



Editorial

Sid and I welcome you to the first issue of the *Gazette* for 2016.

Last time, we congratulated Peter Hall on his election to the Academy of Social Sciences; this time we mourn his passing. It is difficult to do justice to his achievements, and to the gap now left in the Australian mathematical and statistical landscape. In addition to his own stellar research output, Peter contributed in many ways to the health of the mathematical sciences in Australia. He played a key role in the establishment of AMSI (as first chair of its Scientific Advisory Committee), and more recently, the ARC Centre of Excellence in Mathematical and Statistical Frontiers at the University of Melbourne. He was President of the Australian Mathematical Society from 2006 to 2008; some of his reports in the *Gazette* from this period still make interesting reading today. At the Australian Academy of Science, he served at different times as chair of the National Committee for Mathematical Sciences, Secretary for Physical Sciences, and chair of the Steering Committee for the NCMS's Decadal Plan. (The Decadal Plan has recently been released www.science.org.au/mathematics-plan-2016-25; we encourage everyone to have a look at it.) Matt Wand tells more about the story of Peter's life in an obituary in this issue.

With regret, we also record the passing of Mirka Miller and Phil Silberstein.

On a brighter note, we are pleased to report on recent honours to living mathematicians. These include membership of the Order of Australia for Gus Lehrer, Australian Academy of Science Honorary Awards for Luke Bennetts and Jane Elith, and the Ren Potts Medal for Phil Howlett and Erhan Kozan. Our congratulations to all these award winners.

We all like to present our work in the most elegant way, which means burying the dead ends and failed attempts at a solution. This often leaves our audience with no hint of where our ideas came from, and creates the impression that trial and error plays no part in our work. Neville de Mestre makes the case for presenting our varied attempts to students, to clarify how problem solving really works in practice. His article, which begins with a problem about Diophantine triples, should be of interest to students at all levels, and those who teach them.

President Tim Marchant reports in his Column on the results of the ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia) exercise, released last December. Tim also reports on the development of the workshop and visitor program of MATRIX, the research institute whose establishment by the University of Melbourne we recorded briefly last year. Further details can be found under Conferences and Courses in the News section. This year, the Society's Annual meeting will be preceded and followed by significant AMSI supported workshops, making a three week long Maths Fest in Canberra. Details are given by Geoff Prince, in the AMSI Director's report. The

annual Australian Statistical Conference, the Australasian Data Mining Conference and the Australian Conference on Teaching Statistics will also take place in Canberra at the same time.

We have decided to expand the list of reports with less frequent reports from the society's divisions and special interest groups. These may not appear in every issue, but often enough to keep members abreast of developments. In this issue, there are reports from the Victorian Algebra Group, ANZIAM and ANZAMP.

Other regular features are reports from the chair of the NCMS, the secretary of the AustMS, two conferences, and several book reviews. There are no new puzzles, but Ivan Guo has prepared solutions for the final two Puzzle Corners, numbers 44 and 45, which will appear in the May issue. Happy reading!

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David Yost is a graduate of the University of Melbourne, the Australian National University and the University of Edinburgh. He has lived in eight countries and ten cities, returning to Australia in 2003, where he has now completed twelve years at Federation University Australia and its predecessor institution, the University of Ballarat, including a three-year period as Deputy Head of School. While most of his research is in functional analysis, he has lately been interested in convex geometry.