

The Australian Sociological Association

## **Applied Sociology Thematic Group**

### **Contact email September 2011**

Last week-end I went to a Volunteer Marine Rescue exercise at Camden Haven, NSW. We spent the weekend going through the processes necessary for saving life at sea and testing it out on the ocean. On the way home I was reminded just how tenuous life can be on the land. Whilst driving home along the Pacific Highway, my car was clipped by a semi-trailer, thrown across the road, rolled over and became a total wreck. I, and my three passengers miraculously were able to walk away without a scratch. At the same time I was reminded how caring complete strangers can be. People stopped and came to help. Ambulances arrived and insisted we should be checked out at the hospital. The head of Marine Rescue, Coffs Harbour, was told and immediately drove two hours in the dark to check on us and drive us home when we were released. The next morning the regional manager was at my door and the NSW Head of Marine Rescue telephoned me, to make sure I was alright and offer assistance if needed.

I would like you to see our Applied Sociology Thematic Group, not just as providing a place for papers to be published or an occasional meeting but as a backup for your professional life. I hope we can develop it as a place where you can get help for cares and concerns your professional life brings. Being a professional sociologist outside of university usually means you are struggling to make your professional contribution among people who have little or no idea what sociology is about. I hope we will be able to find ways in which we can support each other, further our own professional development and make a real sociological contribution to our society.

I intend to keep in contact with our group by email on a monthly basis. I hope this will remind you that you are thought about by your professional Association, that through this medium we can share information (if you help by passing information on to me), and provide for the group a collegiate atmosphere for those of us who do not have the support of a college or university.

My piece of information for this month is probably old hat to some but may be new to others: The 'Sociologists Outside Academia' section of the British Sociological Association (<http://www.britsoc.co.uk/>). They see themselves as "a group of who have come together through our common experience of being members situated largely outside of academia or who do not fit the 'traditional' profile of institutionally based sociologists. Their aims are to Strengthen the idea that we are first and foremost sociologists regardless of our circumstances. Raise the profile and value of sociologists working largely outside the academy (including post-graduate students who may not wish to, or are unable to remain in the academy). Raise the status of sociological work undertaken beyond an academic context. Raise awareness of the support needed for sociologists outside academia and they have a journal with interesting articles.

Take care at sea and on the roads,

Alan Scott  
Convenor