

# LEVELLING THE SPIRIT

ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

The last decade or so has seen social and economic inequalities increase in many countries including Australia. A recent OECD report points to an increase in income inequality in most (but not all) OECD countries in the two decades to 2008 and notes that:

**Rising income inequality creates economic, social and political challenges. It can stifle upward social mobility, making it harder for talented and hard-working people to get the rewards they deserve ... The resulting inequality of opportunity will inevitably impact economic performance as a whole ...** (OCED, *Summary of Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising*, 2011: 40).

In *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better* (2009) Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett suggest that the broader economic and social consequences of high and growing levels of inequality include the prevalence of health and social problems, teenage births, violence and rates of incarceration.

While the dimensions of change differ from country to country, common trends include increasing inequality in both economic dimensions such as income, living standards and wealth, and in social dimensions ranging from social exclusion to the digital divide. In Australia, inequalities in school funding and tertiary education participation, in locational disadvantage, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups, and between and within generations present challenges that the political system seems incapable of dealing with.

This symposium will explore the nature, meaning and especially the impacts of inequality for the fabric of social relations, public policy and democratic government. It will feature the launch of a new series of *ABS Measuring Economic Wellbeing Facts Sheets* giving high quality information about the most important dimensions of inequality in income and wealth in Australia. While the symposium will inform its audience about magnitudes and patterns of change, the emphasis will be on open discussion of issues, perspectives and implications.

## 2013 SYMPOSIUM

### PROGRAM • TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER

- 8.30 Symposium Registration
- 9.00 **PRESIDENT'S WELCOME AND SYMPOSIUM OPENING**  
PRESIDENT'S WELCOME **Debbie Terry** FASSA
- 9.05 CONVENOR'S INTRODUCTION **Peter Saunders** FASSA, **Sheila Shaver** FASSA, **Susan Kippax** FASSA  
*Including the launch of a series of ABS Measuring Economic Wellbeing Facts Sheets by a speaker from the ABS Population, Labour and Social Statistics Group*
- 9.15 **SESSION 1 Perspectives**  
CHAIR **Peter Saunders** FASSA  
KEYNOTE ADDRESS **Lars Osberg** *What's so bad about more inequality? Why?*
- 10.00 **Andrew Leigh** MP FASSA *Battlers and Billionaires: The story of inequality in Australia*
- 10.30 MORNING TEA
- 11.00 **SESSION 2 Critical Impacts**  
CHAIR **Susan Kippax** FASSA  
**Fran Baum** FASSA *Action on Health Equity: Reducing health gradients through theoretically and politically informed action*
- 11.30 **Jen Skattebol** *Vagrants and Cartographers: The lived experiences of hollowed out equity policies and practices in education*
- 12 NOON **Rosanna Scutella** *Social exclusion in Australia*
- 12.30 LUNCH
- 1.30 **SESSION 3 Political Consequences and Challenges**  
CHAIR **Sheila Shaver** FASSA  
**Brian Head** FASSA *Policy challenges of inequality as a wicked problem*
- 2.15 **Shaun Wilson** *Inequality and Insecurity: Political and social responses to inequality in Australia*
- 3.00 AFTERNOON TEA
- 3.30 **SESSION 4 Facilitated Discussion: Inequality, Policy Responses and the Role of the Social Sciences**  
FACILITATOR **John Nieuwenhuysen** AM FASSA  
*The facilitated discussion of the issues raised in earlier sessions will provide ample opportunity for participation from the floor*
- 4.25 Conclusion and thanks
- 4.30 PRESIDENT'S DRINKS AT THE SHINE DOME
- 5.30 **CUNNINGHAM LECTURE**  
**Professor Simon Chapman** AO FASSA  
*Plain packaging of tobacco products: A case study in radical health policy adoption and the role of advocacy*

### PRESENTERS

- Professor Fran Baum** FASSA, Head, Department of Public Health, Flinders University
- Professor Brian Head** FASSA, Policy Research Program, Institute for Social Science Research, The University of Queensland
- Dr Andrew Leigh** MP FASSA, Member for Fraser, House of Representatives
- Professor Lars Osberg**, McCulloch Professor of Economics, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada
- Professor John Nieuwenhuysen** AM FASSA, Honorary Professorial Fellow, Asia Institute, University of Melbourne and Emeritus Professor, Monash University
- Dr Rosanna Scutella**, Senior Research Fellow, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, The University of Melbourne
- Dr Jen Skattebol**, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales
- Dr Shaun Wilson**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Macquarie University

### CONVENORS

- Professor Peter Saunders** FASSA, Research Professor in Social Policy, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales
- Emeritus Professor Sheila Shaver** FASSA, Honorary Professor, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales
- Professor Susan Kippax** FASSA, Emeritus Professor, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales

## 2013 CUNNINGHAM LECTURE

Professor Simon Chapman AO FASSA



ACADEMY OF  
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IN AUSTRALIA

PROMOTING THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

## 2013 SYMPOSIUM

5.30pm-6.30pm TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2013

SHINE DOME · CANBERRA

Free admission, RSVP required.

Register online at [www.assa.edu.au/cunningham2013](http://www.assa.edu.au/cunningham2013)

### **Plain packaging of tobacco products: A case study in radical health policy adoption and the role of advocacy**

Tobacco control is widely considered the contemporary poster child of successful public health policy and practice in reducing major chronic diseases. In December 2012, the Australian government became the first nation to prescribe the entire packaging for any consumer product when it introduced plain packaging law for tobacco products. The bill attracted sustained opposition from the tobacco industry and its acolytes, a High Court challenge, a World Trade Organisation action and a claimed bilateral trade treaty violation between Australia and Hong Kong. Many millions of dollars were spent unsuccessfully by the tobacco industry in trying to defeat the bill. This lecture will consider both proximal and distal factors in the success of the bill. It will also consider the role of public health advocacy, and specifically the extent to which the case highlights the importance of active engagement by social science researchers in the policy advocacy process.

### **Professor Simon Chapman AO FASSA**

Simon Chapman AO PhD FASSA Hon FFPH (UK), is Professor in Public Health at the University of Sydney. He has published 466 articles in peer reviewed journals and 17 books and major reports. His *Public Health Advocacy and Tobacco Control: Making Smoking History* was published by Blackwell (Oxford) in 2007 and his co-authored *Let Sleeping Dogs Lie: What men should know before being tested for prostate cancer* by Sydney University Press in 2010. He was a key member of the Coalition for Gun Control which won the 1996 Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Community Human Rights Award for its advocacy for gun law reform after the Port Arthur massacre in 1996. In 1997 he won the World Health Organisation's World No Tobacco Day Medal and in 2003 he was voted by his international peers to be awarded the American Cancer Society's Luther Terry Award for outstanding individual leadership in tobacco control. In 2008 he won the NSW Premier's Cancer Researcher of the Year medal and the Public Health Association of Australia's Sidney Sax medal. He was deputy editor (1992-1997) then editor (1998-2008) of the British Medical Journal's *Tobacco Control* and is now its editor emeritus. In 2013 he was made an Officer in the Order of Australia for his contributions to public health.

### **Presentations by New Fellows**

FOR FELLOWS AND INVITED GUESTS

#### **MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2013**

7.30PM Common Room, University House

On the evening before the Annual Symposium Fellows-elect (those who will be welcomed into the Academy by the President on the evening of 12 November) will briefly describe their past and current work. A list of the New Fellows who will be presenting will be available on the Academy's website in October 2013.

### **Program listing of annual events**

#### **MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER**

7.30PM **Presentations by New Fellows**, Common Room, University House  
Fellows and invited guests

#### **TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER**

9.00AM **Annual Symposium: *Levelling the Spirit: Addressing the social impacts of economic inequality***, Shine Dome  
Registration open to Fellows and non-Fellows

4.30PM **President's Drinks at the Shine Dome**  
Symposium registrants and invited guests

5.30PM **Cunningham Lecture: *Plain packaging of tobacco products: A case study in radical health policy adoption and the role of advocacy***, Shine Dome  
Free admission. Bookings essential

7.45PM **Fellows' Dinner**, Great Hall, University House  
(7.15pm for 7.45pm)  
Registered Fellows and invited guests only

#### **WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER**

7.45AM **New Fellows' Breakfast**, Fellows' Bar, University House  
New Fellows only

9.00AM **Panel discussions** (Fellows only, by registration)  
*Panel A Seminar Room, University House*  
*Panel B Scarth Room, University House*  
*Panel C Ian Wark Theatre, Shine Dome*  
*Panel D, Becker Room, Shine Dome*

10.45AM **Annual General Meeting**, Ian Wark Theatre, Shine Dome  
Fellows only, by registration

1.00PM **Lunch**, Shine Dome - Complimentary for registered Fellows and invited guests

### **For more information or to register online go to**

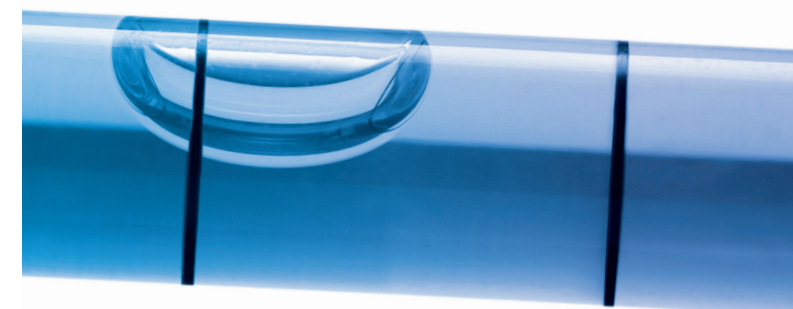
[www.assa.edu.au/events/symposium/2013](http://www.assa.edu.au/events/symposium/2013)

Manual registration is also available by completing the appropriate registration form

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**Tuesday 12 November 2013**

SHINE DOME · CANBERRA

Including the 2013 Cunningham Lecture  
Featuring Professor Simon Chapman AO FASSA