

**Monday, November 1, 2021**

## SSI welcomes first new members since 2000

Settlement Services International (SSI) has boosted its membership with the addition of two new members: NSW-based Participate Australia and Victoria's Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC).

It is the first time since 2000, when SSI was established by 11 migrant resource centres and multicultural services, that its membership has grown.

SSI's member expansion began in 2020, with the recognition that the membership needed to better reflect the communities it worked with, its geographical reach and service delivery portfolio.

As half of the SSI Board were member directors, diversification was also essential to ensure that SSI remained governed by local organisations embedded in the communities SSI supports.

ECLC CEO Michael Smith said, "SSI has been doing important and innovative work with migrant, refugee and other culturally diverse communities for a long time now. Eastern Community Legal Centre is looking forward to building on our strong local relationships and experience in this area through this partnership with SSI."

Participate Australia CEO Jerry McNamara said, "Participate Australia is delighted to be included as a new member organisation with SSI. We believe that, with SSI's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and with Participate Australia's long-term support for people with disability, our organisations truly complement each other."

“We look forward to working with SSI and other member organisations to champion and seek inclusion and meaningful participation for all individuals.”

SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis said SSI was thrilled to welcome the new members.

“In 2000, when SSI was established as the NSW Migrant Resource Centre Association to deliver humanitarian settlement services, our vision was to think outside the box, to be a player in a different way,” she said.

“Then as now, through collaboration and connection to community, we sought to serve the needs of vulnerable people.

“In 2021 our reach has extended throughout regional NSW, to Queensland, and in Victoria, and I felt that it was also time for our membership to represent this.

“I am looking forward to the diverse perspectives our new members will bring and the wonderful opportunities ahead.”

## **About Participate Australia**

Participate Australia is a registered charity that has supported people who have an intellectual, cognitive, and developmental disabilities since 1983. Its purpose is to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities by respecting their dignity, autonomy, freedom of choice, independence and by supporting the achievement of their goals.

Participate Australia provides a diverse range of highly successful programs, NDIS supports, support coordination, and supported accommodation, which are available to individuals aged from 5 to 65 years. Its programs and supports are aimed at achieving a greater level of inclusion, access, and community participation, and it supports participants to attain independence by gaining necessary daily life skills, inclusive social activities, health, and fitness programs.

## **About Eastern Community Legal Centre**

ECLC is a multidisciplinary legal service that works to prevent problems, progress fair outcomes and support the wellbeing and resilience of communities and community members in Melbourne's East.

ECLC works across a diverse catchment of around one million Victorians living and working in the Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges municipalities. In conjunction with partners, ECLC delivers education and primary prevention programs; early intervention responses; and integrated legal services across a wide range of areas.

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## **About SSI:**

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

## **Media enquiries:**

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