

NZSA President's Report (James Curran)

AGM 2011

Welcome to the 2012 AGM.

This is my first report as President. Given my usual meeting style it may be very brief. Firstly I would like to take the opportunity to thank some specific people.

Firstly thank you to Jennifer Brown, past president, for leaving the Association in such good shape. As a consequence I have had very little to do! Thank you to Beatrix Jones for her fine first year as secretary. Organizing me (in particular) is never a pleasant task, and you do it with such aplomb. Thanks also to Harold Henderson. As Jennifer said in her final report, you're "more than just the membership secretary." Without your encyclopedic institutional knowledge we would be all at sea. Thanks to Judi McWhirter for keeping our finances under control; Martin Hazleton for his conscientious approach to convening the Awards Committee – a thoroughly professional approach which will become more and more important in years to come; Vanessa Cave for her superb maintenance of website which can sometimes be trying; Steven Miller for his work on the newsletter; Ian Westbrooke for the journal management and Alasdair Noble/Mike Camden with the education committee. Thanks to all others who take part in the NZSA exec and keep our wheels rolling.

I will mention a few highlights of the year

2012 Conference

The 2012 conference is a great success. Thanks to the local Austina Clark, David Fletcher, Marguerite Hunter, and the rest of the Otago crew for organizing such a great conference. I would also like to acknowledge our sponsors, SAS, and the University of Otago. I know from experience that organizing a conference is a fine balancing act between what you would like and what you can afford. The contributions of sponsors certainly relieves some of the pressure in this regard, and for this we are very grateful.

Journal

I want to make special mention of the journal, Australian & New Zealand Journal of Statistics. Management issues associated with the journal has taken considerable effort and time. Thanks specially to Steve Haslett, Ian Westbrooke, and Harold Henderson. I would also like to thank our Australian counterparts Neville Bartlett and the now Editor-in-chief Alan Welsh.

Obituaries

Again, our year has been tinged with sadness. Frank Nolan, who worked at Statistics NZ from 1980-2002, and later at the UK Office for National Statistics died of a heart attack whilst out running in mid-October. Frank was well known to many former and current Statistics NZ employees. Frank will be missed by us all and our thoughts are of course with his family at this difficult time.

The years ahead

In 2010, Jennifer Brown wrote the following: *“I will finish with two personal views. I would like to see a commitment to recognize and reward statistical excellence in science. As statisticians we make a very large contribution to science and to society, so let us make sure we recognize and celebrate our successes. I hope we will see more statisticians receiving Royal Society awards and fellowships, and as members of panels that shape NZ science. We all have a responsibility to ensure that we nominate and encourage our colleagues for these awards.”* I would like to echo these comments. As New Zealanders we are often discouraged from promoting ourselves, or highlighting our own achievements. With the advent of performance evaluation exercises such as the PBRF we can no longer afford to sit around and hope someone else says how good we are. Nominations and awards for society prizes, and participation in national committees are recognized as evidence of peer esteem and contribution to the community. So please nominate those who you think deserve it and please continue to participate.

2013 The Mathematics of Planet Earth

In 2013 New Zealand Mathematics Association, the New Zealand Statistical Association, and the New Zealand Operations Research Society will take part in activities that dedicate 2013 as a special year for the Mathematics of Planet Earth. I encourage you strongly to take part and to help the NZSA organize activities that raise awareness about the importance of our subject.

Thank you all

James Curran