To build community resilience it is important to understand the individual and examine personal perceptions and beliefs that influence our sense of identity and belonging. Questions of connectedness and shared values in a community are explored via the social, historical, and cultural factors that contribute to community development and sense of belonging. We use multiple lenses to gain a deeper understanding of identity and belonging. Our evidence-based research has helped deepen understanding of the shared values and beliefs that help to build connected and resilient communities. Our research draws attention to the voice of community which can feed into decision processes such that governance becomes more inclusive.

Our research in intercultural competence helps to explain:
- **Cultural awareness** (Who am I? How do my cultural values influence my words, thoughts and my behaviour?);
- **Cultural understanding** (Why are people with a different cultural background not necessarily thinking, talking and behaving as I am expecting?); and
- **Cultural sensitivity** (How do we understand/deal with difference?)

Arts researchers are collaborating with community leaders and key stakeholders at the local, state and regional level to identify creative solutions and innovative research projects to capture robust data and evidence to help build connected and resilient communities. Projects related to identity and belonging have helped to: explain identity, social change and emerging needs of Melbourne’s Jewish community; write unexplored history of Vietnamese veterans in Australia; explore issues of Australian heritage in times of accelerated climate change; examine urban cultural policy; examine immigrants’ changing values and perceptions of funeral rites in the context of multicultural Australia; and map out life histories, generational change and memory of Australian communities.
CASE STUDY | PROFESSOR KOICHI IWABUCHI

MIGRANT DIPLOMACY: AUSTRALIA-JAPAN COLLABORATION TO FOSTER CULTURAL DIVERSITY BY ARTISTIC PRACTICES

This project explores the role of Museums and artistic projects as mechanisms for promoting cultural diversity across borders. With the intensification of human mobility and migration, we are observing the rise of antagonistic sentiments and movements against migration and multiculturalism in many parts of the world. In such a contrarily diverse world of today, cultivation of a compassionate social understanding is vital to embrace and foster cultural diversity. Various actors such as artists (e.g., film makers, visual artists, musicians, writers), museum, curators, migrant communities, NGOs and local governments are actively and jointly working to encourage innovative artistic presentation and expression of migrants’ and their descendants’ experience and presence as constitutive of society. This project aims to advance such cultural practices by promoting cross-border dialogue and partnership between the Immigration Museum in Melbourne and associated artists in Australia and the counterparts in Japan.

Through a series of collaborative events and an ongoing exchange of ideas, this project will facilitate a cross-border dialogue over museums’ and artistic projects’ role in representing and promoting cultural diversity in society and how to further develop it together. Involving diverse actors of two countries, this project also innovatively enhances public diplomacy in mutual terms by developing Australia-Japan relations on a common ground of trans-Asia human mobility. The transnational dialogue and collaboration enabled by this project will nurture new directions and practices to foster cultural diversity and newly enhance Australia’s engagement with Asian regions.