

56th Annual Meeting of the Australian Mathematical Society

David Yost*

The 56th Annual Meeting of the Australian Mathematical Society was hosted by the School of Science, Information Technology and Engineering of the University of Ballarat from September 24 to 27, 2012. In all, 227 mathematicians from near and far descended on the University's main campus at Mt Helen for a full four-day program covering a wide range of topics in pure and applied mathematics.

The meeting was again sandwiched between two independently organised workshops. It was preceded by the Early Career Workshop, this time held at the Novotel Resort in Creswick on the weekend 22–23 September. Useful career advice was presented by Sean Carmody from Westpac, Arun Ram from the University of Melbourne and Jacqui Ramagge from the University of Wollongong. Immediately after the end of the conference was another ALTC Professional Development Workshop, held at Mt Helen 27–28 September, and whose report follows this one.

The conference proper began off campus on the Sunday evening with a registration desk and welcome reception at the Mercure Hotel. The official opening took place on Monday morning with Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Frank Stagnitti welcoming participants, and saying a few words about the University of Ballarat's history of mathematics research and teaching. This was followed by presentation of the Australian Mathematical Society medal to Stephen Keith (in absentia) and Anthony Henderson, and the George Szekeres medal to Ross Street and Neil Trudinger, with short talks by each of them. A report on the medal winners, with their citations, appeared in the last issue of the *Gazette*.

The 11 plenary lectures given by internationally renowned mathematicians were broadly accessible, and provided an opportunity for all participants to learn of developments outside their own specializations. The speakers included four overseas visitors (Assaf Naor, Narutaka Ozawa, Michel Brion and Henning Haahr Andersen) and some of Australia's best (Mary Myerscough, Sid Morris, Fedor Sukochev, Neil Trudinger, Kate Smith-Miles, Scott Morrison and Aidan Sims).

The special sessions are a major reason people keep coming back to these meetings, providing everyone an opportunity to interact with mathematicians in their own speciality. There were 18 in all this time, with particularly large sessions in Mathematical Physics, Geometry & Topology, and Group Actions.

The meeting is always an important opportunity for students to present their work, with 50 short talks by PhD students altogether. The \$1000 Neumann prize for the

*School of Science, Information Technology and Engineering, University of Ballarat, PO Box 663, Ballarat, VIC 3353. Email: d.yost@ballarat.edu.au

best student talk was awarded to Imam Tashdid ul Alam from ANU for his talk entitled ‘The Interplay between Discrete Holomorphicity and Integrability in the Z_N model’.



Peter Taylor (left) and Imam Tashdid ul Alam (right)

Following a recent tradition, there was again an Education Afternoon on the Tuesday, aimed at undergraduates, teachers, and prospective mathematics teachers. This public event included two general interest talks, and a panel discussion on primary mathematics. It was attended not only by conference registrants, but also a few dozen secondary school teachers and students. The University of Ballarat’s annual Alexander Rubinov Memorial Lecture was incorporated into this event, thus serving as the traditional Public Lecture of the AustMS Annual Meeting. Presented by Manfred Lenzen, the topic ‘Think global— act local: a new quantitative view on how our actions affect the environment worldwide’ provided a serendipitous introduction to the general theme of the Mathematics of Planet Earth. It can be accessed at <http://www.ballarat.edu.au/schools/school-of-science-and-technology/research/centre-for-applied-informatics-and-optimization-ciao/rubinov-lecture-series>.

Other social events at the conference included a Women’s Lunch on the Monday, and the Conference Dinner on the Wednesday evening. Entertainment at the dinner was provided by the mathematician/comedian Simon Pampena.

The next annual meeting is of course being hosted by the University of Sydney. I wish Laurentiu Paunescu and his team all the best with the organisation thereof.