



Editorial

Welcome to issue two of the *Gazette* in 2008.

It's been an amazing couple of months for mathematics in Australia since writing the last editorial. Instrumental for this was the University of Southern Queensland's management announcement of cuts of its mathematics and statistics academics, as well as removal of the maths/stats major, to leave service-level courses only. A nine-year-old prodigy, who had just completed his first university-level course at USQ, was worried about his local university and contacted Terry Tao, Australia's first Fields medallist (see online supplement to *Gazette* **33**(3)). Terry responded not just to the boy, but also by contacting the media and by starting a petition to change USQ management's mind. Worldwide, more than 900 people signed the petition. While the outcome is still not clear, it appears that the publicity and submissions by concerned parties have led to changes in the original plan.

USQ is not the only university currently struggling to keep mathematics alive. In a letter to the editors, the situation of our colleagues at UNE is described. While 'battles' like this have been fought before, mathematical sciences in Australia are in deep crisis now as reported by the National Strategic Review of Mathematical Sciences Research 18 months ago, and more recently acknowledged by the Federal Government; see Peter Hall's President's Column in this issue. Let's hope that the new budget will be kind to the mathematical sciences.

In Maths Matters, previous *Gazette* editor, Jan de Gier, shares his thoughts on the challenges that young academics face to establish a career. The Style Files are taking a break, but Tony Roberts has promised at least one more in this series, for issue 3. When the Style Files are complete we will make them available as one PDF file on the *Gazette* website.

In the Communications section, you will find a paper on the MVT by John Koliha and his student Peng Zhang — a follow-up on their previous paper 'Rolle to Cauchy'. Ricardo Simeoni writes about noble gas magic numbers and Kevin Burray describes the doctoral programs at Oxford University.

The winner of the \$50 book voucher for Puzzle Corner 5 is Konrad Pilch from the University of Adelaide — congratulations! And in this issue we have not only Norman Do's next Puzzle Corner, but also his B.H. Neumann Prize winning paper on moduli spaces, and technical papers by Mike Hirschhorn, Gerry Myerson, and Joe Gani and Randall Swift.

Enjoy!

Birgit and Eileen