



# AMSI News

**Geoff Prince\***

## **Review of the AMSI Workshop Program**

AMSI's Research and Higher Education Committee has commissioned a review of the AMSI Workshop Program. Details of the current program and the relevant committees can be found at [www.amsi.org.au](http://www.amsi.org.au). The review will not be concerned with the operational aspects of the current program, but with the purpose of the program, the range of events that we support and the way in which that support is specified. The mathematical sciences community is invited to make submissions to the review. The opening date for submissions will be announced shortly through the usual channels.

The Workshop Program was one of AMSI's first initiatives and it has had a major impact on our research environment. Peter Hall was the inaugural chair of AMSI's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) which assesses applications for workshop sponsorship. Jon Borwein is the current chair of the SAC. While the program has sponsored hot topics workshops put together at short notice and theme programs lasting weeks and months, in recent years the program has settled in to sponsoring more or less conventional workshops across the entire spectrum of the mathematical sciences. These workshops number about 20 per year and run for between 2 and 5 days. AMSI funds each of these to a maximum of \$10,000. At the moment we have a joint application process with the Society and ANZIAM for their own workshop programs and two rounds per year. These programs do not pool funds but the AMSI SAC advises the Society and ANZIAM on the quality of the applications. Of course many applications are directed to AMSI alone.

AMSI itself restricts its direct funding to the travel and accommodation support of a limited number of invited speakers, typically between one and four per workshop. These individuals are usually internationals with a significant track record of achievement. There are many other ways in which we could support workshops but we have chosen to do this because it delivers proven benefit and because this single focus is clear-cut for all parties. In addition, the AMSI Member Travel Funds introduced by Phil Broadbridge support workshop attendees from AMSI members without burdening the workshop organisers with the task of distributing travel support.

In thinking about your submission to the review, I suggest that you consider your international experiences as a source of innovation, whether we should be supporting attendees from developing countries, the possibility of longer events, joint

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workshops with other societies and institutes and so on. Please also give consideration to any inadvertent bias that might be present in the current (or future) program, for example against colleagues with families, against women or regional attendees. For instance, we know that women are under-represented at senior levels in academia so that too much focus on eminent scientists may produce an inherent male bias. Finally, but by no means exhaustively, there is national benefit. The program has always insisted on wide geographic participation so please give this some thought when you make your submission.

We look forward to hearing from you and, by the way, the next workshop application round closes on 5 June 2015.



I completed a BSc (Hons) and secondary Dip Ed at Monash University in the 1970s and moved to La Trobe where I undertook a PhD in 1981 in geometric mechanics and Lie groups. I did a postdoc at the Institute for Advanced Study in Dublin. I've taught at RMIT, UNE and La Trobe University, where I was Head of Department a couple of times in the last decade. I worked at AMSI from 2004 through to 2006 in part as executive director to Garth Gaudry and I oversaw the introduction of the AMSI/ICE-EM Access Grid Room project. I became AMSI director in September 2009.

My research interests lie mainly in differential equations and differential geometry and I work with friends in Europe: Mike Crampin, Willy Sarlet, Olga Krupkova and Demeter Krupka.

My partner is a mathematician and we have two children with a refreshing lack of interest in mathematics. On the margins I brew beer and ride a bike.

I'm a proud Fellow of the Society and am currently a Council member and a steering committee member.