



## AustMS bulletin board

### AustMS Accreditation

The secretary has announced the accreditation of:

Dr Anthony Sofo, Victoria University of Technology, as an Accredited Member (MAustMS).

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### MathMedia

#### *Brendan Nelson's case for more (male?) mathematics teachers*

Recently, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) and the Sex Discrimination Commissioner (SDC) Pru Goward brokered a deal concerning the offering of male-only scholarships, in a bid to tackle the problem of low numbers of male teachers in Catholic schools. As a result of this deal, the CEO can now offer special male-only scholarships as long as these are balanced by an equal number of scholarships for women.

On the ABC's Saturday AM programme of March the 20th, the Federal Minister for Education Brendan Nelson expressed his discontent with the deal between the CEO and the SDC.

[Brendan Nelson] *It has been told that in order to attract more men into teaching, it (the CEO) has to attract more women into teaching as well, and if you offer in this case, twelve male and twelve female scholarships, how on earth does that change the percentage of primary school teachers who are men?*

Of course, had the honourable member for Bradfield been reading his *Gazette*, he no doubt would have had little trouble in answering his own question. According to the CEO, in 2001 the total number of primary school teachers at Catholic schools in the ACT and New South Wales was 5202. Of these, 937 were male teachers. Making the assumption that the 24 scholarships on offer will attract men and women not currently considering a career in teaching, and assuming that without the new scholarships the 2001 figures are stationary, the total number of teachers is going to rise from 5202 to 5226, with 949 male teachers. (The *Gazette* admits to using a perhaps less than optimal lower bound on the number of states of Australia). The above figures correspond to the number of male teachers jumping from 18.0123% to 18.1592%. Perhaps not impressive, but the 12 female scholarships can hardly be blamed for the very modest change in percentage. Indeed without the 12 female scholarships 18.1592% would have read 18.201%. It thus seems the only fair criticism would be that 12 (or  $2 \times 12$ ) simply is too low a number to make a significant impact. May we suggest the need for more (male or female) mathematics teachers to explain this to the parties involved?