

Session #4 – Neighbourhoods as settings for learning and impact

The *2025 Mapping Social Cohesion Report* notes that one of the sources of community strength in recent years has been in neighbourhood connections and cohesion. “Most Australians continue to report high levels of local connection and neighbourliness,” and this provides “an important source of connection, belonging and resilience in local communities. These, in turn, potentially support social cohesion across the country.”¹

The *Creating an Inclusive Narrative* publication notes that neighbourhoods are unique environments that deserve particular attention and support from all levels of society. In a neighbourhood we have a shared identity and status: that we are all ‘neighbours’ to someone. “It is in neighbourhoods that intensive learning about social cohesion can take place and be sustained. It is the shared space where diverse individuals have the opportunity to come together to draw on the intergenerational, intercultural and interfaith wisdom, and the range of experiences, skills and talents that they all possess.” “All share a common social reality, and all can make small, but meaningful contributions to social change.”²

- What does social cohesion in neighborhoods look like? How is it proving to be an important source of connection, belonging and resilience? How can it strengthen the ‘social, emotional and practical bonds’ among diverse groups of people?
- What are the processes and endeavours that bring people together and help foster a greater sense of togetherness and connection in the neighborhood? What helps to sustain and strengthen such engagement?

¹ The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, *2025 Mapping Social Cohesion Report* (2025).

² Australian Baha’i Community, *Creating an Inclusive Narrative*, (2021)