

**ORSNZ
ANNUAL REPORT 2004**

Membership

The current membership of ORSNZ is as follows:

	2004	2003
Corporate Members	5	5
Corporate Sponsors	2	3
Life Members	2	2
Corporate Representatives	8	7
Standard Members	91	94
Overseas Members	8	14
Members (no branch)	12	13
Retired Members	5	4
Student Members	41 (some need to be deleted)	51
Total Membership	174	193

A brochure has been prepared to assist in recruitment of students and ultimately members to ORSNZ. The membership, although lower than we would wish, has been relatively stable over the past few years. This year has seen a decrease in Overseas and Student Membership.

Finances (Treasurer's Report attached)

Although the 2004 conference is budgeted to break even there is a commitment to subsidize the brochure promoting Operations Research, produced at the University of Canterbury.

I would like to take this opportunity to record the Society's appreciation of the efforts of John Paynter as treasurer. John has made a substantial effort to bring the accounts to a state that meets the Auditor's requirements.

Conferences

The 38th ORSNZ Conference was held at Waikato. The Council would like to thank the organising committee under the sponsorship of the Department of Management Systems, Waikato University. This year's is in Auckland and following the cycle:

The Council decision to hold the 2004 Conference in Auckland, also confirmed that in 2005 we would revert to the normal cycle for Conferences with Wellington hosted the Conference in 2005 and Christchurch in 2006.

A proposal has been made that the 2005 Conference be held in Christchurch. This is a matter for consideration at the AGM.

Visitors

The visiting lecturers funded by the society in 2003/4 were Russell Cheng and Saul Gass. The Council is recommending that Professor Oli Madsen's travel to present a Plenary Lecture at the 2004 Conference be funded by the Society. Professor Madsen's visit has been coordinated by Professor Ryan.

Newsletter (Newsletter Editor's Report attached)

The base for the newsletter was moved from Christchurch to Auckland during the year. Although few newsletters have been sent of late, it is understood that the frequency will be increased.

Council Meetings

No Council meetings were held, although frequent communication on matters such as the production of a brochure and conference planning were conducted regularly.

The ORSNZ Hans Daellenbach Prize

The Council will seek nominations for the next award in 2005.

Membership Database and the Documentation of the Society Processes

Andrew Mason is continuing to make progress fine tuning these as the situation requires as well as updating the ORSNZ web site with this and other information. I would also like to record the Society's continued appreciation of Paul Rouse for auditing the annual accounts and monitoring processes.

The Council, The Presidency, and the Future

It is gratifying to learn that most Council members are willing to remain in office in 2005. I would like to thank all members, especially those on the Council.

David Ryan
President
ORSNZ

Treasurers Report 2004

The funds available at the start of the period were \$18,148.02. The funds at the end of the period were \$20,568.34. There is an excess of receipts over expenditure of \$2265.31. This is mainly due to the profit from the conference and increase in membership fees, from \$50 to \$70, and the drive that resulted in receiving past fees owing (\$1824.00).

The previous years ran at a loss due to the conferences and/or visitors. The 2003 conference showed a profit of \$4117.47 mainly attributable to the high level of sponsorship received (\$8980). Other expenditure (e.g. branch) was under budget due to the low level of activity in the branches during the year, although some e.g. IFORS registration was up as it included previous years (unpaid) subscription.

In this year there was out of period expenditure to pay for costs associated with previous conferences (\$367.03) and also GST for prior periods (\$536.11). Conversely Engineering Science (UoA) owes the society \$427.32 as an adjustment from expenses associated with the 2001 and 2002 conferences. We have a liability of between \$1500

and \$2500 to pay towards the production of a poster to promote Operations Research in schools.

There were problems with the subscription system during the year. These were mostly brought about from the direct debits being paid to the BNZ bank account from the University of Auckland. There was no associated reference number with the transactions, so we could not determine on whose behalf they had been paid. Procedures have been put into place to rectify this.

The term deposit was broken during the year. We should consider putting some money back into a high earning account as we have sufficient funds in hand for the current year, especially as the 2004 conference is budgeted to break even.

We may transfer our account to the National Bank as it has a branch on the Symonds St campus. This will simplify banking.

John Paynter
Hon. Treasurer

Auckland Branch Report 2004

The Auckland Branch held no official meetings during the year, although with the move of the Presidency and a number of Council positions to Auckland there has been much activity to promote OR/MS by Branch members over the last 12 months. Over the last 12 months many of our members have been to international meetings such as INFORMS and the Stochastic Programming Symposium. The attendance of New Zealanders at these meetings has an enormous effect in promoting international awareness of an active OR/MS community in New Zealand, which is far greater than local promotion efforts. The Society should actively pursue both.

Alas, in March the Auckland Branch missed the opportunity of hosting their annual student induction ceremony that trades cans of ORSNZ beer in return for signatures on ORSNZ student membership forms. Despite this unfortunate oversight, student enthusiasm for OR/MS has been high at Auckland, with a large number of conjoint Commerce/Engineering students pursuing final-year projects in OR/MS in Engineering Science. The shift of Engineering Science (who with Statistics are now responsible for all the OR teaching on the Auckland Campus) into shiny new premises at 70 Symonds Street has enhanced the glamour of the subject to undergraduate students – staff makeovers are next on the list of changes, with CBD haircuts for all being a top priority.

The Auckland Branch intends to reinstate the student meetings in March 2005, as well as to reinstate the Honour Roll for Year 3 OR/MS students. We expect this will reverse the decline in student memberships in ORSNZ.

The major concern of this correspondent is continuing to attract students from high schools into our subject. The Min and Max campaign of Nicola Petty and Shane Dye is an excellent effort to help here that is supported by the Auckland Branch. We are also working to promote the subject through the Maths in Action posters that were funded by the Royal Society of New Zealand. With the resignation of this

correspondent from the Council of the Royal Society, one might expect less overt lobbying for OR/MS in this forum, but promotion through the RSNZ will be actively pursued as long as I represent ORSNZ on the MISC standing committee.

Andy Philpott
Auckland Branch Chair.
1 November, 2004

Wellington Branch Report 2004

We have had a very quiet year as far as meetings are concerned. We started the ORSNZ year with a talk planned by Russell Cheng, which had to be cancelled, and then our Chair David Boland also withdrew for family health reasons. So it turns out we have had no formal meetings this year, and for that we offer our apologies to the Wellington OR members.

But that doesn't mean we've been idle – just that we have not had our cheerleader David Boland to crack the whip and get us out of our own little worlds and instead we've been engrossed on our seemingly ever-busy lives. Some branch members have changed jobs, and those we've spoken to seem to have been busy doing good work.

At VUW, we had Professor James Cox here for the first trimester which provided us with an ideal opportunity to work alongside one of the top TOC people in the world. We had intentions of organising meetings with the OR Society and the NZPICS, but once the term started, we were so busy with various projects that before we knew it, it was time for him to leave.

We welcome new members onto the Wellington Branch committee to help organise meetings. Victoria Management School is willing to continue to provide modern and convenient meeting facilities at its downtown location at the new Pipitea Campus, but it does help to have someone else on the committee who is happy to provide an impetus for setting meeting dates and finding speakers. It makes us appreciate all the more the great job that David did in getting the meetings onto the agenda. It provides a useful reminder that we need help from those who have spare time to devote to the local branch.

Next year, we expect to have Lyn Thomas from the UK visiting us, and we hope to organise more meetings. We would love to hear from any Wellington members who would like to take an active role on the committee. We are happy to make arrangements, we have the email lists at the ready – we just need stirring into action.

John Davies, John Hayes, and Vicky Mabin (and David Boland, on leave)
Wellington Branch Committee
8 November, 2004

Christchurch Branch Report 2004

This year has been a relatively quiet year for the Christchurch Branch of the ORSNZ. In December 2003 we had two seminars by Professor Saul Gass of the University of Maryland. One on "The Analytic Hierarchy Process" and the second on "The First

Linear Programming Shoppe". In February we had Professor Don Gaver of the Naval Postgraduate School give a seminar on "Some Operations Research Problems in Homeland Defence".

The Christchurch Branch has also been very supportive of the initiative of Nicola Petty, Shane Dye (both from the Chch Branch), and Andy Philpott for the development of publicity material and web sites for attracting high school students to the field of Operations Research.

Ross James
Christchurch Branch Chair
22 October, 2004

Newsletter Editor's Report 2004

After an "editorless" period of some months, and two missed issues of the newsletter, the president asked me if I would be willing to take that job. So in August I became the new newsletter editor. My first issue of September 2004 is out. Hoare Research Software offered to sponsor the newsletter in return for sending out their catalogue together with the newsletter. They covered printing and mailing cost, so that the society did not encounter any costs for this issue. Les Foulds agreed to run a puzzle corner.

The main job of the editor appears to be chasing contributions (for example I did not manage to get any response from the Wellington branch chair, so the Wellington News section had to remain empty). The actual preparation of the newsletter is less work than expected, a result of Fritz Raffensperger's excellent work on the layout (although, as a customary Latex user, it will forever remain a mystery to me why MS Word insists to make changes to some part of a document when I am working on some other) which I continue to use.

Let me also use the opportunity to call for contributions. Send me any OR related stuff that you come across that you think is interesting. I hope to get more stories like the Min and Max piece in the September issue. The December one will have an article by Val Belton, President of the UK Operational Research Society.

Matthias Ehrgott
Newsletter Editor
1 November 2004

Liaison Officer's Report 2004

Liaison Portfolio – what's been happening around the OR globe?

Complementary to local efforts to encourage more students to enter the OR discipline in NZ, the UK-based Operational Research Society (ORS) has launched a publicity campaign aimed at users of OR. In addition, the USA-based Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences, INFORMS, continues to promote excellent examples of OR through its publications such as OR/MS Today. These help us see our own efforts in the global context.

There is much that we can utilise from the ORS campaign, to promote the use of OR here in NZ. The full campaign “**Promoting operational research – the science of better**” can be found at www.ORChampions.co.uk, with plenty of examples that will help us sell OR here as well, but they are quick to point to the role we can all take. [Ed.: This is an “anglicized” version (Operational Research) of the INFORMS initiative that can be found at www.ORChampions.org.]

“There has never been a bigger opportunity for operational research to deliver premium value to the world’s organisations. But if the people who need OR don’t know what it is or understand its potential, it will remain the world’s most important invisible profession. The OR Society, in association with INFORMS, is launching a marketing and public relations campaign to raise the visibility of OR. But nothing can compare with the power you have to promote the discipline to your clients, managers and administrators. USE THAT POWER NOW.”

Here are some pointers from **Promoting OR: The Science of Better**

- Explain OR Better
It helps to have a brief definition. They suggest:
The discipline of applying advanced analytical methods to help make better decisions.
- Prove the Value
Use brief success stories, show the potential opportunities
- Sell OR better
They point out what we all know – that most OR people are not sales people!
We need to transcend ourselves and take advantage of sales techniques and marketing tools.
- Find Resources
Network with colleagues, regional societies and on-line forums.
We could add here as well, journals and other printed sources.

The recent column in OR/MS Today From the President’s Desk (the president being none other than Professor Michael Rothkopf, our ORSNZ Conference Keynote Speaker in 1999) exhorts us to continue to support INFORMS’ 11 publications, including journals Operations Research, Management Science and Interfaces and magazines such as OR/MS Today. Combined with the OR success stories on the ORS promotional website above, we have some powerful stories to share with the local OR user community.

Next year IFORS will be holding its 17th Triennial Conference in Hawaii. All members of the international OR community are invited and encouraged to submit papers. The abstracts deadline is on 15 December so anyone wanting to submit a paper should get busy now. Further details can be found at www.informs.org/conf/IFORS2005

Vicky Mabin
Liaison Officer
5 November, 2004