



*Shaping our future together*

2022

# Social Cohesion and Inclusion Conference

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The conference will offer opportunities for all participating to actively engage with presenters and panellists, and to explore insights and experiences during intimate small group discussions as part of the program.

*The Australian Baha'i Community acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.*

# Conference Brief



The 2022 National Social Cohesion and Inclusion Conference will be the fourth annual conference hosted by the Australian Baha'i Community. These conferences aim to be an ongoing space to explore the various settings, approaches, and methods that help to foster greater social cohesion and inclusion in Australia. They are opportunities for those who are thinking deeply about the progress of our country to deliberate, learn, share ideas and reflect on experience.

This year's conference will begin by honouring and celebrating the thousands of well-wishers of humanity who came together at more than 85 of The World Conferences in Australia to deliberate on the material, social and spiritual progress of our country and steps to traverse the obstacles impeding social cohesion. Individuals and community representatives from every part of Australia, of all religions, cultures, ages and

backgrounds, share a longing to foster social cohesion, unity and contribute to the betterment of the world. Their determination and strong sense of purpose are reflected in the spirit generated at these conferences, hosted by local Baha'i communities across Australia.

A report capturing their insights, hopes, noble aspirations, and unity of vision and action will be formally presented to the representatives of the Australian government at the opening reception. This will be followed by cultural and artistic performances celebrating our cohesion, diversity and the oneness of humanity.

The remaining sessions of the conference will include keynote presentations, panels and small group consultations where civil society leaders and representatives will deliberate further on this report and consult on steps to strengthen social cohesion. Themes for this year include:

- ☀ A vision of social cohesion in Australia
- ☀ The distance traversed to strengthen social cohesion: Community, Mass Media and Government Institutions
- ☀ Obstacles impeding further progress
- ☀ Glimpses of Social Transformation: Traversing obstacles to social cohesion – experiences from organisations and communities of practice.

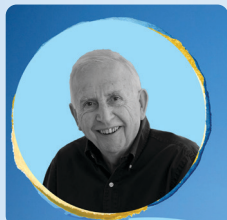
Since 2019, these conferences have aimed to systematically build upon themes and ideas introduced by speakers and panellists from the previous ones. The programs have been designed to respond to contemporary issues pertinent to advancing the national discourse on social cohesion. The 2019 conference focused on Indigenous values and ethics; the need for a collective vision for the future; the experiences of those at the grassroots; and the role of the media.

Last year, presenters looked at issues on the role of leadership in fostering social cohesion; social

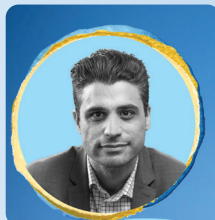
and economic inequalities; the impact of COVID-19 on social cohesion; and the impact of social cohesion on our future economy, justice system, Indigenous reconciliation, the media and policy. In breakout sessions, participants consulted on how they can advance the 'Pathways for Action' that had been identified during 50 roundtables with 500 participants as part of the "Creating an Inclusive Narrative" project held around Australia. The 2022 conference will focus on the themes of diversity and inclusion, consultation and participation, reflecting on how organisations and community groups are putting into action the themes above through initiatives, policy and projects.



# Keynote, Speakers & Presenters



***Hugh Mackay AO***  
Social Researcher and Author



***Aleem Ali***  
CEO, Welcoming Australia



***Tessa Scrine***  
Member, Continental Board of  
Counsellors in Australasia



***Vic Alhadeff***  
SBS, Board of Directorsllective



***Dr. Chrisanthi Giotis***  
Lecturer in Journalism & Writing, UniSA



***Ruha Fifta***  
Artist, Choreographer and Cultural  
Ambassador, Ivi Projects



***Hari Remala***  
Educational Consultant



2022

## SOCIAL COHESION & INCLUSION CONFERENCE PROGRAM

### DAY ONE

Monday 30 May 2022

6.00pm - 6.30pm Registration Opens

6.30pm - 8.30pm Conference Reception

Welcome and Opening

Welcome to Country

Presentation of World Conferences – Australia report

Cultural Artistic Performances

*(Canapes and Drinks to be served)*

### DAY TWO

Tuesday 31 May 2022

8:30am - 9:00am Registration Opens

9:00am - 10:30am Conference Session 1

Welcome and Opening

**Keynote Address - Kindness: The key to social cohesion**

Hugh Mackay AO - Social Researcher and Author

**A vision for social cohesion and the distance traversed in government, media and community**

**Government:** Aleem Ali - CEO, Welcoming Australia

**Media:** Vic Alhadeff - SBS, Board of Directors

**Community:** Tessa Scrine - Member, Continental Board of Counselors

Audience Q&A

10.30am - 11.15am Morning Tea & Networking



## 11.15am - 12.45pm Conference Session 2

Small Group Discussion on themes from Session 1

12.45pm - 2.00pm **Lunch**

## 2.00pm - 3.20pm Conference Session 3

Small Group Discussion summary

**Panel - Glimpses of Social Transformation: Experiences from organisations and communities of practice**

**Vic Alhadeff** - Keep NSW Safe Campaign

**Ruha Fifita** - Ivi Community Arts Collective

**Dr. Chrisanthi Giotis** - Reimagining the Media Landscape Initiative

**Hari Remala** - Social Cohesion and Transformation in Neighbourhoods

Audience Q&A

3.20pm - 3.45pm **Afternoon Tea & Networking**

## 3.45pm - 5.00pm Conference Session 4

Small Group Discussion on themes from Session 3

**Conference Closing**

# A vision for social cohesion and the distance traversed

## Small-Group Discussion Questions

### Morning session

*Explore the implications of the theme in relation to the reality of the people with whom you are engaged.*

- ✱ What are the characteristics and the aspirations of the people with whom you are engaged? (e.g. physical environment, demographics, aspirations of children, youth, parents, and adults, strengths and challenges)
- ✱ What contributes to a vision of a united and socially cohesive society among the people with whom you are engaged?
- ✱ What aspects of the presentations resonate with those aspirations?
- ✱ What are some examples of the ways in which cooperation and mutual assistance are manifest among individuals, the community, institutions, and the leaders of society?
- ✱ In what way is consultation being used as a means for making decisions and strengthening social cohesion? What spaces exist for regular consultation and reflection?
- ✱ In what ways are you learning to engage growing numbers in the process of building a vibrant and socially cohesive society?
- ✱ Reflect on the development of society  
Map the distance traversed over the years in relation to the endeavours in which you have been engaged to strengthen social cohesion and inclusion, and link this to the current reality and **a vision for the immediate future.**





# Glimpses of social transformation

## Small-Group Discussion Questions

### Afternoon session

*Explore the implications of the theme in relation to the reality of the people with whom you are engaged.*

- ✱ What are some of the social, economic, and cultural barriers impeding social cohesion and inclusion? In what ways are the endeavours in which you are involved helping to:  
a) raise consciousness about these barriers and  
b) overcome them?
- ✱ In what ways are you and those with whom you are engaged learning to raise consciousness of the qualities and attitudes needed to contribute to social cohesion?
- ✱ In what ways are interactions with leaders and institutions advancing social cohesion?
- ✱ How can we develop the capacity of increasing numbers of people to contribute to strengthening social cohesion and inclusion?
- ✱ What are some of the signs that social transformation is occurring within the groups of people with whom you are engaged?

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SO POWERFUL IS THE LIGHT OF UNITY  
THAT IT CAN ILLUMINATE  
THE WHOLE EARTH

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BAHA'I WRITINGS

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