

ContentsSTARTTS ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017





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About STARTTS

NSW SERVICE FOR THE TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF TORTURE AND TRAUMA SURVIVORS

STARTTS, the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, helps people from refugee backgrounds deal with their past experiences and build a new life in Australia.

STARTTS provides expert services to help people recover from torture and refugee trauma, including counselling, group therapy, programs for children and young people, community development activities and physiotherapy.

In 2016-2017 STARTTS provided clinical interventions and community development to close to 7,000 individuals and families, and worked with refugee communities to encourage self-support and adaptation to their new environment.

STARTTS' clients are people living in NSW who came to Australia as refugees or asylum seekers, or who have a refugee-like background. Some clients have suffered and survived torture.

We also work with other organisations and individuals to help them work more effectively with people from refugee backgrounds. Opened in 1988, STARTTS is one of Australia's leading organisations for the treatment of torture and refugee trauma survivors.

Our Mission

To develop and implement ways to facilitate the healing process of survivors of torture and refugee trauma and to assist and resource individuals and organisations who work with them to provide appropriate, effective and culturally sensitive services.

Since 1988 STARTTS
has assisted 57,097
people from 163 countries
heal the scars of torture
and refugee trauma



Chairman's Report

A/PROF. ROGER GURR



2016-17 has truly been a very challenging year, as plans to provide 12,000 additional places in the refugee program in connection with the refugee crisis in Syria and Iraq became a reality. In this context, STARTTS staff were highly involved and made a valuable contribution in all steps of the planning process at Commonwealth and State levels, to ensure the success of the program.

While the additional resources were extremely welcome and badly needed to meet the service provision challenge we faced in NSW, the increased funding associated with the Iraqi and Syrian intake meant that lots of changes in terms of service staffing, management structure and infrastructure were needed within a very short period of time.

As a board, we are very proud indeed about the way the STARTTS leadership team, and the organisation as a whole, has been able to rise to these challenges, without allowing its ongoing projects and commitments to be negatively affected.

We are also very proud to have Jorge Aroche elected as President of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture victims (IRCT),

at its latest general assembly in Mexico in December 2016. The Board fully supports his appointment as a very tangible way of supporting the global movement and the millions of victims of torture around the world who are not yet able to benefit from services like STARTTS. With the reduction in international funding by governments for torture services, the skills and experience Jorge brings to the task will lead to improved effectiveness of the international network.

This is one of the many ways in which STARTTS is making a substantial contribution in the global struggle to improve the life of peoples who have survived torture. In collaboration with several universities, STARTTS is significantly contributing to the growing body of knowledge derived from research and innovation in clinical and psychosocial interventions. We are proactively willing to share these insights with our colleagues both in Australia and overseas.

Now more than ever, the investments by governments and donors in STARTTS and its service achievements, can be seen to have created a world leader in the rehabilitation of refugees traumatized by torture and other human rights violations. This is an incredibly important asset in a world that continues to produce refugees at a frightening rate, and where the skills needed to assist people to regain a life after torture are sadly in much more demand than we would wish.



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Chief Executive Officer

MR JORGE AROCHE



2016-17 has been an incredibly busy year. It has also been a year of enormous achievements for the organization, and more importantly, for the work STARTTS does in ensuring that torture and the horrors of the refugee experience do not become a lifelong sentence for survivors. STARTTS assisted 6,866 clients in 2016-2017 in the context of the additional 12,000 places made available in the refugee and humanitarian program to address the refugee crisis in Syria and Iraq. Our work in 2016-17 took the number of people STARTTS has assisted since 1988 to 57,097 persons from 163 countries.

This achievement was made possible by increased funding allocated by the Commonwealth and the NSW governments, as part of a coordinated approach in NSW under the leadership of Professor Peter Shergold, to address the additional demands on the service associated with the Iraqi and Syrian intake that settled largely in NSW. To address these demands STARTTS increased its staff by 66 positions and opened a new office in Fairfield, the LGA in NSW that received the highest number of refugees in 2016-17.

This pattern also included a significant Yazidi resettlement in Wagga Wagga and Coffs Harbour, which meant that STARTTS needed to not only develop links and learn how to best assist this new community, but also bolster its resources in these two locations with very little lead time.

Other challenges turned into achievements associated with the additional intake were as follows:

- Development of a state of the art induction program to ensure the 66 new staff were able to start assisting clients as soon as possible
- Expanded school liaison program and team
- Expanded Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) program and team
- Expanded research program and team

Perhaps one of STARTTS' biggest achievements in this period, however, was that we were able to deal with these additional demands without dropping any items of the quite ambitious program planned for this year. Some of these achievements are as follows:

- Coordinated and hosted the 1st Australia and New Zealand Refugee Trauma Recovery in Resettlement Conference, 29-31 March 2017, which attracted around 650 attendees.
- Organized a seminar featuring renowned researcher-practitioner and author in the trauma field, Dr Bessel van der Kolk, in November 2016.
- Attended the IRCT Conference Mexico and General Assembly, 5-7 December 2016, where STARTTS presented several papers and where I was privileged to be elected President of the IRCT movement for a period of three years.
- Completed the implementation of STARTTS' new client information and client management system database, CAREHR.
- Systematized the implementation of psychometric assessment tools across the agency utilizing the Multi-CASI platform and commenced working on the development of a new and enhanced platform; CAMLAP.

 Expanded the Neurofeedback team, not just in terms of positions, but also in terms of expanded and improved tools and techniques. Most exciting, our research study indicated that neurofeedback therapy may indeed be able to improve brain regulation and make a profound difference to the quality of life and regulation of symptoms for survivors of torture and trauma. Initial results of this study were published in the Australasian Psychiatry Journal, and another manuscript has been submitted for peer review. Positive results of this study have encouraged us to undertake a randomised control trial in collaboration with the University of Sydney and Westmead Institute for Medical Research. This research study will examine the efficacy and mechanisms of change of neurofeedback for traumatised adult refugees.

The list of achievements for 2016-17 is very long, and while many more are listed in the body of this report, inevitably many have been left out. As always, however, STARTTS' main achievement remains the lives of refugees we have been able to contribute to, and the enormous contribution to Australian society this represents. 2016-17 could be said to have stretched STARTTS' staff and all those involved in refugee resettlement in many ways, but also prompted us all to excel and develop in ways that will leave a lasting legacy and will result in better settlement, health, educational and economic outcomes for future generations of refugees resettling in NSW. I am enormously proud of the work of our staff in making these achievements possible, and incredibly grateful to our board and our many government, community and fellow NGO stakeholders for their support in this most challenging year.

Board Of Directors

STARTTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016/2017

A/Prof. Roger Gurr (Chair)

Ms Ezel Jupiter (Deputy Chair)

Mr Colin Hickling (Treasurer)

Mr Jorge Aroche (CEO and Secretary)

Prof. Abd-Elmasih Malak Ms Anne Harvey

Prof. Derrick Silove

Mr George Lombard

Mr John Richardson

Mr Michael Kakakios

Dates of STARTTS Board of Director Meetings 2016-2017

Executive of the Board of Directors

27 July 2016 26 September 2016 28 November 2016 30 January 2017 27 March 2017 Full Meeting of the Board of Directors

29 August 2016 31 October 2016 27 February 2017 1 May 2017 26 June 2017

Locations

LOCATIONS OF STARTS OFFICES

STARTTS Head office

152-168 The Horsley Drive Carramar NSW 2163

Phone: 02 97941900

Email: stts-startts@health.nsw.gov.au

Web: startts.org.au

Major locations from which STARTTS provides services

Carramar (main office)

Fairfield Auburn

Liverpool

Blacktown Newcastle

Coffs Harbour

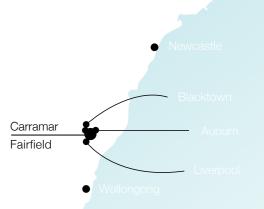
Wagga Wagga

Wollongong

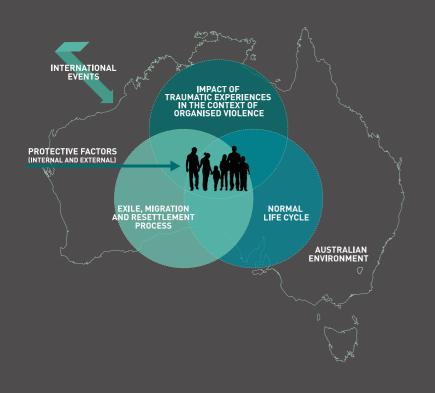
STARTTS also provides outreach services in a range of locations across the Sydney metropolitan area and regional NSW. Please contact us for outreach locations.

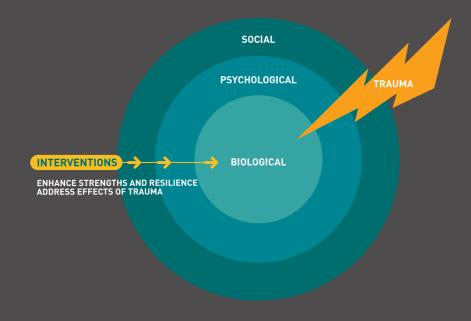
Wagga Wagga

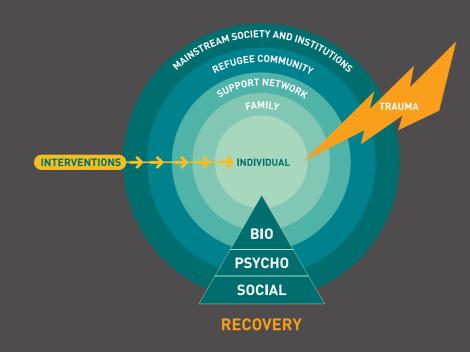
Coffs Harbour



STARTTS Service Provision Model







FRAMEWORK 1: THE COMPLEX INTERACTION

STARTTS provides services to torture and trauma survivors using a model that recognises the socio-political, cultural and human rights context of the traumatic events that people have experienced. The model also acknowledges the complex interaction between the effects of these traumatic experiences and subsequent stresses associated with the migration and settlement processes.

FRAMEWORK 2: BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL

The model recognises the impact of trauma at biological, psychological and interpersonal and social levels, and is informed by scientific developments in the neuroscience of trauma and the growing body of evidence on interventions and treatments for traumatic stress related problems and disorders.

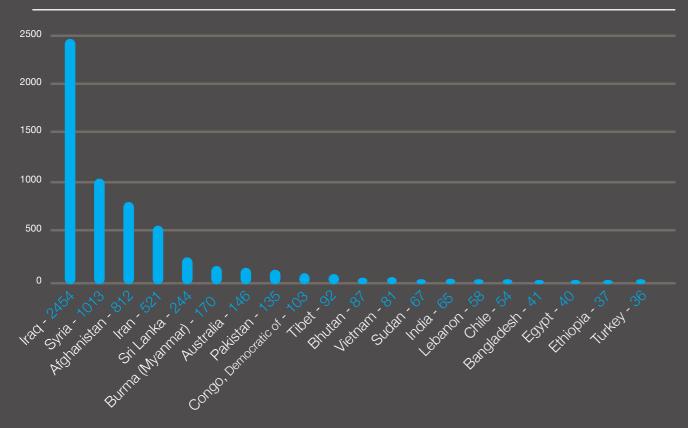
FRAMEWORK 3: SYSTEMIC APPROACH

This translates into a Systemic Bio-Psycho-Social approach to service provision that uses early intervention, secondary prevention and capacity building strategies alongside clinical interventions at individual, family and group levels. STARTTS emphasises a client centred approach that recognises the importance of language, cultural, religious and socio-political issues to overcome access barriers and increase the effectiveness of both community development and clinical interventions.

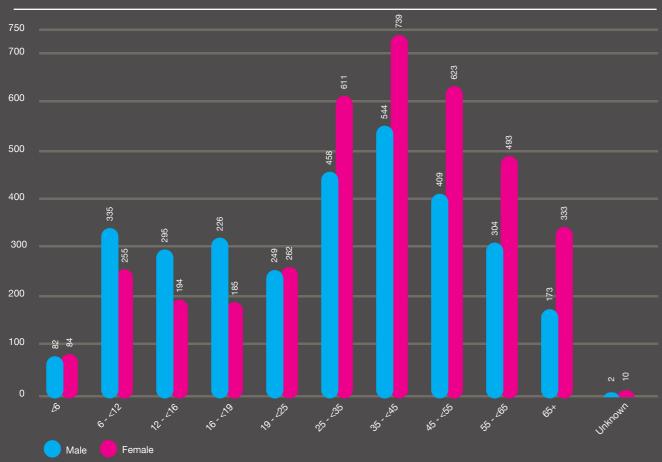
Based on the above philosophy, the services provided by STARTTS are broad, and include assessment, counselling, psychiatric assessment and interventions, family therapy, group interventions, support groups, youth programs, child counselling, and various strategies to increase the capacity of support networks and refugee communities.

STARTTS' Clients

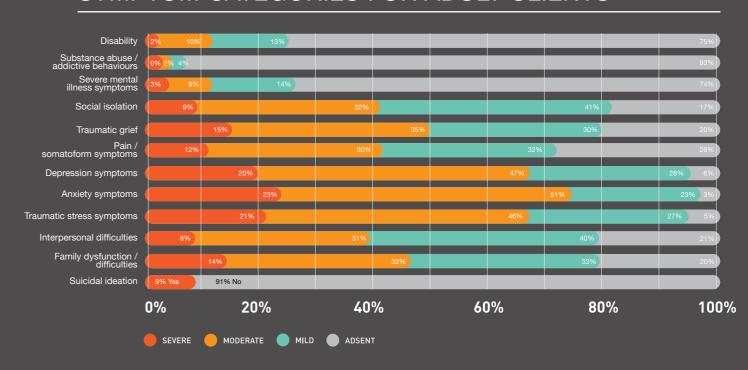
STARTTS ASSISTED 6866 CLIENTS IN 2016-2017



CLIENTS BY AGE AND GENDER



SYMPTOM CATEGORIES FOR ADULT CLIENTS



INCREASING NUMBERS OF SCHOOL AGED CHILD AND ADOLESCENT CLIENTS: 2011-2017



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COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Torture and refugee trauma and the stressors of resettlement and integrating into a new culture and society can cause great emotional pain and fear, and can have serious negative impacts on people's health and everyday life. At the most basic levels – the individual and family – STARTTS counsellors work face-to-face with people who have survived significant trauma, helping them to harness their own resources to heal and lead more healthy and productive lives.

STARTTS' counsellors are experienced professionals who work from a client-centred perspective, using a range of interventions and approaches so that clients are assisted to manage and overcome their trauma in ways that best suit them.

"

It was hard to get out from a dark part of my unhappiness and constant nightmares, but you helped me to see life from different perspective and opened my hopes.

Highlights of 2016/2017

A variety of clinical approaches and modalities were implemented within both individual and group treatment settings; aiming to address clients' symptoms and increase their functionality. It was important this year where STARTTS saw an increased number of clients from Syria and Iraq, particularly in the Liverpool and Fairfield areas. This led to STARTTS opening a new office in Fairfield with 3 counselling teams. Overall we employed a number of new counsellors - generalist, family, group, early childhood, and child and adolescent

counsellors. We also diversified and extended our services to reach out to clients across the life span. This is illustrated by the enhancement of services provided to early childhood, and children and adolescents. STARTTS has continued to utilise a range of traditional and innovative interventions and have incorporated iLs, an Integrative Listening System, that integrates music, movement and language exercises to improve brain functioning in our clients. In keeping with the cultural preferences and sensitivities of the collectivistic

cultures of our clients, clinical groups have been on the increase. The inclusion of a nutritionist, behavioural activation officers and body focussed therapists in different locations has enabled us to offer a service in synch with our biopsychosocial approach. STARTTS continued to provide support to asylum seekers, particularly from Afghanistan, Iran and Sri Lanka.



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Although refugee children are resilient, traumatic experiences often have a powerful impact, making them vulnerable and resulting in difficulties adjusting to Australian society. STARTTS offers a range of interventions which address the psychosocial needs of refugee children and youth, and help them to adjust to life in Australia. From clinical therapies such as sand play, music and art therapies, through to group or community approaches such as youth camps, STARTTS services are accessible to all refugee young people and those who work with them. This year saw an increasing need to work with young refugees, and STARTTS enhanced our capacity to respond to this need. We received additional \$2.5m over 4 years to implement the School Liaison

Program (SLP). This was an outcome of the work by Prof. Peter Shergold, the New South Wales (NSW) Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement and the Joint Partnership Working Group. This has led to the STARTTS in Schools initiative - a combined effort by SLP, Youth Team, FICT team and STARTTS Child and Adolescent Counsellors. In 2016-17, STARTTS staff have seen 613 school age clients and delivered 25 training sessions for 1,809 school staff.

"

I noticed I am not moody like before, like I feel happier, I don't get upset about everything and everybody, you know.



The Early Childhood Programme Clinic, STARTTers, continued to provide individual, family-based and group programmes for 0-6 year olds. Working with young children takes advantage of the peak time in brain development. The changes that occurred in their brain development in utero, because of the mother's stress during the pregnancy, can be at least in large part reversed, and new positive experiences of the child with their parent can help to reduce the cycle of stress. Groups held showed

parents the skills they could use to help their child, as well as assisting parents to reflect on their own experiences and look at ways to support the child in developmentally appropriate exploration, as well as enhancing positive attachment experiences.

The Youth Team implemented a long term Sporting Linx Leadership Program in conjunction with Bossley Park High School and CORE Community Services and engaging 20 young men, aged 13 to 17 from a refugee background. The majority were recent arrivals identified as facing a variety of behavioural challenges. The group spent a term learning leadership skills and a term preparing a coaching/game day for a local primary school, officiated and run by the young men themselves. Soccer was used as a vehicle to teach the leadership skills with a focus on teamwork, communication, honour and respect. A leadership camp continued this theme. The culmination led to a successful



COMMUNITY SERVICES

Trauma impacts communities as much as it impacts individuals. When groups of people are exposed to organised violence and terror, the bonds of trust that hold a community together are damaged. Whilst it is important to work on an individual's symptoms of trauma, a vital element of the recovery process is to increase a community's strengths and capacities. Recognising and building on these strengths is an essential element of STARTTS' work assisting communities to overcome trauma, empower themselves and create a better life in Australia. STARTTS' work is based in the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) framework. In 2016-17 this work included Enterprise Facilitation; Families in Cultural Transition (FICT); Mental Health Literacy work with Hazara and African communities; many

social support groups (eg Tamil, Afghan, Hazara, Tibetan, Spanish and Arabic speaking, Assyrian and Mandaean), Communities in Cultural Transition (CiCT); art and cultural development projects such as Musical Odyssey, and other initiatives developed and owned by refugee communities themselves.

Highlights of 2016/2017

This year saw an increase in Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) funding enabling the creation of a FICT Team. The Team recruited and trained 30 new Arabic speaking facilitators (Sydney), 6 new Afghan facilitators (Newcastle) and 7 Bhutanese and Congolese facilitators (Riverina). The Liveable Communities project enabled the recruitment and training of 27 new Older People in Cultural Transition (OPICT) facilitators in regional NSW followed by 11 OPICT groups. In total, the team supported 60 FICT

groups and 22 OPICT groups.
Of the 82 groups, 39 were held in regional areas and 43 in the Sydney metropolitan area. Development of a new FICT module on parenting and attachment commenced during this period. A new resource, We can do this, containing self-care activities to promote mental health and wellbeing was trialled in FICT groups and is awaiting publication.



CLINICAL DEVELOPMENTS, INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

It is an exciting time to be working in the refugee trauma field. Our understanding of the brain, the impact of trauma, and the role of attachment is increasing and making possible a number of opportunities to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our services. STARTTS has been at the forefront amongst torture and refugee trauma services in its commitment to the development and evaluation of approaches that utilise advances in neuroscience and information technology to produce better client outcomes. We have made significant investments in developing or enhancing service infrastructure that will enable us to better evaluate client outcomes achieved through/in accordance with our biopsychosocial model. This includes better evaluation tools and a state of the art client information system and database, and better links with academic partners to support research in areas of immediate application to our practice and to our clients.

Highlights of 2016/2017

Client Information System and Database

A new state of the art client information system and database integrated with our computer assisted assessment tools (see next section) was successfully rolled out to all STARTTS locations. The system allows the incorporation of the Treatment and Research Integrated Model (TRIM). Once the content of TRIM is finalised, STARTTS will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions by comparing interventions with client demographics and symptomatology. The implementation of this system has been a great success and has improved our management of the client waiting list and overall service efficiency.

Computer Assisted Clinical Assessment

Language has been one of the most intractable barriers in utilising psychometric self-report tools. Over the last few years STARTTS has been trialling a computer based assessment platform called MultiCASI (Multilingual Computer Assisted Self Interview) to deliver these tools to clients in their own language in both written and audio form. STARTTS is also partnering with centres in Western Australia, New Zealand and Denmark to conduct a procedural validation study on the validity of computer mediated assessment versus pen and paper questionnaires. A preliminary analysis found very high agreement between the two methodologies, with most clients finding computer-based assessment equally or more acceptable than pen and paper.



TRAINING, EDUCATION AND INFLUENCE

The experiences of people who have suffered persecution, torture, war and other types of human rights violations are a distant reality for most people living in Australia. It is vital for services working with them to understand the impacts, and how to work in a refugee trauma informed and culturally competent way.

It was a hugely challenging and rewarding year for our training services program. In addition to our suite of in-house trainings, professional development calendar workshops, clinical master classes and seminars; STARTTS organised a very successful conference outlined in the highlights below.

STARTTS made significant contributions to the torture, trauma and health fields through conferences and presentations, both across Australia and internationally, including at the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) conference in Mexico in December 2016.

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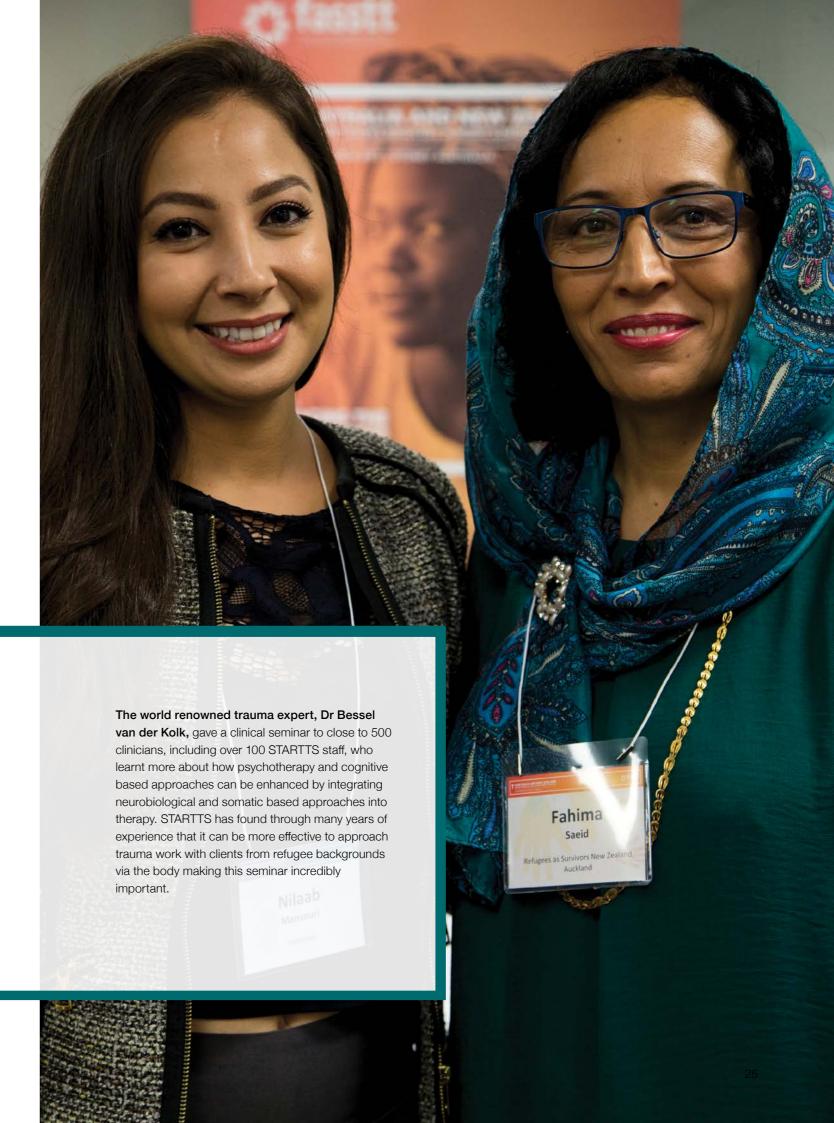
It was a great opportunity to broaden and deepen our knowledge in this field of practice; it was very inspiring to meet so many people who are dedicated to the work.



The 1st Australia and New Zealand Refugee Trauma Recovery in Resettlement Conference

On behalf of FASSTT, STARTTS organised on 29-31 March 2017 in Sydney was successful beyond our wildest dreams. 650 people from Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the world across the health, human rights, education, welfare and policy sectors came together to connect, share and learn. Many of the conference keynotes, paper presentations, posters and panel discussions were published on the conference website (www. refugeetraumaconf.org.au) and in the Psychevisual online video journal, meaning anyone around the world can keep benefitting from this incredible conference.

The induction of over 60 new staff into the service in response to the increased intake of Syrians and Iraqis was a challenge that we rose to through an organised induction program that started every 3 weeks bringing together online lectures and quizzes, face-to-face briefings, clinical role plays and practical workshops. The program greatly helped our new staff adapt their skills and experience to STARTTS' service provision model and the context of refugee trauma and resettlement. The immersive 45 minute clinical role play with a real interpreter and our bilingual Clinician Trainer acting as the client has been particularly praised by our new counsellors as being highly beneficial.



RURAL AND REGIONAL

While most people from refugee backgrounds settle in metropolitan Sydney, the number of people arriving in rural and regional areas has been steadily increasing. STARTTS has responded to their needs by continuing to expand and provide more comprehensive services in regional areas across NSW. Regional offices work from the same model and provide the same counselling and community development services as the Sydney offices, but they also adapt to the unique circumstances of their location and respond creatively to the challenges this presents. With permanent staff now stationed in all of our regional offices, STARTTS is now an important part of the fabric of services for people from refugee backgrounds across NSW.

"

I come every week to see you because I feel happy after I see you... medicines don't work..but relaxation exercise you taught me helps me sleep in the night when I wake from nightmares... I do it every day

Highlights of 2016/2017

In our **Wollongong** office, STARTTS has been playing an important role in the resettling of people from refugee backgrounds from Syria and Iraq. Counselling referrals have increased markedly and Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) groups have been running on a regular basis. The commencement of the School Liaison Program facilitated an increased presence in primary and secondary schools, and there has been an enthusiastic response to our Capoeira program.

In **Coffs Harbour**, we experienced a sharp increase in counselling referrals due to the arrival of people who are Yazidis from Syria and northern Iraq. Our weekly youth group continues to thrive, with students from various refugee backgrounds participating.

Yazidis have also been settling in **Wagga Wagga**. We now have a greater range of activities in the Riverina as a result of the employment of a Community Development Officer. FICT programs have been an important component of our work in the region, not only in Wagga but also in Albury-Wodonga.

Our **Newcastle** team continues to support a number of our clients in developing their enterprises in regional markets, where their food and craft stalls have been popular and successful. Outreach services have been expanding in response to client settlement, such as in Tamworth and the Central Coast.

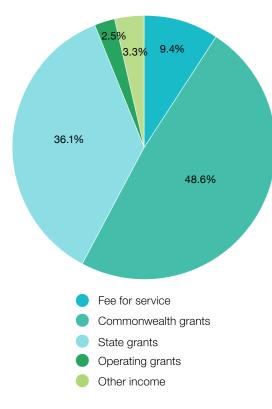


Financial Reports

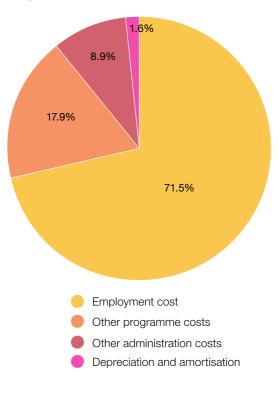
STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2017

Revenue	2017 \$	2016 \$
Fee for service	2,236,202	4,166,832
Commonwealth grants	11,543,892	9,452,542
State grants	8,577,114	4,937,775
Operating grants	595,252	621,177
Other income	792,771	571,021
TOTAL REVENUE	23,745,231	19,749,347
Expenditure		
Expenditure Employment cost	16,953,562	13,357,436
•	16,953,562 4,241,866	13,357,436
Employment cost	· — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —	
Employment cost Other programme costs	4,241,866	2,870,389
Employment cost Other programme costs Other administration costs	4,241,866 2,129,815	2,870,389 2,330,543
Employment cost Other programme costs Other administration costs Depreciation and amortisation	4,241,866 2,129,815 371,882	2,870,389 2,330,543 521,576

Revenue



Expenditure



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH JUNE 2017

Assets	2017 \$	
	_σ φ	2016 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	12,237,116	11,165,816
Trade and other receivables	808,172	843,788
Other assets	250,554	260,218
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	13,295,842	12,269,822
NON CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	2,800,996	2,855,728
Intangible assets	164,600	194,405
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	2,965,596	3,050,133
TOTAL ASSETS Liabilities	16,261,438	15,319,955
Liabilities	16,261,438	15,319,955
Liabilities CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Liabilities CURRENT LIABILITIES Trade and other payables	1,895,458	2,170,356
Liabilities CURRENT LIABILITIES Trade and other payables Employee benefits	1,895,458 2,346,922	2,170,356 1,829,992
Liabilities CURRENT LIABILITIES Trade and other payables Employee benefits Other financial liabilities	1,895,458 2,346,922 1,631,403	2,170,356 1,829,992 558,469
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STARTTS

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