Editorial

Ever felt any anguish regarding the ARC? Now is perhaps not the best time to ask, as many of you will have just finalised grant proposals and are happy to take a break from funding considerations. Peter Bouwknegt, however, gives his answer in **Math matters**, arguing for a funding system with a simple application procedure for small grants. In the present convoluted system, with its many rules and subrules, writing and administering successful grant proposals has become an art in itself. "Gone are the days that only Math mattered. These days it is just not good enough to be an excellent mathematician" Peter writes.

On Friday 10 March 2006, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics of the University of Melbourne held an opening ceremony for the recently renamed Michell Theatre and the Nanson and Wilson computer laboratories. These have been renamed to honour the first professors of the department: Wilson (1854 – 1874), Nanson (1875 – 1922) and Michell (1923 – 1928). You can read about them, and the fourth mathematics professor Thomas Cherry, in the *Gazette's* new column **Historical** which starts with a contribution from Graeme Cohen. It will become clear from Graeme's article how strikingly little the politics of job application procedures in Australia have changed since 1928, when Melbourne had a chance to attract Norbert Wiener. He was rejected, reportedly due to a lack of "adequate qualifications as a general teacher and administrator". You can read the real reasons in Graeme's article, but clearly, in 1928, just like today, being an excellent mathematician was not always good enough ...

It is perhaps time then to improve your generic skills, and what better way than by following Tony Roberts' advice on improving your mathematical writing in **The style files**. With regards to actual mathematics, Norman Do's **Mathellaneous** has been a constant source of marvel and curiosity. This time, Norman has a go at some of the more unknown constants, and there is an interesting lesson to be learned about truth and reality. A theorem by Khintchine says that the geometric mean of the coefficients in a continued fraction expansion approaches the same limit for all but a measure zero set of real numbers. However, no such "generic" real number appears to be known explicitly.