

THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

New South Wales Branch inc.

Registered number Y1920037

ANNUAL REPORT

for the period from the 55th Annual General Meeting, 19 March 2003,
to the 56th Annual General Meeting, 30 March 2004

presented at the 56th Annual General Meeting

1. COUNCIL

The Branch Council for 2003 met 9 times following the 55th Annual General Meeting, up to and including the February 2004 meeting. Members of the Council, together with the number of Council meetings attended, are listed below.

President	Assoc Prof John Rayner	9/9
Immediate Past President	Mr Rodger Robertson	3/9
Treasurer (resigned July)	Dr Eric Beh	2/5
Treasurer (from July)	Dr Shelton Peiris	8/9
Secretary	Dr Alun Pope	7/9
Membership Secretary	Dr Jos Beunen	9/9
Councillors	Ms Caro Badcock	7/9
	Dr Richard Gerlach	1/9
	Mr Simon McGregor-Macdonald	6/9
	Mr Ian Nivison-Smith	6/9
	Dr Fred Osman	7/9
	Dr Neville Weber	8/9

Eric Beh resigned from the Council; the July meeting was the last he was able to attend. Shelton Peiris (already a member of Council) took over his responsibilities as Treasurer.

2. CENTRAL COUNCIL

During 2003, the delegates from the NSW branch to the Central Council of the Statistical Society of Australia Incorporated were Caro Badcock, John Rayner and Neville Weber. The Central Council met in Canberra on 9 July 2003 and by telephone conference on 17 and 24 February 2004.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the NSW Branch each year since 1990 has been as follows:

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Honorary Life Members	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	6	6
Financial Members	288	270	281	265	297	329	259	322	164	227
Unfinancial Members	17	29	26	0	31	21	99	45	79	34
	309	304	312	291	333	355	354	372	249	261

The membership for 2003 included 5 retired and 11 student members.

The Membership Secretary reports that the 2003 membership figures are in close agreement with information received from Central Council in November 2003. At the time of the previous AGM there was a discrepancy between these two sets of figures. During 2003 a follow-up of unfinancial members was carried out, which led to some renewals and some corrections of the database.

4. PROGRAM

Annual General Meeting and H O Lancaster lecture

The 55th Annual General Meeting was held at UNSW on 19 March 2003. There were 19 members present. After the presentation and receipt of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, the Presidential Address was given by John Rayner on "Academia: Anticipation and Actuality."

Other Meetings

The program of general meetings in 2003 and the attendance at each meeting were as follows:

Date during 2003	Number attending <i>(Members + visitors)</i>	Speaker and topic	Venue
April 29	17+0	Simon McGregor-McDonald, MARKET21: <i>The Ins and Outs of Shopping Baskets</i>	Parramatta Campus, University of Western Sydney
May 20	29+14	Martin Bland, University of London: <i>Cluster designs: a personal account</i>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
June 17	21+2	Barry Quinn, Macquarie University: <i>Statistical problems in the localisation of a submarine using passive sonar</i>	Macquarie University
July 22	16+3	Colin Priest, Sigma Plus Consulting: <i>Non-Standard Time Series Analysis</i>	Campbelltown Campus, University of Western Sydney
August 27	19+3	Steve Davies, Australian Prudential Regulation Authority: <i>Safety in Numbers</i>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
September 23	19+3	Robert Kohn, University of New South Wales: <i>Multivariate Regression with non-Gaussian data</i>	Australian Graduate School of Management, University of New South Wales
October 22	12+4	Eric Beh, University of Western Sydney, and David Whitford, Australian Bureau of Statistics: <i>Choosing Statistics</i>	University of Sydney
November 26	60 (split unknown)	Peter Hall, Australian National University: <i>Statistical Inference in a High-Dimensional, Low Sample Size Setting</i>	Darlington Centre, University of Sydney
February 26	15+0	Neville Bartlett, President SSAI: <i>Should ANZJS become an electronic-only journal?</i>	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:

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Average attendance	35	34	29	39	27	30	25	26	25	26

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.

For the first time in 2003 the NSW branch initiated a sponsorship program by inviting some sponsors to support these Awards. It is a great pleasure to record that (in alphabetical order) Roche Pharmaceuticals, SAS Australia, the School of Mathematics and Statistics (University of Sydney), the School of Quantitative Methods and Mathematical Sciences (University of Western Sydney) and Wollongong Statisticians all gave generous support as major sponsors.

If the Branch is able to obtain sponsorship to the same level in future years, it will be possible to support the scholarship of our brightest and best at a far greater level than prior to 2000, in a more appropriate way, and at far reduced cost to the Branch's membership.

The talks were judged by a panel of 4 consisting of Professor Peter Hall (ANU), Associate Professor John Rayner (Chair, President of the Branch), Associate Professor Judy Simpson (University of Sydney) and Ms Melissa Cassar (Academic Program Manager, SAS Australia). 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. Timothy Dobbins, University of Sydney
2. Nicholas Von Sanden, University of Wollongong
3. Ravi Jagannathan, University of Western Sydney
4. James McCulloch, University of Technology, Sydney
5. Faisal Ababneh, University of Sydney
6. Ruth Penman, Macquarie University
7. Robert Denham, University of Newcastle

The panel reported that all seven talks were excellent and recommended the award of a special certificate for each student. In addition to these certificates, the following students received cash prizes of \$400 each:

- Timothy Dobbins, University of Sydney
- Nicholas Von Sanden, University of Wollongong
- Robert Denham, University of Newcastle.

Ruth Penman, Macquarie University, received a cash prize of \$200.

6. SAS Special Workshops

SSAI (NSW Branch) and SAS planned a series of one-day workshops designed to provide SSAI members with skills in applying SAS. These courses are taught by experienced SAS professionals and include lectures, software demonstrations, "hands-on" workshops exercises, comprehensive course materials and provide the opportunity to network.

The courses were to be conducted at SAS, 300 Burns Bay Road, Lane Cove. As part of the relationship between the Branch and SAS, \$40 was paid back to the Society for each member attending a 1-day workshop.

In the event, only 1 workshop went ahead: *Introduction to Data Mining using SAS*, which was conducted on 24th June 2003 and had 6 registrations. There were insufficient numbers to conduct the other workshops.

Fred Osman was the Council member who was most involved in the negotiations with SAS.

7. SECTIONS AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

During 2003, there was one active special interest group within the NSW branch: the Illawarra Statistics Group (convenor Dr Fred Osman)

Illawarra Statistics Group

The Illawarra Statistics Group met twice in 2003. Difficulties were experienced in finding speakers during the year, but this difficulty seems to have been overcome for 2004. The following talks were delivered at the two meetings of the group:

March 26	Prof. Matt Wand, Dept. of Statistics, University of New South Wales: <i>What is Semiparametric Regression?</i>	University of Wollongong
July 22	Mr Colin Priest, Sigma Plus Consulting: <i>Non-Standard Time Series Analysis</i> "	University of Western Sydney, Campbelltown

Young Statisticians Conference

Council member Simon McGregor-McDonald was active in the organisation of this event, which took place in Newcastle. An account of this Conference has appeared in the SSAI Newsletter.

8. ACCOUNTS

A summary of the Branch's accounts for 2003 is attached.

The Branch showed an excess of income over expenses of \$3303.70. This figure is *before* accounting for the overpayment referred to in the next paragraph.

Sponsorship to a total of \$4000 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 which is shown as an advance payment in the accounts. This payment will not be re-funded to the Society, but will lead to the Branch having a greatly reduced income in 2005.

The Branch's expenses in 2003 were less than in 2002. The Branch maintains adequate reserves.

The Council considered it desirable and safe to *decrease* the standard annual subscription fee from \$125 to \$110 in 2004.

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

Alun Pope, Honorary Secretary

March 2004