

Sky de Jersey

Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA)
Executive Officer



Sky is the Executive Officer of the Settlement Council of Australia. Sky spent 5 years working with recently arrived refugees for the St Vincent de Paul Society, firstly managing direct settlement services, and then coordinating all migrant and refugee activities for Vinnies in NSW. This role included membership on the Refugee Council Board, a position Sky retained while shifting sectors, spending time working in international development and intellectual disability. Spending 9 years as a teenager in Africa shaped Sky's engagement with the world, leading her to study anthropology and philosophy, culminating in a Masters in Applied Anthropology and Development Studies at Macquarie University.

Building Community Cohesion Through Inclusive Settlement

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) is the peak national settlement agency representing more than 80 settlement organisations in all states and territories, each with its own constituency of organisations.

The paper will discuss the focus of the work undertaken within the settlement sector to support and strengthen community cohesion.

Settlement agencies are often the first contact newly arrived migrants and refugees have with Australian institutions. As such they play an important role in fostering community understanding and cohesion within and between the many different communities in Australia.

Direct examples will be given of grassroots programs that are proving effective in building links within the community. The presentation will also explore conceptual issues surrounding building community cohesion which arise in the development and delivery of community cohesion programs.

The need for cross-agency, cross-government and government-NGO partnership in supporting programs developing policy that can be owned and implemented at the local level by all Australians has never been greater.

The settlement sector specialises in receiving and settling new arrivals and, in so doing, has developed an extensive repository of knowledge and experience critical to fostering community cohesion and engagement of new arrivals with other Australians in metropolitan centres and regional and remote areas.