

NZSA President's Report to the 2025 AGM (John Haywood)

Welcome

Welcome to the 2025 AGM – both to those here in person at the University of Otago – Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka, and also to those joining us online.

Highlights and thanks

It is a great honour to be President of the NZSA, which continues to grow strongly – we now have 586 members! There are detailed reports available online from our various subcommittee conveners, which explain more about the activities that our Executive Committee oversee. Thank you so much to everyone who contributes in so many ways to support the mission of the NZSA: that is, to lead New Zealand and New Zealanders to value and make intelligent use of statistical thinking and good statistical practice.

The NZSA Executive Committee members have all worked hard this year – thanks everyone! – and none more so than new Secretary Ivy Liu and new Treasurer Ciprian Giurcăneanu, who joined me as a new President and Matt Parry as the new Membership Secretary one year ago. Lots of changes, for sure! As always, thanks to Harold Henderson – who, despite attempting to step back from NZSA activities two years ago, still helps several of us regularly with his wise counsel.

In the (new) role of Past President, Beatrix Jones, and our Webmaster, Heather Jenkins, have ensured that our updated Constitution is now available on the NZSA website; see <https://www.stats.org.nz/constitution/>. Updates were necessary so that we comply with the Incorporated Societies Act 2022, and Beatrix led that work for the NZSA during her term as the previous NZSA President. Heather continues to make updates to our website throughout the year, including the busy time immediately prior to the annual conference.

One of the most active NZSA committees is the Education Committee, which aims to improve the quality of statistics education at all levels within New Zealand. A project that has been in progress by some members of the Education Committee for some time is the production of a book, edited by Pip Arnold (now also the Ed Comm secretary), *Probability / Tūponotanga – A guide for teaching probability (ages 5–18)*.

The NZSA and the New Zealand Association of Mathematics Teachers (NZAMT) have both agreed to provide significant financial sponsorship for this teachers' guide, so that it can be made available electronically to all teachers at no charge. A primary focus for the book is to meld teaching and learning practice with research knowledge, to provide teachers with guidance that is relevant and practical, and backed by research. The book is being created in three stages and Stage 1, comprising chapters 3 and 4 from the book, was published on 27 June 2025. Chapter 2, the first from Stage 2, was added on 3 December 2025. This is great progress! For more, and to download the chapters, see:

<https://new.censusatschool.org.nz/teaching-probability-book/>

The Education Committee's report also provides detail about the ongoing work to engage with the revision of the curriculum, at all levels from Year 0 to Year 13. Many, many hours of work – and a big thank you to all our Ed Comm volunteers.

Activities coordinated by our Mentoring and SECS reps (Lisa Thomasen and Muskaan, respectively) continue to flourish – including successful mentoring of the SECS rep by the Mentoring rep! One initiative that I'd like to further highlight here is the award of the first NZSA Tidy International Travel Scholarship, which has been generously funded by Hadley Wickham. The Scholarship application process was coordinated by the SECS Award Committee (led by Muskaan) and the award went to Otago PhD student Sarah Croft. Sarah used the scholarship to help fund attendance at the IBS-AR Conference, *Biometrics in the Bush Capital*, 24-28 November 2025 in Canberra, Australia.

Past NZSA SECS rep and then Corporate rep, Jie Kang, coordinated the process to set up our new External Engagement committee – renamed at this meeting as the Committee for Engagement with Statistics in Industry – see that report. Jie has secured an academic position at the University of Sydney (congratulations, Jie!), and consequently has moved on from his roles on the NZSA Exec, with thanks. The idea behind the Engagement with Statistics in Industry committee was to develop a useful and workable replacement for the Corporate class of membership, which the whole Exec had previously agreed was past its use-by date. Terms of reference have now been refined for the new committee, with the proposal that it is chaired by the Past President, to ensure provision of continuing institutional (i.e. NZSA) knowledge. A primary aim is to bridge the gap between academia and industry.

Martin Hazelton was elected as an honorary life member of the NZSA at the 2024 AGM, in recognition of his distinguished contributions to the association over many years. One of those contributions was as Editor-in-Chief of the Australian & New Zealand Journal of Statistics (ANZJS) between 2019 and 2024, during which time the journal extended its high academic standards and saw significant growth in both the quality and impact of the research it published. During March 2025, Lynne Giles, President of the Statistical Society of Australia (SSA), and I prepared a letter to jointly thank Martin, on behalf of the statistical communities in New Zealand and Australia, for his long and dedicated service as ANZJS Editor-in-Chief. Martin's leadership, expertise, and ability to guide the team of editors, reviewers and authors has left a lasting legacy, which is deeply appreciated by both professional societies.

Treasurer Ciprian Giurcăneanu completed annual reporting for our GST return and our Charities Services registration, with both those returns involving a lot of work, following a redesign of the process. Ciprian was involved (along with Ivy Liu and I) in email discussions with the SSA Treasurer, Damjan Vukcevic, to work towards a new financial arrangement to support ongoing management and editorial activities for the ANZJS. This has now been approved, and Matt Parry's ANZJS Management Committee (non-editorial) report gives further details. Thanks, Ciprian and Matt.

The Exec Committee approved a proposal from the President that NZSA becomes an annual Benefactor of the R Foundation, of which NZSA member Simon Urbanek is currently President. The Foundation relies heavily on donations for income, with funds of the R Foundation used exclusively for supporting the R Project.

Our Science Fairs sponsorship has been boosted to \$200 per fair, with Roy Costilla now established in the role of Science Fairs Convenor. Regarding other sponsorship from NZSA, the Executive Committee agreed to continue our support of the New Zealand Mathematics and Statistics Postgraduate Conference (NZMASP), provided they continue to feature Statistics in a meaningful way, including with at least one invited speaker who has a focus on statistics within their research. This year NZMASP was held at the University of Auckland, from 18-21 November, and previous NZSA Newsletter editor Ben Stevenson was one of the Invited Speakers. Thanks, Roy and Ben.

Regarding conferences, a really big thank you to Conor Kresin and the rest of the 2025 NZSA Conference organising committee for their hard work in getting things ready for us here in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Plus a big thank you to all the members who have come together to make the conference another great experience. As President I'm looking forward to presenting several awards at the 2025 Conference Dinner, following a lot of hard work behind the scenes by our Awards Committee and their convenor, Vanessa Cave. You can read Vanessa's full report online – but you will need to wait for the dinner to find out who the award winners are! Finally, we have two more life members to vote on at the AGM, with certificates to be presented at the Dinner as well. It is hugely satisfying to acknowledge our statistical stars in this way – and I hope many of you will be there to join in the celebrations.

John Haywood

NZSA President

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