



**Professor Richard Wilkinson -  
ASMR Medallist 2017**

***A more equal society brings health, social and economic benefits to all!***

Professor **Richard Wilkinson** is a Scientist, Author and Advocate from the University of Nottingham. He has played a formative role in international research on the social determinants of health and on the societal effects of income inequality.

Societies with bigger income gaps between rich and poor, consistently have a higher prevalence of a variety of health and social problems, from mortality and obesity through to incarceration and harmful drug use. Professor Wilkinson has found that bigger income differences are divisive and make the grip of social class and status disparities more powerful, setting up the psychosocial risk factors for ill health –

- *low social status*
- *weak social connections*
- *stress in early life (pre and post-natal)*

His work urges policy developers to focus on addressing this underlying disparity rather than treating specific health and social issues as unrelated phenomena.

Richard has said, “It’s not the inferior housing that gives you heart disease, it’s the stress, the hopelessness, the anxiety, the depression you feel around that”.

In Australia, the top 20 per cent of households receive half of our total income, while the bottom 20 per cent receives only four per cent. Successive “Closing the Gap” reports and other social measures highlight Australia’s level of inequality.

His bestselling book “The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better”, authored with Kate Pickett encouraged 75 British Members of Parliament to sign the Equality Trust’s ‘Equality Pledge’ prior to the UK’s 2010 general election, promising to “actively support the case for policies designed to narrow the gap between rich and poor”.

The Spirit Level won the 2011 UK Political Studies Association Publication of the Year Award and inspired a documentary film, “The Divide” in 2016.

Following on from The Spirit Level, Richard became a co-founder of the Equality Trust (with support from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust) which works to improve the quality of life in the UK by reducing economic inequality.

Richard has given many hundreds of conference addresses and media interviews around the world, including at WHO, the EU, OECD and the World Bank. In 2017 has been awarded the Australian Society for Medical Research Medal.

**WHO:** ASMR Medalist 2017, Professor Richard Wilkinson  
**WHAT:** National Press Club Address and Medal presentation  
**WHERE:** 16 National Circuit, Barton, Canberra  
**WHEN:** Tuesday June 6, 2017 – 5pm to 7pm

**Media contacts:** **Dr Matt Dun** 0413 113 352  
Catherine West: 0415 928 211