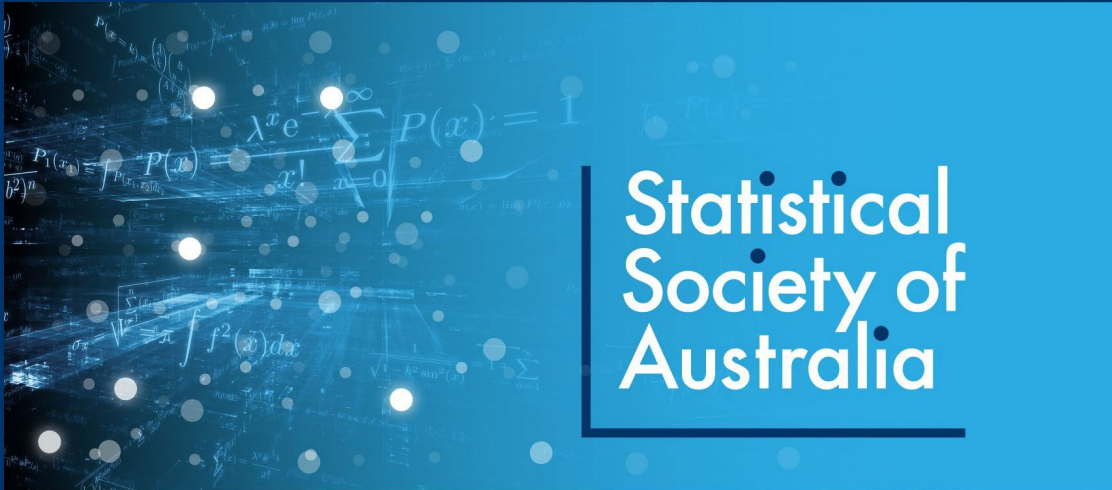


From: [Statistical Society of Australia](#)
To: [Contact us](#)
Subject: Stats Matters & Events
Date: Thursday, 3 August 2023 3:04:56 PM



STATS MATTERS & EVENTS

3 August 2023

Thank you to the almost 300 members and non-members who registered for the Australian Statistical Conference & OZCOTS 2023. Planning a post-COVID-19 conference is no easy feat, as no one knows quite what to expect. Are people thirsty for face-to-face events? Would they prefer the safety of online meetings? Are employers still happy to send staff to events like our conference? Is the ever-increasing CPI causing financial struggles for some of our potential delegates?

We passed the early bird deadline earlier this week and after months of uncertainty the members of the ASC and OZCOTS 23 Local Organising Committee and Scientific Program Committee can now breathe a united sigh of relief. The registration numbers are promising, exceeding the minimum target.

Thank you again to everyone who registered. We can't wait to see you in December!

[Marie-Louise Rankin](#)

Executive Officer

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Simon Christopher Barry

12 February 1965 – 16 July 2023

Simon Barry died in a car accident on July 16th, aged 57.

Simon graduated with first class honours in statistics from ANU in 1990. He worked at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) before completing a PhD on truncated data with Terry O'Neill at ANU (1996). He then worked at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) in Canberra, followed by ANU, both as a Statistical Consultant and as a Lecturer, before moving to the Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS) in 1999. Simon moved again in 2008 to CSIRO where he held a variety of roles, including Research Director, Analytics and Decision Science in Data61. He also recently became an Honorary Professor at ANU.

Simon passionately promoted the use of statistics to support and improve

decision making. He strove to use statistics to make a difference. He contributed to the New Atlas of Australian Birds for Birdlife Australia that won the 2003 Eureka Prize, was recognised (with others) for his contribution to activities that led to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) being awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, and contributed to a project to map continental land use. Simon was involved in international fisheries negotiations through the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna. He was particularly interested in biosecurity risk, including risk assessment for introduced pest species and the control of ballast water from commercial shipping. He was very interested in digital technologies, machine learning and artificial intelligence; he discussed synthetic data at the MODSIM2023 conference held shortly before his death. Simon also did practically-motivated theoretical work on capture-recapture methods, zero-inflation, distance sampling, info-gap decision theory and presence-only data.

The Society expresses its condolences to his family and friends.

Ian Gordon
President, SSA

(Thanks to Alan Welsh for preparing this notice.)

Decadal Plan for Social Science Research Infrastructure – Have your say

The consultation phase for the [Decadal Plan for Social Science Research Infrastructure 2023-32](#) is open. The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia would like to encourage you to be a part of this collective endeavour to support impactful and innovative social science research in the coming decade. The discussion paper is available [here](#). Feedback and suggestions on key issues and priorities are welcomed by Friday 18 August.

Counting Danger: The Perils of Census Work in Mexico's Gang-Ridden Terrain

Thinking you're having a tough day? Spare a thought for Mexican census workers trying to go about their business.

According to an article published on the website El Paso Inc. on 28 July 2023, the Mexican government's statistics agency, the National Statistics Institute, has admitted that it had to pay gangs to enter certain towns to conduct the census last year. Assistant Director Susana Pérez Cadena informed a congressional committee that census workers were also forced to hire

criminals to carry out interviews.

In some parts of the country, drug cartels and gangs target census workers for extortion and harassment, seeking to influence polling results or gather intelligence.

Depending on where you are, walking into town and asking questions can cost you your life in rural Mexico. In 2015, a mob in a small town southeast of Mexico City killed and burned two pollsters who were conducting a survey about tortilla consumption. Similarly, in 2016, three men working for a polling firm were rescued from a mob that violently attacked them in the Gulf coast state of Tabasco.

This issue highlights the increasing concerns that some areas of Mexico have been abandoned to the control of drug gangs. It poses significant challenges for conducting government operations and collecting accurate data in these regions.

Read the full article [here](#).

The ABS is seeking your support: Help shape the 2026 Census

On 27 July 2023, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) published a document providing an overview of the 2026 Census topic review, which involves two phases of public consultation. Phase one, held from 28 February to 28 April 2023, sought submissions from the public on the information they would like the ABS to collect in the Census.

The ABS carefully considers new topics to ensure they benefit the public and outweigh the cost to taxpayers and the burden on households. Phase one received 260 submissions from various stakeholders, with individuals contributing 41.5% of the total submissions.

The second phase of consultation, from 27 July to 8 September 2023, will involve discussions on topics for inclusion, change, or removal from the 2026 Census. You can provide your feedback via the ABS Consultation Hub [here](#).

During this consultation, the ABS is specifically seeking feedback on the topics where further information is required to help inform its assessment and recommendation.

Find out more [here](#).

Latest edition of "The Random Sample" podcast out now!



**THE
RANDOM
SAMPLE**

Industry PhDs

OPTiMA
ABC TRAINING CENTRE IN OPTIMISATION TECHNOLOGIES
INTEGRATED METHODOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS

Nico Andres Thio **Hritika Gupta** **Harry McArthur** **Hosted by: Sevvandi Kandanaarachchi**

TheRandomSample.com.au

This episode deals with Industry PhDs and what makes them different than traditional PhDs. Listen to the podcast [here](#).

Battling ignorance: The urgent call for accuracy in a misinformation-flooded world

Warning: the following article contains language that you may find offensive.

Last month, [Harry Frankfurt](#), a distinguished professor of philosophy known for his extensive work on free will and moral responsibility and his book "On Bullshit", passed away at the age of ninety-four. Known for his work on the concept of *bullshit*, he argued that those spreading this type of incorrect information differ from liars in that bullshitters don't care about the truth. In contrast, liars intentionally obscure the truth.

Some of the biggest spreaders of bullshit can be viewed night after night on our television screens as we watch the daily news. Politicians trading in bullshit - and every government has them - are widely recognised as masterful deceivers, adept at disseminating false ideas. Their primary concern is not whether their statements hold any truth; instead, their focus lies in creating a politically advantageous impression of themselves for their audience.

Is there a way to combat the spread of bullshit? Author Brian Gallagher (Nautilus, 18 July 2023) quotes a study in *Nature Human Behavior* that examined interventions to combat COVID-19-related misinformation. The researchers found that reminders to think about accuracy, digital literacy tips,

and crowd-sourced accuracy rating were effective in helping people avoid believing and spreading false information. Interestingly, the study also found that people who tend to believe and spread COVID-19 misinformation are associated with low analytic thinking, a lack of motivation for accuracy, and less support for democracy. These individuals are more accepting of weak claims in general. No one wants to be like them!

In a world where misinformation is prevalent and often harmful, Harry Frankfurt would have agreed that addressing misinformation and promoting accuracy is more important today than ever before.

Would you like to know more about the philosophical concept of Frankfurt's "bullshit"? Check out Sydney-based writer Brett Evans article "Harry Frankfurt's warning" (Inside Story, 28 July 2023) [here](#).

You can read Brian Gallagher's article "Yes, There Is a Cure for Bullshit" [here](#).

Dispute between Beijing and Paris over R&D statistics

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has halted the publication of China's annual research and development (R&D) statistics due to reported anomalies in the data provided by Beijing. The discrepancies include improbable combinations, such as a significant increase in non-manufacturing industry R&D spending while manufacturing R&D decreased.

According to the article "A puzzle stumps statisticians: How much does China actually spend on R&D?" by Richard L. Hudon, published on the website "Science Business" on 31 July 2023, China's rising R&D investment is closely monitored by Western tech policy experts, concerned about potential technological overtaking. However, comparing R&D spending between China and Western countries will always be challenging due to different counting methods and the unique structure of the Chinese economy.

Chinese officials have acknowledged some errors in their reported data and are working with the OECD to resolve the issue.

Read more about the dispute [here](#).

Announcement from the Royal Statistical Society (27 July 2023):

RSS publishes new data visualisation guide

We are pleased to announce the publication of our new guide, 'Best Practices for Data Visualisation', containing insights, advice, and examples (with code) to make data outputs more impactful.

The guide begins with an overview of why we visualise data, and then discusses the core principles and elements of data visualisations – including the structure of charts and tables, and how those structures can be refined to aid readability.

Concrete advice, examples, and code are presented to help improve the styling of charts, with a particular focus on accessibility. There's a dedicated section on styling charts for RSS publications, and readers are also provided with links to resources for choosing the right type of chart for the data at hand.

The guide is free to read online, and source code and files are on GitHub.

The authors welcome feedback and contributions from readers to help develop the guide. They are hosting a session at the RSS International Conference in Harrogate this September where they plan to work with delegates to expand and add new content to the guide. For more details on the session, visit the RSS conference website.

'Best Practices for Data Visualisation' is written by Andreas Krause, Nicola Rennie, and Brian Tarran.

[Learn more](#)

[IMS - Asia Pacific Rim Meeting 2024 - Melbourne, Australia](#)

The sixth IMS APRM will be held from 4-7 January 2024.

The main Meeting hub will be the Glyn Davis Building at The University of Melbourne's Parkville Campus with some sessions being held in neighbouring buildings.

Abstract submission is now open for talks in contributed sessions.

Sessions will be organised into general themes. Each talk will be a total of 20 minutes in length (about 15-16 minutes for the talk and allow for 4-5 minutes of questions).

Early career researchers and PhD students are particularly encouraged to submit abstracts to present their work at the conference.

Once your abstract is submitted, the Committee will notify acceptances on a rolling basis. You should expect a notification with the outcome within approximately 2-3 weeks of submission. Once your abstract is accepted, you will be provided with further instructions on finalising your registration for the conference.

Please submit your abstract via Oxford Abstracts through the link [here](#).

Details can be viewed [here](#).

The deadline for abstract submission in order to be included in the program is 31 October 2023.



Latest issue of Significance out now!

The urge to right statistical wrongs seems to fuel many of the articles submitted to Significance. Take the August issue cover story, which tells the tale of how an annual Dutch culinary tradition came off the rails - it illustrates brilliantly the harm that can be caused when rigour is abandoned and the rush for “impact” too hasty. Reading too much into early results, say the authors, is “like trespassing in minefields. [...] Even drawing sensible descriptive conclusions is not trivial.”

Of course, it’s not just *homo sapiens* that can suffer when stats goes wrong. We also look at the poor methodological reputation of animal testing and consider how to banish this scientifically and ethically problematic practice for good.

On a lighter note, this issue also delves into the mischievous Spotify album charts, and how to win over the crowd at your next statistical presentation.

August issue highlights:

A very Dutch scandal

Why did a Dutch herring taste test end up mired in scandal?

Testing times: Let's leave the animals out of it

How the controversial and unreliable practice of animal testing could be consigned to history

Sweet little lies: Deceptive statistics in the album charts

Spotify’s ranking system isn’t a perfect reflection of our favourite music

World population projections: Just little bits of history repeating?

Official estimates do not sufficiently account for human behaviour

Can TV make you a better stats communicator?

Watch and learn from TV sitcoms like *The Big Bang Theory*

Millicent Fawcett and Eleanor Rathbone: The Royal Statistical Society suffragists

The remarkable achievements of two statisticians

Stefano Franscini: The statistician who built a nation

Celebrating the farmer’s son who forged a national identity for Switzerland in

the 19th century

Access the digital version of *Significance* through your [membership portal](#). You need to be logged in with your membership details to be able to open your digital copy and then go to <https://www.statsoc.org.au/SignificanceAccess>. Print issues will be mailed to subscribers soon.

Significance is also online [here](#).

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](#))

With best wishes,

PhD scholarship at Curtin University - spatial analysis of cardiac arrest

Curtin University is currently advertising an RTP (Research Training Program) full-time PhD scholarship on “**Spatial analysis and modelling of strategies to reduce the time to defibrillation in out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA)**”.

The project supervision will be led by Prof Judith Finn in PRECRU - the Prehospital, Resuscitation and Emergency Care Research Unit, in the School of Nursing. More information about the PhD topic and scholarship application process can be found at: <https://scholarships.curtin.edu.au/Scholarship/?id=6724>.

Applications close 25 Aug 2023.

Applicants must be an Australian Citizen, New Zealand Citizen, Australian Permanent Resident, or hold a Permanent Humanitarian Visa.

For any questions, please contact judith.finn@curtin.edu.au

SSA Events

Statistical Consulting Network July Meet-Up

25 August 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](#)

Joint SSA WA & IBS-AR Meeting: Designing Efficient Clinical Trials (Michael Dymock)

8 Aug 2023, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM (AWST), Blakers Lecture Theatre, The University of Western Australia

In this talk, Michael will motivate the departure from fixed trial designs with the introduction of adaptive designs, where the trial design itself adapts in response to the accrued data. Adaptive trials are more complicated to design and difficult to implement, but he will argue that in many situations the benefits outweigh the costs and we have a responsibility to “do better” with our research. A vaccine trial will be used as a toy example throughout the talk as he demonstrates how to use simulations to design an adaptive trial. He will close with some thoughts on how to design efficient trials to directly address the decision-making of clinicians and consumers and pose some questions on where to from here. Please RSVP for dinner afterwards by contacting [Mario D'Antuono](#) (0480 123 071) by **12 noon, Monday, 7 August 2023**.

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

SSA Vic & Tas Branch August meeting: Applications in long-term forecasting, derivatives' valuation, anomaly detection, and machine learning presented 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](#).

SSA QLD Branch Meeting: Collecting and Analysing Data through the Lens of a Behavioural Economist presented by Prof Benno Torgler, Queensland University of Technology

23 Aug 2023, 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM, 0500D-0M14 - UQ Brisbane City, 88 Creek Street, Brisbane/Online

Like a breath of fresh air, the expansion of economics and behavioural economics has moved into all kind of spheres of life, including sports, the science of science, warfare, crime and more. This presentation will provide insights on how we have tackled some of those areas (exploring data on sports athletes, scientists, soldiers, or citizens) while discussing both advantages and shortcomings. Moreover, It will explore future avenues for potential progress in terms of data and tools of thought and exploration.

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, Susanna 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



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

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

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

[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](#)