



AMSI News

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As part of AMSI's tenth anniversary celebrations, the AMSI Board has introduced the AMSI Medal for Distinguished Service. This medal will be awarded to those who have demonstrated both sustained and exceptional service to AMSI and leadership in one or more of AMSI's portfolio areas of research and higher education, school education and industry engagement, or in advocacy for the broad discipline.

The inaugural medallists, along with their citations¹, are:

Jim Lewis

As the Foundation Chairman of the Board, Jim Lewis guided AMSI through its first 10 years with the vigour and expertise that comes only from experience. A BHP executive, a successful businessman, a chemical engineer and a distinguished university lecturer, Jim was exactly the sort of over-achiever that AMSI's architects wanted as independent chair of the board. Jim relentlessly pursued AMSI interests, providing advice and inspiration to AMSI's staff and providing the business orientation that led to our significant successes with government and industry.

To quote from the AMSI Review report:

AMSI was fortunate to attract the services of Jim Lewis, a former BHP executive, as Chair of its Board. Jim has been inspirational in his unflagging efforts on behalf of AMSI. A brief summary of his contributions include maintaining AMSI's relationship with the University of Melbourne, appointing and mentoring a series of AMSI Directors, negotiating complex contracts such as BlueScope Steel's involvement in the ICE-EM outreach program, taking a hands-on leadership role when there was no director and direct involvement in negotiations to bring significant funding to AMSI. The Panel salutes this massive contribution without which AMSI's survival would have been jeopardised.

Jim is held in the highest esteem and affection by AMSI's staff, past and present.

Garth Gaudry

AMSI and ICE-EM (International Centre of Excellence for Education in Mathematics) owe much to Garth and to the contribution that he made over the five years from 2003 to 2007. Garth, with Tony Guttman and Jan Thomas, drove the

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¹These citations have been compiled from a number of sources.

vision and commitment to establish AMSI. As foundation director Garth put in place the basic structure upon which AMSI has been built. His most significant achievement was obtaining and leading the ICE-EM grant in 2004. This grant funded not only AMSI's remarkably successful school education program but also many innovations in research and higher education including AMSI's flagship programs and our Access Grid network. ICE-EM's impact cannot be underestimated. Garth moved to the position of Director of ICE-EM to oversee the major initiative to improve mathematics education, especially in schools. Garth recruited first-class staff and a team of authors to work with him on producing a remarkable series of texts. These texts, now in their second edition and marketed by CUP, have had a seminal influence on school mathematics education in Australia. ICE-EM's work has established AMSI as an influential policy maker and a provider of school educational materials second to none.

Garth's vision and strength of character continue to be an inspiration to AMSI members and staff.

Jan Thomas

Jan Thomas was instrumental to the establishment of AMSI.

In 2001, she saw an opportunity to set up a national centre in the mathematical sciences with a \$1 million grant provided by the Victorian Government's Science, Technology and Innovation Program. This specialist centre was a recommendation of the 1995 report *Mathematical Sciences: Adding to Australia*, a review to which she had made important contributions. Jan and Tony Guttmann co-wrote the grant application and coordinated the support of the foundation members of AMSI, with a common purpose to turn around the decreasing supply of mathematics teachers and subsequent loss of students and staff across university schools of mathematics. The grant application was successful and AMSI was established in 2002 with a mission to 'promote and strengthen understanding and use of the mathematical sciences in Australia's culture, science and economy'.

As the Executive Officer for AMSI until her retirement in 2011, Jan was the government and member liaison person at AMSI, continually pushing the message of the importance of quality mathematics education to Australia's national interest, through her participation in reviews and submissions. Her deep knowledge of the mathematics education landscape spanning over 20 years, her contributions to gathering the necessary data to reinforce subjective observations of the health of the discipline, and her active involvement in pursuit of positive change has been an asset to the advancement of mathematics education.

Jan has worked closely with all the AMSI Directors and the Board. She has extensive experience in dealing with politicians, the press and bureaucrats, and has brought this to bear to AMSI's considerable benefit. She has been deeply involved in almost all aspects of AMSI's activities and has been tireless in communicating with our members. Occupying an honorary position at AMSI, Jan continues to support AMSI with her sound advice.

Jan Thomas is an iconic figure in Australian mathematics. Few individuals in the last 20 years have had such an impact on the discipline.

Tony Guttmann

Tony Guttmann was one of the original architects of AMSI and together with Jan Thomas wrote the original expression of interest proposal to the Victorian Government for a Strategic Technology Initiative grant in 2001. This was followed by the preparation of the full business plan and the final success of the application. This process involved very significant negotiation with the future Joint Venture Partners in order to produce a proposal of truly national benefit. Tony followed this with the negotiation and project management of the University of Melbourne's fit out of the AMSI offices. He also negotiated the provision of the University's legal and administrative services in setting up AMSI. During this period Tony was AMSI's interim director and was heavily involved in establishing AMSI's board. He can take the credit, along with Jan, for the many aspects of the formation of AMSI.

Tony followed this by becoming the Director of the Centre of Excellence for Mathematics and Statistics of Complex Systems (MASCOS) and leading its long formal partnership with AMSI. As MASCOS Director he has been an active AMSI board member ever since and has given indispensable advice to successive AMSI Directors. Recently he has been heavily involved in the planning phase of the proposed national research institute in the mathematical sciences.

Peter Hall

Peter Hall was instrumental to the establishment and success of AMSI's scientific program.

In 2003, the first full year of AMSI's operation, Peter Hall, as one of Australia's most respected and active mathematical scientists, accepted the position of chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee. This is an advisory committee to the AMSI Board whose membership comprises eminent mathematicians and statisticians of international repute and includes Professor Terry Tao, Australia's only Fields medallist.

For the next seven years Peter was architect and custodian of AMSI's scientific program. This program annually delivers between 15 and 20 workshops in mathematics, statistics and cognate disciplines around Australia. It has been instrumental in bringing hundreds of scientists to Australia from the world's strongest research communities. Peter worked tirelessly with workshop organisers to realise their vision, mentoring them on their applications and the execution of their meetings. His remarkable work ethic and deep experience along with the expert advice of the members of the committee has had a considerable impact on our research output and the grant success of our discipline over the last 10 years. The program itself has developed a strong sense of national identity amongst the researchers and research students at AMSI's 30-odd member institutions.

All the AMSI Directors have relied heavily on Peter for policy advice in pursuing the Institute's mission. He can quite rightly take considerable credit for our success.

Of course, his service to the discipline extends far beyond his work at AMSI. His ability to be both one of our most respected and prolific scientists and a servant to his discipline commands the respect of everyone who knows him.

Peter Taylor (Australian Mathematics Trust)

Peter Taylor chaired the AMSI Education Advisory Committee (EAC) from its inception and was deeply involved in the planning and execution of the seminal workshops 'Teacher Content Knowledge and Materials for Schools'. Work in the following years, including the first edition of the ICE-EM Mathematics books, was based on these early initiatives. Peter guided this work with an awareness of its importance and an ability to encourage others to become involved.

He has overseen AMSI's response to the Australian Curriculum; the creation of the teacher resource modules; the launch of the 'Maths: Make your career count' campaign; the collaboration with CSIRO to produce 'Maths by Email'; the support of the 'Mathematicians in Schools' program; and of course the new edition of the ICE-EM Mathematics series of textbooks. Peter has given wonderful support to the staff of AMSI and has made a major contribution to each of the projects undertaken during his chairing of the EAC.

Peter has been a great friend to AMSI and has supported Garth Gaudry, Phil Broadbridge and Geoff Prince each in their turn as AMSI Director. Many AMSI staff, particularly Janine McIntosh and Michael Evans, have been fortunate to work with Peter in his time as Chair of the EAC.

The Australian mathematical sciences community owes a considerable debt of gratitude to these far-sighted and dedicated individuals. Without them AMSI would not have reached its tenth anniversary or its track record of achievement and influence.



I was a Monash undergraduate and took out a La Trobe PhD in 1981 in geometric mechanics and Lie groups. This was followed by a postdoc at the Institute for Advanced Study in Dublin. I've enjoyed teaching at RMIT, UNE and La Trobe. My research interests lie mainly in differential equations, differential geometry and the calculus of variations. I'm a proud Fellow of the Society, currently a Council and Steering Committee Member. I became AMSI director in September 2009.