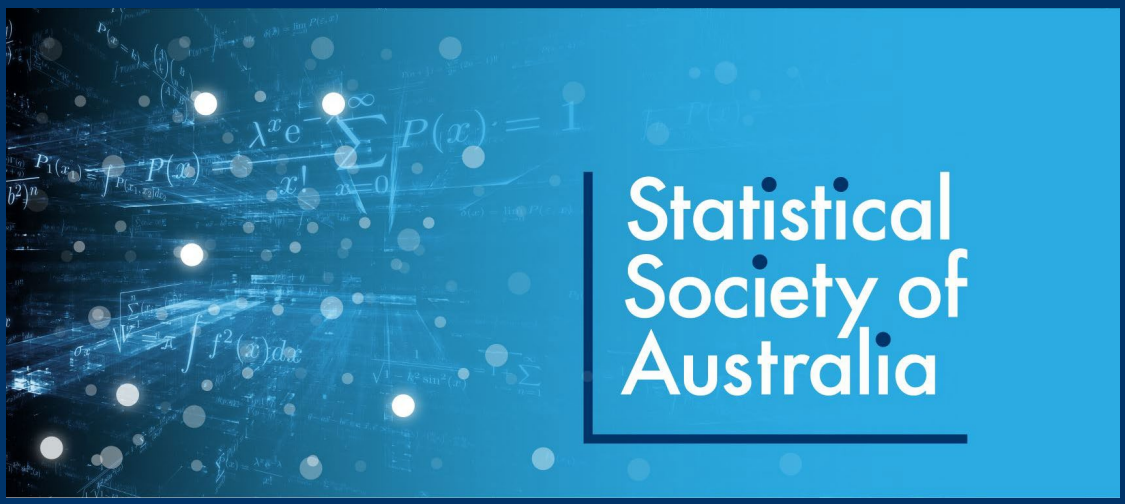
From: Statistical Society of Australia
To: Contact us
Subject: Stats Matters & Events
Date: Thursday, 23 March 2023 1:25:59 PM



STATS MATTERS & EVENTS

23 March 2023

Dear Contact,

By now some of our branches have already held their 2023 Annual General Meetings (AGMs). Other branches will hold their AGM over the coming few weeks.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all outgoing committee members for the wonderful work they have done for the Society. If you are one of them: I hope that your volunteer experience was not a one-way street. Of course, the Statistical Society of Australia (SSA) is the main beneficiary of your efforts, but it would be great to think that our volunteers are benefitting from their experience with SSA as well. Some of you may have learned new things, some of you got to express your creative side and some of you would have particularly enjoyed the sense of community within your branch council and branch. As memberships go, I firmly believe that the more you put into it, the more you get out of it.

I would like to thank the incoming branch council members as well. Thank you for stepping up, for giving it go, even though for some of you this may be a daunting endeavour. I know you won't regret it. Also, I'm here to help. I'm just an email or phone call away if you have any questions. I look forward to working with you.

Last but not least: Big thanks to those of you who have been on your branch council for a while already and are willing to give it another year. Your ongoing contribution to the Society is much appreciated and I look forward to working with you some more!

Marie-Louise Rankin
SSA Executive Officer

Read newsletter in your browser

Would you please note that the SSA office will be closed on

Monday, 27 March 2023.

In this newsletter:

NSW Branch AGM and Lancaster Lecture on Learning from Complex Data

Robodebt Scandal: How Flawed Algorithms Led to Inaccurate Debt Notices

Andreas Georgiou vindicated

SSA Events

NSW Branch AGM and Lancaster Lecture on Learning from Complex Data

On Thursday 16th March, the NSW Branch held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the University of Sydney. The event was well attended by members both in person and online. During the meeting, the President, Clara Grazian, expressed her gratitude to the outgoing council members for their contributions and she also welcomed the new and continuing council members. The AGM concluded with a small presentation from Thomas Fung who thanked Runze Xu for his contributions to the council over the years with a small gift.

Following the AGM, the Lancaster Lecture "Ctrl-Alt-Delete & Repeat: Learning more from Complex Data" was presented by Professor Samuel Muller from Macquarie University. The Lecture was aptly motivated by the work of Henry Oliver Lancaster. Professor Muller shared his insights into the intricacies of learning from complex data. He discussed how one should delete part of the data, control the properties of the variables selected using regularisation, and

how repeatedly learning from slightly altered data improves our understanding of the data in the context of predicting cancer events. He then provided an interesting simulated data example in which p-values were used for selecting covariates in a regression model and show how this could lead to poor model selection. He then discussed some of his recent work to overcome such shortfalls. He finished his talk by thanking over 120 colleagues that he has worked with over his distinguished career so far, some of whom were in attendance for the lecture.

Following the Lancaster Lecture many members gathered for dinner. The evening provided an opportunity for members to socialise and was it enjoyed by all who attended.

Dr. Tom Stindl
NSW Branch, SSA

Robodebt Scandal: How Flawed Algorithms Led to Inaccurate Debt Notices

The flawed Robodebt algorithm used by the Australian Government to determine welfare recipients' debt repayments should have been stopped immediately because of its incredibly high error rate, according to a recent article by Noel Cressie, Distinguished Professor of Statistics, University of Wollongong, published in “The Conversation”. As Professor Cressie explains in his article "Robodebt not only broke the laws of the land – it also broke laws of mathematics", the Robodebt scheme resulted in an estimated 470,000 debts being falsely raised, out of a total of around 567,000.

These results were due to the algorithm's use of income averaging, which fails when applied to some parts of a payment curve. If simulations had been run, or human intelligence used to check real cases, the "stop" button would have been hit almost immediately.

Read the full article here.

If you have written an article for the “**The Conversation**”, please feel free to share it with us! The SSA has a special webpage dedicated to our members’ contributions. You can view it here.

Andreas Georgiou vindicated

Most statisticians would be aware of the legal proceedings against Dr Andreas Georgiou, the former President of Greece's national statistical office, over the release of official Greek National Statistics in 2010 that revealed the full magnitude of fiscal expenditure prior to 2010, which led to the Greek financial crisis. Despite Dr. Georgiou's professional conduct and the validation of these statistics by the EU Statistics Office, he faced sustained backlash for 11 years.

You will recall that the Statistical Society of Australia (SSA) co-signed a statement initiated by the American Statistical Association (ASA) together with close to fifty other organisations and over 1,000 individuals, calling on Greek authorities to halt the legal proceedings against Andreas Georgiou.

Dr. Georgiou's case was raised before the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled earlier this month that Georgiou's human rights were breached by the Greek court's failure to submit a pre-trial question to the European Court of Justice. The US State Department has highlighted Dr. Georgiou's case under Section 1.e: Denial of Fair Public Trial for three consecutive years in its Annual Human Rights Report.

In his article "Greek statistician Andreas Georgiou, the Galileo Galilei of statistics, is vindicated", author and former statistician-general of South Africa Dr Pali Lehohla, explains what Georgiou and Galilei have in common.

Read Pali Lehohla's article here

SSA Career Centre

Hiring in a candidate driven market is tough. As an employer, it can be difficult to find the right talent. SSA's career centre is the best source to look for highly-qualified professionals in your industry, making sure that you're spending your recruiting dollars on the right resources.

With SSA's career centre's pay-per-use Resume Bank, you'll be able to search through anonymous resumes before you pay anything. Browse and contact candidates for free. Pay only when the candidate accepts your invite.

Webinar: Why statisticians must have a tailored insurance program

Recording available now! Watch it here.

Mentioned in previous newsletters (click on the relevant heading to find out details)

SSA PhD Top-Up Scholarships: the SSA wants to support you (deadline 26 April 2023)

Society Awards - Do you know anyone deserving of one of SSA's Society Awards?

ASC 2023: Call for Abstract Reviewers (deadline 31 March 2023)

Expression of Interest in Survey and Data Science Courses in 2023–24

2023 Venables Award for Developers of Open Source Software for Data Analytics - Call for submissions

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SSA Events

SSA Vic Branch: 2023 Annual General Meeting

28 Mar 2023, 5:15 PM – 6:00 PM (AEDT) at the Staff Tea Room, Peter Hall Building, The University of Melbourne, 813 Swanston St, Parkville VIC 3052 OR Online via Zoom

Following the conclusion of the AGM we will be hearing from Professor Gordon Smyth for our March event, titled "20 years of statistical bioinformatics: a brief history of the limma and edgeR packages".

To register for this talk and to find out more visit the event page.

SSA Canberra Branch: 2023 Annual General Meeting and monthly branch meeting - Estimation of daily smoking prevalence for disaggregated statistical areas in Australia

28 Mar 2023, 5:15 PM – 7:00 PM (AEDT), (in-person and on Zoom

SSA Canberra invites you to its 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and March branch meeting. This event will feature Sumonkanti Das, Bernard Baffour and Alice Richardson, Statistical Support Network from the Australian National University (ANU). Our speakers will present in-person (+streamed online) on the Estimation of daily smoking prevalence for disaggregated statistical areas in Australia.

The AGM will be held in hybrid format, both in person at the ANU and by Zoom, at 5.15pm AEDT on Tuesday, 28 March. All relevant documents; proxy form, Council nomination form, Annual Report as well as Financial and Membership reports are on or will soon be loaded to the Google Drive SSA Canberra Branch AGM documents. The talk featuring Sumon, Benard and Alice will take place immediately after the AGM around 6pm. After the talk, there will an opportunity for those interested to attend a dinner with the speakers.

More details are available here.

Join the Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 885 2085 7358

Password: 129610

SSA QLD Branch: Annual General Meeting and seminar

29 Mar 2023, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM @ GP-P-419, P Block, Gardens Point Campus, QUT

Understanding the interpretation and presentation of statistical methods in the Australian criminal justice system presented by Lani Cronin .

Lani's PhD thesis (currently under examination) delves into how statistical evidence is presented in the Australian criminal justice system, examining how potential jurors and expert witnesses understand and present this evidence. In this presentation, Lani will provide valuable insights into the complexities of presenting statistical evidence in legal settings, highlight ways in which experts can assist in optimising lay comprehension, and discuss factors that may impact a potential juror's understanding of statistical evidence.

Click here to register.

ECSSN SSA and NZSA Joint Webinar Series: Academia vs Industry: A statistical viewpoint

Presented by Dr Clair Alston-Knox, Senior Statistician, Head of Visualisation Development and Statistical Modelling, Predictive Analytics Group

30 Mar 2023, 2:00 PM AEDT, held online

Statistics is a skill that is essential for progress in multiple environments. In academia, we apply these skills to understanding measurements produced in research. In industry, these skills are required to make sound decisions based on the best available information. However, the mindset needed to approach problem-solving in these sectors has many subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle differences.

In this talk, Dr Alston-Knox will discuss, based on her personal experience, aspects of academia and industry that differ and the pros and cons for each. This will include the level of statistical difficulty, biased perceptions between workers in each sector, timeframes, technology, extraneous responsibilities, communication, teams and administration.

To register click here.

Statistical Consulting Network March Meet-Up

31 Mar 2023, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM AEDT, held online

Come along with your thinking cap, maybe a problem, and some lunch!

The Statistical Consulting Network invites you to their monthly meet-up, a virtual lunchtime meeting where statisticians help each other out with problems that they aren't sure how to deal with. This virtual meeting is held on Zoom at lunchtime on the last Friday of each month, 12:30-1:30 PM (AEDT). We start

each meet-up with announcements, or occasionally a special topic discussion, then discuss problems that attendees have brought along with them.

We also have a Slack workspace where members of the consulting network can communicate between meetings, or post problems or relevant materials they would like to discuss during a meeting.

Zoom link

Slack Workspace link

Mathematical Engineering of Deep Learning - Part One Foundations

20 Apr 2023, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (AEST) held at Room 163, 14 Sir Christopher Ondaatje Ave Macquarie University, NSW 2109, Australia

This workshop is presented by the NSW Branch and School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Macquarie University. It is targeted at people interested in engineering, signal processing, statistics, physics, econometrics, operations research, quantitative management, pure mathematics, bioinformatics, applied machine learning, or even applied deep learning.

For more details and to register click here.

Item Nonresponse And Imputation Course

20 Jun 2023, 5:00 PM (AEST) – 11 Jul 2023, 6:00 PM (AEST), held online - weekly 1 hour live discussions with Professor Dr Jörg Drechsler

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The ASC2023 workshops are now open for registration:

10 December 2023

ASC 2023 Workshops- Essential Skills for Statistical Communication

ASC 2023 Workshops-Statistical Consultancy – The Essentials for Getting Started and Ongoing Success

ASC 2023 Workshops-Deep Statistics for More Rigorous and Efficient Data Science

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ASC and OZCOTS 2023

10-15 December 2023, University of Wollongong, NSW

Abstract submissions now open!

The Scientific Program Committee is pleased to invite authors to submit abstracts for oral and poster presentations, to be delivered at ASC and OZCOTS 2023.

Please click here to submit your abstract. You will be asked to create an account with Oxford Abstract. Just follow the prompts.

Presenters should aim for 10-15 minute presentations. Depending on the number of submissions a final decision on the length of presentations will be made closer to the event.

The abstract submission deadline is 24 April 2023.

Find out more

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