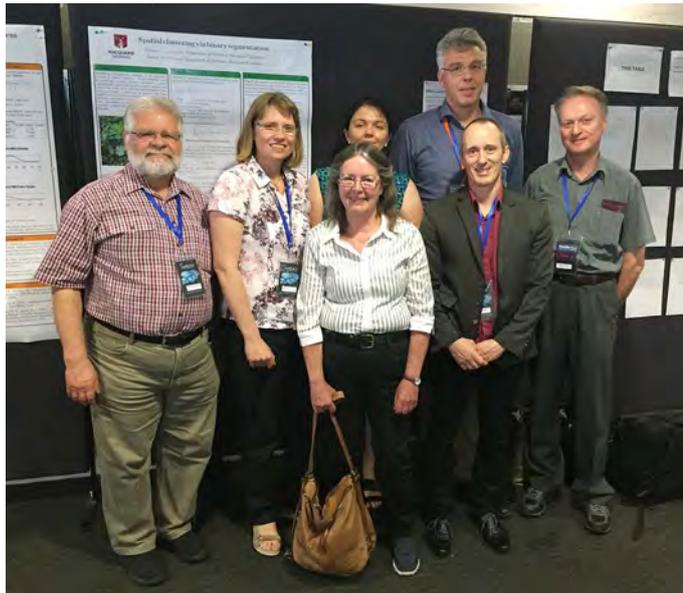# Editorial

David and I welcome you to the first issue of the *Gazette* of the Australian Mathematical Society for 2017. One cannot avoid mention of the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States of America and the impact that it may have on support for science and mathematics, and in turn how that will affect the priorities of the Australian Government. Already the Council of the Australian Mathematical Society has expressed its concern about the now repealed Executive Order on US visas and the limitation on the free flow of scientific information and scholars across borders.

The 60th Annual Meeting of the Australian Mathematical Society was held in December 2016 at the ANU. This meant that David and I would be in Canberra, and we could not miss the opportunity of meeting for the first time Eileen Dallwitz who is the very professional and experienced Production Editor of this *Gazette*. In fact, not only had we not met Eileen previously, neither had any former editors of the *Gazette*. So we arranged a meeting of all those editors present and of course had a group photo which appears below.

After these preliminaries, let me turn to the content of this issue. We have the first President's Column from Kate-Smith Miles. Kate says: "I believe that one of the roles of AustMS is to provide a forum for mathematicians to not only discuss

Back row: Sid Morris, Birgit Loch, Amie Albrecht, Jan de Gier, David Yost.
Front row: Eileen Dallwitz, Ole Warnaar.

mathematical questions, but also to debate fundamental questions about our discipline: what is the most successful way to teach mathematics in today's university environment? What is the role of mathematics in interdisciplinary applications? How can we ensure mathematics advances from interdisciplinary collaborations and industry engagements, and that we are not just merely providing a service to other fields?" And these are but a few of the questions she asks. I encourage you to read her column and to participate in these debates.

In his AMSI Director's report, Geoff Prince updates us on 2017 activities supported by AMSI. He also follows up his remarks in the last issue of the *Gazette* on the NCRIS (National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy) Discussion Paper. AMSI is critical of the lack of leadership in the Draft Roadmap, which recognises advanced mathematics as an important and scarce resource, but does not offer an adequate strategy to develop this resource. Geoff includes a link to the AMSI critique on this lack of leadership.

On behalf of NCMS (National Committee for the Mathematical Sciences), Peter Forrester reports on a meeting to discuss the Decadal Plan, which took place during the 60th AustMS Meeting at ANU. And he goes on to inform us about an initiative to have Data Science introduced into the secondary school curriculum.

David Wood, Deputy Director of the Mathematical Research Institute MATRIX refers to the very successful first year of operation of MATRIX and the Programs to occur in 2017. David says that comments, suggestions and requests are always welcome.

Jan Thomas brings to our attention the Special MERGA 40 Conference 2017. MERGA (The Mathematical Education Research Group of Australia) was formed in 1976. An anniversary conference will be held at Monash University from 2–6 July, with special guest Professor McKenzie (Ken) Clements. Ken was co-founder of MERGA and organiser of the initial conference in 1977 at Monash.

Reports on several past conferences appear in this issue. In particular, Gerd Schroeder-Turk informs us about the September 2016 conference "Animal, Vegetal, Mineral", which was designed to encourage open and broad discussions between biologists, physicists, mathematicians, chemists and materials scientists.

In this issue of the *Gazette* we have two obituaries, of Anne Penfold Street and Wendy Robertson. Anne was a world-renowned researcher and I can attest to the fact that she was a very fine lecturer. I certainly benefitted from her encouragement and generosity with her time. Wendy was particularly well known for her highly cited book, co-authored with her husband Alex, on topological vector spaces. She was also an inspiring teacher, and I benefitted too from my interactions with Wendy early in my career.

On a happy note, we welcome the return of Puzzle Corner. We are grateful that Peter Higgins accepted my invitation to present Puzzle Corner in each issue. Peter is originally from Australia and now at the University of Essex. He is the inventor of Circular Soduku, has written extensively on mathematics and won the 2013

Peano Prize in Turin for the best book published about mathematics in Italian in 2012.

Peter Stacey, AustMS Secretary, draws to our attention that nominations are called for the Australian Mathematical Society Medal and the Gavin Brown Prize, and updates us on the major Medals and other Prizes awarded during the AustMS Annual Meeting at ANU. A separate more detailed article about the major medal winners appears earlier in this issue. Peter also informs us about other events and Council decisions during the meeting.

As usual a feature of this issue of the *Gazette* is the News from Universities around the country. Reading the News is an excellent way to find out about promotions, awards, PhD completions, staff appointments and departures, books published, current and future visitors, and conferences.

Another feature of the *Gazette* are the Book Reviews. This time the review is by our experienced reviewer, Phill Schultz, of "Why is there Philosophy of mathematics?" by Ian Hacking and published by Cambridge University Press.

David and I hope you enjoy this issue of the *Gazette*.

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Sid Morris retired after 40 years as an academic. He received BSc (Hons) from UQ in 1969 and PhD from Flinders in 1970. He held positions of Professor, Department Head, Dean, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, CAO and CEO. He was employed by the universities: Adelaide, Ballarat, Flinders, Florida, La Trobe, UNE, UNSW, UQ, UniSA, Tel-Aviv, Tulane, Wales, and Wollongong. He was Editor of *Bull. AustMS* and *J. Research and Practice in IT*, and founding Editor of *AustMS Lecture Series* and *J. Group Theory*. He has been on the Council of AustMS for 25 years and its Vice-President. He received the Lester R. Ford Award from the MAA. He has published 160 journal papers and 4 books for undergrads, postgrads and researchers, plus an online book, translated into 8 languages and supplemented by YouTube videos and a Facebook group of 5,000+ members. In 2016 he edited the book *Topological Groups: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* and was ordained as a Rabbi.