

SRA-ANZ Member Newsletter

The purpose of the Society for Risk Analysis – Australia & New Zealand (SRA-ANZ) is to provide an opportunity for an inclusive, broad-based society that promotes communication between disciplines, a breadth of tools and viewpoints, and platforms for training, workshops, and conferences.

December 2018 Newsletter

Highlights:

- SRA-ANZ 2018 conference re-view
- Best student prize winner
- Membership reminder

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Message from the President

Dear SRA-ANZ Members,

It's the season for looking back and taking stock, and what an eventful year it has been. The past 11 months have seen tumultuous and groundbreaking events: scientists in China created the first monkey clones, SpaceX built and successfully launched the world's most powerful rocket, the United States and North Korea "fell in love", and Apple became the world's first company to be valued at \$1 trillion. All this occurred against a backdrop of historic and record-breaking environmental disasters including the volcanic eruption in Guatemala, wildfires in Greece, severe flooding in India, the earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia, and the recent deadly bushfires in California. It does seem like the worst of times and the best of times for those of us in risk analysis and crisis management.

On reflection, it seems that the risk community now more frequently speaks about "firsts": that is, crisis events of the likes that the world has never seen before. This effectively underscores how much continues to be unknown and uncertain despite significant advancements in the level of sophistication in our risk analysis methods and approaches. Risk analysis never gets old. We continue to marvel at the complexity that our tools can only begin to hint at. This underscores the challenge of working together across disciplines to piece together the disparate pieces of our knowledge to gain richer and deeper insights into the complex and changing nature of risk.

In the past two years of my term as president of SRA-ANZ, our society has highlighted the urgent need to break down silos in the scientific and professional fields of risk, and the need for more interdisciplinary and cross-geographic conversations. In line with this, we explored the interconnectedness of risk at our 2017 conference at the University of Melbourne. Given this underlying connectedness, we then sought to bring a broad set of risk analysis lenses together in order to appreciate the multifaceted nature of risk at our 2018 conference at the University of Sydney. This year's conference brought together colleagues from as far away as Norway, Finland, and China. We covered a wide diversity of disciplines from cyber security to biosecurity, and had lively debates about fundamental questions on the nature of risk and risk analysis that cut across disciplines. We also celebrated the wonderful work of Victoria Hemming from the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis (CEBRA), who won the best student talk award for her presentation on quantile aggregation, performance weighting and judgment. We look forward to seeing her work influence the field in the years to come!

Our society has reached out to the international risk community by publishing our first special issue in the Journal of Risk Research. The issue was focused around the theme of bringing people into risk analysis, featuring papers that were first presented at our 2016 conference at the CQUniversity Appleton Institute in Adelaide. We showcased the cutting edge work that we do in our region and raised the profile of the important contributions of our Australian and New Zealand scientists and professionals to the field. We have much to contribute as a society, and I have no doubt that we will continue to shape the field well into the future.

The close of 2018 marks changes to our leadership team. I would like to take this opportunity for the generous contributions of Naomi Cogger (Massey University), who is stepping down as Immediate Past President. I would also like to thank Martina Hoffmann (CEBRA) and Anca Hanea (CEBRA), who as Councillors have made invaluable contributions to the newsletters and conferences that are key initiatives of the society. With the changing of the guard, I am stepping down as President and assuming the position of Immediate Past President vacated by Naomi. I am very pleased to welcome Lee Bailey (Environmental Protection Authority New Zealand) as the society's new President, Aaron Dodd (CEBRA) as President-Elect, and our new Councillor Victoria Hemming (CEBRA).

Hong Jin (Food Standards Australia New Zealand) will continue his role as Secretary while Steve Corin (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, New Zealand) likewise continues as Treasurer. The new team will lead the society's continued efforts to enrich discussions on risk among a broader and more diverse group of scholars, professionals, and policymakers.

On that note, here's to lots of interesting and stimulating discussions in 2019!

Sandra Seno-Alday, SRA-ANZ President

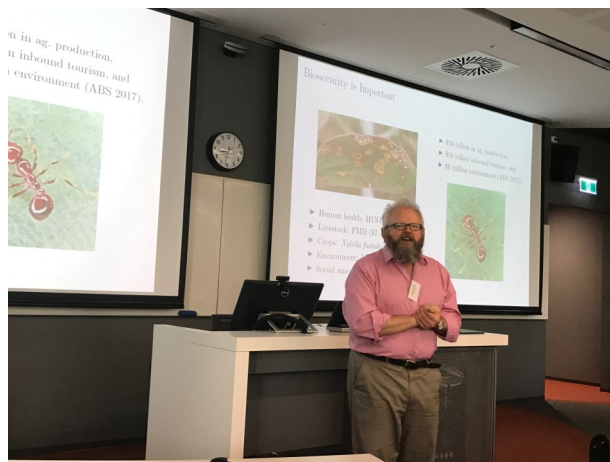




SRA-ANZ 2018 Conference Review

SRA-ANZ member, *Anna Kosovac*, reports on the 11th annual SRA-ANZ conference, 'Risk Prisms', which was held at the University of Sydney from September 26–27, 2018.

The 2018 conference of the Society of Risk Analysis–Australia and New Zealand (SRA-ANZ) was held at the University of Sydney from September 26–27. The theme of this year's conference was Risk prisms: exploring the multifaceted nature of risk. The keynote speakers were CEBRA Director, Associate Professor Andrew Robinson, who presented on the nature of risk analysis and aspects of risk analysis in biosecurity, and Professor Terje Aven, President of SRA International, who spoke on the foundation and challenges of risk analysis science. PhD student Victoria Hemming was awarded the best student talk award for her presentation on whether quantile aggregation and performance weighting improves judgement.



Associate Professor Andrew Robinson



Dr Marja Ylonen and Dr Sandra Seno-Alday

A fantastic element of the conference was its ability to bring together so many differing industries and sectors on a shared goal of understanding risk processes and behaviours. Moving from risk in global supply chains, through to risks to cyber security and food safety, it highlighted the varied nature of risk throughout different industries.

Some particularly fascinating research came from Dr Sandra Seno-Alday, on the inherent riskiness of increasing networks among board members in high-earning companies in Australia. She presented an argument on whether these ties place the nation-state in a position that could be open to future governance crises, as the networks are so closely connected among organisations.

Dr Marja Ylonen (President of the Nordic Chapter of SRA-Europe) highlighted

SRA–ANZ 2018 Conference Review

the issues of risk governance in the decommissioning of nuclear reactors. As Australia currently does not run any nuclear power facilities, she puts forward salient lessons that should be considered in the debate on whether to go down the nuclear power path or not. As such, the case study of the Finish decommissioning presents useful findings for any future nuclear endeavours.

Personally, as a risk researcher, it was great to see so much research coming out of Australasia in this field. The risks discussed were also reflective of the region's challenges and struggles. For example, presentations on fire management reflected the cultural zeitgeist of the current time, with fire risk being seen as a significant problem within Australia, thus leading to a heightened perception of the risk. This is relevant and important as it can lead to greater study and focus on risk management practices to allow for lower overall harm to the community and environment.



A big thanks to Sydney University for hosting us. It was a beautiful venue, combined with some fantastic Sydney weather.

Dr Trent Penman

Read the profile on best student prize winner, Victoria Hemming, on page 4.



Left to right: SRA International president Professor Terje Aven, Victoria Hemming, SRA-ANZ President Dr Sandra Seno-Alday and SRA-ANZ President Elect Lee Bailey



Best Student Talk Winner: Victoria Hemming

Victoria Hemming is a PhD student at the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis at the University of Melbourne. At the recent SRA–ANZ conference, Victoria won the prize for best student talk, which includes a \$500 travel voucher to attend future SRA conferences, courtesy of SRA–ANZ.



My decision to undertake a PhD in expert judgement was motivated by my experience as an ecological consultant where my job involved conducting risk assessments related to threatened species and ecological values that may be impacted by proposed developments. Very often there was little data to make these assessments, and subjective expert judgement was required.

At the time, the tools recommended for undertaking these assessments failed to capture uncertainty, utilised methods which were imbedded with linguistic ambiguity, and mixed value judgements with judgements of fact. While teams of experts were often convened, usually there was only one expert per subject matter.

There were methods that could improve the process of obtaining subjective expert judgements, however, they were not incorporated into policy, which meant there was little incentive for practitioners to adopt them due to the additional time and expense they may incur. There was also prescriptive guidance on how the methods could be utilised, and little evidence that their application improved judgements. These findings motivated my decision to undertake a PhD in expert judgement with the Centre of Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis at the University of Melbourne.

My thesis looks at how expert judgement can be improved in ecology. In the talk I presented at the SRA–ANZ 2018 conference, I outlined a protocol which has formed the main method of my thesis: the IDEA Protocol (“Investigate”, “Discuss”, “Estimate”, and “Aggregate”). The IDEA Protocol is practical to apply, and can improve judgements. In my talk I focussed on possible improvements that could be made to the aggregation of judgements via different methods of equal weighted averaging, and performance weighting (based on the Classical Model), and the challenges which may arise with different methods of aggregation.

The main findings of the talk were that 1) equal weights is a simple and robust way to improve judgements, 2) performance weights can further improve judgements, but they do not always achieve this and can be challenging to apply. 3) The main reason I believe the method of performance weighting with test questions should be considered is that the method provides a basic level of empirical evidence that the judgements provided, the experts included, and the assumptions made by the analyst in the aggregation stage provide the best representation of uncertainty. You can read more about my work by looking up the publications on my webpage <https://hemmingresearch.wordpress.com/>

Updating your Membership

As a SRA–ANZ member you will be invited to attend meetings, workshops and events as well as participate in specialist discussion groups

Memberships for SRA–ANZ run from January to December and entitle holders to a hefty conference discount. It is now time to renew your membership for 2019 if you haven't already done so! You can do this quickly and easily online at our website: <http://www.sraanz.org.nz/>

Upcoming Conferences & Events

SRA–Benelux Annual Conference

Luxembourg

March 25–26, 2019

The 2019 SRA–Benelux Conference focuses on the theme: “Reasoning with Uncertainty”. Experts, practitioners and policy makers often have to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty. This sometimes leads to catastrophic outcomes, but often also results in averted disasters, innovation and unexpected discoveries. This conference is devoted to how risk research(ers) can better inform decision-making in the face of uncertainty, anticipate negative outcomes, increase the propensity for positive outcomes, and better communicate uncertainty. <http://www.sra.org/events/sra-benelux-2019-annual-conference>

SRA International Fifth World Congress on Risk

Cape Town, South Africa

May 6–8, 2019

The Fifth World Congress on Risk will focus on “Development and Resilience” and aims to stimulate dialogue and education on risk issues of worldwide interest. SRA welcomes contributions on any topic related to risk assessment, risk characterization, risk perception, risk communication, risk management, risk governance, and policy relating to risk, in the context of risks of concern to individuals, to public and private sector organizations, and to society at a local, regional, national, or global level. <http://www.sra.org/worldcongress2019>

SRA–Europe Conference

Potsdam, Germany

June 23–26, 2019

Following on from a successful 2018 conference in Sweden, the 2019 conference will be held in Germany. More will be available online shortly. <http://www.sra.org/events/sra-europe-2019-conference>



Check out our website at
www.sraanz.org.nz for
updates

Society for Risk Analysis, Australia & New Zealand

The Society for Risk Analysis - Australia & New Zealand (SRA-ANZ) provides an opportunity for an inclusive, broad-based society that promotes communication between disciplines, a breadth of tools and viewpoints, and platforms for training, workshops, and conferences.

SRA-ANZ's Goals:

1. To serve as the focal point for interaction of members of the Society and other interested individuals and organisations in Australia and New Zealand.
2. To further understanding, awareness, and appropriate applications of risk analysis, and to promote an exchange of ideas and practical experiences among members of the academic, professional, industrial, and regulatory communities involved in risk analysis and risk management in Australia and New Zealand.
3. To hold scientific and educational meetings.

Executive Members

2019 Incoming Committee

Lee Bailey (President)
Aaron Dodd (President Elect)
Sandra Seno-Alday (Immediate Past President)
Hong Jin (Secretary)
Steven Corin (Treasurer)
Erica Kecorius (Secretariat)
Victoria Hemming (Newsletter Editor)

Past Presidents

2017 Sandra Seno-Alday
2015 Naomi Cogger
2014 Tom Beer
2013 Mark Colyvan
2012 Rochelle Christian
2011 Simon Barry
2010 Janet Gough
2009 Jean Chesson
2008 Daniela Leonte
2007 Keith Hayes
2006 Nick Linacre

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