



**TASA** The Australian  
Sociological Association

## Contact Email for November 2015

Greetings All,

An article in the New Scientist for the 31st October, (pp8-9). The opening paragraph has this to say: "The curtain at the edge of the universe may be ripping, hinting that there may be more backstage. Data from the European Space Agency's Planck telescope could be giving us our first glimpse of another universe, with different physics, bumping up against our own." I'm not sure that their 'different physics' logically follows, but the thought of us on our small planet, moving in a small galaxy, in a universe we cannot comprehend, with all our troubles, makes us so insignificant in what is now an understanding of a reality that we cannot fully grasp. Where do our theories of sociology fit in a universe that is banging into another universe? I will leave the issue there, and move on to issues in our small part of our small planet.

In response to the 'Becoming More Professional' material that Mitzi prepared, there has been a massive 36 responses posted. Mitzi has asked for permission to make a 20 minute presentation to the Executive at the Conference next week and I will be there in support. She has also got the issues on the Annual Meeting agenda for debate. (A copy of the proposal is attached.) Any of our members who will be present at the Conference please make sure you are at the Annual Meeting. If any of you who cannot be there have anything you would like to be presented at the Annual Meeting, please send it to me before Thursday (19<sup>th</sup>).

Whilst we are on our Group's matters, I would remind you that I agreed to be Acting Convenor until the Group Meeting at the Annual Meeting. I did not want things to fall in a heap and have tried to keep things going. However, I am getting too old, and the group needs someone a bit younger to see to the running of things. The position is: there is one year left of Lyndal Thompson's three years which needs to be filled, then if that person wants (and the rest of us agree) they can continue in a three year term in their own right. If one person is not prepared to commit for four years we will need one person for one year then another person beginning a three year term starting in 2017. For the moment I am willing to continue being the Continuing Education Officer, and produce the monthly Contact email, it keeps my mind ticking over.

I will finish off this month with something else from 'New Scientist' (17th November, p22). This article concerns new digital technology which can search millions of papers to identify for you every paper that has been published on the particular topic you are interested in. It makes the point that of all the papers published each year only half will be read by more than three people. This has started with The Allen Institute in Seattle. A second organisation, Meta Science, has opened up in Toronto to do the same thing. The U.S. Defense Advanced Research Agency is working on a similar search engine. This article was written with the natural sciences in mind, but it would be just as useful for the social science. I don't know if these programs are available to search for sociology or whether there is niche opportunity for someone to develop a new one.

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Acting Convenor