



President's Column

Tim Marchant*

Most members will be aware of the continuing push by the Federal Government to deregulate university tuition fees for domestic students and the blocking of these measures in the Australian Senate. This policy stalemate is causing great uncertainty in the university sector with adverse consequences for teaching and research in the Mathematical Sciences. Many universities have implemented hiring freezes or cutbacks and programs such as the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) and the ARC Future Fellows (FT) are threatened. Recently NCRIS has received a year's funding reprieve but the fate of the FT scheme is unknown. The FT scheme supports mid-career researchers by funding them for four years of research intensive activity. In the six years the FT scheme has been operational about fifty mathematicians have been awarded Future Fellowships and the scheme has been vital in supporting the careers of some of our most promising members. Hence I believe that it critical that the FT scheme continues and that a bipartisan approach is needed, from our politicians, in developing a sustainable and appropriate funding model for our university sector.

International research and teaching collaborations are very important to Australia for many diverse reasons, such as research visibility, international student commencements and engagement with the growing economies of Asia. Hence I was pleased to attend the recent launch of the LaTrobe University branch of the Kyushu University Institute of Mathematics for Industry. This partnership between LaTrobe and Kyushu University, located in the south of Japan, provides a great opportunity for Australian mathematicians to engage with one of the strongest industrial economies in Asia and home to many of the world's leading high technology companies. The Institute will make joint academic appointments, who will work both at Latrobe and Kyushu Universities.

The Australia-Germany Research Cooperation Scheme has recently been launched by Universities Australia (UA) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The scheme will support the travel costs for joint research projects between academics based at Australian and German universities. As such the scheme is highly suitable for mathematicians as funding for visits is often the key ingredient to facilitating our joint research activities. Previously, the G8 and ATN universities had links with DAAD but now nearly all Australian university-based researchers can participate. DAAD is committing one million Euros per annum to the program, which is being matched by \$1.4 million dollars from Australian universities.

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As part of a campaign to boost AustMS membership I will soon be writing to all academics who are employed in Australian mathematics departments, but who are not Society members. I will detail the benefits of membership and encourage them to join the Society and I ask current members to reinforce these messages, in their discussions with new appointments in their workplaces.



Tim Marchant received his Doctorate from Adelaide University in 1989. After graduation he joined Wollongong University where he is currently Dean of Research and Professor of Applied Mathematics. His research areas include nonlinear optics, nonlinear waves and combustion theory. Tim is a Fellow of the Australian Mathematical Society, a Member of the Endeavour Awards selection panel and on the editorial board of *Applied Mathematical Modelling*. His other interests include playing bridge and learning Mandarin.