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Levelling the Spirit: Addressing the Social Impacts of Economic Inequality

A recent OCED report points to a rise in income inequality in most OECD countries over the two decades to 2008 and found that this is creating economic, social and political challenges for those countries, and that ‘the resulting inequality of opportunity will inevitably impact economic performance as a whole’. (OCED, *Summary of Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising*, 2011: 40)

The Symposium to be held by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) at the Shine Dome, Canberra, on Tuesday 12 November 2013, *Levelling the Spirit: Addressing the Social Impacts of Economic Inequality*, will explore the nature, meaning and especially the impacts of inequality for the fabric of social relations, public policy and democratic government.

During the Symposium:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will launch a new *Household Economic Wellbeing Fact Sheet Series* giving high quality information about the most important dimensions of inequality of income and wealth in Australia. The Fact Sheets will provide a broad overview of the key concepts and data sources for measuring household economic wellbeing and for related issues such as identifying households most at risk of economic hardship and looking at changes over time in the distribution of household income and wealth in Australia.
- Andrew Leigh MP, will tell the story of inequality in Australia, drawing on his recent book, *Battlers and Billionaires*.
- Lars Osberg of Dalhousie University in Canada, will draw on theoretical ideas and data from the US, Canada and Australia to examine whether market mechanisms are likely to automatically restore balanced growth or stabilise the income distribution.
- Other speakers will examine the impacts of inequality on health and education, and the political consequences and challenges of inequality.
- There will be a facilitated discussion on inequality, policy responses and the role of the social sciences.

For more information please contact:

**About the Symposium**

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**About the ABS Fact Sheets**

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*Encl:* Annual Symposium Brochure