



AMSI News

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In the recent report to the Group of Eight (Go8) by Professor Gavin Brown: *Review of Education in Mathematics, Data Science and Quantitative Disciplines*, the fifth recommendation is that:

The Go8 should encourage research networking within Australia, not confined to its own universities. One specific proposal is that AMSI should be invited to organise research programs of six months or a year on specific topics with international visitors. The Go8 by contributing \$10K each annually could, in sequence, second a program leader on sabbatical. Other costs could be sourced from research agencies and philanthropic organisations. Comment: The 'equivalent' of AMSI in the United States or United Kingdom is funded to provide such research infrastructure. This proposal demonstrates pre-emptive self-help.

This very welcome proposal is strengthened by the University of Western Australia's decision to become a full member of AMSI, meaning that all the Go8 universities are now full members (along with La Trobe and RMIT). The absence of such a research program is significantly detrimental to the mathematical sciences in Australia. The benefits which could flow to our entire research community and the various stakeholders in government agencies and the commercial world are being withheld because the Commonwealth has not yet succumbed to the many recommendations before it to provide AMSI with an operating grant.

Nonetheless there have been positive signs from government and the ARC and, as a result, AustMS President Nalini Joshi and I have obtained the agreement of the Australian Council of Heads of Mathematical Sciences (ACHMS) to launch a green paper/white paper process to run over the next six months leading to a comprehensive proposal for the mathematical sciences in Australia at all levels. The 2009 National Strategy Document, informed by the Go8 report, will be used as an initial draft for the green paper. It is our sincere hope that the Australian Government will follow its counterpart in the United Kingdom and declare the mathematical sciences a priority area supported with legislated funding. You can see and hear details of the UK initiatives in Professor Celia Hoyles' presentation at www.amsi.org.au (Celia was the Mathematics Advisor to the UK government).

We will keep you posted on our progress in forthcoming editions of the *Gazette* and online.

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There have been changes to the funding arrangements for AMSI workshop and conference sponsorship. Assessment of proposals is now competitive; a number of funding rounds will be held throughout the year. The closing dates for 2010 are 16 April, 13 August and 1 December. The sum of \$100 000 has been allocated to the Scientific Advisory Committee for 2010 workshops and continuing commitments; funding is usually in the range \$1000 to \$10 000. An additional \$25 000 will be allocated for the funding of Special Theme Programs and Hot Topics Workshops along the lines of those at the Institute for Mathematics and its Applications in Minneapolis, USA. Dates are to be announced soon. Applications must normally be for events to be held no less than three months after the closing date. Final reports and the invoice for sponsorship must be received within 90 days after the event. These new arrangements will be reviewed at the end of 2010. See www.amsi.org.au/index.php/events/call-for-proposals for details.



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.