



Statistical Society of Australia Inc.

## SSAI Annual Report

April 2008 to March 2009

The Society was founded in 1962 as a national "umbrella" organisation to support and further the work of the state statistical societies. The overall objective of the Society is to further the study and application and good practice of statistical theory and methods in all branches of learning and enterprise.

The Society is incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The constitution was revised in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 (ACT) on 5 July 2006.

In order to hold Annual General Meeting of the SSAI and the annual meeting of Central Council in association with Australian Statistical Conferences or other mid-year conferences, the financial year for the Society is from 1 April until 31 March. Branches may choose, through their own constitutions, to retain a different financial year.

### 1. Membership of the Society

At 31 December 2008 the Society had 488 ordinary members, 16 Members at Large, 70 student members, 35 retired members, making a total of 602. There are also 12 Honorary Life Members. Equivalent figures (including Honorary Life Members) since 1994 are 966, 956, 971, 898, 927, 874, 789, 733, 764, 761, 743, 764, 770, 695. This steady decline is a serious issue for the future of the Society. Our Young Statistician group is active and vibrant, providing some hope for the future, but the wider issue will need to be addressed. A reinvigoration of our membership and recruitment processes is planned (see later).

### 2. AGM and Central Council

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 30 June 2008 in Melbourne. Central Council meetings were held on 25 September 2008, 11 December 2008, 26 March 2009, 14 May 2009 and 4 June 2009 by teleconference. The Executive Committee of the Society has had monthly teleconference meetings during the year.

The Central Council for 2008 – 2009 comprised:

<i>President</i>	W. Dunsmuir
<i>Vice-President</i>	G. Lee
<i>Editor</i>	K. L. Mengersen/M. Silvapulle
<i>Secretary</i>	D.E. Shaw
<i>Treasurer</i>	S.R.T. Horn
<i>Accreditation Committee Chair</i>	J. Henstridge
<i>Newsletter Editors</i>	M. Adena, Alice Richardson
<i>Branch Presidents Representative</i>	A. Branford (Co-opted)
<i>Branch Delegates</i>	
Canberra Branch	G. Bishop, R. Lindsay
New South Wales Branch	E. Beh, B. Choy
Victorian Branch	M. Silvapulle, L. Busija
Queensland Branch	M. Mortlock, H. Johnson
South Australian Branch	A. Kiermeier, P. Sutcliffe
West Australian Branch	M. Firth, R. O'Leary

Much of the Society's business is conducted by the SSAI Executive Committee on a monthly basis by telephone hook-up. Members of the SSAI Executive Committee for 2008-2009 were:

<i>President</i>	W. Dunsmuir
<i>Vice-President</i>	G. Lee
<i>Editor</i>	K. Mengersen, M. Silvapulle
<i>Secretary</i>	D.E. Shaw
<i>Treasurer</i>	S.R.T. Horn
<i>Branch Presidents' Representative</i>	A.J. Branford (co-opted)
<i>Young Statisticians' Representative</i>	K. Wang, Fiona Beer

The Executive Officer, Marie-Louise Rankin, attends SSAI Executive Committee meetings as an observer.

### **3. Association with other bodies**

The Society is an affiliated organisation of the International Statistical Institute, with the President as the Society's *ex officio* member.

The Society is a constituent member of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Council, and through this Council a member of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS). William Dunsmuir represented the Society on the Council.

The Society was represented on the National Committee for Mathematical Sciences of the Australian Academy of Science by N. Bartlett and W. Dunsmuir.

The Society is a corporate member of the New Zealand Statistical Association.

The Society is a member of the Australian Foundation of Science. S.R. Wilson was the Society's representative this year.

### **4. Finances (to be provided by Treasurer)**

#### **4.1 Treasurer's Report**

#### **4.2 Financial issues arising from the ASC 2008**

The Annual Conference held in Melbourne in July 2008 was a success from a scientific viewpoint, but the subsequent failure of the conference organising company to honour its contract has put enormous pressure on the Society's finances. We are pursuing the company and its principal through the courts in Melbourne, but the process is slow, and the likelihood of seeing financial return from the conference in the near future is very low. The Society is left with a large financial obligation to the conference venue, without having received the associated revenue from the PCO.

The issue has occupied much of Central Council and the Executive Committee's time since this became apparent. At the time of writing (August 2009), Central Council has recently approved a plan of action involving:

- very careful management of our ongoing expenditure and income;
- arrangements with the individual branches which should enable us to resolve the situation with our creditor from the ASC 2008 within the next few months;
- a program of fund raising workshops in each state;
- a reinvigoration of our membership drive; and
- agreement to move forward developing an institutional membership program.

The strength of support from individual members via donations of money and time (both very valuable) and the uptake of multi year memberships, and the responses to branch level canvassing of members' views, gives me reason to believe the Society can and will survive this setback.

The painful lessons learnt have been applied to the planning for the ASC 2010 in Perth, and financial arrangements with the conference organising company and the venue are structured differently.

## **5. Accreditation**

The accreditation process continues to run smoothly thanks to the efforts of the Accreditation Committee and the SSAI Office. The Committee meets approximately every six weeks, generally via teleconference, and spends a considerable time examining each of the applications and referees' reports to ensure that a high standard for accreditation is established. Some of the forms for the Accreditation process have been updated through the year. In particular the referee form now stresses the question "can this person be relied on for applied work?".

The Committee has received several applications for accreditation of programs by Universities. To date two programs have been accredited and there are several applications pending. It has to be said that Universities have been slower to take up accreditation than had been hoped. The fees for course accreditation applications have also been revised.

At 30 June 2009 there were 96 financial members with current AStat status and 32 members with GStat status. Of all the members listed in the database (including expired memberships or expired AStat or GStat status), 158 have had AStat Accreditation and 60 have had GStat Accreditation. The Young Statisticians' Conference is being used for the promotion of GStat accreditation this year.

A new online-directory for accredited Statisticians is about to be implemented. It will give accredited members the opportunity to keep their details up-to-date, choose which details are made public in the directory or not, and it will be a useful tool for prospective employers to search the database.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Accreditation Committee for their efforts.

## **6. Conferences, Workshops and Symposia**

Branches conducted a number of workshops during the year, with support from the central office provided for collection of registration fees and payment of accounts. These workshops were especially successful with very strong support from members and others.

Branch	Workshop	Date	Number of attendees
Victoria	R-System	27-29 June 2008	87
New South Wales	Bayesian Workshop	17-18 July 2008	60
Victoria	R-System	27 November 2008	17
Victoria	Meta-Analysis	28 November 2008	14
South Australia	Comparing clin., biochemical measurement methods	19 February 2009	21

## 7. Named Lectures

- The E.K. Foreman Lecture was given by .Fiona Steele.
- The Knibbs Lecture was given by .Matt Wand.
- The Belz Lecture was given by William Dunsmuir
- The H.O. Lancaster Lecture was given by Dr Louise Ryan, CSIRO.
- There was no E.A. Cornish Lecture lecture (biannual event)

## 8. Sections

Sections and Chairs for 2008-2009 were:

Bayesian Methods Section	K. Mengersen
Survey and Management Statistics Section	V. Rodriguez
Environmental Statistics	P. Kuhnert
Statistical Education Section	M. Martin & P. Howley
Young Statisticians Network	Kevin Wang, Fiona Beer
Statistics and the Social Sciences	M. Haynes

Other Sectional and Branch activities have been detailed in the Society's *Newsletter*.

For the Society,

G. Lee  
President

D.E. Shaw  
Secretary

August 2009