

From: [Statistical Society of Australia](#)
To: [Marie-Louise Rankin](#)
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STATS MATTERS & EVENTS

7 March 2024

Tomorrow is [International Women's Day](#), a day dedicated to celebrating the social, economic, cultural, scientific and political achievements of women. I'd like to take this opportunity to give a big shout out to the wonderful women in our membership, and all those that support them.

While on the search for material suitable for the celebration of International Women's Day I stumbled over a media release by Statistics Canada about a recent report on Women Inventors, published on 28 February 2024, citing data collected by Statistics Canada and the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO). It highlights the increase in the number of women inventors in Canada, especially in comparison to men, within specific periods.

This media release made me wonder about women inventors in Australia, and a quick Google search found a report in the UNSW Law Journal on "[Patents and Gender](#)". I was thrilled to see that of the three co-authors, Sue Finch and Patrick Cameron are members of the SSA! Our members are everywhere!

This study, published in 2022 and using data from 2001-2015, highlighted the low participation of female inventors in the Australian patent system, with only 23.6% of standard patent applications between 2001 and 2015 including at

least one female inventor.

The paper called for further research to understand the gender disparity at the patent application and examination stages and to identify and address leaks in the STEM pipeline for women. It sought to stimulate discussion for structural and social change to address gender disparities in the patent system, highlighting the importance of recognising and overcoming systemic inequities. You can read the full paper [here](#).

If you are interested in learning more about women inventors in Australia, you could also check out the article "[8 Amazing Australian Female Inventors You Need to Know About this #IWD](#)". The article is from 2018, so an update today would certainly show different names. Still, it's a remarkably interesting list! Among the eight women profiled are, for example, Dr Dharmica Mistry, who invented a blood test that can detect breast cancer, Jacqueline Savage who developed an adhesive patch that measures core body temperature and administers medication remotely, and Sarah McDonald who created another patch for real-time pregnancy and labour monitoring. Fascinating stuff. Have you ever considered inventing something?

International Women's Day is also a terrific opportunity to quickly address the release of the pay gap data last week. I wasn't going to mention it, because the subject has the potential to get people fired up, but then I came across an excellent article by Lucy Dean in the Australian Financial Review that explains to the layperson how the data should be interpreted. Lucy manages to shine a light on the topic from various angles and her article equipped me with what I needed to know to be able to participate in discussions with my friends. If you have a minute or two, I highly recommend reading the article [here](#), although having a statistical background you've probably figured it all out on your own already.

On that note, happy International Women's Day to you or the women in your life!

[Marie-Louise Rankin](#)

Executive Officer

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UN paves way for global food security and nutrition data enhancement with new statistical domain

The [United Nations Statistical Commission](#) has officially approved the creation of a distinct statistical domain dedicated to food security and nutrition statistics, an unprecedented move in the commission's history. This new domain is designed to enhance the efforts of key organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in developing and standardising food security and nutrition data. These organisations will now present a report on the state of food security and nutrition data biennially to the UN Statistical Commission. This initiative is aimed at advancing a unified agenda to address and improve food security and nutrition data globally.

The establishment of this domain underscores the importance of a systematic and committed approach to food security and nutrition, facilitating dialogue and technical discussions among UN agencies and member countries. It seeks to refine existing data definitions, methodologies and recommendations, and bridge significant gaps in the assessment of food security and nutrition at all levels.

This decision follows the advocacy of FAO, UNICEF and WHO, alongside policy recommendations from the Committee on World Food Security. It highlights the necessity for harmonised data collection and measurement methods, aiming to close existing data gaps, strengthen statistical capacities at the national level, promote the application of data in policy-making and encourage international donor support for these initiatives. The agenda for this

work includes the development and documentation of best practices and guidelines on concepts, methods, and standards for food security and nutrition statistics.

[Find out more.](#)

Remote control: how flexibility fuels success and why RTO mandates miss the mark

Are you currently working from home? I've been lucky enough to be able to work from home since 2015. While you can feel isolated working away from a bustling office, for me the pros far outweigh the cons. Given that my office was never "bustling" anyway, I did not forfeit anything when I gave up the annoying commute into my office in the city and the parking fees that went with it.

A recent article by Adam Rowe on the website Tech.co "[9 Statistics That Prove Return to Office Mandates Don't Work](#)" entered the debate around return-to-office (RTO) mandates and presented data that challenges the effectiveness of such policies. Quoting Mike Hopkins of Amazon, who admitted to having "no data either way" to support the decision for a strong push towards RTO, Rowe then highlighted key-points showing that remote work has significant benefits for both employers and employees:

- A significant portion of remote workers, over 33%, would quit their jobs if forced to return to the office, indicating a preference for workplace flexibility.
- Remote and hybrid workers often report working longer hours, suggesting increased productivity.
- RTO mandates have a disproportionately negative impact on women, exacerbating the gender disparity in the workplace.
- Studies show that returning to the office has not led to increases in companies' profits, challenging the business rationale behind RTO mandates.
- Remote-friendly companies have experienced higher revenue growth compared to those enforcing full in-office work.
- A large majority of executives regret their RTO mandates, recognising a mismatch between their decisions and the actual data on employee preferences and productivity.
- Gen Z workers, in particular, find remote and hybrid work beneficial for their careers, indicating a future trend towards flexible working arrangements.
- Remote work can significantly reduce carbon footprints, offering an environmental advantage over traditional office work.

- In the United States, remote workers earn significantly more than their in-office counterparts, suggesting that remote work may be a perk associated with higher-paying positions.

In a nutshell, remote work is not only a matter of employee preference but also linked to broader benefits such as productivity, gender equality, environmental sustainability and even financial advantages for both workers and companies!

Enhancing humanitarian response: the World Bank-UNHCR partnership in microdata curation and dissemination

An article co-authored by [Paddy Brock](#), [Olivier Dupriez](#), [Lauren Herby](#), [Andrea Pellandra](#) and [Matthew Welch](#), published on 1 March 2024 on "World Bank Blog" (WorldBank.org), discussed the World Bank–UNHCR collaboration on microdata curation which represents a significant milestone in the safe sharing and utilisation of socioeconomic data concerning people affected by displacement. Historically, UNHCR's data, crucial for designing informed responses and programs for displaced individuals, remained inaccessible outside the organisation due to legal and ethical obligations towards data protection. Addressing the challenge of protecting this sensitive data while leveraging its potential for broader humanitarian and developmental work, the UNHCR Microdata Library project was initiated. This project, supported by the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC) and stemming from a partnership between UNHCR and the World Bank, has successfully facilitated the dissemination of 736 datasets, encompassing 92,209 columns of data, since its launch in early 2020.

Key to this achievement has been the technical collaboration which encompassed aspects such as software provision, curation, anonymisation techniques, capability enhancement and governance framework development. The use of the open-source NADA Data Catalog, adapted for UNHCR's requirements, alongside the adoption of the Data Documentation Initiative metadata schema, has ensured that the data is both accessible and protected. Anonymisation methods and risk assessment have been tailored to UNHCR's operational contexts, with policies and training in place to uphold data governance.

The results are telling: the library has seen over 168,000 visitors, over 3,200 access requests, and its datasets have been cited in at least 71 reports and articles. The median time for license request approval is just one day, demonstrating the efficiency of access management. The primary users include universities, development organisations, UN agencies, NGOs and think tanks.

The success of this initiative is attributed to the collaborative, two-way technical exchange between UNHCR and the World Bank, enriched by engagement with other organisations and the facilitative role of the JDC. This partnership has not only bridged the gap between humanitarian and development data practices but also enhanced the interoperability of UNHCR's microdata with other databases, including those of the World Bank, FAO and the Humanitarian Data Exchange. This integration is crucial for fostering cooperation between humanitarian and development sectors, especially in fragile contexts, and sets a precedent for the responsible dissemination of data.

Looking ahead, the JDC is aiding UNHCR in developing an indicator platform to complement its population statistics, further expanding the utility of this collaboration for informing programming and policy more directly. This initiative underscores the importance of making complex datasets accessible to a wider audience, thereby amplifying the impact of data on humanitarian and development efforts.

Read the full article [here](#).

Join the ECSSC2024 Committee – Apply before 22 March 2024

The Early Career and Student Statistician Network (ECSSN) is busy preparing for the Early Career and Student Statistician Conference (ECSSC) 2024, to be held across multiple venues in WA, Tasmania and New Zealand later this year.

We are currently looking for some energetic members to get involved and help shape ECSSC2024. Being able to add a role on the ECSSC2024 committee to your resume is attractive to employers and funding bodies, is a great opportunity to expand your network, and is a lot of fun!

To apply for a role on the committee and get involved with the conference planning for our Early Career and Student Statisticians, please click [here](#) and submit your Expression of Interest by Friday, 22 March 2024.

2024 Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Excellence in Research Software – Open for Entries!

The 2024 Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Excellence in Research Software, sponsored by the ARDC, recognises software as a critical part of research and innovation. [Enter now](#). Entries close 12 April.

Mentioned in previous newsletters:

SSA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee: calling for new members

The SSA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is looking for new members, and if you're keen to ensure that the SSA is an equitable, diverse, and inclusive society, we invite you to join us.

The EDI Committee meets once every 6 weeks, and works towards ensuring that our Society is equitable, inclusive and diverse. To find out more about what the EDI Committee has done in the past, and aims to do in the future, please visit the SSA website [here](#).

If you're interested in learning more or joining the committee, please get in touch with our [Executive Officer](#) by March 21.

Election of Executive Members

Members are advised that the Executive positions of Secretary and Treasurer will become vacant at the Society's Central Council Annual General Meeting in 2024.

Members of SSA are invited to submit nominations for the two positions to be vacated. Nominations must be in writing and signed by the nominator(s), and must be accompanied by a written and signed statement from the nominee accepting the nomination. Nominations should be submitted to the SSA President (president@statsoc.org.au) or to a Branch President before 1 May 2024.

Doug Shaw, Secretary

The Tjanpi Award for best Student paper in Environmental Statistics -

Deadline extended until 15 March!

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2023 Tjanpi Award, the annual student prize for best student paper in environmental statistics, sponsored by the SSA Environmental Statistics Section. To be eligible a student must be:

An author of a paper that has been accepted during 2023, having made a substantial contribution to the work

- A student as of 30 June 2023
- A current member of the SSA and the Environmental Statistics Section

The winner will receive \$500 and will be asked to present in an invited session on environmental statistics at the next annual stats conference.

Please submit your nominations to eo@statsoc.org.au (self-nominations welcome), with Tjanpi Award submission in the header, by 5 PM AEDT Friday 15 March 2024, including:

- Full name, institution

- Paper, as one pdf file.

- Letter of support from supervisor or other academic at the institution, confirming student status of applicant and describing the student's role in the paper.

David Warton

Chair, Environmental Statistics Section



Central Australian landscape dominated by Tjanpi, photo by Sara Winter

Tjanpi is the Pitjantjatjara word for Triodia, a spiny tussock-forming grass that dominates the vegetation across more than 20% of Australia's land mass. It is a long-lived plant that makes deep roots and can withstand the harshest of conditions. It can grow over decades into characteristic ring formations three metres in diameter. As a source of food and shelter, Tjanpi is fundamental to life in some of Australia's most extreme conditions, being central to highly diverse ecosystems dominated by termites and ants, as well as reptiles, birds and small mammals. It has also been traditionally used by Indigenous people for a range of purposes, including building shelters, making an adhesive resin, basket weaving, fishing and using its seeds as a food source.

Tjanpi is an analogy for the Environmental Statistics student award – because the development and application of appropriate statistical techniques is fundamental to good environmental research, and our hope is that the recipient of this award will grow over the coming decades to become central to a diverse range of interesting research endeavours!

SSA Events

Missed one of our events?

Most of SSA's events are recorded these days and available on the SSA website!

[Check out our long list of event recordings.](#)

Sampling II Course

2 -23 May 2024, weekly 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.

Sampling II presents different applications of the methods and techniques covered in the Sampling I course. This is also an applied statistics methods course concerned almost exclusively with the design of data collection rather than data analysis. The course will concentrate on sampling applications to human populations, since this poses a number of particular problems not found in sampling of other types of units. The principles of sample selection, though, can be applied to many other types of populations.

Early bird rates are only available until 15 March so click [here](#) for details and to register.

There are **3 tutorials** being offered on March 26th. Register now, one of them is almost full.

Visualising high-dimensional data, presented by Di Cook

26 Mar 2024, 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM (AEDT), Online

Click [here](#) to register.

This is for scientists and data science practitioners who regularly work with high-dimensional data and models and are interested in learning how to better visualise them. You will learn about recognising structure in high-dimensional

data, including clusters, outliers, non-linear relationships, and how this can be used with methods such as supervised classification, cluster analysis and non-linear dimension reduction.

Visualising spatial uncertainty, presented by Petra Kuhnert

26 Mar 2024, 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM (AEDT), Online

Click [here](#) to register.

This is for research scientists wishing to visualise uncertainty on maps and keen to gain a greater understanding of visualisations available in the Vizumap R package and how to generate them.

Introduction to Machine Learning with tidymodels, presented by Max Kuhn

26 Mar 2024, 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM (AEDT), Online

Click [here](#) to register.

This is for data scientists wanting to improve their modeling skills, and gain a better understanding of machine learning models.

WA Branch AGM 2024 (Alex Jenkins)

12 Mar 2024, 5:15 PM – 7:00 PM (AWST), Cheryl Praeger Lecture Room, The University of Western Australia

While non-members are welcome to attend, please note that voting on Branch matters is restricted to SSA WA Branch members. Post AGM proceedings, Mr. Alex Jenkins from the WA Data Science Innovation Hub (WADSIH) will deliver the guest address. In his presentation Alex will speak on WADSIH's work with data and AI, including opportunities with synthetic data. He will discuss the implications of AI, language models, and embedding models for industry and research. Furthermore there will be a discussion on potential areas of collaboration between WADSIH and the Statistical Society of Australia and its members.

Members will receive the AGM agenda, proxy forms, and pertinent documents via email. In case these documents elude you by the preceding Monday, kindly contact the WA Branch Secretary.

Commencing at 5:00 PM, members and visitors alike are invited to partake in pre-AGM networking with wine and cheese. Subsequent to the meeting, all attendees are welcome to join us for dinner at a nearby restaurant.

To register click [here](#).

SSA Vic & Tas AGM

19 Mar 2024, 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM (AEDT) @ Staff Tea Room, Peter Hall Building, The University of Melbourne OR CSIRO, 3-4 Castray Esplanade, Battery Point, Hobart OR online via Zoom

Join us for the SSA Vic & Tas annual general meeting, where we will recap on our last year and vote in the new council for 2024. The annual report will be made available closer to the date of the AGM.

Following the AGM we will be hearing from Helen Baird, Program Manager a/g of the Standards, Classifications and Business Register Branch at the Australian Bureau of Statistics on how the ABS develops standards. To find out more and register for the talk, visit the [event page](#)

To register for the AGM you must be signed in to your SSA member account.

SA Branch AGM

20 Mar 2024, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM (ACDT), University of Adelaide, Braggs Building Seminar Room 2.14

SSA NSW: 2024 AGM + Lancaster Lecture

Presented by Dr. Gordana Popovic.

28 Mar 2024, 4:30 PM – 7:00 PM (AEDT), Room 4082, Anita B. Lawrence Centre (previously Red Centre), UNSW

Statistical Consulting Network Monthly Meet-Up

22 March 2024, 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) (unless it's

a public holiday, like this month, when we will hold the event the week before). 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](#)

Other events

Women in Data Science Worldwide | @ Australian Data Science Network

Join us online!
Tuesday, 12 March
Australia's Rising WiDS Stars
WOMEN IN DATA SCIENCE

#WiDS2024 AustralianDataScience.net

AUSTRALIAN DATA SCIENCE NETWORK REGISTER: 

Celebrate International Women's Day with Australia's Rising WiDS Stars! (*WiDS = Women in Data Science*): The Australian Data Science Network introduces you to more than two-dozen women in Data Science from around Australia who are quickly becoming rising stars in the field. They'll share their journeys, why they're in Data Science and what they're doing, and explore the issue of gender equity in STEM and what they experience in their careers and studies. Each person will speak for 10 minutes.

- Online & Free
- Tuesday, 12 March
- 12 pm AEDT – 5 pm AEDT (come when you can and stay for as long as you'd like! There will be 5 new speakers every hour)
- More info/Register [here](#)

Data Management Plans Interest Group Meeting 1, 2024

- 28 March, 12 pm – 1 pm AEDT
- Online
- **REGISTER**

Join the ARDC online for the first Data Management Plans (DMPs) Interest Group meeting of 2024 for a presentation on the DMP Course for Librarians.

22nd Research Data Alliance (RDA) Plenary

- 14-24 May
- Online
- **REGISTER**

Join the fully virtual 22nd RDA Plenary, where you can explore collaboration and engagement with the global community through sharing local experiences, best practices, and recommendations.

ARDC Digital Research Skills Summit 2024

- 21-21 May
- Melbourne/Naarm
- **REGISTER**

Find out how digital infrastructure providers and research communities are upskilling researchers in emerging research technologies.

Assessing the risk of bias in studies evaluating the effects of interventions and of exposures

21 Mar 2024 (AEDT) – 22 Mar 2024 (AEDT), Ground Floor Conference Rooms, Monash University, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, 553 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

Professor Julian Higgins, University of Bristol, will be leading this two-day (in-person) workshop, providing a unique opportunity to learn from the lead developer of the risk of bias tools. The course is designed for those undertaking systematic reviews, synthesizing evidence for guidelines, or generally interested in how to appraise studies. For registration information, please see [here](#).

ACSPRI's [2024 Winter Program](#) is now available on the ACSPRI website for enrolments.

Running from 24 June 24 to 12 July 2024, the Winter program offers 3 weeks of online courses.

- June 24-30: [Online](#)
- July 1-5: [Online](#)
- July 8-12: [Online](#)

The early-bird deadline is 15 May. Be sure to enrol before this date to take advantage of the discounted enrolment fees, particularly if you are a full time student.

More workshops and master-classes are scheduled for 2024. [Visit the ACSPRI events page](#) to find out more.

If you have any questions you can email the organisers at info@acspri.org.au.

Current Vacancies in SSA's Career Centre

[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](#)