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New Zealand's main qualification system for the senior secondary school comprises the three levels of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). These qualifications were introduced progressively, Level 1 in 2002, Level 2 in 2003, and Level 3 in 2004. Additionally, the present system for awarding New Zealand Scholarship was first implemented in 2005. The NCEA system has several features that afford schools the opportunity to develop their own assessment programmes for a wide variety of courses in traditional, emerging, and cross-disciplinary subject areas.

However, the features that provide this flexibility also present challenges from the psychometric point of view. In their paper, *Statistical modelling and analysis of NCEA and New Zealand Scholarship assessments*, David Lillis and Michael Johnston describe a range of statistical modelling and analyses undertaken by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to meet these challenges.

Climate scientist Dr James Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, visited New Zealand in May 2011. As well as speaking about the scientific basis for the detection and attribution of changes in climate and potential impacts of climate change, Dr Hansen advocated the use of a tax and dividend scheme for reducing CO₂ emissions.

However, as Laura Revell points out in *Implementation of a tax and one hundred per cent dividend scheme as a means for New Zealand to address greenhouse gas emissions*, New Zealand aims to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets via an emissions trading scheme (ETS). Nevertheless, as Laura indicates, there is also value in discussing potential alternatives, such as that advocated by Dr Hansen, to explore whether such a scheme could be applicable in the New Zealand context.

The Association for Women in the Sciences recently published a snapshot of Women in Science in New Zealand¹.

This did not provide an in-depth analysis of trends, problems or achievements, but is intended to provide readers – whether involved in scientific research, management, or policy – with an overview of the current state-of-play.

In their article, *Gender equality in New Zealand science: A 2011 snapshot*, Belinda Bray and Emma Timewell provide a summary of some of the findings.

The AGM and Annual Awards

The Association's AGM was held on Wednesday 23 November in Wellington, with a report received from out-going president James Renwick. Shaun Hendy, Professor of Computational Physics at Victoria University of Wellington, was elected president, with Desmond Darby joining NZAS Council. Stepping down from Council was David Ackerley. The NZAS Financial Report for the year ending 31 July 2011 was accepted at the AGM. This along with the Auditor's Report and the President's is shown in this issue.

At the NZAS awards ceremony held on Thursday 10 November in Wellington, the Hon. Wayne Mapp, Minister of Science and Innovation, presented the Marsden Medal to Professor Geoffrey Jameson, of the Institute of Fundamental Sciences at Massey University, the Shorland Medal to Professor Harjinder Singh, co-Director of the Riddet Institute at Massey University, and the Research Medal to Associate Professor Alexei Drummond, of the Department of Computer Science at the University of Auckland. The Science Communicator Award was made to Dr Mark Quigley of the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Canterbury.

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¹See, <http://www.awis.org.nz/women-in-science-a-2011-snapshot/>