

## President's Report - September 2025

As ISCA continues to grow and mature, it has been my great pleasure to serve as ISCA President and Chair of the Board. At our fourth AGM, I am delighted to reflect on the progress we have made, the challenges we have faced, and the exciting future that lies ahead. This year has been one of consolidation, innovation, and preparation for our landmark international conference in 2026.

### Achievements

Over the past twelve months, ISCA has maintained a strong program of activities while advancing several of our long-term strategic goals. We deepened our community-building efforts, expanded our events portfolio, and strengthened our financial and organisational foundations. Most significantly, we made major strides in preparing for the 1st International Conference on Social Capital (Social Capital 2026), which will be the defining event for our association in the coming year.

### Sunbelt Conference 2025

This year, ISCA once again participated in the Sunbelt Conference of the International Network for Social Network Analysis, held in Paris. Our presence at Sunbelt continues to raise ISCA's profile, offering a space to connect with colleagues, showcase research, and recruit new members. We co-organised dedicated sessions on social capital, bringing together an impressive array of scholars and practitioners.

The ISCA meeting at Sunbelt was well attended, reflecting a growing sense of community and engagement among our members. Our visibility at Sunbelt reinforces the importance of collaboration between the social network analysis and social capital research communities, a partnership we are committed to continuing.

### Social Capital 2026 – Dubai

In the last year, planning for our first international conference has moved from concept to reality. We are delighted to confirm that the 1st International Conference on Social Capital will be held 25–28 March 2026 at Heriot-Watt University, Dubai.

This will be the first global gathering dedicated entirely to social capital research, practice, and policy. With thematic streams spanning health, governance, democracy, economic opportunity, community development, theory, and measurement, the conference promises to be a watershed moment for our field.

The call for abstracts has already generated strong international interest, and sponsorship outreach is underway. This conference will not only showcase world-leading scholarship but

will also provide opportunities for capacity-building, networking, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

## Events

ISCA has continued its rich calendar of events, including webinars, research design workshops, and professional development sessions. This year, we also launched thematic interest-group events, including the new Social Capital Measurement Interest Group (affectionately nicknamed MIG, and led by Dr Eunice Park). We have continued specialised forums in Measurement and Disaster & Emergency Management, both of which are gaining momentum.

Our events have consistently attracted large audiences, often exceeding 150 registrants, and have facilitated rich exchange between academics, practitioners, and policymakers. These events remain one of the most visible and accessible ISCA activities.

## Community Building and Interest Groups

Our community platform has continued to grow, and this year has seen more activity in our interest groups, which now provide spaces for collaboration on specific themes. The Measurement Interest Group has been especially active, beginning the groundwork for a repository of tools and approaches.

Community building remains central to our mission. ISCA is helping to bring together individuals who often work in isolation, fostering a sense of belonging and collective purpose.

## Newsletter and Member Communications

Our newsletter, *The Bridge*, has continued to grow in scope and readership. It now features not only ISCA news but also member highlights, book reviews, event reports, and resources on social capital. We are exploring opportunities to further expand the newsletter into a platform that showcases the diversity of our members' work.

## Membership

Membership has remained steady, with modest growth during the year. As of the end of August 2025, ISCA had 168 current members. We expect substantial growth as we approach Social Capital 2026, when our visibility and reach will expand significantly.

Our commitment to accessibility continues. Tiered membership fees, fee reduction programs, and sponsored student memberships remain in place, ensuring ISCA membership is available to all regardless of financial circumstances. We continue to encourage members to reach out to colleagues and networks to grow our association.

## Governance

The Board has maintained its regular meetings, providing oversight and guidance while progressing strategic initiatives. This year saw some changes in board composition, with members stepping down due to other commitments and new members joining. I would like to thank all board members for their service and contributions during this year.

Our committees, particularly those focused on the conference and publications, have been increasingly active. These groups will be critical in shaping the next phase of ISCA's development.

## Challenges

As a volunteer-driven organisation, ISCA continues to depend on the commitment and goodwill of a relatively small group of highly dedicated people. Volunteer burnout remains a risk, and we are working to create more opportunities for wider member involvement.

Membership growth has been slower than we hoped, and this will need to be a major focus in the coming year. Our ability to deliver on our ambitious agenda depends on expanding our base of engaged members.

## Financial Position

ISCA remains in a sound financial position. Our expenses have grown, primarily due to investments in our community platform, event delivery, and conference planning, but these have been balanced by income from membership and donations. As of September 1, 2025, ISCA has NZ\$13,381.03 cash on hand.

We remain careful stewards of our resources, ensuring that we can continue to fund our core activities while investing in growth.

## Looking Ahead

The year ahead will be defined by the build-up to Social Capital 2026. The conference will be our most ambitious undertaking yet, and its success will depend on the collective efforts of our members. I encourage all members to consider how they might contribute—by submitting an abstract, volunteering, helping with sponsorship, or spreading the word.

Beyond the conference, ISCA is laying the groundwork for long-term initiatives, including the development of resources for social capital scholarship, the establishment of a peer-reviewed publication, and expanded opportunities for professional development.

The need for ISCA has never been greater. Around the world, the concept of social capital is being invoked in policy debates, academic research, and community practice. ISCA is uniquely placed to provide leadership, clarity, and connection in this space.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our members, volunteers, board, and committee members for their tireless contributions. ISCA has been successful thanks to the continued work of our volunteers, including the Board of Directors, committee members, and every member who gets involved by attending events or contributing to our community forum. I would like to acknowledge and thank every member for their continuing support of ISCA.

The Board is comprised of hardworking and dedicated people. I feel very honoured to have worked with you during the past year. I want to acknowledge and thank all Board members for their service and support over this period - Jacob Spanke (Vice President), Mario Marais (Treasurer), Jeff Donaldson (Secretary), Alice Campbell, Charlotte Felix-Faure, Heather McGregor, and Marcelo Siles.

Special thanks go to:

- Heather McGregor, whose leadership and vision continue to drive ISCA's international engagement and our preparations for Social Capital 2026.
- Jacob Spanke, whose consistent energy and support remain vital to the association, has been integral in preparations for Social Capital 2026.
- Jeff Donaldson, for his active contribution and service on the board and for leading an interest group.
- Beverly Sloan, for her continued mentorship and leadership in our Research Design and Methods sessions.

Finally, I thank all members who have attended our events, contributed to our community, or supported our initiatives in any way. Your commitment is what makes ISCA thrive.

I am optimistic about the future of ISCA. With our first international conference on the horizon, an expanding program of activities, and a committed membership, the association is well placed to make a lasting contribution to the field of social capital.

Kind regards  
Tristan Claridge  
President of the International Social Capital Association