

ORSNZ ANNUAL REPORT 2009

President's Report

This is my first year as president of New Zealand's newest OR society. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, we are no longer the Operational Research Society of NZ, but instead the Operations Research Society of NZ. This small name change is just one of several steps we've taken to modernise the society this year, and forms part of the constitutional changes approved by members in April. (This constitutional change was approved by 20 votes for, and none against). The new constitution allowed us to become registered as a Charity, a change which was backdated to take effect from 30 June 2008. It also means that, for the first time, we are able to provide this Annual Report electronically, saving paper and postage. Other changes include:

- Adding "advancement of education" into our aims, being a term recognized by the Charities Commission as specifying a charitable activity
- Introducing a non-voting Associate Membership category, and introduced concept of a Full (i.e. voting) member
- Specifying that Council makes decisions by majority vote, allow remote attendance at meetings (e.g. via Skype) and allow Council to make decisions without meeting in person. (This generalizes an earlier modification made to permit email voting by Council.)
- Allowing members to be removed from the Society when their email or postal address goes out of date
- Allowing formal communication with members using email, fax etc, not just posted documents
- Updating the wording describing our nonprofit charitable status, clarifying for example that members can be reimbursed for expenses. This new wording is based on that provided by the Charities Commission
- Specifying that upon dissolution, any assets go to a charity (as required by the Charities Commission)
- Formally allowing electronic banking
- Allowing the AGM to change the Society's Financial Year
- Reducing the AGM quorum to 10, not 12 members
- Specifying who chairs meetings, who can vote, that decisions are made by majority vote, and that the Chair has a casting vote
- Allowing for attendance at meetings using Skype etc with the agreement of the meeting attendees.
- Allowing the Constitution to be changed at an AGM (as well as via a written vote of members)

Membership

The table below shows our membership figures for 2009. The figures show the count of paid up members, while the bracketed figures show the additional count of members owing subscription fees.

| | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 | 2004 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|------|
| Corporate Sponsors | | | | | | 2 |
| Corporate Members | 3 | 3 | 3(1) | 3(1) | 5(2) | 5 |
| Corporate Representatives | 4 | 3 | | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| Life Members | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Standard Members | 42 (30) | 50 (23) | 52 (19) | 62 (17) | 77 (13) | 91 |
| Members (overseas) | 10 (8) | 7 (6) | 8 (5) | 8 (8) | 17 (5) | 8 |
| Members (no branch) | 4 (6) | 4 (6) | 10 (4) | 11 (5) | 16 (2) | 12 |
| Retired Members | 8 (2) | 8 (1) | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Student Members | 25 (20) | 14 (30) | 23 (16) | 26 (18) | 35 (19) | 41 |
| Total Membership | 96 (67) | 90 (66) | 104 (45) | 122 (49) | 161 (41) | 174 |

Finances

As you will see in the Treasurer's report, our finances continue to be in a healthy state. I wish to acknowledge the continuing contributions of our treasurer, John Paynter, who dedicates many hours of his time to keeping our financial records up to date. I'd also like to acknowledge the contribution of long standing (and long suffering!) auditor Paul Rouse. Auditing is a thankless task, but one that helps give our members confidence in the financial records of the society. We are very grateful to John and Paul for their contributions.

Visitors

As part of the ORSNZ Visiting Lecturer program, Ted Ralphs visited us from Lehigh University, Pennsylvania in January. Ted is actively involved in the Open Source COIN-OR project as the author and developer of the Symphony optimization package. He gave excellent presentations on his work at the ORSNZ branches. This year, the ORSNZ is assisting Professor Denis Borenstein from the Management School of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, and Prof Mike Pidd from Lancaster University, to visit NZ. Keep an eye on your emails to see when Denis and Mike will be speaking to ORSNZ members.

Newsletter

Matthias Ehrigott continues to do an excellent job in putting together the ORSNZ newsletter. We are grateful for the continuing support we receive from HRS in printing the newsletters for us.

Council

Our secretary Hamish Waterer left NZ last year, with his role being taken over by Fernando Beltran. Hamish made a huge contribution for which we are most grateful. I wish to thank Fernando for stepping into this role.

Through a number of email resolutions, Council has been active in preparing the new constitution and working through the steps to gain charity status, as well as dealing with various administrative matters. I wish to thank the Council members, listed below, for their contributions over this year.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| President Andrew Mason | | Vice President Matthias Ehrgott | |
| Newsletter Matthias Ehrgott | Secretary Fernando Beltrán | Treasurer John Paynter | Council (APORS / IFORS Rep) David Ryan |
| Council Alastair McNaughton | Council Ross James | Council Stefanka Chukova | Council Andy Philpott |
| Council (Industry Representative) Geoff Leyland | Council Paul Rouse | | |
| <u>Auckland Branch</u> Chair <u>Golbon Zakeri</u> | <u>Christchurch Branch</u> Chair Grant Reid | <u>Wellington Branch</u> Chair <u>Mark Johnston</u> | |

Online Conference Registration Updates

Our old secretary, Hamish Waterer, was the ‘guru’ that set up and maintained our online conference registration system. With Hamish gone, we asked the developer of this system, Ullrich Speidel from the Department of Computer Science at the University of Auckland, to upgrade our software to his latest version and set it up for our particular needs. Ullrich has done an amazing job, including making a number of improvements to his open source code ware to meet our requirements. We are most grateful to Ullrich for giving us far more of his time than he charged for. I hope this system will keep us going for at least the next 5 years, saving the conference organizers (and the treasurer) many hours that would otherwise be spent on tedious administrative tasks such as manual credit card processing.

Edelman Finalist

I mentioned last year that one of our ORSNZ members, Mikael Rönnqvist, was a finalist for the 2008 Franz Edelman Award for Achievement in Operations Research and the Management Sciences. I’m very pleased that this year, ORSNZ members Andy Philpott and Graeme Everett were selected from 200 entrants as one of the 6 finalists in this competition for their work with the international pulp company Norske Skog. Andy, Graeme and the Norske Skog team presented their work in April at the INFORMS Practice Conference in Phoenix (and will be presenting it again for ORSNZ members at the upcoming ORSNZ conference). Although the prize was won by Hewlett Packard, Andy and Graeme’s work was reported in the New York based *BusinessWeek* magazine, which then resulted in Andy speaking on Radio NZ's Nine-to-Noon slot and being interviewed on TVNZ's Morning TV program. You can view Andy in action at our prize page, <http://www.orsnz.org.nz/Prizes>. Well done, Andy and Graeme, in demonstrating to the world the quality of the OR work in NZ.

Conference

We had a very successful conference in Wellington in 2008. Many thanks are due to the organizer, Mark Johnston, and his Victoria University team. Without a doubt, being a conference organizer is the most demanding role in the ORSNZ; thanks for all your hard work, Mark. (Mark deserves an extra vote of thanks as the conference coincided with his role as a father.) This year I am looking forward to a most enjoyable and productive conference in Christchurch, where I know that Shane Dye and his team, John George, John Giffin, Terri Green, Ross James, Don McNickle, Nicola Petty, E. Grant Read, John Raffensperger, and Pulakanam Venkateswarlu, have been working hard to make sure we all have a great. I look forward to seeing many of at the Canterbury University venue in a few weeks.

Andrew Mason
President

Treasurers Report 2009

The funds available at the start of the period were \$44,814.84. The funds at the end of the period were \$48,880.61. There is an excess of receipts over expenditure of \$3,504.77. This is mainly due to the interest earnings. Some changes from the 2008 accounts are due to timing differences of annual costs, such as PO Box Rental, IFORS and RSNZ membership fees.

The 2008 conference made a small loss and had a low turnout. The conference expenses included producing and posting copies of the conference proceedings to non-attending members and subscribers, such as the libraries, these could be reclassified as membership costs. Other expenditure was under budget or non-existent (e.g. branch, due to the low level of activity in the branches during the year).

\$32,480.30 was now held on term deposit at the end of the financial year. It is continuing to be rolled over every 180 days (matures 3 Jan 2007). Three 180-day receipts fell into the 2008 financial year; hence interest income was higher in 2008 than in 2009 and will continue to fall as term deposit rates have dropped.

We are continuing to use the BNZ system to automate credit card receipts and incur higher fees (Buyline at \$35 per month).

John Paynter
Hon. Treasurer

Wellington Branch Report

This year we hosted two ORSNZ visiting lecturers: A/Prof Ted Ralphs from Lehigh University (USA) and Prof Mike Pidd from Lancaster University (UK).

Ted Ralphs visited in January and gave two talks on mixed integer linear and bilevel programming. Mike Pidd visited Victoria Management School from October to December and also gave two talks on simulation modelling of hospital performance and modelling career development in the European Commission. Prof Klaus Moeller

from Pforzheim University, Germany also visited VMS and gave a talk on supply chain logistics in October. Prof Vijay Nair from the University of Michigan visited in September and gave a talk on degradation modelling in reliability theory. In addition, Frank Kane, HoD Mathematics at Onslow College in Johnsonville, spent the year on a New Zealand Science, Mathematics and Technology Teacher Fellowship, hosted by the SMSOR at VUW.

John Davies and Mark Johnston have both been on research and study leave for the second half of 2009. John has been based at the University of Glamorgan, but has visited too many places and been to too many conferences to list here. Mark has been working with Prof Chris Potts at the University of Southampton and attended two huge OR conferences in Bonn and Warwick.

The VUW MBA had its 25th birthday this year and celebrated with, among other things, a series of excellent seminars. Sima Rouhollahi has completed her MSc thesis on "Two-Dimensional Warranty with Imperfect Repair Strategies". Robyn Moore's thesis entitled "Shaping more sustainable Communities: a case study in urban water management" completes her MMS degree. This summer we have been fortunate to attract a number of undergraduate summer research scholarships funded in part by a new government scheme, each worth \$5000 tax-free.

Looking ahead, John Davies is programme chair for the WDSI 2010 (39th) Annual Meeting on April 6-9, 2010, at the Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort in Lake Tahoe, Nevada. Stefanka Chukova is already planning for the 4th Asia-Pacific International Symposium on Advanced Reliability and Maintenance Modeling (APARM 2010) to be held in Wellington, December 2-4, 2010. We are also looking forward to hosting Prof Mike Wright from Lancaster University from Feb-April 2010.

Mark Johnston
Wellington Branch Chair

Christchurch Branch report

Our main activity for 2009 has been organising the annual conference, in association with which we have organised a reunion dinner. During the year we hosted talks by international visitors Ted Ralphs, Anita Schoebel, Gary Koehler, and Stewart Robinson, with another from Denis Borenstein to follow soon after the ORSNZ conference. We have made modest progress in attracting the small number of local OR people outside the University to such events.

Grant Read
Christchurch Branch Chair

Newsletter Editor Report

In 2009, two issues of the newsletter have been published: March 2009 (16 pages) and August 2009 (8 pages). While I again would have liked a November issue this was not

possible. Unfortunately the editor has been very busy this year with other editorial work, in particular having become area editor for APJOR.

The printing by Hoare Research Software runs very smoothly and I am grateful to HRS for the continuing support of our society. However, we did not have any other adverts this year (effect of the recession).

As usual, I would like to thank those people who sent more or less unsolicited contributions or allowed me to reprint their articles, thereby sustaining the newsletter: Andrew Mason, Anita Schoebel, Golbon Zakeri. Grant Read, Mark Johnston, John Gregory, Oliver Weide Richard Lusby. Ziming Guan, Andrea Raith.

Unfortunately, branch chairs have to be reminded often to send news from the different chapters. Overall there seems to be no interest in contributing to the newsletter at all and I don't know how many people actually read it.

Having been the editor for 6 years, I would be more than happy to hand over to a new, energetic editor who is willing to take on the job.

Matthias Ehrgott