

ANZSC 2021 Report

ANZSC 2021 took place virtually July 5-8 using a combination of Slack and Zoom, after an in person version planned for July 2020 was postponed due to covid. There were around 170 contributed talks, and over 300 registrants; it was followed by OZCOTS July 8-9, with overlapping sessions on July 8.

The conference was jointly put on by the NZSA and SSA. While the SSA took on the financial risk (and ultimately financial loss) associated with the conference, the NZSA was clearly a valued partner in the conference organization. Daniel Gerhard co-chaired the local organizing committee with Mark Griffin from SSA. Beatrix Jones was the NZSA co-chair of the programme committee, with Berwin Turlach from SSA. The keynote speakers included NZSA member Renate Meyer, and one of the virtual lecture theatres was named the Leonard Cook theatre. Matt Parry, as NZSA president, was involved in the conference welcome and closing.

The NZSA put on an invited session organized by Lisa Thomasen (who also chaired the session), David Fletcher, and Ian Westbrooke. This session featured Chris Wild, Christine Bycroft, and Louise McMillan, with speaker registration sponsored by NZSA. NZSA also offered to sponsor registration for our student members, and this was taken up by four students.

The virtual conference worked well due in large part to a lot of hard work from the technical team led by David Warton and David Cowen, which included about 10 paid “elves,” who ran orientation to the technology for all speakers and chairs, as well as being on hand to solve technical issues on the day. It also relied on the good will of the participants to take up this training and the opportunity to react/ask questions via Slack, as well as engage in discussion threads and online social activities. It was this engagement that really made the conference a success.

Beatrix Jones and Daniel Gerhard
November 2021