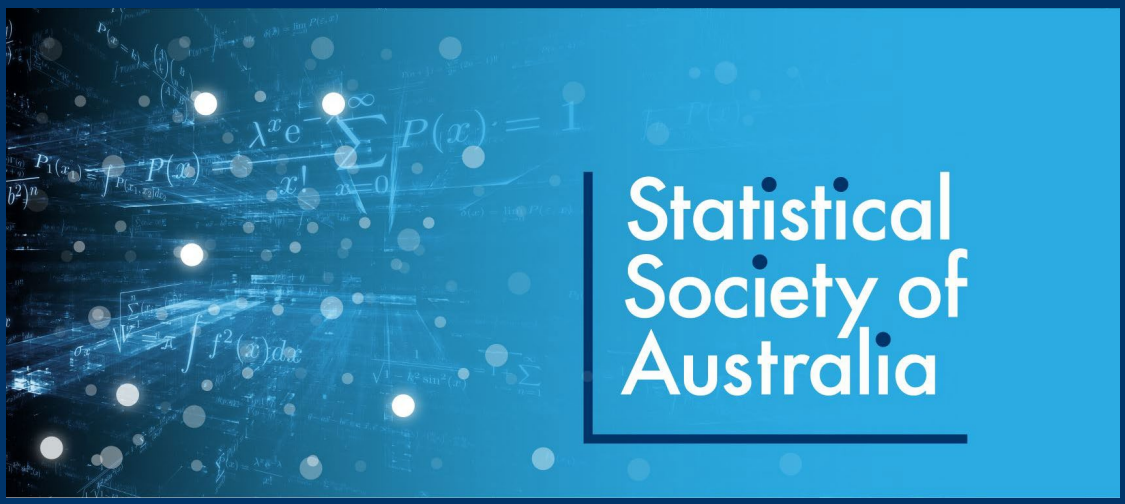
From: Statistical Society of Australia
To: Marie-Louise Rankin
Subject: Stats Matters & Events
Date: Thursday, 22 December 2022 9:11:18 AM



STATS MATTERS & EVENTS

22 December 2022

Dear Marie-Louise,

The holiday season in our country is often associated with gifts. Our consumerist society wants us to think about this in a materialist way, so that we spend money and keep the wheels of business and industry turning.

I'd like to encourage you all to think about gifts, and giving, from a personal and relational perspective. We have all been given attributes and dispositions that can be exercised and used for the benefit of our various circles: family, community, society …

In my role as President, I see many people using their gifts for the benefit of the SSA. I've learned that it is important to recognize the variety of gifts that members have. Think of what is required to keep the Society functioning well. We do need advocates for the Society in various general forums. That sounds grand and important; but no less important, in my view, is the person who makes sure that the drinks and nibbles are organized for a branch seminar, or keeps good minutes, or monitors and reports on finances well, or worries about whether four of five rooms are needed at the national conference for contributed talks. The person who notices attendees on the fringes of an event and goes out of the way to make them welcome is exercising a gift of hospitality that adds to the value of the SSA in a worthwhile way.

Recognition of your own and others' gifts and potential, fosters a vibrant, inclusive and effective Society. Are your gifts being used well? Do you see people whose contributions to the Society could be greater, with the right gentle and timely encouragement? A flourishing Society is one in which there is mutual support and good recognition of what everyone is doing to promote its progress and health.

I wish all members a pleasant break at this celebratory time of the year, and look forward to a productive 2023 for the Society. In December, we will be able to meet in person at the national conference; that's something to anticipate and plan for; I hope to see you there.

Ian Gordon
SSA President

Read newsletter in your browser

In the last two issues of the newsletter, I have been writing about the pressure of the year coming to its end, and how busy everyone is, desperately trying to have everything done before settling in for the Christmas break. My own stress levels reached such a high last week that my fitness watch was giving off warnings!

Just as I reached the point where I was wondering how I would make it to the end of the year, I got a gift from a very unexpected source. Our 21-year-old daughter, who still lives at home, tested positive for COVID. Luckily, she only had a mild case, but for me, being a close contact, it meant that if I wanted to do the right thing by my friends, I could not socialise for seven days.

We cancelled two sets of visitors coming on different nights for Christmas drinks and nibbles as well as an all-day boat trip we had booked. Suddenly I felt like I could breathe again. I could relax at work, knowing there was no deadline at the end of the day – I could potter around as long as I liked to get on top of things. With the free time I suddenly had on my hands, I even managed to do a bit of Christmas baking and try out different options for a suitable Christmas dessert.

I wouldn't wish COVID on anyone, but in this case, it taught me an important lesson: it's up to me to ensure that I don't get stressed. Perhaps planning several nights in a row of outings and invitations is not the best idea, even if it's the season to me merry. It's up to me to say "no" and not be guided by FIFO (fear of missing out). I hope I'll remember that next December!

This lesson is my Christmas gift to you.

Wishing all our members stress-free, perhaps even contemplative and reflective holidays and quality time with loved ones.

See you in 2023.

Marie-Louise Rankin
Executive Officer

Would you please note that the SSA Office will be closed from 22 December 2022, reopening on 9 January 2023.

The first newsletter of 2023 will be published on 12 January 2023.

In this newsletter:

2022: the year we celebrated 60 years of the SSA - Jessica Kasza

NSW Branch - Reflections on 2022

SA Branch - Summary of events in 2022

Reflections from the Statistical Consulting Network

2022 in Review - From the Official Statistics Section

Seasons Greetings from the Biostats & Bioinformatics section

The 2022 Tjanpi Award for Best Student Paper in Environmental Statistics - Winner Announced

Statistical Education Section: Connecting students with Statistics, Systems thinking, Sustainability & STEM (SSSS)

Reflections from the Bayesian Statistics Section

What Kind of Statistician Could You Be? Take this quiz.

The Sydney Mathematical Research Institute (SMRI) International Visitor Program: applications open

SSA Events

Other events

Job vacancies in SSA's Career Centre

2022: the year we celebrated 60 years of the SSA

In 2022 we celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Society: it was 60 years ago, in 1962, that the New South Wales Statistical Society and the Canberra Statistical Society joined forces to create a national association of statisticians. How did we celebrate this milestone?

- Past presidents provided pieces reflecting on their time at the top, with these reflections published in past newsletters. Look through the newsletter archive to find out more!
- We awarded four Diamond Jubilee Fellowships, worth $5000 each: these Fellowships were designed to enhance the careers of our early/mid-career members. Keep an eye out: in 2024, we will hear from the Diamond Jubilee Fellows about how these fellowships have enhanced their careers.
- We celebrated the achievements of a few of our current and past superstar statisticians, with a series of profiles published in the latest edition of Significance magazine. All SSA members can read these online here.
- President Ian Gordon and Vice President Jess Kasza were interviewed on the Random Sample podcast and the past, present and future of the SSA. You can listen to that episode, and all the rest, here.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in the SSA

The Society's Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee kicked off 2022 with the release of a report describing the results of our Diversity survey. This report, which can be found here, shows that many of our members care deeply about issues of diversity and inclusivity. The Committee is continuing to work toward enacting some of the recommendations of survey respondents.

In 2022 the Committee continued to develop our recommendations for Branches and Sections, to help ensure that all Society events are equitable and accessible. These recommendations can be found here. We also developed Equity Membership Scholarships to help everyone access the benefits of SSA membership.

What does 2023 hold for the Committee? Two big projects are underway: the first is the collection of demographic data on our members, to help the Society understand who we are. The second is the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan for the Society: to affirm the commitment of the Society to reconciliation, and to support the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statisticians. Please keep your eye out for calls to participate in both of these initiatives!

Jessica Kasza
SSA Vice President

NSW Branch - Reflections on 2022

This has been a challenging year for the NSW SSA Branch, but also great.

Our events have finally gone back in person and many of the councillors met for the first time, after two years of almost exclusively online meetings!

Our year started with the new President Dr Clara Grazian's Lancaster Lecture on the use of mixture models for clustering and partitioning data. It was great to see the participation of the community to this event, with a lovely dinner in the busy main street of Newtown.

Between April and November, we had a combination of talks across many disciplines of Statistics, both from Academia (Prof Benoit Liquet and Dr Sarat Moka - Macquarie - Dr Matt Moores - UoW - Dr Shila Ghazanfar - USyd - Prof Brian Cullis - UoW) and Industry (Michael Bewley - Nearmap - Steph Stammel - Transurban - Tom Honeyman - ARDC - Andrew White - ARDC). The participation was great, both online and in person, with always interesting discussion, about regression models and variable selection, functional analysis, software availability, support to academics.

Two events have had a huge response from our community: the Early Career and Student Statisticians Career Event 2022, which took place with the support of SUPRA (Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association) in September; around 50 young statisticians participated to listen to the experiences and advice of 6 amazing speakers from a broad range of companies. The second event with a large support was the JB Douglas Award, with more than 60 participants: 6 PhD students from a range of Universities in NSW presented their thesis work and the committee chose Emily Wong (USyd) and Chris Lisle (UoW) as winners ex-aequo; the award ceremony was followed by the Annual Lecture given by Prof Marijka Batterham (UoW) on the use of statistical models and methods in Nutrition and Dietetics, and the Branch annual dinner: Dr Thomas Fung, with the help of Dr Francis Hui, from the Canberra Branch, put together an amazing trivia, that brought together four groups to fight for the glory and the prize!

This has been a great year: many of the councillors joined the council during the COVID era and were very used to the online environment; many of us are also early career researchers or professionals, extremely busy with their duties, at work and at home. But the group is amazing, we have always tried to support each other and support the community and it has been a great privilege to work with this amazing group of people. I am definitely sorry to see Dr Thomas Fung, Dr Alex Xu, Dr Houying Zhu, Dr Jaslene Lin, and Ms Yidi Yan leave at the end of their term on the Branch Council. I can only thank them with all my heart and wish them good luck. But I also look forward to the next year, to working with Dr Gordana Popovic, Dr Kevin Wang, Dr Nicole De La Mata, Dr Boris Beranger, Dr Firouzeh Noghrehchi, and Dr Ling Nghiem: we are full of ideas!

Best wishes,

Clara Grazian
President, NSW Branch

SA Branch - Summary of events in 2022

2022 saw the SA Branch welcome a new President, Barbara Toson, elected at the first branch meeting in March. Outgoing President Dr Murthy Mittinty presented on the use of robust Poisson usage to help overcome the issue of convergence and provide doubly robust estimates of Risk Ratios.

Other presenters throughout 2022 included:

April: A/prof Michael O' Callaghan from Flinders University discussed how we as statisticians could help advance research in his field.

- June: an international guest joined online, Dr Clare Griffith, Head of the UK COVID-19 dashboard at the UK Health Security Agency. Her talk was "The UK coronavirus dashboard: how we provide a daily, high demand service".
- July: Dr Kris Rogers, senior biostatistician at University of Technology Sydney and Elizabeth Armstrong, PhD candidate at UNSW Sydney in the School of Population Health gave a presentation on "ANZHFR - Data Presentation for Different Audiences"
- August: Chris Brien, adjunct Associate Professor, UniSA, presented on "The Design and Analysis Of A Two-Phase Experiments Involving Human Subjects".
- September: Professor Adrian Barnett presented on the topic "Bad Statistics in Medical Research", we had a stellar attendance online and a great and lengthy discussion afterwards

There was no talk in October and November.

The SA branch hosted a workshop in May, a 2-day course on "Introduction to Machine Learning for Health Data" presented by Dr Oscar Perez-Concha, Centre for Big Data Research in Health, UNSW Sydney. The course was sold out and the organisers are planning to offer a course at more advanced level for 2024.

The Young Statisticians' event in September showcased invited professional statisticians from academia, applied biomedical research and the public sector which was held in-person and virtually. We had presenters from the main SA universities, ABS and SAHMRI and the event was well-attended. Free pizza and refreshments afterwards were enjoyed by all!

The end of the year Christmas dinner happened in early December at the Griffin Head's hotel and was attended by approximately 20 statisticians. And finally who doesn't like a freebie! We are offering **20 free memberships for students** who attend at least one meeting in person to promote networking.

Closing with thanks and best wishes for 2023!

Lan Kelly
Vice President, SA Branch

Reflections from the Statistical Consulting Network

In April 2022, the Statistical Consulting Network launched a new initiative –

monthly online lunchtime meet-ups – where statistical consultants can share statistical problems and issues in consulting. These meet-ups have been well-attended with people joining from all around the country. Here is some feedback about the meet-ups from a couple of attendees:

- The sessions have been helpful for thought-provoking discussion of 'soft skills' involved in consulting. Discussing different areas of consulting with other statisticians who consult regularly has helped me think about how I consult. Also sharing online resources and textbooks that can be used for training, that I wouldn't have necessarily come across on my own. I am still relatively new to consulting, so it's a great opportunity to discuss consulting skills and challenges with very experienced consultants, beyond those who I work with directly.
- Not only have I thoroughly enjoyed my conversations with a diverse range of statisticians covering a wide range of topics, but have found them directly informing improvements to my own practice and statistical understanding. The diversity of topics and viewpoints means there is never a dull moment with conversations ranging from the soft skills of consulting, politics and management of running a statistical consultancy, improving the capability of statistics across the board and hard-core statistical theory.
- We all need a work "clan": fellow travellers who understand our interests and share them by default. They are our support network and safe place for discussing work candidly and without competition or judgment. Usually we have this in a local group. This year, for statistical consultants in the SSA, the Statistical Consulting Network has added a national dimension to this, allowing wider perspectives with the same warm and inclusive collegiality.

Our meet-ups will continue in 2023, on the last Friday of every month.

In 2022, the SSA Executive approved a statement on co-authorship developed collaboratively by the Statistical Consulting Network. Statisticians can share this statement with collaborators to support understanding of issues to consider when deciding whether the contribution of a statistician to a research project warrants co-authorship. You can find the statement as: https://www.statsoc.org.au/Statement-on-co-authorship). The Statistical Consulting Network will consider developing more resources for consultants and clients in 2023, so if you see a particular need, come along to a meet-up and let us know!

David Warton & Sue Finch
Co-Chairs, Statistical Consulting Network

2022 in Review - From the Official Statistics Section

There were important developments in official statistics at international level during the year. An IASS webinars on bridging big data and sampling was held in November; and on calibration and balanced sampling - honouring the contribution of Jean Claude Deville - in May. In March ISI issued a statement following the Russian military aggression in Ukraine, stating inter alia: t*he actions will cause disruption to the statistical processes that official statistics rely on, leading to a lack of information on Ukrainian society and its economy; with an impact on the quality of statistics, especially on key indicators such as the movement of people and trade,* a statement that could apply in all cases of civil turmoil and war. ISI and IAOS declared its concerns at the dissolving of El Salvador's central statistical office in June. The first of the ISI series of regional seminars was held for the Australasian region in December, on the important issues facing Australasia on statistics and data science, with four eminent statisticians, and SSA members contributing. In the July Joint Statistical Meetings in Washington, a special session was held to honour the contribution of Ken Brewer to the discipline, with eminent statisticians taking part. It is hoped to launch the Ken Brewer Fellowships sometime in 2023. Another plan for 2023, is to provide a platform for a broad discussion on indigenous statistics, foreshadowed for some time by our Section, that can raise the role of statistics in the lead up to national debate on the Voice and constitutional change to recognise first nation's people in our construction of the nation.

The Section is as strong as its participants - we hope to hear from any working in or with experience and desire to raise the profile of official statistics within the larger SSA community.

Finally, I attach a reflection from mid-year on data science as seen from an official statistics perspective. And look forward to lively exchanges, ideas, and contributions in the coming year.

Stephen Horn
Chair, Official Statistics Section

The 2022 Tjanpi Award for Best Student Paper in Environmental Statistics

The Tjanpi Award is an annual student prize for best student paper in environmental statistics, sponsored by the SSA Environmental Statistics Section. Tjanpi is the Pitjantjatjara word for Triodia, a long-lived plant fundamental to the diverse lifeforms on more than 20% of Australia’s land

mass. Tjanpi is an analogy for the Environmental Statistics student award – because use of appropriate statistical techniques is fundamental to good environmental research, and because we hope the awardee will over time become central to a diverse range of interesting research endeavours!

Congratulations go to **Sarah Vollert** for her paper titled "Strategic model reduction by analysing model sloppiness: A case study in coral calcification" in press at *Environmental Modelling and Software*. Her team used an original application of data reduction techniques in a model selection context, and applied the technique to inform how to simplify a model that predicts coral calcification rates, with minimal loss of information. An Honorary Mention goes to **Laura Cartwright** for her paper titled Emulation of greenhouse-gas sensitivities using variational autoencoders published in *Environmetrics*.

Sarah will receive $500, and both Sarah and Laura will be asked to present in an invited session on environmental statistics at annual stats conference coming up in Wollongong in late 2023.

News from the Statistical Education Section

Connecting students with Statistics, Systems thinking, Sustainability & STEM (SSSS)

In 2022, the National Schools Poster Competition (NSPC) received 4 times the number of 2021 submissions, with 20 new schools submitting!

Topics are too numerous and diverse to list them all, but examples include: nutrition, health, psychology, sustainability, space, diversity and inclusion, biology, science, finance, aspects of political and social interest, sports, physics, chemistry, product preferences, physiology and solar energy.

Please view this year's winners and honourable mentions, along with feedback. There's even a capture-recapture based project, with lollies in the wild!

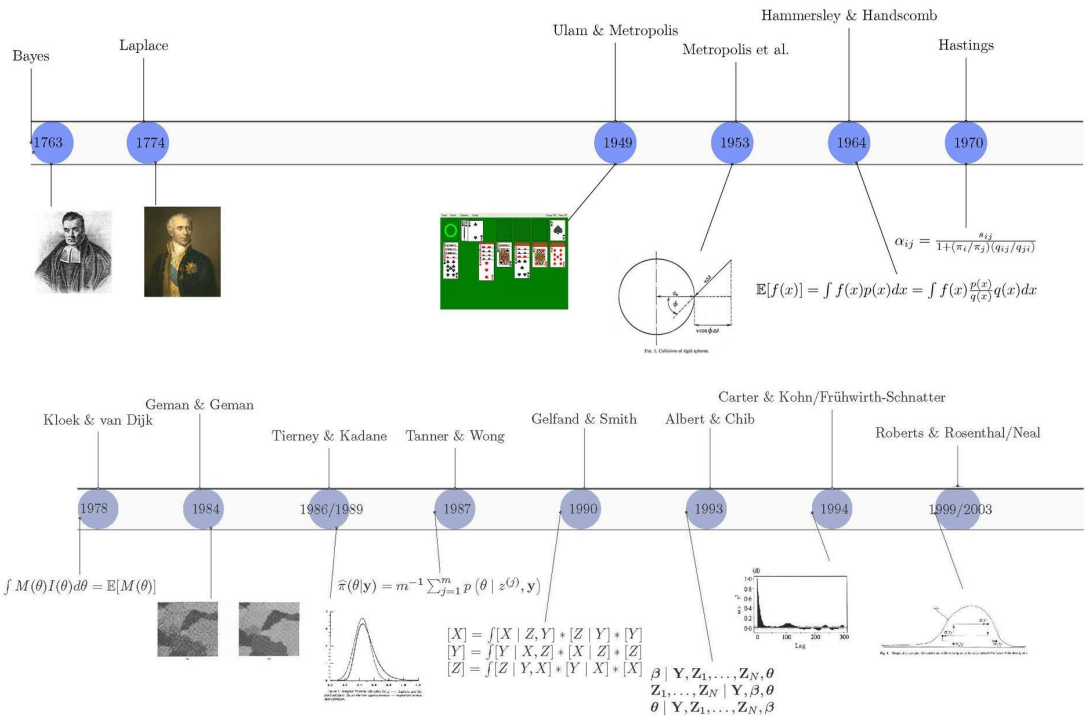
Australia's NSPC is entering its 10th year in 2023…and there's significant news! Find out more.

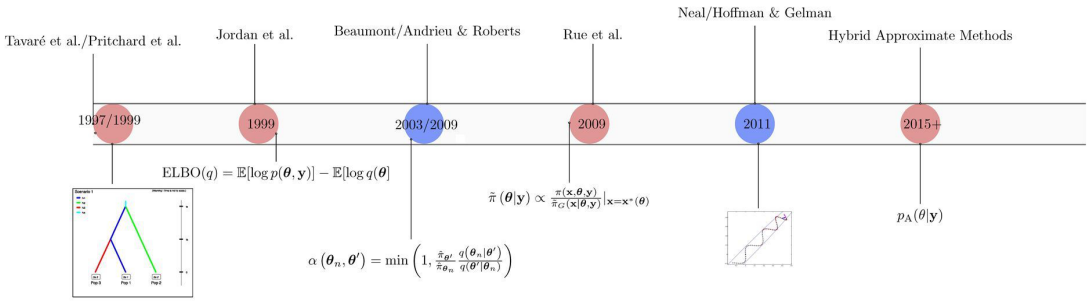
By Professor Peter Howley
Chair, Statistical Education Section

Reflections from the Bayesian Statistics Section

As 2022 draws to a close our Bayesian community has a lot to be thankful for, most importantly of which are our wonderful members. Every year our members bring their skills, expertise and creativity to the section, and this year is no different!

To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the SSA, executive member David Frazier has created a timeline of important events in the history of Bayesian statistics. A snippet of this timeline is shown here.





Interested readers can delve further into the history of Bayesian statistics by reading his Statistical Science review papers with co-authors Gael Martin and Christian Robert here and here. We look forward to the innovations that the next 60 years will bring to Bayesian computation.

Another highlight of 2022 was the webinar we organised by Dr Marina Riabiz on “kernel Stein discrepancy minimization for MCMC thinning in cardiac electrophysiology”, which showed us an exciting new method for optimally thinning MCMC output.

Of course, as the year draws to a close we can hardly help but look forward with eager anticipation to the exciting activities that are already planned for 2023, including:

- The upcoming BayesComp2023 conference is relevant to many of our members. Our session on “Likelihood-free inference using surrogate models and ABC” has been accepted and will feature Gael Martin (Monash U.), Chris Drovandi (Queensland U. of Technology) and Quan Vu (U. of Wollongong). Further details about the conference are available here.
- We will continue to support Griffith University’s workshops that introduce scientists to Bayesian thinking. In 2023, we plan to sponsor their workshops on Bayesian prior elicitation and offer reduced costs to SSA Bayes members.
- We are in the early stages of planning a satellite workshop and a session for the 2023 Australian Statistical Conference (ASC2023). Further details about the conference are available here.

Please stay tuned for more activities coming out of the Bayes Section!

The Executive Committee, on behalf of the Bayesian Section of the SSA, wishes you a wonderful and relaxing holiday break. We hope that 2023 brings you joy that overwhelms any prior beliefs.

Follow us on Twitter

Seasons Greetings from the Biostats & Bioinformatics section

From the Biostats & Bioinformatics section, just a brief note about what we are looking to achieve in 2023:

After a quiet 2022, the Biostatistics & Bioinformatics section are looking forward to a productive 2023. We will continue with our quarterly webinar series - speaker suggestions welcome!

And we have a great workshop in the planning stages as part of the ASC2023 conference.

Our last newsletter of 2022 came out last week.

Read the Biostatistics & Bioinformatics Sections' Newsletter Here

Nicola Armstrong and Alberto Nettel Aguirre
Co-Chairs, **Biostatistics & Bioinformatics section**

What Kind of Statistician Could You Be?

Do you have a young person in your life who is thinking about following in your footsteps and becoming a statistician?

How do you guide them in the right direction? Why not get them to do this quiz to reveal which specialisation could be best suited for them.

Take the quiz

The Sydney Mathematical Research Institute (SMRI) International Visitor Program: applications open

The IVP2023 February Round applications are now open. Researchers in the mathematical sciences from international and Australian universities who wish to do research at SMRI either individually or as part of a group of collaborators are warmly invited to apply.

This round is for visits taking place between January - December 2024 for general applicants; and October 2023 - December 2024 for Australian & New Zealand citizens.

Applications will close on 21 February 2023 (23:59pm AEDT).

Applications with the information requested in the terms and conditions can be made through the webform found on the IVP webpage .

If you have existing or potential research collaborators who may want to spend some time working at SMRI, please direct them to the website and encourage them to apply.

(NB: The next application deadline is expected to open between June - August 2023.)

Mentioned in previous newsletters

ASC 2023: Call for Abstract Reviewers

The ASC 2023 Scientific Programming Committee (SPC) is currently seeking expressions of interest from SSA members interested in undertaking the peer review of abstracts for the conference. All areas of statistical expertise are welcome. The Australian Statistical Conference, partnered with the Australian Conference on Teaching Statistics (OZCOTS), will take place in Wollongong from 10th-15th December 2023.

Each reviewer will be responsible for blind reviewing up to 20 abstracts of up to 300 words aligned with their area of expertise and each abstract will have 2 reviewers. Review criteria and information on how to review the abstracts will be provided once the call for reviewers closes. **Reviewers must be available to review abstracts between April and May 2023**.

Selection of reviewers will be based on SSA membership and area of expertise, with the number of reviewers based on the number of abstract submissions. If you are able to review abstracts, please complete the online registration form. Abstract reviewer registrations will close on **31st March 2023**

Call for nomination: Horizon Lectures, Australian Statistical Conference, 10-15th December 2023 (ASC 2023)

The Statistical Society of Australia (SSA) and ASC 2023 Scientific Programme Committee are delighted to open nominations for the inaugural Horizon Lectures, to be given at ASC2023 in Wollongong, 10th- 15th December 2023.

The Horizon Lectures aim to recognise emerging leaders in Australia's statistics community and their contributions to advancing statistical practice across academia, government, and/or industry. Lectures will be awarded to mid-career statisticians working in any discipline who have made an impact within their field(s) of expertise and have demonstrated leadership in building capacity in statistical expertise within Australia.

Up to three (3) Horizon Lectures will be awarded for presentation at ASC2023. All Lectures will be presented together as a plenary session to all conference delegates. Lectures can be on any area of statistics in line with the awardee's expertise. Each awardee will receive up to $2,500 to cover conference and travel costs.

Nominations involve a written statement (up to 1,000 words) summarising how the nominee meets the award selection criteria. Nominees must be a member of the SSA and be employed as a statistician in Australia. Nominations must be supported by another member of the SSA.

Full details on eligibility, award selection criteria and submission are available in the nomination form, available on the conference website. Nominations must be submitted by **5 pm AEST, 28th February 2023**. Late nominations will not be accepted.

Questions about the Horizon lectures can be sent to ASC 2023 Scientific Programming Committee at asc.ozcots2023@gmail.com

---

SSA Events

The Necessary SQL - An Introduction to SQL with Daniel Fryer

6-February 2023, 9:00 AM (AEDT) – 7 February 2023, 5:00 PM (AEDT), Online via Zoom

Save the date: ASC and OZCOTS 2023

10-15 December 2023, University of Wollongong, NSW

Find out more

Other Events

AMSI Careers Day 2023

Maths, Stats & Data Science is critical to so many careers across all industry sectors. University students are invited to attend the FREE AMSI Careers Day on Monday 16 January 2023 at the University of Melbourne to explore the diverse career pathways available to Maths, Stats and Data Science graduates - refreshments provided.

Hear from some of Australia's leading employers of mathematical sciences graduates, including:

- Optiver
- MECCA Brands
- Microsoft
- CSIRO's Data61
- Australian Signals Directorate
- Australian Space Agency
- Reserve Bank of Australia
- APR.Intern.

Find out more and register here

Job vacancies in SSA's Career Centre

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer - Business Analytics

Victoria

Monash University

Job No.:644352 Location:Caulfield campus Employment ...

Principal Biostatistician

New South Wales

Parexel Australia

Are you interested in working on mRNA vaccine ...

Biostatistician II

New South Wales

Parexel

Parexel is one of the world s leading Contract ...

View All Jobs

If you have news from the Australian statistical community to share in Stats Matters and Events, please get in touch with us! We love getting feedback too.

Unsubscribe