

President's report

This report is typically a long litany of “thank you”-s and this year is no exception. First, I want to thank our hosts at Victoria University for the effort they have put into organizing this conference, and I want to thank everyone for being here. Being in Wellington I think we have a slightly larger-than-usual contingent from StatsNZ and the wider public service here and I want to thank them particularly for using their limited time, energy, and money to attend this conference (and/or this AGM), as I know this has been a stressful year for many of those working in the public sector.

I want to thank Martin Hazelton, the outgoing editor of the Australia and New Zealand Journal of Statistics. We have seen the results of one of his initiatives today in the fascinating read paper and discussion—and this is just one example of the leadership that has slowly but steadily increased the journal's quality and relevance. On the ‘management’ side of the Journal, this year we have renewed our agreement with the publisher Wiley, including the move to an ‘online only’ model for the journal.

Second, I want to thank the education committee—they have worked very hard to keep abreast of developments as the year 0-8 curriculum review process proved to be very demanding. As requested by the members at last year's AGM, the education committee put together a revised proposal for developing materials to assist teachers to implement the probability sections of the refreshed curriculum. The executive committee has agreed to fund this initiative, in conjunction with the NZ Association of Teachers of Mathematics. We hope to see the first tranche of materials available soon—please see the education committee report for more details. Finally, I have been advised that Mike Campbell will be stepping down as secretary of the education committee. I would like to thank Mike for his many years of service in this role, noting that this has been one of our most active subcommittees with his contributions.

Another super-active subcommittee has been the awards committee, who not only have administered the “usual” awards (including our first instance of our Early Career travel awards), but gone out and got sponsorship for another award—an international travel award for students or early career researchers that will be funded by Hadley Wickham. A special thanks to Jie Kang and awards convenor Vanessa Cave for this initiative--refer to the Awards committee report for further details. I'm also delighted to relay that in 2025 there will be an NZ visiting lecturer for the first time since 2010. The society will help to welcome stats education expert Matt Beckman to various NZ venues next year, organized by Anna Fergusson.

These are not even all the good things that have taken place this year, so please read the reports from individual groups.

“What does the president actually do besides thank people?” I hear you saying. I am pleased to say that one thing I have done this year is sign up the NZSA to the Instats service. This is a platform for stats related video material (possibly accompanied by written material) that can be either free or fee-based. It is used by the American and Canadian Statistical associations, among others. The NZSA will consider how we might

best use this platform as a society, but an immediate benefit is that NZSA members wanting to access fee-based material on Instats will get a 30% discount. This is available now if you tick NZSA under “Professional Association Memberships” when you register at Instats.

I have also been up to my elbows in revising our constitution and making sure it complies with the 2022 incorporated societies act—again, with thanks to previous president Matt Parry who began this process and, despite no longer being NZSA president, worked through the recommendations of the Companies Office to develop an initial draft constitution that complied with the new act. I have built on that to incorporate key pieces of our previous constitution and liaised with a law firm for a final review. The full document is available for you to read, along with a commentary document that includes some details and context—however there are a couple of things that I would like to highlight here.

First, we are proposing that we eliminate corporate membership. Eliminating corporate membership certainly does not mean that corporate organizations that employ statisticians are not important to our society, just that the corporate membership structure is no longer doing a great job of building and maintaining those relationships. In place of this, we will have a subcommittee devoted to collaborating and communicating with corporate and other non-academic organizations. I’m delighted to confirm that our outgoing corporate rep, Jie Kang, has agreed to lead this subcommittee next year.

Second, we are proposing changes to the terms for officers. We have previously elected officers for a term of one year, with unlimited re-election. This has led to many officers serving for very long periods. The concern is not that officers are overstaying their welcome, but that prospective officers have been (rightly) trepidatious about what exactly they are committing to. (Here I feel the need to single out our outgoing treasurer Daniel Gerhart for thanks: he has served for the past 8 years, doing an admirable job in one of our more labour-intensive roles.) The new constitution has longer terms (for instance, 4 years for treasurer) but while some roles permit consecutive terms, our intention is that there is always a genuine opportunity to hand off the role after one term. There is also a new role: “Past president”! As I alluded to earlier, previous presidents have very kindly stuck around as members of the executive committee to ensure a smooth transition and tidy up loose ends. We are now proposing to enshrine that practice in our rules. I am not standing for president again this year but, since I was elected under the old constitution, I will ask you to endorse me as past-president for the next 2 years. My hope would be to sweep up some of the details from the constitutional changes (e.g. making sure we have clear mechanisms for all the functions required by the new act, such as members requesting information), allowing the incoming President to focus on the future and new challenges that are sure to arise.

Before signing off I want to do a final thank you—to the remaining members of the executive committee, but especially our outgoing secretary Nokuthaba Sibanda who has served the last four years. I am a person that requires ‘timely reminders’ and

Nokuthaba has been responsible for providing most of these, as well as the usual duties of secretary.

--Beatrix Jones