



Settlement Council of Australia  
Strategic Plan 2011-2014

SCOA brings a unique and important voice to debates about Australia's migration and humanitarian programs, settlement, social inclusion, and multiculturalism. Other peak bodies may comment on matters of settlement but they are not advocates for settlement-specific services and the many complementary initiatives around settlement. Their roles are important, but different. SCOA therefore fills an important niche in the way Australia fulfills its humanitarian obligations. It provides the 'voice' and the practical expertise of settlement program delivery. It has provided advocacy on the extent, standards and developments within the sector, and on the participation and inclusion into Australian society of the clients of settlement services. In this role SCOA has, and will continue, to provide important quality assurance, advisory, policy, and risk management support to governments' ongoing settlement programs.

Multiculturalism is a critical complement to the settlement process, helping to establish the most positive social environment in which settlement can take place. Migrants and humanitarian entrants may, in various ways, experience many barriers to their full participation in Australian society. Tangible barriers of employment, language and education (as examples) can be compounded with less tangible impediments such as social exclusion, racism and disparate impact discrimination. This second category of barrier can, in many ways, be more damaging to people attempting to make a home in a new country.

It is in a spirit of optimism, a belief in the importance of its role, a commitment to support the settlement sector and to advocate for those communities receiving settlement services, that SCOA has developed its current strategic plan.

SCOA's advocacy is based on the following values :

- human rights, under which broad value others are subsets, including:
  - multicultural democracy
  - access and equity
  - social justice and social inclusion, and
  - transparent, accountable, respectful and client-centered governance and focus.

The following important assumptions or beliefs underpin SCOA's work:

- all major political parties are committed to maintaining non-discriminatory migration and humanitarian settlement programs
- these programs will continue into the future. Australian society is made up of many ethnicities, cultures, faiths and identities: we ARE a multicultural democracy and, given that (along with other 'givens' such as the economic benefits of multiculturalism and social harmony) the current values of non-discrimination and multiculturalism will – with only marginal variations – be maintained into the foreseeable future
- on this basis, settlement services will continue to be funded by governments so as to ensure the inclusion of new arrivals into the broader Australian society as quickly and as effortlessly as possible
- there is an inherent value in the engagement and participation of CALD community members and CALD community organisations in the settlement sector, even if they are not members of SCOA
- government, and its agents, will continue to make policy and program decisions based on adequate evidence. This evidence will include research, in particular, research that is informed by consultation with experts who work on a daily basis 'in the field'

# SCOA's GOAL, VISION & OBJECTIVES

## PURPOSE

SCOA is the national peak body that represents and advocates for the needs and issues of the settlement sector

## GOAL

SCOA helps ensure the best possible settlement outcomes for Migrants and people of refugee background, the settlement sector and funding bodies

## VISION

An equitable, respectful and inclusive Australia where effective settlement outcomes provide every opportunity to humanitarian entrants and migrants to fully participate in society and realise their full potential.

## OBJECTIVES

To advocate on behalf of the settlement services sector to help ensure the best settlement outcomes for migrants and people of refugee background.

To achieve this objective SCOA has identified five broad, sector-wide, strategic goals.

### ENSURE EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT BY:

- maintaining ongoing dialogue with the settlement services sector and to improve settlement outcomes;
- collaborating with partners in the non-government sector, academia, business and government agencies, and
- engaging on issues of importance with the sector.

### REPRESENT THE SETTLEMENT SECTOR BY:

- lobbying and advocating on behalf of the settlement services sector and its clients to government, the media and other organisations, and
- meeting with and providing advice to ministers, their advisors and their departments.

### PURSUE AN EVIDENCE BASE BY:

- advocating for and participating in research activities, funding, gathering data from settlement services and other sources to inform advocacy such as submissions, reports and research collaborations;
- identifying gaps in knowledge about communities, services, programs and policies, and advocating that these gaps be addressed;
- advocating for an expansion of the research activities, funding, and data-collection processes relating to humanitarian entrants specifically and CALD Australians generally, and
- develop a SCOA members' database on services and best practice that members can access.

### PROVIDE LEADERSHIP BY:

- providing strong, persuasive, proactive and evidence-based advocacy on behalf of the settlement sector;
- consulting with, and accurately reflecting, the interests of the settlement sector and, consequently, its clients, and
- developing and promoting best practice, quality assurance and service standards in the settlement sector.

### IMPROVE GOVERNANCE BY:

- maintaining a current Constitution to reflect SCOA's goals, vision and objectives;
- modeling accountability, transparency and ethical conduct to both the sector and to its clients, and
- pursuing continuous evaluation processes.

# ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES AND THE STRATEGIC PLAN

## SCOA will achieve its objectives through:

- effective representation | advocacy
- engagement
- consultation
- communication – including through web technology and media engagement
- research
- policy development
- developing National Settlement Standards which will provide an effective benchmark for best practice in settlement service delivery, and a framework for quality assurance
- preparing and disseminating submissions and position papers
- partnerships
- participation
- priority-setting
- stakeholder management
- sectoral capacity development and governance
- political lobbying and expanding influence
- increasing the organisation's funding base and increasing its sustainability

## ACHIEVING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

SCOA will measure success in achieving its Strategic Plan through:

### Consultation and engagement

- the quality and number of consultations with SCOA members;
- the quality and range of responses prepared by SCOA to calls for submission and comment;
- monitoring SCOA members' feedback, and
- maintaining a high quality web space which facilitates communication and information sharing within the sector.

### Representation

- SCOA submissions which articulate clear policy positions on behalf of the settlement sector;
- participating in appropriate meetings and fora representing the settlement sector;
- continuing to publish a high quality newsletter addressing sector issues and highlighting examples of best practice in settlement service delivery, and
- promoting best practice examples and good news stories within the sector and media.

### Evidence base

- SCOA and members participation in research in the settlement sector;
- facilitating development of a national settlement data set, and
- development of web-based examples of best practice case studies and resources for members.

### Leadership

- the quality and range of advocacy that SCOA provides on behalf of the settlement sector;
- collaboratively developing best practice and service standards for the settlement sector, and
- expansion in the quality and range of partnerships with SCOA.

### Governance

- an expansion in the membership base of SCOA;
- maintaining a current constitution;
- SCOA maintaining a strong sustainable financial position, and
- executive participation which supports the achievement of SCOA's goals.

### Acknowledgements

SCOA would like to thank the members, the past members of the Executive, who attended the strategic planning day on 9 March 2011 in Canberra; as well as members and stakeholders who participated in the consultation process. They made this document possible. SCOA particularly thanks Dewani Bakkum at the ACT Migrant Resource Centre for hosting the event. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Myriad Consultants, in particular Maria Dimopoulos who facilitated the day's activities. Conrad Gershevitch (Executive Officer) and Ms Dimopoulos subsequently prepared the first draft of this strategic plan.