

SSA guidance on making public statements on issues

From time to time, the Statistical Society of Australia is called upon to make public statements on various issues. This document describes the process by which the Statistical Society of Australia's President, in conjunction with the Society's Executive Committee, will come to a decision regarding whether to make a public statement.

In deciding whether to make a public statement regarding a particular issue, the President and Executive Committee will consider the following questions. (Note that these questions are inspired by those the American Statistical Association considers, available here:

<https://www.amstat.org/policy-and-advocacy/process-to-guide-asa-s-determination-of-whether-to-make-a-public-statement-on-a-policy-related-issue>)

1. How does the issue relate to:
 - a. the statistical or data science profession?
 - b. education in statistics or data science?
 - c. the application of statistical or data science methods, the interpretation of data, or the collection of data?
2. If the issue relates to the application of statistical or data science methods, has any intent to deceive or mislead on the part of the person or people who conducted this analysis been alleged and/or confirmed?
3. In the absence of any alleged or confirmed misconduct, could a public statement from the Statistical Society of Australia on the issue be seen as critical of the person or people who conducted the analysis in question?
4. Is there a particular perspective that the Statistical Society of Australia can lend to the issue, related to the statistical profession, statistical education, or the analysis or collection of data?

These questions apply to all issues about which the Statistical Society of Australia may be asked to provide commentary or a public statement.

Generally, the Statistical Society will avoid making statements on non-statistical issues and will not make statements regarding political candidates.

If there is a call for the Statistical Society of Australia to make a public statement on an issue, we will request that those calling for a statement prepare a document outlining the issue, with answers to the above questions, and declarations of any conflicts of interest. The President and Executive Committee will consider the request at the next Executive Committee meeting (the Executive Committee meets once per month). Should the request be time-sensitive, the President and Vice President will consider the request.

*These guidelines were written by Jessica Kasza and Ian Gordon.
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