

Australasian Region

Newsletter

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From the President, Graham Hepworth



For Australasian region members, 2010 may seem like an "off year" because there is no regional conference. But there is still plenty happening, some of which will be mentioned in this newsletter. And of course it is very much an "on year" for the wider society, with the International Biometric Conference (IBC) in Brazil coming up in December. I encourage you to go to the IBC if you possibly can. Although it is less direct and more expensive to get to than other recent IBCs, it is well worth the effort, and there are always enough from our region so you don't feel isolated. Delegates from other regions are interesting to talk to as well!

I've now entered my last 6 months as regional president. It's been hard work, but I've found it very rewarding, both on a professional and a personal level. Although I've been aware that the buck stops with me (it has to stop somewhere), I've never felt on my own. Regional council members have always been very supportive and willing to pull their weight, and other members have contributed in a variety of helpful ways, especially in judging awards and organising conferences (more on that below). With our system of 1+2+1 years as vice-president/president/past president, I won't be going "cold turkey" but will be able to continue to contribute and hopefully oversee a smooth transition of "power" to Mario! ("power" is perhaps not the right word here!)

Australasian region council

In 2010, the regional council comprises

President: Graham Hepworth (University of Melbourne)

Vice-president: Mario D'Antuono (Department of Agriculture and Food, WA)

Secretary: Patrick Graham (University of Otago) **Treasurer:** Warren Muller (CSIRO)

Newsletter correspondent: Duncan Hedderley (Plant & Food Research)

Regional website manager: Hans Hockey (Biometrics Matters)

IBS President: Kaye Basford (University of Queensland)

IBS council members: David Baird (VSN); Tony Pettitt (QUT); Alan Welsh (ANU).

Introducing our president-elect, Mario D'Antuono

To many of us, Mario needs no introduction. But for those who haven't come across his engaging personality, I have asked him to say a few words about himself:

I was born in Western Australia and have been working as a biometrician in the field of agricultural research mostly within the Department of Agriculture and Food in South Perth, but also have worked in medical research, CSIRO and Murdoch University environments.

I have interests in many areas of biometrics including linear mixed models, Bayesian methods, and R statistical software. I look forward to this new chapter in my life and my association with the committee of the IBS Australasian region in providing support to all of our members.

It is important that members feel welcome and free to participate and enjoy the knowledge and activities that this region of the IBS provides in fostering good statistical practice.

I hope I can make a small contribution to this family of biometricians and look forward to the coming term of my role as president.



Next regional conference

After our very successful regional conference in Taupo, some of us are already looking forward to the next one! I'm very pleased to inform you that Philip McCloud, the Asia-Pacific Head of Biostatistics at Roche in Sydney, will chair the Local Organising Committee of the next conference, which will be held in the vicinity of Sydney in the summer of 2011-2012.

So far, the other members of the committee are Mario D'Antuono, Sally Galbraith, Hans Hockey, Emma Knight, Ian Marschner and Warren Muller. The committee have already started work, and a venue and date for the conference are not far off.

If you would like to help with the organising of the conference, either in local organisation or in the scientific program, please contact Philip McCloud on philip.mccloud@roche.com.

For more news as it comes to hand, see <http://www.biometrics.org.au/conferences.html>

This newsletter was created by [Graham Hepworth](#)
- please forward any feedback on the newsletter to him.

Scholarships for Honours and Masters Students

Each year our region awards scholarships valued at \$1500 to students doing a fourth or honours year of study, or a coursework Masters, in statistics, mathematical statistics, biostatistics, bioinformatics or biometrics. This was the first year that the award was available to coursework Masters students, and there were 16 applicants - surely a record! It was therefore a substantial job for the judges, to whom the society is very grateful. The judges were Duncan Hedderley (chair), John Carlin, Rachel Fewster and Olena Kravchuk. The worthy winners were:



Ross Haines (University of Otago).

Ross was summer intern at AgResearch, where he developed a resource on time series methods, and is doing his honours dissertation on summarising key features from gaze behaviour studies in sport.



Elizabeth Ryan (Queensland University of Technology).

Elizabeth has done work on modelling dengue fever, including a period of work experience at Oxford University and a project funded by the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute and CSIRO.

We congratulate Elizabeth and Ross, and wish them well in the future.

IBC 2010 travel award

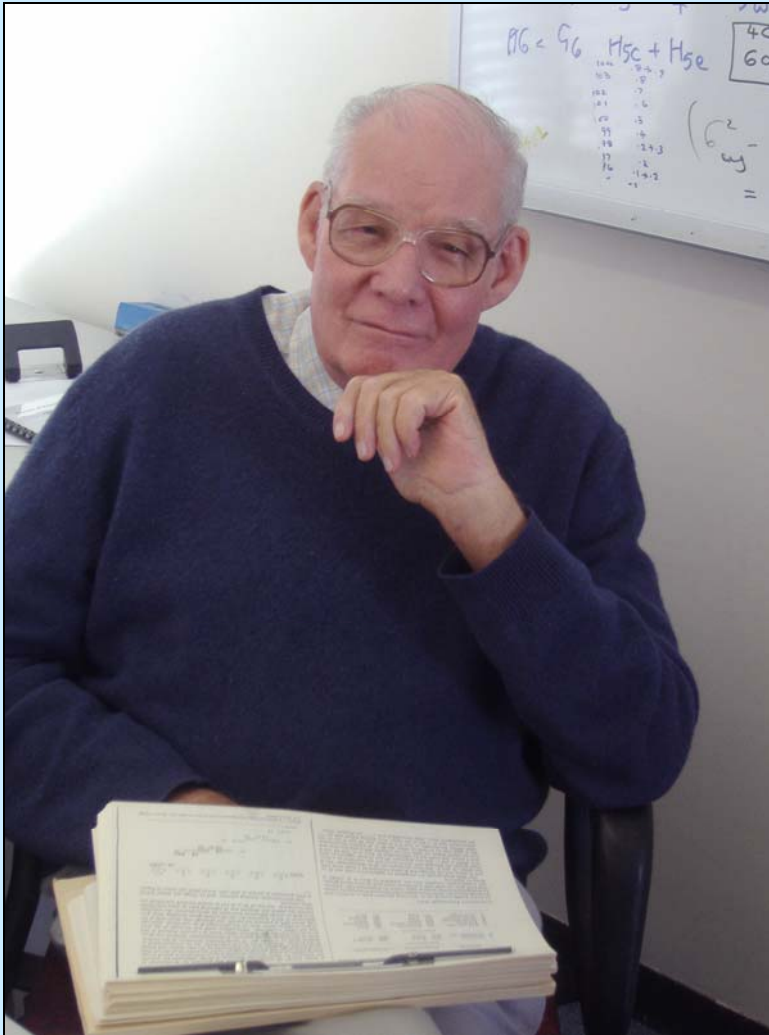
As has been our custom, the region offered a travel award (of AUD3000 this time) to enable a student member of the society or an early career regular member to present a talk or poster at the IBC in Florianópolis, Brazil, in December. The winner of this award was Kevin Chang, a PhD student in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Auckland. Kevin has submitted an abstract entitled "Handling missing data from high-throughput protein abundance experiments", with co-authors Richard Jarrett and his PhD supervisor Kathy Ruggiero.

The "runner-up", to whom AUD1500 was awarded, was Stephen Bush, a lecturer in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney. Stephen has submitted an abstract on the design of efficient stated choice experiments.

Our congratulations go to Kevin and Stephen, and we wish them a wonderful time at the IBC. Our thanks go to the judges of the award, Patrick Graham and Ken Russell.

Member News - Retirement of G. Peter Y. CLARKE

Professor Geoffrey Peter Young CLARKE retired on June 24, 2010 in Perth, Western Australia, aged 72 years. He was Emeritus Professor in Biometry at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg till 1999, before moving to the Biometrics unit in the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) at South Perth. Peter has been a long-time member of the International Biometric Society (since 1969), as well as active in the establishment of the Sub-Saharan branch (SUSAN) of the IBS.



Since coming to Australia Peter has been active in the Australasian region of the society, and also in GenStat conferences, with a number of invited and contributed paper presentations.

His main work in Perth has involved the annual publication of the Crop Variety Sowing Guide (2000 to 2008) and planning and analysis of Western Australian and national crop breeding trials.

He has mentored many students and researchers including Alan Welsh of ANU, Canberra. He leaves behind a legacy of a belief in one's personal views and a strong basis of the 3Rs that R.A. Fisher promoted. I have added 2 more Rs (Reml and the R program) for biometricians working in agriculture to learn!

Peter was very thorough in his work and would many times write on paper or whiteboard the steps of a problem converted to a statistical framework. His whiteboard (pictured) still has steps that we have discussed since 2001!

On behalf of all IBS members in the region, we would like to wish Peter the best in his retirement. His keen interest in bridge and fishing as well as being involved in the activities of his children and grand-children, will make him feel forever YOUNG!

A more detailed and formal dedication will appear in the IBS Biometrics Bulletin later in the year.

By Mario D'Antuono, who sat next door to Peter from 2000-2010! I never saw a fish but I heard they were big!