



Australasian Region

Newsletter

Issue 11
November 2012

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

From the President's desk, Mario D'Antuono



A final salute from the President before 2012 winds up! This will be my last newsletter before I hand over to David Baird from New Zealand. It has been quite an adventure but I am still involved as Chair of the Local Organising Committee for the next regional conference in Mandurah (just south of Perth, Western Australia), during 1-5 December 2013. See more details below.

Thanks to the members who attended and supported the IBC meeting in Kobe, Japan. Our travel awardee Alexandra Gillett gives us a snapshot of her time at the conference. It was great to see a good gathering from the Australasian Region with some photos in the coming Biometric Bulletin and soon on the website.

Sally Galbraith has been busy with the Biometric Bulletin and thank you to all who have responded to Sally's call for information. Please do send Sally any information that you think is important to disseminate to members.

Congratulations to Professor Annette Dobson on receiving the Moyal medal for services to Statistics from Macquarie University. A report appears in this newsletter by Sally.

New members are most welcome and I urge you all to help recruit new people to the Society. See the website for application forms.

Please note that the region's website has a new address to match the international one. See the extension (.au) on the top right-hand-corner! The old address will expire next year and we hope to have a new fresh look to the web pages! I ask you to check regularly for the latest news especially on the forthcoming meetings around the region.

Some of our members will be involved in conferences later this month and next month before the Christmas and New Year Holidays. Best wishes for an enjoyable and rewarding conference to all those who are planning to attend. See other news below.

May I wish all of our members a safe and Happy Christmas and best wishes for the coming year 2013.

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Australasian Region - council

In 2012, the regional council comprises:

President: Mario D'Antuono (Department of Agriculture and Food, WA)

Vice-president: David Baird (VSN International)

Secretary: Patrick Graham (University of Otago)

Treasurer: Warren Müller (CSIRO)

Newsletter correspondent: Sally Galbraith (University of New South Wales)

Regional website manager: Hans Hockey (Biometrics Matters)

IBS Vice-President: Kaye Basford (University of Queensland)

IBS Representative Council Members - David Baird (VSN Limited) and Alan Welsh (Australian National University)

Next regional meeting 2013 - Biometrics by the Canals in Mandurah, Western Australia

- Monday December 2, 2013 to Thursday December 5, 2013 are the conference days, and
- a pre-conference workshop planned on Saturday November 30, 2013.



More details will be posted on our website <http://www.BiometricSociety.org.au> by the end of this year 2012.

Please NOTE THE CONFERENCE DATES IN YOUR CALENDAR NOW! Thank you!

The Local Organising Committee consists of myself as Chair, Katia Stefanova, Rebecca O'Leary, Warren Muller (Treasurer) and Hans Hockey (Website). The Scientific Programme Committee and themes will be announced soon.

We are pleased to announce that the next Australasian regional meeting of the International Biometric Society, nicknamed 'Biometrics by the Canals', will be held at The Sebel Mandurah Hotel, in the City of Mandurah (about 70 kilometres, south of Perth) in December 2013! For more information on the region and hotel, please see the websites <http://www.visitmandurah.com/> and <http://www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-8767-the-sebel-mandurah/index.shtml> .

The dates to remember are:

- Sunday December 1, 2013 (Registration and welcome reception/dinner/drinks from 5pm),



A front view of The Sebel Mandurah Hotel (TSMH) courtesy of Sarah Stott, Conference Manager, TSMH

My adventure at the IBC2012, Kobe, Japan *by Alexandra Gillett*

Monday: Jetlagged, but glad to be in a country which embraces the parasol & Sake, I stepped into the Kobe International Conference Center-home to the International Biometrics Conference 2012. My first thought was 'OMG! Are those free pencils!?' But I knew they would have to wait, for I had an opening ceremony to attend.

After being formally welcomed, the varied program of invited & contributed sessions kicked off. Highlights for me included the 'Statistical Challenges in the Analysis of Rare Genetic Variants in Association Studies' & 'Categorical Data' sessions. I also enjoyed networking (catching up) colleagues (friends) from all over the world.

Tuesday: My (nerve-wracking) talk day. I walked in bright & early, & my first thought was 'OMG! Are those beautiful origami cranes free!?' After securing myself a crane & a pencil, I completed my talk with the smallest amount of stammering to date (hurrah!), spurred on by the supportive atmosphere in the room. Afterwards, I could happily immerse myself in the talks of others, which included an excellent talk on using a Memetic Algorithm with a modified BIC in Association Studies. That evening I attended the IBS General Meeting & Awards Presentation. It was great to hear about the future progression of the IBS & to cheer the achievements of others. A particularly large cheer goes to Susan Wilson, who was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the IBS.

Wednesday: Mid-week break. The organisers had put together a schedule of outings which all sounded brilliant but I, being very much like a 10 year old child at heart, decided to go to the nearby Universal Studios!

Highlights: Jaws & Jurassic Park rides (you can't beat the classics), frozen mango on a stick (delicious) & curry popcorn (disgustingly different).



[Yes, il Presidente was there to congratulate Professor Susan Wilson on receiving her Honorary Life Member award in Kobe, Japan! Photo courtesy of Dee Ann Walker]

Lowlights: I'm in Japan! At Universal Studios! Eating mango! There were no low points.

Thursday: I started the day by wandering the diverse poster session, having fun talking with the authors. The 'Data Visualization: Optimization & Applications' invited session was fantastic; crammed full of clear explanations, useful packages & thought-provoking Q&As.



'Kobe, view from the Mount Rokko cable car'

Friday: My return flight meant that I had to leave after the 2nd session but I enjoyed talks on designing accelerated longitudinal studies & random effects copula models.

I found the conference to be wonderfully organised meaning the only things I needed to worry about was making a quick enough dash for the coffee & snacks & more importantly, concentrating on the fantastic scientific program.

Annette Dobson awarded Moyal medal
by Sally Galbraith

We are very pleased to announce that IBS-AR member Annette Dobson has been awarded the Moyal medal for 2012. The Moyal Medal is awarded annually by Macquarie University for research contributions to mathematics, physics or statistics, the areas of research of the late Professor José Enrique Moyal who was Professor of Mathematics at Macquarie University from 1973 to 1977. Annette is Professor of Biostatistics in The University of Queensland School of Population Health and Director of the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, and is well known in the Australian biostatistics community and internationally for her contributions to biostatistical methodology, practice and education, including her involvement with the Biostatistics Collaboration of Australia from its inception. She was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2010, for "service to public health and biostatistics as a researcher and academic, particularly through the collection and analysis of data relating to cardiovascular disease and women's and veterans' health". The Moyal Medal was awarded at Macquarie University on 4 October 2012, where Professor Dobson delivered the

Moyal Medal Lecture on "Statistical Challenges in Longitudinal Epidemiological Studies". The underlying theme of the lecture was causality - a subject also of interest to J.E. Moyal, who published an article "Causality, Determinism and Probability" in the journal *Philosophy* in 1949. The lecture used some fascinating examples from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health to illustrate the difficulties researchers face when trying to establish causality. The IBS-AR extends its warmest congratulations to Annette for this very well deserved award.



Annette Dobson receiving the 2012 Moyal Medal from Professor Jim Piper, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research at Macquarie University. (Photo courtesy of Christine Hale, Macquarie University)

Other news

Members of the region may also be involved and /or interested in some of the other conferences taking place this year:

- i) New Zealand Statistical Association Conference, Dunedin, November 29-30, 2012, Dunedin, New Zealand. <http://www.maths.otago.ac.nz/nzsa2012/>
- ii) Australasian Applied Statistics Conference (GenStat/ASReml), Queenstown, New Zealand (December 4-7, 2012). <http://aasc2012.com>

Best wishes to all involved and for successful and rewarding conferences.

Acknowledgements

This newsletter was devised by Mario D'Antuono with special contributions from various members. Thank you to all for your support.

Feedback

All comments and suggestion are most welcome. Please forward any feedback on the newsletter to Mario D'Antuono.

Version 1a - updated Nov 8, 2012 - some minor corrections!