

# **AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE**

## **National Committees for Science: ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL on 2008 activities**

### **NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR: Mathematical Sciences**

**CHAIR: J. H. Rubinstein, FAA**

PERIOD COVERED IN THIS REPORT: 1 January - 31 December, 2008

**Please complete and return this form by 12 December 2008.**

NOTE: This report will be published on the Academy of Science website at  
[www.science.org.au/natcoms](http://www.science.org.au/natcoms)

### **MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE MET ON:

No official meetings occurred in 2008 but a number of meetings of an unofficial nature took place.

THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS ARE PROPOSED FOR 2009 (include date and place, if possible):

### **MEETINGS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AFFILIATED WITH ICSU**

IN 2008 THERE WAS A GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF (include date and place):

ICME in Mexico, July 2008

IN 2009 THERE WILL BE A GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF (include date and place):

The next GENERAL ASSEMBLY/CONGRESS will be held in 200\_

Of the IMU will be in 2010

I RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THE FOLLOWING VOTING AUSTRALIAN  
DELEGATION: (include title, name, address, telephone, email and fax number)

## AUSTRALIAN OFFICE HOLDERS IN ICSU AND AFFILIATED BODIES

AUSTRALIANS WHO HELD OFFICE IN 2008 WERE:

(include all appointed/elected memberships of subsidiary bodies, standing committees, commissions etc. as well as appointments to Bureau/Executive positions in the governing body).

PERSON	INTERNATIONAL BODY	POSITION	TERM OF OFFICE
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C Praeger	FAA International Mathematical Union,	Executive committee	2006-2010
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THE FOLLOWING NOMINATIONS WILL BE MADE IN 2009:

PERSON	INTERNATIONAL BODY	POSITION	TERM OF OFFICE
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**ACTIVITIES OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE – Please include comments on progress achieved on projected activities identified in your 2008 Business Plan. 2008 Business plans can be viewed at [www.science.org.au/natcoms](http://www.science.org.au/natcoms)**

Go to <http://www.science.org.au/reports/2008anrep.htm>, to view the Chairs' Reports on 2007 activities.

I SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING REPORT TO COUNCIL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE IN calendar year 2008 (200-250 words):

[Your Report, as presented here, will be published in April 2009, in the National Committees for Science section of the Academy's Annual Report for 2008-2009].

This has been another busy year for the national committee. In February, at the annual meeting of heads of mathematical sciences departments, we heard that very little of the new money from the Commonwealth budget increase for teaching undergraduate students in mathematical sciences was passed on to departments. Most universities take around 50% of such money in 'overheads' i.e. costs of central administration, buildings and power, libraries and student services. The remainder is passed on to faculties, where budget decisions are devolved.

We attempted to gain a hearing with the new government and also were able to get some media interest into this situation. However with the enquiries into research and innovation and into the higher education sector, no real progress has been made in rectifying this serious problem.

A major campaign was organised by Professor Terry Tao FAA to protest against huge cuts to the mathematical sciences program at the University of Southern Queensland. After a lot of media attention, the university made some very modest changes and

most of the cuts went ahead. Generally, the annual review of staffing of mathematical sciences departments across Australia showed around an 8% decline or 40 positions in 2007, which was extremely disappointing.

In the middle of the year, we learned that the ARC had commissioned someone from outside the mathematical sciences to organise mathematics journal ranking for the new research assessment exercise, ignoring our work from 2007 for the RQF. Little communication took place as to why this was necessary. When the list appeared, it had a number of problems. After representations to the ARC from Professor Peter Hall FAA, on behalf of the Australian Mathematical Society and the National Committee, Professor Peter Taylor and I were able to have a meeting with Professor Margaret Sheil. She was very helpful in allowing us time to organise another journal ranking exercise in Melbourne. I would like to particularly thank Professor Hall, Professor Phil Howlett, Dr Aleks Owczarek and Associate Professor Jim Denier, amongst a host of people, who contributed to this major task. The lists were posted on the Australian Mathematical Society website, which led to much wider consultation and discussion taking place, and have been submitted to the ARC evaluation group.

Finally the National Committee has been involved in discussions with Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia about collaboration in the area of mathematics education in schools. With the move to a national curriculum in school mathematics, it is essential that cooperation and communication occur.

**Please complete and return this form by 12 December 2008 to:**

Jeanette Mill  
National Relations Officer  
Australian Academy of Science  
E [jeanette.mill@science.org.au](mailto:jeanette.mill@science.org.au)  
P 02 6201 9413  
F 02 6201 9494  
Ian Potter House, Gordon St, Canberra, ACT, Australia, 2600  
GPO Box 783, Canberra, ACT, Australia, 2601