



**TASA** The Australian  
Sociological Association

## Applied Sociology Contact Email for July 2014

Greetings All,

Wow! The responses to my June email was most uplifting. They came from round Australia and from overseas, wherever our members find themselves. Like Dragica Wes who is working in Moldova on the Ukrainian boarder. Christine Walker, holidaying in New York, and Jim .... who now lives and works in Thailand. It seems I am still doing something that others find helpful. At my age, that is most gratifying. However, it is also a point that I want to emphasise. i.e. Retirement is not the end of life, you can go on using your skills. If you look to retirement as the eternal holiday your will soon find it palls. As Christine Walker notes in her email "I am of retirement age but after five weeks holiday I want to return to work." To live a long and happy life you need to keep the brain active and keep doing things which are meaningful and contributing to the community. I started work in 1946 at the age of 14 and my jobs since have been many and varied. I started as office boy, moved on to being a clerk. Then to the British army's navy, and then to laboratory work. All the time doing study at night. Eventually, to my delight I discovered sociology and went on to lead an applied sociology research team for 30 years. To-day I still go to work every day. I have written one small book. I work with Marines Rescue NSW. I do research for the local museum, and I do things for TASA, and at 82 I'm still going strong.

I do appreciate that many of you who do read my monthly emails are not able to respond. What I needed to know was that I was being helpful. That seems to be the case. There were also a few things in your responses that I think I need to address. First, 'Am I a sociologist?' If you have looked at Anthony Hogan's post on G-mail you will have seen his declaration "I am a sociologist and proud of it." As far as I am concerned, if you have studied sociology, if you do sociology, or if you do other work but still have your sociology background to feed into it, or if you are interested enough to be part of the sociological family: **You are a sociologist.** We do not have a professional association which sets standards for sociologists. I wish we did and in time this may come. While we are waiting for this to happen, we need to declare to anyone who listen that we are sociologists and proud of it. We have a skill which the community needs, but does not know or understand. It will only be when we are proud enough of our discipline to tell the community what we can do, that a wider recognition of our discipline can be achieved.

Another issue that has been raised, asks the question, "Where can I get sociological support when I am a lone sociologist and no one to talk to about my work." First let me offer myself. Email me with your problem and include your phone number if you would like to talk. Second, if you would like a broader response to your concern. Send me the details and I can circulate it to everyone in our group. But also remember that many of our members may not have time to respond. However, if you don't try you don't know what you can get. Another possibility is to make contact with your local university (If they have sociology) and see if they can help. (My nearest university with a sociology department is 210km away, so if you have the same sort of distance, the university option may not be appropriate.) For me, it is important that applied sociologists, especially when they are the sole one in an organisation, have somewhere to turn for professional assistance.

The next TASA conference is in Adelaide 24 – 27 November. The theme is "Challenging Identities, Institutions and Communities. To encourage non-academic members to attend the Executive would like members who have conducted applied research or written sociological papers on their work to apply for the TASA Conference Scholarship for Sociologists Outside Academe. Applications close on September 8th, 2014.

One last thought for this month. How is Liberal Party policy and budget affecting where you work? Are their programmes good or bad or not affecting where you work? Think about these questions as a sociologists for your own sake and if you feel like it share your thoughts with the rest of us.

Thanks again everyone.

Alan Scott, Continuing Education Officer