

## Two Gold Medals at IMO in Bremen

Peter Taylor\*

The Australian team at the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) in Bremen, Germany, has won two Gold medals for just the second time.

Andrew Elvey Price, of Brunswick Secondary College, Melbourne, matched the world's best students to essentially solve all six problems and win a Gold Medal, adding to a Silver won in 2008. He was placed overall in 10th position. Sampson Wong, of James Ruse Agricultural High School in Sydney also won a Gold Medal, adding to his Bronze from last year.

Aaron Chong, of Doncaster Secondary College in Melbourne, won a Silver Medal, in fact only two points off a third Gold Medal for the team, while Stacey Law, also of James Ruse, and Alfred Liang, of Trinity Grammar School in Melbourne, won Bronze Medals. Stacey's Bronze Medal was only two points short of Silver. Dana Ma, of Melbourne Girls Grammar School, was ill on day two and not able to add to a sound score on day one, but earned an Honourable Mention.

The IMO was the 50th and to celebrate, many distinguished mathematicians, including former IMO Gold Medallists, attended. These included Australian Terry Tao, Gold Medallist in 1988 and the only student to ever win an IMO Gold Medal before turning 13. Terry holds a Fields Medal, considered the mathematics equivalent of the Nobel Prize.



From left: Dana, Stacey, Andrew, Aaron, Terry, Alfred and Sampson.

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Sampson and Andrew display their Gold Medals after the Closing Ceremony in Bremen.

Team Leader was Dr Angelo Di Pasquale of the University of Melbourne and Deputy Leader Mr Ivan Guo, from the University of New South Wales.

Australia was placed 23rd of a record 104 countries, with China in first position and Japan in second (see <http://www.amt.edu.au/imo2009.html> for more country placings).

A further highlight was that one of the problems, Problem 1, was composed by an Australian, Ross Atkins, an IMO Bronze Medallist from 2003.

Australia's participation is administered by the Australian Mathematics Trust, a not-for-profit organisation based at the University of Canberra. These students have reached a very high standard after years of training largely by volunteers, particularly former Olympians, led by Angelo Di Pasquale and Ivan Guo. They are first identified in the Australian Mathematics Competition, which is participated in by several hundreds of thousands of students of all abilities and tests basic skills as acquired at school and also to test the ability to use the mathematics they know in different contexts. Students then go on to participate in a range of activities, based in schools with teacher supervision through to more advanced work. As a result tens of thousands of students are better prepared for University study and later employment, with the IMO team the tip of the iceberg.

Australia's participation at the UNESCO sanctioned (as with other Science Olympiads) IMO is sponsored by the Australian Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, whose support enables access to the program for tens of thousands of students, and the two professional societies, the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the Australian Mathematical Society.