

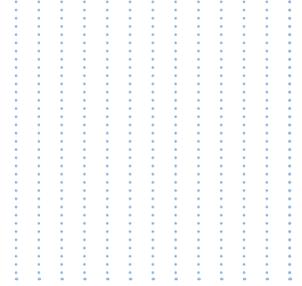


**sttars**

supporting survivors of  
torture & trauma

Annual Report  
**2014-2015**





**COVER LARGE IMAGE**

Photo Credit: Barat Ali Batoor

**COVER INSET IMAGE**

Photo Credit: UNHCR

**BACK COVER IMAGE**

Photo Credit: Barat Ali Batoor

## **OUR VISION**

A community in  
which survivors  
of torture and  
trauma thrive  
and flourish



# Ministerial Address

Australia is a country that values democratic rights and personal freedom, whose citizens enjoy a high standard of living and personal safety. We reject the notion of harm being done to people because of their culture or ethnicity, their personal values or political convictions.

Living in a country like Australia can deceive us into thinking that around the world, most people enjoy similar freedoms. Unfortunately this is not the case. More than 28 years since the international Convention against Torture came into effect, this cruel and dehumanising practice remains pervasive.

There are many people in our community who have suffered some type of trauma as a result of torture or by having their communities and livelihoods destroyed by civil unrest or war. What encourages me is the knowledge that people can find the strength to create new lives filled with hope and purpose. However, for people to find this strength, specialist supports must be available.



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I sincerely commend STTARS for providing culturally appropriate services and rehabilitation to individual torture survivors, their family members and communities.

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*Hon Zoe Bettison* MP

*Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion*

*Minister for Multicultural Affairs*



## From the Chair

At the last AGM our interim CEO Linda Matthews presented an insight into the work being done by STTARS staff and outlined the findings of her review of the organisation, its structures, practice capacity and the areas for development.

The new Board took on the challenges raised in that review and with our CEO Stephanie Miller have supported the changes identified as essential to the future of STTARS. These challenges reflect current funding as a mental health service and the FASSTT network moving to strengthen performance, data collection and evidence based practice as we maintain our shared commitment to provide the highest quality services throughout Australia.

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We have been fortunate to have a depth of knowledge and skill relevant to Board responsibilities across the membership of the new Board.

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I would want to recognise the commitment that Board members have individually and collectively made to the work undertaken by the Board in this year.

In no order of significance let me just recognise some of the critical work covered by the Board. Jude Davis has worked with staff to address past financial management issues identified by our auditors. To Jude's credit the recent auditors report confirms the improvements made and the current strength of our financial controls. Marilyn Lennon, Maggie Estrange, John Oliphant and Daniel Moya formed the constitution review working group and provided sound advice to the Board on the changes required. Marilyn has provided wise advice for the Board over the years reflecting her community legal expertise; it is hard for any Board to operate without legal input. Nilofar Najimi has helped us maintain a focus on client experiences, contributed to public forums for

STTARS during her time on the Board and has been a volunteer in youth camps sponsored by STTARS. It is important for a Board like this to have the contribution of members with contemporary lived experience. Penny Munro, Luci Lovelock and Bill Miliotis have contributed to governance and policy development drawing on their experiences in management and leadership roles in the human services.

The Board has learnt much from the input of various staff members who have given presentations to the Board. And finally, I would want to recognise all of the work by the leadership team to support the Board's endeavours.

So what has been achieved:

- a strong affirmation of the values and objectives that have been part of STTARS's unique and respected service approach;
- a strategic plan built on input of all staff and a planning day with Board members and the Leadership Group;
- Board education around good governance leading to the formation of a Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee that will contribute significantly to strong accountability for individual and organisational performance;
- an ICT strategy that has ensured staff have contemporary technology to support practice and streamline organisational tasks, as well as provide an effective data base for reporting and evaluation;
- a clinical services review led by practice staff and the leadership group; and
- key policies in relation to HR practices.

The results have meant stronger performance and service outcomes for clients which has been our primary goal.

Our CEO will give more information about STTARS work this year but I would just want to acknowledge the critical work Stephanie has undertaken building links within our sector, working collaboratively with all in

the organisation to lead a change process, bringing our agenda to a wider audience through several well attended events and a 'STTARS presence' in the community. I have appreciated how much Stephanie has achieved when I have attended various functions and been invited to talk with other Chairs about complementary service arrangements and projects. STTARS is well placed for the future.

To retiring board members my thanks; to those continuing and to new board members my best wishes. The work of STTARS is important and it's been a privilege to contribute.

*Di Gursansky*

*Chair*

“ My fear is that it will happen again or where I can't run away and escape, that is my biggest fear. I lost my confidence. I was humiliated to say that I was a man. I felt humiliated. I always underestimate myself, most of the day and most of the time. ”

## Board Members 2014-2015

### Chairperson

Di Gursansky

### Vice Chair

John Oliphant

### Treasurer

Judith Davis

### Secretary

Marilyn Lennon

Maggie L'Estrange

Luci Lovelock

William Miliotis

Daniel Moya

Penny Munro

Nilofar Najimi

Marj Ellis

*(retired 27 November 2014)*

David Egege

*(retired 27 November 2014)*

Michael Colmagro

*(retired 27 November 2014)*

Gido Mapundo

*(retired 27 November 2014)*



## From the CEO

It was with much excitement, hope and some trepidation, that I joined STTARS as CEO in December 2014. I knew I had big shoes to fill following Linda Matthews, who took the reins and provided strong leadership during a difficult transition period.

It was, and is, also a time of uncertainty in terms of refugee policy and the future of front line mental health services. I was confident, however, that my 30 years' experience in the not for profit sector, leading and renewing client and consumer centred organisations, would be of value to STTARS in facing the many challenges ahead.

STTARS provides vital specialist services for refugees and asylum seekers and has sustained this work over 24 years through many ups and downs.

We provide services to over 1200 clients every year and provide up to 20,000 hours of individual counselling, casework and group activities.

Clearly, STTARS is a resilient organisation; and it must remain so to support and strengthen the resilience of our clients. I take very seriously my responsibility for sustaining that legacy and "future proofing" the organisation so that it remains viable as an independent specialist client-centred service.

From the first day I experienced an organisation with great people and values, and a very capable Board and leadership group, all of whom expressed a strong commitment to STTARS clients and a willingness to be open and honest. There was also a healthy appetite for change. Externally there was considerable goodwill and willingness to partner. In short, there were very strong foundations to build upon.

There were also a range of opportunities for improvement and these were encapsulated in an action plan approved by the Board in February 2015. The Action Plan set out to achieve the following objectives:

- An effective and well supported Board
- A governance policy framework that facilitates good corporate governance
- A modern and relevant Constitution
- Co-ordinated and collaborative executive leadership
- A new 3-5 year strategic plan
- Performance systems and processes that support compliance with contractual obligations
- A client centred evidence informed service model
- Improve performance against funding contracts ensuring all obligations & targets are either met or exceeded
- Improve ICT capability to enable industry standard collaboration, increase efficiency and enhance service quality and safety
- A human resources policy framework that supports quality service delivery and professional development
- Enhance the profile and reputation of STTARS through strategic stakeholder engagement
- Adopt a quality improvement framework

It is very pleasing to report that 90% of these objectives and the associated actions have been completed.

During the second half of 2014-15, the Leadership Group focussed on implementation of the action plan, while at the same time sustaining STTARS services to clients and their communities. The change process has involved significant staff engagement in the introduction of new ICT systems, a review of corporate and community services, scoping and market research

for a new client management system and a review of clinical services.

Although still a work in progress, a key achievement has been to clarify and enable the roles and responsibilities of leadership and management at STTARS. The Leadership Group which includes managers from across client and corporate services has worked together since January 2015 to build a whole of organisation culture and one team approach, and develop policies, systems and processes that promote a client centred and coherent service.

In March 2015, Anne Nixon joined STTARS as Manager, Corporate and Community Services, and thus completed the establishment of a highly skilled and experienced Senior Leadership Team joining Daryl Eckermann, Manager ICT Services, David Tully, Manager Client Services and myself as CEO.

It is a credit to Anne, and her team, that the Corporate and Community Services Review has resulted in new and refreshed administrative and support services at STTARS. The corporate support functions at STTARS had evolved, over time, as the organisation expanded and contracted, rather than developed in a strategic and purposeful manner. The restructuring created new, specialised and upgraded roles that value the contribution of these essential employees.

Client services, led by David Tully, developed and implemented a counselling target improvement plan, in response to concerns about achievement of key performance targets and deliverables. The plan focussed on:

- Increasing referrals across all client group categories;
- Developing team targets and clarifying STTARS expectations regarding number of counselling sessions and new clients per week;
- Improving systems and processes for assessment and therapeutic goal setting;
- Improving client flow through with better defined case review and closure processes;
- Improving data collection and analysis

## Staff Members 2014-2015

### Chief Executive Officer

Stephanie Miller  
*(from December 2014)*

### Interim Director

Linda Matthews  
*(to December 2014)*

### Manager, Client Services

David Tully

### Consultant, Client Services

Dr Tanja Stojadinovic *(to  
October 2014)*

### Manager, Corporate and Community Services

Anne Nixon  
*(from March 2015)*

### Manager, ICT

Daryl Eckermann  
*(from December 2014)*

### Client Services

Rima Abu-Assi  
Amritha Aparnadas  
Kerri Berardi  
Lyn Butler  
Ryan Carr  
Katerina Charova  
Kathrine Cock  
Sophie Coote  
Slavica Dedijer  
Ally Drew  
Abigail George  
Rebecca Goudie  
Carolyn Grace  
Mariana Ilic  
Lisa Jenkins-Small  
Sonia Kiriyanthan  
Melanie McGuigan  
Ghani Nasery

Wah Wah Naw  
Kimberley Nefyn  
Mthobeli Ngcanga  
Dale Peterson  
Teresa Puvimanasinghe  
Kirsty Reynolds  
Riziki Saidi  
Karl Schmitz  
Matt Seabrook  
Anneka Skirrow  
Nicola Trenorden  
Jasmin Turner  
Melissa Tweedie  
Alica Varesanovic  
Mini Varghese  
Manja Visschedijk  
Elly Wild

### Corporate and Community Services

Mark Allen  
Ashlynn Bayley  
Lynne Button  
Carol Cantlon  
Karma Dolkar  
Clementina Humphrey  
Marina Lever  
Zoe Lyons  
Mohammad Nawrozi  
Maria Siros  
Sallyanne Scholefield  
Perla Soberon-Brittle  
Stephen Sokvari

### Visiting Mental Health Consultants

Dr Daya Somasundaram  
Dr John Raftery  
Dr Tanja Stojadinovic  
Shona Russel  
Melissa Tweedie

### Students

Julie Lewis



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## Client services team leaders and staff are congratulated for their achievements in 2014-15.

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STTARS met all contractual funding obligations at 30 June 2015 as well as associated internal performance targets set in relation to new client allocations and waiting lists. This was an exceptional achievement in the context of significant external policy and program uncertainty and internal people and systems change.

Daryl Eckermann also joined STTARS in December 2014, and as a result of his leadership, STTARS is almost unrecognisable, in terms of information and communications technology, from the organisation it was this time last year. Daryl has guided us through implementation of the ICT Capability Review recommendations provided by Warwick Moyes in 2014. The ICT infrastructure improvement project has made significant improvements in our efficiency and ability to collaborate. STTARS is now connected through an industry standard network that supports centralised booking of rooms and other resources, reliable remote access and mobile working.

The client management system working group led by Daryl and David, completed a very comprehensive and robust scoping of STTARS requirements, researched the available systems and recommended that STTARS purchase a CMS that has been developed by our sister organisation STTARTS. Installation, configuration and implementation of this system is a key project for 2015-16.

STTARS is a member of the Forum of Australian Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT). We work collaboratively with our colleagues across Australia to advocate for quality services for survivors and their communities. A major highlight of 2014-15 was the FASSTT National Conference held in February 2015. STTARS staff travelled to the Hunter Valley for three days of learning, sharing, networking, deliberating and dancing. It was an invigorating and inspiring experience and we came away with some significant new knowledge, skills and relationships with peers.

The conference experience has been an important contribution to our change agenda this year and will continue to be as collaboration with our sister agencies increases.

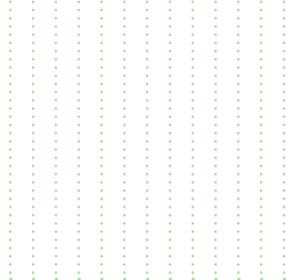
In response to feedback from staff, team leaders and external stakeholders concerning a lack of clarity and coherence, and perceived inconsistency, with respect to STTARS clinical practice, the Board approved terms of reference for a review of clinical services in March 2015. The Review has now been completed and has proposed an appropriate and coherent model of clinical practice and service delivery based on the best available evidence, good practice and the quality aspects of our sister agencies; provided advice on how we can better integrate the work of our visiting mental health consultants to enhance clinical effectiveness and outcomes for clients; and provided advice on the appropriate skills, experience, training and supervision required to ensure STTARS has the clinical workforce to deliver the recommended model.

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## Implementation of the recommendations of the review will be a significant focus during 2015-16 and managers and staff will lead the process through a project working group.

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Following the recommendations of STTARS auditors there has been a necessary investment in renewing and improving our financial controls, systems and processes. These have included introducing a modern delegations policy and schedule as well as policies and procedures that have updated our debt management and procurement processes. In addition, STTARS engaged the services of Rebecca Fischer, a Chartered Accountant, of Account Works. Rebecca has reviewed our systems and provided recommendations for improvements as well as mentored and supported staff. She concluded that overall STTARS systems were sound and satisfactory. However, improvements to streamline processes, reduce double handling and update practices have been implemented.



These improvements provide a strong foundation for the sustainability of STTARS in the context of uncertainty around government funding. This unpredictability was highlighted in the process of establishing the 2015-16 budget and a forecast revenue or operating deficit of over \$500,000, due primarily to reductions in Commonwealth recurrent grant funding.

Clearly, this is not a sustainable financial situation for STTARS and the Board has adopted a strategic approach aligned with the new strategic plan and outcomes of the clinical services review to mitigate the risk. In particular, the Board approved strategies for reducing the deficit that included: applying a 5% efficiency saving; part funding the deficit from reserves; and exploring further efficiency savings and/or increasing income from different and new sources.

While this 12 month period has been largely dominated by an internal focus we have continued to be very active externally. The client services team leaders, Kathrine Cock, Carolyn Grace and Kerri Berardi, and their teams, have made significant contributions in this regard. Kathrine has transformed our presence in the asylum seeker space in very difficult circumstances and also more recently as Manager, Service Development and Partnerships, greatly enhanced our profile in health and related sectors. Carolyn and her team have sustained our profile and reputation in relation to our expertise working with children and young people. Carolyn has been

instrumental in preserving and building these important relationships. Kerri has maintained our presence with housing and refugee services and supported the development of our work in the south east.

Two very successful events, detailed elsewhere in this report, were held during 2014-15. We thank our partners for these opportunities which have maintained and enhanced the profile of STTARS as an important service in South Australia. Without funding from federal and state government STTARS would be unable to do this vital work and we thank our funders for their support. They include the Commonwealth Department of Health, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and Department of Social Services, and in South Australia, SA Health and the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Board and staff of STTARS, our interpreters and visiting consultants, and our partners and friends, for making my first year a rewarding and memorable one. I have learned much from you all and I look forward to continuing to lead and follow, as appropriate, in the service of our clients and their communities, and ultimately the broader South Australian community.

*Stephanie Miller*  
Chief Executive Officer

A woman wearing a vibrant red sari with intricate white and gold patterns is seen from behind. She is adorned with numerous white bangles on both wrists. The background shows a blurred outdoor setting with white tents, suggesting a refugee camp or a similar environment. The lighting is warm, indicating it might be late afternoon or early morning.

# OUR WORK WITH CLIENTS

“ My culture is different. What experience I had, I couldn't tell to anybody because of my culture. Therefore, I had to keep what happened to me inside my mind, so I was depressed. ”

# Our Work with Clients

STTARS provides services to individuals, families and groups. We work with adults, children and young people. Our services include psychosocial treatment and assessment, with a particular focus on people from refugee, refugee-like and asylum seeker backgrounds transitioning from war, conflict and violence into settlement and safety.

Promoting recovery through a strengths-based, client-centred approach, counsellors and caseworkers not only provide specialised trauma-informed counselling but also assist clients with access to mainstream services, including education, employment, income support, housing and health, within South Australia.

STTARS services also include the provision of therapeutic groups and community education activities to enhance access and inclusion opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers.

Our staff are experienced in undertaking comprehensive assessments to establish appropriate therapeutic goals with clients; in recognising and responding to the effects of torture and trauma; and providing counselling that is trauma informed, strengths-based and recovery oriented.

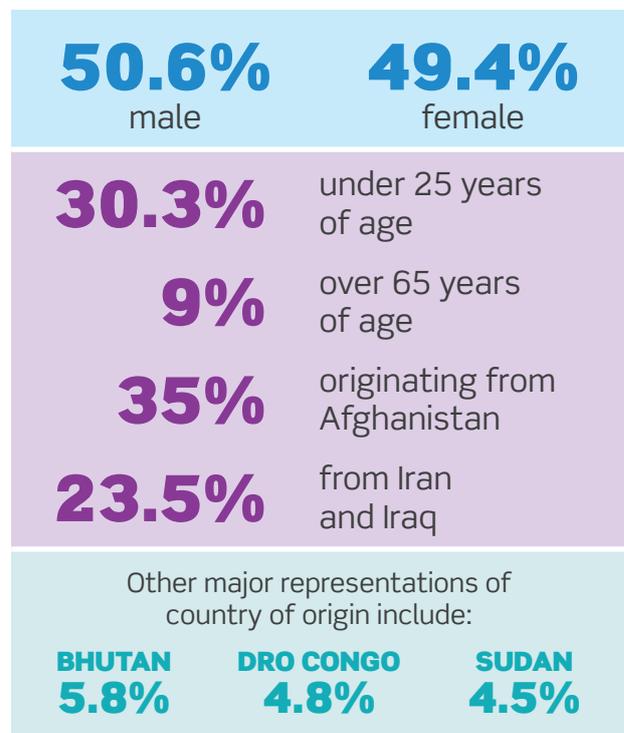
We provide these services at our offices in the city and Bowden and, as required, in schools, community centres and clients' homes, as well as in the South East of SA.

In 2014-15, a number of external environmental changes affected our services and ability to provide continuity of care to clients. As a result it has been a very busy and challenging year, as we have responded and adapted to new and at times ambiguous programs and policies, including changes to funding arrangements and the introduction of new systems and processes.

Nevertheless, our services have continued to improve in accessibility and consistency; we have provided more services to more new clients and achieved all of our funding targets. This demonstrates our strong and unwavering commitment to refugees and asylum seekers and our capacity to meet complex needs across multiple client groups.

It has been a successful year for STTARS service provision, as we strive to provide best practice interventions to clients and meet funding agreement targets. In 2014-15, STTARS provided counselling and service provision to 800 clients under our PASTT program.

We have had a varied demographic within this program:



Our asylum seeker demographic continues to be represented by large numbers of clients from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Sri Lanka.



## Adult Refugees

STTARS provides psychosocial counselling and support to adult survivors of torture and trauma, aged eighteen years and over, from a variety of cultural backgrounds, such as Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and Liberia. Adult refugee clients are referred to STTARS through a variety of sources, with the majority being self-referrals or referral by General Practitioners. Interventions through counselling range according to the needs of the client, from utilising techniques such as mindfulness, relaxation, and sleep hygiene to narrative therapy, grief and loss counselling and behavioural modification interventions.

## Children and Young People

STTARS provides therapeutic programs for children, young people and their families. The majority of our support is specialist trauma counselling to individuals and families with complementary group programs to support this work in schools and youth agencies. The group programs aim to address the needs of students from refugee backgrounds with histories of psychological and physiological trauma. These programs are aimed at refugee children with significant challenges in both the school and family contexts

As part of this service provision, counselling is provided at STTARS, in over twenty primary and high schools within the Adelaide region and in the homes of young people. STTARS also works closely with numerous child-focussed programs and organisations to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Photo Credit: UNHCR

Our counsellors work in collaboration with a number of other agencies to provide support and advocacy for our clients. Referrals are increasingly coming from a diverse range of services, the mental health sector, the youth sector, via GPs and the school system. We continue to work collaboratively with schools, providing additional support to Intensive English Learning Centres. Our work is systemic and embraces the support of the family, if required, to adjust to a new country and its systems.

Our consultancy in schools with school leadership teams and teaching staff enables increased understanding of clients' needs. Working with families facilitates positive connections with the school environment where, on many occasions, there was no communication or contact with family members. Our counselling work focuses on outcomes regarding relationships, mental health and personal and social development.



“ So, nowadays, I feel like I am in a safe country and slowly, slowly, I am telling that and I am coming out of that shell. But I tell you, that I'm not completely out of it. ”

## Referrals and Assessment

STTARS operates a managed waiting list. Clients have an intake interview within 48 hours of referral. If eligible for STTARS services, clients are either allocated to a counsellor for assessment and treatment, or placed on the waiting list to be seen by the first suitable, available counsellor. Priority is determined by severity of symptoms and the availability and adequacy of other supports.

While on the waiting list, clients are telephoned regularly to monitor and respond to any deterioration in condition and provide assistance with issues such as housing, finance, and access to physical health services. Information and advice on self-care is also provided. Many clients are referred through to our case work service, where appropriate, to resolve practical issues and provide links to mainstream services

## Asylum Seekers

STTARS provides specific services to asylum seekers living in immigration detention or in the South Australian community while they await the outcome of their visa applications.

In December 2014, Inverbrackie Alternative Place of Detention (Inverbrackie APOD) was decommissioned due to changes in Federal immigration policy that saw the reduction of asylum seekers arriving in Australia. STTARS provided torture and trauma support services to Inverbrackie clients in a unique arrangement, where counsellors worked onsite with clients and Detention Centre staff to ensure the mental health needs of asylum seekers were met. The closure of Inverbrackie had a significant impact on our services. STTARS has continued to provide services to asylum seekers living in community detention or in the Adelaide Immigration Transition Accommodation (AITA).

We have worked closely with AITA to provide emotional and mental health support for asylum seekers who have been re-detained. We continue to be a key stakeholder involved with AITA and we provide advice to International Health and Medical Services (IHMS), Serco and the Department of Immigration & Border Protection (DIBP) staff in relation to the mental health of those clients.

Between December 2014 and March 2015, significant changes were made to asylum seeker support



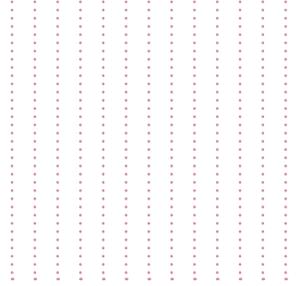
Photo Credit: UNHCR

programs in Australia. The previous ASAS (Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme) and CAS (Community Assistance Service) were disbanded in favour of an umbrella program known as the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS). This program encompasses all detention and bridging visa holders, governing their access to support services. During this time, clients and service providers experienced significant changes in allocation of clients and this impacted service delivery. STTARS were fortunately able to continue to provide services to these clients to ensure continuity of care during the transition phase.

STTARS has worked very hard to develop and maintain positive partnerships with key service providers for asylum seekers. We acknowledge very positive working relationships with the Migrant Resource Centre, Australian Red Cross Migration Support Programs and Life without Barriers National Immigration Support Service.

We have also been heavily involved in the development of services to assist asylum seekers who do not receive DIBP or other service provider support due to their visa status. These clients are some of the most vulnerable we see and the ability to provide services to them is vital in their recovery from trauma and associated mental health issues. We have been able to develop solid partnerships with various organisations to enable service provision to these asylum seekers and we continue to develop innovative programs to support them in collaboration with other services.

Photo Credit: UNHCR



## Regional: South East South Australia

STTARS has established a prominent presence in the South East region of South Australia, with an office in Mount Gambier and services in Naracoorte offering counselling and support to asylum seekers and refugees.

The majority of clients in the region are from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Afghanistan, Syria and Sudan. Services provided reflect the range of services offered to STTARS clients in the metropolitan region and, in addition, STTARS builds on community education and the development of collaborative services to assist families, single adults, young people and children.

## Visiting Mental Health Consultants

The Refugee Mental Health Clinic is based on a service model originally developed by the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture and Trauma and the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit. Under the auspices of STTARS, a number of registered mental health practitioners with specialist expertise provide a dedicated service to refugees and asylum seekers under the Medicare 'Better Access to Mental Health Care' initiative. Within this, we are able to provide professional and practical support from psychologists, psychiatrists and other mental health professionals.

STTARS has experienced improved access for clients to public sector mental health services by having a private psychiatric consultant as part of this service, who has worked extensively in the public mental health sector. When clients have required hospitalisation or post-discharge follow up, this process has been greatly facilitated by having continuity with a practitioner who is familiar with the operation of both sectors. This area continues to be a priority for improving access for our clients.

Another of our practitioners has specialist expertise with clients who have been experienced sexual violence in the context of war and conflict, increasing the range of services we can provide to clients. This model has an innovative approach to ensuring the 'Better Access to Mental Health Care' initiative is adapted to be accessible to people from refugee backgrounds to address the specific mental health impacts of torture and trauma.

“ It would be hard to say what I enjoyed most as a child because I lost my parents during the genocide in Rwanda when I was 12 years old. When I lost my parents, I didn't feel like I could enjoy anything anymore. As an adult in my country I could have done a lot. I think at the moment, perhaps I could have even had a family. ”



Photo Credit: UNHCR

## Group Work

In addition to individual services, STTARS has conducted a range of therapeutic groups and activities for and with adults, children and young people. In 2014-15 STTARS facilitated 18 groups, with a total of 139 sessions.

Through these groups we were able to work with 16 different cultural communities, representing adults, young people and children.

Overall, we worked with approximately 150 participants in these groups, taking into account the fluctuation of participant numbers.

There were a number of 'firsts' within the groups facilitated and some winding down of groups that had been long-running. Those groups that ceased in 2014-15 are in hiatus, ready for revitalising in 2015-16.

## Reconnections Chronic Pain Group

The Reconnections Chronic Pain group was a pilot program which provided adults experiencing significant chronic pain (as a result of torture, trauma or sometimes unexplained), a space to 'reconnect' to a life of meaning and purpose, in accordance with personal values.

Based upon the work of Dr Boris Drozdek, a psychiatrist with extensive cross cultural experience with adult survivors, this group allowed clients to accept their current state of pain and create ways to live with existing feelings of guilt and shame. As a fortnightly program which featured therapies to aid relaxation and stress release, the Reconnections Pain Group provided survivors with existing psychological pain, related to prior experiences of trauma, with a safe supported environment to connect with others with shared histories.



Through the utilisation of various psychological therapies, mindfulness techniques, plus yoga and narrative therapy approaches, STTARS counsellors facilitated this group of adult men from three different language groups for 12 weeks.

Counsellors found working across three language groups entailed significant challenges to conventional group work theory and practice, however, there were benefits in terms of reducing personal isolation and culturally there were similarities and differences in participants' responses to the experiences of war, torture and trauma and in managing subsequent psychological impacts.

## Seeds of Life Gardening Group

During 2014-15, Cancer Care Centre SA funded six Afghani clients to participate in a horticultural therapeutic program - 'The Seeds of Life' - at the Fullarton Organic Community Garden, Adelaide.

With a strong focus on improving food security and assisting clients to overcome social isolation and depression, 'The Seeds of Life', allowed STTARS clients to socialise with each other and with other participants on the program. One STTARS client remarked that, "It was good to socialise with people. I learnt a lot. I felt focussed and calmer."



Other comments from the gardening group noted positive outcomes:

“During this group we shared information and interest in organic gardening. We have been inspired and excited to grow our own vegetables and salad.”

Clients expressed that being outdoors in the gardening group allowed them to witness the passing of seasons which in itself instilled a gentle sense of reality and connection to nature. All clients participating on this program found this experience not only calming but that it promoted creativity, connection and imagination.

## Colours of Life

The Colours of Life art therapy project continued throughout the year, facilitated by an artist in residence in collaboration with counselling staff. The Colours of Life project takes a strength-based approach to highlight people’s resilience and life skills and reinforces a sense of self and identity through art and group meaning-making. Separate groups were run on a regular basis for men and for women.

Feedback from clients has been extremely positive with many reporting significant improvements in their mental health and general wellbeing. This is also evidenced by the high attendance rate for this group and further illustrates the effectiveness of therapeutic group work in complex trauma management.

## DRUMBEAT/Tree of Life

During 2014-15, six Drumming/Narrative Therapy programs were conducted in primary and secondary schools throughout Adelaide to address the needs of students from refugee backgrounds with histories of psychological and physiological trauma.

The STTARS counselling team use ‘Discovering Relationship Using Music, Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes and Thoughts’ (DRUMBEAT), a program which enables young people to engage with support programs through musical expression and traditional therapeutic

interventions to deliver effective social learning outcomes.

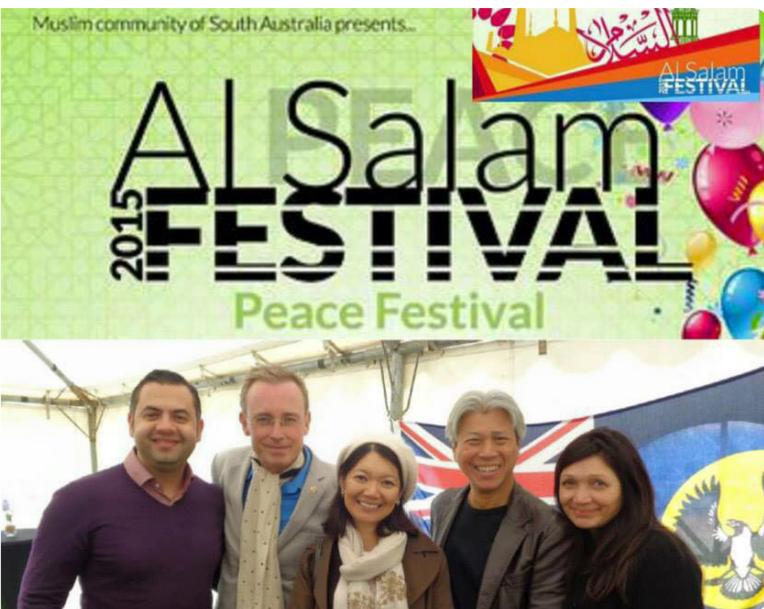
Some of the DRUMBEAT programs have also incorporated ‘Tree of Life’ programs. The ‘Tree of Life’, uses the narrative of a person’s life to enable people to speak about their lives in ways that make them stronger. The ‘Tree of Life’ explores discussion about people’s ‘roots’, as in their country of origin, and emphasizes skills, hopes and dreams and identifying special people in our lives.

These programs achieved positive results, demonstrated by students becoming more aware of stress responses and self-regulation, as well as enabling the sharing of stories, which strengthens group dynamics, and engenders trust. Over 60 young people have been involved in these groups over the last year.

## Peace Camp

The annual Peace Camp attended by 25 children aged between the ages of six and twelve was held in October 2014 at the Douglas Scrub campsite in Blewitt Springs. Within this environment, children formed secure and supportive relationships with others, engaged in drama programs and group work. The theme of the camp was ‘Peace’, which enabled participants to focus on the personal meaning of this and the value of peace for the group.





One participant provided a reflection on the most valuable part of the camp:

“Learning the heart beat rhythm and teaching us to share our stories with others and sharing the things we like.”

A major highlight was a day at the beach, in which children participated in activities supported by the Noarlunga Surf Life Saving Club.

## Afghani Women’s Living Skills Workshops

STTARS recognises that single refugee women are among the most marginalised and vulnerable in Australian society. Some of these women have lost their husbands due to war or conflict; others may have fled gender-based violence at home. As the primary caregivers for children in a new country, these women have fewer opportunities to access language classes, socialise, or increase their knowledge of services and assistance available to them.

In 2014-15, the STTARS case work team facilitated a six-week Afghani Women’s Group, funded through the Department of Social Services’ Settlement Grants Program. The objectives of the group sessions were

to provide a safe and secure women-only space, to increase awareness of services for migrant women and to support the development of peer support relationships. The focus of these informal sessions ranged from women’s health education to recreational activities in Adelaide.

Women reported that the group benefited them in a number of ways and were especially grateful for the opportunity to connect with other women with a shared cultural background. Indeed, one woman discovered that she had distant relatives living in Adelaide.

The sessions also fostered a sense of solidarity and empowerment among the women. Over the weeks, facilitators noticed that more and more members were connecting outside the group, assisting one another to move house and providing transport to important appointments.

“I am very glad to be part of this group, a good chance for me to explore new places and socialise with other women. Thanks for all STTARS staff.”

## Arabic Women’s Group

The Arabic Women’s Group provided Arabic speaking women with opportunities for social connection and mutual support in dealing with the difficulties of trauma and settlement. Activities included learning mindfulness and meditation exercises and gentle exercise techniques and other self-care strategies. The group adapts therapeutic strategies in ways that are culturally appropriate and encourages group problem solving on difficulties women are facing. This group has been very successful in reducing isolation for Arabic women, providing education on social issues and developing recovery-focussed skills.

## Men’s Social Support and Language Classes

In partnership with the Sophia Centre, STTARS was involved in a Men’s Social Support Group. Due to their experiences of trauma and language difficulties,



these men were extremely socially isolated. This group involved development of English language skills, socialisation and trauma counselling. The activities and classes were run by Sophia Centre volunteers and STTARS staff offered counselling and other practical supports. This was a very successful group and participants were awarded certificates for their achievements and dedication.

## Activity Days

A number of Activity Days for asylum seeker clients were held throughout the year to reduce social isolation and provide an opportunity for clients to learn new skills, share their stories and develop new friendships. Some of the organised activities undertaken by STTARS counselling staff and asylum seeker clients included: outings to the Royal Show in September 2014; a trip to Mount Lofty in October 2014; a visit to the National Art Gallery, followed by a walk in the Botanical Gardens in January 2015. With a client-centred approach, social gatherings have been opportunities to foster relationships and provide positive interaction with others in a friendly, neutral setting. As the pathway to receiving refugee status proves difficult for asylum seekers, sharing normal activities enables empowerment, social connection and develops an individual sense of identity.

## Interpreters

Interpreters are an integral part of STTARS service provision. We would like to acknowledge Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National) in their provision of fee-free interpreting services to our clients. This enables survivors to fully understand the recovery processes they are engaged in, and for STTARS counsellors to engage meaningfully with them. Interpreters work tirelessly with STTARS clients and in many cases assist clients in other environments to ensure their wellbeing and smooth settlement into their new communities and lives.

Thank you to all those interpreters who have been involved with our clients in 2014-15. We greatly appreciate their professionalism, accuracy and community connections.

**“ What I can say about hope is this. I had this feeling that I have to live... I have to live. ”**



A young child, likely a boy, is shown in profile, applying mud to their face. The child is wearing a white, long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The background is a wall made of thick, brown mud with visible roots and cracks. The child's hands are also covered in mud. The overall scene suggests a rural or impoverished setting.

“ When I was nine years old, we were displaced from our home. One day we lived one place and the next day it would be somewhere different. Up until the age of 22, we were displaced, moving from one place to another, every day. ”

# CLIENT STATISTICS

# WHO ARE OUR CLIENTS...

## AGE & GENDER

2013-2014

2014-2015

| AGE          | FEMALE     | MALE        | TOTAL       | FEMALE     | MALE       | TOTAL       |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 0 - 10       | 30         | 41          | 71          | 21         | 36         | 57          |
| 11 - 20      | 77         | 185         | 262         | 90         | 120        | 210         |
| 21 - 30      | 94         | 326         | 420         | 84         | 109        | 193         |
| 31 - 40      | 127        | 260         | 387         | 111        | 161        | 272         |
| 41 - 50      | 122        | 128         | 259         | 110        | 125        | 235         |
| 51 - 60      | 54         | 65          | 119         | 62         | 62         | 124         |
| 61 - 70      | 10         | 12          | 22          | 13         | 14         | 27          |
| 71+          | 1          | 2           | 3           | 4          | 2          | 6           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>515</b> | <b>1019</b> | <b>1534</b> | <b>495</b> | <b>629</b> | <b>1124</b> |

## VISA TYPE

2013-2014

184

1

-

555

2014-2015

**212**

**3**

**3**

**119**

Asylum  
Seeker

Australian  
Citizen

Child  
Visa 101

Immigration  
Detention

Orphan  
Visa

2013-2014

5

-

1

5

2014-2015

**4**

**2**

**4**

**2**

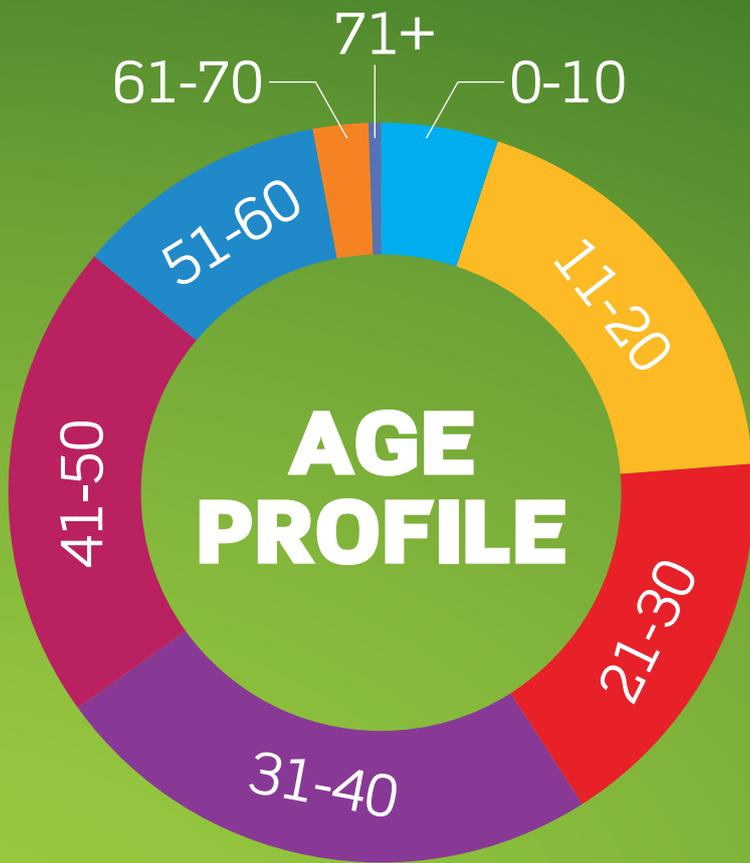
Protection  
Visa 866

Special Assistance  
Category

Spousal  
Visa 309

Students/Visitors  
Visa 307

Temporary  
Concer

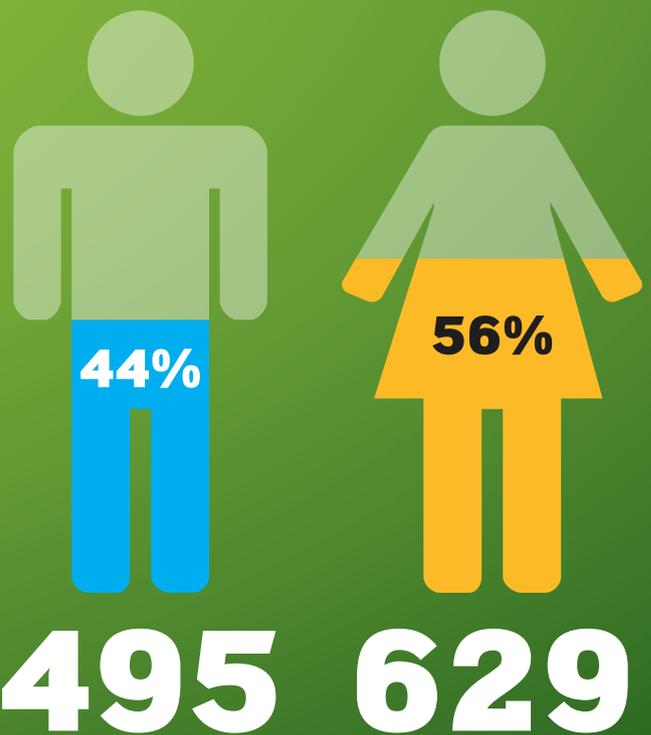


Number of Clients Receiving Services...

TOTAL

**1,124**

**GENDER PROFILE**



|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 2<br><b>6</b><br>n Relative<br>sa 117       | -<br><b>142</b><br>Permanent<br>Protection Visas | 781<br><b>606</b><br>Permanent<br>Resident |
| -<br><b>1</b><br>Humanitarian<br>n Visa 786 | -<br><b>3</b><br>Temporary<br>Protection Visa    | -<br><b>17</b><br>Other                    |

# WHERE OUR CLIENTS ORIGINATE FROM...



| COUNTRY      | 2013-2014   | 2014-2015   |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Afghanistan  | 401         | 353         |
| Iran         | 319         | 200         |
| Iraq         | 150         | 125         |
| Sri Lanka    | 185         | 74          |
| Bhutan       | 46          | 46          |
| Congo        | 29          | 41          |
| Sudan        | 55          | 36          |
| Other        | 349         | 249         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1534</b> | <b>1124</b> |

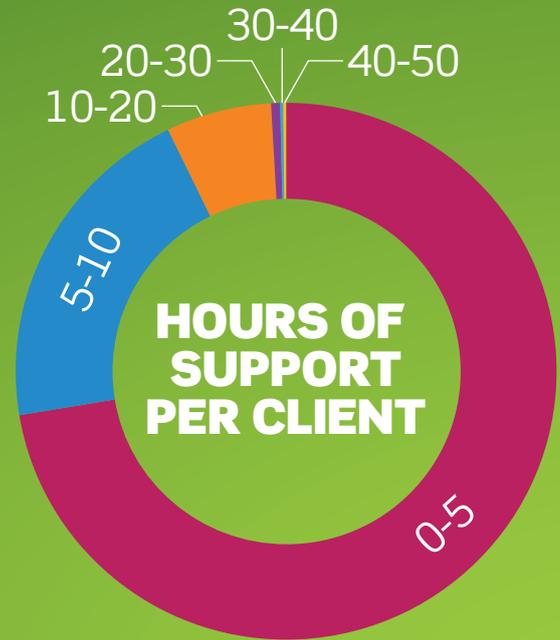
\* China excludes SARs and Taiwan Province



TOTAL  
**1,124**

# TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS OF SUPPORT PER CLIENT (DIRECT AND INDIRECT)

| HOURS        | 2013-2014   | 2014-2015   |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 0-5          | 854         | 815         |
| 5-10         | 253         | 230         |
| 10-20        | 254         | 71          |
| 20-30        | 90          | 6           |
| 30-40        | 27          | 1           |
| 40-50        | 10          | 1           |
| 51+          | 46          | 0           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1534</b> | <b>1124</b> |

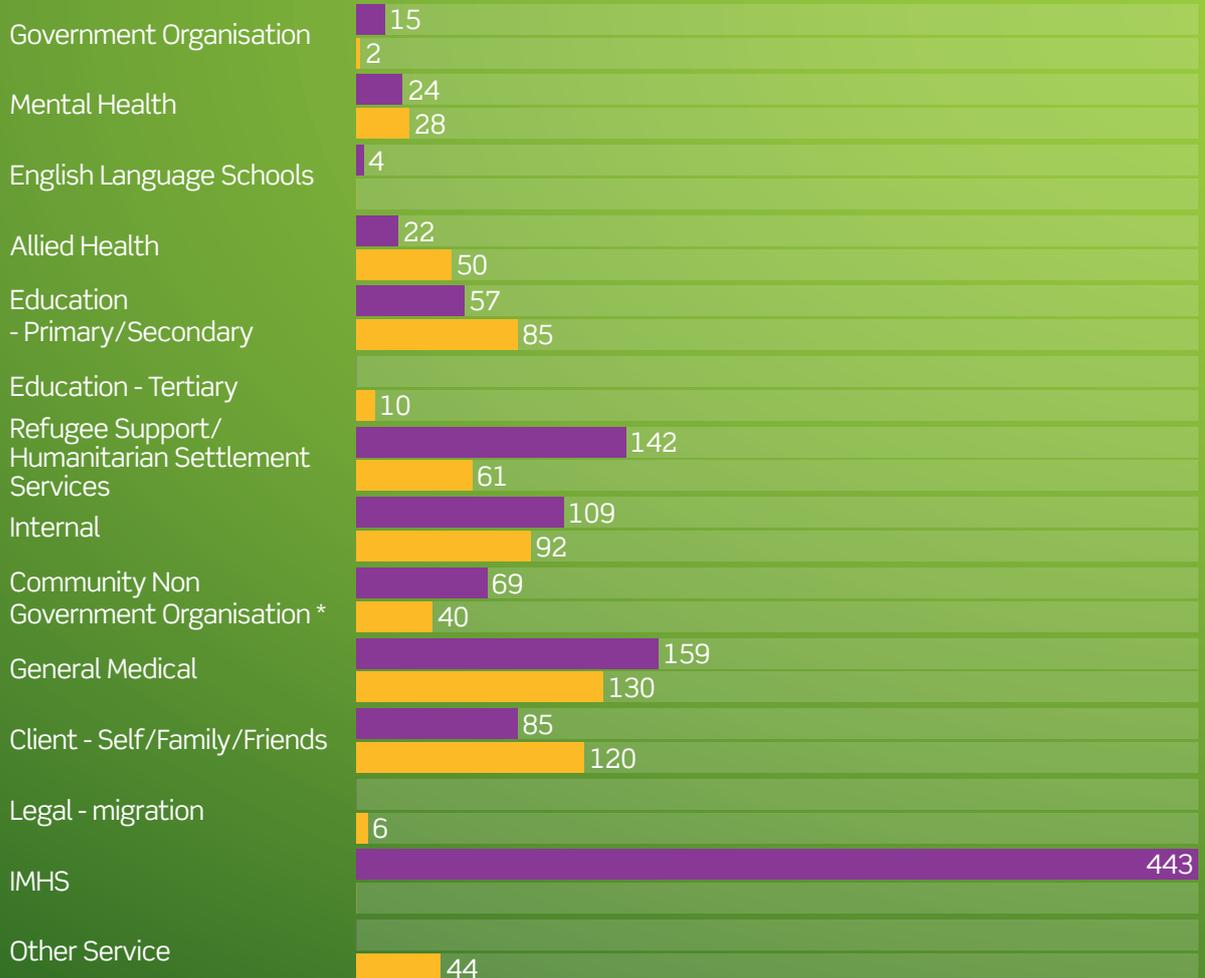


2013-2014 2014-2015

## NEW REFERRALS

2013-2014 TOTAL 1129

2014-2015 TOTAL 668





## Case Work

Many STTARS clients accessing our services continue to struggle with their settlement into Australian society. The STTARS case work service is available to these clients to assist in addressing the many social issues that are often present while people are dealing with mental health issues in their lives.

Critically, resolving these issues can be complicated by a number of barriers, which include:

- Complex and confusing formal systems and procedures;
- Limited language skills and literacy;
- A lack of social support and family networks.

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STTARS recognises that these stressors can often exacerbate trauma symptoms and has a specialised case work team to provide practical support to clients.

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Case work provides significant support to engage a wide variety of mainstream services spanning financial, physical and mental health services, employment services and engagement with local community based resources. The majority of clients who accessed the case work service were also assisted to access a mainstream service. This was through a range of information provision, direct support and advocacy strategies employed by the case workers.

For this client group, specialised case work has been invaluable. Due to the particular issues of the client group, case work can be intense both in terms of length and complexity. This is because the impacts of trauma may impact an individual's cognitive capacity in specific areas such as decision making, memory and concentration.

STTARS case workers have been successful in the achievement of positive housing outcomes in the context of long public/community housing waiting lists and a tight private rental market, through a range of information provision, direct support and advocacy strategies backed up by strong networking skills.



## An Example of a Client's Story:

---

*Mohammad\* arrived in Australia as an asylum seeker five years ago. In his 60s, the transition to a new life in Australia was especially challenging for Mohammad. Not only was he managing traumatic experiences and worry for his family back home, he had a number of specific health needs: he had lost his hearing, had developed osteoarthritis and was receiving treatment for a chronic virus infection. Mohammad was living in an upstairs apartment and like many older Australians, he struggled with daily tasks like climbing stairs, showering and travel. Mohammad had limited English literacy and memory problems and often missed his numerous medical appointments. Additionally, he lacked storage for his refrigerated medicines.*

*Mohammad's STTARS counsellor referred him to the case work team. In the initial assessment, Mohammad identified his ethnic community as a potential source of support. The case worker approached Circle of Friends to donate a second-hand fridge. The case worker also assessed his eligibility for a number of home-based services for older people in metropolitan Adelaide and referred him accordingly.*

### OUTCOME

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Mohammad is now able to keep his medicines cool in a fridge donated and delivered by Circle of Friends. He is managing his medical needs with the support of his case worker, who co-ordinates with medical centres and a community link, who provides transport. He now has a hearing aid and is beginning to make his own steps to managing his appointments. Furthermore, Domiciliary Care have also provided in-home equipment and he reports that he is better able to manage his daily tasks.

*\*Client's name has been changed to protect privacy.*

# Strategic Plan 2015-2020

With the appointment of a new Board in November, a Chief Executive Officer in December 2014, as well as the expiry of the STTARS Strategic Plan 2012-14, Board and staff embarked on a journey of developing a new vision and strategic directions for STTARS.

In March 2015 the STTARS Board agreed to adopt an appreciative and collaborative approach.

Although Appreciative Inquiry was developed as an approach to organisational change it can be used as an approach to developing strategy. Instead of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, the SOAR framework invites us to look at Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and (measurable) Results. Appreciative Inquiry presents a positive approach to organisational development and planning.

As one important element of STTARS' strategic planning process for 2015, a staff workshop was held on the 12 May 2015 to engage staff in this process and to elicit their perspectives, contributions, questions and ideas.

Thirty-five staff participated in this successful workshop, which was facilitated by Stephanie Miller and Anne Nixon. Staff contributed enthusiastically and thoughtfully demonstrating a high level of commitment to STTARS clients and the future of the organisation.

Continuing the focus on an appreciative and collaborative approach to engaging staff in planning, a "World Café" format was used, with an Appreciative Inquiry framing of four key questions to guide and deepen the conversations with and among staff.

Written ideas, thoughts, feedback and responses were captured on flip chart paper in response to each of the four questions posed, at each of six tables of staff. There was regular movement amongst tables after each round so that staff had the opportunity to work with a range of different colleagues throughout the workshop.

All of the material gathered was presented visually to the participants and, to synthesise their insights



and ideas in summary, participants were asked to individually provide written answers to three questions:

- What was the most important insight to come out of today's conversation for you?
- What is the key thing you want to recommend to the Board for inclusion in the Strategic Plan?
- What can you do to make a healthy and vital future for STTARS a reality?

Following the workshop the STTARS Leadership Group met to agree the themes arising from the conversations as recorded. The report of the workshop outlining the process, and a themed summary of the results organised around the SOAR framework, was circulated to staff and then to the Board.

A Board and Leadership Group workshop was held on 30 May 2015 and the results of the staff deliberations provided a sound starting point for the next round of conversations. Judith Sellick was engaged to facilitate the one-day workshop attended by all 19 Board and Leadership Group members. Given the newness of both groups, and in order to ensure well-informed discussions, all the participants were asked to do pre-reading that included articles, reports and guidelines, as well as pre-work on hopes and concerns about the future.

Following the workshop staff were consulted on the draft vision and strategic directions and asked for comment prior to final Board approval in July 2015.

The vision, four strategic directions, linked outcomes and strategies have been developed partly using a results based accountability approach and enable STTARS the flexibility to evolve and respond over the next five years.

# Strategic Directions 2015-2020

**OUR VISION** | A community in which survivors of torture and trauma thrive and flourish

## › OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

We provide trauma-informed, culturally responsive services that recognise the values, needs and aspirations of our clients

We work with communities to build health literacy, social capital and resilience

We develop collaborations for innovation, growth and service improvement

We inspire courageous governance, service excellence and a vibrant and inclusive organisational culture

## › OUTCOMES

- 1 Client needs are met and their expectations exceeded
- 2 Clients participate in and actively contribute to our society
- 3 Improved mental health and wellbeing

- 1 Clients, their families and communities influence how services are planned, delivered and evaluated
- 2 Improved individual and community health literacy
- 3 People can manage the problems and challenges they face with resilience

- 1 Improved stakeholder relations
- 2 Lead agency for responses to refugee and asylum seeker torture and trauma
- 3 Innovation and excellence through collaborative service planning, delivery and evaluation

- 1 Our culture and systems foster wellbeing, innovation and excellence
- 2 Increased and diversified funding for sustainability and growth
- 3 We meet and exceed contractual performance targets and deliverables

## › STRATEGIES

- 1 A client centred recovery oriented practice framework
- 2 A clinical workforce strategy to support our practice framework and delivery of these service outcomes
- 3 Advise and educate health and other services in trauma-informed, culturally responsive approach
- 4 Systems and processes for effective service planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation

- 1 An active and valued client reference group
- 2 Work with communities to identify and support opportunities for capacity building and peer education
- 3 Develop and promote relevant health literacy resources
- 4 Work with community leaders to reduce stigma

- 1 A stakeholder engagement strategy
- 2 Explore and develop strategic co-location opportunities
- 3 Develop and respond to research proposals and partnerships
- 4 Establish a sector development consultancy
- 5 Co-ordinate a strategic forum of services for survivors of torture and trauma

- 1 A continuous quality improvement strategy
- 2 A business development strategy
- 3 Refresh and sustain excellence in clinical and corporate governance
- 4 Professional development pathways and employment practices that support cultural diversity and inclusion



## Our Work with Communities

With a strong focus on the provision of training and education to other service providers, STTARS provides support and valuable information-sharing to external stakeholders, as well as schools and community groups.

In 2014-15 STTARS provided professional development to numerous organisations, volunteer groups and communities. In total, 26 training programs were delivered across South Australia, reaching 1014 participants. Some of the organisations STTARS staff provided training for include: Flinders University, Domiciliary Care, University of South Australia, Welcome to Australia, Centacare, Families SA, Amnesty International, various primary and secondary schools, Migrant Resource Centre and the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion.

Training programs were delivered on many topics, from Working with Children and Young People; Dementia, Trauma and PTSD; Suicide and Self Harm in New and Emerging Communities; and Understanding the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Experience. These programs were very well received and STTARS will continue to offer a calendar of professional training events in 2015-16. In addition, some fantastic and promising collaborative partnerships have been developed which will be built on in the new year.

We work in partnership with the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion, the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to provide training to social services and education staff regarding working with children and young people from a refugee background.

Since 2006, CAMHS and STTARS have worked collaboratively with the DECD Intensive English Language Centres (IELCs) to support the mental health needs of students from a refugee background. STTARS is an active member of the Intensive English Liaison

Centres, which meet quarterly in each region, North, West, South and East to support teaching staff and leadership about the needs of refugee children and young people.

STTARS has also had a counsellor based at the Adelaide Secondary School of English, which has the largest intake of new humanitarian entrants in Adelaide, for a day per week.

.....

This collaboration between the school and STTARS has improved the therapeutic support for students from refugee backgrounds, increased the cooperation between staff and counsellors and provided a much needed consultancy to teaching staff.

.....

STTARS also promotes collaboration and community engagement, and was pleased to be involved in the Harmony Day celebrations which took place in Naracoorte in March 2015. Together with the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) and TafeSA, STTARS celebrated cultural diversity and extended a warm welcome to new and emerging communities in the South East.

.....

STTARS also collaborated with HIVE 12:25 Youth and the Tea Tree Gully Council to run a program of drumming, art and soccer as part of the Harmony Day celebrations.

.....

STTARS continues to form good working relationships with Flinders University and the University of South Australia which results in Social Work student placements, training for students by STTARS staff and involvement in forums and networks.

STTARS has a strong commitment to supporting other agencies to further develop their capacity to support people who have experienced torture or trauma.

Where STTARS is unable to provide a direct service to a client, we offer support to other service providers on a consultation basis.

Workers from STTARS consult with colleagues from other agencies to provide support and assist the development of skills and knowledge needed to support the client.

This strategy has been particularly useful in rural and remote areas but also in school situations where the STTARS counsellor is present for a limited number of hours per week.

A review of STTARS community development and group work activity was commenced in February 2015 and this has resulted in a more strategic approach and the adoption of new guidelines and processes. STTARS has developed a closer relationship with Welcome to Australia, partnering for several events during Refugee week 2015, as well as working more closely with the Multicultural Communities Council of SA and the Australian Refugee Association. This year, STTARS was given the opportunity to sponsor the inaugural Al-Salam Festival in April 2015, which united both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, hosted by the Islamic Society of South Australia.

**“ In those moments, I had two voices in my mind. One would get angry at myself and I want to end my life and the other voice inside my mind, it would say, it’s not your fault, don’t be like that. That’s the second voice, always comforting me and always telling me to keep on going. ”**



Photo Credit: Barat Ali Batoor



# Understanding and Responding to Refugee and Asylum Seeker Distress

## - 25 September 2015

“Right now many thousands of asylum seekers, including children and families, are living in the Australian community with an uncertain future. This forum will examine the nature, scope and consequences of asylum seeker uncertainty, distress and mental deterioration, as well as inform thinking around what practical strategies might be considered to help. The forum blends together key practitioners and service providers with people who have lived experience of seeking asylum.”

In conjunction with The Refugee and Migration Research Network and the Human Rights & Security Research and Innovation Cluster, STTARS sponsored the ‘*Understanding and Responding to Refugee and Asylum Seeker Distress*’ forum, held on Thursday 25 September 2014, at UniSA campus.

With reference to and understanding of our specific client group, STTARS’s Client Services Manager, David Tully, joined the panel to offer discussion surrounding the development of trauma-related counselling specific to affected communities within the refugee and asylum seeker sector who have been subjected to torture or war-related trauma.

A member from the STTARS Board, Nilofar Najimi, joined the speakers on the day, to present, ‘*Asylum Seeker Lived Experience*’, in which Nilofar shared her personal journey as a refugee from Afghanistan. Already recognised within her community as being a leader, Nilofar has received accolades due to her ability to build social capital, and connect community members while navigating new systems in Australia.

Representation from the Forum of Australian of Services for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (FASSTT), was given by Guy Coffey who works as a Clinical Psychologist with Foundation House, the Victorian torture and trauma service provider. Guy has worked for more than 25 years within the public mental health and trauma counselling settings, and offered a presentation at the event entitled, ‘*The Sources and Experience of Uncertainty When Asylum is Sought*’; this presentation reflected upon research undertaken by Guy into the determinants of mental health among asylum seekers plus the role of psychological evidence in refugee status determination.

The ‘*Understanding and Responding to Refugee and Asylum Seeker Distress*’ forum was convened by Dr. Melanie Baak from the Refugee and Migration Research Network; Melanie is a member of the leadership group for the Human Rights and Security Cluster, and also a member of the Centre for Postcolonial and Globalisation Studies at the Hawke Research Institute. With extensive research conducted into themes of ‘belonging’; ‘identity’; ‘transition’; ‘family’; ‘gender’; and ‘sexual violence’, Melanie brought forth an understanding which resonated throughout the forum.

Reflecting upon the experience and research conducted amongst attendees and participants at the forum, the issue of subsequent mental health demise as a real factor to be considered amongst asylum seekers, was highlighted. Also considered was the uncertain future for this specific cohort due to their undetermined visa status combined with undulating changes in regulatory conditions around those seeking asylum. Although the think-tank of key practitioners and service providers with people who have lived experience of seeking asylum present at the forum offered variable solutions, it was felt that much needed to change politically to respond to the challenges of working effectively with disenfranchised refugees and asylum seekers within Australia.

“ When the genocide came, I was 12, when I went back to where my parents were living, I was about 13. It was really challenging because I had to do the cooking by myself. Then I started living in the house without electricity because I couldn't pay for bills and I had to use candles at night-time. I kept living in that situation. I had to stay and live there. I had no choice. I started to pray and I kept praying. ”



# United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture - 26 June 2015

On June 26 2015, STTARS co-partnered the “Rehabilitation: co-creating new lives” event with The Hawke Centre, at UniSA. As an event which acknowledges the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the evening presented the keynote address by Mr. Thomas Albrecht, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Regional Representative.

In compliance with the theme: ‘Right to Rehabilitation’, as proposed by The International Council of Rehabilitation for Torture Victims (IRCT), the event presented a worldwide perspective as to the collaborative underpinning of providing trauma focused service for refugees and asylum seekers. As Mr. Albrecht described, many of the world’s population live in conditions marred by the threat of persecution and death. UNHCR provides assistance to refugees and other persons of concern in more than 125 countries around the world, and co-ordinates international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems internationally.

Mr. Thomas Albrecht spoke of the Syrian political crisis with reflection as to it being one of the most current challenges and volatile operating conditions. However despite this, UNHCR continues to provide help to those in need throughout Syria, including providing relief items, cash, health care, shelter, psycho-social support and legal aid. With deteriorating conditions in countries such as Syria, thousands of internally displaced persons are driven from their homes in pursuit of safety and protection to neighbouring countries. There are 4.08 million refugees already in neighbouring countries – the vast majority of whom live outside of formal camps – and who barely survive daily facing abject poverty. It was the message of renewed hope and the belief in humanity being a global concern, for all political leaders.



It was posed by Mr. Albrecht that early intervention was the best approach in order to avoid crisis and retribution killings. Humanity, and human welfare is an international concern which stretches not just from the political forum, but also extends to each person in the audience, and beyond.

STTARS’s CEO Stephanie Miller concluded the evening’s event and described the interconnectedness of the trauma-focused specialised work undertaken by our agency, with the national network of torture and trauma service providers, that is, FASSTT, and the international membership organization of which STTARS is one of members worldwide – IRCT. Ms. Miller also concluded that in light of the process of rehabilitation for survivors of torture and trauma,

STTARS provides sustained, client-focused recovery orientated practice. Such approaches, Ms. Miller stated, are an integral part of the rehabilitation process for survivors which is required for them to not only thrive and flourish, but to feel part of Australian society as a whole.

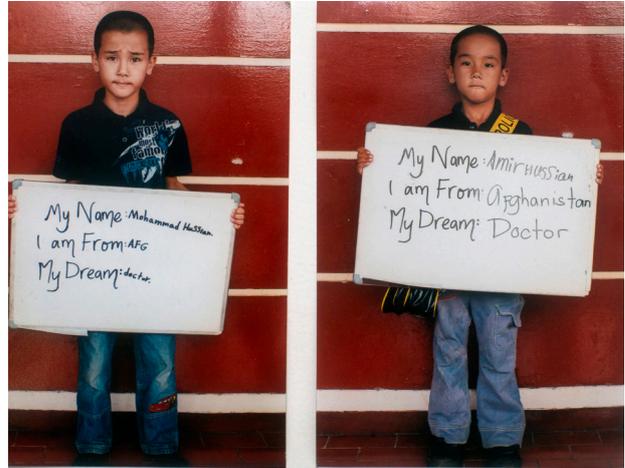


Photo Credit: Barat Ali Batoor

“ At that time, there were prisoners, those who were convicted of doing the genocide and committing the crimes. They had to come and give evidence. It looked bad to me because I thought there was a possibility that there may be another genocide... ”



# Messages of Support



The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre at the University of South Australia has been honoured to support STTARS in 2015 presenting two events, one being a public lecture in June, the other an exhibition within our Kerry Packer Civic Gallery in November.

The public lecture held in June was titled: Rehabilitation: co-creating new lives with Thomas Albrecht, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Regional Representative. Mr Albrecht delivered an interesting and thought provoking lecture looking at the global challenges of refugee protection from an international standpoint, and reflecting on how Australia can meet the challenge to support survivors of war-related torture. This was relevant in June but even more so with the current situation in Europe.

The exhibition, to be held in November, will present two photographers who have worked in war, conflict and through personal tragedy. Barat Ali Batoor will showcase 'Hazara Exodus', the photographic series for which he was the recipient of two Nikon-Walkley awards, while Fairfax journalist Kate Geraghty will feature her photo documentary 'Displaced Future'. Not only will this imagery highlight the atrocities of war, but will also convey a sense of hope that this time it will be different, and the creation of a new life can emerge when all seems lost.

The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre is a community-focused centre committed to delivering a diverse program of events and exhibitions throughout the year which reflect our fundamental themes of strengthening our democracy, valuing our diversity and building our future. We aim to honour these themes through our accessible and thought provoking program that engages with our diverse South Australian community and beyond via social media to our global audience. The work of STTARS, a specialist trauma-focused mental health service, which provides psycho-social treatment and support to help refugees heal from the scars of torture, is truly inspirational.

It has been a pleasure to work with you over the past year in bringing these events to fruition.

Kind regards

**Jacinta Thompson**

*Executive Director Hawke Centre*



We are so grateful for the work of STTARS and see how they positively impact on the lives of asylum seekers and refugees first-hand. Many of our friends who volunteer at The Welcome Centre in Adelaide, or use its services, have benefitted from their engagement with STTARS.

Our work at The Welcome Centre and the work of STTARS can be viewed as being complementary in the provision of holistic support to people who have suffered and remain vulnerable in the South Australian community.

**Brad Chilcott**  
*Founder of Welcome to Australia*



The Australian Refugee Association (ARA) is proud of its long history of partnership and collaboration with STTARS. ARA has been supporting refugees to settle in Australia for 40 years. We know that torture and trauma is a significant barrier to successful settlement.

Our clients have often experienced multiple forms of trauma during all stages of the journey from their country of origin to Australia. STTARS has been providing incredible programs to torture and trauma survivors in SA since 1991. This is a much needed service in our community. The impact of torture on the individual, family and broader community is immense. STTARS is transforming lives.

**Kirsten Bickendorf**  
*CEO of ARA*



I would like to acknowledge the valuable work of STTARS in assisting the most vulnerable of humanitarian entrants through torture and trauma counselling.

The Migrant Resource Centre of SA's work in settling new arrival refugees and other migrants in South Australia would not have as effective an impact without the counselling interventions of those clients presenting with torture and trauma. I congratulate Stephanie Miller, recently appointed CEO of STTARS for her invaluable work to position STTARS as a critical allied service to the settlement sector. The MRCSA values our partnership with STTARS to ensure we keep providing the best possible support for our most vulnerable new arrivals as they negotiate their new life in South Australia.

**Eugenia Tsoulis OAM**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

# Financial Summary

Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service  
Statement of Profit and Loss and other Comprehensive Income  
For the year ended 30 June 2015

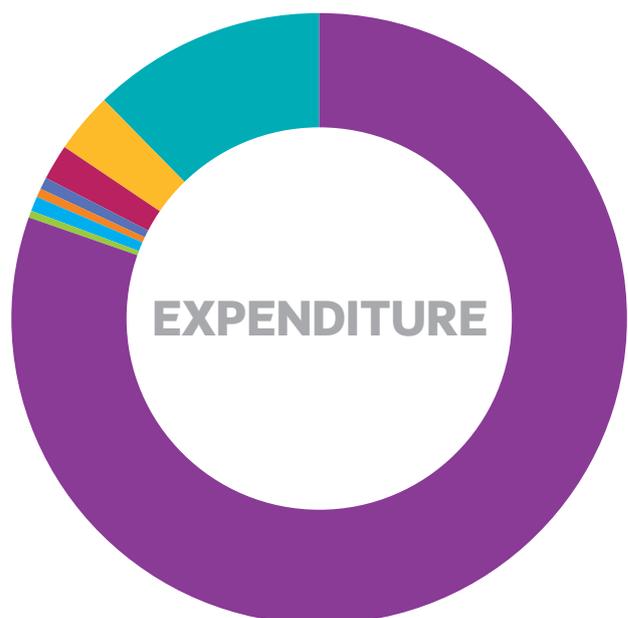
## Income

|                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Grant Income             | \$2,606,884        |
| Trade & Operating Income | \$815,339          |
| Interest                 | \$30,238           |
| Other Income             | \$33,082           |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>      | <b>\$3,485,543</b> |



## Expenditure

|                                     |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Salaries, Wages & Employee Expenses | \$2,697,449        |
| Audit & Accounting Fees             | \$12,405           |
| Client Expenses                     | \$26,276           |
| Depreciation                        | \$15,465           |
| Insurance                           | \$21,142           |
| Occupancy Expenses                  | \$62,923           |
| Rent                                | \$107,236          |
| Other Operating Expenses            | \$413,479          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>            | <b>\$3,356,375</b> |



OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) \$129,168

Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service  
Statement of Financial Position  
As at 30 June 2015

## Current Assets

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Cash & Cash Equivalents     | \$1,536,678        |
| Debtors & Other Receivables | \$150,835          |
| Prepayments                 | \$18,156           |
| Inventory                   | \$7,920            |
| <b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b> | <b>\$1,713,589</b> |

## Non Current Assets

|                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Property Plant & Equipment      | \$31,424        |
| <b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b> | <b>\$31,424</b> |

**TOTAL ASSETS** \$1,745,013

## Current Liabilities

|                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Trade & Other Payables           | \$220,689        |
| Grants Received in Advance       | \$59,164         |
| Income Received in Advance       | \$15,910         |
| Employee Provisions              | \$228,026        |
| Other Provisions                 | \$95,000         |
| <b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b> | <b>\$618,789</b> |

**NET ASSETS** \$1,126,224

**TOTAL EQUITY** \$1,126,224



Photo Credit: UNHCR



STTARS gratefully acknowledges funding from the following agencies in 2014-2015



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health**



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Immigration and Border Protection**



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**



**Government of South Australia**  
**SA Health**



**Government of South Australia**  
**Department for Communities and Social Inclusion**



**sttars**  
supporting survivors of  
torture & trauma

**Survivors of Torture and Trauma  
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