



ACADEMY OF THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

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ARC funding for ‘The Use of Big Data for Social Policy’

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) President, Professor Glenn Withers AO, has welcomed Linkage funding from the Australian Research Council for the project, ‘*The Use of Big Data for Social Policy: Benefits and risks*’, announced today by the Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Senator Simon Birmingham. <http://www.arc.gov.au/news-media/media-releases/115-million-special-research-projects-australian-learned-academies>

The project will lead to significant advances in knowledge regarding the application of big data to social policy. It will yield innovative cross-disciplinary research outcomes and promote future collaboration between the social sciences and big data disciplines, such as statistics, data science, and computation.

ASSA is receiving \$170,000 over two years to help foster increased collaboration, discovery, productivity, and translation between Australian researchers.

ASSA’s Project Lead, Professor Janet Chan, said the new project will use a case-study approach to address some of the most challenging research problems at the interface of the social sciences and public policy.

“The project will be the first systematic analysis of how big data and analytics have been and can potentially be applied to social policy in Australia,” she said.

The project, which involves five Chief Investigators, in addition to Professor Chan, will deliver practical assessments of potential applications of large-scale data and analytics in key areas of social policy. Through the specific studies it will aim to develop a broadly applicable understanding of the risks and benefits involved in using big data to achieve social policy outcomes. This innovative new knowledge will be valuable to policy makers and social advocates concerned to look over the horizon to policy development, evaluation, and privacy protection in the digital era.

For more information please contact: Dr John Beaton ED ASSA 0438 451 944

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia—26 Balmain Crescent Acton ACT 2600

P +61 2 6249 1788—[Www.assa.edu.au](http://www.assa.edu.au)— Secretariat@assa.edu.au