



Editorial

There is a modern commercial characterisation of mathematics in Australia, provided by the sponsored links of Google when searching for “mathematics” on Australian web pages. Topping the list are two educational software packages, “Mathemagic Computer Tutor” (<http://www.austmaths.com.au>) and “MathsPower Tutoring Software” (<http://www.mathspower.com.au>). The first one claims support of the Australian Institute of Mathematics AIMWA (<http://www.aimwa.net.au>). Reassuringly, AIMWA is an “Authorised Distributor for the Australian Institute of Mathematics Products”. The second company goes even one step further, and advertises as an Australian Government Endorsed Supplier. How comfortable are we with this characterisation of mathematics? Should a professional organisation such as the AustMS play an active role in accrediting and endorsing commercial mathematics products? Surely the AustMS should be able to give more trustworthy advice on professional mathematics products than the Australian Government?

There are other circumstances where there is an important practical need for a good description of mathematics, for example when we want to properly identify mathematics in teaching and research for assessment or funding purposes. One definition of mathematics research in Australia is the collection of RFCD codes we use when applying for grants or report to funding agencies. Many of us will not like this bureaucratic definition, but we need to realise that it is the one used by those that feed us. Do we believe that the current set of codes adequately reflects the ever changing research directions in Australia? With regards to mathematics education it is equally important to be aware of changing trends. In this *Gazette* John Crossley attempts to provide a framework for reviewing the present curriculum. Again one may ask whether or not the AustMS should raise its profile and play a more active role in defining mathematics in Australian research and education.

The current Review of Mathematical Sciences in Australia will give its own definition of mathematics in Australia, but it is unlikely one to look forward to. In **Math matters** you can read Tony Guttman’s submission to the Review and his views for the future of the mathematical sciences. In another contribution, Peter Hall takes a broader point of view, trying to measure the value of science, research and innovation in general. Peter shows a demonstrable strong positive impact on innovation of R&D expenditure in both public and private sectors. But, as Tony writes, an increase in R&D funding is not easily achieved in practice. Related to the issue of funding, in particular whether to allocate funds to mathematics or not, is Imi Bokor’s **Letter to the editors**, reacting on the recent retrenchments at University of New England.

Perhaps we should let mathematics speak for itself, and that is exactly what Norman Do does in **Mathellaneous**, showing us how to communicate efficiently with limited means, using stern logic as a helping hand. Applications of elementary probability theory are given by Michael Deakin who considers paradoxical wine/water solutions, while the mathematics of tsunamis is discussed by Maurice Breatly. This *Gazette*’s **Historical** is written by Joe Gani, telling the story about Pat Moran’s legacy in statistics at the ANU.