



ACADEMY OF  
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IN AUSTRALIA

**Jubilee Fellows**  
**2014**

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Committee of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, together with the entire Fellowship, join us in extending the honour of Jubilee Fellowship to two Fellows who were elected to the Academy in 1964.

Over 50 years, Emeritus Professor Ronald Taft (Panel D, Psychology) and Emeritus Professor John Legge AO (Panel C, History) have made significant contributions not only to the Academy but also to the social sciences more broadly.

At the 2014 Academy Annual Dinner, Professor Taft and Professor Legge were presented with a plaque from the Academy in recognition of their long service.

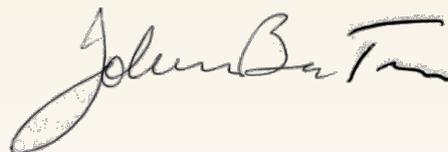
We thank them for their valued contribution to the social sciences and the Academy.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Terry  
President

Yours sincerely



John Beaton  
Executive Director



## **Emeritus Professor Ronald Taft**

is a founding fellow of the Academy, with a specialisation in psychology, personality, immigrants, multiculturalism, and attitudes.

After academic appointments at the University of Western Australia and the University of Melbourne, Professor Taft was Professor of Social Psychology at Monash University. His special field is the adjustment and adaptation of immigrant children and adults.

He was President of the International Association for Cross Cultural Psychology (1984–86) and has been an Executive member of the International Union of Psychological Science and the International Association of Applied Psychology. He was the foundation Chair of the National Committee for Psychology in the Australian Academy of Science.

## **REFLECTIONS**

I am deeply honoured that the Academy has seen fit to mark my 50-year connection with its activities and, more generally, with the Social Sciences in Australia.

I represent one of the longest standing social sciences in Australia—psychology. Although some other disciplines in Australian universities, such as history, economics, anthropology and social geography, may be older, psychology is probably the first to have called itself a science. Already in the 1930s students in the first Australian psychology departments in Sydney and Western Australia

were being taught the catchphrase 'Psychology is a science is a science', I doubt whether any of the other social science disciplines were doing so at that time, and maybe some of them are still not describing themselves as a science. Considering the long-standing image of psychology as a science it is perhaps no coincidence that the first Chair of the Social Science Research Council in 1952 was a psychologist, Kenneth Cunningham—although it might have helped that he was also the administrator of the Carnegie Funds in Australia.

The position of psychology in the Australian Academies raises some degree of ambiguity in identity in that some psychologists work entirely in areas, such as neurology and sensory psychology, that can only be classified as social sciences by a long stretch of the imagination. Quite early in the piece the academies decided that the Academy of Social Sciences would cater for the whole range of psychology rather than splitting the discipline, and this sometimes creates problems in relations with other countries where psychology is usually covered by the Academy of Science, not Social Science.

One radical change that I have seen in my time in the Academy concerns the gender balance. By the early 1970s members started to become aware that the Academy was flagrantly biased in its gender balance. In my early days I think that there was only one female member, Norma McArthur, Reader in Demography at ANU. Later, Enid Campbell, Law Professor at Monash and Jean Martin, Professor of Sociology at La Trobe were elected. The Panels were advised to make a more conscious effort to nominate suitable female candidates and the balance soon started to change.

I was asked to say something about my own research and my membership of the Academy. In my first years in Australian academia, in the 1950s, carrying out research was not a central part of a lecturer's duties, but it already was my expectation as a result of my American experience. It is hard to realise that there were no PhDs in the social sciences in Australia until Sam Hammond and Fred Emery were both awarded that degree in 1959 for research conducted in the Psychology Department at Melbourne University. Their work was stimulated and inspired by the foundation Professor of Psychology at Melbourne, Oscar Oeser who also was a social psychologist.

In 1955 Clyde Kluckhohn, an anthropologist who was the Head of Harvard's Department of Social Relations, had come to Australia with a commission from the Carnegie Corporation to provide financial support for research in the social sciences, and after some investigation he decided to put the funds entirely into studies on the psychology of immigrants that I and my team were conducting at the University of WA. The process for obtaining those funds was quite informal—just one interview between Kluckhohn and myself; no detailed research proposal was required, no ethics committee, no annual reports and no referees—as far as I know. What a contrast to the present situation where most of my academic friends seem to be spending almost as much time in drafting research proposals as they do in carrying out the research. My program on immigrants, which was started in 1953 in WA, continued for 30 years as I moved, first to the University of Melbourne and then to Monash Faculty of Education. This program on the Psychology of Immigrants was one of the first in the world on that topic and is arguably the most extensive and longest running.

In the early 1960s I started to become vaguely aware of the promotional work that the Australian Social Science Research Council, which consisted of the leading social scientists in Australia, was doing to represent and promote the social sciences. At the same time membership of the Council was starting to become a prestige symbol within academia and it was not surprising that the Council was eventually converted into the Academy with concomitant formal nomination and selection procedures. In 1964 I was given the honour of being invited to join the SSRC, which very soon afterwards became the Academy of Social Sciences. At that time the Executive Officer was Herb Burton, an economic historian known widely as 'Joe', who had been the Principal of Canberra University College.

It seemed to me that the members who were resident in Canberra had a dominating role in the operations of the Council/Academy, which is not surprising in view of the responsibility of the Council for lobbying and consulting governmental and other official bodies that were often located in Canberra. A considerable amount of the Council's time also seems to have been devoted to determining procedures for deciding who should be in, and who shouldn't. Later

on, when panels were created, the nomination procedures and proposals of potential members occupied most of the discussion time at the panel meetings with very little attention given to academic matters.

By the late 1960s it was realised that membership selection was a narrow focus for the Academy and it started to devote more time to promoting some specific research projects, and also workshops and symposia. It was my good luck that the Academy decided to develop as its first major research project my topic, immigration to Australia. This project was led by Mick Borrie who was Head of the Population Studies Department at ANU, supported by Charles Price, demographer at ANU and Reg Appleyard, economic historian at the University of WA. Naturally I was an active member of the guiding committee and was also fortunate enough to be given a financial grant to assist my research team.

Soon afterward the Academy selected a second research project, Australian Aborigines, and again my research on Australian attitudes to Aborigines was given financial support. I was certainly most fortunate in my association with the Academy! In return I had the opportunity to serve on some committees. On two separate occasions I chaired Panel D and, as a result, also served on the Membership Committee and the Executive. Thus I had the opportunity to observe the workings of the Academy from the inside.

The necessary visits to Canberra were for me a pleasure. Australians seem to be divided into Canberra-philes and Canberra-phobes; I fortunately am the former. I always tried to take advantage of the opportunity to visit old friends and national institutions while I was there and always enjoyed my brief exposures to the unique atmosphere of University House. The November meetings used to coincide with Melbourne Cup Day and I celebrated the chance to escape the craziness of Melbourne at that time. I believe that the clash with the Cup offended a horse-racing aficionado who had influence with the Academy and the practice of scheduling the meetings to coincide with Cup Week has now been changed. A pity in my view!

I have long been retired from active scholarship and have only participated once in the activities of the Academy in more recent times, when my son Marcus was

inducted as a Fellow, but I can't stop my old habits of mulling over the elegant mysteries of human behaviour. I hope that I shall continue to do so until the end comes.

Thanks again.

*Ronald Taft*



## **Emeritus Professor John Legge AO**

was appointed to the foundation Chair of History at Monash University in 1960. From 1964 till 1986 he chaired the Monash Centre of Southeast Asian Studies. In 1969–70 he was Director of the Singapore Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. From 1978 to 1986 he was Dean of the Monash Faculty of Arts. In 1987–93 he was an Executive Member on the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board.

His main area of interest has been Indonesian history. His written work includes a study of regionalism and local government in Indonesia (1962), a biography of Sukarno (1972, 1985, and 2003), and *Intellectuals and Nationalism in Indonesia* (1988), an examination of the group which formed about Sutan Sjahrir during the Japanese occupation and became the core of the Indonesian Socialist Party during the revolution. He is also a Fellow of the Academy of the Humanities.

## **REFLECTIONS**

Like Professor Taft, I am honoured by the actions of the Academy in giving me this award. I recall that when discussions about the formation of an Academy began one distinguished historian resisted the idea. He argued that the variety of existing scholarly contacts were sufficient, citing the Australian & New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS) meetings of the 1950s and 1960s, and the Social Science Research Council, the Academy's predecessor, organised in Canberra by Herbert Burton. He went on to describe the creation of an Academy as 'pretentious'. After the Chairman's pencil fell it

was clear the idea of the Academy carried the day. The foundational purpose of the Academy would be to deal with practical challenges facing tertiary institutions.

The Academy performs a function that couldn't be performed by the other institutions, such as unifying perceptions of social science work. Monash, for example, came into being at a time when choices had to be made between whether one should go for faculties and departments in organising a university, or along the lines of 'schools of study' under which institutions would be shaped by overall conceptions of what should be studied. ANZAAS also did not provide universities with directives or avenues for social scientists to work in common with scientists, physicists, and chemists. It was more a case of organising travel and annual meetings and working within existing expectations of what would be studied. Within ANZAAS institutions would be shaped, not by general goals of common study, but by the activity of scholars working at meetings each year with other scholars whom they already knew. The Academy, by contrast, was established to push into new areas of study and foster development outside of these expectations.

The study of Asia at Australian schools and universities before the Second World War was limited in scope and in focus. But in the post-war world, the development of studies of Southeast Asia were made very much under the influence of social science type enquiries. My movement towards involvement coincided with a social science approach to these studies, a new leaning towards a social science paradigm in the study of Southeast Asia, providing new questions to be answered. My development of the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University reflected that influence and one, I think, important contribution that I made was a chapter on the study of Southeast Asia in the *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*.

When I began my study of Indonesia, the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project was of great assistance to me and took me into a different world, which provided a specific approach to the subject matter. In a way, with the formation of the Academy, one took a different attitude towards other organisations, which had

their own specific approaches to the study of Asia. I was able to benefit from that as well as the new kinds of contacts that could be found through the Academy.

I had initially been interested in the Western Pacific in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and worked in that direction but suddenly took a dramatic turn towards Southeast Asia itself. In 1944 I began to learn Indonesian and two years later, aided by a Carnegie Fellowship, I headed for Cornell, the leading centre of Southeast Asian studies. At the end of my Cornell semester came the next part of the plan—fieldwork in Indonesia focusing on local government. Across the United States by car, over the Pacific by Dutch cargo ship, to Singapore via the Philippines and then by KPM ship to Java. That six months was to be the first of what became more or less annual visits to Indonesia. In subsequent years I moved away from a concern with local government to more general questions of Indonesian history and politics.

In 1960 I was appointed to the Chair of History at the newly established Monash University. In 1964 the university created a Centre of Southeast Asian Studies and my involvement in this is my proudest achievement. In 1969, I was appointed Director of the newly founded Singapore Institute of Southeast Asian Studies for a 12-month period. One might also mention I was convenor of a series of papers titled *Traditional Attitudes and Modern Styles in Political Leadership* (1971), which was presented to the 28<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Orientalists. In May 1976, I was elected the first President of the Asian Studies Association of Australia.

In future the Academy should continue to provide scholars with a different approach. The Academy meetings and the contacts that one made at these meetings, provided a breadth of easy association with people sharing ones specific subject authority.

Sincerely,

*John Legge*



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The Academy of Social Sciences in Australia  
GPO Box 1956, Canberra ACT 2601  
T +61 2 6249 1788 • F +61 2 6247 4335  
Email: [secretariat@assa.edu.au](mailto:secretariat@assa.edu.au).

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