

## 50th Annual Meeting of the Australian Mathematical Society Macquarie University 25 – 29 September 2006 William Chen

The landmark 50th Annual Meeting of the Australian Mathematical Society took place in the last week of September 2006 at Macquarie University, with roughly 260 participants. For this special event, the organizers decided quite early on to encourage participation by research students and drastically lowered their registration costs to a symbolic \$50. It was therefore particularly pleasing that among the participants, there were roughly 50 research students, and they contributed over 35 short presentations.

The plenary talks and a number of other main activities took place at Macquarie Theatre, while special session talks took place in 9 classrooms on the eastern end of the campus, in buildings E5A and E6A. Accommodation for participants was available at the Dunmore Lang College, the Travelodge, the Medina Serviced Apartments and the Stamford Grand North Ryde, all within walking distance of the main parts of the Macquarie University campus.

The Program Committee started work in the middle of 2005 and eventually organized 14 exciting plenary talks, covering a wide area of pure and applied mathematics. The plenary speakers and the titles of their talks are as follows:

- Pascal Auscher (Université de Paris-Sud) *On  $T(b)$  Theorems*
- Robert Bartnik (Monash University) *Static Metrics and the Recognition Problem*
- Michael Batanin (Macquarie University) *Configuration Spaces from Combinatorial, Topological and Categorical Perspectives*
- Frank De Hoog (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) *Industrial Mathematics – a CSIRO Perspective*
- Steven Evans (University of California, Berkeley) *Phylogeny, Real Trees, Metric Geometry, and Dirichlet Forms*
- Peter Forrester (University of Melbourne) *Random Matrices and Painlevé Transcendents*
- Andrew Hassell (Australian National University) *The Time-Dependent Schrödinger Equation*
- Adrian Lewis (Cornell University) *Eigenvalues and Optimization*
- Ngaiming Mok (University of Hong Kong) *Global Extension of Local Holomorphic Isometries with respect to the Bergman Metric*
- Christopher Skinner (Princeton University) *What Do We Know About the Birch–Swinnerton–Dyer (and Related) Conjectures?*
- Terence Tao (University of California, Los Angeles) *Long Arithmetic Progressions in the Primes*
- Katrin Tent (Universität Bielefeld) *Buildings and Algebraic Groups*
- Claire Voisin (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) *Hodge Theory, Kähler Geometry and Projective Geometry*
- Xu-Jia Wang (Australian National University) *The Monge–Ampère Equation and its Applications*

The Program Committee also chose fifteen areas for special sessions. Together with a general session, there were 188 shorter talks in 16 special sessions.

The Meeting opened on Monday morning with a brief welcome by Professor John Loxton, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of Macquarie University and Conference Director of the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Society in 1989 when it was last held at Macqua-



Award of the AustMS Medal to Andrew Mathas

rie University. The Meeting was then officially declared open by Professor Neil Trudinger, the first recipient of the Australian Mathematical Society Medal 25 years ago. The 2006 Australian Mathematical Society Medal was presented by Professor Michael Cowling, the President of the Society, to Dr Andrew Mathas of the University of Sydney. The 2006 George Szekeres Medal was presented by Dr Peter Szekeres to Professor Anthony Guttman of the University of Melbourne. Dr Mathas and Professor Guttman then gave short presentations.

A birthday cake for the Society was cut on Tuesday afternoon by Professor Bruce Craven and Professor Max Kelly who were both present at the First Annual Meeting of the Society in Sydney in 1957. This was followed by the presentation of the 2005 Australian Mathematical Society Medal to Professor Terence Tao of the University of California, Los Angeles. On Tuesday evening, following a champagne reception, the book on the history of Australian mathematics,



Award of the Szekeres Medal to Tony Guttman

written by Graeme Cohen and entitled *Counting Australia In*, was officially launched by Professor David Elliott, for many years the Secretary of the Society. At the end of the proceedings, Graeme Cohen was made an Honorary Life Member of the Society.

An Education Afternoon, sponsored by the International Centre of Excellence for Education in Mathematics, took place on Wednesday afternoon, with short talks on mathematics given by Steven Evans, Ngaiming Mok, Mary Myerscough and Terence Tao. A talk on mathematics education was delivered by Chris Wardlaw.

On Wednesday afternoon, there was also a Forum on the recent Review of Australian Mathematical Sciences led by Barry Hughes.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society took place on Thursday afternoon. Professor Peter Hall succeeded Professor Michael Cowling as the President of the Society. It was also confirmed that the 51st Annual Meeting of the Society would take place at La Trobe University, with Geoff Prince as Conference Director and Grant Cairns as Conference Treasurer.

The Conference Dinner took place on Thursday evening at the Stamford Grand North Ryde, not far from Macquarie University. Benjamin Wilson of the University of Sydney was awarded the Neumann Prize for the best talk given by a research student. Jan Thomas was made Honorary Life Member of the Society at the conclusion of her tenure as Executive Officer of the Society.

I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow members on the Program Committee – Peter Bouwknecht, Xuan Duong, Nalini Joshi, Amnon Neeman, Cheryl Praeger, Hyam Rubinstein, Ross Street and Rob Womersley – for their wonderful judgment and informed discussions that enabled us to arrive at such an exciting program of plenary talks, to all the special session organizers who went out of their way to organize such a rich supporting program, to my

wonderful team on the Organizing Committee – Xuan Duong, Andrzej Kozek, Chris Meaney, Ross Moore, Tanya Schmah, Ross Street and Rod Yager – for their amazing effort in ensuring the smooth running of the Meeting, to Victoria Benning who handled the mountain of registration and accommodation paperwork, and to my great friend Margaret, my wife Lily, my daughter Abby

and the many student helpers who organized the refreshments throughout the week as well as the champagne reception on the Tuesday evening.

Lastly, but definitely not least, I would like to thank all the participants, without whom the Meeting would not have taken place.