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James Jupp and John Nieuwenhuysen
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Social Cohesion in Australia

Australia has succeeded in harmoniously absorbing millions of immigrants from a great diversity of cultures. Divisiveness has been minimal. Indeed, Australia is one of the world's most cohesive societies: since 1788 it has never experienced revolution, invasion or assassination of a major public figure. Helping secure this outcome have been steady economic growth, high living standards, stable democratic institutions, and isolation from conflict. However, there is no denying that problems have been encountered.

With contributions from some of Australia's leading experts, this book addresses the threats to Australia's social cohesion and asks how they can be countered. Issues covered include the social exclusion of Indigenous communities; feelings of marginalisation of young people; tension between mainstream and new religious groupings; inter-ethnic relations in the wake of security legislation; the relative status of overseas-born workers; and the tendency of the media to devalue nonconformist minorities, values and ideas. This important new book deserves to be read by anyone with an interest in Australia's social fabric – its past and its future.

James Jupp AM is Director of the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies at the Australian National University (ANU). He has published widely on immigration and multicultural affairs and has acted as a consultant for the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Department of Immigration and other public agencies.

John Nieuwenhuysen AM is Director of the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements. He is also a member of council, RMIT University; Chair of the Board, VITS Language Link, and a Member of the Board, Australian Multicultural Foundation. He was a foundation director of the Commonwealth Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research.

Emma Dawson is Research Fellow at the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements, and a PhD Candidate at Monash's National Centre for Australian Studies. A Fellow at public policy think-tank The Centre for Policy Development, she is a columnist for online political magazine *New Matilda* and has published widely in other magazines.

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Foreword

Australia is one of the world's most diverse societies. It is a country of immigration, nearly half of whose population was born, or is the child of a parent born, overseas.

Down the decades, successive Australian governments have pursued planned immigration intake programs, accompanied by settlement services. In addition, ever increasing temporary migration and tourism have been facilitated and encouraged, enlarging further the diverse composition of Australian society.

It is a substantial achievement that this persisting population expansion from a multitude of varying cultures has been achieved with very little divisiveness, though the lack of Indigenous equality remains a thorn.

With the unparalleled persistence of steady, strong economic growth in the past 11 years, skill shortages and bottlenecks have emerged despite the immigration program and temporary entry of workers. And it is highly likely that substantial increases in immigration intake targets will ensue, even though current levels are at their highest for 20 years.

It is clear that, in order to achieve and accommodate this larger inflow, social cohesion will be especially important at a time when there are potential tensions arising indirectly from the international 'war on terror' and the freer movement of people in a globalised world.

Social Cohesion in Australia is, therefore, a well-timed publication. Its 16 chapters by distinguished scholars from a variety of universities and from the Commonwealth Government, cover an excellent range of topics, from the quest for harmony, to social cohesion and sport, the arts, education, the workforce, Indigenous communities, the media, inter-ethnic marriage, the landmark of Cronulla, the Commonwealth's view, human rights, and definition and measurement.

Social Cohesion in Australia is part of the Scanlon Foundation's major Social Cohesion Research Project and has been undertaken through Scanlon funding provided to a partnership between the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements and the Australian Multicultural Foundation.

We congratulate the editors and authors of this important volume. Their work makes a major contribution to understanding and knowledge about the constituent parts of social cohesion in a country whose experience is of interest not only to its inhabitants but also internationally.

Professor Richard Larkins AO
Vice Chancellor and President
Monash University

Sir James Gobbo AC CVO
Chair
Australian Multicultural Foundation

Mr Peter Scanlon
Chair
Scanlon Foundation

Contributors

Hurriyet Babacan is Professor of Social and Cultural Development in the Institute for Community Engagement and Policy Alternatives at Victoria University.

Santina Bertone is Associate Professor and Head of the Work and Economic Policy Research Unit, and Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Business and Law at Victoria University.

Gary D. Bouma is Professor of Sociology and UNESCO Chair in Intercultural and Interreligious Relations – Asia Pacific at Monash University.

Jock Collins is Professor in the School of Finance and Economics at the University of Technology in Sydney.

Emma Dawson is Research Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Global Movements, and a PhD scholar at the National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University.

Nick Economou is Senior Lecturer and Head of Politics in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University.

Jenny Hocking is Professor and Deputy Head of the National Centre for Australian Studies and Director of Research for the School of Humanities, Communications and Social Sciences at Monash University.

Brett Hutchins is Lecturer in Communications and Media Studies at Monash University.

Andrew Jakubowicz is Professor of Sociology at the University of Technology in Sydney.

James Jupp AM is the Director of the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University.

Siew-ean Khoo is Senior Fellow in the Demography and Sociology Program at the Australian National University.

Liudmila Kirtpitchenko is a researcher at the Scanlon Foundation for Social Cohesion Research Program and a PhD candidate in Sociology in the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University.

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CONTRIBUTORS ix

Rod Ling is Post Doctoral Fellow in the School of Sociology at Monash University.

Andrew Markus is Professor of Jewish Civilisation and the Director of the Australian Centre for the Study of Jewish Civilisation at Monash University.

Gabrielle McKinnon is Research Associate in the Centre for International Governance and Justice at the Australian National University.

Robert Nelson is Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, and Acting Head of Department in the School of Visual Arts at Monash University.

John Nieuwenhuysen AM is Professor and Foundation Director of the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements; Chair of the Board, VITS Language Link; a member of RMIT University Council, and a member of the board of the Australian Multicultural Foundation.

Tim Rowse is Senior Research Fellow in the History Program of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University.

Rob White is Professor of Sociology at the University of Tasmania.

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The editors wish to thank the Scanlon Foundation and its chair, Mr Peter Scanlon, for their generous funding of this work. We are also grateful to the Chair of the Board of the Australian Multicultural Foundation, Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO, and its Executive Director, Mr Hass Dellal OAM, for material assistance in conceiving the idea and consistent help in its execution.

The editors wish in particular to thank the eminent authors who have produced an excellent, diverse collection of chapters for the book. They did so with cheerfulness, great professionalism and impressive punctuality.

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James Jupp John Nieuwenhuysen Emma Dawson