



AMSI News

Philip Broadbridge*

Valediction

In recent times, by promises of support, AMSI has helped to attract several significant international congresses to Australia. Members of the Society are encouraged to attend the first Congress of the Pacific Rim Mathematical Association, to be hosted at the University of New South Wales 6–10 July 2009 and the 18th World Congress of the International Association for Mathematics and Computers in Simulation (IMACS, to be held in Cairns 12–17 July 2009, in conjunction with MODSIM09. See websites <http://www.mssanz.org.au/modsim09/> and <http://www.primath.org/prima2009/>. The regular conference Frontiers of Fundamental and Computational Physics will be hosted in Australia for the first time, at the University of Western Australia 24–26 November 2009. The International Society for Operations Research will host its congress in Australia for the first time, in 2011. Other notable international congresses held in recent times include the meeting of the International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, Adelaide, 2008 and the International Conference of General Relativity and Gravitation, Sydney, 2007.

On 20 November, Minister for Innovation, Industry Science and Research Senator Kim Carr announced that AMSI was the winner of the 2008 National Innovation Award for Science Innovation, managed by Fast Thinking Magazine and Open Universities Australia. Jan Thomas and I attended a presentation dinner on 19 November at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum. We are grateful to the sponsor Fujii Xerox.

In his opening remarks, chairman of the judging committee Professor Ron Johnston of the University of Sydney's Innovation Centre said that a key component of innovation was to stimulate new collaborators to work together. AMSI has done that by forging new multi-institutional teams to work together on a range of practical problems such as statistical taste perception analysis as a confectionary marketing tool, mathematical consistency of prudential regulation risk assessment systems and furniture placement optimisation for architects. CEO of Open Universities Australia Stuart Hamilton had earlier said that it was not an easy task to arrange for competing universities to work together. With a membership of 29 universities, CSIRO, ABS and Australian Mathematics Trust, AMSI has been able to form teams from a large pool of mathematical expertise that is not normally available from a single source.

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The award was based also on the breadth of AMSI's influence in education, for example running a regular successful summer school to improve the education experience of several national cohorts of honours students, setting up an Access Grid Room network to support a fledgling program of shared honours courses, and improving school mathematics materials available in all states. Other speakers at the Awards Dinner included Greg Combet, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement Dr Geoff Garrett, and CEO of CSIRO and ABC Science journalist Robyn Williams.

I have resigned to take up a continuing position at La Trobe University, beginning as Head of the School of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences. For one semester, I will be working one day per week at AMSI so a valediction may be premature. In any case, while I have the opportunity, I wish to thank the Board and my work colleagues and advisory committees for making my time at AMSI so rewarding. Thanks to my many colleagues in the mathematical science profession for supporting AMSI.

I have enjoyed many aspects of my work. I encourage those of you with management experience to consider the AMSI director's position when it is advertised.



Director of AMSI since 2005, Phil Broadbridge was previously a professor of applied mathematics for 14 years, including a total of eight years as department chair at University of Wollongong and at University of Delaware.

His PhD was in mathematical physics (University of Adelaide). He has an unusually broad range of research interests, including mathematical physics, applied nonlinear partial differential equations, hydrology, heat and mass transport and population genetics. He has published two books and 100 refereed papers, including one with over 150 ISI citations. He is a member of the editorial boards of four journals and one book series.