



# Editorial

David and I welcome you to the July issue of the *Gazette*. The period since the last issue has been an eventful one. The Federal Budget impacted on science and mathematics. According to the Australian Academy of Science:

The Australian Government's 2015 Budget in May brought relief from the deep cuts to science funding of the previous two budgets. Some areas received a funding boost while others experienced moderate cuts (cuts which will be delayed in most cases until 2016–17), with the result being what many viewed as a 'status-quo' outcome for science. Significant announcements made during the budget include:

- two years continued funding for the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS)
  - a further cut to support for university research block grants in the out-years (commencing in 2016–17)
  - additional funding for the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)
  - a reduction in funding for the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) program
- continued development of the Medical Research Future Fund, with an expectation of significant funding for research over the next four years.

Following the budget, the Government also committed to a round of 50 Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellowships to be offered in July 2015, and full rounds of 100 Fellowships to follow conditional on passage of the higher education reforms.

John Forbes Nash Jr. and Louis Nirenberg received the Abel Prize from the Norwegian King, His Majesty King Harald V, at an award ceremony at the University Aula in Oslo on 19 May 2015 'for striking and seminal contributions to the theory of nonlinear partial differential equations and its applications to geometric analysis.' A mere four days later John Nash and his wife Alicia died in a car accident in New Jersey. John Nash shared a Nobel Prize for Economics in 1994. His struggles with his illness and his recovery became the basis for Sylvia Nasar's biography, *A Beautiful Mind*, as well as a film of the same name. This film certainly brought to the attention of the public, the importance and relevance of mathematics.

Talking about bringing to the attention of the public the importance and relevance of mathematics, I must mention the AMSI article by Janine McIntosh in this issue in which she reports (as reported in our last issue) that AMSI has secured funding from the BHP Billiton Foundation to engage 13 new staff to work on a program designed to entice more girls and young women into mathematics. This is a wonderful achievement by AMSI in this vitally important area and we wish

the program great success. I refer readers also to the annual ‘Girls Do the Maths’ workshop item in News.

And while on wonderful achievements, we were delighted that in the Queen’s Birthday Honours, Emeritus Professor Peter Taylor was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to education, and to youth, particularly through the development of mathematical competitions and challenges for students, as an academic, and to professional learning associations.

On 25 May 2015 the Australian Academy of Science announced the election of 21 new Fellows for their outstanding contributions to science and scientific research. Amongst them were three practitioners of mathematics. Our congratulations go to Professor Peter Bartlett FAA (Queensland University of Technology), Professor Geoffrey McLachlan FAA (The University of Queensland) and Professor Malcolm Sambridge FAA (Australian National University).

Three members of the Society have recently been awarded Laureate Fellowships by the Australian Research Council. They are: Professor Ben Andrews (Australian National University), Professor Kerrie Mengersen (Queensland University of Technology) and Professor Trevor McDougall (University of New South Wales).

One of the features of each issue of the *Gazette* in recent years has been Puzzle Corner prepared so brilliantly by Ivan Guo. Ivan has indicated that he would like to step down from this role, or at least have a break, from the end of 2015. So we seek expressions of interest from anyone interested in preparing Puzzle Corner from 2016. As Ivan is a very hard act to follow, we would certainly be happy to have expressions of interest from a group of people who would like jointly to prepare Puzzle Corner for 2016 issues of the *Gazette*.

This year, in the International Mathematics Olympiad, Australia achieved its highest-ever placing of 6th (ahead of Russia, Canada, Singapore, France, UK, Germany . . .), and the team members won two gold medals and four silver medals. Congratulations to the team. For more details, see [http://www.imo-official.org/year\\_country\\_r.aspx?year=2015](http://www.imo-official.org/year_country_r.aspx?year=2015).

In his President’s Column, Tim Marchant observes “Currently the AustMS publishes three journals, with the support of Cambridge University Press. These comprise the Bulletin and the Journal of the AustMS, which focus on pure mathematics and the ANZIAM Journal, which has an applied focus. Journals via editorial policy and their editorial panels have the opportunity to influence research directions, both in Australia and overseas.” Tim goes on to say “I believe there is capacity within the Society to support the launch of an additional journal. I encourage AustMS members to discuss the idea of forming a new journal and what disciplinary focus would be most suitable.” It is certainly timely for Tim to raise this issue as the Society is increasing the number of its Divisions and Special Interest Groups.

In the News section in this issue we read about the desire of Deb King and Joann Cattlin to build on the growing interest in mathematics education to form a new Special Interest Group of AustMS on Mathematics Education. If you would like to nominate to join this SIG, please contact Joann at [joann.cattlin@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:joann.cattlin@unimelb.edu.au).

Nalini Joshi, Chair of the National Committee for Mathematical Sciences (NCMS), in this issue says there is a nationwide obsession with the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and it appears that the flame of mathematics education may be flickering because of our fixation on maximising every student's ATAR. She asks what we can do to manage this distorting influence.

This issue contains reports on several conferences and workshops supported by the AustMS and/or AMSI. There is also an article by Professor Philip Broadbridge on the recent establishment of the Australian Branch of Institute of Mathematics for Industry, Kyushu University.

Finally I mention that we include in this issue four interesting book reviews.

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Sid Morris retired after 40 years as an academic. He received BSc (Hons) from UQ in 1969 and PhD from Flinders in 1970. He held positions of Professor, Department Head, Dean, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, CAO and CEO. He was employed by the universities: Adelaide, Ballarat, Flinders, Florida, La Trobe, UNE, UNSW, UQ, UniSA, Tel-Aviv, Tulane, Wales, and Wollongong. He was Editor of *Bull. AustMS* and *J. Research and Practice in IT*, and founding Editor-in-Chief of *AustMS Lecture Series*. He was on the Council of AustMS for 20 years and its Vice-President. He received the Lester R. Ford Award from the Math. Assoc. America. He has published 150 journal papers and 4 books for undergrads, postgrads and researchers, plus an online book, supplemented by YouTube and Youku videos, and translated into 6 languages. The third edition of the 900-page book *The Structure of Compact Groups* by Karl H. Hofmann and Sid was published in 2013 by Water De Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston.