



**International
Social Service**
AUSTRALIA

Annual Report **2020-21**



Supporting Children • Connecting Families • Across the World



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Child Safety Statement

ISS Australia is absolutely committed to the safety of children. We have in place policies to develop and foster an organisational culture of child safety and provide assurance regarding recognising and reporting any child abuse. All ISS Australia staff, volunteers, students and interns are required to have a working with children check. For further information on our more detailed child safety policy contact ISS Australia.

Acknowledgement of Country

ISS Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and pay our respect to Elders past present and emerging of the land on which our NSW Office stands, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. We also wish to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging of the land on which our Victoria Office stands; the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung (Wurundjeri) peoples of the Kulin Nation. We also offer this respect to the Traditional Owners of the land throughout Australia. ISS Australia acknowledges the importance that connection to land and culture has to identity and the wellbeing of children, families and communities.

Who we are

ISS Australia is a leading agency in Australia providing social work, legal and family mediation services. We are a national not-for-profit service provider and registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

What we do

ISS Australia provides intercountry social work, legal and mediation services supporting children and families separated by international borders. We do this with around 130 International Social Service network partners around the world. Human rights and the best interests of the child guide our work.

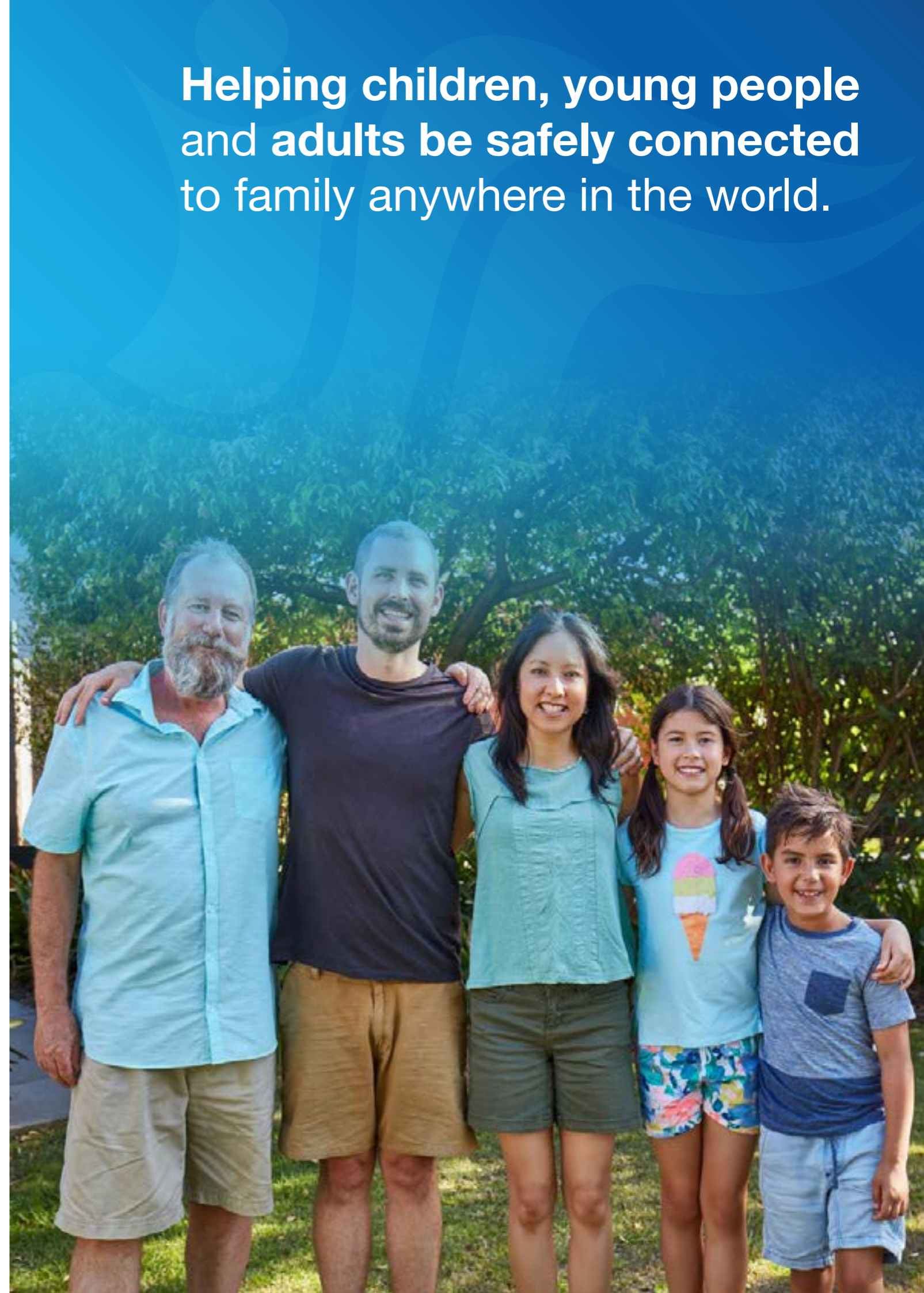
Why we exist

ISS Australia believes children and families should be connected wherever they are in the world. **We believe that everyone needs to belong and know who they are.**

Our services and international focus

- International parental child abduction legal and social work service
- international child welfare and kinship care
- NSW Special Search Service
- international post adoption tracing and reunification
- international family mediation
- family tracing and reunification; and
- other services for children and families separated by international borders

Helping children, young people and adults be safely connected to family anywhere in the world.



President's Report

Dr Fiona McIntosh

It has been a year of reflection and celebration at ISS Australia as we marked our 60th birthday as an Australian incorporated association supporting and connecting children and families across borders. We held formal events in early 2021 for this auspicious anniversary; firstly at Parliament House in Sydney and then at the Melbourne Town Hall.

These events were an opportunity to reflect on how ISS Australia has grown over sixty years into Australia's leading agency providing international social work, legal and family mediation services for children and families across borders. Speakers included the Victorian Minister for Child Protection, Luke Donnellan, MP, our former President and long-time supporter Rupert Myer AO, and our new ISS Australia ambassador Ra Chapman.

Having events in both Sydney and Melbourne also reflected ISS Australia's history as being a tale of two cities, having had a strong presence in both cities throughout our history. There have been many contributors along the sixty-year journey. Rupert Myer AO, during his speech paid particular tribute to his late Aunt Neilma Gantner (1922-2015) who was one of ISS Australia's most enduring, influential and loved personalities for much of our history.

It was therefore fitting that we also welcomed a younger member of the Myer Family, Suzie Wnukowska-Mtonga, on to our Board this year. Suzie has a strong background as a human rights lawyer and presently works for the Clooney Foundation's Justice's Trial Watch program. We were pleased to attract someone of her calibre to the Board and we look forward to her contribution to our organisation over the coming years.

In 2020-21 the Board also completed a significant amount of work in the strategic planning and policy area. We finalised our 2021-23 strategic plan and updated our mission and purpose which will guide our work over the next three years. Our new mission focuses on supporting and assist children and families separated by international borders and our new purpose is to provide the connection and safety that children, young people and families need. Our strategic plan for the next three years is focused on growth and diversification, service excellence, further strengthening our governance and systems, and growing ISS Australia's profile and brand.

This year we said farewell to two long serving Board members, Freia Carlton and Barbara Lane. Freia was Vice-President of the ISS Australia Board and served on the Board for around eight years since 2013. She made a wonderful contribution, including through her outstanding knowledge of family law and mediation and her general professionalism, warmth and her collegiate style.

Barbara served on the Board for 12 years since 2009 and was a dedicated, conscientious and fiscally minded Board member whose experience as a social worker, including for ISS, made her particularly valuable to the Board. Both Freia and Barbara are to be thanked for their outstanding contribution to our organisation and we look forward them remaining part of the ISS Australia family in the years to

come. It gives me great confidence that both Freia and Barb felt this year was a good year to leave as the organisation is in great shape and they both felt confident in the foundations we have built in recent years.

I would like to thank ISS Australia staff for their ongoing commitment and energy to our organisation and its mission in what has been a most challenging time. Peter van Vliet has settled well into the role in his second year with us as CEO and continues to drive high standards and innovation within the organisation. Our Deputy CEO Damon Martin and managers Kay Hardefeldt and Rebecca Chapman have also continued to perform to a high standard and are managing our services exceptionally well.

I would like to thank the volunteers on our various committees. In 2020-21 our Policy subcommittee became active under the leadership of our Board member Peter Arnaudo. The committee met several times and developed formal ISS Australia policies in Intercountry Adoption, Surrogacy, and Donor Conception, all of which are available on our web site.

I would like to thank voluntary members of our marketing and fundraising committee and in particular Rohan Lancaster who volunteered his copywriting flair to strengthen and crystallise ISS Australia's purpose as 'Everyone needs to belong and know who they are'.

Finally and importantly, I would like to thank our on-going Board members for their valuable and entirely voluntary contribution to ISS Australia. Richard Giles, our Treasurer, continues to ensure that ISS Australia's finances are in good shape and has now helped deliver two consecutive surpluses. Nina Brooks has taken on the role of Vice-President and has assisted greatly in the area of human resources. ISS Australia has weathered the storm of significant external challenge and we look forward to further growth and development of our services supporting and connecting children and families across borders in the coming years.



CEO's Report

Peter van Vliet

I am pleased to report that ISS Australia has had another successful year operationally. We have responded well to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and we continue to provide high-level social work, legal and mediation services while also focusing on the protection of our clients and staff from the pandemic.

It was particularly pleasing to renew all of our major government service contracts this financial year including our International Parental Child Abduction contract with the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and our various contracts with the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice. We thank both departments for their ongoing support of ISS Australia and their trust in the work that we do.

Amidst Australia's border closures and the stresses of the pandemic, the demand for international social work, legal and family mediation services remains strong. Our staff responded to 823 inquiries and worked extensively on 319 new cases, on top of their existing caseload.

In 2020-21 we published our brand new website at www.iss.org.au which contains a wealth of practical information around international child protection and legal issues to assist the general public. We also moved our Melbourne office to LaunchPad in Cremorne and our Melbourne based staff now have access to state-of-the-art meeting rooms and facilities.

In February 2021, ISS Australia was most pleased to implement its first Reconciliation Action Plan which commits ISS Australia to delivering culturally safe practices to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples using our services (see article within). We are proud to be on the reconciliation journey in Australia to bring justice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for past wrongs. Thanks to our managing lawyer, Rebecca Chapman, for leading this vital work.

Our work is enabled by the generous funding and support of the Commonwealth and NSW Governments. In 2020-21 we also received funding from the Collier Foundation and the Alfred Felton Bequest which has enabled us to strengthen our international family mediation service. We would also like to thank the Yulgilbar Foundation, the Aranday Foundation, Legal Aid NSW, and UNICEF for their generous support. Another highlight in 2020-21 was to run a small surplus for the second year in a row. This demonstrates that ISS Australia is committed to and can be relied upon to have good financial governance for our various funding bodies and donors.

In June 2021, ISS Australia was pleased to receive our formal accreditation from Community Legal Centres Australia. This accreditation shows that ISS Australia supports its clients whilst maintaining the highest possible professional standards. Accreditation approval was the culmination of several years hard work by our Managing Lawyer, Rebecca Chapman, including a full refresh, update and expansion of ISS Australia's policies and procedures as follows. Well done Becky!

ISS Australia's new policy manual of 184 pages includes policies in all key areas such as human resources, workplace health and safety, finances, Board governance, privacy, data

integrity, media and communications. This will give assurance to all of our funding bodies and supporters that ISS Australia is properly governed and managed. Again I would like to thank Rebecca Chapman and also the Board for helping drive this important work.

I wanted to thank the ISS Australia management team: Damon Martin, our Deputy CEO; Rebecca Chapman, our managing lawyer; Kay Hardefeldt, our Manager IPCA Social Work and International Family Mediation; and Ann Freilich our accountant. ISS Australia has an experienced and stable management team who continue to drive high standards and are committed to our purpose to provide the connection and safety that children, young people and families need.

With ISS Australia staff, I cannot thank them highly enough for their dedicated work during such a challenging period of their professional lives. Every day our staff perform wonderful and life-changing work supporting children and families across borders, for our clients who are often in the most complex and difficult of circumstances. Our staff have also had their own challenges dealing with the pandemic by working from home and enduring lockdowns to keep our community safe.

Many of our staff are parents themselves and have been caring for their children at home while working while working. Others have performed vital assessments in personal protective equipment to make sure children remain safe. Despite all of these challenges our staff have remained steadfast to their work and our formal client feedback remains overwhelmingly positive.

Also during 2021 we conducted a staff survey which showed on the whole our staff are very positive about and committed to our organisation which was most pleasing. A follow up workplan from that survey has been implemented focusing on staff areas of interest.

Finally, I need to thank my international network partners, ably led by our Secretary General, Mr. Jean Ayoub, who make our international work possible. We remain committed to our network and its incredible global coverage for good. ISS Australia finishes the 2020-21 financial year in good shape and is weathering the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward with optimism to continuing to fulfill our mission of supporting children and connecting families across the world.



We believe that everyone needs to belong and know who they are.



Our Impact

2020-21 ISS Australia Service Data

Service Areas: Total Cases

International Child Welfare and Kinship Care **98**

International Post Adoption Tracing Services **88**

General Family Tracing and Reunification **21**

International Parental Child Abduction Legal **124**

76 International Parental Child Abduction Social Work

NSW Special Search Service **81**

International Family Mediation **32**

In 2020-21 ISS Australia worked extensively on **520 cases**

We also handled **823 inquiries** where advice was given without case management.

International Parental Child Abduction Service

Client Services

We provide compassionate, professional services to achieve the best possible outcomes for families affected by, or likely to be affected by IPCA.

The IPCA services offers multidisciplinary support to clients. The provision of legal advice and social work support ensures that clients receive holistic services as they navigate the emotional and legal challenges associated with IPCA.

The IPCA services have assisted over 500 families in the last financial year. The countries most commonly involved were New Zealand (13%), United Kingdom (12%), India (5%) and USA (5%). Overall, the majority of matters involved fathers. This is consistent with previous years.

There has been a decrease in the number of legal cases and enquiries since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic which reflects the decreased

international movement of people. Our legal work is expected to increase significantly as borders begin to open again. Contrastingly, there has been an increase in the number of social work cases and enquiries which reflects the increased community awareness of mental health and acceptance of professional support services.

Legal
19/20 FY 410 enquiries and cases
20/21 FY 314 enquiries and cases

SW
19/20 FY 114 enquiries and cases
20/21 FY 190 enquiries and cases

Legal and SW
19/20 FY 440 + 114 enquiries and cases = 524
20/21 FY 314 + 190 enquiries and case = **504 families assisted**

Feedback from service users:

"I feel having the emotional support through an organisation like ISS, which brings a strong understanding of international family disputes, has been invaluable to me and has really helped me navigate through the anxiety, sadness and decision making that I have felt in my situation.

The international perspective and specialisation, including understanding of international legal issues, best- and worst-case scenarios that can occur across borders, understanding emotions of both parents I feel is not the type of social work or psychology support, understanding and guidance I have been able to get anywhere else, and I really value and thank ISS for that."

– Social work client.

"Words cannot express how grateful I am that I was fortunate enough to have [my lawyer] answer the phone when I first made contact. I felt at ease and confident I had made the right decision to call right from the first few minutes of our conversation. [My lawyer] guided me professionally combined with compassion and patience. I was at the lowest point in my life and was struggling to simply face the next day.

[My lawyer] didn't build me with false hope, she was very professional and I felt put 100% effort into providing the best possible chance of a positive outcome for me. [My lawyer] will forever be remembered by myself and my family as a Professional lady who guided and supported us through an incredibly difficult time. Thank you so much."

– Legal Service client

Community Engagement

We reach individuals and families affected by IPCA by raising community awareness.

Community education

Over the past 12 months, the IPCA service has actively facilitated and participated in community education opportunities. This included presentations to post separation service staff, community legal centres as well as professionals in the broader legal and family services sector.

Community education efforts have focussed on reaching professional bodies who support sections of the community likely to be impacted by IPCA. In May 2021, for example, ISS Australia distributed over 100 IPCA brochures to professionals within the central coast Family law pathways network. This approach supports an increased number of professional referrals, ensuring that families affected by IPCA are able to receive IPCA assistance promptly.

Of particular note in the 2021/2021 period was the webinar in honour of the 40th anniversary of the 1980 Hague Convention. The webinar had over 200 registrations and is also available on YouTube. The webinar assisted in raising awareness of IPCA amongst professionals, particularly mediation and family law professionals, leading to increased referrals.

Feedback from community education events has included:

It was so valuable to hear about your service, but I think also the possible indicators for parental abduction was extremely helpful information for our staff. The feedback has been so positive, and the staff are very grateful for your time and very interesting presentation.

Presenters were respectful, engaging and acknowledged the knowledge within the audience.

Social Media

The IPCA service continues to develop unique content for use in ISS Australia's social media channels to raise awareness of IPCA. During Law Week, for example the IPCA Legal service produced a series of socials providing legal information about IPCA, including a video which is now available on ISS Australia's YouTube channel.



Rebecca Chapman



Kay Hardefeldt

Client resources

The IPCA service has developed a series of new factsheets and resources for families affected by IPCA. The resources have been promoted on social media channels and are available on ISS Australia's website. These include:

- **What is international parental child abduction?**
- **How can I improve video calls with my child?**
- **Travel between Australia and New Zealand**
- **Loss and grief in the context of international parental child abduction**
- **I don't know whether my child is in Australia or overseas**
- **Is my child in a 1980 Hague Convention country?**
- **Covid19 and return applications under the 1980 Hague Convention**
- **40th anniversary of the 1980 Hague Convention**
- **Sending your child on an overseas holiday**

Service operations and infrastructure

We meet our client needs and operate the IPCA service efficiently and effectively.

ISS Australia's IPCA service has seen a number of improvements over the last financial year.

Lawyers and social workers

The IPCA service employs qualified social workers and lawyers. The service boasts longstanding staff retention rates and accumulated expertise. This improves services for clients which is particularly important given this specialised and complex area of work. ISS Australia continues to provide training opportunities for continued professional development of staff.

Website

Of note is the new IPCA page, launched in September 2020, on ISS Australia's website. This new and improved page includes a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions section, a new interactive intake tool and appointment booking functionality. The IPCA page delivers clear and accessible information to the public.

Brochures:

New IPCA Service brochures have been developed and these are now available on our website in a number of different languages.

The IPCA service has continued to ensure internal systems and resources support the ongoing provisions of services, despite the frequent restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

NSW Government Funded Services

1. International Child Welfare and Kinship Care

ISS Australia provides international child protection services and assists child protection authorities and non-government organisations with their international casework. We aim to uphold international child protection best practice principles to ensure children have a strong sense of identity and belonging. We do this through the full exploration and establishment of family connections overseas, and the assessment of extended family placement options overseas.

Full exploration of family placement options overseas opens up the opportunity for children in care to be raised by family members whenever it is in that child's best interests. For many years ISS Australia has observed a reluctance among decision makers to transition a child across borders to a kinship or family placement. In many cases, this reluctance remains despite a positive kinship assessment determining that a placement with prospective carers abroad would be suitable.

While anecdotal, ISS Australia notes that this reluctance to place children internationally may stem from decision makers being unfamiliar or concerned by the cultural and systemic differences of the other country that typically may be very different to that of Australia, and in effect ignoring the obvious and overriding benefits of children being placed with family and kin.

ISS Australia argues that many international kinship care placements do not proceed due to an outdated belief system that it is inherently 'safer' to keep a child in a local placement in Australia, even when an Australian placement has no kinship connection and a placement in a country overseas does.

ISS Australia calls on decision makers

to critically reflect on cases to ensure that a child doesn't miss the opportunity to remain cared for by family overseas. For many children the long term emotional and psychological benefits of being raised by kin far outweigh the complications associated with a transition across borders. Furthermore, international kinship care placements afford the child the opportunity to maintain links with their cultural, spiritual and biological family which supports the positive development of self and identity.

2. International Post Adoption Tracing Service (IPATS)

IPATS provides tracing and reunion support to NSW residents who have been affected by adoption, where one party is now overseas. Our goal is to locate and reunite family members and facilitate contact (when appropriate) in a supportive, respectful and empathetic manner.

Our annual IPATS case numbers continue to be high and in 2020/21 we handled 77 cases. For our IPATS clients, we know that adoption often has a lifelong impact with identity and attachment issues at its core. As such, having access to ISS Australia's experienced social workers who understand adoption, identity and attachment issues, has clear therapeutic benefits for our clientele as they embark on their post adoption journey to discover their true identity and trace their origins.

3. NSW Special Search Service

The NSW Special Search Service is ISS Australia's newest government funded service and first domestic service.

The NSW Special Search Service provides free and specialised search and reunion services to people who were

separated by government intervention in NSW. This includes separation through adoption, being under the care of the Minister, foster care, or through being placed in a children's home.

In 2020/21 we handled a total of 81 cases, a 40% increase from the previous year. Since obtaining access to the NSW Births Deaths and Marriages Life Search database in June 2019, our search outcomes have greatly improved. Remarkably we have achieved a 67% success rate in locating and reuniting family members. This shows ISS Australia's extensive search skills and ability to achieve great outcomes for our clients, especially considering this service only consists of 1 FTE social worker.

We have also produced two concise user-friendly Search Guides for people separated by adoption or care leavers. These are available on our website.

Damon Martin

Deputy CEO / Manager, NSW Government Funded Services



Damon Martin



International Family Mediation

Our vision is to provide Australia’s best international family mediation service by focusing on the needs of children and reducing cross border family conflict.

ISS Australia’s International Family Mediation (IFM) Service has had a year of growth with a 20% increase in enquiries and cases since the previous financial year. The service has had a strong focus on marketing with new **service brochures** and a refreshed **International Family Mediation page on ISS Australia’s website**.

In October 2020, International Social Service Australia hosted our first ever online seminar, with a focus on International Family Mediation. The session, International Family Mediation and 40 years of the 1980 Hague Convention had outstanding attendance and received overwhelmingly positive feedback. With over 200 registrations and over 100 people tuning in and facilitated by ISS CEO Peter van Vliet, the role mediation can play in Hague Convention matters was explored. Expert insight was provided by ISS Australia professionals, Kay Hardefeldt and Rebecca Chapman, as well as leading family law specialist, Amanda Humphreys. Since the event, the recording has had over 180 **YouTube** views.

Watch the seminar

The International Family Mediation team is growing with two new staff members starting their training as Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners. In addition, a further three staff have completed training as child consultants. This internal capacity building will ensure the long-term sustainability of the IFM service.

ISS Australia gratefully acknowledges the support from the Alfred Felton Bequest and Collier Charitable Fund who have assisted us to build the capacity of this service.



Feedback from service users included:

“I felt listened to and could trust the guidance without question”

“It helped greatly to be able to have some constructive conversation with the other parent to reach some decisions without emotions or aggression getting in the way”.

“You guided me through a complex process and handled all of the emotions with grace and then, expertly gave me direction”.

Feedback from attendees included:

“I found the session to be one of the clearest and most informative sessions I’ve attended online”

“It was a very informative session, which provided me a better insight into the child abduction field”

“It was fabulous and probably the best CLE [Community Legal Education] that I’ve attended in a while”

Damon Martin appointed ISS Casework Coordinators Group Chair

In August 2020, ISS Australia’s Deputy CEO, Damon Martin, was appointed Chair of the **International Social Service Casework Coordinators Group**. The Group consists of casework managers from the global ISS network. The Group’s function is to provide expert knowledge and advice to the ISS Secretary General in regard to the operation of the ISS network.

Through Damon’s leadership, ISS Casework Coordinators from over 25 countries have been meeting online monthly and developing new ISS projects. Working groups have been established to: address and develop a common ISS approach on the Brussels II ter Regulation; remodel and reformulate the ISS Casework Manual; and develop an Advocacy Paper to support those impacted by illicit intercountry adoptions.

Introducing ISS Australia’s newest Board member: Susan Wnukowska-Mtonga

ISS Australia was pleased to welcome **Susan Wnukowska-Mtonga** to our Board of Directors in 2021. Susan is a human rights lawyer who currently works for the **Clooney Foundation for Justice’s Trial Watch program**. The foundation focuses on monitoring criminal trials of minority groups and advocating for victims of injustice. Susan also started the **not-for-profit Rights Nights**, which focuses on educating the Australian public on human rights issues.

Susan holds an LLM from Columbia Law School, where she graduated as a James Kent Scholar. She also holds a Bachelor of Laws with First Class Honours and a Bachelor of Arts from the Australian National University. Her significant legal and human rights background will benefit ISS Australia enormously.



Susan Wnukowska-Mtonga

ISS Australia 60th Birthday Celebrations

In March 2021, ISS Australia celebrated our 60th anniversary since our incorporation in Australia in 1961. Flagship events were held at both Parliament House Sydney and the Melbourne Town Hall celebrating this wonderful anniversary.

Several Ministers spoke including Victorian Child Protection Minister Luke Donnellan, MP (Vic). Our very own ISS Australia ambassador Ra Chapman gave incredibly powerful speeches on her own personal journey.

Over sixty years ISS Australia has supported children and families separated by borders. Today we are Australia's leading agency providing social work, legal and international family mediation services

in areas such as international child protection and international parental child abduction.

Celebrating this milestone event with our stakeholders, staff and board members was fitting. Having our former President, Rupert Myer AO, speak and pay tribute to all the individuals who over sixty years have made us what we are and often volunteered their own time and resources was greatly appreciated.



ISS Australia's 60th anniversary, L-R, Dr Fiona McIntosh – ISS Australia President, Ra Chapman – ISS Australia Ambassador, Rupert Myer AO- former ISS Australia President, Hon. Luke Donnellan, MP, Peter van Vliet- ISS Australia CEO, Hon. Justice Victoria Bennett – Family Court Judge

ISS Australia Reconciliation Action Plan Launch

ISS Australia was pleased to implement its first Reconciliation Action Plan, which was officially launched in February 2021.

ISS Australia is committed to the reconciliation journey in Australia to bring justice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for past wrongs. We are committed to delivering culturally safe practices to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our own services.

As an organisation that assists people impacted by international family separation, we acknowledge the great harm and trauma caused by past separation practices in Australia, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were wrongfully separated from their families. We acknowledge the ongoing injustice still occurring today, as reflected in the high incarceration rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

ISS Australia has obtained the license to work by artist Hayley Pigram, a Darug woman from the Sydney areas. The artwork, "Community Gathering", tells the story of different people coming together to meet. Meeting together on common ground these vastly different people find connection in sharing their similarities. The differences fall away in the meeting place and the connections are felt more deeply. Together we are more than we could be alone and our differences are less important than our connections. ISS Australia thanks Hayley Pigram for this meaningful artwork.

We hope that our commitment to this Reconciliation Action Plan will in our own small way assist our nation in its journey to true reconciliation where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, having survived past injustices, assume their rightful place as the empowered and respected First Nations people of Australia. Staff at ISS Australia have completed a cultural safety reflection tool to identify areas for learning and look forward

to undertaking cultural awareness training upon our return to the office.

Rebecca Chapman, Managing Lawyer, is ISS Australia's reconciliation champion and has worked with Reconciliation Australia and Community Legal Centres NSW in developing our plan. We look forward to the important journey ahead and doing our best to help bring true reconciliation to Australia.



Our People

Our Board

Dr Fiona McIntosh – President (Melbourne)

Nina Brooks – Vice President (Melbourne)

Richard Giles – Treasurer (Melbourne)

Peter Arnaudo (Canberra)

Rebecca Cowan (Melbourne)

Deborah Fry (Sydney)

Mary Griffin (Armidale)

Susan Wnukowska-Mtonga (Melbourne)

Freia Carlton (Melbourne) until February 2021

Barbara Lane (Sydney) until April 2021

Our Patron and Ambassadors

PATRON

The Hon Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC

Former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia;
Chair, Children's Rights International

AMBASSADORS

Professor Felicity Gerry QC

Ra Chapman

Dr Sue Packer AM

Our Staff

CORPORATE

Peter van Vliet – CEO (Melbourne)

Ann Freilich – Accountant (Melbourne)

SOCIAL WORK TEAM

Damon Martin – Deputy CEO / Manager (Sydney)

Kay Hardefeldt Manager – IPCA Social Work and IFM (Sydney)

Eleni Bailey – Senior Social Worker, International Family Mediator (regional NSW)

Phoebe Lewis – Senior Social Worker (Sydney)

Amelia McDermott – Coordinator, National Child Protection Services (Melbourne)

Aga Duc – Intercountry Social Worker (Melbourne)

Breanna Worthington – Marketing Coordinator

Lizzie Gray – Intercountry Social Worker (Melbourne)

Meredith Gantt – Intercountry Social Worker (Sydney)

Phoebe Peters – Intercountry Social Worker (Sydney)

Sarah Burn – Senior Caseworker (Sydney) until April 2021

LEGAL TEAM

Rebecca Chapman – Managing Lawyer (Sydney)

Jenny Tam – Senior Lawyer (Melbourne)

Belinda Li – Lawyer (Melbourne)

Ben Hughes – Lawyer (Sydney) until September 2021

STUDENTS, INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

Emily Young

Valeria Laurenzia

Deniz Gok

Staff Spotlight

Amelia McDermott

Coordinator National Child Protection Services

I have been a social worker at ISS Australia since 2016. This year, I have taken on the role of Coordinator National Child Protection Services, having previously worked in International Parental Child Abduction (IPCA) and in the Intercountry Adoption Family Support Service. (ICAFSS). I have also worked in post-adoption and general family tracing at ISS Australia, particularly focusing on searches in the United Kingdom.

My new role addresses the complex cross-border issues children and families can face and I am the dedicated point of contact for families and professionals requiring international child protection services and support. This work is even more critical given the impacts of COVID-19 and the ongoing border closures that separate families, which I know is incredibly distressing. I will also work states and territories child protection authorities around facilitating ISS Australia support for clients in need.

I have spent recent months gaining valuable experience and knowledge in the ever-growing field of Assisted Reproductive Therapies, focusing closely on linking individuals and families affected by donor conception. This is a fascinating and complex area of work, and further cements my commitment to our basic human right to know our identity. I hope to integrate this work into the services ISS Australia offers in the future.

At ISS Australia, I have gained extensive experience supporting people seeking asylum, particularly unaccompanied minors who arrived in Australia by boat, as well as individuals and families in community detention. I have learnt a lot about developmental trauma, attachment, domestic abuse, and working on cross-cultural issues, which I really enjoy.

Like everyone here at ISS Australia, I practice child rights and ensure that my casework is always child-focused. I have always loved working for ISS Australia. We get to do such varied casework and are introduced to people from all different cultures, which brightens the working day, especially during our ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.

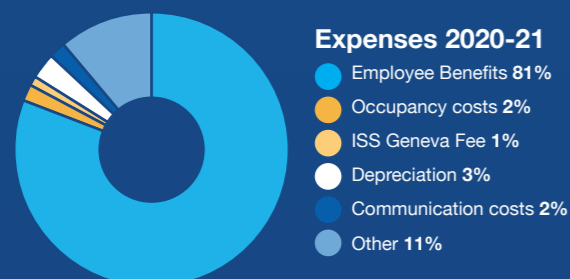
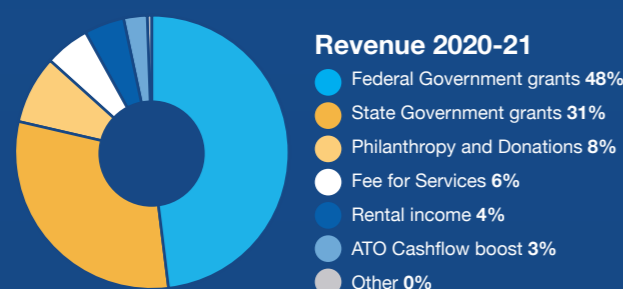
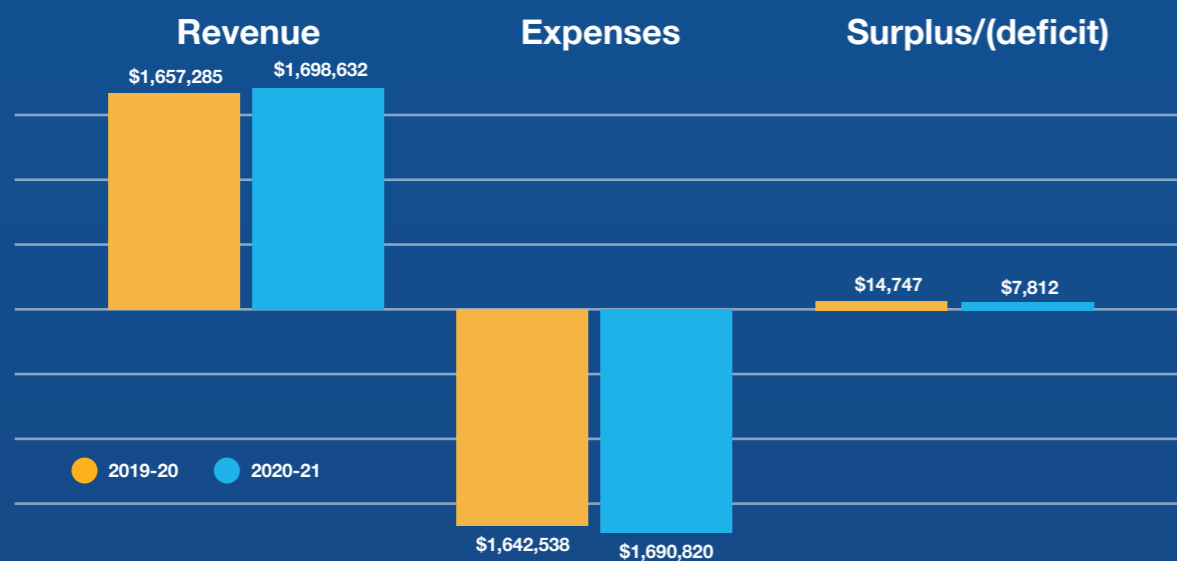
I value my colleagues a great deal. Everyone is equally committed to the work and we all bring such different experiences and knowledge to our work. I'm proud to be part of this organisation and look forward to what the future holds for us all.



Amelia McDermott

Financial Report

ISS Australia Financial Snapshot 2020-21 operating results



Financial Position at 30 June 2021

ASSETS	
Current Assets	\$495,810
Non-Current Assets	\$1,531,431
Total Assets	\$2,027,241

LIABILITIES	
Current Liabilities	\$412,541
Non-Current Liabilities	\$33,257
Total Liabilities	\$445,798

NET ASSETS	
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit)	\$305,349
Reserves	\$1,276,094
Total Equity	\$1,581,443

Support ISS Australia

ISS Australia gratefully acknowledges the support and involvement of the following organisations over 2020-21.

Gold Sponsor
ISS Australia has just confirmed **Rafton Family Lawyers** as our exclusive gold sponsor.



Partners and Supporters Continued

- Toby Blyth, Partner, Collin Biggers and Paisley Pty Ltd
- United Aid for Azerbaijan
- Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA)
- WayAhead

Finally, we would like to acknowledge our wider ISS global network partners, including our General Secretariat in Switzerland, who contribute so much to our work and to improving the lives of children and families separated by borders.

Donate

ISS Australia relies on the generous donations of individuals to support our work with children and families separated by international borders.

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. Visit our website or call 1300 657 843 to make a donation.

Leave a bequest

Make your legacy on that help change the lives of children and families separated by borders. Call 03 9614 8755 to discuss your bequest options in complete confidence.

Get involved

Follow us on social media. Become a member to help shape our organisation. Sign up to our quarterly newsletter. Volunteer for our marketing and fundraising or policy subcommittee. Apply to be an intern if you come from the social work, law, media and communications, marketing or international studies disciplines.

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- International Social Service Australia
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- Commonwealth Attorney General's Department
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- UNICEF Cambodia
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- Melbourne City Council

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