

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## NEVER MIND THE CLOTHES, FEEL THE QUALITIES

When INCITE announced we were going to take a look at our profession's enduring stereotype, the response was mixed.

In OPINION this month Edgar Crook says we should concentrate on something more constructive but Holger Aman and Rachael Kuan speak up for forging a new mindset. Pixie Stardust shares a cautionary tale of what happened when she found herself in the hands of a stylist whose job was to sell magazines rather than paint an accurate picture of a profession.

Stereotypes cause all sorts of indignation for those in the group described—but arguably a whole lot less for everybody else. Why is it we seem to focus on what we perceive to be as negative about our stereotype instead of making use of the potentially good stuff?

Peel away the angst about questionable dress sense, assumed lack of a social life and obsession with rules and what do we have? Let's see—professionals with a high level of trust placed in us by everyone from policy-makers to new mothers. People who make available environments that travellers know are safe, even if they don't speak the language wherever they are, and create places kids go to get away from everything else. I don't



know about you, but I love the way so many people see us as helpful, friendly, informed and trustworthy. That's all part of our stereotype too, but we don't seem to be talking about that much.

The Roy Morgan Image of Professions survey consistently puts nurses, doctors and teachers right up there on the scale of the most highly regarded professionals. Librarians aren't ranked in their survey because that question has simply never been asked.

No matter what dress code you choose, may I just mention that 2014 is an ALIA National Conference year? Which leads me to passing on just one piece of fashion advice from an anonymous conference expert: any new fashion item purchased more than four days before returning home is officially no longer new, and therefore needs no explanation. Leave room in that suitcase for an exciting September in Melbourne!

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LEE WELCH  
Editor

*Got an opinion about what you are reading in INCITE? We welcome letters to the editor. Email us at [incite@alia.org.au](mailto:incite@alia.org.au). (Letters must include name and a postal or email address.)*

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