

Deborah Lockhart

Australian Disputes Centre
Chief Executive Officer



Appointed as CEO in 2013, Deborah is a strategic leader, change manager and ADR specialist. An early advocate for ADR in Australia, Deborah introduced its commercial and community benefits into the financial services sector in a career spanning 25 years. Admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand, Deborah is currently a Steering Committee Member for the Australian ADR Industry Forum; Executive Officer of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (Australia); Editorial Panel member, Lexis Nexis ADR Bulletin and Advisory Committee Member, Melbourne Commercial Arbitration and Mediation Centre.

Mediation for Social Cohesion: A Case Study in Community Skills Development

Building conflict and dispute resolution capability in communities and organisations is central to building long term national social cohesion. Conflict and disputes are an inevitable part of life for all communities. Empowering community members with the skills, techniques and processes that can help reduce levels of conflict and effectively resolve disputes, while preserving relationships, is fundamental to ensuring a cohesive society. The Australian Disputes Centre is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting best practice conflict and dispute resolution. During nearly 30 years, ADC has trained thousands of mediators from all walks of life. Mediation is a proven dispute resolution process in many cross cultural contexts. In 2014, ADC introduced its Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Mediation Training Scholarship Program with the aim of empowering local people within local communities with the highly effective skills of a trained and accredited mediator. This paper discusses the goals, approach and experience of this national program and its potential application in other community contexts where social cohesion is a vital objective.