



# **Survey of Settlement Service Providers**

**2009**

## **Introduction**

In November 2008, the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) first received a grant from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, in recognition of its role as the national peak body for settlement services. The grant enabled SCOA to set up a national office and employ an Executive Officer. As part of the initial setting-up phase, SCOA embarked on a national survey of settlement agencies. The aim of the survey was to gather feedback from service providers regarding the various roles and activities that SCOA might focus on, in its role as a national peak body. The survey listed 11 possible roles and activities.

For each of these roles, those surveyed were asked to rate how important they felt it was for SCOA to provide this. The response options offered ranged from “not at all important” to “extremely important”. The survey also included a section for “any other comments”. A copy of the survey is attached (see Appendix 1).

The survey was sent to all SCOA member organisations, and was emailed to every organisation in Australia receiving funding from the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) during 2008/9. It was also provided to those attending the SCOA national conference in Canberra in May 2009.

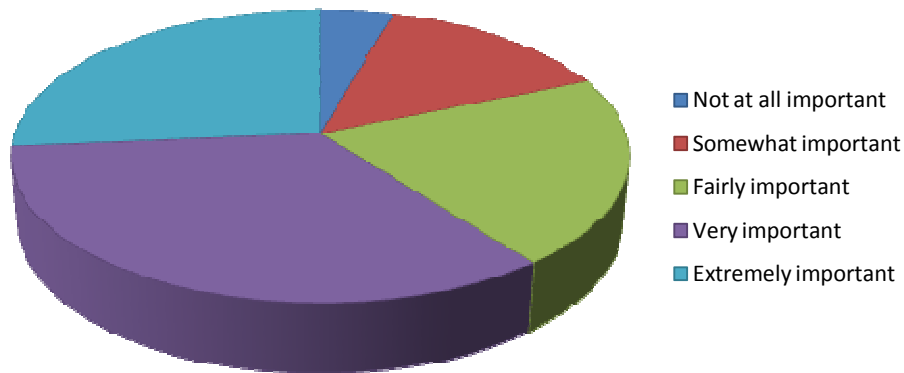
A total of 95 responses were received, representing a broad range of service providers from both large and small settlement organisations, in every state and territory in Australia.

## **Survey Findings**

Below is a summary of the responses to the survey questions. A pie chart is provided for each of the questions asked in the survey, and shows the proportion of respondents who ranked that particular role or activity according to the options given.

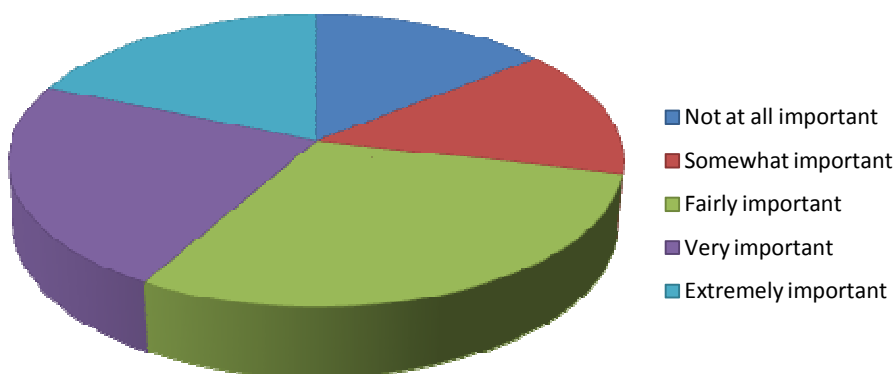
Following the summary for each question, a table is provided that shows the order of importance given to each role or activity.

## Developing and Providing Resources



91 people responded to this question. Of these, 60 % of respondents see this as either “very important” or “extremely important” role for SCOA. Alternatively, 19% believe that this is “not at all important” or “somewhat important”.

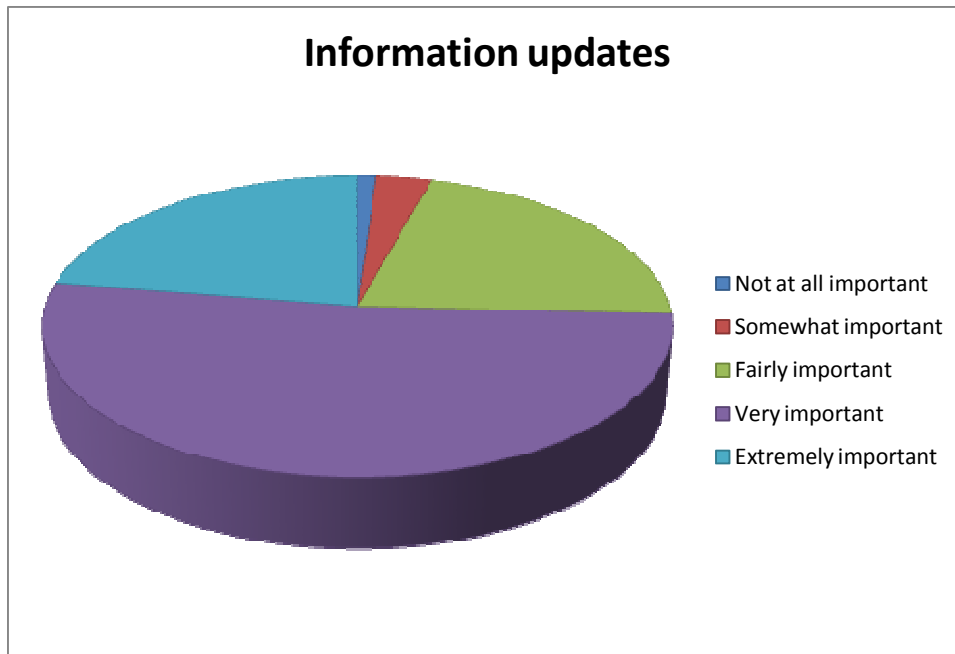
## Practical support



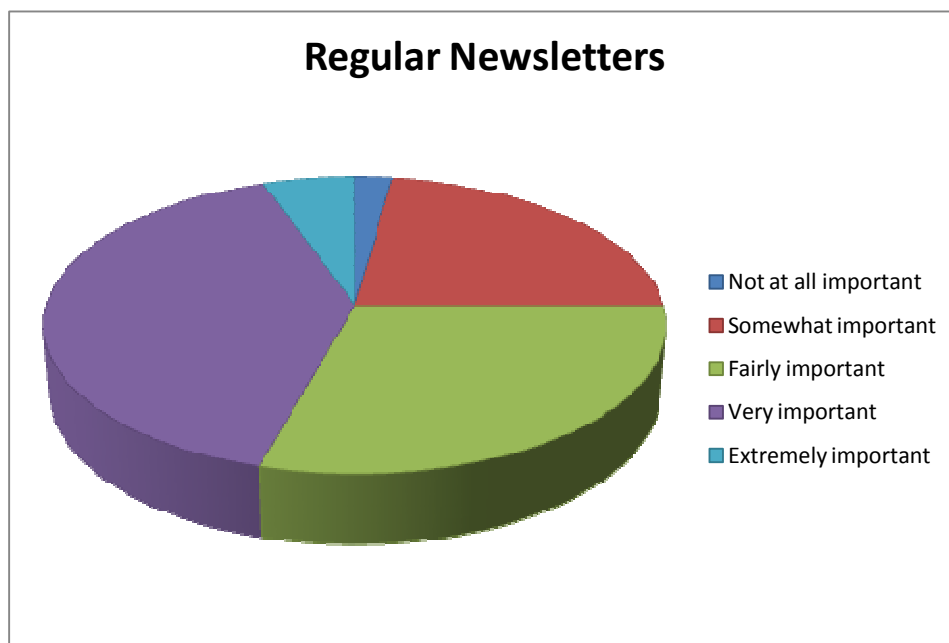
The issue of practical support had the most divergent views amongst the survey respondents, with 13 people seeing this as “not at all important”, and 17 viewing it as “extremely important”.

Of the 91 people who responded to this question, 42 % stated that providing practical support was a “very important” or “extremely important” role for SCOA. 29 % rated this as

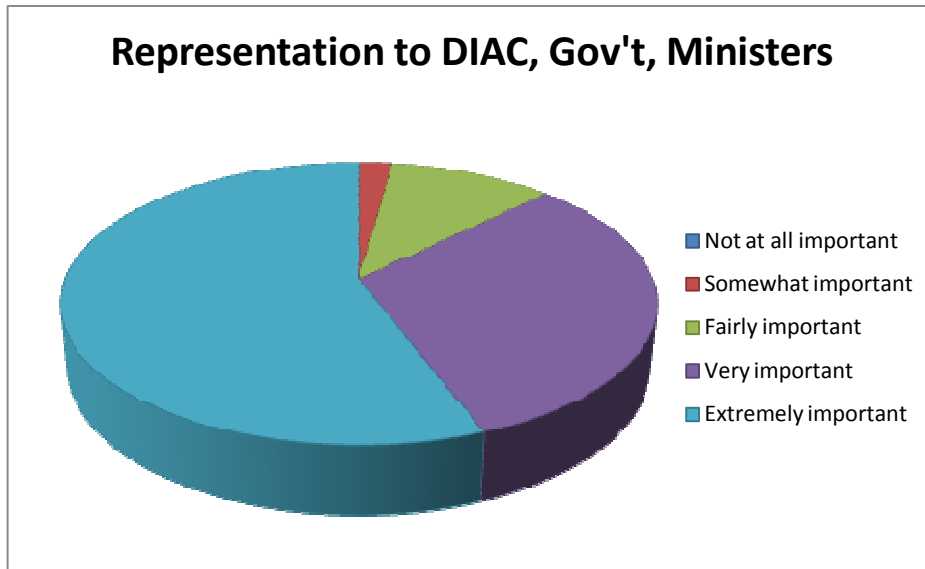
“not at all important” or “somewhat important”. Of all the potential roles for SCOA, this was seen as the least important by the respondents overall.



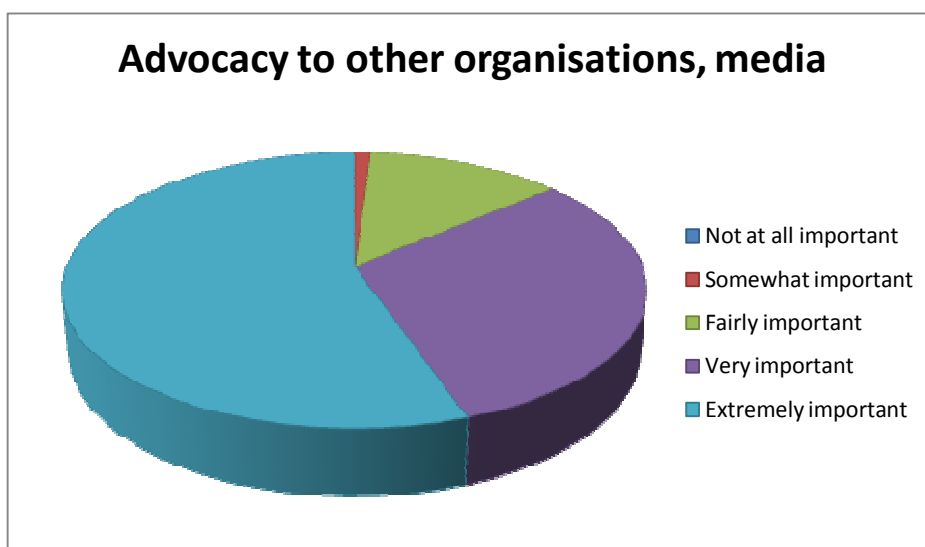
Providing information updates is seen as important role for SCOA by settlement service agencies. Of the 93 people who answered this question, 74 % rated this as “very important” or “extremely important”. Similarly, only 4% of those who responded rated this as “not at all important” or “somewhat important”.



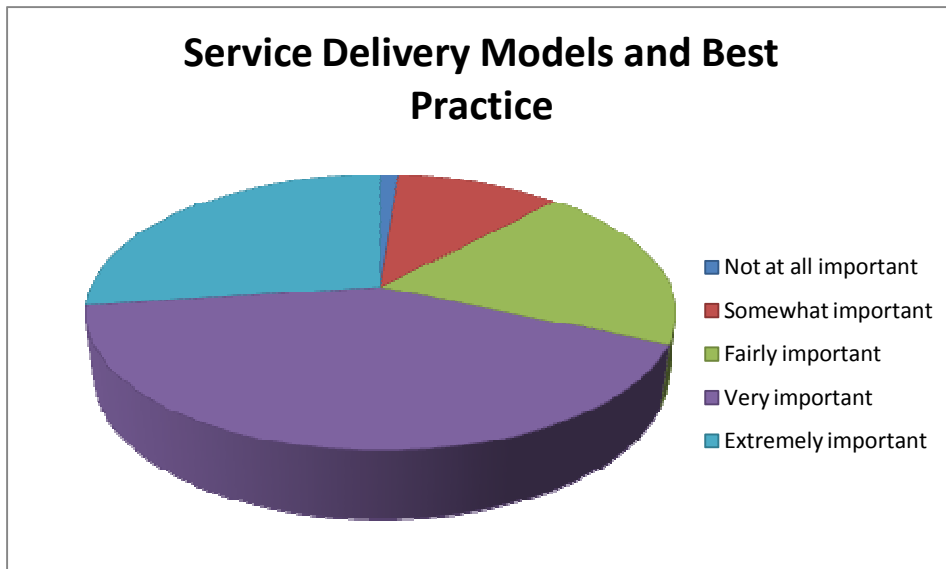
Providing regular newsletters was another role that met with quite a divergent response. Of the 92 responses, only 5 % rated regular newsletters as “extremely important, which was by far the lowest response for any of the areas of work discussed in the survey. Similarly, 46 % rated this as “very important or “extremely important”, while 25% rated regular newsletters as “not at all important” or “somewhat important”.



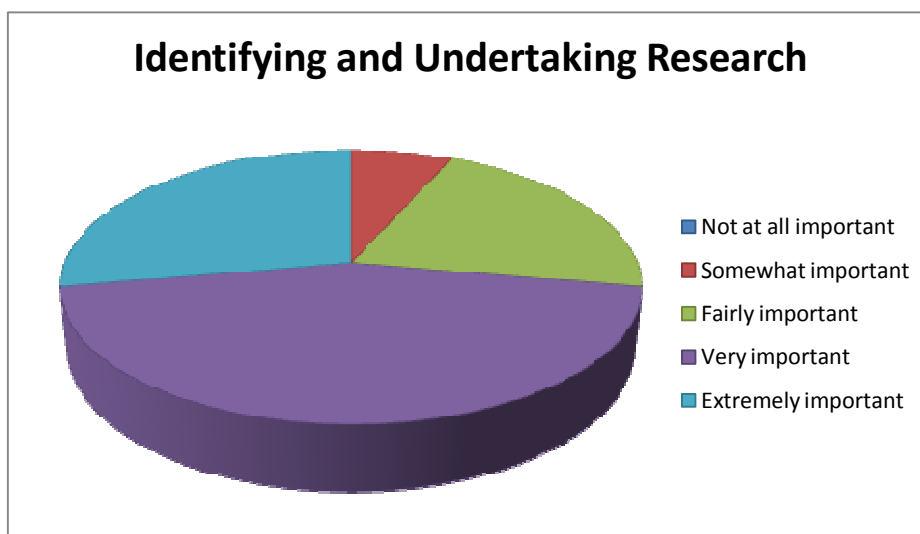
Representation to DIAC, other Government Departments and Ministers was seen as the most important role for SCOA to play. This question received 95 responses, which was the highest response rate for the 11 questions asked. 56% of respondents saw this as “extremely important”, and 87% saw this as either “very important” or “extremely important”. In addition, no-one saw this role as “not at all important”, and only 2% saw this as only “somewhat important”.



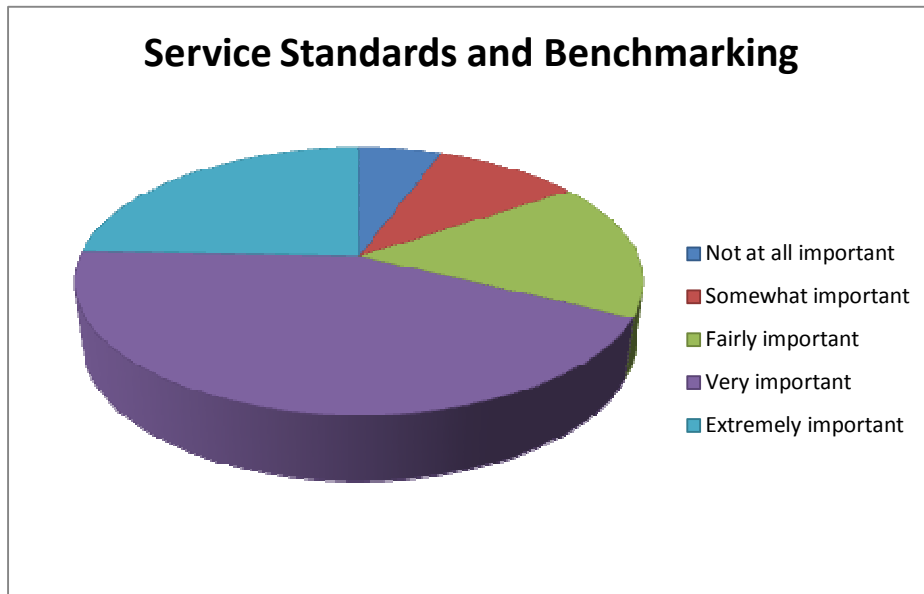
Advocating for settlement issues with other organisations and the media was also seen as an important role for SCOA by most respondents. Of the 94 people who responded, 55 % saw this as an “extremely important” role, and 86 % rated this as “very important” or “extremely important”. No-one rated this role as “not at all important”, and only 1 % rated it as “somewhat important”.



Providing settlement service providers with service delivery models and examples of best practice was rated fairly highly. 92 people responded to this question. Of those, 68 % rated this as “very important” or “extremely important”. Alternatively, 12 % of respondents viewed this as “not at all important” or “somewhat important”.



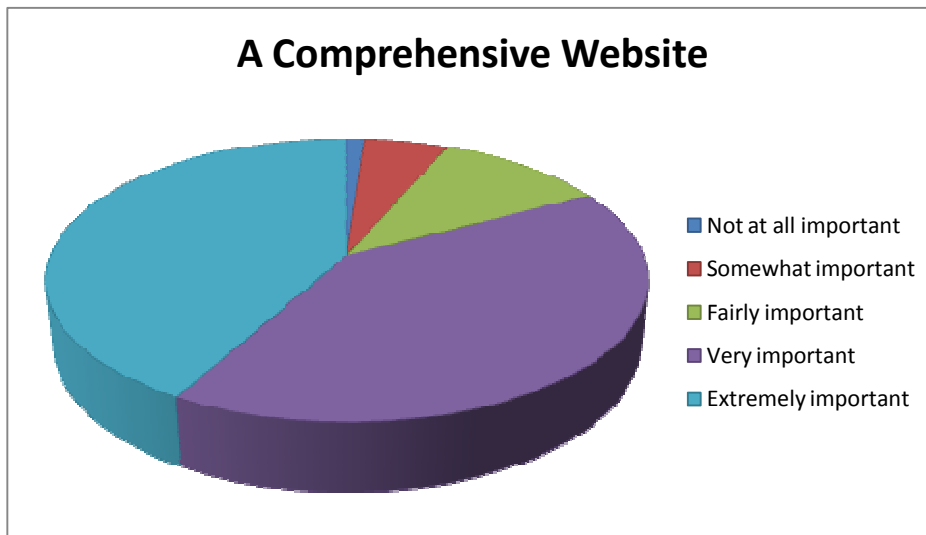
Identifying and undertaking research was also rated as an important role by a significant number of survey respondents. Of the 90 people who answered this question, 72 % rated it as a “very important” or “extremely important” role for SCOA. No-one rated research as “not at all important” for SCOA, and 7% rated it as “somewhat important”.



Setting service standards and providing benchmarking for settlement services was also seen as an important role for SCOA. 68% of those surveyed saw this as an “extremely important” or “very important” role for SCOA. Alternatively, 14% of those who responded felt that this was “not at all important” or only “somewhat important” as a role for SCOA.



Providing training and resources around governance was another issue which had a fairly divergent response amongst the organisations surveyed. Of the 92 people who responded, 48 % saw this as a “very important” or “extremely important” role for SCOA. On the other hand, 28 % saw this as “not at all important”, or only “somewhat important”. This divergence may well be explained by the considerable difference in size and scope of settlement service providers, with large, well established organisations perhaps seeing this as less important than new and/or small organisations.



Developing a comprehensive website containing documents, resources and links to other websites was another issue that was rated very highly. Of the 93 responses, 83 % rated this as either “very important” or “extremely important”. In contrast, only 6 % of respondents rated a website as “not at all important” or only “somewhat important”

### Summarising the Survey Responses

Below is a summary of the roles and activities that SCOA might potentially address, in order of their order of importance. This has been identified by giving each rating a score out of 10 as follows:

Rating	Score / 10
Not at all important	0
Somewhat important	2.5
Fairly important	5
Very important	7.5
Extremely important	10

Using this rating system, the roles and activities ranked in order of importance according to the survey responses are:

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Role / Activity</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>1</b>	Representation to DIAC, other departments, Government Ministers etc	810
<b>2</b>	Advocating on settlement issues to other organisations, the media etc	800
<b>3</b>	A comprehensive website with links to documents, other websites, resources etc	737.5
<b>4</b>	Information updates	677.5
<b>5</b>	Undertaking and identifying research and studies	660
<b>6</b>	Service delivery models and examples of best practice	650
<b>7</b>	Service standards and benchmarking	610
<b>8</b>	Developing and providing resources	600
<b>9</b>	Governance training and resources	535
<b>10</b>	Regular newsletters	515
<b>11</b>	Practical support	495

### **Other Comments and Recommendations**

In addition to ranking the importance of the roles and activities outlined above, the survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments. These comments have been summarised below:

- “Emphasis on work of volunteers and volunteer groups”
- “We would like SCOA to provide us:
  - 1) Policy Development & Materials
  - 2) Up to date data on key settlement and migration issues
  - 3) Media releases
  - 4) Examples of “Best Practice” etc
- “Placement of African Children with foster carers of non-African background”
- “African Foster carers needs to be trained urgently”

- “SCOA should include small CALD organization with state regional planning committees in order to get grass roots focused evidence. At the moment they seem to be eliminated from the committee”
- “We are also happy to support SCOA regarding any issues concerning the African communities ”
- “Please note that this is what the service does currently until June 30th .We have lost quite a proportion of our funding and our services will be adjusted accordantly ”
- “We would appreciate being part of an organization that can act as a peak body for the settlement issues however are aware that due to our remote location, it may be difficult for an organization to provide certain service to us. One of our major concerns relates to the lack of settlement services provided to visa 457 holders. In the Pilbara this is of grave concern as there is a lack of services anyway, and of course under the SGP funding, we are not allowed to service this group of clients. We have made deputations to the minister concerning this-and will continue to do so”
- “This organisation is funded by the settlement grants program, the challenges we face is that we have and a significant influx of refugee’s settlings in the area, but we don’t have a local IHSS service. The closest service that offers case work to refugee entrants is located 170 km away. This impacts on the initial support that individuals and families require when first arriving in Australia .Many of the new arrivals are unaware of who their IHSS case workers are ,therefore ,this is increasing the work load of SGP services as individuals are coming to this organization for initial assistance .DIAC in our region has a very clinical, detached approach to managing SGP resulting in increasing barriers for staff to support clients.SGP providers feel completely unsupported by them.”
- “SCOA to represent the needs and issues of settlement in partnership and consultation with existing SGP workers and networks, especially when organisations lose funding and the impact it has on the clients, as there is no or limited services to refer to clients to.”
- Major issues for small organisations like ours where we would need support would be:
  - “To stay abreast of developments sector wide, raise issues to do with the DIAC processes particularly issues around their processes of Acquittals, workplan negotiations. Whilst the small organisations are most effective in reaching single population target groups like Farsi speakers for ICO, there is no acknowledgement that often all administration takes place through volunteer committee members, and there is no streamlining of processes to make this easier. ”
  - “Provision of practical support to SGP project workers in navigating the Dept requirements, supervision and support.”
  - “It would be great if an arrangement could be developed where SCOA could run an External Staff Supervision and support program with contractors/staff who are also familiar with settlement work requirement and organisation like ours could buy into(contribute to) and have access to monthly/bimonthly S&S for their staff. It is really hard to source this individually because not many people out there are aware of DIAC related work requirements and the organisation does not have the buying

power. This is important because often the volunteer committees do not have the staff supervision expertise to do this function appropriately.”

- “Another area would be quality assurance system/standard tailored to SGP work which small/big organisations could tap into.”
- “SGP Tailored training (including Orientation) for management committees which could be run in-house after hours for volunteer committees.2 sessions to assist new Committee members become familiar with responsibilities.”
- “We are members of at least 8 other peak associations (4 national and 4 states) and while each has an important function they also provide a number of the services listed and it is important that SCOA links with and is consistent with these rather than duplicates these. For example:
  - Service Standard and Benchmarking-We currently have to respond to 3 other quality services standards and benchmarking frameworks including external auditing processes. It is not necessary to develop new ones. It would be better to work with other peaks to support the development of a set of core standards that are consistent across human services organizations, potentially with additional 1 or 2 standards of services specialising in each area.
  - Governance Resources-Again many of these have been developed by other peak associations and it would be better to ensure that these are available to SCOA members rather than duplicate could be made available on the website.
  - SCOA could be perhaps concentrate its resources on what it can do that is not done elsewhere eg advocate on settlement issues, provide representation to DIAC and other department in relation to settlement issues and to provide information and resources in relation to settlement. SCOA does however need to ensure that it has a rigorous and open process for ensuring that it is able to fairly represent the views of its members.
- “Small ethno-specific settlement service should be offer an opportunity to be part of state Planning committees so that they can represent issues from the grass roots.”
- “We do our own work in advocacy, involving our target group in that process”
- “As settlement services workers we work with the Settlement Services Coalition forum (NSW) and together we do advocacy on settlement issues to other organization eg community relation etc. Most SGP workers are members of this forum .Meetings are quarterly and we rotate locations. We have representation at DIAC, DOCS and Department of housing and CRC”.
- “SCOA needs to undertake the activities that can best be done by a nation-wide co-ordinating body”
- “SCOA should have lower membership fees. Not many organization can afford to pay it”
- “Advocacy on the provision of settlement services for skilled migrant coming from non-English countries because even though the language is not a huge issue, Australia culture and service are not familiar for the new arrivals under skilled migrant category. This

situation leads to longer time taken to be included in the Australian society (e.g. a lack of understanding about how to get a job in Australia) if you want further information about these then contact”

The questionnaire responses, and additional comments provided by those who took part in the survey, are now being considered by SCOA’s Executive Committee, and will help to inform the activities undertaken by SCOA in the future.

Andrew Cummings  
Executive Officer  
August 2009

## What do you want from SCOA?

Please read through the following areas of work that SCOA may be able to provide to its members. For each one, place an **X** in the appropriate column, depending on how important that type of support is to your organisation:

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Fairly important	Very important	Extremely important
Developing and providing resources					
Practical support					
Information updates					
Regular newsletters					
Representation to DIAC, other departments, government ministers etc on key issues					
Advocating on settlement issues to other organisations, the media etc					
Service Delivery Models and examples of Best Practice					
Undertaking and identifying Research and Studies					
Service Standards and Benchmarking					
Governance training / resources					
A comprehensive website with links to documents, other websites, resources etc					

**Any other comments:**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please email to [andrew@scoa.org.au](mailto:andrew@scoa.org.au) by **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009**