

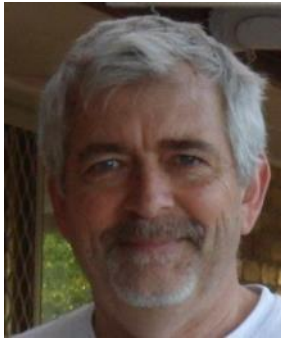
Australasian Region

Newsletter

Issue 19
August 2016

<http://www.BiometricSociety.org.au>

From the President's desk, Ross Darnell (Ross.Darnell@csiro.au)



Two big news items for our region.

One is that Louise Ryan is the President Elect for the IBS. Louise is currently Distinguished Professor of Mathematical and Physical Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney. Louise is Australian born and schooled and, after a time in the USA as Professor and Chair of the Department of Biostatistics at Harvard University, returned to Australia in 2009 to take up the role of Chief of CSIRO's Division of Mathematics, Informatics and Statistics. Congratulations to Louise and, given our region is one of the strongest in the IBS, one can only imagine good things to come from this partnership.

The other is the award presented to Kaye Basford for Honorary Life Member. Kaye is currently Professor of Biometry in the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences, University of Queensland. Currently she is also President of the Academic Board at University of Queensland and from 2001 to 2010 she was Head of the School of Land, Crop and Food Sciences. Kaye's professional activities in both the SSAI and to the IBS are extensive, including being the IBS President for the years 2010-2011. Both during and after her time as President and Vice-president of IBS, Kaye was the driving force in the major restructure of the IBS which better allows participation in IBS activities by the wide range of countries with members in the IBS.

Having recently returned from beautiful Victoria, British Columbia, venue of the IBC 2016 conference, our planning is well under way for our own biennial conference slated for Nov 26-30th, 2017. The local organising committee is finalising the choice of venue which will be announced within a few weeks. Please mark the dates in your calendars. The program committee are actively chasing invited speakers already, however I am sure the chair of the program committee, James Curran, would be interested to hear suggestions. Invited speakers have a tremendous impact on the success of any conference. Also, sponsorship for conferences helps reduce registration costs for attendees. Please contact me if you have suggestions of possible sponsors.

Another initiative for the 2017 conference I am keen to support is the sponsorship of members or potential members from our neighbouring areas like Melanesia and the Pacific Islands. If any member has professional links to statisticians from these areas please contact me. The IBC-AR could be the hub for this broader region.

The IBC 2016 conference turned out to be a busy time for me as I had committee meetings to attend but I did manage to catch a few talks. See below for a joint report from our two travel award recipients Garth Tarr and Jarod Lee.

One of the announcements at the conference was the confirmation of Seoul as the venue for the IBC 2020 conference. Seoul is relatively close to Australia and New Zealand so I expect a good turnout from our members.

Australasian Region - Council

The regional council is comprised of:

President: Ross Darnell (CSIRO)

Vice-president: Samuel Müller (University of Sydney)

Secretary: David Baird (VSN NZ)

Treasurer: Warren Müller (Retired)

Newsletter correspondent: Vanessa Cave (AgResearch)

Regional website manager: Hans Hockey (Biometrics Matters)

IBS 2017 President-elect: Louise Ryan (University of Technology Sydney)

IBS Executive Board: Alan Welsh (Australian National University)

IBS Representative Council Members: Ken Russell (Charles Sturt University)
Katya Ruggiero (University of Auckland)

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New this year is our very own [Facebook group, IBS-AR](#), which has photos uploaded from conference attendees and much more!

IBS-AR Travel Awards

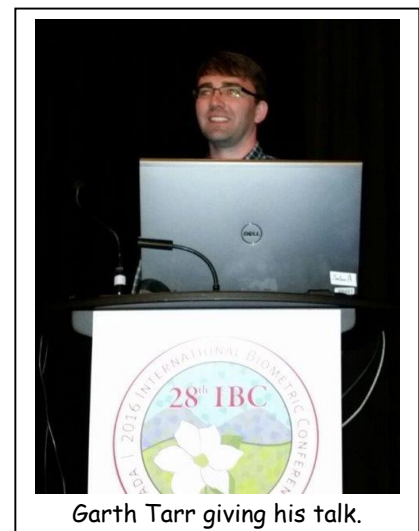
The Australasian Region offer travel awards to assist outstanding students and/or early career members to attend international meetings of the society. Garth Tarr, a lecturer in statistics at the University of Newcastle, and Lee Yan (Jarod) Liang, a PhD student at the University of Technology Sydney, were awarded travel grants to attend the XXVIIIth International Biometric Conference in Victoria, Canada. **Jarod and Garth write:**

In July we were fortunate enough to attend the International Biometrics Conference (IBC) hosted by the Western North American Region (WNAR) of the International Biometric Society (IBS) in Victoria, Canada. It was an excellent conference with a diverse range of talks and posters. We were both recipients of the IBS Australasian Region travel award, which assisted with the costs of attending the conference. In addition, Jarod is supported by the Statistical Society of Australia (SSAI) Golden Jubilee Travel Grant.

Victoria is located on Vancouver Island, roughly half way between Vancouver and Seattle. While the flight from Sydney to Vancouver took around 14 hours, the connecting flight to Victoria took a mere 25 minutes. Known as the "The Garden City", Victoria is frequently named one of the top 20 destinations in the world.

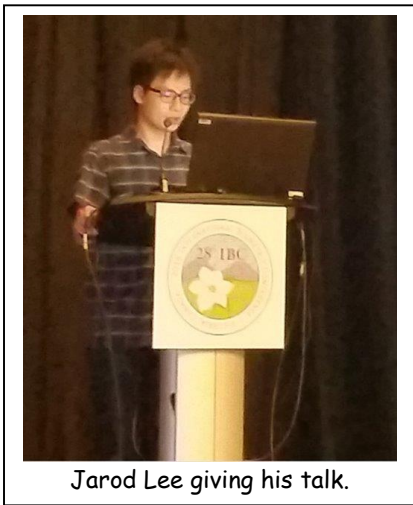
On the free day on Wednesday, Garth hired a car with a few other IBC members from the Australasian region and went for a drive around Vancouver Island. They visited Sooke, Port Renfrew, Lake Cowichan, Unsworth Vineyards and Meridale Cidery. Gastronomic highlights were the Canadian bacon and cider as well as the deliciously unhealthy poutine (hot chips, gravy and cheese curd). We did see deer, but unfortunately there were no elk, orcas, black bears or cougars to be found. Jarod visited Craigdarroch Castle, the Butchart Gardens and Canada's oldest Chinatown with a few other IBC members. Besides poutine, he enjoyed pancake with maple syrup, halibut (a local fish) and wild salmon (Australian salmon are all farmed).

Garth's talk, "Model selection stability with mplot", introduced the mplot R package which provides a collection of functions to aid exploratory model selection. These variable selection methods rely heavily on bootstrap resampling techniques and allow users to better explore the stability of model selection criteria. Garth received positive feedback on the package from a number of attendees and he has been contacted by a member from the Brazilian Region who is applying the methods to their current research. Garth also had the opportunity to attend a short course, held on the Sunday prior to the conference, on "An introduction to the joint modelling of longitudinal and survival data" delivered by Dimitris Rizopoulos, who literally wrote the book on joint modelling. It was a great introduction to the field of joint modelling and provides solid grounding for future



Garth Tarr giving his talk.

research in this area, particularly with regard to model selection.



Jarod Lee giving his talk.

Jarod's talk, "Multilevel Modelling of Counts with Gamma-Poisson Model", introduced a framework for modelling correlated count data. It is applied to ease privacy concerns in population based administrative or census databases, and can be naturally extended to multilevel modelling of complex survey data in small area estimation. Jarod also had the opportunity to attend a short course on "A statistical approach to machine learning", delivered by Andreas Ziegler and Marvin Wright. The course introduced some of the most commonly used algorithms for classifications, along with their extensions. They showed that all problems from generalised linear models and survival endpoints can be tackled with the algorithms discussed. Jarod particularly enjoyed the special "Statistics in Practice" session

on "Meta analysis of individual participant data (IPD)", as both Simon Thompson and Mark Simmonds gave an excellent up to date overview in this area. There were also a variety of activities tailored to young statisticians, including a warm-up session, a few showcases and a mixer, where Jarod made some useful connections.

Overall, we had a wonderful experience at the conference. We highly encourage all students and early career researchers to submit an application for the next round of travel grants.

Jarod Lee
University of Technology Sydney
Garth Tarr
University of Newcastle

Save the Date: IBC 2018



Flyer: <http://www.biometricsociety.net/2016/06/14/ibc-2018-barcelona/>

Honours for Regional Members

Congratulations to **Louise Ryan** who has been elected President-Elect of the IBS. Louise will take office in 2017 and serve one year as President-Elect, two years as President, and one year as Immediate Past President.

We also congratulate **Kaye Basford** (from the University of Queensland) on receiving Honorary Life Membership of the IBS. This accolade is in recognition of Kaye's outstanding contributions to the development and promotion of the discipline of Biometry and for exemplary service and leadership to the IBS.



IBS President Elizabeth Thompson (right) congratulating Kaye Basford (left) on her Honorary Life Membership of the IBS.

Further, we congratulate **James Curran** (from the University of Auckland) on his election as President of the New Zealand Forensic Science Society and Vice-President (New Zealand) of the Australia and New Zealand Forensic Society. James comments: *"I'm definitely the first statistician to ever hold this role in New Zealand. There is a fairly good chance I'm also the first statistician to be the president of any forensic science society in the world, but I don't know for sure."*



James Curran.

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

Australasian Biometrics Conference 2017

The next IBS-AR conference will be held Nov-Dec near Brisbane. Date and venue TBA.

Joint Conference of the New Zealand Statistical Association and the Operations Research Society of New Zealand 2016

27-30 November, Auckland

For more information visit: <http://orsnz.org.nz/conf50/>

Australasian Applied Statistics Conference 2016



Join us for the 2016 Australasian Applied Statistics Conference (AASC'16) being held from 28 November - 2 December 2016 at The Windsong Pavilion, Barragga Bay, New South Wales, Australia. The conference provides an excellent opportunity to liaise with fellow statisticians within the agricultural, biological and environmental sciences and to keep abreast of the most recent developments in statistics within this context. The themes of AASC'16 are "Big data and innovative consulting, Statistics in fisheries and ecology, Statistical genetics and Modern approaches to smoothing complex data".

For more information visit: <http://aasc.org.au/>

Australian Statistical Conference 2016

5-9 December, Canberra

At this conference there will be several invited sessions on biostatistical themes. The Biostatistical Section has organized: Mining & analysis of massive 'omics data, Analysis of linked health data and Risk prediction; while the Environmental Statistics section of SSA has organized: Measurement error modelling in the environmental sciences and Spatial statistics in the environmental sciences.

For more information visit: <http://2016asc.cmail20.com>

International Conference in Mathematics and Applications 2016

17-19 December, Bangkok

For more information visit: <http://cem.sc.mahidol.ac.th/icma2016>