Our research explores issues of social cohesion and migration from inter-personal and intergroup interactions to social and economic dynamics at the national and international level. With over 80 academics and more than 50 graduate research students in the faculty working in social cohesion and migration, we are at the forefront of research into the mechanisms of building and sustaining stronger, more resilient communities. Since 2010 we have collaborated with 67 national and international partners to deliver more than 100 projects valued over $10 million. Practical applications of this research include informing policy making, contributing to debate and reporting on trends in social cohesion both here in Australia and internationally.

SOCIAL COHESION, INCLUSION, RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING

Our research explores perceptions of equality of opportunity and trust in institutions. It examines social cohesion in urban and regional areas in Victoria and throughout Australia.

We explore the extent to which community members have equal access to resources in the community (education, healthcare, employment, housing) and how this affects, for example:

- community resilience/connectedness and community health and well-being; and

- community engagement and political/civic participation.

Arts researchers have worked across different community groups such as youth, newly arrived and well established migrant groups, vulnerable groups, and indigenous communities to help determine appropriate means of structuring services and social infrastructure in order to cater to these diverse needs. Our findings have helped to define best practice and map out the conditions required for successful implementation. As such this theme is concerned with transformation and improvement of services.

Our researchers collaborate with different service providers to develop and inform policy. Projects have included: work with interpreters in mental health settings; recording Aboriginal Exemption Policies in Australia; identifying the conditions for enhancing social cohesion and understanding in regional Victoria; research to explain the barriers and facilitators of neighbourhood networks and cohesion; and roadmaps of the conditions necessary for creating access to services for women with disabilities experiencing family violence.

CASE STUDY OVERLEAF: TRANSFORMING MULTICULTURAL POLICY AND AIDING EQUAL ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY
For just under a decade our researchers and practitioners have been delivering successful research-based professional development programs for translators, interpreters and end-users. The programs have aimed to enhance social cohesion by combining traditional migrant and cultural competence studies with the recognition of the centrality of a variety of language practices, ranging from multilingualism to translation and interpreting, in a world seen to be increasingly characterised by transnational and globalised connections.

Specifically the program was designed with the aim of:

- **Serving** the professional development needs of practising translators and interpreters;
- **Providing** training to interpreters entering the profession with a focus on high-demand, and new and emerging language communities;
- **Redressing** regional deficits in language services to remove barriers to successful settlement for recently arrived refugees and economic migrants;
- **Engaging** with stakeholders in the industry in Australia and abroad; and
- **Influencing** public policy.

The impact achieved was multi-faceted from the transformation of translation and interpreting practices and policies across Victoria, nationally and internationally, to the adoption of a practice-informed methodology which led to the involvement of a wide range of domain-specific experts (GPs, psychologists, police, ethnic groups, researchers across a range of disciplines) in the development of several topic-specific areas of delivery (Legal, Health, Mental Health, Family Violence, and Stress Management). More than 1,000 trainees and practitioners completed entry-level training or professional development program.

The outputs delivered spanned scholarly publications, reports for government departments and the delivery of the professional development program. These outputs demonstrate how these different facets inform each other in a cyclical manner: i.e., practice informs research, which informs training, which then informs practice.

Questions addressed by the project were:

- What are the perceived linguistic and cultural barriers to access the full range of social services on which successful settlement depends?
- What is the relationship between government language policies and actual practices with regard to the deployment of public service interpreters and the provision of translated material?

Impact delivered:

- A foundation for evidence-based policy-making in multilingual communication support.
- Informing and guiding changes to national and international policy frameworks related to the provision of settlement services, focusing in particular on the language needs and barriers faced by refugees and asylum seekers.
- Intervening to break the vicious circle of under-professionalisation in the translation and interpreting industry.