



Editorial

David and I welcome you to the September issue of the *Gazette* of the Australian Mathematical Society.

I have just returned from IECMSA 2016, the 5th International Eurasian Conference on Mathematical Sciences and Applications, in Belgrade, Serbia, where I was honoured to deliver a plenary address. Despite the location, the conference is supported mainly by Turkish universities and a good proportion of the participants are Turkish. The two languages of the conference are Turkish and English. Because of the attempted coup in Turkey, this was a difficult time to have a Turkish conference as most academics were not permitted to leave Turkey. Rarely today does politics impact in this way on mathematics conferences. Of course in the days of the Soviet Union, travel restrictions were the norm. Notwithstanding the constraints, the conference was warm and friendly and several participants gave their papers from Turkey using Skype or an equivalent. And I enjoyed the conference very much. I hope other Australian mathematicians will keep in contact with their colleagues in Turkey. I know they appreciate these contacts greatly. One pleasant surprise at this conference was the number of research papers presented related to the work of our own Alwyn (Horrie) Horadam on Fibonacci numbers. I had the great pleasure to get to know him during my time at the University of New England. Horrie died in July this year and an obituary will appear in a future issue of the *Gazette*.

In this issue we have an obituary of John Robert Blake who did his PhD under the supervision of Sir James Lighthill at Cambridge, was appointed by Joe Gani to establish an applied and computational mathematics group at CSIRO, and in 1980 took up the Chair of Mathematics at the University of Wollongong. He served as Secretary and Chair of ANZIAM before becoming Head of Department and then Dean of Science at the University of Birmingham.

A future issue of the *Gazette* will have obituaries for two leaders of mathematics in Australia: Jonathan Borwein and Joe Gani.

In his President's Column, Tim Marchant reminds us that

The 60th annual AustMS Meeting to be held in Canberra 5–8 December is part of the MathsFest initiative where the meeting is sandwiched between two major mathematical workshops, creating three weeks of events in Canberra. A joint initiative of AMSI and the AustMS, the

idea is to create stronger international interest in the AustMS conference, raising the number of overseas participants, whose primary interest may be one of the specialist workshops.

Tim also addresses the question: Is the lecture becoming an outdated teaching method? We are all aware that after the first couple of weeks, attendance at lectures frequently drops below 30%.

In NCMS News, Peter Forrester notes that one of the three key priorities of the Decadal Plan is that Australian universities should plan for the staged reintroduction of at least Year 12 intermediate mathematics subjects as prerequisites for all Bachelor programs in Science, Engineering and Commerce. At almost the same time of the release of the Decadal Plan, the University of Sydney announced that by 2019 no fewer than 62 degrees will indeed require this prerequisite.

In this issue Jan de Gier writes about the Mathematical Research Institute MATRIX. In the short time since it began operations it has run four successful programs involving mathematicians from several Australian universities. In my opinion, MATRIX is a good first step and is to be encouraged and supported.

Graeme Wake and Seumas McCroskery describe in this issue the Mathematics-in-Industry NZ Study Group 2016 held at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand from 4 July to 8 July 2016. More than 100 mathematicians, a number of whom were postgraduate students, participated.

Geoff Prince, AMSI Director begins his report here as follows:

We have a remarkable series of events coming up over the summer months and I urge *Gazette* readers to take part. The quality of our summer events is legendary and we have Commonwealth co-funding for another four years.

He then discusses BioInfoSummer 2016, MathsFest 2016, AMSI Summer School 2017, Vacation Research Scholarships 2016–17 & AMSI Connect. There can be no doubt that AMSI has been very successful and is a vitally important part of the Australian mathematical scene and provides leadership in a number of areas.

In our News section, we are delighted to report that David Hunt was presented with a Paul Erdős Award from the World Federation of National Mathematics Competitions at a ceremony in Hamburg on 30 July 2016, during the 13th International Congress of Mathematics Education (ICME13). The Award recognises contributions of mathematicians who have played a significant role in the development of mathematical challenges at the national or international level and which have been a stimulus for the enrichment of mathematics learning. We are similarly delighted to note that Associate Professor James McCaw of the University of Melbourne is part of a team led by Professor Leann Tilley that has just won the 2016 Eureka Prize for Infectious Disease Research. Malaria kills nearly half a million children each year, and the emergence of resistance to the first-line antimalarial drug, artemisinin, is looming as a major global health crisis. Professor Tilley and

her team have made a number of key scientific discoveries leading to insights into how artemisinin resistance may be overcome. This is one example of the increasing interaction between biology and mathematics.

Our book review in this issue is by Moninya Roughan of the book *Success Strategies from Women in STEM: A Portable Mentor*, edited by Peggy A. Pritchard and Christine S. Grant.

The News section contains news from each Australian university about awards, promotions and appointments. It also contains a useful list of forthcoming conferences.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Gazette*.

Sid Morris, Adjunct Professor, La Trobe University;
Emeritus Professor, Federation University Australia.
Email: morris.sidney@gmail.com



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 has been 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 160 journal papers and 4 books for undergrads, postgrads and researchers, plus an online book, translated into 8 languages and supplemented by YouTube videos and a Facebook group of 5,000+ members. The third edition of his 900-page book *The Structure of Compact Groups* with Karl H. Hofmann was published in 2013. In 2016 he received ordination as a Rabbi and also became a grandfather.