

THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

New South Wales Branch inc.

Registered number Y1920037

ANNUAL REPORT

for the period from the 56th Annual General Meeting, 30 March 2004,
to the 57th Annual General Meeting, 16 March 2005

presented at the 57th Annual General Meeting

1. COUNCIL

The Branch Council for 2004 met 10 times following the 56th Annual General Meeting, up to and including the February 2005 meeting. Members of the Council, together with the number of Council meetings attended, are listed below.

President	Dr Alun Pope	10
Immediate Past President	Associate Professor John Rayner	5
Treasurer	Dr Shelton Peiris	8
Secretary	Associate Professor Neville Weber	10
Membership Secretary	Dr Jos Beunen	10
Councillors	Ms Caro Badcock	9
	Mr Frankie Chan	5
	Dr Petra Graham *	5
	Dr Chris Howden	8
	Mr Ian Nivison-Smith	5
	Dr Fred Osman	10
	Dr Scott Sisson	7

* Petra joined Council at the June meeting.

2. CENTRAL COUNCIL

During 2004, the delegates from the NSW branch to the Central Council of the Statistical Society of Australia Incorporated in July were Caro Badcock, John Rayner and Neville Weber and the February delegates were Petra Graham, Chris Howden, and Alun Pope. The Central Council met in Cairns on 11 July, 2004 and by telephone conference on 8 February, 2005.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the NSW Branch each year since 1995 has been as follows:

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Honorary Life Members	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	6	6
Financial Members	270	281	265	297	329	259	322	164	227	244
Unfinancial Members	29	26	0	31	21	99	45	79	34	24
	304	312	291	333	355	354	372	249	261	274

The membership for 2004 included 6 retired and 12 student members.

4. PROGRAM

Annual General Meeting and H O Lancaster lecture

The 56th Annual General Meeting was held in the Coghlan Room, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Sydney on 30 March 2004. There were 19 members present. After the presentation and receipt of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, the H.O. Lancaster Lecture was given by Alun Pope on "Statistical Significance."

Other Meetings

The program of general meetings in 2004 and the attendance at each meeting were as follows:

<i>Date during 2004</i>	<i>Number attending</i>	<i>Speaker and topic</i>	<i>Venue</i>
April 21	34	Ann Eyland: <i>Measuring Justice</i>	University of NSW
May 19	22	Mark Bartlett, <i>Communicable disease surveillance and outbreak decision support</i>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
June 22	44	Graham Wood: <i>A new angle on the t-test</i>	Macquarie University
July 27	13	Ian Nivison-Smith: <i>Australasian bone marrow transplant recipient registry</i>	University of Sydney
August 25	17	David Nott: <i>Adaptive sampling for Bayesian variable selection</i>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
September 21	20	Mick O'Neill: <i>Revealing the riddle of REML</i>	University of Sydney
October 19	17	Virginia Wheway: <i>Boosting</i>	Parramatta Campus, University of Western Sydney
November 24	55	Alan Welsh: <i>Outlier robust model selection</i>	Darlington Centre, University of Sydney

The Council records its gratitude to the speakers for their contribution to the Branch's program, and to Caro Badcock and Ian Nivison-Smith for organising the program.

Attendance

The average attendance at lecture meetings over recent years has been as follows:

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Average attendance	34	29	39	27	30	25	26	25	26	27

5. THE J.B. DOUGLAS POSTGRADUATE AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN STATISTICS

The *J. B. Douglas Postgraduate Awards for Excellence in Statistics* are named in recognition of the contributions to the discipline of Professor Jim Douglas, colleague, mentor and friend to many in our profession.

The awards are decided on the basis of a competition for graduate students, late in their research programs for masters or PhD degrees. Outcomes are determined by 20 minute presentations made to members of the Society and their guests.

This year the first prize was dedicated to the memory of Dr Peter Wright, a former Branch Councillor who died suddenly in May. Associate Professor Ken Russell gave a brief tribute to Peter at the award presentation.

In 2004 these awards were sponsored by (in alphabetical order) CSIRO, Macquarie University Department of Statistics, Roche Pharmaceuticals, SAS Australia, St. George Bank, The University of NSW School of Mathematics, and Wollongong Statisticians. The Branch is very grateful to these organisations for their generous support.

The talks were judged by a panel of 3 consisting of Professor Alan Welsh (ANU), Dr Alun Pope (Chair, President of the Branch), and Dr Philip McCloud (Roche). The Council expresses its grateful appreciation for the generosity of the judges in giving so much time and care to this task.

Talks (in order of presentation) were given by:

1. Alistair Merrifield, University of Sydney
2. Shuling Chen, UNSW (Statistics)
3. Piea Peng Lee, Macquarie University
4. Daniel Melser, UNSW (Econometrics)
5. Clair Alston, University of Newcastle
6. Carole Birrell, University of Wollongong

The panel reported that all six talks were excellent and recommended the award of a special certificate for each student. In addition Daniel Melser and Carole Birrell were awarded cash prizes of \$400 and Clair Alston was awarded the \$500 Peter Wright Prize.

6. SPECIAL WORKSHOPS

The Branch-sponsored workshop *Meta-analysis for Drug Development* to be given by Professor Stephen Senn on 30-31 March 2005 has received a pleasingly large number of enrolments. Caro Badcock (Branch Councillor) has been the main organiser of this event.

The SAS workshops planned for March 2005 have been cancelled as they were undersubscribed. Those who had enrolled were offered alternative arrangements by SAS. Fred Osman (Branch Councillor) and Melissa Cassar from SAS have been the main organisers of these workshops. The Branch is grateful to SAS and Melissa Cassar for their willingness to be involved with Branch activities.

7. BRANCH WEB-SITE

The web-site is an important resource for the Branch and involves a great deal of hard work to develop and maintain. The web-site has been moved from the old *geocities* site and will be progressively migrated to the SSAI central web-site, as that is developed. The intention is that this will provide a cheap, efficient and timely means of communicating with the membership, while at the same time providing a repository for administrative information. Scott Sisson (Branch Councillor) has been the main person behind this effort.

The main page is at: <http://web.maths.unsw.edu.au/~scott/ssai/>.

8. SECTIONS AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Young Statisticians

Council member Chris Howden was active in organising meetings for those in the Young Statisticians Section of the Branch. Members wishing to be placed on the mailing list for YS activities should email Chris at Chris.Howden@sydney.cbr.com.au.

During 2004, there was one active special interest group within the NSW branch: the Illawarra Statistics Group (convenor Dr Eric Beh).

Illawarra Statistics Group

The Illawarra Statistics Group met three times in 2004.

Date	Speaker and topic	Venue
March 24	Ann Cowling, Head of the Statistical Consulting Unit, A.N.U.: <i>A clustering model for Minke whales in line transect surveys.</i>	University of Western Sydney, Campbelltown
August 3	Vithanage Pemajayantha, UWS : <i>Environment and enterprise: Issues and facts.</i>	University of Western Sydney, Campbelltown
December 2	Shelton Peiris, University of Sydney: <i>Estimating functions and their applications in estimation, hypothesis testing and prediction.</i>	University of Wollongong

9. ACCOUNTS

A summary of the Branch's accounts for 2004 is attached.

The Branch showed an excess of income over expenses of \$1402.29.

Sponsorship to a total of \$4250 meant the Awards evening was self-funding.

An erroneous calculation of capitation in the central office of the Society caused an overpayment of \$5839.45 to the Branch in 2003. This is shown as an advance payment in the accounts. This payment was not re-funded by the Branch to the Society, which led to the Branch having a greatly reduced subscription income in 2004. The Branch's expenses in 2004 were less than in 2003. The Branch maintains adequate reserves.

The Branch had reduced the membership fee from \$125 in 2003 to \$110 in 2004. The Central Council of the Society voted in July 2004 to increase capitation from \$70 to \$90 for ordinary members. This increase led Branch Council to vote to increase the fee again to \$120 with effect in 2005. While this increase is less than the capitation increase, projections of income indicate that it will not be necessary for the Branch to eat into its reserves.

The Council would like to thank the honorary auditors, Brian Coote and Dennis Reid, for their generous services over many years.

Neville Weber,
Honorary Secretary
March 2005