



**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN  
BRANCH**

Statistical Society of Australia Inc.

## **2007 President's Report**

**11 March 2008**

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### **1. Preliminaries**

This year has been a successful year despite the need to put up subscription fees which we all would have noticed happened in the issue of subscription notices at the end of 2008. For the uninitiated an explanation of this event is given by the President of the SSAI, Professor William Dunsmuir in his article "Planning for the Future of your Society", which is available in the September 2007 issue of the SSAI Newsletter. See for example the Web address

<http://www.statsoc.org.au/Publications/SSAINewsletter/SSAINews120.pdf>

William is of course the National President. I have been the President of the Western Australian Branch over the last two years. The Branch activities have been overseen by myself and a youthful and exuberant group of statisticians including Vice President Marty Firth, Secretary Pamela McCaskie, Treasurer Suzanne Brown, and Committee Members Anna Munday, Nihal Yatawara, and Alex Stuckey who is also the Young Statisticians Representative.

After a successful "Statistics Day" at ANZIAM in January 07 we completed a full sequence of meetings from March to November 2007 and had two successful Workshops, one on "Analysing Spatial Point Patterns in R" presented in November 2007 by Professor Adrian Baddeley and a workshop in January 2008 on "Advanced Regression Models with R" by Professor Martin Hazelton.

### **2. Meetings**

At the monthly meetings aforementioned Numbers were never really huge but varied from 13 to 26 on recorded counting. This year we kept record of meeting attendances. We ended the year with the Christmas Party at The Oyster Bar on the Beach, North Fremantle with 24 people attending. A good time was had by all. The overall average attendance at meetings was 19.2.

The table below gives a complete list of speakers for the monthly meetings and their seminar title.

Date	Speaker	Organisation	Title
March 2007	David Andrich	Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia	Inferring parameter estimates in an experimentally independent response space of a logistic regression model from its experimentally dependent response subspace.
April 2007	Alex Stuckey	Mathematics and Statistics, The University of Western Australia	Single index models for panel and spatial data.
May 2007	Tony Traylen	CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences, Leeuwin Centre	Estimating spectral baselines in hyper-spectral images
June 2007	1.Rebecca Hogan 2.Jason Rabbitt	1. The University of Western Australia (Medical Student) 2. Data Analysis Australia	1. Ageing and aged care data analysis 2. Cockburn Sound – comprehensive baseline study.
July 2007	1. Nick de Klerk 2. Peter Jacoby	Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Centre for Child Health Research, University of Western Australia.	1. Mobile phone exposures and adverse health effects: what do the statistics show? 2. Group based modelling of longitudinal carriage data
August 2007	Brenton Clarke <sup>1</sup> , Peter McKinnon <sup>1</sup> & Geoff Riley <sup>2</sup>	<sup>1</sup> Mathematics & Statistics, Murdoch University, and <sup>2</sup> Technology Delivery Group, Alcoa World Alumina	Robust methods for fitting gamma distributions with an application to spectral goodness of fit data, for use in chemometric measurement quality assurance.
September 2007	1. Jane Heyworth 2. Kieran McCaul	1. Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences, The University of Western Australia. 2. WA Centre for Health and Ageing, The University of Western Australia.	1. Environmental lead exposure in Port Pirie, South Australia 2.Environmental lead contamination in Esperance
October 2007	John Henstridge	Data Analysis Australia.	Beyond a statistical toolkit
November 2007	Ian James	Mathematics and Statistics, Murdoch University	Some issues in large-scale genetic association and related studies.

### 3. Scholarships

The SSAI WA Branch Honours Scholarship was awarded to Nicole Warrington who completed honours successfully with a thesis titled “The role of the prostanoid DP gene on asthma phenotypes” at the University of Western Australia for which she attained a grade of 1<sup>st</sup> Class. She received a cheque to the value of \$500. **The Honours Scholarship is again being advertised this year and applications are due in by 31<sup>st</sup> March. Please see your departmental secretary and or honours supervisor re method of application.**

There was also a Young Statisticians Conference held in Canberra on April 13-14, 2007 titled “We’re Young and We Count”. At our January executive meeting after deliberating some time and after emails we decided in line with other states to support via funding two “Young Statisticians” to go to the Conference by subsidising them to a maximum value of \$700 each. After an initial call for applications it was clear that the message had not got through to honours and PhD students from some institutions since the closing date was prior

to the beginning of their semester. It was decided by the Executive therefore to extend the application period till the end of the first week of the semester at UWA for example.

In the end two students received funding to go to the conference.

1. Anamai Na-Udom from Curtin University received \$700 towards expenses.
2. Pamela McCaskie received \$150 towards registration... she was also financially supported by her employer. Pamela is to be complemented for being a joint organizer of the meeting.

The Branch Executive has agreed in principal to help fund Young Statisticians to the ASC 2008 Conference in Melbourne though how much and to whom is at the behest of the incoming Committee. The Young Statisticians Rep of the WA Branch should be contacted re this. Alex Stuckey has been the representative of the Young Statisticians in the past year and either he or in the event that Alex is succeeded by someone else in this meeting, that person should be contacted re information about ASC 2008. They will then take this to the incoming Executive to discuss the degree of funding offered.

#### **4. Statistics on our Branch**

Further statistics on our branch in 2006 we had 72 full members and 12 student members. In 2007 we have 54 full members and 1 Honorary member and 14 Student members plus 2 Retired members. There has obviously been some attrition in the number of full members because of the jump in fees in two consecutive years. This may be coupled with a certain amount of inattention of members in making their annual renewal of fees.

#### **5. Special General Meeting**

At the October 2007 meeting, the Branch held a Special General Meeting to vote on two motions

1. That there be a new class of membership: that of Transitional member, where he/she has been a student member in the previous year, and is no longer eligible for student membership. They are to pay a fee equivalent to that of a retired member.
2. That the WA Branch adopts a subscription rate for full membership to be \$225 inclusive of GST (\$200 for capitation and \$25 for branch component), with an early bird discount of \$10 for paying by the 1st February. The fee for Retired and Transitional Members be set at \$115 inclusive of GST (\$100 for capitation and \$15 branch component), with an early bird discount of \$5 for paying by the 1st February. The subscription rate for students is \$20 inclusive of GST (\$20 for capitation and \$0 for branch component)(and there is no early bird rate for students; a student member has all the rights of a full member but will not receive hardcopy of the journal nor the newsletter; they will have access to the electronic versions of both).

The motions were accepted.

#### **6. ASC 2010**

This is an exciting prospect. We have the opportunity to forge and participate in the implementation of ASC2010 which is in Perth. With Jane Speijers chairing the Organizing Committee, and members including myself, Alex Bremner, Anna Munday and Katia Stefanova, Pamela McCaskie, Marty Firth, and John Henstridge as well as Jane Waslin (now

resigned) from Central Office and a past National President in Neville Bartlett we went ahead with negotiating a contract with a Conference Organizer called PROMACO. PROMACO is a leading company for organizing events in Perth and the Founding Director Don Pearce is now on the Organizing Committee and Programme Committee. I am Chair of the Programme Committee, John Henstridge is the Deputy Chair and there are 6 other respected members interstate with expertise and experience in relation to running conferences including previous conferences run by the Statistics Society of Australia. We are investigating themes of Mining and the Environment, Agriculture, and Biostatistics in line with facets heavily linked to Western Australia. There are to be other minor themes to be countenanced, as the program committee sees fit and which are seen to be current.

The ASC2010 will be held in 6-10 December and also there is a possibility that it would be a joint meeting with GENSTAT users. The decision as to whether GENSTAT will be run at the same time is still pending and will become certain in December 2008.

Distinguished Academics including Professor Persi Diaconis from Stanford University, U.S.A, Professor Noel Cressie from Ohio State University, U.S.A, Professor Tadeusz Bednarski from the University of Wroclaw, Poland, and Dr. Gordon Smyth from Melbourne's Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research have notionally accepted invitations to speak at Plenary sessions at the ASC2010.

## **7. Central Council Issues**

Professor William Dunsmuir is the incumbent President of the Statistics Society of Australia Incorporated.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> November Jane Waslin resigned from her position as Executive Officer from the Central Office. This left a gap in the day to day administration of the Central Office. Liz Jermyn continued to do accounts on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. In addition the Secretary of the Central Council, Doug Shaw, was on leave for all of November and December. Nevertheless there has been an appointment of Marie-Louise Rankin to replace Jane Waslin and we are looking forward to a good working relationship in the coming year as Marie-Louise finds her feet.

Another point to make is that all Branches are struggling to get members to come to meetings. While there are named lectures such as the Foreman lecture in Canberra and the Belz lecture in Melbourne that can attract up to 100 participants typically in most states the numbers hover around twenty and one branch, namely Victoria has opted for one meeting every 2 months.

There is an ASC2008 coming up this year in Melbourne. I encourage all to support this conference to be held in 30<sup>th</sup> June-3<sup>rd</sup> July this year. The deadline for abstracts for contributed talks has been extended to 20<sup>th</sup> March! By going you can ensure that the conference is successful and hence add money to the Society's reserves.

Last year we flagged that there might be a common fee across states for Branch Components in the Membership Fees that were charged, in order to get some unity. In the end there was no overall agreement re an amount, Victoria again choosing to go its own way and some confusion re Early Bird Rates leaving states to choose their own paths, as we too did eventually.

Regarding the **Journal ANZJS** in 2008 the Editorial Board will comprise the following:

- Kerrie Mengerson, Managing Editor.
- Steve Haslett, Theory and Methods Editor
- Jeff Wood, Applications Editor
- Ken Russell, Technical Editor

The journal usually breaks even and has made a small surplus in recent years.

Currently the Impact Factor is 0.347 and is ranked 71 out of 83 Statistics and Probability Subject Category Journals on Journal Citation Reports.

## **8 Frank Hansford-Miller**

Just two weeks ago one of our long time members and a good friend of mine as well as others in the Society passed away at the age of 91. His funeral service was held at St James Anglican Church in Yanchep. Frank was born in London and emigrated from England to Australia when he retired from full time work. He made a big impact on the local WA Branch contributing to the discussions and the life of our branch over much of his retired life. More recently he had several medical complications and was unable to attend meetings. He lived a full life and will be sorely missed. I understand that Shane McGilvray, Frank's nephew, will be in touch with the President of the SSAI WA Branch as Frank has mentioned the Branch in his will.

## **9 Daniel Dice Schubert**

In November 2007 the statistical community were taken aback due to the untimely death of Daniel Schubert. He was a friend of many of the local statistics community and particularly the younger people here and an enthusiastic mathematical statistician along with his many other pursuits. Daniel presented a seminar on his PhD work here, both at the Young Statisticians meeting held at Thompkins Park a few years ago and also spoke at the July 2006 meeting of the Statistics Society WA Branch meeting. Currently there is work behind the scenes to remember him in connection to Murdoch University where he did his studies and CSIRO where he was employed on a postdoctoral fellowship. We shall keep you posted.

## **10. Looking Ahead**

I'd like to thank **all** the members of the Committee with whom I've had the pleasure of working in 2007. There has been energy and enthusiasm and lots of hard work behind the scenes. I know the workload has fallen to a few on occasions but would like to say the society would not run without your efforts.

The Branch's finances are healthy. In particular we have a projected \$2,000 Surplus from the running of the aforementioned Workshops that can be distributed by the Branch as it sees fit in the coming 2 years. Special mention is to be given to Marty Firth who has played a pivotal role in the organizing and running of the Workshops. On the other hand in regard to finances we need to continue to chase members who have failed to renew membership and encourage each other in getting new members to join also.

It behoves us all to get involved in Branch activities – helping to organize them, participating in them, to suggest ideas for new activities or providing suggestions as to how the Branch can raise its profile in the wider community. I invite all to think about what you could contribute to the Society. We wish the new executive well and finally wish to thank the outgoing executive for the mammoth effort they have put in during the last year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brenton R. Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style with large, flowing letters.

**Brenton R. Clarke**

11 March 2008