

## Conference

# The Future of Democracy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Vulnerabilities, Risks and Strategies for Democratic Resilience

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UNIVERSITATEA  
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of Dundee**

## Keynote Speakers

**Dr Nicole Tausch** is Reader in Psychology in the School of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of St Andrews. Her research in social psychology focuses on intergroup relations, conflict, prejudice and discrimination, and the psychological processes that shape political participation and collective action. Dr Tausch's work spans experimental and longitudinal methods to understand how group-based emotions, perceived injustice, and social context influence attitudes and behaviour in diverse social settings. She has received funding from the British Academy and the Economic and Social Research Council for projects on political engagement and social change, and has published widely on the dynamics of intergroup contact, collective action, and social perception.



**Dr Matteo Vergani** is Associate Professor in Sociology at Deakin University and Director of the Tackling Hate Lab, where he leads research on hate, hate crime, and political violence. His interdisciplinary work examines the “ecosystem of hate”, from discrimination and micro-aggressions to hate speech and extremist violence, and the social and policy factors that drive and prevent these harms in multicultural societies. Dr Vergani has published widely on hate, radicalisation, and violent extremism, completed numerous impact evaluations of prevention and counter-extremism interventions, and secured significant research funding across Australia and Southeast Asia.





## Overview

Democracy is under increased pressure as populism, polarisation, foreign authoritarian interference, and declining institutional trust erode its normative and institutional foundations. The algorithmic amplification of disinformation and the strategic use of digital influencers are already eroding the necessary conditions for democratic deliberation and civic participation. Understanding these developments is vital to confronting the current crisis of legitimacy for elected governments and safeguarding democratic continuity.

This conference invites critical engagement with the vulnerabilities undermining democracy and with interventions that strengthen its resilience. We welcome interdisciplinary contributions from political science, psychology, sociology, media and communication studies, law, computer science, and related disciplines addressing these issues. By examining the social, affective, and technological dynamics of democracy amid the rise of social media, populism, artificial intelligence, and transnational digital authoritarianism, the conference aims to advance conceptual, empirical, and practical insights into democratic renewal.

## Organisers

The conference and workshop are organised by Ihsan Yilmaz (Deakin University), Ana-Maria Bliuc (The University of Dundee), Daniela-Muntele (“A.I. Cuza” University of Iași), John Betts (Monash University), and Matthew Belanger (Stirling University).

