



AMSI News

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I had the pleasure of attending the CSIRO's Big Day In at Macquarie University on 11 and 12 February. The AMSI vacation scholars have been participating in the Big Day In for a number of years thanks to the generosity of CSIRO Mathematics, Informatics and Statistics. It is a tremendously upbeat event and a real credit to CSIRO. The quality of the presentations by the AMSI students was outstanding; a strong assessment but completely justified. The slideshows were high quality, the deliveries confident and fluent and, importantly, the discussions were enthusiastic and intelligent. It was clear to me that every one of these young undergraduates had spent a very productive summer on their scholarships. I was also very pleased to see so many of the supervisors there to support their students.

February is also the meeting season for AMSI and from 16 to 18 February I attended meetings of the National Committee for Mathematical Sciences, the Australian Council of Heads of Mathematical Sciences and the AMSI member and Board meetings. On one of the afternoons we had a briefing on the national curriculum, both K to 10 and the senior curriculum. I urge all of you to read the details once they are announced and to respond if you wish. The processes behind the development are open and consultative and the tertiary mathematics community has been involved from the start.

One of the highlights of the three days was the presentation by Celia Hoyles, former UK Government Advisor on Mathematics. Celia briefed us on the various measures put in place that have put the mathematical sciences on the front foot in England in particular. I'm sure that we can learn a lot from her experience—the challenge will be to convince the Australian government to act! The video of Celia's presentation can be found at <http://www.amsi.org.au>.

And finally there was the AMSI Summer School. Thanks to the director, Grant Cairns, and all my old friends at La Trobe for delivering another success in this flagship AMSI program. Both the students and the lecturers were in high spirits every time I saw them and I personally believe that this event is a significant factor in the increased cohesion amongst early career researchers around the country, evidenced by the enthusiasm and camaraderie at AustMS annual meetings, for example.

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I'm glad that every month isn't a February, but it's certainly a month when AMSI's virtues are self evident.



I completed a BSc (Hons) and secondary Dip Ed at Monash in the 1970s and moved to La Trobe where I took out 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 where I've been Head of Department a couple of times this decade. I worked at AMSI in 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.

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, currently a council and steering committee member.