



NCMS News

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The 60th annual conference of the Australian Mathematical Society was held on the week beginning Monday 5 December. This provided an opportunity to bring together members of the Australian mathematical sciences community for a meeting in relation to the implementation of the decadal plan. It is a formal requirement of the National Committee for the Mathematical Sciences to report on this annually.

The meeting began by me revising the decadal plan itself, extracts from the response to the decadal plan from AustMS, SSA and AAMT, as well as extracts from the minister's address at the launch. Next we heard from Louise Ryan, telling us about a Data Science initiative coming out of members of the Australian statistics community, which aims to have Data Science introduced into the secondary school curriculum, particularly at years 11 and 12. The rationale is that demand for expertise in Data Science greatly exceeds demand, that Data Science may well attract more students to STEM, and that Data Science provides motivation for the teaching of statistics.

Geoff Prince from AMSI addressed the meeting on actions undertaken in relation to the three key recommendations, relating to out-of-field teachers of mathematics, mathematics prerequisites for university bachelor programs, and a national research centre. In relation to the second, the need to both muster up grass root support from Heads of School in university mathematics departments, and to put a well-argued and well-timed case to government were emphasised. Jan de Gier gave a presentation relating to the research station initiative MATRIX, which is a joint venture between the University of Melbourne and Monash University. We also heard from Mary Myerscough on the phenomenon of post-truth, and what it might mean for advocacy in the mathematical sciences, and to wrap up the session, Steve Thornton spoke on the reSolve: Maths by Inquiry initiative.

As the anniversary of the launch of the decadal plan approaches, and with the meeting as stimulation, a call has been made to various stakeholders to make a

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formal submission relating to its implementation. These comments will be assembled to form the basis of the first report, and also to help guide future courses of action.



Peter Forrester received his Doctorate from the Australian National University in 1985, and held a postdoctoral position at Stony Brook before joining La Trobe University as a lecturer in 1987. In 1994 he was awarded a senior research fellowship by the ARC, which he took up at The University of Melbourne. Peter's research interests are broadly in the area of mathematical physics, and more particularly in random matrix theory and related topics in statistical mechanics. This research and its applications motivated the writing of a large monograph *Log-gases and Random Matrices* (PUP, Princeton) which took place over a fifteen-year period. His research has been recognised by the award of the Medal of the Australian Mathematical Society in 1993, and election to the Australian Academy of Science in 2004, in addition to several ARC personal fellowships. He was AustMS President from 2012 to 2014.