

2009 – 2011 STRATEGIC PLAN

Consolidation with Development: *Towards 50 years of making a difference in Australia*

ISS Australia (ISS) was established as the Australian arm of the international ISS network in 1961, and is thus approaching the significant milestone of 50 years of casework service delivery at the end of the current planning period in 2011. For most of its history, ISS has operated as a small- to medium-sized NGO with a relatively tight focus on the provision of international social work services as a member of the ISS network, and a fairly low public profile.

There can be no doubt that ISS has a record and history of which it can be proud. ISS today has well-developed casework practices, highly skilled and dedicated staff and strong values underpinning the organisation's work. ISS offers a capacity unique in this country as a member of an international network actively engaged in social work practice. As ISS approaches its fiftieth anniversary, these positive qualities must be retained and enhanced, and should form the starting point and initial building blocks for future development.

In financial terms, ISS Australia has fluctuated between modest operating surpluses and deficits, with a trend of operating deficits in recent financial years. Reversing this pattern and boosting the company's financial viability must be a clear priority for the next three years.

The twin themes of ISS's 2009–2011 Strategic Plan are therefore *consolidation* and *development*:

Consolidation: will involve refining and extending existing services, organisational systems and the professional skills and activities of ISS's staff team; we will value our current strengths and devote organisational resources to maintaining and building them further.

Development: will entail taking concrete steps to achieve financial viability, and identifying and pursuing opportunities for new business and services with real determination. In doing so, the next three years for ISS will require some adjustments in organisational culture and thinking.

Central to ISS's identity and working life is its membership of the international ISS network. Though we stand alone in a formal sense and must pursue financial viability and greater organisational capacity on our own initiative, we nevertheless are and will remain a constituent element of a larger whole. Issues arising in the international network therefore concern us and we must play a part in addressing them and devising effective solutions. ISS Australia has arguably "punched above its weight" in the international network to date, and we will continue making an effective contribution that is at least commensurate with our capacity as a branch.

ISS today stands on the cusp of an exciting and potentially highly rewarding period of consolidation, development and growth, reflected in the five strategic objectives outlined in this Plan. The benefits to be derived from achieving these objectives include:

- New services to meet real needs in our community
- A better resourced and thus more effective organisation, and
- Significant professional development opportunities for staff that will enhance capacity

Achieving the Plan's objectives will require hard work, determination, flexibility and vision, but with its track record to date ISS can face the tasks ahead with confidence.

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

ISS Australia will focus on the following five strategic objectives during 2009-2011. Unforeseen circumstances and developments in that period may require revision of the strategic objectives and the specific goals associated with them.

Strategic Objective 1: Achieve financial viability

Specific goals include:

- Identify and pursue opportunities for new business and service provision appropriate to ISS
- Establish and market a suitable fundraising tool to support and secure ISS's future
- Foster an organisational culture of "social entrepreneurialism"

Strategic Objective 2: Build organisational capacity

Specific goals include:

- Ensure adequate staff time and resources are allocated to building organisational capacity
- Develop other organisational resources including memberships, access to information and networks in relevant fields and participation in professional bodies and activities
- Ensure adequate resources are available for professional development so that staff can extend available services and develop new areas of expertise for ISS

Strategic Objective 3: Effectively rebrand, market and network

Specific goals include:

- Review ISS's name, logo and other organisational identifiers to ensure branding reflects and communicates ISS's unique history, values and services
- Effectively market ISS's services and capacity to stakeholders, potential clients and the public, using all available communication channels and both printed and online resources
- Identify and participate in a range of strategic networks relevant to ISS's services and interests

Strategic Objective 4: Extend casework services into new areas

Specific goals include:

- Maintain and enhance the quality and effectiveness of ISS's existing casework services
- Develop capacity in policy development and related areas and pursue opportunities for new business or services in these areas
- Develop capacity in training design and delivery and pursue opportunities for new services

Strategic Objective 5: Effectively contribute to the ISS network

Specific goals include:

- Ensure ISS contributes to efforts in the international network's meetings and other forums
- Develop and implement plans for ISS to take a leadership role in the Asia-Pacific region or Pacific sub-region through mentoring, network development, training and capacity building

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLANNING

On adoption of the broad strategic objectives identified in this 2009-2011 Strategic Plan, further detailed planning will be undertaken at the beginning of each financial year in the planning period on the practical steps required to achieve the objectives and specific goals. An Annual Business Plan will be developed by the Executive Director and staff team for approval by the Board. The Business Plan will clarify the tasks and activities to be undertaken and the staff and Board responsibility, timelines, budget requirements and Key Performance Indicators associated with these.