



## Media release - for immediate release September 2007

### Australian industry looks to mathematicians for next generation breakthroughs

**Australian industries such as mining, aviation, finance, security and public health will reap long-term benefits from a meeting of mathematical minds in Melbourne from Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September.**

The 51<sup>st</sup> annual Australian Mathematical Society conference will give mathematical scientists the opportunity to share the latest in theoretical and applied mathematics and statistics, which will lead to improvements in modern applications such as scheduling in the aviation industry, on the docks and in railway yards; mining and transport efficiencies; internet and banking security; and patient waiting lists in hospitals.

Conference Director, Associate Professor Geoff Prince, from La Trobe University Department of Mathematics and Statistics, said the contribution of mathematics to modern society was more important than ever.

"Industry and government recognise that mathematics and statistics are critical to Australia's future prosperity," Associate Professor Prince said. "From saving millions of dollars through improved mining efficiencies to streamlining hospital admissions, and from predicting and preventing transport delays to improving internet security, today's mathematicians are making more of a contribution to society than at any other time in history. And this conference allows them to exchange the ideas, forge the new links and create the research partnerships that will lead to the next generation of mathematical breakthroughs."

More than 260 researchers — including 60 postgraduate students, the most ever — will be at the conference, which is the country's largest meeting of mathematical scientists.

The discipline has recently been buoyed by the Australian Government's Budget response to the National Review of Mathematical Sciences, which last year warned of an impending crisis if funding for mathematical research continued to decline.

"There's definitely been a mood of optimism among Australian mathematicians and statisticians since the Government's turnaround following the review," said Australian Mathematical Society President, Professor Peter Hall.

"This is reflected in the number of conference registrations and particularly in the number of postgraduate students attending; it's the most we've ever had. We need young mathematicians and statisticians coming through the ranks to maintain our technological capability and international competitiveness."

The annual conference is the only national whole-of-discipline event where many Australian mathematical researchers are able to meet with peers, share ideas and initiate collaborations that will lead to new areas of research and development vital to Australia.

"The national review showed that support for collaborative work among mathematical scientists is critical to Australia's future technological development," Professor Hall said.





A stellar line-up of international and Australian mathematicians will be speaking at the conference. They include:

- Head of the Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences, US National Science Foundation, Tony Chan, whose organisation funds more than \$US200 million in mathematical research projects in the United States each year
- Young ex-patriot Australian, Mark Kisin, now a rising star at the University of Chicago, US
- Professor of Computer Sciences and Industrial and Systems Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison, US, Stephen Wright, also an Australian ex-pat.
- Professor of Physics and Mathematics, Australian National University, Peter Bouwknegt
- Professor and Federation Fellow, Research School of Information Sciences & Engineering, Australian National University, David Hill
- The conference will address key issues in mathematics education at a public Education Day on the Wednesday, which features an address by **Jetstar CEO and mathematics graduate, Alan Joyce.**

Founded in 1956, the Australian Mathematical Society is the major national professional body for mathematicians. Its aim is to promote and extend mathematical knowledge and its applications in Australia. This year the annual conference is being hosted by La Trobe University Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

### **51<sup>st</sup> Annual Australian Mathematical Society (AustMS) Conference**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September (inclusive)

Department of Mathematics & Statistics, La Trobe University

Bundoora, Victoria

Website: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/mathstats/maths/conferences/AMS2007/>

**Ends/ends....**

**Media note:** Media are invited to attend the conference. Key speakers are available for interview and abstracts are available on the conference website. For photo opportunities and interview arrangements:

**Diana Wolfe** P: (03) 9372 5305 M: 0419 547 270

Publicist E: [wolfewords@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wolfewords@optusnet.com.au)

[www.latrobe.edu.au/mathstats/maths/conferences/AMS2007](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/mathstats/maths/conferences/AMS2007)

**MEDIA RELEASE ISSUED BY:**

Wolfe Words

