



## **Making social worlds**

### *Language limitations*

#### **Professor Andrew Jakubowicz:**

If you don't have access to the national language you're really disempowered in quite serious ways. If we're looking for the long term integration of people into Australian society then we desperately need very much more effective English language support programmes, not simply so people can pass citizenship tests which is, in a sense, a trivial part of the process, but so they can engage with Australian society and more particularly so that their skills and capacities can actually contribute fully. There's nothing quite so sad in the Australian context as the many thousands of stories of highly skilled immigrants whose qualifications were never recognised and whose capacities were never utilised. Doctors who spent their lives as taxi drivers, academics and professors who were cleaners, engineers who were never able to contribute to the building of Australian society and I think that's something that Australia needs to be aware of. It's not simply a matter of the Australian taxpayer paying for this stuff, there is a huge return if we properly utilise the skills and capacities that people bring here and a huge loss if we don't.