

From: [Statistical Society of Australia](#)
To: [Contact us](#)
Subject: Stats Matters & Events
Date: Thursday, 7 December 2023 5:27:30 PM



STATS MATTERS & EVENTS

7 December 2023

I am writing this message to you from a very untidy office. I am surrounded by stationary: packets with markers, post-it stickers, a new stapler, wristbands in a variety of colours, award certificates, sign holders, print-outs of this and print-out of that's. You guessed it – I'm getting ready for ASC&OZCOTS2023 and I have a lot of stuff to pack. At this stage I'm wondering if I'll be able to fit any spare clothes into my suitcase!

Before I head off to Wollongong, there's something important I need to share with you:

After not having touched the SSA membership fees for three years, Central Council decided at the last Central Council AGM to raise the membership fees from 18 December 2023. You'll be pleased to learn that we will not raise them in line with the CPI. The increase for full members, retired members, early career and perpetual members will be 12%. The increase for full members paying via our automatic renewal facility is 10%. The fees for our overseas members will be increased at a slightly higher rate. Student members will be delighted to read that their fees will remain the same.

We hope you understand the need for SSA to put its prices up. We need to be

able to cover our expenses. Like all of you, SSA is affected by a general increase in cost. Everything has gone up, from our website maintenance costs to any software we subscribe to, telephone charges, fees associated with Australia Post, etc. We now also have five paid staff members – more than we have ever had before.

Members have the option of renewing their membership before 18 December at the current rate. Simply log into your [membership account](#) and generate a renewal invoice. You can also keep your fees lower by registering for automatic renewals.

Furthermore you have the option of taking out multi-year membership for up to five years to secure membership at the current rate. If you would like to do this, please [contact the SSA office](#).

Those experiencing hardship could apply for one of our [equity membership scholarships](#).

We firmly believe that SSA still offers great value for money. The many membership benefits include

- Access to [local monthly meetings](#)
- Professional [accreditation](#) and support for your career advancement
- Access to our popular [mentoring program](#)
- Access to [special interest groups](#)
- Numerous [awards](#), recognising statisticians at various stages of their career
- Scholarships, such as [fellowship funding support](#)
- Discounted [indemnity insurance](#)
- [Discounted software](#), such as 20% off any 12-month paid subscription to [shinyapps.io](#).
- [Discounted publications](#)
- Free access to the [Australian & New Zealand Journal of Statistics](#)
- Free access to “[Significance](#)”
- Access to our [Early Career and Student Statistician Network](#)
- Access to [webinars](#) and our new [upskilling resources](#)
- Discounts for our [training workshops](#)
- [Career centre](#) access for employers and job-seekers

Are we missing anything? Please keep your suggestions coming. We are always looking for ways to improve your membership experience.

Until next week

[Marie-Louise Rankin](#)

Executive Officer

Read newsletter in your [browser](#)

In this newsletter:

[Data Science: Charting the future of Australia's fastest-growing field - AMSI-SSA Data Science Review released](#)

[PM's Prizes for Science](#)

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Data Science: Charting the future of Australia's fastest-growing field -

AMSI-SSA Data Science Review released

This week a review initiated by the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) and the Statistical Society of Australia (SSA) was released. Focusing on the role of mathematics and statistics in data science education in Australian universities, the review highlights several key points:

- Rapid growth of data science: Data science is among the fastest-growing occupations in Australia, with a high demand for skilled data scientists in academia, research, and industry.
- Importance of mathematics in education: Senior secondary school mathematics is crucial for preparing students for data science courses, essential for building the future data science workforce.
- Need for industry-university collaboration: There is a need for better connections between the industry and universities to support data science growth. This includes internships, work-integrated learning, research training, career education, and building a professional community.

AMSI Director, Professor Tim Marchant, emphasised the significance of this review, noting the official recognition of data science as an occupation in Australia. It is ranked among the top in-demand and high-paying jobs, with a

global market projected to grow significantly in the next five years. The review underscores the vital role of mathematical sciences in developing data science skills.

Chaired by Distinguished Professor Kerrie Mengersen, Director of the QUT Centre for Data Science, the Data Science Review suggests that university data science courses should be recognised as a separate field of education. “It’s time we treated data science like a grown up. It needs to go out on its own. It needs to move out of the house, especially when you consider it lives in many different houses, or in its case, schools depending on which university you’re talking about,” she said. The report also advocates for the inclusion of a significant level of statistical content in data science degrees. Professor Mengersen stresses the importance of statistics in data science education, likening it to a critical skill set for data scientists.

Read the review [here](#).

Prime Minister's Prizes for Science

Nominations are open for the 2024 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science (the Prizes). From now until 8 February 2024, you can nominate your leader, mentor, employee, colleague or peer for one of 7 prestigious awards in scientific research, research-based innovation and excellence in science teaching.

\$750,000 in prize money is available, to be distributed across seven categories:

- Prime Minister's Prize for Science
- Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation
- Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year
- Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year
- Prize for New Innovators
- Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools
- Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools.

[Find out more](#)

PISA 2022 Results Out Now

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assesses the

knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in mathematics, reading and science.

The results of the 2022 PISA study were released two days ago. According to the study, Australia's performance compared to other OECD countries showed a mix of stability and areas for improvement. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Australian students' performance remained steady from the previous PISA cycle, while the average score across OECD countries fell significantly in mathematics and reading.

This stability in Australia's performance is notable as it marks the second consecutive PISA cycle (covering 2015 to 2018, and 2018 to 2022) where the country's performance in mathematics and reading has been largely unchanged. In science, the results were similar to those in 2018, halting what had been a steady decline in Australia's results since PISA began.

[Find out more](#)

Statistician faces trial over vaccine data misuse

Barry Young, a former employee of New Zealand's public health agency Te Whatu Ora, was recently arrested for allegedly leaking health data related to the coronavirus vaccination rollout. Young, 56, is accused of unauthorised disclosure and misuse of data. He allegedly uploaded information online, claiming to have discovered a link between specific vaccine batches and high mortality rates. However, data experts have refuted Young's claims, pointing out his failure to properly adjust the data set for age differences.

New Zealand's Health Minister Shane Ret has expressed serious concerns about these allegations, highlighting the spread of harmful disinformation by conspiracy theorists. Ret emphasises public confidence in vaccines, supported by expert reassurances that there is no evidence backing Young's allegations.

Margie Apa, the chief executive of Whatu Ora, confirmed Young's previous employment with the agency but noted his lack of clinical experience or vaccine knowledge. Apa referred to the need for detailed analysis of the released data and a thorough investigation to learn from the incident. Apa also discredited Young's claims, asserting that vaccination is safe and effective, and there is no evidence linking it to excess mortality in New Zealand.

Young appeared in Wellington District Court on December 4 and faces a maximum sentence of seven years if found guilty.

[Read more](#)

SSA Events

Step by Step in Survey Weighting

15 Feb 2024 (AEDT) – 7 Mar 2024 (AEDT), held online- live 1 hour sessions on Thursdays at 6pm AEDT

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. Places are limited, please register early to take advantage of early bird discounts and secure a place.

About the course:

Step by Step in Survey Weighting is a statistical methods class that combines hands-on applications and general review of the theory for survey weighting giving participants the necessary tools to calculate analysis weights for various survey designs in a real-world setting. The course will focus on methods to solve practical problems while providing overview of the theory for the underlying assumptions. Weekly homework problems are included to reinforce learning and provide opportunity to apply methods in practice. Participants are encouraged to discuss their own weighting challenges and solutions during weekly online meetings. Click [here](#) for more details

Introduction to Big Data & Machine Learning

6 Feb 2024 (AEDT) – 27 Feb 2024 (AEDT), held online

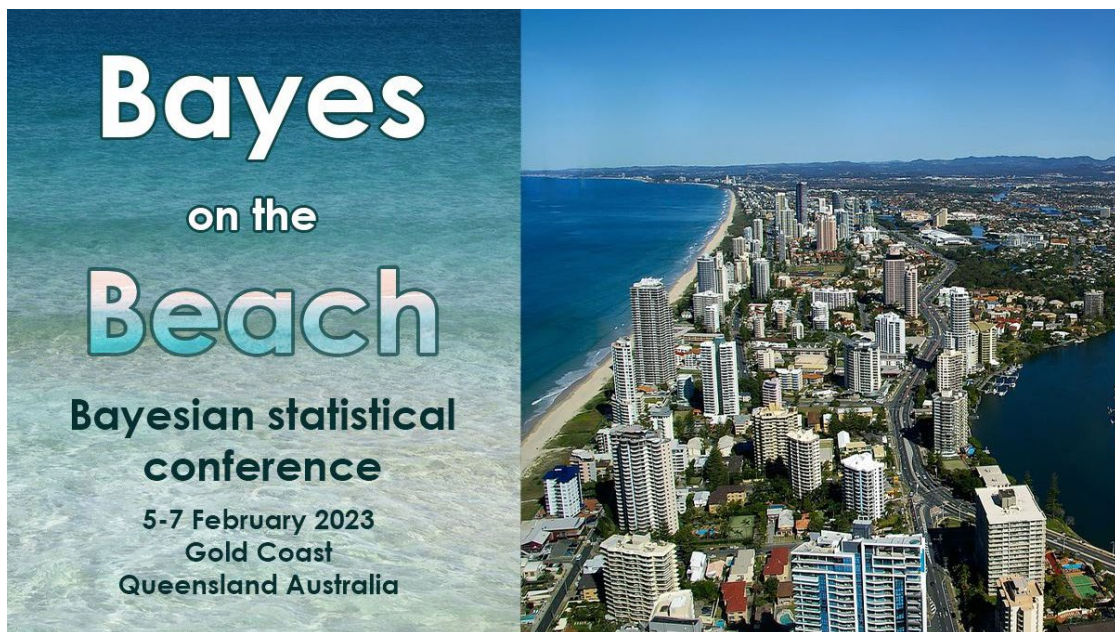
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About the course:

The amount of data generated as a by-product in society is growing fast including data from satellites, sensors, transactions, social media and

smartphones, just to name a few. Such data are often referred to as "big data" and can be used to create value in different areas such as health and crime prevention, commerce and fraud detection. Big Data are often used for prediction and classification tasks. Both of which can be tackled with machine learning techniques. In this course, we explore how Big Data concepts, processes and methods can be used within the context of Survey Research. Throughout this course we will illustrate key concepts using specific survey research examples including tailored survey designs and nonresponse adjustments and evaluation. For details click [here](#).

Other events



[Registrations now open!](#)

Current Vacancies in SSA's Career Centre

[Internal Revenue Agent \(Examiner\) - DIRECT HIRE \(12 MONTH REGISTER\)](#)

Multiple Locations (See Description)

Internal Revenue Service

Summary: Positions under this announcement are ...

[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.

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