



President's Column

Kate Smith-Miles*

What a busy first few months in this role! This has coincided with many of the annual meetings held in February: Australian Council of Heads of Mathematical Sciences (ACHMS), AMSI Member and Board meetings, the ANZIAM conference, MATRIX Advisory Board meeting—all of these meetings provided valuable opportunities to speak to people about issues affecting members and the role that can be played by the Australian Mathematical Society. I also enjoyed the opportunity to represent the AustMS at a meeting at the ARC in Canberra with the new Executive Director Professor Stephen Buckman — along with Geoff Prince representing AMSI and Peter Forrester representing the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee for the Mathematical Sciences. It was an excellent meeting where we had the opportunity to explain the Australian mathematical landscape to Prof Buckman and how all the various bodies work together to advance our common mission.

The ACHMS meeting provided me with feedback about the increasing role that Heads of maths departments would like AustMS to play in a range of priority areas: helping to implement the decadal plan; improving visibility of MISG and other opportunities to engage with industry; investigating the perceived inequities in the ARC grant system that may be disadvantaging some groups within the mathematical sciences; ensuring sufficient numbers of mathematicians are nominated for ARC College of Experts roles; revisiting the course accreditation role of AustMS. I am grateful to these colleagues for their feedback and look forward to advancing these issues.

Feedback has also been positive for other initiatives we have recently progressed, including our current work to adapt the London Mathematical Society's good practice scheme for gender equity, as suggested by Professor Nalini Joshi. The idea that a formal debate be held at the annual AustMS meeting has also been welcomed. Open debate and sharing of best practice will benefit our discipline, and the annual meeting seems like a good opportunity to discuss not just mathematical questions, but also to stimulate discussion about significant issues affecting our discipline. The meeting Directors are currently considering how to accommodate this debate in the timetable for the annual meeting, and I would like to hear from anyone who would be willing to help select a debate topic and/or join a debate team. I know there are some very articulate and entertaining AustMS members out there, so I hope we will be able to provide an informative and entertaining debate about an important issue of relevance to us all.

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I have been delighted with the support that we have received from members when the AustMS Council decided to release a statement in support of the American Mathematical Society's opposition to US President Trump's Executive Order on Immigration. This statement was emailed to members, sent to the President of the AMS, and posted on Terry Tao's open thread (<https://terrytao.wordpress.com/2017/01/31/open-thread-for-mathematicians-on-the-immigration-executive-order/>). General consensus from people who have contacted us seems to support the idea that AustMS should speak out when there is an issue affecting Australian mathematicians and students, and the Australian mathematical landscape, and we will continue to do so.

Strengthening the connections between our society and similar mathematical societies overseas has also been a focus in recent months. Many thanks to Professor Mary Myerscough for her initiation of the new reciprocal membership agreement we have recently signed with the Japanese Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics. I have also just signed a cooperation agreement with the European Mathematical Society, and look forward to more opportunities to broaden the reach of AustMS membership on a global mathematical stage.



Kate Smith-Miles is a Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellow, Professor of Applied Mathematics at Monash University, and inaugural Director of the Monash Academy for Cross & Interdisciplinary Mathematical Applications (MAXIMA). She was Head of the School of Mathematical Sciences at Monash from 2009-2014. She is member of the ARC College of Experts, Chair of the Advisory Board for the AMSI Choose Maths program, serves on the MATRIX Advisory Board, and is a member of the Federal Government's Knowledge Nation 100 group. Kate is a Fellow of the Australian Mathematical Society, and Fellow of Engineers Australia. She was awarded the Australian Mathematical Society Medal in 2010 and the EO Tuck Medal from ANZIAM in 2017.