



Australasian Region

Newsletter

Issue 6
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From the President, Graham Hepworth



2009 was a very busy year for me professionally, with lots to do as President of the region as well as keep things going at work. But it was also rewarding - one of the best aspects of being involved at the organisational level of a society such as the IBS is the interaction with colleagues and the camaraderie which develops when working on a demanding task together. And the most demanding task for the year was the organising of the recent regional conference in Taupo. As anyone knows who has organised a conference, it requires a huge effort and

for a while seems to take over your life! But it is very satisfying when it goes well and you see the benefits.

Feedback from conference delegates has been very positive, and my thanks goes to everyone who attended, contributed and helped in various ways. I'm especially grateful to the Local Organising Committee - Neil Cox, Melissa Dobbie, Harold Henderson, Hans Hockey and Kathy Ruggiero (Chair); and the other members of the Scientific Program Committee - David Baird, James Curran (Chair) and Hans Hockey. Have a look at the [photos](#) from the conference. Vanessa Cave has written an article about her experiences at the conference - see next page.

At the conference we held our Biennial General Meeting, during which the regional council for 2010 and beyond was elected. I'd particularly like to welcome to the council our new Vice-President and President-elect Mario D'Antuono from the Department of Agriculture and Food, WA. Mario will succeed me as president in 2011. The council says goodbye to Brian Niven who has been Assistant Treasurer since 1985 - a remarkably long period of service for which we are grateful. The position of Assistant Treasurer (based in NZ) will no longer be required because of the ease of paying subscriptions directly to the Treasurer in Australia.

I believe that our region of the society is in a healthy state as we move into 2010. Membership numbers are going well, finances are in good shape (with very modest annual subscriptions), and we are benefiting professionally in many ways. I wish all members a successful and rewarding year.



Biometrics on the Lake - a young statistician's experience

By Vanessa Cave, AgResearch, Ruakura

The 2009 IBS Australasian Region conference was an unqualified success and a real pleasure to attend: the setting spectacular, the scientific programme diverse, the atmosphere friendly, the organisation smooth, and the conference activities a bundle of fun.

Held on the shores of picturesque Lake Taupo (NZ), a caldera lake created following a huge volcanic eruption, and overlooked by three active volcanoes, the conference setting was beautiful, and nicely set the tone for a fun and relaxed conference. The conference kicked off to a great start when delegates were greeted in fine style with a piece of local pumice, a good bar, and many tasty treats at the welcome reception. In the days that followed the scientific programme, with its rich variety of talks and posters, certainly did not disappoint. A great feature of this conference was the opportunity to attend a diverse range of presentations, with applications in medicine, agriculture and ecology, and to meet fellow statisticians working in fields, and on problems, perhaps different to that of our own.

A particularly nice aspect of the conference was its size - it was not overwhelmingly large. This year's conference attracted ≈ 120 delegates, a good size for encouraging attendees to meet and mingle with one another, and for cultivating a very friendly atmosphere. It was also great that the conference was far from being a strictly Kiwi-Aussie affair, with 13 countries being represented. I really enjoyed catching up with old acquaintances, putting faces to names, and meeting new biometrical colleagues.

To "relieve brain strain", timetabled mid-conference was a free afternoon, providing delegates with a chance to relax and/or partake of one of the organised social activities. These activities, which included jet-boating, kayaking, fishing, and exploring the thermal areas, were thoroughly enjoyed by their participants.

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On the final night the organisers arranged a brilliant conference dinner, held at the nearby Huka Prawn Farm - an event which scored extremely highly in the novelty and fun stakes. The pre-meal prawn fishing was a scream (literally for several of the delegates!), and many of us enjoyed feasting upon the spoils of the night's catch. I am sure that I speak for all attendees in wholeheartedly thanking the organisers (David, Graham, Hans, Harold, James, Kathy, Melissa and Neil) for arranging such a successful and interesting conference.

Australasian region council

President: Graham Hepworth
(University of Melbourne)

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

Secretary: Patrick Graham
(University of Otago)

Treasurer: Warren Muller (CSIRO)

IBS President: Kaye Basford (UQ)

IBS council members:

Tony Pettitt (QUT); Alan Welsh
(ANU); David Baird (VSN)

Regional website manager:

Hans Hockey (Biometrics Matters)

Newsletter correspondent: Duncan
Hedderley (Plant & Food Research)



Presidents past, present and future
at the regional conference in Taupo,
from right to left:

Melissa Dobbie (2007 - 2008),
Graham Hepworth (2009 - 2010),
Mario D'Antuono (2011 - 2012).

Regional website news: www.biometrics.org.au

Hans Hockey (Biometrics Matters Limited) took over the job of website manager during 2009, which included managing the Taupo conference website. Hans has recently updated the website, and it is in good shape! Please have a look at it, if you haven't done so. If you have any suggestions for improvements, we would welcome [your feedback](#).

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