



# Australian Social Cohesion Summit 2025

## October 16, 2025





**a Cohesive Australia**  
is ONE WHERE  
**EVERYONE BELONGS**



**a Living Process**  
we are setting a **BENCHMARK**



**Australian SOCIAL COHESION SUMMIT**

THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 2023, MELBOURNE

PART 1



DR. JAMES O'DONNELL

**PANEL DISCUSSION**

**KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**

Complacency is the **ENEMY**

**URGENCY REQUIRED**

It's a **SECURITY** and an **ECONOMIC** ISSUE



**JOHN FAINE AM**  
we remain **RESILIENT** - we score highly

NUANCE IS LOST  
EMBRACE **OPTIMISM**

**SOCIAL COHESION** IS **KRYPTONITE** TO **RACISM**

GIVE RESPECT TO **GET RESPECT**

WE SHOULD HAVE A CONTEMPORARY PATRIOTISM

**Celebrating OUR DIVERSITY**

GOVERNMENT FUNDING REQUIRED

IS **MISSION CRITICAL**



SCHOOLS & INSTITUTIONS SHOULD OPEN THEIR DOORS AFTER HOURS AS **COMMUNITY HUBS**

LET'S NOT USE THE WORD 'TOLERANCE'

I DON'T WANT TO BE 'TOLERATED'!

**MAPPING SOCIAL COHESION**

IT'S LOWER THAN THE 2010'S

there is **PRESSURE** ON THE POPULARITY OF MIGRATION

DECLINING SENSE OF BELONGING IS A **WEAKNESS**

**RACIALLY** motivated **NEGATIVE** attitudes

creating **DISCRIMINATION**

**RACISM** IS AN **UNSOLVED** PROBLEM IN AUSTRALIA TODAY

**TRUST** IN THE SYSTEM & GOVERNMENT DECLINING

**PARTISANSHIP**

... BUT I DO STILL FEEL MY NEIGHBOURS WILL HELP

YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL MORE ISOLATED

**FINANCIAL** PRESSURES HAVE A **CUMULATIVE** EFFECT

**HUMAN GRATEFULNESS**

**DIVERSITY WITH INCLUSION**

DOING NOTHING IS DANGEROUS

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT TIL IT'S GONE

WE'RE ON THE SAME **MISSION** REGARDLESS OF **HISTORY**

MULTICULTURALISM IS MULTI-FAITH

IGNORANCE IS DANGEROUS

THINGS HAVE **CHANGED** - WE NEED GOOD

**LEADERSHIP**

LISTENING TO THE **MAJORITY**

NOT THE NOISY MARGINS

**RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**

**YOUNG** AUSTRALIANS ARE **SWITCHED-ON**

**FEED THE CURIOSITY**

**VISION**

HOUSING CRISIS!

WE DON'T BLAME MIGRANTS

and we will PUNISH 'DOOR WHISTLE' POLITICS! FOR US...

**DIVERSITY IS A GIVEN**

CAPTURED WITH ♥ ON WURUNDJERI LANDS BY @SketchGrp

sketch GROUP



16<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2025 MONASH UNIVERSITY CITY CAMPUS  
750 COLLINS ST MELBOURNE

## NEIGHBOURHOODS

FISHBOWL SESSION 3

DRIVE THOSE  
MICRO  
PROGRAMS

...LITTLE  
THINGS  
ARE SO  
IMPORTANT

COMMUNITIES  
ARE NOT  
THE PROBLEM  
LANGUAGE IS!

Provide  
INFORMATION IN  
LANGUAGE

Happier  
People Live  
in Connected  
Neighbourhoods

The City of  
Melbourne  
Believes  
in it

IT'S ABOUT  
People and  
Place

KNOWING  
YOUR  
NEIGHBOUR  
IS  
ESSENTIAL  
FOR  
WELLBEING

The Feeling  
of BELONGING  
& CONNECTION

WE'RE  
MADE  
FOR IT!

FIRST NATIONS  
PEOPLES  
HAVE  
THOUSANDS  
OF YEARS OF  
NEIGHBOURING

Looking after  
HEALTH AND  
OTHER  
NEEDS

WE NEED  
EACH OTHER  
... WE DON'T  
NEED TO BE  
THE SAME ...

IT'S ABOUT  
BEING  
KNOWN

THE RHYTHM  
OF THE CITY  
IS ABOUT HOW  
WE DO  
CONNECTION

HOW CAN WE  
CELEBRATE ?  
ALL OF OUR  
NEIGHBOURHOODS

... THEIR  
UNIQUENESS &  
DIFFERENCES  
... LIVED  
EXPERIENCES

LET'S HAVE  
MORE  
INVESTMENT  
IN WHAT'S  
ALREADY  
THERE

STRUCTURALLY  
COMPLEX  
ECOSYSTEMS

OFTEN  
DISENFRANCHISING  
AND HARMFUL  
... AND DIVISIVE

WE NEED TO BE  
OUT THERE,  
ENGAGING &  
BRINGING PEOPLE  
IN

... WHAT ABOUT  
'THE SYSTEM'  
NEEDS TO CHANGE ?

LET'S  
UNDERSTAND  
WHO  
IS THERE

TRUST  
IN GOVERNMENT  
NEEDS  
REFRAMING

... SO WE CAN  
CREATIVELY  
LEVERAGE  
OUR  
RESOURCES

WE HAVE FELT LIKE WE HAVE TO  
DO IT ALL BY OURSELVES

RECONNECTING  
WITH OUR  
STORIES  
BECAUSE WE  
ALL HAVE  
SOMETHING  
TO GIVE

GOVERNMENT NEEDS  
TO CONSIDER AND  
EMPHASISE COMMUNITY  
SPACES IN THIS HOUSING  
CRISIS

Sketch  
GROUP

Captured with  
on Wurundjeri land  
by @Sketchorp.

WHAT CAN  
I DO?

Be an  
UPSTAND

THINK  
ABOUT  
LANGUAGE  
AND  
HOW IT SHAPES  
CULTURE

Focus ON  
THE  
GIFTS we  
HAVE

INTENTIONAL ACTS OF CONNECTION

GARDENS  
DRIVING-  
SCHOOLS  
COMMUNITY  
SPACES  
LIBRARIES  
PARKS POOLS

WHAT'S LACKING?

IT'S NOT  
ALL ABOUT THE  
DEFICIT MODEL

WHAT'S  
WRONG ?

WHAT'S THE  
DAMAGE ?

GO OUT THERE  
AND CONNECT

HOW  
DO WE  
CREATE A  
NETWORK  
OF  
NEIGHBOURHOODS

PLEASE  
TAKE  
ONE

IT'S CHALLENGING FOR MIGRANTS TO CONNECT AND FEEL BELONGING

MULTI-YEAR FUNDING!





sketch group

Australian  
SOCIAL  
COHESION  
SUMMIT

16 OCTOBER 2025  
MELBOURNE

PART 2

## PROGRAM DESIGN for SOCIAL COHESION INITIATIVES

EVERYBODY HAS  
SHARED ENGAGEMENT

NOT TOUCHY-  
FEELY ABOUT  
MINORITY  
GROUPS

EVOLVING

age is  
a FACTOR

ACCEPTANCE,  
TOLERANCE &  
LACK OF BELONGING  
IS HIGHEST  
AMONGST THE  
YOUNG!

NATURALLY  
OCCURRING  
CONFLICT &  
DISAGREEMENT

COHESION  
= HAPPINESS

NEIGHBOURHOODS  
A CRITICAL PROTECTIVE FACTOR  
... BUT WE DON'T ALWAYS PRIORITISE IT

CULTURAL  
DIVERSITY  
(IS)  
RELIGIOUS  
DIVERSITY

THE  
POWER  
OF  
COMMUNITY

PERCEPTION CAN  
BECOME  
REALITY

WE'RE NOT THE UNITED NATIONS  
PROBLEMS ELSEWHERE MAY  
NOT BE OURS

DON'T  
UNDERESTIMATE THE  
POWER  
OF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

HEALTHY  
SYSTEMS MUST BE  
OPEN &  
COLLABORATIVE

HOPE  
&  
OPTIMISM

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
MOST TRUSTED  
... LEVERAGE  
THIS!

TRADE ON  
THAT GOOD  
WILL

BENDIGO'S  
WELCOMING-  
CITIES  
PROGRAM

LET'S  
FLIP  
THE  
NARRATIVE

THE  
AWAY FROM THE  
LANGUAGE OF HATE AND  
DIVISION

ALLEVIATE  
FEAR

... IT LEADS TO SO  
MUCH BAD  
BEHAVIOUR

YOUNG PEOPLE

YOUNG WOMEN  
VOICES HEARD

NETWORK  
CREATING &  
PEER LED  
INTERVENTION  
FOR YOUNG MEN

GET OUTSIDE  
OF SOCIAL  
MEDIA

YOUNG PEOPLE  
WANT TO MAKE  
A DIFFERENCE

SCHOOLS ARE  
COMPETITIVE &  
TRIBAL

BRING PEOPLE  
TOGETHER AROUND  
ISSUES

OLDER PEOPLE

HELP TO BE  
COMFORTABLE WITH  
CHANGE

FOCUS ON  
ISSUES NOT  
CATEGORIES

FOSTER  
COLLABORATION

I SHOULD BE ABLE  
TO MOBILISE  
LOCAL SERVICES

WE ALREADY HAVE  
PLENTY OF WHAT  
BRINGS US  
TOGETHER

EVOLVING  
BENCHMARKS  
BECAUSE WE  
ARE ALWAYS  
LEARNING

NOT BOX-  
TICKING

EMPATHY  
IS  
ESSENTIAL

IN UNDERSTANDING  
HOW PEOPLE  
LIVE

MULTICULTURAL  
CONNECTION ENVIRONMENT

THE  
MORE  
WE ARE  
SILOED...

THE MORE  
PROBLEMS WILL KEEP  
HAPPENING

SAFETY &  
SECURITY

DON'T GET  
CAUGHT IN  
A BOX

THE  
MORE  
PROBLEMS WILL KEEP  
HAPPENING

THE  
MORE  
PROBLEMS WILL KEEP  
HAPPENING

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PROBLEMS WILL KEEP  
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## PANEL DISCUSSION

IF SOCIAL COHESION STARTS  
WHERE WE LIVE, LEARN AND  
LEAD - ARE WOMEN, YOUTH AND  
NEIGHBOURHOODS AUSTRALIA'S  
TRUE COHESION ARCHITECTS?

HELP FULL, HALF EMPTY?

WHAT  
THEORETICALLY  
A GLASS ON  
THE TABLE?

THOSE FIRST  
2000 DAYS  
OF A CHILD'S  
LIFE DETERMINES  
SUCCESS IN LIFE

MISS AND DISS  
INFORMATION

THE BAR  
IS VERY  
LOW!

FACTS DON'T  
MATTER, IT'S  
ABOUT WHO  
SAID IT!

BEAUTIFUL &  
DIVERSE

WE ARE A SUCCESSFUL  
CITY - NOT BY CHANCE!

A SPECIAL PROUD MULTICULTURAL  
CITY BY CHOICE

WE SPEAK  
150 LANGUAGES

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WE CAN BUILD  
OUR LITTLE  
UTOPIAS  
... WE CAN  
DEFINE OUR  
NATURE

BREAK IT  
DOWN TO THE  
LOCAL  
LEVEL TO  
CREATE  
CHANGE

NORMALISE  
DIVERSITY

MANY COWBOYS  
STOP A LION

COMMUNITIES  
CAN BE DIGITAL  
NOT JUST  
GEOGRAPHIC

SO SORRY,  
I DIDN'T  
EVEN  
REALISE  
I WAS  
DOING  
IT!

RESPECT &  
HARMONY  
INTERFAITH  
LEARNING

LET'S GET  
TOGETHER  
AND TALK  
BUILD AND  
GROW  
RELATIONSHIPS

ADDRESSING  
RACISM

THE  
ARTS

HELPING  
BUILDING  
BRIDGES

START  
SMALL

Local  
Governments  
are closest  
TO THE  
PEOPLE ON  
THE STREET

DIFFERENCES  
HELP US  
GROW

INTERVIEWING  
TO CREATE  
SOMETHING  
BEAUTIFUL

WE ALL HAVE  
A VOICE

IT'S HOW  
WE USE IT!

WE NEED  
OPEN,  
HONEST  
DISCUSSIONS

HOW DO WE  
GIVE THE  
TRUTHFUL  
ANSWERS?

NOT  
DEMORALISING  
THE OTHER

HOW DO WE GET  
THE CONNECTIONS  
GOING

STUCK  
IN THE  
SILCO  
FLAT

WE SPEAK  
150 LANGUAGES

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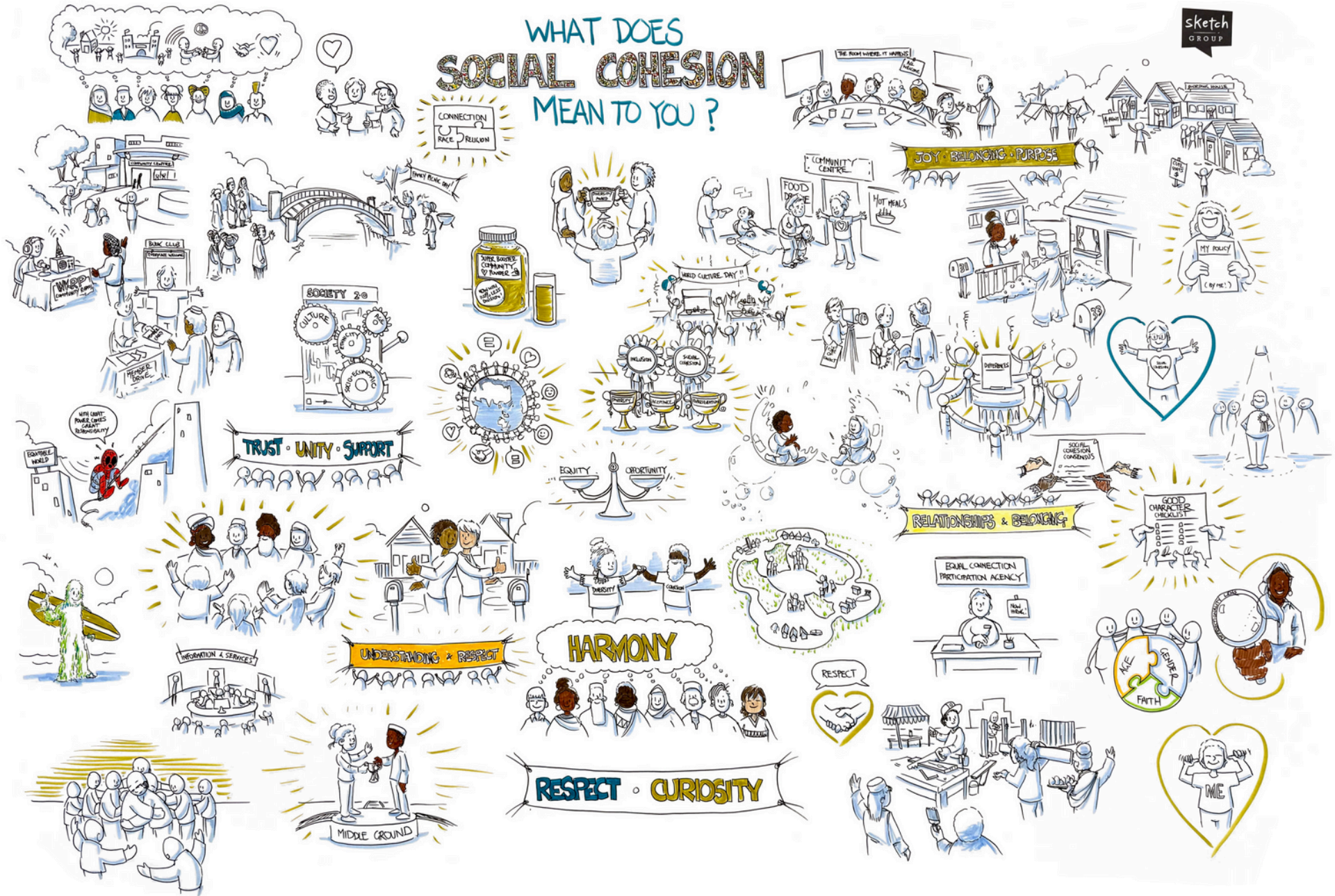
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CAPTURED WITH  
ON WURUNDJERI LANDS  
BY @SketchGrp



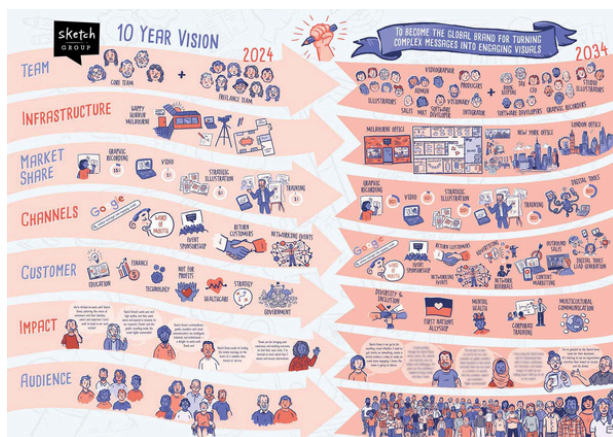
# WHAT DOES SOCIAL COHESION MEAN TO YOU?





# How can Sketch Group help?

We're experts at turning complex messages into engaging visuals.



Visualise your strategic plan



Proactively represent diversity  
in your communications



Engage constituents with  
compelling campaigns



The background is filled with various light gray line drawings. These include a sun with rays, several sheets of paper or documents, a globe with latitude and longitude lines, a hand holding a pen, a stack of coins, a thumbs-up gesture, and various stars and swirls.

**Visuals bring clarity, creativity,  
and connection to the community.**

Find out more at  
[sketchgroup.com](https://sketchgroup.com)