STATS MATTERS & EVENTS

27 July 2023

At SSA we are getting extremely excited, now that the Australian Statistical Conference (ASC) and the Australian Conference on Teaching Statistics (OZCOTS) are coming closer, with another major milestone just around the corner: the early bird deadline ends on 31 July 2023. That's in four days! Have you booked your ticket yet?

Register now to get the best price for our signature event, a crucial platform for Australian and international statisticians, data scientists, researchers, educators, and statistics enthusiasts to come together, exchange knowledge, and foster connections. The joint conference, ASC and OZCOTS 2023, promises to be an exceptional gathering with remarkable keynotes, engaging presenters, and a series of social events that will leave you with lasting memories.

ASC and OZCOTS 2023 have curated an outstanding lineup of keynote speakers and presenters. There are too many to mention them all right here, but hearing Sir David Spiegelhalter speak will certainly be one of the highlights. And if you are registered for one of the three pre-conference workshops, you may suddenly find yourself in a discussion with Casey Briggs from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)!

The conference program promises to offer a rich blend of talks, workshops, and presentations that cover cutting-edge research, innovative methodologies, and real-world applications.

One of the highlights of the conference is the poster session, where delegates can engage with researchers and practitioners displaying their work in an interactive format, over drinks and appetisers, thus setting the stage for a warm and welcoming welcome reception. The combination of intellectual discussions and social interactions will create a vibrant atmosphere and set the tone for the days ahead.

Apart from the academic sessions, ASC and OZCOTS 2023 are going the extra mile to ensure delegates have a memorable time by organising a series of social events. These get-togethers are designed to encourage networking, foster friendships, and create a sense of community among statisticians of all levels.

We invite you to attend the [Early Career and Student Statisticians Network ASC Social,](#) taking place on 12 December 2023 at the Illawarra Brewery's outdoor terrace of WINN Stadium. This event will be a relaxed get-together for students, early-career statisticians, and seasoned professionals. With beach views as the backdrop, attendees will have the chance to connect with like-minded individuals, discuss career opportunities, while enjoying nibbles and drinks and having fun.

No ASC would be complete without its traditional [conference dinner](#), held on 13 December in the Grand Ballroom of the Sage Hotel. Centrally located within walking distance of all our conference hotels, this is a great venue to socialise and celebrate the spirit of statistics.

And finally, on 14 December 2023 you can indulge in a [fabulous dinner](#) at Lucia's by the Sea, hosted by OZCOTS. This delightful beachfront venue, next to the Novotel Wollongong, will provide another beautiful setting where you can connect with peers, discuss the conference's insights and enjoy a lovely meal together.

With so much happening, you may need to take a few days off work after your return home, to get some rest.

See you at ASC/OZCOTS 2023!

[Marie-Louise Rankin](#)
Executive Officer
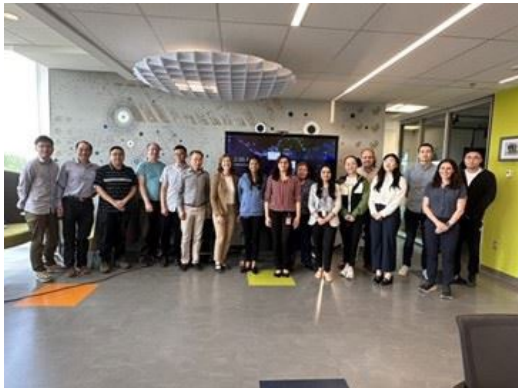
In this newsletter:

From Frosty Learning to Lasting Collaborations: My Canadian Journey as a Biostatistician

Report from the Statistical Society of Australia Betty Allan Travel Award 2020 winner Sharm Thuraisingam

After three long years (thanks Covid-19), I was finally able to use my 2020 SSA/CSIRO Betty Allan Travel Award to spend time at the Centre for Health Informatics, University of Calgary in Canada. In February this year, my family and I headed off to Calgary, arriving to a chilly -30C! I spent 4 months at the Centre for Health Informatics (CHI) learning from statisticians and data analysts about health data, data linkage practices and prediction modelling using linked electronic medical record data in Alberta. During my time at CHI, I connected with various researchers utilising health data for prediction modelling, including family doctors, nephrologists, cardiologists, epidemiologists, paediatric surgeons, biostatisticians and data analysts. My visit has resulted in 4 ongoing international collaboration projects between the University of Melbourne and University of Calgary, and the development of a 5-year Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) collaboration project grant aimed at harnessing the power of hospital electronic medical record data for clinical prediction model development.

In May I travelled with the CHI team to Montreal to attend the Canadian Association for Health Services and Policy Research (CAHSPR) Conference where I learnt about the collection and amalgamation of health data across Canada, the effect of the pandemic on the Canadian health workforce and

strategies for improving access to healthcare for vulnerable populations. I thoroughly enjoyed the networking opportunity and have returned home with a list of researchers to collaborate with.

Of course it wasn't all work and no play! My family and I made the most of our weekends in Canada, hiking and skiing in Banff, Lake Louise, Jasper and British Columbia. We were also lucky enough to visit Quebec City where we enjoyed indulging in French cuisine and some warmer weather. Highlights of my trip include making lifelong friends at CHI, establishing ongoing collaboration projects with the University of Calgary which will (hopefully) see me return in the near future, the picturesque scenery in Alberta (especially the Icefields Parkway), northern lights, well insulated housing, extremely friendly people, delicious poutine and ketchup chips!

Thank you to the Statistical Society of Australia and CSIRO for such a wonderful learning and development opportunity that has enhanced my career as a biostatistician, enabled me to secure ongoing international research/analysis work and provided lifelong memories that my family and I will treasure forever! It really has been a once in a lifetime experience, living and working in another part of the world!

Sharm Thuraisingam

Want to know more about the Betty Allan Travel Award? Find out here.

And while we're on the subject of Canada....

Stuck in a rut – dreaming of a lifestyle change?

Canada's new Express Entry occupation-targeted draws include mathematicians, statisticians and actuaries as some of the targeted Canada jobs for candidates hoping to gain their permanent residence.

The latest figures from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

forecast a shortfall of 1,800 of these professionals over the next eight years.

Under the changes announced by IRCC at the end of May, Express Entry will now be more responsive to labour market needs through occupation-targeted draws.

Programs covered under Express Entry include the [Federal Skilled Worker](#) (FSW) program, [Federal Skilled Trades](#) (FST) program and [Canadian Experience Class](#) (CEC), as well as parts of the [Provincial Nominee Programs](#) (PNP).

Find out more

Peter John Brockwell

12 October 1937 – 5 July 2023

We have received the sad news that Peter Brockwell passed away on July 5th, aged 85.

Peter graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Masters in Statistics (1962), having also completed a degree in electrical engineering. After completing a PhD with José Enrique Moyal at the ANU (1967), most of his career as a statistician was spent in the USA, at Colorado State University, where he was appointed Professor of Statistics in 1977. He also had professorial and chairmanship appointments at La Trobe University (1973-76), the University of Melbourne (1988-89) and RMIT University (1995-96), among other places.

Peter was an excellent mathematical statistician who made substantial and deep contributions to time series and forecasting, including authoring two key books with R.A. Davis: "Time series: theory and methods" (1987) and "Introduction to time series and forecasting" (2000). He gave many invited and plenary lectures at important events and conferences throughout his career.

Peter had a history of making cases for numerous additional faculty appointments in his multiple appointments as department chairman. In the Australian context he was involved in the organisation of the Third Australian Statistical Conference in 1976. Among his many PhD students was Rob Hyndman, whom he co-supervised with Gary Grunwald.

The Society expresses its condolences to his family and friends.

Ian Gordon
President, SSA

SSA Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Have you seen SSA's [Strategic Plan](#), which was finalised this month? Check your inbox for a message from SSA President, Ian Gordon, sent out just this afternoon.

Strategic plan July 2023 – June 2026

Statistical Society of Australia

Vision
Statistical understanding and evidence-based decision making are at the heart of societal progress.

Purpose
Amplifying the power, use, and practice of statistics and data science.

Strategic priorities

Enhance the public profile of statistics and data science.
- Foster public understanding of statistics and data science.
- Increase awareness of the value of the statistical professions.
- Amplify statistical voices in public discourse.
- Advance advocacy priorities.

Raise the standard of practice of statistics and data science.
- Deliver a quality professional development and events program.
- Maintain a curated portal of high-quality training and resources.
- Advocate for improved statistical content within formal education.
- Promote improved statistical content within data science and statistics-related university degrees.

Foster professional connections.
- Empower the Branches and Sections to grow and strengthen professional connectivity.
- Better connect the broader data science and statistical communities.
- Increase participation from a broad range of sectors.
- Nurture the careers of emerging professionals.

Operational priorities
● Productive team　　● Financially sustainable　　● Strong engagement　　● Digitally enabled　　● Great governance

Who we serve
We serve the Australian community by supporting good statistical practice and evidence-based decision making. We achieve this by supporting those advancing the appropriate use and practice of statistics and data science.

Abstract Submissions Now Open for 2023 ADSN Conference!

The Program Committee of the [Australian Data Science Network (ADSN) 2023 Conference](#) invites submissions of contributed abstracts in all areas of Data Science. We welcome submissions from both **academia and industry**, with the major themes of interest including, but not limited to:

- Data Science in Society and Public Policy
- Data Science for Scientific Discovery
- Data Science in Industry
- Data Science Modelling and Methodologies
- Ethics and Privacy in Data Science

Abstracts should be concise, not exceeding 300 words and should clearly state the objective, methodology, results, and implications of your work. A small number of accepted submissions will be presented as spotlight talks in the conference program and all accepted submissions will have the opportunity to be presented as posters. Presenters will be responsible for their own expenses of attending the conference.

Submit your abstract

Professional Indemnity

This cover protects against claims that are caused by your professional advice or services which may give rise to a financial loss.

Public Liability

A staple requirement in contracts, this protects against claims made for property damage and personal injury to third parties caused by your negligent acts.

Cyber Insurance

Covers costs and losses incurred as result of cyberattacks. Cover can include incident response costs, business interruption, liability and cybercrime.

What insurances should a **Statistician** consider?

Office Insurance

Coverage extends to property, office furniture, computers, printers, copiers, and other essential equipment used in your daily operations.

Corporate Travel

Annual combined Business & Leisure coverage while travelling around Australia or Overseas – includes coverage for medical expenses, trip cancellation and baggage/contents.

Mentioned in previous newsletters:

Request for topic suggestions: R-Ladies of Melbourne to showcase R demos at ASC & OZCOTS 2023

We are delighted to announce that R-Ladies of Melbourne will be participating in the upcoming [Australian Statistical Conference & OZCOTS 2023](#), setting up R demos during the event. The organisers are seeking your assistance in identifying specific areas of interest that attendees might like to see in these demos.

By tailoring their presentations to match our delegates' needs, R-Ladies can ensure that the sessions are both relevant and valuable. Please email our Event Coordinator, [Jodi Phillips](#), to share your preferences or suggestions for particular topics. Thank you!

SSA Branches have opened applications for funding to attend ASC/OZCOTS 2023

Branches of the Statistical Society are offering funding for student and early career members of the society to attend the [Australian Statistical Conference (ASC) and Australian Conference on Teaching Statistics (OZCOTS)](#) in Wollongong, 10th - 15th December 2023. All branch funding will cover registration to the conference, with some branches covering additional travel if funds allow. For full details see each branches' announcement.

- Canberra (check your email for 'Canberra branch ASC & OZCOTS 2023 rego grant')
- NSW ([application form](#))

Queensland (application form)
- South Australia & Northern Territory (application form)
- Victoria & Tasmania (application form)
- Western Australia (application form)

With best wishes,

ASC & OZCOTS 2023 Programming Committee

SSA Events

Statistical Consulting Network July Meet-Up

28 July 2023, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM AEST, 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

Password: 660145

Slack Workspace link

SSA QLD Branch Meeting: Evidence of statistical "hacking" in clinical prediction models presented by Professor Adrian Barnett, Queensland University of Technology

2 Aug 2023, 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM, Room 348, Building 67, UQ St Lucia Campus and online

Clinical prediction models are widely used in health and medical research. The area under the receiving operating curve (AUC) is a frequently used estimate to describe the utility of a clinical prediction model. The AUC is often

interpreted relative to thresholds, with "good" or "excellent" models defined at 0.7, 0.8 or 0.9. These thresholds may create targets that result in "hacking", where researchers are spurred on to re-analyse their data until they achieve a "good" result.

We extracted AUC values from PubMed abstracts to look for evidence of hacking. The distribution of 306,888 AUC values showed clear excesses above the thresholds of 0.7, 0.8 and 0.9 and shortfalls below the thresholds. The AUCs for some models are over-inflated, which risks exposing patients to sub-optimal clinical decision-making. Greater modelling transparency is needed, including published protocols, and data and code sharing.

*This is joint work with Nicole White (QUT), Rex Parsons (QUT), and Gary Collins (Oxford).

For more info and to register please click [here](#).

SSA Vic & Tas Branch August meeting: Applications in long-term forecasting, derivatives' valuation, anomaly detection, and machine learning presnted by Dr Zili Zhu is the Director of RiskLab at CSIRO

15 Aug 2023, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM (AEST), RMIT Building 15, Level 3, Room 10, 124 La Trobe Street Melbourne OR online via Teams

At RiskLab, our objective is to develop and implement innovative quantitative solutions and/or products for the industry. The methodologies that we rely on are in the domains of applied math, statistics and software engineering. In this talk, we will present some examples derived from our direct engagement with industrial clients to illustrate some typical techniques and methods that we have implemented for applications in long-term forecasting (actuary), derivatives valuations (finance and agriculture), anomaly detection (fraud risk) and machine-learning (high-frequency algorithmic trading).

To register click [here](#).

SSA NSW August event: A/Prof Anastasios Pangiotelis - Forecast Reconciliation: A Review by A/Prof Anastasios Pangiotelis and Paco Tseng.

16 Aug 2023, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM (AEST), Seminar Room 020, Law Building Annex, The University of Sydney or [online](#).

Collections of time series that are formed via aggregation are prevalent in

many fields. These are commonly referred to as hierarchical time series and may be constructed cross-sectionally across different variables, temporally by aggregating a single series at different frequencies, or may even be generalised beyond aggregation as time series that respect linear constraints. When forecasting such time series, a desirable condition is for forecasts to be coherent, that is to respect the constraints. The past decades have seen substantial growth in this field with the development of reconciliation methods that not only ensure coherent forecasts but can also improve forecast accuracy. This talk will serve as a review of forecast reconciliation and an entry point for researchers and practitioners dealing with hierarchical time series. The talk will include perspectives on forecast reconciliation from machine learning, Bayesian statistics and probabilistic forecasting as well as applications in economics, energy, tourism, retail demand and demography.

For more details and to register click [here](#).

Bill Venables Award seminar

24 Aug 2023, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM (AEST), online

SSA's Statistical Computing and Visualisation section proudly presents the Venables Award seminar.

This award is to encourage new open source software development from the Australian community with a view to support efforts to develop and share data science and statistics methodology This year's winners are Matthew Sainsbury-Dale, Andrew Zammit-Mangion,with FRK: Fixed Rank Kriging. Runners-up are Rex Parsons, Robin Blythe, Adrian Barnett, Susannna Cramb and Steven McPhail, with predictNMB.

To register and see more information click [here](#).

Machine Learning with Python

5 Aug 2023, 9:00 AM (AEST) – 6 Aug 2023, 12:00 PM (AEST), held online

The Statistical Society of Australia's Victorian and Tasmanian branch warmly invites you to a workshop on machine learning with Python, presented by Patrick Robotham from Magic.
This two-day workshop aims to enable data scientists to incrementally incorporate Python in their workflow. After an introduction of Python basics, the workshop focuses on developing Python models in a workflow framework that

is most commonly seen in a production environment. Participants will benefit from a gentle introduction to Python on the first day before learning some powerful modelling concepts and tools on the second day.

For more information and to register click [here](#).

Sampling course

12 Oct 2023, 9:00 AM (AEDT) – 8 Dec 2023 (AEDT), held online, one hour a week

The Social Research Centre and the Statistical Society of Australia (SSA) are very proud to offer statistical training from the International Program in Survey and Data Science (IPSDS), a joint program of the University of Mannheim and the Joint Program in Survey Methodology at the University of Maryland.

The 8-week online sampling course is aimed at working professionals who are interested in expanding their data collection skills. The course will be available fully online with prerecorded videos that students are expected to watch on their own time plus weekly 1-hour live interactive sessions with the instructor, Raphael Nishimura, Director of Sampling Operations at the University of Michigan.

By the end of the course, you will…

- understand the basic ideas, concepts and principles of probability sampling from an applied perspective
- be able to identify and appropriately apply sampling techniques to survey design problems
- be able to compute the sample size for a variety of sample designs
- understand and be able to assess the impact of the sample design on survey estimates
- be able to estimate the precision of the survey statistics using different estimation techniques

Please book before 15 August 2023 to take advantage of the Early Bird Deadline For more details and to register click [here](#)

Check out these pre-conference workshops held in Wollongong on 10 December 2023:

- [Essential Skills for Statistical Communication](#) presented by Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter, University of Cambridge and Dr Linden Ashcroft, University of Melbourne

  The workshop will include a panel discussion. Presenters Prof David Spiegelhalter and Dr Linden Ashcroft will be joined by applied mathematician and science communicator [Dr Sophie Calabretto](#), and ABC journalist and 'lapsed mathematician', [Casey Briggs](#), to share their experiences.

- [Statistical Consultancy – The Essentials for Getting Started and Ongoing Success](#) Presented by Professor Julie Simpson, University of Melbourne, A/Professor Emily Karahalios, University of Melbourne and A/Professor Karen Lamb, University of Melbourne, A/Prof Sue Finch from The University of Melbourne and

- [Deep Statistics for More Rigorous and Efficient Data Science](#) presented by Professor Xiao-Li Meng, Harvard University

[Australian Statistical Conference (ASC) and Australian Conference on Teaching Statistics (OZCOTS)](#)

10th - 15th December 2023, Wollongong

Early Bird deadline is 31 July 2023!

ASC and OZCOTS 2023 Social Events

[Early Career and Student Statisticians Network ASC Social](#) on 12 December 2023, held at the Illawarra Brewery's outdoor terrace at WINN stadium. The ECSSN is organising a social get-together during the ASC2023! They are inviting students, early career and more senior statisticians to join them a lovely beach view and network with like-minded people you might not see very often, plus have some fun, nibbles, and drinks!

Statistical Conference Dinner on 13 Dec 2023, at the Grand Ballroom at the Sage Hotel. Just minutes from the beach, come and join us for a three-course dinner. (You register on the same page as the conference registration page)

OZCOTS 2023 Social on 14 Dec 2023, at Lucia's by the Sea, next to the Novotel Hotel. The OZCOTS committee invites you to come and join them for a lovely meal and catch-up at a beautiful beach front venue.

Other events

Workshop on Causal and Explainable Artificial Intelligence

4 December 2023, Shanghai, China

The 2023 Workshop on Causal and Explainable Artificial Intelligence (CXAI) will be held in Shanghai, China on 4 December 2023, as a part of the 23rd IEEE International Conference on Data Mining (ICDM 2023). Some of the topics of interest definitely have a statistical flavour, e.g. "Causal inference and Bayesian networks". Authors of accepted papers will be invited to submit extended versions for possible inclusion in a Special Issue on Causal and Explainable Artificial Intelligence in the Applied Sciences journal.

More details can be found here and here.

For further information please contact Yanchang Zhao or Ainura Tursunalieva of CSIRO.

Current Vacancies in SSA's Career Centre

Internal Revenue Agent (Examiner) - Direct Hire (12 Month Register)

Multiple Locations (see description)

Internal Revenue Service

Duties WHAT ARE THE APPEALS (AP), LARGE BUSINESS ...

Revenue Officer- DIRECT HIRE (12 Month Register)

Multiple Locations (see description)

Internal Revenue Service

Duties WHAT IS THE DIVISION? SMALL BUSINESS ...

Internal Revenue Agent (Examiner) - DIRECT HIRE (12 MONTH REGISTER)

Multiple Locations (See Description)

Internal Revenue Service

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