

# Integrated Report 2023–24

In community, with community, from community

Note: This has been created as an accessible document. Where possible, figures and tables from the original report have been replaced with text.

## Acknowledgement of Country

SSi acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land. We pay respect to Elders past and present 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, deliver our programs and services and create impact for the clients and communities we serve.

## Welcome

Welcome to Settlement Services International's (SSi's) 2024 Integrated Report for the year ended 30 June 2024 (FY24). In this report, the term 'SSi' refers to the SSi Group including Settlement Services International Limited and its subsidiaries, unless otherwise specified.

This report follows the principles of Integrated Reporting. It has been prepared in accordance with the Integrated Reporting <IR> Framework to report on material activities and provide a view of our performance and the value created during the year

The 2024 report is produced by SSi's management team and reviewed by our Executive team. It is authorised for release on 28 November 2024.

## Explanation of the report

The theme of this year's SSi Integrated Report, 'In community, with community, from community', underscores the power of collective action and mutual support. It reflects the multiple dimensions of both our connection to and position within the communities which we serve.

SSi delivers services tailored to the unique needs of these communities by working closely with community members to draw on local strengths. Our workforce is an extension of these communities, and we place great value on lived experience, combining it with professional expertise to deliver culturally responsive, high-quality services.

This Integrated Report reflects SSi's value creation over time. By measuring and incorporating comparable, consistent, and reliable data in line with the Integrated Reporting <IR> Framework, we are committed to making informed decisions that foster long-term, sustainable outcomes for our clients and communities.

Our FY24 Integrated Report builds on progress made over the past four years as we transition to Integrated Reporting. With the strong leadership and vision of the Executive

and Board, we have embedded <IR> principles across SSI. While our goal to fully adopt the <IR> Framework by 2025 was ambitious, we are proud of the significant strides we have made.

Notably, our FY23 report earned a Silver Medal at the 2024 Australasian Reporting Awards, demonstrating our commitment to quality and excellence. Such acknowledgement provides a valuable benchmark, guiding our ongoing efforts to enhance the value and completeness of our reporting.

### **Enhancing data connectivity**

In FY24, we developed our first outcomes dashboard for the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) tracking eight priority outcomes across four outcome domains including a year-on-year comparison for each priority outcome. We also established new data collection protocols for priority programs, ensuring transparency and connectivity. In FY25, we will enhance data quality, focusing on employment program outcomes such as satisfaction with pay, security and flexibility.

### **Addressing materiality**

Material topics are those that are most relevant to our operations and stakeholders, and that are likely to have a significant impact on our ability to create value in the short, medium and long-term. We've strengthened our process for identifying material topics, to further align strategic planning, decision-making and reporting, including reviewing our value creation model and recategorising the FY23 material topics. In FY25, we will refine our approach to ensure stakeholder relevance.

### **Our commitment to continuous improvement**

We recognise opportunities for growth as we further integrate <IR> principles into our annual reporting cycles, operational activities and strategic planning. In FY25, we will refer to the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation to be guided by the relevant accounting and sustainability disclosures and engage experts. We are also mindful of the Global Reporting Initiative and have incorporated key GRI disclosure standards, most notably in Our People section (p65), along with new commitments to sustainability and climate action.

### **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG)**

In September 2015, all 193 member states of the United Nations agreed to adopt the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs lay out a path to end extreme poverty, reduce inequality and injustice and protect our planet by 2030.

The SDGs provide a powerful universal framework in which to manage and mitigate sustainability matters. SSI has prioritised the following eight SDGs that support our long-term outcomes:

- 1 No Poverty
- 3 Good Health and Wellbeing
- 4 Quality Education
- 5 Gender Equality
- 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
- 10 Reduced Inequality
- 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- 17 Partnerships for the Goals

## Feedback

We value your feedback as we strive to improve our reporting, please contact [info@ssi.org.au](mailto:info@ssi.org.au)

**Navigation icons are included in the printed version of this document.**

### Outcome domains:

- Safety and stability
- Learning and growth
- Social inclusion
- Economic participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Society and systems capacity

### Material issues:

- M1** Client and community outcomes and impact
- M2** Inclusive, accessible and culturally responsive practices
- M3** Advocacy, research and thought leadership
- M4** Financial sustainability
- M5** People capability and retention
- M6** Governance, accountability and risk management
- M7** Technology and data security
- M8** Responding to external opportunities and risks
- M9** Responsible care of environmental resources

### Strategic priorities:

- SP1** Enhanced client experience and service delivery excellence (new for FY25)
- SP2** Systems and processes and governance to support improved client outcomes
- SP3** Sector leadership, advocacy and policy contributions to influence change
- SP4** Our people, culture and capability are impact driven
- SP5** Financial sustainability

## About SSI

SSI Group is a national not-for-profit (NFP) organisation whose purpose is to help create a more inclusive society in which everyone can meaningfully contribute to social, cultural, civic and economic life. We work towards this goal by delivering life-changing human and social services on behalf of governments and other non-government organisations and also using our own funding channels.

The organisation started life in Sydney in 2000 when Settlement Services Australia, then the NSW Migrant Resource Centre Association, was founded by 11 member organisations with the aim of helping newly arrived refugees settle in Australia. Over time, our expertise working with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds enabled us to expand into delivering other social services, including a significant focus on supporting people living with disabilities.

We have also expanded into Victoria and Queensland, with offices and co-location sites across Melbourne, Sydney and southwest Sydney, Newcastle, Logan, and regional areas such as Armidale, Coffs Harbour and Townsville. We continue to engage internationally, and our membership base has grown to 17 organisations.

Our approach to our work and to achieving social change has been firmly anchored in the belief that strength comes from collaboration. 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.

By accessing federal and state funding as well as private philanthropy, we're able 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 ensure that we remain a client-centred organisation.

While we have maintained our initial focus on assisting those on humanitarian visas, we today work with a wider group of people experiencing vulnerability to build capacity and enable them to overcome inequality. These include 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.

Community is at the heart of what we do. Our committed and diverse employee base reflects – and serves as an extension of – the extremely varied communities with whom they work.

SSI is a company limited by guarantee and registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). We adhere to the ACNC Governance Standards. SSI Group's corporate structure comprises of six companies – please refer to our Governance section for further information on our statutory obligations, governance and corporate structure.

### Key stats:

- 67,000 clients
- 17 member organisations
- 59 programs and community-based services
- 38 offices and co-locations
- 1,167 staff
- 24 years in operation

### Our Vision

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

### Our Purpose

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

### Our Values

- **Accountability** - We take responsibility for our actions and act with integrity and honour our commitments.

- **Inclusion** - We foster belonging and value the diversity of people's lived experiences, identity, knowledge and talents.
- **Respect** - We accept people for who they are and treat each other fairly and empathetically.

## Significant events in FY24

### July 2023

- Launched our three new values: Accountability, Inclusion, Respect
- Kicked off our Annual all-staff Roadshows in Melbourne, Victoria
- Awarded the National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery, SToP project

### September 2023

- Launched our fourth signature report Foundations for Belonging
- Opened SSI Dandenong office in Victoria

### December 2023

- Admitted four new member organisations to SSI
- Awarded an extension to NSW's RESP program for 6 months
- Attended the Global Refugee Forum, Geneva Switzerland
- Re-accreditation granted to NSW's Multicultural Child and Family Program (MCFP) for 5 years

### January 2024

- Hosted the New Beginnings Festival attracting 8,000 visitors
- Launched the Aged Care Worker e-Learning Diversity program

### March 2024

- Established the Crisis Arrival Response Service (CARS) as a result of the Gaza crisis
- Represented SSI at the Commission of Status of Women 68, United Nations, New York

### May 2024

- Voted in the wholesale review of the SSI Constitution at EGM
- Opened our new Parramatta office, NSW
- Launched the Train, Engage, Connect and Support (TECS) program
- Hosted the ICVA Regional Lead (Thailand) visit

### August 2023

- Launched the Home Care Experience Centre in Bankstown, NSW
- Celebrated the World of Cultures Festival, Logan Queensland attracting 3000 people
- Joined Yes23 to kick off the Multicultural Australia for the Voice campaign in Springvale, Victoria
- Established SSI Legal Pty Ltd as a new social enterprise

## November 2023

- Launched the Rights Path Project, supported by the NDIS Providers Grant
- Billion Dollar Benefit: Welcoming Tech Talent Guide with ACS and LinkedIn

## February 2024

- Hosted the Consultations on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Working Group, Sydney
- Held the Pathways to Possibilities Symposium, Bankstown NSW

## April 2024

- Launched On-The-Spot employee award platform
- Launched NSW Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety

## June 2024

- Ceased the NSP consortium

## From the Chair and CEO

### Redefining our impact in a landscape of change

Over the past year, we've navigated a landscape of change — pushing for reforms, advocating for our communities, and expanding our support to those who need it most. The winds of change have tested us, but in this reflection, SSI Chair Voula Messimeri AM and CEO Violet Roumeliotis AM reflect on how they have also created an opportunity to redefine our impact, champion diversity and strengthen the foundation of our work.

### Our changing landscape

Before delving into the year that was, it's important to give some context on the wealth of reforms that have swept through our sector in the last 18 months – many of which SSI contributed to through formal submissions and advocacy.

The most recent, and perhaps most wide-reaching, is the release of a once-in-a-generation review of multiculturalism in Australia. If implemented, the Multicultural Framework Review will reset multicultural policy so that it reflects the Australia of this century, not the last.

The Australian Government has also released findings from another major review, this time into its system to support disadvantaged jobseekers. This review provides a roadmap to create a more equitable system that delivers specialist support and better employment outcomes for migrants and refugees.

In yet another historic reform, the Government released its Migration Strategy, which detailed a new vision for the nation's migration system, with over 25 new policy commitments and areas for future reform. Other major reforms worth noting are those aimed at improving the skills assessment processes and reducing complexity (which align closely with our Billion Dollar Benefit movement).

In short, we are experiencing a period of extraordinary change which has the potential to significantly transform the landscape in which we operate as an organisation.

## Advocating for our communities

During the year, SSI continued to lead and grow the Billion Dollar Benefit campaign, the powerful movement of individuals and organisations committed to reducing employment barriers for skilled refugees and migrants. If successful, this initiative will lead to talented individuals being able to work in their fields of expertise and contribute billions of dollars to the economy.

Just recently, we kicked off an offshoot campaign called Activate Australia's Skills. Through it, we are seeking to drive changes that will make it simpler and more affordable for migrants and refugees to have their skills and qualifications recognised.

Around half of permanent migrants living in Australia are working beneath their skill level. Activating this workforce represents a huge opportunity for individuals, along with our country as a whole.

Another focus for our advocacy throughout the year was the violence and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. While we lent our voice to broader calls for a ceasefire and the protection of all civilians, our core advocacy centred on Gazans arriving on our shores, who have largely been living on visitor visas without access to social support or employment rights. This is at odds with Australia's response to previous atypical refugee cohorts.

We supported almost 500 Gazans, including 188 children, while also working with sector and diaspora stakeholders to lead the development of a more coordinated response for current and future crisis arrival cohorts. In a year's time, we hope to be back here updating you on the successful creation of a consistent framework to govern Australia's response to emergency humanitarian arrivals.

## Strategy and governance

We continued progressing the 2023–2026 Impact Strategy. The focus for FY24 was designing and commencing impact measurement for SSI's core programs, along with advocacy, thought leadership and capacity building.

By the end of FY24, we had commenced data collection for SSI's Impact Measurement Framework, while also building the Impact Strategy into a new Board and Executive reporting framework dashboard.

During the year, we also introduced important changes to SSI's Constitution informed by feedback from members, who have played an integral part in our development and growth.

Our new constitution reflects this shared history, while also positioning us for future growth, change and shared impact.

We would like to offer particular thanks to SSI's Board for their efforts this year. We have experienced some board renewal during this time. We welcomed four new board members Rola Hijwel, Peter van Vliet, Angela Tsoukatos and Dushy Thangiah, while we farewelled Alex McCauley, along with departing members from FY23, highlighted in last year's report.

## Growth and program performance

More than 67,000 people accessed our services during the year. Our settlement programs supported over 27,000 people in building new lives in Australia, while over in the disability space, our Local Area Coordination (LAC) team worked with over 26,000 people.

We also had a number of areas of growth during the year, beginning with the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) Program, which expanded both its funding and geographic reach in Queensland.

Unfortunately, the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) consortium, concluded after nine successful years of leading 21 partner organisations. A consortium of that size was no longer favoured by the funder and individual partners collaborated to apply in smaller groupings or individually.

Still in Queensland, we have secured funding from the Queensland Government to establish SSI's new Logan Hub. This is a co-investment to provide the Logan region with a facility at which a range of employment and economic-related programs and community services will be delivered.

In November, we established a new social enterprise headquartered in Victoria, SSI Legal, offering ethical, trusted legal services to support individuals to navigate Australia's complex immigration system.

The year also saw strong progress and engagement in the areas of women and family, domestic and sexual violence, including establishing the NSW Multicultural DFV Centre in Sydney with funding from the NSW Government, and setting up the Train, Engage, Connect and Support (TECS) Project, funded by the Department of Social Services.

### **Finance, efficiencies and closures**

We did face financial headwinds during the year but we are undertaking rigorous reviews to find savings and additional revenue opportunities that align to our Impact Strategy to achieve a sound, sustainable operating model in FY25.

A good example of this is the office consolidation project in Sydney, which has better aligned our offices with a hybrid working model and saved close to \$1 million. We have also rationalised our service lines, moving away from unprofitable or unsustainable programs.

Having said that, we felt very deeply the involuntary loss of a handful of programs. Despite extensive advocacy, the NSW Government-funded Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) came to an end after five years. This groundbreaking initiative filled a significant gap in the mainstream Workforce Australia system, relieving ongoing precarity for refugee jobseekers in NSW.

We also bid farewell to the Homecare Workforce Support Program. In all, we placed over 2,300 participants in jobs, with almost all participants retained as at program closure in June.

### **From community**

This year's annual report theme references that we are 'from community', a nod to the fact that our talented, experienced staff are themselves a reflection of the rich and diverse communities we serve.

As of FY24, we can count a prestigious Human Rights Medallist among our staff, after Women's Equity and Racial Equality Advocate Juliana Nkrumah AM was recognised at the 2023 Australian Human Rights Awards.

We are very conscious of the importance of attracting and retaining the best people. During the year, we continued rolling out our new reward and recognition program, while also examining employee attraction and onboard journeys.

We also submitted our 2024 Workplace Gender Equity reporting, showing an average Gender Pay Gap (GPG) of three per cent, significantly lower than the national average of 21.7 per cent.



## Looking ahead

A key future focus area for SSI is growth. We want to diversify our services to support clients on their life journey, wrapping around their needs and aspirations such as aged care and housing.

We are also exploring untied revenue through corporate partnerships by creating shared value.

In addition, we are exploring the use of ethical AI technologies that can improve efficiency. For example, reducing time spent on administrative tasks to free staff up to engage with our clients and communities.

As we step into the new financial year, we carry forward the lessons of this past year, but also the achievements – made possible through the dedication, hard work, and heart of our team. We extend our heartfelt thanks to every staff member, volunteer, and partner, along with our Board and Executive team, for their tireless efforts to transform lives and create lasting change.

Voula Messimeri AM, Chair

Violet Roumeliotis AM, CEO

## Walking together

In FY24, SSI completed a review of its inaugural Innovate 2021–2023 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) featuring 88 actions aimed at advancing reconciliation.

Our work gained momentum as we aligned our RAP activities with our position supporting the Yes campaign for the Voice to Parliament referendum, and by June 2024, 90 per cent of actions were completed or underway. Achievements across our four RAP pillars were:

- **Relationships:**

We built partnerships with First Nations communities and businesses, with 19 out of 29 actions completed. The challenge was growing external partnerships to strengthen First Nations–focused services.

- **Respect:**

We incorporated First Nations cultural practices, including Acknowledgment of Country at events and staff education through online programs and cultural sessions.

- **Opportunities:**

Whilst progress on increasing First Nations employment and supplier engagement was slower than expected, we secured partnerships with recruitment consultants and suppliers to boost our efforts.

- **Governance:**

Nine out of 14 actions focused on reporting and accountability were completed. Delays occurred due to leadership transitions.

In FY25, we will continue to build upon our Innovate RAP initiatives and will re–focus our efforts on areas most material to SSI, including advocacy, community engagement and partnerships, education (truth–telling) and organisational cultural competence, First Nations procurement strategy, and a First Nations employment strategy.

## About the artwork

In FY24, we produced the new RAP artwork. It centres on our core values of accountability, inclusion and respect, represented by the three large circles. Surrounding the central circle, the weaving pathways and dotted lines symbolise SSI, which upholds these values. U–symbols around the weaving pathways represent First Nations communities, whose cultural knowledge

and guidance inform SSI’s work. The two-tiered U–symbols acknowledge both First Nations staff and communities, who give voice to SSI’s efforts.

A network of connected circles represents the journey of SSI clients, with pathways symbolising the diverse routes they take. Smaller circles connected by these pathways represent SSI staff supporting marginalised communities. Six white and teal circles highlight SSI’s key outcome domains.

The artwork is set against a midnight sky, symbolising unity across Australia and reminding us that SSI’s work is done on Aboriginal land.

The artist, Charmaine Mumbulla, is a Kurna and Narungga woman who is a passionate advocate for social justice. She is co–director of Mumbulla Creative, an Aboriginal agency, working with organisations like SSI to tell stories through art.

## Our strategy

As a for–purpose organisation, our main objective has always been to provide sustainable value to our stakeholders. To drive this, in FY23 we developed an Impact Strategy for 2023–2026, reaffirming our commitment to creating, measuring and achieving meaningful outcomes for the communities we serve. The strategy outlines the strategic priorities that will enable SSI to achieve this.

FY24 marked the first year of implementing our Impact Strategy. Throughout the year, we sharpened our organisational planning with a focus on impact, enhancing our measurement and reporting practices across the organisation. Our success is now defined by the outcomes we create for the people we support. The strategy includes our six outcome domains and their corresponding 15 outcome priorities, supported by five strategic priorities. These five strategic priorities can be compared to business planning goals, that guide our operational activities and outputs to deliver greater impact over time.

Defining and embedding impact within our strategy drives decision–making and will enable us to:

- create greater impact for the individuals and families we support
- better demonstrate the value that we create for funders and partners
- build resilience to overcome potential challenges from the environments in which we operate.

Our outcome domains	Our outcome priorities
Safety and stability	1. A sense of safety and dignity 2. Safe and supportive family relationships for children and young people 3. Stable caregiver relationships for children and young people
Learning and Growth	4. Increased knowledge and skills 5. Increased participation in education and training
Social Inclusion	6. Increased access to services and supports

Our outcome domains	Our outcome priorities
	7. Increased sense of belonging 8. Increased connection to culture and identity
Economic participation	9. Better navigation and access to employment support 10. Increased access to employment and self-employment opportunities 11. Increased experience of good quality, secure employment
Health and wellbeing	12. Increased access to health and wellbeing services
Society and systems capacity	13. Improved community and sector capacity to support people from diverse backgrounds and identities 14. Improved visibility of inequality experienced by people from diverse backgrounds and identities 15. Improved collaboration across sectors and government on policy and funding reforms

### Our strategic priorities

- SP1** Enhanced client experience, and service delivery excellence (New for FY25)
- SP2** Systems, processes and governance to support improved client outcomes
- SP3** Sector leadership, advocacy and policy contributions to influence change
- SP4** Our people, culture and capability are impact driven
- SP5** Strengthened financial sustainability

### Impact

An equitable, resilient, enriched and inclusive Australia where our clients fully participate in the economic, social, civic and diverse cultural life.

### Progress in FY24

Understanding our impact is crucial to fulfilling our purpose. In FY24, we made significant strides toward our impact measurement and reporting goals through the development of SSI’s Impact Measurement Framework. This framework, which was rolled out in six program areas, provides a comprehensive guide to how we will implement impact measurement and learning across the organisation in line with our strategy. The rollout will expand in FY25.

Our strategic priorities provide a mechanism to deepen our impact, focusing on expanding our reach and influence, strengthening our financial position, and improving service delivery. These priorities specify time-bound targets to ensure the sustainability of our services through FY26.

FY24 saw the completion of the first year of our three-year strategic priorities, with key achievements across the following areas:

- **Improved organisational systems and governance:**  
We delivered technology-driven improvements for staff and client experiences, strengthened corporate governance, and aligned with best-practice principles. Key outcomes included a rise in staff satisfaction with IT services to 87 per cent (from 67 per cent), alongside improvements to our helpdesk and project management systems. The Board also endorsed a new SSI Constitution reflecting best-practice corporate governance.
- **People, culture and capability is client-centred and impact driven:**  
We enhanced the client pathway model and client-centric service design, maintaining high employee engagement levels. Leadership training was delivered to over 160 leaders.
- **Sector leadership, advocacy and policy contributions:**  
We made significant progress in our advocacy for economic participation of refugees and migrants, highlighted by our work through the Billion Dollar Benefit coalition.
- **Strengthen our financial sustainability:** Improved financial governance processes and better alignment of growth opportunities with our Impact Strategy were key outcomes

During FY25 planning, we identified the need for a stronger focus on client experience and client-centric design and pathways. This priority was reintroduced into our strategic planning and will be reported on in the FY25 report.

Stakeholder spotlight:

### **SSI Corporate Partner**

Since 2016, Allianz has been supporting SSI by providing funding for the SSI Allianz Scholarship program, which aims to remove financial barriers for refugees participating in education in NSW.

Allianz also supports the SSI-led Billion Dollar Benefit campaign and previously provided work skills and employment opportunities to refugees via the Allianz Ladder program.

Managing Director Richard Feledy says the partnership benefits both parties. Allianz’s support of SSI programs positively impacts Australia’s economy, helps talented people achieve their full potential and, in many cases, leads to excellent staff placements at Allianz.

“We’ve supported 300 people with scholarships and 36 refugees or migrants with permanent positions,” he says. “When you think about the attributes of the people we’ve engaged with through SSI programs, you think about courage, resilience, curiosity and adaptability. These are the attributes we also value in our staff.”

He encourages others to tap into the underutilised skills of migrants and refugees. “I strongly encourage other businesses to access this incredible talent pool. Their incredible work ethic and significant skills are reason enough to provide support by getting your business on board.”

Richard Feledy  
Managing Director, Allianz

## **Our context**

### **Risks and opportunities**

SSI doesn’t operate in isolation. Our ability to meet the goals of our Impact Strategy and achieve our overall vision is impacted by a range of internal and external trends and changes. We operate within a dynamic environment and our ongoing success is dependent upon identifying its trends and drivers and using this knowledge to both leverage opportunity risks and manage threat risks.

Our risk team plays a key role in this work. In turn, it is supported by our expanding materiality analysis work, which aims to identify the needs, challenges and goals of our stakeholders, including clients, staff and funders.

In FY23, the SSI Board adopted a Risk Appetite Statement (2023–26), which outlined our willingness to take risks to achieve impact, as long as they are well-informed and justified. The risk statement was outlined in the FY23 report. Below, we outline key aspects of our operating context in FY24 and our responses, followed by an exploration of the main risks and opportunities identified.

### **Changing landscape**

Geopolitical unrest, particularly the war in Ukraine and the Israel–Gaza conflict, led to refugees arriving in Australia in FY24. Our teams worked tirelessly to support highly traumatised individuals from both conflicts, providing 24/7 assistance and collaborating with local diaspora communities. For Gaza, where government support was lacking, we used our own resources to offer short-term case management. We also responded to these events to advocate for the

Australian Government to develop a standard protocol for humanitarian disaster responses and joined calls for a ceasefire in Gaza.

In Australia, social tensions related to these conflicts spilled into our communities, alongside home-grown divisions. At the end of 2023, the Scanlon–Monash Index of Social Cohesion reported its lowest score in 16 years.

Throughout FY24, we used our platform to promote unity, including support for the Voice to Parliament as a pathway to reconciliation with First Nations people.

### **Reforms and policy changes**

Unexpected policy changes in FY24 significantly impacted SSI. The Australian Government’s decision to limit delivery of the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program to consortia with fewer than 10 members led to the disbanding of our successful NSW Settlement Partnership. Additionally, the rethink of the Home Care Workforce Support Program saw its discontinuation, affecting our work in NSW and the ACT. While disappointing, we are using our experience to pursue new opportunities in the aged care and home care sectors.

The NSW Government’s Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP), which we delivered, also came to an end after eight years in June 2024. On a positive note, the Australian Government’s Multicultural Framework Review, published just after FY24, provided a roadmap to strengthen our multicultural democracy, backed by over \$100 million in new initiatives.

### **Other macro impacts**

Beyond industry-specific changes, our operating context in FY24 was shaped by broader national and global trends. The rising cost of living directly affected the vulnerable populations we serve, limiting their ability to afford essentials like food, utilities and rent. Housing shortages, particularly in capital cities, further strained our clients, especially those involved in our Humanitarian Settlement Program. Meanwhile, as outlined in the Our People section, a strong labour market made it challenging to recruit and retain top talent for many specialised roles.

Additionally, cyber security continued to be a critical focus after several high-profile attacks on major organisations in Australia. This underscored the importance of safeguarding the sensitive data of those we work with.

### **Commitment to sustainability and climate action**

Since endorsing the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations in 2021, we have committed to four goals: enhancing sustainability, collaborating with communities, building capacity to assess climate risks, and driving environmental protection. In FY24, our Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) developed a position paper, hosted staff workshops, and led initiatives like recycling and reducing waste. Two staff surveys showed strong support for climate action—86 per cent in 2023 and 92 per cent in 2024. We aim to formalise our strategy through a Climate Action Plan in FY25, continuing our work to improve sustainability and resilience.

### **Maturing our approach**

SSI continues to closely monitor and respond to risks and opportunities, dividing our strategic risk portfolio across six key areas. In FY24, we saw progress in our risk management maturity, improving our understanding of the interrelationships between risks and the impacts of business decisions. One of our goals for FY25 is to automate status updates and enhance reporting, enabling more robust conversations on risk and further embedding risk management into decision-making processes.

We have observed that risks managed by single teams tend to improve more quickly, while those requiring organisation-wide coordination have progressed more slowly. We are working to strengthen our approach to these more complex risks.

## Operational resilience

A key part of SSI's resilience is our ability to respond effectively to unexpected events. In February 2024, our Executive team and leaders of core functions participated in a crisis scenario exercise facilitated by our risk partners, Metropolis Advisory. This exercise allowed participants to familiarise themselves with our emergency response protocols and test our crisis response framework. Overall, the tools and steps were deemed effective, but a key takeaway was the need to clarify the role of the SSI Board in such scenarios and to refine communication protocols between management and the Board. Moving forward, we plan to involve the Board in future crisis response exercises to ensure comprehensive preparedness.

## Our strategic risk portfolio

### External

#### Political/Economic

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Need for preparedness for policy and government changes
- Positioning of SSI to support social reform

Key responses:

- Effective controls in dedicated teams per jurisdiction and structured management reviews of policy agenda
- High-profile policy and advocacy engagements, to strengthen stakeholder relationships and SSI's positioning
- Tracking and reporting on engagements to Board

Timeframe: Short to mid term

Likelihood: Unlikely

Impact: Moderate

#### M3 M8 SP3

#### Competition

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Potential to miss business opportunities to competitors – tight market, dependency on government funds, private organisations entering the sectors
- Capitalise on SSI's specialisation, experience, size and service diversity

Key responses:

Undertake a comprehensive competitor analysis to best understand the markets and where SSI is positioned, to capitalise on SSI's competitive advantage.

Timeframe: Mid to long term

Likelihood: Unlikely

Impact: Major

**M4 M8 SP5**

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## Structure and governance

### Membership

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Potential lack of alignment between SSI and members
- Disconnect between membership and client cohorts
- Desire to build trust and support in community through active engagement
- Build synergies in service delivery and advocacy

Key responses:

- Increased membership across sectors and geography
- Bespoke individual member strategies to increase and maintain strong member engagement rates of 4+ and ensure value for members.
- New Constitution

Timeframe: Mid to long term

Likelihood: Rare

Impact: Major

**M1 M3 SP3**

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## Internal performance

### Capacity

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Potential for overstretching the organisation impacting the quality of service delivery
- Starting projects that are not aligned with Impact Strategy
- Capitalise on economies of scale

Key responses:

- Develop and adopt a cost-to-service methodology
- Develop an organisational priority framework for projects, bids and tenders, new ventures.
- Review current and design SSI's organisational structure to ensure it is fit-for-purpose

Timeframe: Mid to long term

Likelihood: Likely

Impact: Major

**M4 M6 SP4**



## People and capability

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Need for attraction, retention, and development of talent
- Need for improving staff capability to deliver SSI's impact strategy
- Develop core competency and culture around impact

Key responses:

- Succession planning
- Client-focused leadership – alignment of competencies
- Recruitment strategy
- Impact Measurement Framework
- Deliver a change management plan for the impact strategy

Timeframe: Mid to long term

Likelihood: Possible

Impact: Moderate

**M5 SP5**

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## Compliance

### Data protection

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Potential data breaches caused by staff errors/behaviour
- Cybersecurity attacks

Key responses:

- Implement the Cybersecurity Strategy and the security monitoring centre
- Complete the update of a Disaster Recovery Strategy and plan for SSI's key systems.
- Design and implement a data lifecycle management strategy
- Improve Business Continuity Management System

Timeframe: Short to mid term

Likelihood: Possible

Impact: Major

**M7 SP2**

### Regulatory, legal and contractual compliance

Includes threats and opportunities:

Reportable breaches

- Large number of legislation and regulatory changes affecting sectors SSI operates in
- Additional compliance requirements when the business expands to new jurisdictions
- Spreading the cost of compliance across the business

Key responses:

- Child Safe Organisation audit
- Internal compliance assessment of obligations on privacy, work health and safety, child protection and cybersecurity
- Sub-contractor compliance review and assessment mechanism

Timeframe: Short to mid term

Likelihood: Likely

Impact: Major

**M6 M7 SP2**

## Financial sustainability

### Financial sustainability

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Potential for financial performance to be insufficient to ensure financial sustainability
- Diversification of revenue sources
- Cost discipline
- Right mix of programs/initiatives

Key responses:

- Deliver critical savings to meet FY24 budget
- Program realignment
- Improve capacity to ensure a culture of robust financial awareness, practice, and accountability

Timeframe: Short to long term

Likelihood: Major

Impact: Unlikely

**M4 M5 SP5**

### Critical programs

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Loss/win of strategic and high margin program
- Efficient service delivery models

Key responses:

- Core program growth strategies
- Tender pre-work for strategic programs

Timeframe: Short to mid term

Likelihood: Severe

Impact: Rare

## M4 M6 SP5

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### Safety

#### Safety and well-being

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Need for a culture of safety
- Potential breaches of health and safety laws, regulations and standards
- Safe systems of work

Key responses:

- Implement effective safety, injury and WHS obligations training and increase compliance with training.
- Mitigate safety risks across SSI:
  - Psychological harm working group
  - Occupational violence working group
  - Purchase and implement an incident and claims management system for WHS

Timeframe: Short to long term

Likelihood: Major

Impact: Possible

## M2 M6 SP4

#### Safeguarding

Includes threats and opportunities:

- Develop culture around safeguarding
- Maintain staff understanding of principles and frameworks
- Maintaining duty of care and safe environments

Key responses:

- Child Safe Organisation – implement the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations across SSI
- Implement the Domestic and Family Violence Framework
- Improve compliance with Client Incident Framework and incident reporting

Timeframe: Short to long term

Likelihood: Major

Impact: Possible

## M2 M6 SP1

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# Materiality and stakeholders

Since transitioning to Integrated Reporting in FY20, we have continued to develop our approach to determining material topics. Our ambition is to ensure a robust and stakeholder-focused approach to our strategic planning, decision making and reporting.

Given the significance of materiality to Integrated Reporting, in late FY24 we began a project to conduct a comprehensive review of our material topics. Due for completion in mid-FY25, the project will involve formal consultation with stakeholders and an extensive process for identifying, evaluating, prioritising and validating the material issues detailed in the table below. The project has informed definition of our FY24 material topics highlighted throughout this report. Our approach is informed by the IFRS 2021 International <IR> Framework, and IFAC’s 2015 Materiality in <IR> Guidance for the preparation of integrated reports, as well as advice from an external consultant. Once complete, it will inform our FY26 strategic planning processes.

## The key components of SSI's FY24–25 materiality assessment process

Period FY25	Stage
Commenced	Reviewing how we define value
Commenced	Review existing stakeholder feedback
Commenced	Reviewing our stakeholder groups
Commenced	Consultation with stakeholders and desk research
March 2025	Identification, evaluation and prioritisation of issues
April–May 2025	Validating material topics
June 2025	Documenting our processes
Ongoing	Review of material topics

Work to date has included a review and revision of our value creation model which has further developed our understanding of the material issues that impact our ability to create value over time. During FY24, we have reviewed feedback from our stakeholders through a range of sources outlined in the table below. This led us to re-categorise our material topics and include two additional topics of particular interest to key stakeholder groups (**M2** Inclusive, accessible and culturally responsive practices; and **M9** Responsible care of environmental resources). We expect to make further adjustments next year, once additional work on the materiality assessment has been completed.

## FY24 stakeholder feedback informing material issues\*

Stakeholder	Engagement	Responses
Clients	Net Promoter Score	NA**
Staff	Annual Your Voice survey	587
	RoadShow feedback	737
	Climate Survey	78
Executive	Monthly Strategy Meetings and Business and Operations Meetings	20
Members	Annual Member Survey	11
Stakeholder interviews	Annual Report	12
Board	Quarterly Board Reports and meetings	5

\*See page 32 for expanded feedback and material issues.

\*\*NA – number of responses not assessed in FY24

### FY24 material topic

Material topic and definition	Key stakeholders interested	Impact on value creation
<p><b>M1</b>  <b>Client and community outcomes and impact</b>            Delivering positive outcomes for the people and communities we serve, with a focus on the outcome priorities set out in our Impact Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> <li>• Volunteers and interns</li> <li>• Member organisations and consortium partners</li> <li>• Regulators, governments and their agencies</li> <li>• Private funders and corporate partners</li> <li>• Volunteers and interns</li> <li>• Other NFPs</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP3</b>            Short, medium, long-term            Inputs: Our people, our expertise, our relationships.            Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities; society and systems</p>
<p><b>M2</b>  <b>Inclusive, accessible and culturally responsive practices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP1, SP4</b>            Short, medium-term</p>

<p>Delivering culturally responsive, inclusive and accessible services and practices that meet the needs of people from diverse backgrounds and identities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member organisations and consortium partners</li> <li>• Regulators, governments and their agencies</li> <li>• Private funders and corporate partners</li> </ul>	<p>Inputs: Our people, our infrastructure</p> <p>Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities</p>
<p><b>M3</b> <b>Advocacy, research and thought leadership</b></p> <p>Our skills, reputation and capacity to advocate for and influence system change to support improved outcomes for our clients and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> <li>• Member organisations and consortium partners</li> <li>• Regulators, governments and their agencies</li> <li>• Private funders and corporate partners</li> <li>• Other NFPs</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP3, SP5</b></p> <p>Medium, long-term</p> <p>Inputs: Our people, our expertise, our relationships</p> <p>Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities; society and systems</p>
<p><b>M4</b> <b>Financial sustainability</b></p> <p>Maintaining our financial sustainability, including strategic contracts, program margins and funding diversification, in order to deliver our strategic objectives, enable effective service delivery and meet the needs of our clients and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> <li>• Member organisations and consortium partners</li> <li>• Regulators, governments and their agencies</li> <li>• Private funders and corporate partners</li> <li>• Suppliers</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP4, SP5</b></p> <p>Short, medium, long-term</p> <p>Inputs: Our financing</p> <p>Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities; society and systems</p>
<p><b>M5</b> <b>People capability and retention</b></p> <p>Recruitment, development and retention of a diverse, skilled and motivated team to deliver our strategic objectives and programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> <li>• Volunteers and interns</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP5</b></p> <p>Short, medium-term</p> <p>Inputs: Our people; our relationships; our expertise</p> <p>Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities; society and systems</p>
<p><b>M6</b> <b>Governance, accountability and risk management</b></p> <p>Good governance and accountability, including Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> <li>• Regulators, governments and their agencies</li> <li>• Private funders and corporate partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP1, SP2, SP4</b></p> <p>Short, medium, long-term</p> <p>Inputs: Our people; our relationships; our expertise; financing; infrastructure</p>

<p>oversight, risk management, compliance with regulations, laws and contracts, and safeguarding the health, safety, well-being and stability of our staff, clients and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media</li> </ul>	<p>and technology; natural resources</p> <p>Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities; society and systems</p>
<p><b>M7</b></p> <p><b>Technology and data security</b></p> <p>Effective use of technology to improve service delivery and operational efficiency, while maintaining the safety and security of our clients and data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> <li>• Regulators, governments and their agencies</li> <li>• Private funders and corporate partners</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Suppliers</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP2</b></p> <p>Short, medium, long-term</p> <p>Inputs: Our people; financing; infrastructure and technology; natural resources</p> <p>Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities; society and systems</p>
<p><b>M8</b></p> <p><b>Responding to external opportunities and risks</b></p> <p>Reviewing and responding to key political, economic and other changes in our external environment to effectively meet the needs of our clients, communities and stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> <li>• Member organisations and consortium partners</li> <li>• Regulators, governments and their agencies</li> <li>• Private funders and corporate partners</li> <li>• Other NFPs</li> <li>• Universities and research institutions</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP5</b></p> <p>Short, medium, long-term</p> <p>Inputs: our relationships; our expertise; financing; natural resources</p> <p>Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities; society and systems</p>
<p><b>M9</b></p> <p><b>Responsible care of environmental resources</b></p> <p>Responsible care of environmental resources and delivering on our commitments to the Climate Change Charter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Board and committees</li> <li>• Regulators, governments and their agencies</li> <li>• Private funders and corporate partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>SP3</b></p> <p>Medium, long-term</p> <p>Inputs: Natural resources</p> <p>Outputs and impact: Our clients and communities, society and systems</p>

## Our stakeholders

Our long-term success depends on our ability to create value for our stakeholders, with whom we work collaboratively and purposefully. These stakeholders include and are an extension of

the communities we support, and we listen and respond to their concerns on key material topics to drive social change together.

At the end of FY24, we initiated consultations for a new materiality assessment process to better adapt to stakeholders’ changing needs and priorities. We have begun a more formal and independent stakeholder analysis to rigorously gather insights and help prioritise our material topics. This feedback will be fully integrated into our materiality process for FY25.

In the meantime, our key stakeholder groups, including how we engage with them, how frequently we engage them, and the most material topics for each group, are outlined below. We have mapped their key concerns and detailed how we addressed them during the FY24 reporting period, including the value created. A summary our remaining stakeholders and further details on our material topics is included in coming pages.

Key to Engagement types:

- A** Annually
- Q** Quarterly
- M** Monthly
- W** Weekly
- O** Ongoing
- WR** When Required
- AH** Ad Hoc

## Employees

**M1 M2 M3 M4 M5 M6 M7 M8 M9**

Key engagement activities and regularity

- ‘Your Voice’ Employee Survey | **A**
- Feedback from All–staff Roadshows | **A**
- Culture and Inclusion Surveys | **A**
- Feedback via managers | **O**
- Exit surveys | **O**
- Attrition tracking | **O**

Key concerns

- Awareness of issues affecting SSI and employment
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Professional development and career progression
- Improved client outcomes and impact

Response

- Regular communication via all–staff Roadshows, intranet articles, Lunch and Learns and online meetings
- Health and wellbeing including EAP, WH&S, seminars
- Provision of a range of general and targeted training opportunities, including Lead@SSI program and a focus on internal mobility

Value created for stakeholder



- Clearer understanding and impact of issues through increased transparency
- Increased sense of support; improvements in health and wellbeing
- Improved skills, knowledge, and employability

#### Value created for SSI

- Greater trust from employees and increased cooperation
- Strengthened employee loyalty and healthier workforce
- Increased ability to deliver on purpose

## Clients

### M1 M2 M3 M5 M7 M8

#### Engagement activities and regularity

- Client feedback surveys, including Net Promoter Score | ○
- Reference groups | ○
- Feedback to case managers and other team members | ○
- Research and program evaluations | ○
- Feedback and complaints process | ○
- Networking and client events | ○
- Client interviews for website, Annual Report and other communications | ○

#### Key concerns

- Need for additional support, especially where gaps exist in government-funded programs
- Desire for enhanced understanding of services and supports available
- Desire for further tailoring of services to meet the needs of different groups, including further own-language services

#### Response

- Identification of service gaps and provision of SSI-funded programs such as Ignite, the Welcome Program and Arts programs
- Enhancement and simplification of SSI's website; ongoing referrals and signposting to other support services, where appropriate
- Further growing multiple language capabilities within SSI; increased codesign and establishment of reference groups of specific client cohorts

#### Value created for stakeholder

- Enhanced client outcomes across our outcome domains
- Better access to programs that might be of benefit
- Increased access and engagement with services that meet their unique needs

#### Value created for SSI

- Better able to meet our purpose and vision
- Increased access of programs by those in need
- Better able to support the unique needs of our clients

## Members and consortium partners

### M1 M2 M3 M4 M8

#### Engagement activities and regularity

- Member Survey | **A**
- Member engagement 1:1 with CEO | **O**
- Member briefings | **AH**
- NSP Quarterly meeting | **Q**
- AGM | **A**

#### Key concerns

- Better capacity to manage risks, compliance and governance
- Staying abreast of changes across the sector; knowledge and skill sharing
- Addressing increased competition across the sector

#### Response

- Leveraging SSI's size and experience to take a leading consortium role in program delivery, reducing partner risk
- Holding briefing events, seminars and workshops for leaders of member organisations
- Seeking new opportunities for consortia with resulting economies of scale and increased efficiency and competitiveness

#### Value created for stakeholder

- Increased skills and knowledge to manage ongoing demands
- Capacity to draw on the knowledge, skills and expertise of SSI and our diverse membership
- Increased collaboration to drive change for their stakeholders

#### Value created for SSI

- Improved sector capacity
- Capacity to draw on different knowledge, skills and expertise from across our diverse membership; identification of opportunities and risks
- Increased collaboration to drive change for our clients

## Boards and Committees

### M1 M2 M3 M4 M5 M6 M7 M8 M9

- Engagement activities and regularity
- Board and committee meetings | **Q**
- Planning and approval of agendas and feedback on papers | **O**
- AGM | **A**
- Input into strategic initiatives of the organisation including amendments to Charters, Corporate Governance Statement, Risk Governance | **O**

#### Key concerns

- Access to timely, high-quality data and insights on organisational performance, governance and risk management
- Financial sustainability of the organisation, including risks and opportunities around strategic contracts
- Capacity of organisation to measure and deliver positive impact for our clients and communities

#### Response

- Development of integrated reporting dashboards, including key metrics across material topics and business functions; risk management approach
- Monitoring of strategic contract risks
- Investment in internal expertise for impact measurement; regular reporting on impact measurement progress and findings

Value created for stakeholder

- Improved oversight of organisational performance and risks
- Improved oversight of financial position
- Improved oversight of organisational impact

Value created for SSI

- Increased capacity for efficient, comprehensive and frequent reporting on key metrics
- Increased capacity to draw on insights and expertise of the Board and committee

## Stakeholder Summary

In FY25, we will expand on those already mentioned and include the perspectives of the following:

Stakeholder	Engagement activities
<b>Volunteers and interns</b> <b>M1 M5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback to program teams (including the Welcome Program, Ignite)</li> <li>• Feedback after events, festivals and exhibitions</li> </ul>
<b>Private funders and corporate partners</b> <b>M1 M2 M3 M4 M6 M7 M8 M9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings and communication</li> <li>• Funding and pro bono agreements</li> <li>• Program delivery reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Regulators, government and their agencies</b> <b>M1 M2 M3 M4 M6 M7 M8 M9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending regular industry forums and meetings</li> <li>• Liaising directly with local, federal and state government on public policy matters</li> <li>• Policy submissions on issues relating to our mission</li> <li>• Grant funding processes</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press releases and briefings</li> </ul>

<b>M6 M7 M8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews (online and broadcast)</li> <li>• Articles, TV and internet-based media</li> </ul>
<b>Universities and research institutions M8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University advisory board involvement</li> <li>• Partnerships and contributions to research</li> </ul>
<b>Other NFPs M1 M3 M8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending regular industry forums and meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Suppliers M4 M5 M6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement market</li> <li>• Strategic supplier meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Wider community M1 M2 M3 M7 M9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events, festivals and exhibitions</li> <li>• Newsletter and social media</li> <li>• Client and Community Voice consultations</li> </ul>

## What we do

Our work contributes to outcomes across six domains. Tracking and understanding the impact of our work is essential to improving what we do – and to achieving better outcomes for our clients.

The results over the next pages provide highlights for each outcome domain, demonstrating how our work creates value and contributes to change.

A range of programs have been included in the outcome domain highlights with a summary of our program categories on following pages. A full list of our programs providing information on each program’s purpose, region, funder and the outcome domain that it contributes to is available as an addendum to the report and can be accessed by scanning the QR code below.

### Our outcome domains are:

- Safety and stability
- Learning and growth
- Social inclusion
- Economic participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Society and systems capacity

### Outcome domain

## 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. We support newcomers and their families, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and other people experiencing a period of vulnerability to live in safe and stable environments. We work to ensure they have access to services that support secure lives.

### A sense of safety and dignity for newcomers

As part of our work supporting newcomers to Australia, we continued to deliver the Australian Government's Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) in NSW. In FY24, we supported 9,918 refugees, including 3,879 new clients who arrived within the financial year. We provide culturally safe support around orientation and transition to settlement over the first 12–18 months following arrival including connecting our clients with the support, resources and skills they need to find their feet. We assist clients to find suitable housing and can report that all clients exiting the program had secured long-term accommodation.

Meanwhile, our Status Resolution Support Service assisted 1,119 people seeking asylum with supports including facilitating access to healthcare, accommodation, employment and support services. This figure includes 478 newly started clients.

In Queensland, our Emergency Relief program provided 1,665 people, including refugees and those seeking asylum, with emergency payments and food parcels (up 19 per cent).

### Supporting Gaza arrivals

In December 2023, we established the SSI-funded Crisis Arrival Response Service (CARS) to respond to the needs of displaced Gazans and meet the community's urgent need for safety and stability. Hundreds of new arrivals faced challenges associated with a lack of rights, financial means, and service access. In NSW, we helped 483 people, including 126 families and 188 children and young people under 18. With the generous support of the Australian community, we were able to find housing and medical solutions. Collaboration was critical, and we worked with many diaspora community groups and the settlement sector to respond to the crisis.

### Responding to family, domestic and sexual violence

In FY24, we continued to provide family, domestic and sexual violence support and services through a number of programs which we have outlined in a special section on pages 58–59.

### Supporting diverse families

Our Multicultural Child and Family Program (MCFP) in NSW connects children and young people from CALD backgrounds with foster carers who provide a safe and caring environment and help them maintain their cultural identity. In FY24, 295 children in NSW were cared for – an eight per cent increase from FY23, with 113 new children and young people entering the program. Our family preservation and restoration team in NSW assisted five families and 24 children in creating a safe and nurturing home environment for children. In Victoria, the program known as the Multicultural Foster Care Program ended 30 June.

### Legal services through our new social enterprise

SSI Legal Pty Ltd is a new service, launched in February 2024, to support people navigating Australia's ever-changing and complex immigration system. The service offers ethical and honest advice and timely and cost-effective solutions to immigration legal matters. The fully

qualified and experienced team provide a client-focused approach that helps guide clients to find the best solutions for their circumstances. SSI Legal Pty Ltd is a certified social enterprise, doing ‘business for good’ – creating genuine impact and contributing to a fairer and more equitable Australia.

Safety and stability case study:

### **Support bringing a new life into the world**

Twenty-seven-year-old Rana\* arrived in Australia after the 2023 Gaza crisis. Emotionally and physically exhausted, she was heavily pregnant, needing medical care for her soon-to-be-born child.

The temporary visa on which Rana had entered the country meant she unfortunately didn’t qualify for Medicare. Family members dug deep to pay medical bills in the short term, but the situation became unsustainable.

SSI was able to help Rana via a self-funded temporary casework support program, set up to assist communities fleeing Gaza. Our team connected her with financial, medical and housing support.

This included Refugee Health who helped Rana make a prenatal appointment at her local hospital and access free prescription medicine. To support Rana ahead of the birth, we provided a food hamper and vouchers to purchase essential items.

On New Year’s Day 2024, Rana safely delivered a baby boy. We connected Rana with the Australian Relief Organisation, who provided \$600 of vouchers, baby items, clothing and a portable air-conditioner for the newborn’s sleeping area. Rana is now seeking a temporary protection visa to strengthen her security in Australia.

\* Name and some details changed for privacy.

## **Outcome domain**

# **Learning and growth**

Education, training, and self-development empower individuals to contribute to society. These outcomes are key in many of our programs, especially for newcomers and those seeking employment. Through our programs, we promote lifelong learning and help individuals build the knowledge, skills, and capabilities to enhance their potential.

### **Growing and upskilling Australia’s aged care workers**

SSI supported the Australian Government’s Home Care Workforce Support Program (HCWSP) to grow and upskill Australia’s home care workers to help senior Australians access the care they need to remain independent at home. In FY24, SSI recruited and supported 5,608 participants across NSW and the ACT. We assisted them in obtaining the necessary documentation for a role in home care, linked them to accredited and non-accredited training to build their skills, and facilitated employment with Home Care Providers. SSI also provided targeted supports for home care providers, including management and cultural-responsiveness training, business reviews, and best-practice guidelines. The program ended on 30 June 2024.

### **Increased participation in education and training**

SSI's programs support people from diverse backgrounds to access education and training, overcome participation barriers, and achieve their unique goals. These include employment programs, scholarships, settlement programs, and community hubs:

<b>SSI Allianz Scholarship Program</b>	34 scholarships were awarded to undertake study or have existing skills recognised
<b>Employment programs</b>	2,435 individuals supported by our employment programs (35 per cent) had participated in formal education or training
<b>Education and training services</b>	263 students from diverse backgrounds received training with 51 per cent gaining full qualifications  276 job seeker participants enrolled in our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, with 50 completing a course to upskill
<b>Community Hubs (NSW and Qld)</b>	5,339 families supported, up from 3,296 the previous year
<b>HSP</b>	725 adult participants enrolled in education and training other than English (27 per cent)
<b>HCWSP</b>	1,078 individuals were referred to registered training organisations, and of those 451 (42 per cent) engaged in vocational training

### **Building strong foundations for settling in Australia**

Helping humanitarian entrants and migrants develop the skills to settle into their new communities is a major focus. The Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) connects newly arrived refugees to the support and resources they need to adjust to life in Australia during their first 12–18 months in the country.

Our Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program complements the HSP, helping entrants and migrants develop skills for social engagement, emotional wellbeing, and economic independence in their first five years in the country. In FY24, 14,260 people were supported across NSW and Queensland (up seven per cent from FY23).

In FY24:

- 3,000+ clients were supported with education and skills training (an additional 1,600+ attended group sessions)
- 1,500+ clients were assisted with Employment Pathways (an additional 700+ attended group sessions)
- 600+ clients were helped with English-learning pathways (an additional 300+ attended group sessions)

Learning and growth case study:

### **Finding the confidence to do more**

Returning to the workforce after having a child isn't easy. Many parents find their confidence and work readiness is at an all-time low.

Before the birth of her five-year-old, Tonea held a long-term cleaning job. On re-entering the workforce, she struggled with shyness and uncertainty around where to start.

Tonea, who identifies as a First Nations person, found part of the answer in the ParentsNext program delivered by SSI in Queensland. The scheme assists parents with children under six to plan and prepare for future work and study, and it helped Tonea to grow her confidence and work skills. Having had experience caring for a sick relative, Tonea decided to pursue a career as a carer within disability support. With help from SSI, she enrolled to study for Certificate III in Individual Support. She also took the leap of applying for a job as a support worker with First Nations NDIS support business, Wesbro Services. SSI supported Tonea with a fuel card to get to the interview and she was given the job pending her starting her studies.

## **Outcome domain**

# **Social inclusion**

Our support services are aimed at people living with disabilities, newcomers, migrants and others. They provide participants with the skills, relationships, and resources necessary to build meaningful connections, access services, and achieve greater community participation. Through culturally responsive practices, we foster a sense of identity, helping individuals improve their involvement in the community and their sense of belonging.

### **Improving access to services and supports for newcomers**

SSI supports refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant newcomers to connect with the support services they need to settle and thrive in Australia. These services include family, disability and ageing services, non-government community services, legal services, and government support. Support is provided through information sessions, case management and service referrals. In FY24, we supported 25,037 newcomers through the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP), Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS), and Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) programs. Improving service access is a key outcome of these programs.

### **Increased community connection and sense of belonging**

SSI helps refugees, asylum seekers, and newcomers connect with local communities, religious, cultural, and sporting organisations, and other groups. The Department of Home Affairs surveys clients six to nine months after arriving in Australia, with 82 per cent of HSP respondents



reporting greater connection to the community and 90 per cent feeling part of the Australian community.

Similarly, 92 per cent of SETS NSW clients aiming to improve community participation reported positive changes to their circumstances over the year. Both HSP and SETS offer specific programs for young people, including HSP Youth Hubs, Youth Advisory Groups, and SETS Youth Settlement Services, supporting 3,000+ young people aged 15–24 years.

### Connecting and participating through sport

Sport is a positive way to connect and engage with the community. Our Multicultural Sports Club at Gould Adams Park in Queensland offers a wide range of sports and recreational activities, including tournaments, fitness and dance classes, and youth, women’s, and seniors’ programs. The club also brings together community members for events such as International Women’s Day, Family Fun Days, and Refugee Week. In FY24, 1,795 participants from more than 100 cultural backgrounds accessed the club, with over 18,250 participant touchpoints in the year. Programs focused on improving social connections, school engagement, and participation.

### Greater connection and social inclusion through the arts

In FY24, we continued to support creative pathways for newly arrived artists and cultural practitioners, while delivering community arts, festivals and cultural events that foster greater connection and inclusion. SSI New Beginnings Festival, a celebration of dance, art and musical diversity, is part of the Sydney Festival attracting 8,000 festival goers. Hosted by our corporate partner, the Australian National Maritime Museum, this is SSI’s signature NSW event. For the second year, World of Cultures, celebrated Logan City’s diversity, and attracted 5,000 Queenslanders. Meanwhile, the Community Refugee Welcome Centre in NSW ran a number of initiatives across the year that provided creative platforms for local artists, including The Spirit of Welcome festival, art and creative workshops, and teen storytelling workshops.

Our other arts initiatives provide a powerful means for increasing social engagement. These included:

<b>BEMAC program in QLD</b>	<b>5,049*</b> people attended our events <b>46</b> culturally diverse projects delivered <b>372</b> artists and arts workers supported *(down 15per cent from FY23)
<b>Arts and Culture program in NSW</b>	<b>15,000*</b> people attended our events <b>148</b> artists supported *(up 25per cent from FY23 due to the success of our signature arts and culture event)
<b>Community Refugee Welcome Centre in NSW</b>	<b>1,200</b> people supported from refugee and diverse backgrounds with creative initiatives and cultural events

<b>BEMAC post–event surveys found:</b>
<b>96%</b> agreed the event gave them greater respect for cultural diversity
<b>96%</b> agreed the event gave them the opportunity to access cultural activities
<b>88%</b> agreed that the event helped them to feel connected to people in the community

### **Better access to disability support for people from diverse backgrounds**

We partner with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to deliver culturally responsive and person-centred local area coordination (LAC) services within two Sydney regions. We support people to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and other services and supports in the community. In FY24, we supported 23,008 NDIS participants (up 10 per cent) to use their NDIS Plan and to access the services and supports they needed. Of these, 80 per cent per cent were supported to achieve their social participation goals.

Social inclusion case study:

#### **Helping Roaa to achieve her academic dreams**

Even the brightest of students can struggle with the challenges of a new country, language and culture.

Roaa was a teenager when her family found safety in Australia in 2018 after being forced to leave Egypt and then China. Academically excellent, Roaa sat at the top of her cohort in both countries. That changed when she began school in Australia. Adapting to a different school system and lessons taught in English, Roaa’s report card A’s became C’s.

The experience was painful and put a major dent in Roaa’s long-held plans to become a psychologist.

Through hard work and study, she picked herself up and achieved a highly respectable ATAR of 94.5. Roaa is now undertaking a double degree program in psychology and media and communications at the University of Sydney.

To help Roaa go even further, she was awarded an SSI Allianz Scholarship in 2022. These one-off scholarships of up to \$5000 empower refugees and people seeking asylum to continue their studies.

“My community needs more Arab psychologists who can empathise and understand their situation – their trauma and experiences,” says Roaa.

For more information on the scholarship outcomes visit [ssi.org.au](http://ssi.org.au).

### **Outcome domain**

# Economic participation

Being able to participate in the workforce provides individuals with more than just a source of income. It helps build identity and self-esteem, while also strengthening ties within the community. We deliver a variety of programs designed to help people from diverse backgrounds and identities navigate employment support systems, increase their access to job opportunities, and secure good quality, stable employment.

## Better navigation and access to employment support

SSI’s employment services are culturally appropriate, trauma-informed, and tailored to meet the unique needs of our clients. In FY24, we supported over 6,000 clients across a range of employment programs.

<b>ParentsNext (PNXT)</b>	supported 3,546 parents with children under six
<b>Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP)</b>	supported 2,427 refugees
<b>Asylum Seeker Employment Skills Support (ASESS)</b>	supported 621 asylum seekers
<b>Disability Employment Services (DES)</b>	supported 286 people living with disabilities
<b>Connecting Women Into Trade and Return to Work</b>	supported 51 women through these pilot programs for unemployed and underemployed women

Additionally, we supported participants through the Home Care Workforce Support Program (HCWSP), where 5,608 individuals were assisted in navigating and enhancing their employment prospects in home care.

SSI’s broader programs also help participants access employment support. In FY24, 40 percent (2,586) of the Humanitarian Settlement Program’s (HSP) adult clients were supported in accessing employment by the exit of the program, while 52 per cent (7,093) of Local Area Coordination (LAC) participants aged 15 and above set employment-related goals. Refer to pages 36 and 50 for further details on the HSP and LAC programs, respectively.

## Increased access to employment and self-employment opportunities

In addition to supporting job seekers, SSI works closely with employers to help them recruit talent and with employment partners to connect people to opportunities. In FY24, over 4,000

individuals secured employment or were supported to continue their employment through SSI’s programs, including:

<b>HCWSP</b>	2,266 participants were employed with a home care provider
<b>Employment services (RESP, PNXT, ASESS, DES)</b>	Of clients supported in FY24, 1819 (29 per cent) had secured work (631 with RESP, 899 with PNXT, 146 with ASESS and 143 with DES)
<b>HSP</b>	629 clients were employed by the time they exited the HSP program

### **SSI Social Enterprise highlights**

SSI continues to develop innovative social enterprises that address employment participation gaps in the communities we serve. Our Ignite® program assists individuals from diverse backgrounds in starting or expanding their small businesses. In FY24, 62 individuals were supported in either the creation of a new start-up or the strengthening of an existing business.

The Work + Stay social enterprise connects newcomers and other job seekers with regional employers. This initiative serves the dual purpose of matching job seekers to roles that align with their skills and supporting regional employers to address workforce shortages. Between FY23 and FY24, more than 50 candidates were placed and settled in regional areas, achieving a 90 percent retention rate.

### **Working with employers to increase opportunities**

SSI collaborates with employers through initiatives like the Diversi-Ready program, which offers training and support to employers in industries such as retail, hospitality and aged care. The aim is to build employers’ confidence and capacity to recruit and retain people with disabilities in their workforce. In FY24, this program supported **120** individuals.

### **Increasing experiences of good-quality, secure employment**

SSI is committed to helping clients find good-quality, secure employment that aligns with their personal goals and allows them to fully utilise their skills and abilities. Key indicators we use include job tenure, permanency, satisfaction and use of skills and abilities within a role, with promising outcomes displayed across a range of our programs in FY24.

Economic participation case study:

### **Charlie is living the dream**

Living with autism hasn't stopped Charlie\* achieving his dreams. With help from his mum and his SSI Local Area Coordinator, he has secured not only his driver licence but an apprenticeship as a mechanic – the perfect job for a motorhead.

“I have worked with cars since I could talk,” says Charlie. “I have a really big passion for them.”

During his final years of high school, Charlie accessed the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) with the support from SSI. Charlie's approved NDIS plan included funding for him to participate in specialised driving lessons to help him overcome his anxiety and develop the skills to pass.

“Now he has all the confidence in the world to drive,” says Charlie's mum, Lenora.

“The constant experience of driving and the reassurance that he was doing the right thing made the difference.”

SSI also provided Charlie with post-school options and linked him to mainstream supports to help achieve his goal. With the LAC team's help, Charlie secured an apprenticeship in the first term of Year 12.

\* Name changed for privacy

## **Outcome domain**

# **Health and wellbeing**

Good health plays a key role in an individual's ability to participate in society, to work and to achieve satisfaction and happiness. Our programs aim to empower people through improved health, wellbeing and life satisfaction. Our key focus is on newcomers and their families, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and others experiencing vulnerability. We focus on both mental and physical health.

## **Health and wellbeing services for children and families**

Achieving good health in childhood helps an individual throughout their life. Our Health Impact Project aims to improve the health and wellbeing of both children under five and their parents through Community Hubs, which are based in NSW and Queensland local schools. In FY24, 220 caregivers and 287 children (507 in total, 381 in FY23) participated in the Health Impact Project providing access to occupational and speech therapy as well as delivering child wellness and parenting information days and workshops. Workshop participants who responded to a survey reported an increase in their knowledge.

The Child Health Pathways Pilot Project supports families of children with developmental delays in accessing health services. In FY24, 30 children (23 in FY23) were linked to services providing practical support as well as access to disability services and NDIS planning.

The Refugee Health Nurse program (Ipswich) provides support to refugees and migrants with complex health needs to navigate and access health services. It enhances health literacy and reduces barriers to accessing ongoing healthcare. In FY24, we supported 59 clients with referrals to Child Health, TB clinics and dental care.

The SSI Gateway continued to provide a safe and welcoming place for CALD and newcomer communities to come together. It has a strong focus on strengthening local communities and

supporting families and children through a range of initiatives such as local services outreach, collaborating on strategies around local community issues, and delivering specialised support, such as:

- The Maternity Hub provides comprehensive care and support for expectant and new mothers from migrant and refugee backgrounds who have birthed or are planning to birth at the local Logan Hospital. In FY24, 179 women (157 in FY23) were supported by the hub with prenatal and/or postnatal care coordinated and responsive to their cultural needs and preferences. The hub also links women with internal and external services for housing, employment, health, and financial wellbeing support.
- The PHN Care-finder Program helps vulnerable older CALD people living in Logan to interact with My Aged Care, other aged care services and relevant community supports. In FY24, some 74 people (65+ years old) received support navigating and accessing aged care supports.

### **Access to clinical expertise**

SSI's Practice Management Unit (PMU) supports our settlement and Multicultural Child and Family Programs with clinicians who provide mental health assessment and treatment. Many clients have experienced trauma and stress due to forced migration and/or visa uncertainty. In FY24, the PMU delivered 2,034 sessions (1,921 in FY23) to 211 clients (196 in FY23). The unit also supports case workers across programs, helping them find appropriate services to address clients' specialised needs.

### **Gambling harm prevention**

SSI's Multicultural Gambling Harm Prevention Service (Victoria) is available to everyone, but is designed especially for migrants and their communities, family and friends who are experiencing or are affected by gambling harm. The program provides counselling and support services, and community awareness and education workshops. In FY24 we supported 35 clients with in-language counselling services, delivered 22 community education sessions to more than 700 participants in partnership with community organisations, and ran two community events with more than 500 participants. As well, five community capacity building grants were provided to community organisations to increase awareness of gambling harm and enhance community capacity.

Health and wellbeing case study:

### **Helping Peter rediscover meaning in life**

Peter's life changed dramatically when he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a rare eye disease causing severe vision impairment. As the condition advanced, the 39-year-old could no longer maintain employment or drive his car. He ceased regular activities like cycling and surfing and spent an increasing amount of time alone.

Support from SSI's Local Area Coordination (LAC) program provided the support Peter needed to restore quality of life. In partnership with the National Disability Insurance Agency, the program helps people with disability to access NDIS funding to help gain greater independence and new skills.

Working with SSI, Peter learned how to make the most of the NDIS. "The LAC team encouraged me to try so many things, like being proactive and visiting Vision Australia, and helping me know what questions to ask and the support I need," says Peter. "I now have great glasses and my cane." Taking a whole-person approach, SSI also helped Peter access therapy to better manage his challenges.

Peter's hard work paid off. He confidently rides public transport, and even attends his local Bingo nights.

## **Outcome domain**

# **Society and systems capacity**

One of the biggest challenges vulnerable members of society face is barriers that prevent them from contributing to social, civic and economic outcomes. To combat this, we collaborate with stakeholders and communities in Australia and internationally to influence policymakers, program designers and the broader community. Our goal is to meet the needs of people experiencing vulnerability and advocate for change alongside disadvantaged individuals.

## **Advocacy and awareness-raising**

Through our advocacy and media activities, SSI amplifies the voices of those who struggle to be heard. Our Advocacy, Media, and Marketing teams develop campaigns to influence public narratives, decision makers and policies. This includes evidence-based advocacy, media campaigns and events that support our thought-leadership agenda. For more on our latest campaigns, see The Billion Dollar Benefit campaign on further pages.

## **Paving pathways for people living with disability**

In FY24, SSI led the Pathways to Possibilities Symposium, bringing together sector leaders, including many with lived experience, to identify opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the Australian economy. Participant surveys rated the event highly for sharing relevant information and solutions. The symposium identified key strategies for future action. See a special section on the event in further pages.

## **Research and policy**

In FY24, we completed 14 policy submissions on issues such as disability, migration, employment and refugee settlement. We also published three research reports:

- Foundations for Belonging 2023, conducted with Western Sydney University, exploring refugees' understanding of First Nations issues.

- Stronger Starts Brighter Futures II, a collaboration between SSI, Education Futures, and the University of South Australia, examining the development of children from CALD backgrounds.
- Safety and Health After Arrival (SAHAR), conducted with the University of Wollongong, introducing a culturally tailored domestic violence screening strategy for refugee women.

### International engagement

In FY24, we participated in eight regional working groups in Asia and the Pacific and made three submissions to UN-led forums on migration, displacement and climate change. We also engaged in seven global consultations on resettlement, gender equality and complementary pathways. At the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023, we submitted two pledges focused on supporting civil society and refugee-led organisations.

### Diversity training

Our Diversity Training program helps businesses and organisations harness Australia’s diversity by improving workforce skills. In FY24, we delivered 167 workshops to over 160 organisations and 2,500 participants. Additionally, 500 people completed our new online training modules.

Diversity Training participants reported a:
26% increase in confidence working with people from culturally diverse backgrounds
41% increase in confidence working with a trauma-informed approach
37% increase in confidence working with new employees from a refugee background

### Supporting and empowering women

In FY24, SSI delivered a range of programs supporting women’s participation in society.

- Realise, Inspire, Support, Energise (RISE) supports women from culturally marginalised backgrounds to reach leadership positions. In FY24, 189 women participated.
- Pilot programs such as Ignite Female Founders and Women with Purpose supported women in entrepreneurship and returning to work, respectively.
- Community Hubs supported women in NSW and Queensland.
- The Humanitarian Settlement Program Women’s Committee supported over 300 refugee women to enhance their skills and aspirations.

### Capacity building for women’s and family safety

SSI focused on building the capacity of services to support the safety of women and children from diverse backgrounds

in FY24.

- SafePath, delivered culturally appropriate sexual violence training to 230 practitioners significantly improving their preparedness to respond to sensitive disclosures.
- Strategies to Prevent Modern Slavery (StoP) raised awareness of forced marriage, forced labour, and domestic servitude.



- Championing Action for Tech Safety (CATS) increased understanding of tech-based abuse among CALD women.
- Building Stronger Families supported over 800 people in building healthy family relationships.

## SSI's Women and Girls Strategic Plan 2024–2027

FY23 marked the final year of our first three-year plan, and FY24 saw the development of our new strategy. It focuses on gender justice in our workplace, increased economic participation for female clients, and continuing to advocate for underrepresented women and girls.

Society and systems capacity case study:

### The chance of a lifetime for Dima

For many humanitarian entrants to Australia, the journey to finding meaningful, paid employment is a long one. But that's not always the case.

Passionate storyteller Dima landed her dream job with SBS just months after arriving in Australia from Iraq. After fleeing Syria's war, SSI assisted her in establishing her life in her new country and helped shape her work credentials.

"From the moment we arrived, SSI's team guided us through how to set up our new life here, including opening bank accounts, accessing Medicare, and getting settled in a house," says Dima. "They also helped me update my CV and cover letter to align with Australian standards."

Prior to arriving in 2023, Dima aspired to work at SBS as a journalist and content producer. Four months after arriving, a Digital Producer role opened. Dima applied and won the position.

She considers herself lucky compared to other professional refugees who can experience harder times finding suitable work. Dima's brother is a doctor. Despite passing the required medical exams and applying for hundreds of jobs, he's yet to secure a placement.

SSI advocates on behalf of people like Dima and has activated a national coalition of 80+ organisations who believe hiring skilled migrants and refugees is smart business. To read about our Billion Dollar Benefit campaign visit [ssi.org.au/billiondollarbenefit](https://ssi.org.au/billiondollarbenefit)

## Our programs

SSI delivers a wide range of programs that are organised across nine categories of service delivery. Collectively, these deliver impact across our six outcome domains.

### Community programs

We deliver a range of community programs that engage and empower community members, foster collaboration, improve service navigation, and promote positive change across the communities we serve. These types of programs include a range of place-based initiatives, such as youth, women and seniors' programs, and our arts, culture, sports, and community engagement programs.

## **Disability services**

Our disability services connect people living with disability to the support they need and help them to participate in their communities. Programs include Local Area Coordination (LAC) and community capacity building programs.

## **Education and training**

We deliver a range of programs which support people to participate in education and training, upskill and meet their learning, development, and employment goals. Programs include our diversity training, Registered Training Organisation, Skilling Queenslanders for Work, and the SSI Allianz scholarship program.

## **Employment services**

Our employment services enhance the employability of individuals, including refugees, asylum seekers and people with disability, and support employers to create a diverse and inclusive workplace. Programs include ParentsNext, Disability Employment Services, refugee and asylum seeker employment programs, and Ignite small business start-up and Work + Stay social enterprises.

## **Families, children and youth**

We deliver a range of programs for families, children and youth that help participants to thrive and reach their full potential. These include programs such as multicultural foster care, Community Hubs based in local schools, and youth programs.

## **Family, domestic and sexual violence**

We deliver a variety of family, domestic, and sexual violence (FDSV) programs which directly support migrant and refugee women and children at risk of or experiencing FDSV, as well as other primary prevention and early intervention programs. This includes programs such as 99 Steps, the NSW Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety and a range of capacity building initiatives.

## **Health and wellbeing**

Our health and wellbeing programs support holistic wellbeing for individuals, families, children and communities through education and health promotion initiatives, service navigation support, and community hubs that enhance service access. Programs include SSI Gateway, the Logan Maternity Hub, the Health Impact Project, and SSI's Practice Management Unit.

## **Homecare (Aged-Care)**

The Home Care Workforce Support Program focuses on recruiting and supporting an aged care workforce for the future to help Australia's seniors enjoy a safe and independent life at home. We deliver training to up-skill and support carers with employment pathways and careers.

## **Settlement**

Our settlement services connect newcomers with resources, knowledge and skills for personal growth and community integration, while our advocacy work increases the visibility of experiences of new migrants to Australia. Programs include Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP), Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) and Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS).

## **In-house client support functions**

SSI self-funds programs and initiatives to provide wrap-around support to our clients, and when needed, support to our in-house teams. Programs include our Clinical Practice Unit, Community Engagement Practice and our Domestic and Family Violence Practice Unit.

# **Our advocacy**

## **Billion Dollar Benefit**

Australia's economy faces major challenges in the form of skills shortages and declining productivity. At the same time, nearly half of the permanent migrants living in our country are not working at a level that fully harnesses their skills – often because their qualifications aren't recognised. It's an equation that doesn't make sense for the nation or for individuals who are often unable to work in the fields in which they trained.

Since 2023, an SSI-led campaign known as the Billion Dollar Benefit has been working to change the situation by highlighting the huge financial and social gains that could be made by reducing barriers to employment for newcomers living in our communities. In FY24, the campaign, which is supported by more than 80 organisations, had a strong focus on advocacy, producing two major reports to explain how businesses and governments can better capitalise on migrant and refugee skills. Moving into FY25, Billion Dollar Benefit will shift to an active advocacy campaign footing and call for policy and legislative reform to overhaul Australia's overseas skills and qualification recognition system.

## **Born from Canberra summit**

The Billion Dollar Benefit concept was born at the inaugural Refugee and Migrant Jobs and Skills Summit in Canberra in March 2023. Co-hosted by SSI, the event brought together industry and sector experts, government officials, corporates, unions, and community members who tried to find ways to reduce the barriers to employment facing skilled refugees and migrants. In June 2023, this led to the publication of Billion Dollar Benefit – A Roadmap for unleashing the economic potential of refugees and migrants, a report backed by 36 organisations including Allianz and IKEA Australia. Taking a proactive approach to solving problems, the report recommended a five-prong roadmap to bring about reform, namely to: fix the overseas skills and qualification recognition system; strengthen protections for migrant workers; review the right to work for people on temporary visas; scale cross-sector partnerships; and to reform English requirements so they are fit for purpose. The launch and report gained significant traction with the media and wider community.

## **Potential \$9 billion annual windfall**

Building on this momentum during the FY24 reporting period, in November 2023 the campaign launched Billion Dollar Benefit – Welcoming Tech Talent, an employer guide which highlighted how people from refugee and migrant backgrounds could help meet a shortfall in skilled tech workers in Australia. The report provided 10 evidence-based tips to help employers welcome tech talent from these cohorts.

In June 2024, SSI launched landmark research titled Billion Dollar Benefit – The economic impact of unlocking the skills potential of migrants in Australia. This work was conducted on commission by Deloitte Access Economics and jointly funded by SSI, Allianz Australia, LinkedIn, Business NSW and Business Western Sydney. The research, for the first time, put a dollar value

on the economy-wide benefit to Australia of migrants being able to work to the same skill level as Australian born workers. This was a remarkable \$9 billion dollars added per annum over the next 10 years, with GDP growing by 0.5 per cent and more than 50,000 full-time jobs created.

The coalition of organisations lending their support to the campaign grew from 36 in June 2023 to nearly 90 in June 2024, with the addition of major organisations such as Australia Post, Unions New South Wales, LinkedIn and The Salvation Army.

An Ambassador Program was also launched in FY24, with 15 high-profile individuals from a diverse range of fields publicly promoting the Billion Dollar Benefit campaign. Ambassadors include SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis, broadcaster Craig Foster, CEO of Business NSW, Dan Hunter, and Secretary of Unions NSW, Mark Morey.

As the initiative enters its third year in FY25, the focus is shifting from awareness raising to advocating for concrete change through the Activate Australia's Skills campaign. Efforts throughout the financial year are expected to focus on encouraging the Australian Government to make policy and legislative changes that will help remove barriers to employment for migrants and refugees, with benefits for both employers and Australia's economy.

## Responding to violence against women and children

Seeking support for family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) is challenging for anyone. For women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, these challenges are even more daunting due to language barriers, cultural differences, social isolation, stigma, and limited understanding of Australian systems.

We are committed to improving our response to FDSV while advocating for the unique needs of multicultural communities. Our approach aligns with our FY23 Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Framework and the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032, both aimed at creating safer and more inclusive communities.

### 99 Steps

One of our domestic and family violence key initiatives, the 99 Steps program in Queensland, has grown significantly in the past year. This program provided risk assessments and safety plans to 136 women, a 70 per cent increase from the previous year. These women also received assistance with legal systems, housing and financial support, with \$5,000 in brokerage funding used for rent payments, helping survivors rebuild their lives.

### Domestic Family Violence Practice Unit

In New South Wales, SSI delivered specialist FDSV services to 54 migrant and refugee women and children. The services included risk assessments, safety planning, and psychosocial education. Although the centralised unit was closed in April 2024, these services were integrated into community-based programs, ensuring continuity of care while enhancing localised support.

### The SETS Domestic and Family Violence Project

The Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program, active in both NSW and Queensland, focuses on prevention, early intervention and specialised casework. In the past year, 2,700 clients received support through this program, which was evaluated by the Gendered Violence Research Network at UNSW. The evaluation highlighted improved outcomes in safety, awareness and goal achievement for clients. A crucial component of the project has

been its community engagement efforts, aimed at raising awareness and improving service access.

### **Train, Engage, Connect, and Support (TECS) Project**

In May 2024, we launched the Train, Engage, Connect and Support (TECS) project, a national initiative to create safer communities. The project collaborates with community and faith leaders, who are often the first point of contact for women experiencing violence. By equipping these leaders with the necessary tools, they can guide women to appropriate services. TECS' progress will be reported in FY25.

### **NSW Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety**

SSI's NSW Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety, opened in April 2024. Funded by the NSW Government for three years, the centre improves access to FDSV support for culturally diverse women. It offers direct casework to women in southwestern Sydney, collaborates with services across NSW, and works to raise FDSV awareness in multicultural communities. The centre also strengthens the capacity of both multicultural and FDSV sectors to respond to violence in culturally responsive ways.

Though full results will be available in FY25, the centre has already supported 63 women with intensive casework, offered consultations and referrals to 130 clients, and organised 15 community information sessions, reaching 300 people.

Through initiatives like these, SSI is dedicated to supporting vulnerable women and children and ensuring that migrant and refugee voices are included in the broader FDSV conversation. Our focus is not only on immediate support but also on long-term community education, fostering a future where all women and children can live free from violence.

Stakeholder spotlight:

#### **University and research partner**

For the past four years, we have collaborated with Western Sydney University's Institute for Culture and Society on a series of research projects, Foundations for Belonging, which aims to better understand the Australian refugee experience. The first phase – examining refugees' social connections and civic participation – was published in 2020, with subsequent phases highlighting different areas. These included: refugee women's social participation and refugees' use of digital technology (2021); family separation and reunion among refugees during the pandemic (2022); and refugees' understanding of First Nations histories and issues (2023).

Director of the Institute for Culture and Society Professor Heather Horst says the research was fruitful with tangible outcomes. "The projects have been timely. SSI and other organisations can take the findings and respond, react and build programming around the research."

Professor Horst appreciates SSI's knack for getting decisionmakers to take notice of research findings. "I think SSI is very good at raising visibility, getting the right people in the room, including government and other organisations," she says. "Our researchers feel they're not just doing a report but are conducting meaningful work where people are listening and responding."

Professor Heather Horst

Director of the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University

## How we engage community

Community is at the heart of what we do. Through community engagement, multicultural support and communication activities, we embed client and community participation into all aspects of our work, magnifying the voices of our clients.

In FY24, we launched a Community of Practice program to support best-practice community engagement at SSI which has 63 community members from 18 programs. Through place-based initiatives, we are engaging purposefully with communities to ensure individuals can socially, emotionally, culturally and financially thrive in an inclusive, vibrant and supportive society. SSI's Welcome Program is an example of this, where we have encouraged cross-cultural relationships in Australian communities since 2018.

### Communicating with purpose

Our communications amplify the strengths of our people, partners and clients, using storytelling to engage and influence the public narrative. By promoting our brand, raising program awareness, and positioning SSI as a thought leader, our communications and engagement drive social change, enhance access to services and support SSI's advocacy efforts.

### With community

Examples of our activations in community include those initiated by SSI in the lead-up to the Voice to Parliament Referendum. Over the course of three external community forums in Springvale in Victoria, Bankstown in NSW and Logan in Queensland, we provided 1,000+ community members with accurate information on the referendum and became recognised as a sector leader in Voice advocacy and allyship.

Each year, Refugee Week shines a spotlight on the extraordinary people who come to Australia seeking safety, connection and a new life for themselves and their family. Together with the Refugee Council of Australia, we develop activities and events encouraging people to become part of a community that stands for equal opportunities. Along with our advocacy surrounding the Billion Dollar Benefit report, we attracted 21 speakers and 850 people across our five events in June.

### Improving cultural connection

SSI's Multicultural Support Officers (MSO) build trust and rapport through lived experience and shared culture. Living in community, our workforce of 235 officers work with community and more meaningfully connect via enhanced levels of support across 50+ languages throughout NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

Our MSOs form part of SSI's casual workforce and many have been participants of our programs and services. This means they can provide unique insight and first-hand knowledge of what navigating a new country entails.

This unique program supports organisations on a fee-for-service basis. It provides specialised skills in events, community engagement, administration and customer support, workshop facilitation, accredited interpretation and translation, complex case support, and young people support.

### Measuring our reputation

In FY24, to better understand the role our communications activities play in sector leadership, we introduced a new 'media reputation score' tracking the quality, prominence and sentiment of media coverage. This now has become one of our indicators for sector leadership, advocacy

and policy contributions to influence change. It has also shifted SSI away from focusing on outputs, such as the number of articles produced, and closer to impact metrics. All media coverage through the year charted as either positive or neutral in sentiment, while our overall media reputation score averaged 73.5 (out of 100), consistently placing SSI in the 'favourable' media reputation category.

We strengthened the SSI brand by building our community through reach and engagement in website traffic and social media following. In FY24, we saw a 58 per cent increase in engaged website sessions from FY23, and a 45 per cent total increase in post interactions (engagement) across our five social channels (See back cover). Through our marketing efforts, we led an increase in attendance at two of SSI's flagship events, with 6,000 new community members signing up to our stakeholder database following the New Beginnings Festival.

In FY25, we will reimagine client experience and develop a Service Delivery Impact Hub to further map client journeys and streamline client and stakeholder connections. We will also build customer relationship management capabilities to digitise and track client preferences, enabling personalised recommendations for our communications. These initiatives will improve service delivery and support SSI's strategic priorities of enhancing client outcomes and achieving process efficiencies.

## Pathways to possibility

Australia is facing a skills shortage and the one million individuals in the country living with disability are eager to help bridge the gap.

SSI understands the benefits of fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, and over 10 per cent of staff identify as having a disability. We're committed to empowering people with disability to realise their economic potential through meaningful employment pathways.

In February 2024, we hosted the Pathways to Possibilities Symposium in partnership with Jobs Australia, National Disability Services (NDS), and the Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce. Together with 165 attendees, the symposium explored ways to drive meaningful change for people with disability, focusing on the voices of those with lived experience.

The Pathways to Possibilities report, to be launched in December 2024, will outline SSI's endorsed reforms, including establishing a Disability Employment Centre of Excellence. These reforms aim to strengthen employment ecosystems, particularly for marginalised groups such as First Nations and CALD communities.

The report also outlines four key commitments for employers:

- Placing disability inclusion at the core of business practices
- Becoming disability confident
- Empowering leadership to drive change
- Fostering a safe and supportive workplace culture

## Our people

Our people are the cornerstone of the client experience. That's why we continually invest in processes, technology and a culture that attracts, retains and motivates our workforce.

We operate in a competitive labour market and an industry that exposes our people to unique challenges. We actively work to mitigate these risks through comprehensive compliance training, leadership development and by fostering a safe and healthy workplace.

In FY24, recruitment slowed as several long-standing programs concluded in June 2024. However, we also launched new programs addressing critical areas such as family, sexual and domestic violence, and expanded our mental health services for clients within the Status Resolution Support Services program. Despite the changes in our program mix, our commitment to hiring and developing a skilled, diverse workforce remained strong.

### **A commitment to diversity and inclusion**

SSI remains steadfast in its commitment to being an equal-opportunity employer. Reflecting the diversity of our clients, 70 per cent of our workforce comes from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We actively encourage applications from individuals from a range of diverse backgrounds, including people with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and those with lived experience of disability.

For the sixth year running, we maintained our accreditation as a Disability Confident Recruiter, supported by the Australian Disability Network.

Our recruitment processes are designed to ensure safety and equality for people of all abilities, providing opportunities for workplace personalisation where needed. Throughout FY24, we conducted targeted recruitment campaigns to attract First Nations talent and built on our outreach channels to source diverse candidates through universities, TAFEs and specialist community organisations.

### **Developing our internal talent**

Internally, we focused on enhancing the capability and capacity of our hiring managers and embedding unbiased selection processes. We acknowledge the value of retaining talent within our organisation and over the last year have increased internal mobility with 20 per cent of our roles filled by internal placements – a testament to our focus on developing our people from within.

### **Workforce trends and demographics**

With the changes to our programs, overall staff numbers decreased by nearly four per cent. We observed a shift in our workforce demographics with a slight reduction in the proportion of male employees.

### **Compliance Training**

In FY24, SSI revamped its approach to mandatory and compliance training, focusing on process improvements, technology upgrades, and cultural shifts. Our goal was to ensure that training was not only engaging and accessible but also aligned with legal and regulatory requirements. This transformation has equipped our people with the skills necessary to create a safe environment for our clients and communities, while also reinforcing our organisational impact.

### **Leadership development**

FY24 also saw the continued growth of our Lead@SSI leadership program, designed to foster leadership skills across the organisation. With a focus on performance management and flexible learning, the program saw 59 per cent of our leaders completing the first two stages. Additional modules, including financial literacy training, are planned for future phases to further equip our leaders with the tools they need.



## **Redesigning performance development**

A major milestone in FY24 was the digitisation of our performance development framework. Moving away from cumbersome paper processes, the new system introduced formal goal-setting aligned with SSI's strategic priorities. The redesign emphasised employee development and career growth, which are essential for staff engagement and retention. The new system was well received, with a 98 per cent completion rate in mid-year reviews and overwhelmingly positive feedback.

## **Reward and recognition**

In line with our ongoing focus on staff recognition, we introduced a comprehensive Reward and Recognition program in FY24. This multi-tiered program includes service awards for long-term employees, peer-to-peer recognition through an online platform, and manager-driven rewards for exceptional performance. The program culminates in the annual CEO Award, which recognises outstanding contributions across the organisation.

## **Listening to our people**

In FY24, we conducted the Your Voice survey to gauge employee engagement and assess staff connection to both the organisation and their work. The survey had a 69 per cent participation rate, providing valuable insights. While our engagement score of 73 per cent was slightly below the previous year (76 per cent in FY23), it remains above the global average of 72 per cent. Notably, we received high ratings in areas such as team collaboration, access to flexible working options, and pride in working for SSI.

The survey also introduced a new question regarding lived experience with forced displacement, with 20 per cent of respondents indicating they had such experiences. This information is vital as we continue to build a workforce that reflects the diverse communities we serve.

## **Creating a safe and healthy workplace**

In FY24, SSI took significant steps toward enhancing workplace safety. We launched three working groups focused on site-specific risks, occupational violence and psychosocial hazards, all of which are critical to maintaining a safe working environment. These efforts are part of a broader three-year health and safety strategy aimed at moving from compliance-based management to a proactive approach that prioritises the health, safety and wellbeing of our people.

The social and community services sector has seen a notable increase in psychosocial workers' compensation claims and SSI has worked closely with staff, insurers and return-to-work providers to address these issues. Our ongoing commitment is to create a supportive environment where staff feel safe and valued.

## **Adapting to changing conditions**

This year, we took steps to standardise employment conditions across the organisation, aligning our Queensland teams with their counterparts in NSW and Victoria under the OneSSI initiative. This integration process, which began following our merger with Access Community Services Limited in 2018, was finalised with the introduction of a standard 35-hour workweek across all regions.

Like many organisations in Australia, SSI has also adapted to changes in workplace relations, particularly with the introduction of the 'Closing the Loopholes' reforms. In response, we transitioned large cohorts of staff from maximum-term contracts to permanent employment,

ensuring job security and stability for our workforce. SSI led the way in offering five days of paid domestic and family violence leave which is now a standard condition across Australia.

## Looking ahead

In FY25, we will enhance SSI's operating model to drive greater value by focusing on efficiency, scalability and adaptability. By identifying and strengthening key organisational and people capabilities, we aim to optimise talent mobility and workforce agility, better aligning our human capital with evolving workload demands and positioning SSI to deliver even greater impact for the communities we serve.

## Volunteers

SSI is a volunteering-involving organisation committed to bringing members of the wider Australian community into our activities through volunteer opportunities, student placements and internships. This process brings meaning to those involved and adds enormous value to our service delivery.

In FY24, the SSI Volunteer Program Strategic Plan 2024–25 provided a framework to strengthen the volunteer experience. It aims to enhance opportunities for volunteers to thrive and improves how we measure the impact they have on SSI and our communities. The Strategic Plan is closely aligned with Volunteering Australia's National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033 and SSI's own Impact Strategy Goals.

Overall numbers of volunteers and students/interns remain consistent from FY23 to FY24. Volunteer numbers dipped slightly to 124 (down eight per cent from FY23), while student and intern numbers rose from 41 to 51 (up 24 per cent).

### Recognition

- 6 volunteers invited to NSW Premier's Volunteer Reception
- 4 volunteers recognised at the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards

## Our members

Partnership and collaboration are vital to SSI's success, as no single organisation can drive social change alone. We were established 24 years ago by 11 migrant resource centres and multicultural services in NSW and have always prioritised local organisations embedded in the communities we serve.

In FY23, members Participate Australia and Focus Connect resigned from SSI due to a merger and a strategic redirection respectively. In FY24, the Board took the decision to grow our membership base and, after reviewing 300+ national organisations, seven were invited to an EOI process with this purpose in mind. At the December 2023 Board meeting, four new members were admitted: Arab Council Australia (NSW), Asia Pacific Network of Refugees (international), Islamic Women's Association of Australia (QLD), and Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (ACT).

In May 2024, our members approved a special resolution to amend SSI's constitution, reflecting shared history and future growth. Also in FY24, SSI's inaugural three-year Member Relations Strategy was endorsed, driving stronger relationships and collaboration through an annual Member Engagement Plan.

## NSW Settlement Partnership

The end of an era in settlement

Even good things must eventually end. Changes to funding guidelines for the Australian Government's Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) program marked the end of the NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP) in FY24 (See p24). Led by SSI, this consortium of 21 community organisations, including 11 Migrant Resource Centres, delivered SETS services across NSW for over a decade. The NSP played a crucial role in supporting tens of thousands of newcomers, particularly those without family or community support, during their post-arrival period. Its collaborative model demonstrated that smaller organisations could achieve significant results by working together, shaping the settlement landscape in Australia.

Founded in 2014, the NSP emerged from a shared vision among Migrant Resource Centres and community organisations to better serve both the Australian Government and their clients. SSI was selected as the lead agency, responsible for governance, while the partners focused on program delivery. Together, they successfully secured funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS) and provided impactful settlement services for the next ten years.

### **Strength in numbers**

The NSP quickly proved that collaboration allowed its members to deliver far more for newcomer clients than they could alone. SSI's leadership in advocacy helped amplify the voices of all partners, strengthening their influence in settlement-related discussions. Members also benefitted from a broader knowledge base and a wider professional network.

### **NSP Members 2024**

- Accessible Diversity Services Initiative Ltd
- Advance Diversity Services
- Cambodian Australian Welfare Council of NSW Inc
- Community Migrant Resource Centre
- Local Kind (formerly Community Northern Beaches)
- Core Community Services
- Connecting Community Services
- GyMEA Community Aid and Information Services Inc
- Illawarra Multicultural Services Inc
- Lebanese Community Council of New South Wales
- Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services Inc
- Melkite Catholic Welfare Association Inc
- Metro Assist
- Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency Inc
- Nepean Multicultural Access Inc
- Mosaic Multicultural Connections (formerly Northern Settlement Services)
- Sydney Multicultural Community Services
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre Ltd

## **Finance**

In FY24, SSI Group achieved a record-high revenue of \$183.6 million, an increase of 14 per cent compared to the previous record of \$164.65 million in FY23.

The \$3.4 million operating deficit recorded was a result of decisions to consolidate operations, align programs and services with the Impact Strategy, make targeted investments in technology, and, most importantly, manage upwards inflationary pressure on wages, with no corresponding compensation from funding agencies through indexation.

The commitment to continue investing for the future and maintaining quality services for clients during a challenging year with high inflation contributed to the recorded deficit. Despite these challenges, SSI's core services, funded by federal and state Governments, operated at record levels, delivering impactful outcomes for the clients supported.

SSI's diversification continued in FY24, with growth achieved through the Home Care Workforce Support Program, the asylum seeker Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program, and other programs, such as the Multicultural Child and Family Program. The revenue profile in FY24 reflects the expansion of the SRSS program throughout the eastern states of Australia. The Home Care Workforce Support Program ramped up operations during FY24, more than doubling the financial outcomes achieved in FY23. SSI's core settlement program, the Humanitarian Settlement Program, continued to perform well, matching the financial outcomes of FY23 following the reopening of borders after the initial setbacks caused by Covid-19.

SSI Group's net assets at the end of FY24 stood at \$44.37 million, down from \$47.28 million in FY23. While net assets decreased due to targeted investments and inflationary pressures, the underlying financial health remains strong.

The primary reason for both total assets and total liabilities decreasing relates to the use of funds received in advance by funders during FY24. The market value of long-term investments also performed strongly, recovering from setbacks during Covid-19.

Negotiations continued in FY24 with the Queensland Government to partner to build a hub to support the most marginalised people in Logan and surrounds in finding full employment. At the end of FY24, final contracts were signed, and we commenced the construction phase of the building in FY25. The long-term impact will be a stronger balance sheet with a diversified asset base supporting SSI's financial health.

The 14 per cent increase in revenue in FY24 reflects a continuing trend of sustainable growth. While government funding continues to represent a high proportion (95 per cent) of income, the source of this income is becoming more diverse, with increased funding for programs supporting victims of domestic violence, aged care and other new priority areas. SSI Group's investments performed strongly once again, with investment income contributing close to two per cent of total revenue.

Staff costs and client support costs, consistent with historical trends, continued to comprise a significant portion of the cost base. In FY24, these components made up 86 per cent of total expenditure, compared to 85 per cent in FY23. SSI continued investing in technology to deliver efficiencies in client services, providing value for money to both funders and clients. A key focus in FY24 was exploring how the evolution of AI technology can support clients and drive efficiencies throughout SSI. The investments made in FY24 are delivering the desired financial outcomes, triggering further investments in FY25 that will significantly enhance SSI's ability to adapt and thrive in the years ahead. Additional efficiencies were achieved through office consolidations, resulting in lower administrative expenditures.

The graph below shows the expenditure mapped to program outcomes during FY24. Expenditure in the Safety and Stability domain and Social Inclusion represents a high proportion of our work in core programs to support clients.

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

For the fifth consecutive year, the external auditor issued a non-qualified report and SSI Group's finances had no audit adjustments. This reflects SSI's strong commitment to ensuring that financial governance processes are strictly adhered to, continuously evolving to meet compliance requirements and the expectations of funders.

**2023-24 Annual Report  
Financial Summary**

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Revenue</b>					
Operating Revenue	183,612	164,753	140,819	115,120	121,617
Covid-19 Support		-	-	14,455	5,907
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>183,612</b>	<b>164,753</b>	<b>140,819</b>	<b>129,574</b>	<b>127,524</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Client Support Costs	55,896	44,990	42,351	25,500	39,011
Employee Benefits	104,867	94,360	79,553	78,942	63,090
Rents & Utilities	4,259	3,637	3,211	3,285	3,942
IT Expenses	5,608	6,113	1,205	1,975	2,631
Professional Fees	3,802	3,316	2,506	2,671	2,484
Depreciation Expenses	7,688	6,992	6,501	5,234	5,161
Finance Costs	505	377	292	433	514
Impairment of Assets /					
Loss on Sale of Fixed Assets	100	0	0	17	6
Other Expenses	4,319	4,870	3,632	2,986	2,606
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>187,045</b>	<b>164,655</b>	<b>139,251</b>	<b>121,044</b>	<b>119,445</b>
<b>Net Operating Surplus</b>	<b>(3,433)</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>1,568</b>	<b>8,530</b>	<b>8,079</b>
Revaluation of Property,					
Plant & Equipment	(770)	1,878	-	732	-
Market Movement in Financial Assists	1,292	1,064	(2,397)	2,153	244
<b>Other Compressive Income</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>2,942</b>	<b>(2,397)</b>	<b>2,886</b>	<b>244</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>(2,911)</b>	<b>3,039</b>	<b>(829)</b>	<b>11,416</b>	<b>8,323</b>

## 2023-24 Annual Report

### Statement of Financial Position

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Assets</b>					
Current	48,246	55,997	44,019	35,038	31,418
Non-current	18,056	21,549	18,025	17,830	13,800
Financial Assets	37,070	34,082	31,428	28,175	20,376
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>103,373</b>	<b>111,628</b>	<b>93,472</b>	<b>81,043</b>	<b>65,594</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Current	51,476	56,959	5,537	29,930	22,960
Non-current	7,525	7,386	49,229	6,041	8,978
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>59,002</b>	<b>64,345</b>	<b>54,766</b>	<b>35,971</b>	<b>31,938</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>44,372</b>	<b>47,282</b>	<b>38,706</b>	<b>45,072</b>	<b>33,656</b>

## Leadership Team

### Violet Roumeliotis AM, CEO

Violet brings to her role more than 36 years' experience in leading for-purpose organisations. She has served as CEO of SSI for 12 years and is a former Telstra Businesswoman of the Year.

### Yamamah Agha, GM Newcomers, Settlement and Integration

Yamamah brings to her role more than 20 years' experience assisting new arrivals to settle into Australia. She heads all of SSI's settlement programs including the Humanitarian Settlement Program.

### Ben Fioramonte, GM Children, Families and Disability Support

Ben has 16 years' experience in children's services, social support, home care and emergency preparedness. He oversees SSI's Local Area Coordination Program as part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Multicultural Child and Family Program.

### Sandy Fitter, Group Head Stakeholder Relations, Research and Policy

Sandy brings to her role more than 14 years' experience in government, policy and law across government and corporate settings. She is an experienced lawyer and former government adviser.

### Rob Hoitink, GM Client Connection, Health and Wellbeing and State Director Queensland

Rob is an experienced leader who has worked across several Australian Government portfolios. He brings to his role extensive experience in policy, program delivery and regulatory management.

### **Katia Kullengren, Chief of Staff**

Katia has more than a decade's experience leading and building high-performance teams. She also brings a passion for the arts and founded a small NFP bringing ballet to disadvantaged children.

### **Sharon Lanyon, Group Head Strategic Communications and Engagement**

Sharon brings 25 years of strategic communication and brand experience working across major global brands. She created the new SSI brand strategy and protects and enhances SSI's professional image.

### **Ram Neupane, GM Corporate Services**

Ram brings experience from having worked in more than 70 countries and has a proven track record in strategic thinking, innovation and change management. He has worked widely across the NFP sector.

### **Caroline Reid, GM People and Culture**

Caroline brings extensive experience as a human resources professional in industries such as construction, professional services, banking and the community sector. She excels at building stakeholder relationships and engaging employees.

### **Sonia Vignjevic, GM Client Partnerships and Business Growth and State Director Victoria**

Sonia brings over 25 years' experience in NGO roles in the human services sector. She has strong strategic leadership and stakeholder engagement skills developing partnerships with government, international institutions, academia and civil society.

## **SSI Board**

The SSI Board underwent change in FY24. It welcomed four new Directors and farewelled Directors, Scott Machin, Alex McCauley and Frank Zheng.

### **Voula Messimeri AM MAICD Chair**

Appointed: January 2021

Appointed Chair: December 2021

Voula brings an immense depth of knowledge about the community and multicultural sector to the Board. She has held roles including Chair of the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, Deputy Chair of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Chair of Women's Health in the North, and Chair of InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence. She is the current Deputy President on the Board of PRONIA.

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

### **Tharani Jegatheeswaran**

Appointed: November 2021

Tharani brings to the Board a passion for social impact, profit with purpose, corporate and social sector collaboration, and diversity and inclusion. She is the National Client Relationships Leader at Deloitte Australia, the firm's Race and Culture Leader, and leads Deloitte's Social Impact Practice. Tharani is a Non-Executive Director on several boards, including UNICEF Australia.

She holds a Bachelor of Business degree from the University of Technology, Sydney and is a certified Chartered Accountant.

### **Rola Hijwel**

Appointed: August 2023

Rola brings to the Board extensive experience in law, governance and an understanding of the community sector and the needs of migrants. She is Chair of Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre, an SSI member organisation, and has extensive experience in immigration law. Rola is Principal Solicitor of Hijwel Migration Lawyers and an Accredited Specialist in Immigration Law of the NSW Law Society.

### **Dushy Thangiah OAM**

Appointed: February 2024

Dushy brings a deep knowledge of management accounting and housing policy to the Board. She is a highly regarded advocate for First Nations Peoples and is the CEO of Yumba-Meta, a Townsville-based organisation providing access to housing and support services particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander People. Dushy holds an Order of Australia Medal and in 2019 was awarded the Telstra Business Women's National Award for Purpose and Social Enterprise.

### **Angela Tsoukatos**

Appointed: February 2024

Angela brings considerable experience in corporate public affairs, customer services, people leadership and culture, and corporate services to the Board. She has a successful record as an executive with Australia's largest water utility, local government, and the not-for-profit sector. Angela is the Chair of SydWest Multicultural Services, a member organisation of SSI, and Chair of SSI Legal Pty Ltd. She was appointed to the Board of the NSW Energy and Water Ombudsman in October 2024.

### **Janet Matton AM**

Appointed: December 2022

Janet brings a deep understanding of the IT industry and business management to the Board. She spent 34 years with IBM, including as Vice President of Operations, and 12 years holding key roles in multiple regions. She is Chair of the Australian Centre of the Moving Image (ACMI), on the Board of the Children's Cancer Institute, and Non-Executive Director of Epworth Healthcare and of Pitts&Sherry Engineering Consultants. She is Chair of Eastern Community Legal Centre, a member organisation of SSI.

### **Peter van Vliet**

Appointed: November 2023

Peter brings a deep understanding of social policy and law to the Board. In October 2024, he was appointed the CEO of the Migration Institute of Australia. This is the nation's leading association for migration professionals specialising in migration advice and employment outcomes for employers seeking skilled overseas workers. Peter has a background as a senior executive in the Australian and Victorian Governments and has also led several other not-for-profits in the community sector, including FECCA and ECCV.

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



Stakeholder spotlight:

### **Member organisation**

Yumba–Meta has been delivering housing and social services to people experiencing vulnerability in the Queensland city of Townsville for over 50 years. With a focus on First Nations people, the organisation became an SSI member at the end of 2021.

Yumba–Meta’s Chief Executive Officer Dushyanthi Thangiah says benefits have flowed both ways since partnering with SSI. “SSI is a large organisation, and it partners well with organisations like us and leverages us so we can all work together using our strengths,” she says. “There are lots of niche areas that we are very good at, and SSI is very good in other areas. Together, we can share our knowledge and skills and build on that as a collective.”

Dushyanthi is also a Member of the SSI Board and says this experience has also had positive flow–on effects for Yumba–Meta.

“I have learned a great deal and have been exposed to a very high level of training and governance, which has been valuable. When I bring those skills back to Yumba–Meta, it benefits Yumba–Meta.”

Dushyanthi Thangiah  
CEO Yumba–Meta

## **Governance**

SSI is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and governed by our Constitution. Registered with both the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and the Australian Charities and Not–for–profits Commission (ACNC), SSI complies with the ACNC Governance Standards and maintains obligations to both the ACNC (regarding charitable status) and ASIC (for corporate status).

FY24 marked the introduction of several new internal governance measures to strengthen SSI’s commitment to good governance, transparency and accountability as a sustainable and responsible organisation in the not–for–profit sector.

### **New SSI Constitution**

At an Extraordinary General Meeting on 22 May 2024, SSI members approved a new Constitution, following an extensive review and consultation process led by the Board’s Governance Nominations and Remuneration Committee. The previous Constitution, dating back to 2015 with minor amendments in 2017, no longer reflected SSI’s growth and evolving operations. The wholesale review, initiated in late 2022, compared and reviewed each clause of the current Constitution with the ACNC’s Template Constitution, aligning SSI’s governance with contemporary standards. The new Constitution was finalised after input from SSI’s members, ensuring their interests were considered.

### **Governance principles**

In December 2023, SSI adopted the Australian Institute of Company Directors’ Not–for–Profit Governance Principles for good governance. The principles underpin SSI’s Corporate Governance Framework and apply to SSI in the following manner:

- **Purpose, vision and strategy**  
All activities align with SSI's purpose and strategy, with Board oversight on effectiveness.
- **Roles and responsibilities**  
Clearly defined roles within SSI, with Board oversight of key external providers.
- **Board composition and effectiveness**  
A diverse Board with transparent recruitment and regular evaluations.
- **Risk management**  
Board oversight of risk management frameworks, scenario planning, and dynamic risk assessment.
- **Performance and accountability**  
Focus on financial health and internal and external accountability, extending beyond annual reporting.
- **Stakeholders**  
The Board oversees open, transparent engagement with stakeholders to foster trust.
- **Sustainability**  
SSI's approach to sustainability is integrated with its purpose and overseen by the Board.
- **Organisational culture**  
The Board models expected culture, monitors employee and volunteer satisfaction, and promotes recognition.

The above principles have been adopted in addition to the minimum Governance Standards mandated by the ACNC.

## Governance Framework

In June 2024, SSI introduced a Corporate Governance Framework to formalise and advance governance practices within the SSI Group. This Framework outlines the governance structures at SSI and its subsidiaries, ensuring that they support SSI's purpose, vision and strategy. The Framework is built on the AICD Not-for-Profit Governance Principles.

The governance structure set out in the figure below (print version) illustrates how the SSI Group is directed, controlled and held accountable to internal and external stakeholders. The workflow set out in the figure brings together all the different governance components within the SSI Group to achieve the social outcomes and impact as set out on 'How we create value' earlier in this FY24 Integrated Report.

## SSI Group of Companies

The SSI Group comprises of six companies.

With the exception of SSI Legal Pty Ltd, the SSI Group operates under a mirror board structure with each company being:

- a Company Limited by Guarantee;
- a registered charity with the ACNC; and
- governed by the same Board of Directors and Board committees (mirror board structure).

## Board of Directors

SSI's operations are overseen by a Board composed of a minimum of two Independent Directors and a minimum of two Member Directors. The Board has adopted a charter that details its role and responsibilities and Board appointments are made in accordance with SSI's Constitution.

Member Directors are 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.

Our current Board Directors are listed on following pages.

In FY24, the Board held five meetings, actively shaping SSI's culture and strategy. The CEO, who reports directly to the Board, oversees day-to-day operations and is accountable to SSI's member organisations. The Board ensures that SSI operates with integrity and adheres to ethical standards in all business relationships.

## Board and committee structure

To support effective governance, the Board is supported by several key committees. They perform an advisory role to the Board and are governed by their respective Charters as approved by the Board:

- **Finance and Audit Committee:**  
Assists the Board in its responsibilities regarding financial reporting, internal controls, audits, and financial risk management.
- **Risk and Compliance Committee:** Oversees the management of strategic risks, reviews risk indicators and frameworks, and ensures compliance with external audits and contractual obligations.
- **Governance, Nominations, and Remuneration Committee:**  
Provides governance advice, manages Board recruitment, and advises on remuneration policies.
- **Committee for Member Relations:**  
Advises the Board on membership matters, including strategy development and emerging opportunities aligned with member interests.

Additionally, the Board established a CEO Performance and Remuneration Committee to ensure the CEO's performance and remuneration are in line with organisational goals and market standards.

Each Board Committee reviews and monitors key aspects of the business on behalf of the Board and makes recommendations for Board approval. In addition, 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.

## Organisation structure

The Board delegates operational management to the SSI Group's Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible for the day-to-day functions across all SSI entities. The SSI Group's organisational structure in FY24 was streamlined under three key pillars:

- **Service Delivery**  
Settlement, newcomers and integration; employment services; commercial enterprises; client connection, health and wellbeing; and children, families and communities
- **Revenue and Growth**  
Clients, partnership and business growth; client connection, health and wellbeing; strategic communications and engagement; and stakeholder relations and policy
- **Shared Services**  
Corporate services; and people and culture

## Abbreviations list

ACNC	Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
ACS	Australian Computer Society
AIDC	Australian Institute of Company Directors
Allianz	Allianz Australia
ASESS	Asylum Seeker Employment Skills Support
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investments Commission
BEMAC	Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CARS	Crisis Arrival Response Service
CATS	Championing Action for Tech Safety
CCWG	Climate Change Working Group
DES	Disability Employment Services
DFV	Domestic and family violence
DSS	Federal government Department of Social Services
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
FDSV	Family, domestic and sexual violence
GPG	Gender pay gap
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HCWSP	Home Care Workforce Support Program
HSP	Humanitarian Settlement Program
IFAC	International Federation of Accountants
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IR	Integrated Reporting
LAC	Local Area Coordination
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/ questioning, asexual
MCFP	Multicultural Child and Family Program
MSO	Multicultural Support Officers
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NFP	Not-for-profit
NSP	NSW Settlement Partnership program
PHN	Primary Health Network
PMU	Practice Management Unit

RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RESP	Refugee Employment Support Program
RISE	Recognise, Inspire, Support, Energise
SAHAR	Safety and health after arrival
SETS	Settlement Engagement and Transition Support
SToP	National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery, SToP project
TECS	Train, Engage, Connect and Support
UNSDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
WH&S	Work, health and safety

We welcome feedback and questions on this report, and encourage you to send these to:  
[info@ssi.org.au](mailto:info@ssi.org.au)

How can you help? Get in touch with SSI to volunteer, donate, fundraise or collaborate

**SSI Head Office**

Level 2, 158 Liverpool Road, Ashfield NSW 2131

t: (02) 8799 6700

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