



**Newsletter of the Society for Risk Analysis
Australia & New Zealand**

November 2014 Issue 6

**Society for Risk Analysis—World Congress on Risk
(Incorporating the annual conference of SRA-ANZ)**

**Singapore
19 – 23 July 2015**

Managing Trans-boundary Risk in the Asia-Pacific Region

The SRA-ANZ Council has decided to support the 2015 World Congress on Risk to be held in Singapore 19-23 July 2015.

Next year's SRA-ANZ Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with the World Congress.

Accordingly a session proposal has been submitted for a session titled: "Managing Trans-boundary Risk in the Asia-Pacific Region." This session will incorporate the annual conference of SRA-ANZ.

We encourage SRA-ANZ members to submit abstracts for individual presentations, to ensure that the

the World Congress organisers have complete information on the scope and size of our contribution.

The abstract submission deadline is 30 November 2014:

<http://www.birenheide.com/sra/world15/>

You will need the Symposium ID: u6ehuz
Select "Speaker Abstract as Part of a Symposium" to submit your abstracts.

Society for Risk Analysis Annual Meeting Denver, Colorado 7-10 December 2014.

<http://sra.org/events/sra-2014-annual-meeting>

SRA-ANZ members who are also members of the SRA international body can receive discounted registration to attend the SRA Annual Meeting.

Naomi Cogger, the President-Elect, will represent SRA-ANZ at the conference. The latest information about the conference promises a robust program of plenaries, symposia, roundtables, workshops, and Specialty Group meetings and mixers, as well as the Sunday evening Opening Reception, Monday evening Poster event, Tuesday afternoon Awards Luncheon and Business Meeting, and Wednesday afternoon T-Shirt Giveaway.

Other improved or novel events to be hosted at this year's annual meeting include:

Local Social Events—Sign up now to network, spend quality time with colleagues, or just to relax and enjoy the local flavors and environment of Colorado during the Wynkoop Brewing Company Tour (Sunday, 3:00-4:00 pm); or skiing, snowboarding, or snowshoeing at Keystone Resort (Thursday, all day).

Morning Coffee and Snack—Be sure to attend the Monday and Tuesday morning plenaries from 8:30-10:00 a.m. related to “Technological Advances, Risk Tradeoffs, and Societal Concerns Associated With Hydraulic Fracking” and “Risks, Benefits, and Public Policy Issues Surrounding

Legalized Marijuana Use.” We have a diverse line-up of speakers that will address and debate these timely and contentious issues, and coffee and snacks will be provided!

Book Signing Event—Get your book signed or just stop by and meet the authors of two newly published books on “The Social Roots of Risk: Producing Disasters, Promoting Resilience” (Kathleen Tierney) and “Hurricane Katrina and the Forgotten Coast of Mississippi” (Susan Cutter) on Wednesday from 10-10:30 am and 3-3:30 pm. Be sure to also attend the luncheon plenary session on “Dealing with Natural Disaster Risks: Strategies for Adaptation and Risk Management.”

Speed-Dating Breakfast—Calling all students, young professionals, new members, and international members! Please join us for coffee and breakfast and an opportunity to “meet-and-greet” many of our current and former elected SRA Board and Council members, Specialty Group chairs, Fellows, and esteemed SRA members and learn more about SRA's ongoing activities and ways to get more involved in SRA.

Media Outreach—The SRA News Release Subcommittee of the Communications Committee has expanded its efforts to reach out to local, regional and international reporters and authors to

cover the compelling variety of topics that will be addressed at this year's conference. Be on the lookout for media representatives at the annual meeting and you might have an opportunity to showcase your own work or offer an opinion!

Sponsorship Opportunities— It is not too late to sponsor an SRA event! SRA has continued to update and expand the ways in which sponsors can contribute financially to SRA, which now include exhibitor booths, badge lanyards, coffee breaks, banner ads and splash screens for SRA's Mobile Meeting App, and much

more. Such sponsorship not only increases the visibility of our sponsors among SRA's members and non-members, but also helps maintain the long-term viability of SRA. We have a number of new and ongoing sponsors and exhibitors this year, so please join me in thanking them for their participation! Contact stabor@burkinc.com for more information.

Please view SRA's preliminary program and agenda for more details at <http://www.sra.org/events/sra-2014-annual-meeting>

Fifth International Conference on Risk Analysis and Crisis Response (RACR-2015) Tangier, Morocco 1-3 June 2015

This event is an official activity of SRA-China, hosted by the National School of Applied Sciences, Abdelmalek Essaadi University in Tangier, Morocco.

The theme of the RACR-15 conference will be "Emerging Economies, Risk and Development, and Intelligent Technology." Beijing Cazl Technology Service Co., Ltd., is a co-organizer.

The conference series was launched by the Risk Analysis Council of the China Association for Disaster Prevention in 2007 and subsequently taken over by SRA-China in 2011. It meets every two years. This meeting follows the work of successful conferences RACR-2011 in Laredo (USA), and RACR-2013 in Istanbul (Turkey).

Special session proposals were due August 1, 2014. **Individual paper submissions are due December 14, 2014.** Submission instructions and related details, a list of conference topics, registration fees, and details of publication and award opportunities are all posted at the SRA-China site.

Conference website: <http://www.ensat.ac.ma/RACR5>
Web Submission <http://www.risk007.com/openconf>

President's Report by Tom Beer

The major activity of SRA-ANZ is the annual conference. This was held in Palmerston North, New Zealand, 26-28 August 2014 with the theme "Risk beyond the numbers."

The conference was organised by Naomi Cogger of the EpiCentre at Massey University who did an excellent job that deserved to have a larger attendance. There were 29 submitted abstracts in addition to the invited keynote talks from Peter Sandman, Tim Carpenter, Jody Lanard, Mark Burgman and Nigel French. The presentations will eventually be posted on the SRA-ANZ web site along with the presentations from past SRA-ANZ conferences.

Sandman and Lanard are risk communication experts and in addition to their keynote talks they ran a one-day workshop in Wellington just on risk communication that used numerous case studies. The past Queensland Premier, Anna Bligh, was praised for her risk communication skills during the landfall of Tropical Cyclone Yasi.

The Conference itself was organised into six themes: Biosecurity; Policy & Communication; Business & Economic risk; Food, Climate and Epidemics; Natural Disasters; People & Animals.

Some random points gleaned from the Conference:

- Biosecurity is very important for New Zealand with Foot and Mouth Disease being of special concern.

- NZ uses aerial dispersion of a poison called 1080 (sodium monofluoroacetate¹) to kill possums. It is considered a humane way to kill possums, but an inhumane way to kill any dogs that accidentally eat the poison.
- Homeless people do not fare well during natural disasters.
- Riding horses is risky.

By-Law Changes

The SRA-ANZ Annual General Meeting was held in August 2014 in conjunction with the Annual Conference. Two motions to amend the By-Laws were passed:

1. Fee change

The first is to change the dues schedule so that membership of SRA-ANZ will be USD\$50 rather than the present AUD\$50.

The reason is that at present one can become a member of SRA-ANZ either by paying an SRA-I membership (USD) and opting to join the SRA-ANZ Chapter for a USD\$50 fee, or by applying directly to SRA-ANZ and paying a fee of AUD\$50. When the US and Australian dollars were almost at parity any discrepancy did not matter but now that the two are starting to diverge, the Treasurer would prefer that the fee be consistent.

Students and retired persons will get a discount.

¹ Some toothpaste contains sodium monofluorophosphate as an anti-decay agent.

2. Presidential term change

In order to permit the SRA-ANZ President to take full opportunity of the international networking provided by attendance at the SRA-I meeting, it is proposed that the Term of Office of the President be extended from the present one year to two years. This also means that the President-Elect will serve two years.

Because some concern was expressed over the same person then having to spend a further two years as Immediate Past President, the present Council position held by the Immediate Past President will become a position that can be held by either the Immediate Past President, the Secretary or the Treasurer.



Peter Sandman presenting to the SRA-ANZ Risk Communication Workshop, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand, 28 August 2014. Most of the audience consists of officials from New Zealand Government Departments, and the attendance reflects the importance of risk analysis and especially risk communication to the work of government.

Risk Research in Australia and New Zealand: A Review

Tom Beer (President SRA-ANZ)

This review responds to a request from the Japanese Chapter of the Society for Risk Analysis to write a review of the current status of risk research in the Australia-New Zealand region, as covered by the Australia-New Zealand Chapter of the Society for Risk Analysis (SRA-ANZ).

Because so much of risk analysis and risk research is undertaken “in-house” for commercial purposes within the insurance and finance industries it is not possible to produce a comprehensive review of such activities. Many of the practitioners in this field are members of the Risk Management Association of Australia². The analogous New Zealand body is RiskNZ³.

Australia and New Zealand produced pioneering work in the area of Risk Management through the development of the Australia-New Zealand Standard AS/NZS4360 on Risk Management. Some of the ideas in that standard came from the “Budapest Manifesto on Risk Science and Sustainability”⁴ (Beer and Ismail-Zadeh, 2003) and have proved sufficiently useful and successful that AS/NZS4360 has become the new International Standard on Risk Management ISO 31000.

Because both Australia and New Zealand are countries in which agriculture and

farming are important industries, much of the focus of risk research in both countries revolves around biosecurity. If one examines the expertise and skills of the membership of SRA-ANZ and if one examines the contents of the presentations made at the SRA-ANZ Annual Conferences⁵ then this strong focus on biosecurity becomes apparent. Australia and New Zealand are both free of animal diseases such as rabies and foot and mouth diseases, as well as many other lesser-known plant and animal diseases and both countries wish to make sure that this situation continues.

The difficulty that both countries face is that in an era of globalisation import bans are perceived by exporting countries as trade barriers. Thus, for example, Australia had to defend itself when Canada complained to the World Trade Organisation that the import ban on Canadian Salmon was a trade barrier rather than a quarantine matter. Australia’s defence was to produce the quantified risk assessment to show that import of Canadian Salmon posed an unacceptable risk to the local aquaculture industry. In fact, such disputes also occur between Australia and New Zealand in relation to apples and honey because one country is free of a disease that the other country possesses. The authorities that study

² <http://www.rmaaustralia.org/>

³ <http://www.risknz.org.nz/>

⁴ www.iugg.org/publications/reports/budapest.pdf

⁵ <http://www.acera.unimelb.edu.au/sra/news.html>

food safety also use risk analysis as their standard tool.

New Zealand considers Australian possums to be vermin (there are no indigenous New Zealand possums) and the authorities use aerial dispersion of a poison called 1080 (sodium monofluoroacetate) to kill possums. It is considered a humane way to kill possums, but an inhumane way to kill any dogs that accidentally eat the poison.

What is it about the chemistry of such compounds that make them lethal to animals in differing degrees? Or conversely, some toothpaste contains sodium monofluorophosphate as an anti-decay agent. Why is the acetate form harmful but the phosphate form benign? Such issues are examined by the Australasian College of Toxicology and Risk Assessment⁶.

The world is presently suffering from an outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa. An analogous, though less virulent virus that is endemic in Australian fruit bats is Hendra virus. It can cause diseases in horses—especially if they have been feeding around trees with large congregations of bats—and can be transmitted to humans who handle infected horses. The study of such viruses requires workplace risk analysis, and the dangers faced by veterinarians who treat horses are also an area of active research.

Hendra is, as it happens, only one of the many risks that face people who deal with horses. There is presently active research on methods to reduce the risk to riders taking part in competitive

equestrian events. Wearing helmets has long been compulsory but at the same time that there are social pressures to ban “jumps-racing” (where racehorses have to leap over hurdles), there is also research that seeks to find safer hurdles for equestrian cross-country events.

Australia has an enviable safety record. The national airline, Qantas, has the best safety record of any international airline. The Australian State of Victoria was the first jurisdiction in the world to legislate compulsory seat belts in automobiles. It is compulsory to wear helmets when riding horses, motorcycles or bicycles. The Australian & New Zealand Risk Management Association⁷ exists for safety professionals who deal with health, safety and environmental issues. Such links raise the epistemological issue of whether safety is the opposite of risk, or whether security is the opposite of risk. When dealing with food, food security is seen as a much wider concept with food safety being just one small part of food security. In the area of road safety, much present research focuses on the safe system approach⁸ that seeks safe cars, safe speeds, safe people and safe roads.

In dealing with the public over such toxicological issues, risk communication is particularly important with many practitioners in both countries following the risk communication framework set out by Peter Sandman. Both Sandman and his partner Jodi Lanard are risk communication experts who recently visited New Zealand as the keynote speakers at the SRA-ANZ Conference. In addition to their keynote talks they ran a

⁶ <http://www.actra.org.au/news.html>

⁷ <http://www.anzrma.org/>

⁸ <http://www.safesystemsolutions.com.au>

one-day workshop in Wellington just on risk communication that used numerous case studies. Anna Bligh, the ex-Premier of the Australian State of Queensland was praised for her risk communication skills during the landfall of Tropical Cyclone Yasi.

Natural Hazards such as Tropical Cyclones, Floods, Severe Storms, Droughts and wildfires are a focus of much risk related research in Australia (Middelmann, 2007; Beer, 2014). New Zealand is subject to natural hazards of a different kind with volcanoes and earthquakes being more relevant. Nowadays the focus of such research is on the integration of the physical sciences with the social sciences. Thus, for example, studies show how homeless people fare during natural disasters. Of course there is considerable research on the impacts of climate change on such natural disasters as well as its impacts on all areas of Australian and New Zealand society.

Biosecurity and Natural Hazards both fall within the rubric of Environmental Management (Measham and Lockie, 2012). Risk assessment and risk analysis are seen as a method of prioritising and then managing environmental issues used by the US EPA (Ruckelshaus, 1985) and the Australian environmental management authorities (Beer and Ziolkowski, 1995).

Because mining is an important component of the Australian economy, risk management has been seen as an important component of mine planning and mine operation (Environment Australia, 1999). In addition, the Federal Government is responsible for the oversight of uranium mining so that

much of the work of the Supervising Scientist⁹, who implements oversight, is based on risk management principles. The evidence of success in this area may be noted by examining a catastrophe, such as the red mud incident in Hungary¹⁰ and noting that Australia, which conducts identical mining operations and also has red mud holding ponds, has not encountered any significant spills.

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Risk newsletter

Members are reminded to look for the international SRA (parent body) newsletter published six times a year and freely available on the SRA website at <http://sra.org/newsletter.php>.

It contains general information about the Society as well as information about activities such as the speciality groups.