



AustMS Accreditation

The secretary has announced the accreditation of:

- Associate Professor John J. Shepherd of RMIT University as an Accredited Fellow (FAustMS).
- Mr Mitchell Wheat, of Winthrop, Western Australia, as a Graduate Member (GAustMS).

Report on the 51st Annual Meeting

The 51st Annual Meeting of the Society was held this year at La Trobe University from 25 to 28 September. There were more than 260 registrants, not including school teachers, of whom 60 were graduate students, making it the largest meeting of recent years. There were nine plenary lectures, 13 keynote talks in 14 special sessions and nearly 200 contributed talks, all in four days.

First of all, let me thank everyone who came to La Trobe for making it such a successful event. In particular, heads of department and post-graduate co-ordinators around the country responded very strongly to my requests and there was a real feeling of institutional participation at the meeting.

Now let me explain how we tried to make the meeting a little different this year, because some of these features were well-received. The program committee wanted to make the plenaries as accessible as possible and at the same time increase the coverage of topics to include more of the mathematical sciences. I think that this worked, and I'd like to thank all the plenary lecturers for their commitment and involvement, and especially Steve Wright and Mark Kisin for giving great talks to the teachers. In addition, the Society and ANZIAM came up with the ANZIAM Lecturer idea which Joe Monaghan executed so well.



Tony Chan (plenary speaker).

On the other hand, we reduced the number of special sessions, but mainly through combining smaller sessions from previous years such as differential geometry and

geometry and topology. We did this because feedback from previous years indicated that a large number of sessions produced undesirable clashes and limited the exposure of participants to talks of peripheral but potential interest. The feeling from this year's meeting was that this worked, although, for example, the sheer size of the algebra and combinatorics session created its own problems. The small size of this year's general session also indicates that fewer, broader special sessions excluded fewer participants. Our sincere thanks go to the session organisers for working so well with the organising committee and for bringing in so many of their colleagues as keynote speakers and contributors.



Morning tea on Tuesday.

Of course, the experience of the actual meeting has thrown up many more novel ideas along with some thoughts about how we might have done better.

It was unfortunate that we didn't have a female plenary lecturer; the selection process was a long and arduous one, and there were women on our initial list. This list was generated by the program committee and by the nominations of the session organisers and at any given time a number of invitations were current. By chance, at the moment that all the slots were full, every woman on our list had declined. Rather than formally require that there be at least one female plenary lecturer, I suggest that future conference directors keep a closer watch on the invitation process than I did. For future meetings I recommend that a public lecture be included in the program along with a history of mathematics plenary. I would also like to see a student or ECR on the program committee and a student event on the social program. I tried (and failed) to bring in the many mathematical scientists working in Australia's financial sector, but we can't give up on our non-academic colleagues. Finally, I hope that we can find a better date for the meeting so that we can extend it to five days and increase the attendance.

I am certainly not best placed to identify the highlights of the meeting because I went to so few session talks, but I can't pass up the opportunity to say how much I enjoyed Paul Baum's consummate lecture on K-theory. It was Wojciech Szymanski's suggestion to invite Paul and it certainly paid off. I also enjoyed Tony Chan's energetic performance, although it was probably more interesting to the more administratively burdened in the audience. And then there was the

dinner! I can only take limited credit for having a band — wasn't Diana Wolfe great? If you haven't worked it out, she was the Society's publicist for the event and stepped into the breach that very afternoon. I can't take any credit at all for Paul Baum's performance — what a character! I'm also pleased that the AustMS women's lunch went well — definitely worth making a fixture at future meetings.



(Left to right): Peter Hall, Tony Chan, Steve Wright, Joe Monaghan and Geoff Prince.
Tony, Steve and Joe were plenary lecturers.

Last of all, thanks to Astrid an Huef, Liz Billington, Peter Hall and Mathai Varghese for all their help and co-operation. Also to the Program Committee: John Banks, Robert Bartnik, Phil Broadbridge, Grant Cairns, Michael Cowling, Kerry Landman, Gus Lehrer, Hyam Rubinstein, Neil Trudinger and Mathai Varghese; to the Organising Committee: John Banks, Grant Cairns and Paul Pontikis and to the many people at La Trobe who did the La Trobe thing so well.

There is a photo gallery of the meeting at
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/mathstats/math/conferences/AMS2007/>

Geoff Prince

Conference Director, AustMS 2007

E-mail: G.Prince@latrobe.edu.au

Some items from the recent AustMS AGM and Council meetings

After a most successful 51st Annual AustMS Meeting at La Trobe University, with Director Associate Professor Geoff Prince (many thanks to Geoff and his team!), those Society members who were unable to attend the AGM on Thursday 27 September may be interested in the following items.

- (1) A Nominations and Publications Committee is being formed, in order to collect nominations for Council and various Committees, as well as to find new Editors for our journals when this is necessary.

A call for nominations to Council will appear in the Gazette early in 2008. Members are welcome to contact the Secretary at Secretary@austms.org.au at any time with suggestions, which will be passed on to the Nominations and Publications Committee.

- (2) Dr Alan Jones is stepping down as *Bulletin* Editor in February 2008, and will be replaced by Associate Professor Don Taylor, in the first instance to 31 December 2010. Alan's editorial secretary, Mrs Ros Clothier, is also retiring after 22 years' work for the *Bulletin*. We wish them both well!

Professor Michael Murray is also stepping down as Editor of the *Lecture Series*, and will be replaced by Professor Cheryl E. Praeger AM FAA. Many thanks to both!

- (3) As was reported in a previous *Gazette* (Volume 34(4), p.213), Cambridge University Press (CUP) will be publishing our three research journals from 2008. CUP kindly provided a reception for conference delegates on Wednesday 26 September at La Trobe.
- (4) The B.H. Neumann Student Prize this year was shared between Norman Do (University of Melbourne) and Neil Saunders (University of Sydney). Their talks were (respectively) entitled *A tourist's guide to intersection theory on moduli spaces of curves* and *The minimal permutation degree for a class of finite complex reflection groups*.

Also Tegan Morrison, Omar Rojas and Alison Thomson received honourable mentions for their conference talks.

Thanks are especially due to Dr Astrid an Huef who was Chair of the B.H. Neumann Student Prize Committee, and to all the Committee members.

- (5) The Society should have a new-look professional web page by early next year. In due course, for 2009, this will also allow members to pay dues online and to update their details online.
- (6) The new Council for the session 2007–2008 appears on the AustMS web pages at <http://www.austms.org.au/AMSInfo/Office/office.html>
- (7) The 2008 annual conference will be held from 8 to 12 December 2008, at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, joint with the New Zealand Mathematical Society, as the 7th Australia–New Zealand Mathematics Convention. We now have permission from the Registrar-General in the ACT (in which Territory the Society is incorporated) to hold our AGM during that same week in December, even though this falls outside the five-month period after the end of the Society's financial year. (See item 47(1) in our Constitution, <http://www.austms.org.au/AMSInfo/Const/amsconst.html>).

So your September 'common week' in 2008, for those of you whose institution keeps the late September/October common week, can be used for purposes other than the annual AustMS meeting!

AustMS Special Interest Meeting Grants: call for applications

The Australian Mathematical Society sponsors Special Interest Meetings on specialist topics at diverse geographical locations around Australia. This activity is seen as a means of generating a stronger professional profile for the Society within

the Australian mathematical community, and of stimulating better communication between mathematicians with similar interests who are scattered throughout the country.

These grants are intended for once-off meetings and not for regular meetings. Such meetings with a large student involvement are encouraged. If it is intended to hold regular meetings on a specific subject area, the organisers should consider forming a Special Interest Group of the Society. If there is widespread interest in a subject area, there is also the mechanism for forming a Division within the Society.

The rules governing the approval of grants are:

- (a) each Special Interest Meeting must be clearly advertised as an activity supported by the Australian Mathematical Society;
- (b) the organiser must be a member of the Society;
- (c) the meeting must be open to all members of the Society;
- (d) registration fees should be charged, with at least a 20% reduction for members of the Society. A further reduction should be made for members of the Society who pay the reduced rate subscription (i.e. research students, those not in full-time employment and retired members);
- (e) a financial statement must be submitted on completion of the Meeting;
- (f) any profits up to the value of the grant are to be returned to the Australian Mathematical Society;
- (g) on completion, a Meeting Report should be prepared, in a form suitable for publication in the Australian Mathematical Society *Gazette*, and sent to the Secretary;
- (h) a list of those attending and a copy of the conference Proceedings (if applicable) must be submitted to the Society;
- (i) only in exceptional circumstances will support be provided near the time of the Annual Conference for a Special Interest Meeting being held in another city.

In its consideration of applications, Council will take into account locations around Australia of the various mathematical meetings during the period in question. Preference will be given to Meetings of at least two days duration. The maximum allocation for any one Meeting will be $\$(1000 + 150n)$ where n is the number of AustMS members registered for and attending the meeting, and with an upper limit of about \$5000. A total of up to \$12 000 is available in 2008. There will be six-monthly calls for applications for Special Interest Meeting Grants, each to cover a period of 18 months commencing six months after consideration of applications. Please email Secretary@austms.org.au for an application form.

Elizabeth J. Billington
AustMS Secretary
E-mail: ejb@maths.uq.edu.au