women's Conference.



March 2017 | Ignite Report launched

At SSI's first event to be held at Parliament House in Canberra, Federal Minister Craig Laundy MP launched the final evaluation report of Ignite Small Business Start-ups.



March 2017 | Harmony Day/Nowruz celebration

Hundreds of members of the SSI community celebrated Australia's vibrant and multicultural society with a joint Harmony Day and Nowruz event.



March 2017 | Staff and innovation recognised in national awards

SSI's innovative employment support was recognised with a win at the 2017 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards, where staff member Adam Bujairami also won Case Worker of the Year.



April 2017 | Oceans Without Borders

Newly arrived young people from Syria and Iraq learned to keep themselves and their friends safe in the Australian surf on an outing to Manly Beach.



April 2017 | E3 Forum

More than 200 young refugees spent a day developing fundamental settlement skills at SSI's E3 Youth Forum, held at the Inner West Council's Refugee Welcome Centre.



June 2017 | SSI Speakers' Series goes Vivid

Comedians, authors and other high profile Australians debated the importance of cultural boundaries in creative industries at a special SSI Speakers' Series event held as part of Vivid Ideas.



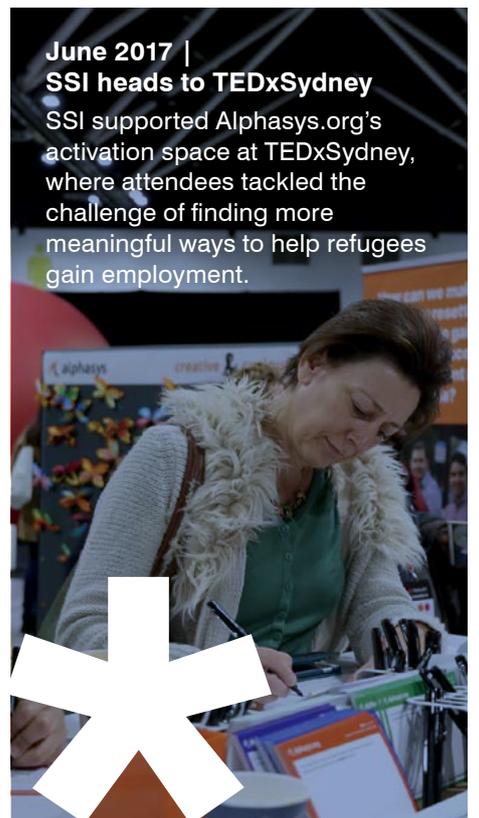
June 2017 | New Beginnings Festival for Refugee Week

The first component of the 2017 New Beginnings: Refugee Arts & Culture Festival kicked off in Refugee Week with an art exhibition, film screenings, workshops and more.



June 2017 | Refugee Week launch

SSI was a major sponsor of Refugee Week— an annual week of celebrations coordinated by the Refugee Council of Australia that acknowledges the rich contributions refugees make to Australia.



June 2017 | SSI heads to TEDxSydney

SSI supported Alphasys.org's activation space at TEDxSydney, where attendees tackled the challenge of finding more meaningful ways to help refugees gain employment.

The past five years at SSI have seen significant diversification that has only accelerated as we have grown. Our client groups are now as varied as the Australian population, representing everyone from refugees to people with disability, to long-term job seekers, to children in foster care.

The 2016-17 financial year has been a time of reflection about what lies ahead for SSI and strategic planning to ensure we are prepared to capitalise on the challenges and opportunities to come. Over the past few years SSI has taken up many such challenges and opportunities — to the benefit of the people and communities we support. We have developed and nurtured more than 45 partnerships and collaborations that have reaped extraordinary benefits for everyone involved and, more importantly, for our communities.

With input from more than 240 members of the wider SSI ecosystem, we have developed our strategic plan for 2017–2020,

to help people at a stage in their lives when they are experiencing vulnerability — whether it be through unemployment, forced displacement, homelessness or any of the other areas in which we provide services. This diversity has extended to establishing social enterprises, working closely with members of the corporate sector that wish to play a role in assisting refugees into employment, and expanding our start-up incubator, Ignite Small Business Start-ups, to include entrepreneurs with disability.

People are at the centre of our work, with a range of responses to their evolving needs. For example, we recently became a community housing provider in order to increase the supply of emergency housing. We have also partnered with investors to increase the production of modular granny flats as part of our affordable housing strategy. This work can only be done with the support of our funding bodies, donors, member organisations and partners, who believe in building strong, diverse communities.

Listening to our stakeholders and the people we support is critical to ensuring SSI stays true to our vision of achieving a society that values the diversity of its people and actively provides support to ensure meaningful social and economic participation and to assist individuals and families to reach their potential. Retaining these communications pathways is key to creating an environment conducive to building community, social capital and access to opportunities.



from the CEO | Violet Roumeliotis

which will drive SSI's next phase of development and continue to do so in an innovative, values driven, ethical and person-centred way.

No organisational vision can be actualised without a constant eye on innovation and flexibility and, most of all, without the hard work of many people. We continue to diversify our offering

At SSI, we are driven by the aspiration to enable better life outcomes for those who have great strength and resilience yet do not always have the pathway to achieve their full potential. We recognise we have an important role to play in amplifying vulnerable voices to ensure they reach key local, national and international decision makers.

Elisabeth Shaw took on the role of SSI Chair in November 2016. She brings extensive experience in a range of professional settings, including in her current role as CEO of Relationships Australia NSW.

How has your career to date prepared you for this role?

I have spent my whole career in the not-for-profit sector so I understand the values, purpose and challenges well. My original training as a family therapist assists me in working with the Board as a group, as well as thinking holistically about the organisation and its relationships with members and the people SSI supports. My training and work with The Ethics Centre provides the scaffolding through which I commit to delivering on the organisational values and principled governance. I am a life-long learner and bower bird when it comes to knowledge, so expect my learning to continue.

What do you see as the biggest opportunity for SSI?

We are looking at opportunities all the time in relation to extending effective services to the people we support. We have to keep considering what is best to offer in house and when to partner, as we don't want to spread ourselves too thin. We are also discussing whether we stay focused on a state presence, or whether we expand. Through technology such as the New Roots app and other products, we already work in ways that are not geographically bound.

What do you see as the main challenges facing SSI?

SSI has to keep maturing and to remain responsive to the external environment. Its success depends on being agile, creative and a thought leader in the sector. Ensuring internal governance structures are in place to support growth is crucial. Our strength is our unity, so we also need to keep maturing our relationships with members and other partners.

What is the role of the Board in helping the executive team develop, nurture and encourage all of those working in SSI?

We are committed not just to being a "rubber stamp" in relation to governance, but really ensuring that we work at our distinct roles effectively too. One of our most important roles is to support the CEO to achieve on the strategic plan and to have the resources she needs to run a high-functioning



meet the Chair | Elisabeth Shaw

organisation. We take seriously all sources of information that reflect how the organisation is functioning, beyond what we hear directly from the executive.

What style do you bring to your role as SSI Chair?

For me, everything rests on good relationships, so my task is to establish a cohesive board culture where we can have healthy discussions, debate and disagree. Good relationships with the CEO and leadership team are equally crucial, ensuring that relationships are respectful but also challenging in service of growth. I don't come to the role as an "expert" but I am there to bring a particular skill set. I aim to model the idea that people need to deliver, but they can also be learning on the job — we are all works in progress!

In your time with SSI, you have come into contact with many people supported by SSI.

Who has made a particular impact on you?

The people I have come to know in more detail are the staff who were previously supported by SSI, and those who are benefitting from the Ignite enterprise. Hearing the stories told by people starting their own businesses as a magician, hairdresser and tennis coach really fuels my determination to assist.



Business Development at SSI

The reporting year saw SSI secure new funding streams in areas including employment, disabilities and youth. The Business Development team led whole of organisation assessments of funding and growth opportunities, along with coordinating and resourcing SSI's responses to a range of tendering opportunities.

Identifying ways to enhance SSI's service delivery is a key role of this team. This year SSI became a sponsor organisation for Work Development Orders (WDOs) as a way of releasing vulnerable individuals from the stress and negative effects associated with debt. WDOs enable eligible people to engage in approved activities in order to clear fines from violations such as traffic offences. SSI is currently sponsoring vulnerable individuals to clear more than \$30,000 of debt.

what we stand for

People, prosperity and partnership are at the heart of SSI's approach to achieving its vision of a society that values the diversity of its people and actively supports meaningful social and economic participation to assist individuals and families to reach their full potential.

We provide services and support to refugees, people seeking asylum, migrants, children in foster care, youth, people with disability, and those experiencing disadvantage. SSI works hard to add value by building a reputation as an innovator, collaborator and responsive provider of service excellence to meet the complex needs of vulnerable individuals and families.

An integrated set of values, evidence and operating principles, underpins SSI's strengths-based, client-centred services. Creating sustainable, realistic and responsive outcomes for the thousands of individuals we serve every year drives our business. Supported by strong governance, SSI aims to make every dollar count.

We take our responsibility as a leader in our field seriously. Our success builds on a foundation of trust, active listening and engagement with individuals, families, members, stakeholders and the wider community. We have learnt what works well and embraced an appetite for continuous improvement and innovation to meet emerging needs. It is a journey, and one we are all on together. SSI recognises no one can do it alone. Together, through the integration of diverse expertise, customisation and shared goals, we can transform lives and have the most profound impact.

SSI puts people first. We look beyond the immediate needs of individuals and communities and invest in their aspirations. We create solutions to build value and a sense of belonging as members of our community.

For most of the people we support, family is at the core. They want their children to prosper, and enjoy an abundance of prospects and high quality of life here in Australia. SSI ensures that, from the early years, opportunities for growth and development can wrap around families. We proudly lead the Community Hubs program in more than 22 sites in Sydney.

Our aim of keeping families strong has also led to initiatives such as our Multicultural Foster Care program, which ensures children in care receive support to learn about and maintain a connection to their culture, religion and language. Recognition of the importance of identity and belonging drives our involvement in youth development activities, from school retention programs to transition into work.

SSI sees arts, culture, sports, volunteering and community engagement as strong features of social participation. Platforms such as these pave a way forward to help connect communities through local networks and build confidence and life skills.

Our specialist partnerships with organisations such as Legal Aid NSW, NSW Health and the NSW Police facilitate access to the right support at the right time — often when people are at their most

vulnerable. Our work with our member migrant resource centres also plays a vital role by applying a localised lens to our work. Their insight and expertise informs the identification of service gaps and opportunities to create meaningful solutions together. Through the NSW Settlement Partnership's Innovation Fund, we've also provided a vehicle for generating local responses outside the scope of funded services to significantly contribute to social cohesion and capability. Strengthening our regions through pilot regional settlement initiatives such as in Mungoola exemplifies this.

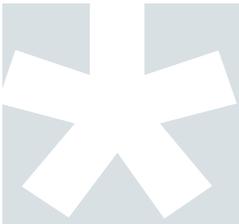
We recognise that one of the most effective ways to help the people we support is through economic participation; building a true sense of identity and contribution in one's life. This has led to our extensive investment in research, service design, corporate partnerships and social enterprises. These award-winning employment initiatives cater for individual life circumstances. Programs such as ParentsNext, EmployAbility, Youth@Work and Ignite Small Business Start-ups illustrate our tailored approach to better career pathways and access to work.

SSI has invested time, expertise and financial resources to build capacity and strengthen the wider community service ecosystem. Our strong and sustainable service network will ensure that every member of our community remains connected, supported and empowered to thrive.





supporting new community



Research and Policy at SSI

In 2016-17, an evaluation of SSI's HSS service delivery conducted by the University of Wollongong found stronger settlement outcomes among people supported by SSI when assessed against a comparison group.

An evaluation of the New Roots project - a partnership with beyondblue/ Movember that developed and piloted digital strategies in NSW to address the health and wellbeing of newly arrived men on humanitarian visas - found high levels of engagement and recommended a national rollout. SSI also entered into formal partnerships in two initiatives funded by the Australian Research Council. A longitudinal study, led by the Refugee Trauma and Recovery Program at UNSW, is exploring the psychological adaptation of humanitarian entrants with secure and insecure residency, while a study, led by UTS, is examining the entrepreneurial strengths of people with disability.



members

Tailored support during the different stages of settlement is key to helping refugees, migrants and other humanitarian entrants reach their full potential in Australia.

At SSI, this begins upon arrival to Australia, where the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program provides refugees and humanitarian entrants with essential settlement support and information for the first six to 12 months in the country. We are looking forward to continuing our long-term work in this area when the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) replaces HSS on October 30, 2017.

SSI successfully tendered for two of the 11 newly defined HSP contract regions: Sydney and Regional NSW, which includes Newcastle, Coffs Harbour and Armidale. Winning these two regions was only possible due to the dedication, skill and passion of our staff in securing excellent outcomes for refugees.

In 2016-17, SSI supported more than 10,000 refugees through the early days of settlement — an unprecedented number buoyed by the one-off intake of refugees from Syria and Iraq. More than 7,000 of the 12,000 intake settled in Sydney.

It is a testament to the diligence and professionalism of the HSS team that this dramatic increase in arrival numbers was accommodated with no change in service quality.

The work of the HSS team was recognised with two high-profile accolades. Staff member Adam Bujairami won Case Worker of the Year at the 2017 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards, while his colleague Romal Baluchzada took out the top spot on *Pro Bono Australia's* 2016 Impact 25 — a list of the most influential figures in the social sector as decided by more than 18,500 votes.

In 2016-17, SSI provided short-term accommodation to 1,446 households on arrival to Australia, which was 33 per cent higher than the combined figure for the prior three years. We also assisted 2,064 households to secure long-term accommodation in areas ranging from Sydney's northern beaches to Penrith.

While Sydney's rental prices continue to climb, we always look at strategies to assist people to find cheaper housing. Local excursions, for example, introduce new arrivals to alternate settlement locations with more available, affordable housing options.



Syrian brothers getting on with the job

It's been a big year for Syrian brothers Sarkis and Garen Keshishian. With decades of experience as mechanics, working on cars has been a way of life for the brothers, who learned the ropes from relatives in their home city of Aleppo. Life has taken a different path since the onset of the Syrian war, but the brothers have quickly found their feet since coming to Australia as refugees.

With support from SSI, the duo secured work in their field within months of arrival. Sarkis and Garen are now undertaking further studies to achieve their goals of becoming a specialist mechanic and mechanical engineer, respectively.

"We want to progress right to the top of the stairs, but we are taking one step at a time," Garen said.



Next steps

Upon exiting HSS, refugees who continue to need support are connected with one of the 23 organisations that comprise the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) — a consortium, led by SSI, that provides settlement support to recently arrived migrants and refugees across much of Sydney and parts of regional NSW.

Using grassroots experience in their local communities, the NSP's high-quality, integrated services support self-reliance, equitable participation in Australian society and, as a consequence, promote social cohesion and productive diversity within the Australian community.

During the financial year, the NSP increased its focus on innovation, growing its Settlement Innovation Fund to 25 projects. Projects funded under this initiative involve experimentation and innovation across the settlement sector in Sydney and NSW, such as an employment mentoring project, an access to tenancy initiative and a regional resettlement initiative.

SSI also supports migrant and refugee families to strengthen their connections with their local communities through the NSW Community Hubs program. The program expanded significantly between 2016 and 2017, growing from 12 to 22 hubs that are mostly based in primary schools in five local government areas.

More than 10,820 families from 64 nationalities attended hub activities during the year, including playgroups, bilingual reading, transition to school programs, English classes, parenting and information sessions, and "soft" entry programs, such as swimming groups, which build confidence and social networks. Parents can also

take part in more formal training programs that build employment skills and work readiness. As a result of these programs, 54 women have gained employment.

In recognition of its work, the NSW Community Hubs received a Highly Commended in the Exceptional Community Partnership Project Across a Region category at the 2017 ZEST Awards.

People seeking asylum

Collaboration forms a key part of the work done by SSI's Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) to assist people seeking asylum in Australia who are waiting for their immigration status to be resolved. Staff members have, for example, worked closely with the Refugee Advice and Casework Service to provide a space to support people seeking asylum in lodging visa applications — a crucial and difficult task at present.

Over the past three years, the SRSS team has also helped more than 1,700 people secure work, which gives individuals independence and a huge sense of self-confidence. Other ways staff members have gone above and beyond their contractual obligations include applying a new domestic violence assessment tool and running regional excursions to show individuals and families alternative settlement options.

SRSS has played a leading role in forming cross-sector collaborations with funded and unfunded services to assist vulnerable individuals and families who have exhausted their options for remaining in Australia long term. This has, to an extent, created a temporary but coordinated support network within which they can make a decision about their future.



Clinical Practice Unit at SSI

The specialist clinicians in SSI's Clinical Practice Unit (CPU) provide consultation and culturally sensitive support to any case matters of a complex nature for children, families and other people supported by SSI.

During 2016-17, CPU provided more than 250 sessions to foster care families and/or children and more than 300 to families from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds.

Specialists from CPU also contribute to the learning and development of SSI staff and stakeholders, delivering training in areas including mental health, suicide intervention skills, foster care, reflective practice, domestic and family violence, and more. For SSI staff and other stakeholders, this work brings their practice to the fore in practical and innovative ways.

achieving economic independence

Innovation is key to disrupting cycles of long-term unemployment and other barriers that prevent people from gaining sustainable, meaningful employment. At SSI, our Employment and Enterprises team works from the perspective that all people have the ability — and deserve the opportunity — to engage in meaningful work that supports their livelihoods.

We provide effective interventions to bypass barriers and support people on the path to sustainable employment — highlighting individuals' skills, not the challenges they face.

During 2016-17, we assisted thousands of people to gain employment, whether that be through entering the workplace or starting their own business. We supported into employment 1,083 refugees and people seeking asylum and 135 people with disability.

Some 27 people also started their own business with assistance from our small business incubator, Ignite Small Business Start-ups. In March 2017, an independent evaluation of Ignite found that it “has been very successful” in its three years of operation, with 73 refugee entrepreneurs successfully starting a business.

During the year, we also launched additional SSI-funded employment initiatives, including IgniteAbility and EmployAbility (a finalist in the National Employment Services Association's 2017 Awards for Excellence) that give employment and enterprise support to people with a disability (see page 19).

The success of our employment and enterprise projects was recognised when we were awarded the Settlement Innovation Award at the 2017 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards.

One of our strengths is the strong understanding of the needs of the communities we support. We use this knowledge to devise innovative solutions to employment barriers, such as a lack of work experience, facing refugees, people seeking asylum, young people and people with disability. Work experience is often a prerequisite to gaining employment, but this excludes many people from the workforce as they cannot gain experience without first having a job. We help people to break this cycle by offering work experience in SSI's social enterprises (see page 18).

We also partner with employers to reduce other recruitment barriers, such as a lack of perfect English, preventing a skilled candidate from progressing to the interview stage. When employers are presented with these candidates face to face, they can see past their imperfect English to a highly talented future staff member. In 2016-17, we had great success partnering with companies including Clubs NSW, Allianz Australia, Kmart, Marsh & McLennan Companies, Bayside, Woolworths, Master Builders Association, and Bayside City Council.

The reach of our work in the future will only increase after SSI was awarded multiple new government contracts in 2016-17, including the Career Pathways Pilot (CPP), the Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP), the Youth Employment Program (YEP) and the Youth Pathways and Placement Pilot (YPPP) (see page 18).





Meet Diana Drooj

Diana Drooj is highly experienced and qualified in her field of IT. Originally from Syria, Diana came to Australia as a refugee and was finding it hard to find employment due to a lack of local work experience. SSI supported Diana to develop her resume and interview skills and she later undertook work experience with SSI while she was completing a training course.

A few weeks into her work experience, SSI supported Diana to apply for a role with the NSW public sector. Diana is now working for the NSW Department of Finance as a Cyber Security Developer.

“When I first met with SSI Employment, they asked me if I wanted to start working. I said yes, but didn’t feel confident I was ready. SSI helped me with my confidence; they offered me work experience assisting their employment team with administrative tasks. Overtime, I started to feel good about myself and now I have a job that I love,” Diana said.



Government and Member Relations at SSI

SSI’s work in the government and member relations domain is an essential component of our broader commitment to engaging authentically with our diverse stakeholders.

We work towards helping decision makers understand the impact of our work on the lives of everyday people, to ensure meaningful human services programs are designed and supported.

As we are co-located with many of our 11 member organisations, our capacity to provide local assistance to communities is enhanced. For our member organisations, co-location expands their service delivery offerings.

SSI has been able to broker the provision of essential legal advice in local communities through a partnership with Legal Aid NSW and our member organisations. The evaluation has shown a positive, effect on communities previously experiencing barriers to accessing legal services, highlighting the value of collaborating with members and key partners.

A critical part of our dialogue with members during 2016-17 was The Strategy Group, comprising CEOs of our member organisations and SSI’s CEO and Government and Member Relations Manager. Members of The Strategy Group come together to work on matters of common interest to both our organisations and most importantly, our constituencies.





empowering young people

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

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

During 2016-17, 933 young people from refugee, migrant and asylum seekers backgrounds participated in Youth Collective activities that focused on themes including employment, education and English.

As one youth leader, George Najarian, explained: "Youth Collective has introduced me to many opportunities and networks I wouldn't otherwise have accessed." With support from the Youth Collective and the Youth@Work program (see information to the right), George has participated in conferences, connected with opportunities to enhance his university studies and found employment as a jewellery designer.

Its work during the year earned the Youth Collective recognition at the 2017 ZEST Awards as a finalist for Outstanding Youth-led

Project in Greater Western Sydney. Additionally, Dor Akech Achiek, Youth Projects Coordinator, took the feedback and views of Youth Collective participants to an international stage during a number of critical forums such as the UNHCR's annual consultations with non-government organisations.

Getting a foot in the door

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

SSI supports young people aged 15 to 24 to overcome barriers to employment through the government-funded Youth Pathways and Placement Program (YPPP) and Smart, Skilled and Hired – Youth Employment Program (YEP), which began in June and August 2017, respectively.

Through an in-house work experience centre, participants receive relevant, hands-on experience in administration, and retail and customer services within SSI and its social enterprises.

Both programs are still in their infancy but YPPP has had several

early successes. To date, 37 young people have taken part in the program — exceeding the initial target of 30 — and nine have secured employment within two months of beginning YPPP.

The employment challenges facing young people do not always end upon securing their first job. This is particularly so for youth from migrant and refugee backgrounds, whose lack of knowledge about the local employment environment and workplace expectations can make it difficult to retain work and identify long-term career goals.

Through SSI's Youth@Work program, young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds who are aged 15–24 years and engaged in employment or education are linked with experienced volunteer mentors. Mentors support the young people to retain their employment or map out their education options and, ultimately, identify the pathway to their career goals.

The program innovates through the methods by which mentors connect with participants, which include the use of virtual blackboards and other apps, and video calls, phone, email, text or in person meetings.



Strategic Policy at SSI

Innovation is central to SSI's Strategic Policy work due to the opportunities that arise when an innovative approach leads to unexpected results. An example of this in practice was a Techfugees event that SSI supported in 2016-17 where, over a weekend, refugees and the tech community came together to design digital solutions to settlement issues.

The area of Strategic Policy responds with agility to emerging public policy and program issues that affect vulnerable communities. Approaches to address arising issues are manifold but usually involve a cross-organisational approach. An example of that is the new cross-organisational Domestic and Family Violence committee. The committee has already finalised screening procedures for one program area and made decisions about information materials and educational approaches that will have positive ramifications for all communities SSI supports.



Meet BPI

BPI is working in a restaurant while he finishes high school, but his ultimate goal is to be a teacher. The 22-year-old is hardworking, community minded and, on paper, the ideal candidate for a teaching role. But he's also facing challenges that some of his peers aren't. BPI has only been living in Australia for two years, prior to which he lived in a refugee camp in Thailand. Even at that point, however, he was working towards his goal, giving basic lessons in English and maths to other children in the camp.

"We have very low levels of English in my country, so to teach English is very hard," he said. "I hope that one day I have good English and can go back to where I came from and teach children. I want to help other people as much as I can."

With support from his mentor Diana, who is a teacher, BPI has broken down his long-term goal into smaller, achievable steps, including improving his English language skills, completing high school, and becoming a teacher's aide.

"I can see it's not hard to achieve my goal. I just needed a pathway. For somebody who wants to be supported and successful, it's really great to have a mentor that you can talk to."



innovating and evolving

Working closely with a diverse range of communities gives SSI unique insight into their strengths, needs and challenges. It enables us to identify areas where more can be done to help people fulfil their potential and to use innovation to close these gaps.



People and Culture at SSI

This year the PAC team worked alongside leaders to deliver YourVoice, our first ever employee engagement survey, where staff shared thoughts and insights on what it is like to work at SSI.

With 89 per cent of people responding, the survey was a fantastic opportunity to hear the voice of our staff. One particularly positive response saw 97 per cent of staff indicate they're prepared to put in the extra effort to get the job done.

Another key PAC initiative during the year was the introduction of the 70-20-10 learning methodology and mindset. This recognises that about 70 per cent of learning occurs on the job, 20 per cent is learned from other people and 10 per cent is learned in classroom-based environments. We are now working toward mixing up our learning to cover all aspects of this methodology, including introducing an online learner management system with flexible learning opportunities.

Housing

SSI is committed to both supporting people experiencing homelessness and using innovation to contribute to the supply of affordable housing. During 2016-17, we provided more than 20,000 nights of emergency housing assistance to vulnerable community members — many of whom are supported by SSI's other services.

We also facilitated 73 long-term tenancies as part of our strategy to improve access to the private rental market for vulnerable individuals and families, and we provided property management services to ethical landlords who were interested in achieving social, as well as financial, returns.

During the year, SSI launched its Modular Housing initiative. This unique project aims to increase the number of affordable private rental dwellings on the market by working with a developer that provides quick-built, affordable and durable modular housing. SSI's role is to identify willing landlords for investment, provide ongoing property management services and source tenants.

At the 2017 Zest Awards, SSI Housing was a finalist in the Exceptional Project within a Not-for-Profit Organisation category.

Social enterprises

SSI's portfolio of five social enterprises recognises that innovation is key to supporting vulnerable individuals in securing sustainable employment.

In addition to the service or product each social enterprise provides, they also offer work experience to people experiencing unemployment, enabling them to prepare for employment in a range of industries. At our low-cost supermarket The Staples Bag, for example, participants gain warehousing, merchandising, retail and customer service skills.

In 2016-17, more than 1,500 people gained work experience through these social enterprises, with many going on to gain employment with organisations including Woolworths, Coles, Barringtons and UNHCR.

The Staples Bag's accolades in 2016-17 included winner of the 2017 Zest Award for Exceptional Project within a Not-For-Profit Organisation, winner of a 2016 NSW Environmental Trust's Organics Infrastructure Grant, and winner in the 2017 Canterbury-Bankstown ClubGRANTS Program.

Our other social enterprises include homewares maker Humble Creatives, and Cater Connect (previously SSI Catering), which provides catering services and frozen meals. We have also recently launched Food For Thought — a food truck run by refugees that produces Middle Eastern and Asian cuisine — and The Experience Centre, a simulated office environment where new arrivals develop professional skills.



Employment for people of all abilities

SSI has recently introduced two initiatives to ensure people of all abilities have the opportunity to achieve their career aspirations.

EmployAbility is a tailored employment service supporting people with disability to achieve their employment and educational goals. Inspired by the success of Ignite Small Business Start-ups, SSI also launched IgniteAbility to meet the specific needs of entrepreneurs with disability, and their family and carers.



To date, the IgniteAbility team has helped 10 entrepreneurs start their business and supported a total of 38 potential entrepreneurs. One particular highlight for IgniteAbility since its inception in December 2016 is a partnership with Cumberland Council that has given catering start-ups access to a commercial kitchen. One of those entrepreneurs, Simon Javari, has achieved incredible results in a short period, catering for a number of corporate events and even some prominent politicians.



Both IgniteAbility and EmployAbility are initiatives of SSI Ability Links (ALNSW), which works with people with disability to achieve individual goals and with communities to become more inclusive and welcoming for all. Through ALNSW, SSI has also initiated a 12-month traineeship placement for people studying a Certificate IV in various disciplines and providing on-the-job mentoring and learning.



Meet Ming

Until recently, 62-year-old Ming Zhong was one of the many Australians struggling to provide care to family members with a disability. Besides being a sole carer for his wife, who has a physical disability and mental health issues, and for his mother, diagnosed with dementia, Ming also lived with his daughter and her two young children.

Ming's low level of English had made it difficult for him to understand what support was available for people with disability and their carers but, with help from an SSI Linker in the ALNSW program this was soon rectified.

Ming learned about how his family could access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and began to feel more comfortable in his role as carer. His SSI Linker also found his daughter was eligible for social housing, and she and her children moved out of the two-bedroom unit the family of six had previously shared.

"The situation at home has improved a lot and now I know there is someone out there to help me, which is a great relief," he said.



Diversity and inclusion

SSI strengthened its work in accessibility and inclusion in 2016-17 with the appointment of Disability Inclusion Promotion Officer Javier Paul Ortiz.

Connecting with businesses, local governments and community groups across the disability and multicultural sectors, Javier works to ensure people with disability of diverse backgrounds are better included in the community and the workforce.

Javier also plays an important role in driving inclusion internally at SSI. This year SSI invested in disability awareness and diversity training for all staff members, interested volunteers and staff from partner organisations. Our website achieved a WGA2 accreditation, making it accessible for people who use adaptive equipment.

SSI partnered with Job Access to improve the inclusiveness of our recruitment and has adopted event practices to facilitate participation for all. We have also become members of the Australian Network on Disability (AND), which is a leader in supporting all areas of businesses in working towards a disability inclusive workforce.



CALD communities

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

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

Working with CALD communities is key to finding CALD foster carers. It requires talking with groups, at their pace, exploring ideas regarding child protection and fostering. It took more than 12 months to find Malaysian/Chinese-Cantonese speaking carers for a 12-year-old Cantonese-speaking child. The investment is invaluable.

In 2016-17, the number of children we cared for increased by 15 per cent. We remained committed to evidence-based permanency outcomes including restoration, guardianship, adoption and long-term care. Over 90 per cent of children who had been returned home were still with their family.

We continued to be encouraged by children's aspirations. As one child Charlie put it, "being in foster care is not a deterrent to dreaming big. I see myself as a vet and I will do more than just represent NSW in athletics."

SSI also engages with CALD communities through the FutureAbility project, with the aim of increasing their knowledge and participation in the NDIS.

Building on its work in 2015-16 to assist ethno-specific and multicultural organisations to become NDIS ready, the FutureAbility project in April 2017 began to roll out innovative activities designed to meet existing needs and gaps in CALD communities themselves.

These included coordinating the first state-wide conference on CALD disability and the NDIS, and producing multilingual audio segments for broadcast on ethnic radio channels to capture listeners who were immobile, isolated, vision challenged, elderly or unable to read in their own language. The FutureAbility project was a finalist for the National Disability Service Awards in February 2017.

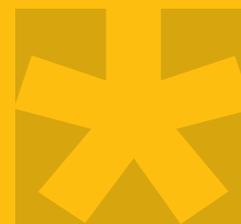
ALNSW is another area of the SSI organisation that offers tailored support for multicultural communities. While ALNSW works with people from all backgrounds, many Linkers are bilingual and bicultural, which makes it easier for people with disability from CALD backgrounds to feel supported to achieve their goals.

During the financial year, ALNSW supported 6,814 people with disability, their families and carers and made 46,874 connections with the community. Of those people supported 48 per cent were from CALD communities.

The program also provides individuals with facilitated support to pursue their goals and aspirations. An outcome is a "link" that ALNSW facilitated to help participants meet goals in areas such as social (34 per cent of outcomes in FY16-17) and employment connections (15 per cent).

Community development and engagement continued to be an important focus for ALNSW

during 2016-17. For example, ALNSW collaborated with local councils and other not-for-profit organisations to build inclusive play spaces, art exhibitions and cultural festivals focused on the strength within communities. SSI ALNSW also launched an ambassadors' program, giving participants the platform to share their stories with the community.



Corporate Communications at SSI

One of the most important jobs of SSI's Corporate Communications team is to share stories from the communities we support in order to influence the public narrative about vulnerable individuals and families. This is achieved through relationships with media, and producing original and engaging social media content.

During the year, SSI reached up to 416.2 million people through 801 pieces of media coverage. Another 500,000 people engaged with material on SSI's website, while more than 3.5 million were reached via SSI's social media channels.

Corporate Communications also provides strategic advice and direction to protect and enhance the reputation of SSI, and promote the outcomes and achievements of its services and the people it works with. The strategic and diverse expertise of the team continues to support SSI's ongoing growth and sustainability.

The Tapestry Couch

Moments of healing and friendship amid uncertainty about the future were at the heart of a community art work that debuted during SSI's 2017 New Beginnings: Refugee Arts & Culture Festival.

Close to 200 people involved in SSI initiatives created a tapestry-covered couch detailing stories gathered from people involved with the Friendship Garden — an inclusive community gardening project run by SSI's Community Engagement team.

In developing ideas for the couch, gardeners from a range of backgrounds, including some who are seeking asylum in Australia, told stories about healing together: moments where their worries melted away, seeing things grow, sharing food, playing football, picking blueberries. These became the final design for the tapestry.

Amid the hubbub of SSI's Community Kitchen — a fortnightly multicultural lunch and social day — tapestry artist Sayd Mahmod sat down with small groups to teach them the art of tapestry and create the beautiful art work.



Arts and culture

Underpinned by our vision that everyone should have opportunities for creative development and cultural expression and participation, SSI self-funds an arts and culture program that runs activities ranging from community-based arts projects to the flagship New Beginnings: Refugee Arts & Culture Festival.

This groundbreaking work was recognised in 2017 when the driving force behind these initiatives, SSI Arts & Culture Coordinator Carolina Triana, was awarded the Premier's Multicultural Community Medal for her contribution to the arts and culture field in NSW.

During 2016-17, initiatives such as New Beginnings supported newly arrived artists and craftmakers from refugee backgrounds with showcase and professional development opportunities. Sameer Dakhil was one of the artists featured in the first component of the festival in June 2017. Sameer exhibited his delicate engraving work to hundreds of people and received mainstream media exposure, which translated into art sales and interest from collectors and industry.

With the aim of enabling more creative conversations about issues faced by artists of CALD backgrounds, SSI also co-hosted sector discussions such as The Arts & Refugee Forum.

Community engagement

Overarching all SSI programs is the fundamental objective to support the capacity of individuals and families to find their own place in the Australian community where they not only belong but make a meaningful contribution to society. SSI's Community Engagement team works alongside community and civic structures to pave systemic change so that community inclusion is possible. It does this through:

- Community leaders' skills and advocacy training
- Community leaders' forums
- Roundtables bringing together NSW Police with the settlement sector
- Mobilising community groups to actively welcome new arrivals
- Community-based initiatives that embrace new ways of doing things
- Supporting new arrivals to share with community groups stories of finding a home in Australia

working locally, thinking globally

At a time where the United Nations has called for responsibility-sharing to support refugees around the world, SSI has taken the initiative to engage in international dialogue, collaborate with international stakeholders and advocate for innovative solutions.

Through initiatives such as the 2017 Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR), SSI has advocated for sustainable solutions to the high number of refugees globally, including increasing resettlement numbers and exploring new options.

SSI's international work has also allowed SSI to give newly resettled communities in Australia a global platform, including collating on behalf of UNHCR feedback on its resettlement process.

Self-representation is always a priority during international advocacy work as this enables SSI staff from refugee backgrounds to advocate for their communities. As one SSI representative, Adam Bujairami, explained: "Refugees have a voice and know what their needs are. They need opportunities to represent themselves and be part of the decision-making process when it involves their lives."

During 2016-17, a Canadian government agency invited SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis and SSI senior staff to present at the National Settlement Council. SSI had the opportunity to share SSI's innovation in programs such as Ignite and learn about resettlement programs in Canada. Throughout the year, SSI has also shared resettlement expertise with a number of visiting international delegations interested in our resettlement practice and how we use innovation to better integrate newly arrived communities.

UNHCR recognises SSI's Yamamah Agha

Yamamah Agha, SSI's Manager Humanitarian Settlement Services, received important international recognition when she was awarded the role of Assistant Rapporteur at the 2017 UNHCR Annual Consultations with NGOs. She will act as Rapporteur at the 2018 consultations.

The consultations bring together NGOs from around the world to discuss global and regional displacement trends, advocacy and ways of collaborating to share the responsibility for refugees. As the Rapporteur, Yamamah's report will guide the UNHCR Executive Committee's 2018 strategic plan.

SSI to host international migration conference

Since SSI became an active member of the International Steering Committee for the Metropolis Project in 2014, the engagement and contribution of Australian NGOs and migration scholars in this forum has dramatically increased. This will culminate in 2018 after SSI successfully won the bid to host the International Metropolis Conference in Sydney.

SSI is the lead organisation to host the Metropolis Conference in Sydney from 29 October to 2 November 2018, working in partnership with the Australian Multicultural Foundation and Multicultural NSW. The successful bid to host the Conference in

Through our international protection work, SSI aims to:

- Increase resettlement numbers globally and improve the refugee resettlement experience
- Share SSI's expertise in resettlement and exchange best practice with international partners
- Strengthen local communities involved in welcoming refugees
- Improve political and public narrative about refugees
- Contribute to advocacy initiatives as well as provide feedback on international policy

Australia was enhanced with letters of support from the Australian Prime Minister's Office and Minister for Social Services.

Hosting the largest regular migration conference in the world will be a valuable opportunity to project Australia's successful multiculturalism model at international level and SSI as a leading humanitarian organisation working in migration and humanitarian settlement.

people making a difference

Each year, SSI draws on the contributions of hundreds of volunteers, donors and corporate partners to deliver services to some of the most vulnerable individuals and families in Australia. Through financial and in-kind support, everyday Australians show their generosity, compassion and commitment to assisting their fellow community members to reach their full potential.

Volunteering at SSI has grown and diversified significantly in the past 12 months. With the addition of 25 new volunteer opportunities, we have been able to draw on the incredible skills and experiences of a broader cross section of the NSW community.

SSI volunteering snapshot:

400 community members volunteered their time in 2016-17 with approximately **250** volunteers active at any one time. In addition, **100** corporate volunteers contributed to a number of one-off events.

Volunteers in **35** different positions contribute an average of four hours per week.

That equates to approximately **52,000 hours** per year. Applying a conservative estimate of \$25 per hour, the annual contributions of SSI volunteers is **\$1.3 million!**

Working across most SSI programs volunteers can be found:

- mentoring young refugee and migrant youth to reach employment and education goals
- coaching entrepreneurs from refugee backgrounds to establish and grow small businesses
- working alongside newly arrived refugees as they establish their lives in Australia
- guiding parents and their children in structured playgroups in partnership with Playgroups NSW
- working alongside community gardeners in the Friendship Garden to foster social inclusion and cohesion
- celebrating culture through food, art, music and sport at Community Kitchen
- assisting refugees and people seeking asylum to build their confidence and work readiness
- assisting refugees and people seeking asylum to practise English
- working in homework clubs, breakfast clubs and playgroups at Community Hubs
- and more!

Another way that everyday community members assist our work at SSI is by supporting fundraising initiatives, which include both community fundraising activities and corporate partnerships.

During the year, more than 180 individual donors gave funds to support SSI initiatives. Funds donated to SSI go towards our value-add, non-government-funded initiatives that address gaps in the services currently available to vulnerable individuals and families.





These include the Community Engagement suite of programs, the Ignite Small Business Start-ups incubator, and education scholarships.

Partnerships and fundraising activities also increase SSI's engagement with existing and new supporters, and bring awareness of the work SSI does to a wider audience.

We provide a range of avenues for diverse supporters to connect with us. In 2016, SSI participated in City2Surf for the first time. A team of 18 people seeking asylum took part in the iconic fun run, joined by fundraisers from across the community.

SSI worked with a number of corporate partners over the year including Allianz Australia, which employed 10 refugees permanently and provided funding for 48 educational scholarships to help refugees minimise financial barriers to accessing education. Now in its second year, SSI's partnership with Allianz has also grown to include corporate volunteering. This partnership and project was a national finalist in the 2017 Australian Migration and Settlement Awards for innovative business inclusion.

Some other standout examples of the generosity shown during the year included Google staff raising \$60,000 for Ignite, and Atlassian running volunteer food drives and providing IT support for our social enterprises.

SSI also receives donations from generous individuals from all walks of life, including through organised fundraisers. This ranges from schools and community groups to a circle of friends who wanted to help people who had been affected by the war in Syria.

Meet Elaha

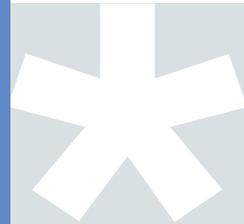
At age seven, Elaha's* parents sent her to live in India so she could enjoy a more free life and education than in her native country. Growing up in a foster care home, Elaha always made an extra effort with her education as she felt getting a good education would help to justify her parents' sacrifice.

Having won numerous awards at school for her academic excellence Elaha went on to do an undergraduate degree at one of the most prestigious universities in India, before pursuing a master's degree. Halfway through her master's, however, Elaha was granted a humanitarian visa giving her a permanent home in Australia.

Arriving in Sydney in June 2014, Elaha initially struggled to adjust and was worried she would not be able to complete her education. But then she received the good news that she had been accepted to study at the University of Sydney.

With support from a scholarship from SSI and Allianz, Elaha is now in the final year of her degree and looking forward to graduating next year.

* Elaha's name has been changed.



Facilities and Operations at SSI

During 2016-17 at SSI offices, the Reception and Administration team provided front and back office support, with 19,520 clients receiving face-to-face contact, and over 27,000 incoming phone calls being registered.

In the facilities area, new properties are sourced, leases are negotiated and fit outs project managed to deliver fit-for-purpose offices. With SSI successfully securing new contracts such as RESP and HSP, new locations in Wollongong, Coffs Harbour, Newcastle and Armidale have been added to our growing register of properties.

As we move into the next chapter for SSI, the Facilities and Operations function will continue to look to consolidate our properties and processes, and work smarter to support staff across all areas of SSI.

finance and governance

During 2016-17, SSI's revenue increased 68 per cent to a record high of \$113.4 million. This was mainly due to the addition of new services and growth in the HSS program, which supported more than 10,000 refugees during the year.

Revenue grew 68 per cent to \$113.4 million, with a net surplus of \$14.6 million. The revenue increase was largely due to growth in refugee arrivals and out-of-home care placements, along with the expansion of our youth employment and housing programs.

SSI's revenue portfolio is heavily weighted to government funding, which accounts for 95 per cent of the total revenue base, compared to 96 per cent last year. Achieving a more balanced revenue portfolio

mix is a strategic priority for SSI to ensure future financial sustainability.

Service expansions saw operating costs increase from \$68.9 million to \$98.8 million, with staffing levels continuing to represent a significant portion of overall costs (39 per cent of total expenditure with our service delivery programs).

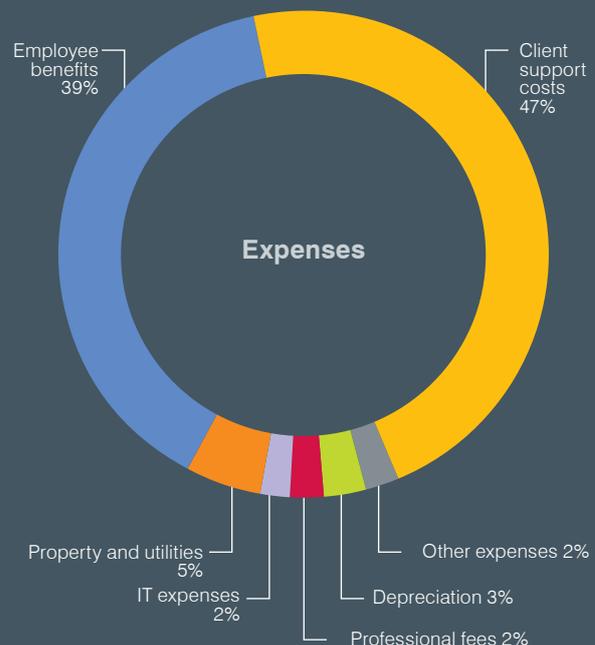
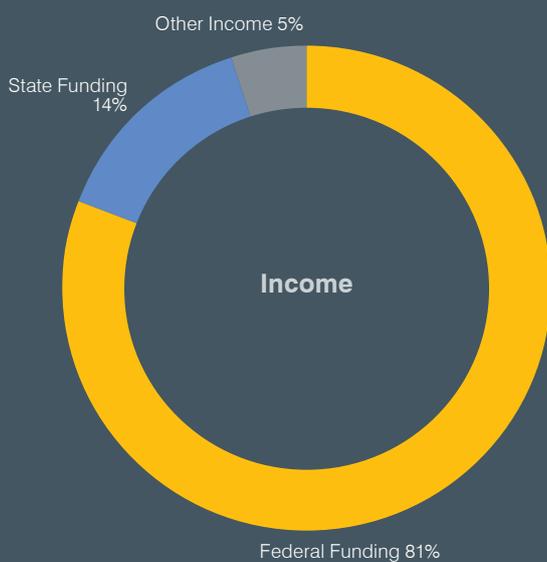
Current assets increased by \$19.4 million year-on-year due to both the operating surplus and the increase in cash held in advance for funded services. Net assets are \$22.8 million, which represents a \$14.6 million increase on 2015-16.

SSI is committed to continually improving its financial governance and management processes, and one of the key areas of focus this year was our financial controls. An internal audit by Grant Thornton that focused on strengthening

purchasing policies, processes and controls has resulted in increased accountability and transparency.

An ongoing review of our financial system aims to streamline and automate purchasing approval workflow to create both time and cost efficiencies.

The financial outlook for 2017-18 remains positive, with the successful HSP tender outcome and further growth in refugee employment programs. New government contracts with greater links between outcomes and funding will drive a greater organisational focus on ensuring we have the right tools and processes to enable both qualitative and quantitative measurement and analysis of outcomes.



June 2017 Annual Report Financial Summary

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income		
\$'000	2017	2016
Income		
Federal Funding	91,749	52,536
State Funding	16,161	12,629
Interest Income	246	235
Other Income	5,194	2,258
Total Income	113,350	67,658
Expenditure		
Client support costs	45,976	23,137
Employee benefits	38,782	33,926
Property and utilities	5,303	5,286
IT expenses	1,687	1,349
Professional fees	1,831	985
Depreciation expense	2,683	2,300
Other expenses	2,491	1,957
Total Expenses	98,753	68,940
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	14,597	(1,282)

Statement of Financial Position

\$'000	2017	2016
Assets		
Current	35,688	16,267
Non-Current	4,868	5,983
Total Assets	40,556	22,250
Liabilities		
Current	17,016	13,588
Non-Current	696	415
Total Liabilities	17,712	14,003
Net Assets	22,844	8,247
Accumulated Funds	22,844	8,247



Legal and compliance at SSI

Quality assurance and risk management are key elements of SSI's compliance framework. We aim to comply with standards, legislation and contract requirements. Integral to this is continuous improvement to systems and processes, and identifying and controlling risks.

SSI is enhancing its incident management platform to better record and manage incidents, mandatory reporting, complaints, allegations and other events. Our aim is to eliminate risk of harm to clients, staff and carers. We are also rolling out an audit and improvement plan involving routine internal and external reviews. During 2016-17, we participated in many external audits and were successful in receiving recertification in a globally-recognised quality management system standard.

SSI uses accurate, simple policy documents to assist in service delivery. A compliance framework is also in place to assist staff to fulfil obligations stemming from service delivery contracts, standards and legislative obligations. Privacy and confidentiality were a particular focus in 2016-17, as were tender reviews, documenting collaborations with stakeholders, and contract review, negotiation and management.

Corporate governance

SSI recognises that a commitment to corporate governance, transparency and accountability is essential to our long-term performance and sustainability, and to achieving the best outcomes for members and other stakeholders. We regularly review our governance arrangements in line with good practice, expectations and regulation.

The Board of directors

The Board is responsible, and is accountable to members, for managing SSI's business. In addition to approving matters required by law, key responsibilities of the Board include:

- approving and monitoring the implementation and performance of strategic and corporate plans
- appointing and assessing the CEO's performance
- overseeing our financial position
- overseeing external and internal audit activities, and strategic and operational risk management systems
- monitoring and influencing culture, reputation, ethical standards and legal and regulatory compliance, and overseeing our corporate governance framework
- monitoring our work health and safety performance
- approving certain matters relating to diversity

The Board has adopted a charter that details its role and responsibilities. The Board is assisted by the Finance and Audit, Risk and Compliance, and Board Nomination Committees.

SSI Board composition and appointments

SSI strengthened its corporate governance capacity in 2016-17 with a change in Chair from Kamalle Dabboussy to independent director, Elisabeth Shaw. The Chair's responsibilities are to provide appropriate leadership to the Board and SSI and to ensure the Board fulfils its obligations under its charter.

Two new Directors joined the board in 2017: Yung Ngo, who joined the Board as an independent director, and Clement Meru, a member director from CORE Community Services.

The Board actively seeks to ensure that it has an appropriate mix of diversity 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 skills matrix that is reviewed regularly.

Conflicts of interest and Board and director performance

In accordance with the requirements of the 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 reviewed annually and the findings and recommendations of this review are provided to the Board.



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt, and a man with short hair, wearing a light pink striped shirt and a dark tie, are both smiling and looking upwards. They are holding a large, grey, speech-bubble-shaped sign above their heads. The sign contains the text: "How can you help? Get in touch with SSI to volunteer, donate, fundraise and more!".

How can you help?
Get in touch with SSI
to volunteer, donate,
fundraise and more!

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