

UNCONFIRMED

**MINUTES: Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 4 July, 2006, 4:30pm
Rydges Lakeside, Canberra**

1. **Present:** Judy Mousley (Chair), Sandra Frid, Steve Thornton, Vince Geiger, Kim Beswick, Shelley Dole, Gregor Lomas, Glenda Anthony, Jodie hunter, Bobbie Hunter, Jenny Young-Loveridge, Margaret Walshaw, Ray Brown, Heather McMaster, Gaye Williams, Jan Thomas, Max Stephens, Helen Chick, Jillian Fox, Abigail Sawyer, Chris Stocks, Tracey Muir, Noeline Fitzallen, Peter Gould, Judy Anderson, Anne Prescott, Peter Galbraith, Bill Atweh, Jill Brown, Ken Clements, Carmel Diezmann, Jaguthsing Dindyal, Nerida Ellerton, Helen Forgasz, Linda Galligan, Merrilyn Goos, Gilah Leder, Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington, Kay Owens, Bob Perry, Ian Putt, Brian Sherman, Tracey Smith, Beth Southwell, Len Sparrow, Colleen Vale, Peter Grootenboer, Tom Lowrie, Robyn Zevenbergen.
2. **Apologies:** Jenni Way , Phil Clarkson, Gloria Stillman.
Motion: That the apologies be accepted [Moved from the Chair; carried]
3. **Minutes of the previous AGM (Tuesday, July 9, 2005, Melbourne)**
Motion: That the minutes of the 2005 Annual General Meeting be accepted
[Moved from the Chair; carried]
4. **Business Arising from the Minutes of the previous AGM**
All relevant matters are dealt with in later reports.
5. **Proposed Constitutional Amendments**
5.1 VP (Membership) to VP (Communications)
Motion: That Article 4, Section 7 of the Constitution be changed to read as follows:
Vice President for Communication:
The Vice-President for Communication shall be responsible for the maintenance of a register of members of the Association specifying the name, and addresses of each member, seek means for recruiting new members, supervise the production of an annual membership directory, manage newsletters and other forms of communication with members, and keep an accurate record of all the activities of the office.
[Moved from the Chair; Carried unanimously]

Motion: That Article 4, Section 1A of the Constitution be changed to read as follows:
The Executive Committee shall consist of eight officers: President, Vice President for Research, Vice-President for Teaching, Vice-President for Publications, Vice-President for Conferences, Vice-President for

Communications, Secretary, Treasurer. The officers shall be elected from the ranks of regular members in the manner specified by Article 5 Section 1 of this constitution.

[Moved from the Chair; Carried unanimously]

5.2 VP (Teaching) to VP (Developments)

Motion: That Article 4, Section 4 of the Constitution be changed to read as follows:

Vice President for Development:

The Vice-President for Development shall attend to matters related to political and curriculum developments in mathematics education, professional development for both teachers and researchers, capacity building of the association and its members, and shall compile an accurate record of all the activities of the office.

[Moved from the Chair; Carried unanimously]

Motion: That Article 4, Section 1A of the Constitution be changed to read as follows:

The Executive Committee shall consist of eight officers: President, Vice President for Research, Vice-President for Development, Vice-President for Publications, Vice-President for Conferences, Vice-President for Communications, Secretary, Treasurer. The officers shall be elected from the ranks of regular members in the manner specified by Article 5 Section 1 of this constitution.

[Moved from the Chair; Carried unanimously]

5.3 Delete VP(Research)

Motion: That Article 4, Section 3 of the Constitution be deleted.

[Moved from the Chair: Defeated (4 abstentions)]

5.4 Consequential adjustment to by-laws

Motion: That the Executive Committee section of the By-laws of Association, point 3, be changed to:

3. Annual General Meeting of Association and Policy Meeting

The executive committee through the Vice-President Conferences will ensure that there is an adequate time provision made available during each annual conference for the Association's annual general meeting, and the annual policy meeting. The policy meeting will be held at least 24 hours prior to the annual general meeting. The policy meeting is for extended discussion of any matter of policy that is of concern to the Association. Its aim is to form motions that will be carried forward to the annual general meeting. The Vice-President for Development will normally chair the policy meeting.

[Moved from the Chair; Carried unanimously]

6. Reports

6.1 President's Report (attached)

- Judy urged members to be diligent and fair in their reviewing of conference papers.
- Gilah Leder suggested that we may need to consider producing the final proceedings one month after the conference so people had time to edit their papers.
- Helen Chick commented that it would be useful to have 3 options on the reviewing form because the present choices of 'accept' and 'reject' didn't offer a middle ground.
- The VP(Conferences) will be reworking the reviewing form – any suggestions or comments to Bob Perry.

Motion: That the President's report be noted [Moved from the Chair; carried]

6.2 Treasurer's Report (attached)

- Income is slightly down for 2006 predominately due to the large conference profit for 2005.
- Administration costs have risen now that AAMT is managing some of the office tasks.
- The accounts are currently with the auditor.

Motion: That the Treasurer's Report be noted [Moved Linda Galligan, Seconded Tracey Smith; carried].

Motion: That the executive committee consider the auditors report at their next meeting [Moved Linda Galligan, Seconded Helen Forgasz; carried]

6.3 Vice President (Publications) Report (attached)

- Bill Atweh thanked Helen Forgasz for her work as editor of MERJ.
- Bill also urged members to consider seriously publishing their work in MERJ and MTED.
- Gilah Leder congratulated Helen Forgasz on having MERJ indexed on ERIC.
- Helen Forgasz asked the executive to consider the future of sustaining 2 journals.

Motion: That the Vice President (Publications) Report be noted [Moved Bill Atweh, Seconded Vince Geiger; carried]

Motion: Commencing in the years 2007, all copies of all MERGA journals will be published on the open-access World Wide Web. Hard copies will also be made available to institutional members as part of their fees and to individual members for an additional price outside their membership fees [Moved Bill Atweh, Seconded Bob Perry]

- Linda Galligan - the cost of type-setting the journals would currently be about \$7300 pa
- Helen Forgasz – we need to put our journals on the www but we need to think more carefully about how it might be done.

Amendment Motion: That the motion be split into 2 motions:

Motion a: Commencing in the years 2007, all copies of all MERGA journals will be published on the open-access world wide web.

Motion b: Hard copies will also be made available to institutional members as part of their fees and to individual members for an additional price outside their membership fees [Moved Steve Thornton, Seconded Vince Geiger; Carried]

Motion: Commencing in the years 2007, all copies of all MERGA journals will be published on the open-access World Wide Web [Moved Bill Atweh, Seconded Bob Perry; Carried, 5 abstentions].

Motion: Hard copies will also be made available to institutional members as part of their fees and to individual members for an additional price outside their membership fees [Moved Bill Atweh, Seconded Bob Perry; Defeated, 8 abstentions]

Motion: In 2006, the Executive will investigate the alternative options to house such electronic publications that guarantee the accessibility of these publications into the distant future. MERGA will re-examine the sustainability of this policy in 2009 [Moved Bill Atweh, Seconded Bob Perry; Carried].

6.4 Vice President (Teaching) Report

- The conference in 2007 will have a common day with the AAMT conference.
- Colleen working on establishing closer relationships with NZAMT.
- With the PBRF in New Zealand and RQF in Australia there is a need for professional development for members. Also, we need to ensure that mathematics education interest and issues don't get lost.

Motion: That the Vice President (Teaching) Report be noted [Moved Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington, Seconded Merrilyn Goos; carried]

6.5 Vice President (Conferences) Report (attached)

- Bob Perry recorded his thanks to the conference organising committee

Motion: That the Vice President (Conferences) Report be noted [Moved Bob Perry, Seconded Carmel Diezmann; carried]

6.6 Vice President (Membership) Report (attached)

- AAMT is preparing an electronic membership directory that will be sent out to members as an email attachment.

Motion: That the Vice President (Membership) Report be noted [Moved from the Chair; carried]

6.7 Vice President (Research) Report (attached)

Motion: That the Vice President (Research) Report be noted [Moved Carmel Diezmann, Seconded Beth Southwell; carried]

7. Election of Officers

Six positions were open for election: Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President (Communications), Vice President (Publications), Vice President (Research), and Vice President (Conferences).

There was one nomination for Secretary. The Chair declared Peter Grootenboer to be duly elected as MERGA Secretary.

There was one nomination for Treasurer. The Chair declared Linda Galligan to be duly elected as MERGA Treasurer.

There was one nomination for Vice President (Communications). The Chair declared Jenni Way to be duly elected as Vice President (Communications).

There was one nomination for Vice President (Publications). The Chair declared Bill Atweh to be duly elected as Vice President (Publications).

There were two nominations for Vice President (Research). After a ballot, the Chair declared Carmel Diezmann to be duly elected as MERGA Vice President (Research).

There were two nominations for Vice President (Conferences). After a ballot, the Chair declared Bob Perry to be duly elected as MERGA Vice President (Conferences).

8. Close

The meeting was closed at 6:11pm by the Chair everyone for their attendance.

President's Report

First and foremost I must thank the previous and current Executive members. Phil Clarkson was president from 2003 to 2005, and left the association in good state. Thankyou, Phil, for your attention to detail and competent overseeing of the work of the Executive. Robyn Zevenbergen also retired in 2005, to be replaced as VP (Teaching) by Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington, but the remaining members of the Executive have continued with their portfolios. Thanks are due to Linda Galligan (Treasurer) for her financial management and detailed budget and expenditure reports; and to the Vice Presidents Bob Perry (Conferences), Jenni Way (Membership), Bill Atweh (Publications), and Carmel Diezmann (Research) for capable management for their own portfolio areas. As you all know, the Secretary is the linchpin in the smooth running of any association and Peter Grootenboer has been very active and reliable as well as most competent. This has been a busy 6 months for Peter because he has also taken a large part in the conference organisation. Thank you, Peter and other members of the Executive.

The Executive has met 3 times this year: twice by phone and then in Canberra last Saturday. Some major decisions have been made. First, there was a review of executive positions, and you have all received newsletter memos and an official notice about the changes to the constitution and by-laws that was discussed at the Policy Meeting and voted on at the beginning of this meeting. It was interesting to note how well-written position descriptions no longer matched the work undertaken by the various Vice Presidents, and to reflect on the reasons for these changes, such as technological and political changes taking place in the wider environment, and the outsourcing of some of MERGA's more routine work due to the increasing workloads of academics. The review process involved Executive members in analysing their roles, recommending their continuance or not, making suggestions for change in names and in definitions of positions, and drafting the notices that went to members. I am sure that the result better reflects the actual work of the Vice Presidents and the updated role descriptions will help people who take on executive positions in the future. You will notice that there were many positions open for election this year, and that there will be only 2 vacancies next year. The Executive did discuss whether to encourage an early retirement in order to even this up but decided not to interfere. Retirements happen in any case, so even if the numbers were evened up this year they could soon become unbalanced again in the future.

The second major change proposed was to publish the conference proceedings, MERJ, and MTED on line, with open access to the public. The reason for this was to encourage MERGA members being cited: readily accessible work is likely to be read and quoted in other countries, in other areas of education, and in theses worldwide. I am sure that most of us, when writing a paper, use electronic databases, Google Scholar and other search engines, and full text electronic journals, rather than spending hours browsing the library and filling out forms for inter-library loans as we used to. I think we are all a bit broader in the hips because of this, but there are also good effects such as people in most institutions across the world now having access to a wide range of excellent (and not so excellent) resources. The internet is now a worldwide library so we must have MERGA's books readily available on its "shelves". This means making access Google-friendly and our publications available to a readership that is wider than even the best academic journals. I hope that

increased access to MERGA resources will mean that the big populations of mathematics education researchers such as those in USA and Canada will find out about, appreciate, use, and cite our work more. Personally, I am looking forward to being able to search a wider range of MERGA articles, to cut and past quotes and diagrams, and to see improved numbers in citation indices for all Australasian maths education researchers.

Our interactions with other relevant associations remain vital, and I will be aiming to increase professional interactions over the next year. FASTS (the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies) is our avenue to Canberra, and we have used this well in 2005–6. Many of us have had funded research and consultancies over the past few years, and the profile of mathematics education has been raised so that newspaper talk is not longer only about “literacy” and “reading standards”. While it might be scary to have nation-wide discussions about secondary-school content this is a debate that has to be had and MERGA needs to be in there with a coherent and research-informed voice. Most politicians and all key members of FASTS no longer talk about “science education” and assume that that includes the mathematical sciences: we now read and hear about “mathematics and science” or “maths, science and IT”. DEST is gradually implementing changes recommended by the review of teacher education in maths, science, and IT, and Minister Julie Bishop has the improvement of mathematics and science learning from pre-school to Year 12 in her policy brief. I was really pleased to hear her say to over 200 scientists at Science Meets Parliament that “Scientific knowledge is not developed first in laboratories: key mathematical and science understandings are laid down in pre-school years and the work of teachers in early primary years is vital”. I think that we are doing well at getting a political focus on mathematics, but we could blow the chance with rivalry between associations. It is very important that AMSI, AAMT, and MERGA develop a shared brief and speak with one voice on mathematics education and teacher education matters in the coming years. This will require more bridges to be built and more opportunities being made for communication and cross-representation.

The “Science Meets Parliament” event that I mentioned before is a wonderful opportunity for young MERGA members to get a sense of our potential roles in FASTS lobbying. Peter Grootenboer and Jenni Way attended last year. Training sessions included how to conduct interviews with politicians and their staffers as well as current issues that are relevant to the sciences (including the range of mathematical sciences). Most of us met 2 politicians, and some have had follow-up contact with them. As always, Science Meets Parliament was an excellent professional experience.

Next year’s conference in Hobart will be run back-to-back with the AAMT conference. AAMT has moved its conference from the usual January timeslot to enable this to happen, so I encourage every MERGA member to plan to attend both conferences as well as to consider special interest groups and round table sessions that will be of particular interest to teachers. The PME conference will be in Korea, so that is a further opportunity for researchers to present their work.

There is a very serious matter that I wish to raise with members, and it relates to both MERGA and PME. Many research papers that fit the established criteria are not accepted each year. People are tending more and more to reject papers that report on pilot studies, progress reports on research projects that have had initial papers

published, comprehensive literature reviews, reports of non-traditional forms of research, research on derivative data, and even some papers where the mathematics or statistical analysis was too complex for the reviewers to understand. During my time on the executive of both associations, the acceptance rate has actually been about 55%. As far as I know, every year both conference committees have re-reviewed rejected papers and accepted many of them or else sent out papers for further reviews. Many of you would have received 3 reviews with widely disparate judgements and perhaps contradictory advice. People even get advice like “You need to use a bigger sample” or “The questions in your survey did not include xyz”. It is time for a reminder that conference papers are opportunities for researchers to present summaries of their research (including initial, partial, or on-going research) *to their peers at conferences* for professional discussion, feedback, and advice. If papers are rejected unfairly before conferences, they do not get that opportunity and it is not only neophyte researchers who feel that they have wasted their time and who will go elsewhere. I am not arguing for lower standards or softer criteria here, but for the guidelines to be applied consistently and fairly. Research paper reviews are of conference papers, not well-polished journal articles. People do not have a chance to resubmit, although I know of several authors whose papers were rejected in the last few years whose almost unchanged work was accepted for journals. In my experience, many reviewers do not report against the criteria, and sometimes I wonder if people read them each year — or have ever read them. I am writing this report before the policy meeting so hopefully the meeting has resulted in some guidance for the executive on ways of tackling this community-wide problem. MERGA is supposed to be a supportive community, so let’s all help attend to the problems of over-zealous rejecting of papers.

Other business that has been undertaken and finalised in the last year includes changes to the Life Membership Policy, shifting the MERGA website and its management from Deakin University to an external provider, the transfer of management services (including memberships and sale of publications) to AAMT, a review of costs for postage and handling, a new editor for MERJ and editorial team for MTED, handling of proposals for special editions of MERJ, planning for the next 4-year review of research, and some initial planning for the 2007 conference. Executive members (including the 2 retired members) have worked hard on this wide-ranging business, so once more I thank them sincerely.

Judy Mousley
President

Treasurer’s Report 2005/2006

Annual Statement

As this conference is held right at the end of the financial year it is not possible to include the 2005/2006 balance sheet and statement of income and expenditure in the conference program. However, preliminary figures indicate that the budgeted surplus of about \$500 is about right. While MERGA 28 conference held in Melbourne in 2005 made a small profit (about \$1300), sales were \$3000 lower than expected and subscription income was down by about \$1000. Income from copyright distributions

this year should be about \$900. Expenditure this year is less than in 2004/2005, mainly because of variations in the production and purchase of publications.

This year AAMT is now handling both the subscriptions (library and individual) and sales. This has been a fairly painless process apart from some initial problems with getting all the stock to AAMT. Sales for this year have been disappointing and has been the lowest for many years (see figure 1).

Annual Conference Accounts

Congratulations to Colleen Vale and her team for organising the Melbourne conference of 2005, which returned an estimated profit of about \$1500. The audited statement is expected in August this year.

Copyright Distributions

MERGA joined the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) organisation as a Publisher Member in February 2001. CAL is a not-for-profit organisation that manages licensed copying of printed works on behalf of authors and publishers. One of CAL's functions is to distribute money collected as licence fees to copyright holders. The amount available for distribution each year depends on how much of the printed work copied is captured in CAL's random audits of licence holders. While in the first two years MERGA received over \$12 000, in 2003 & 4 less than \$100 had been distributed. This year it is expected to be at about \$900

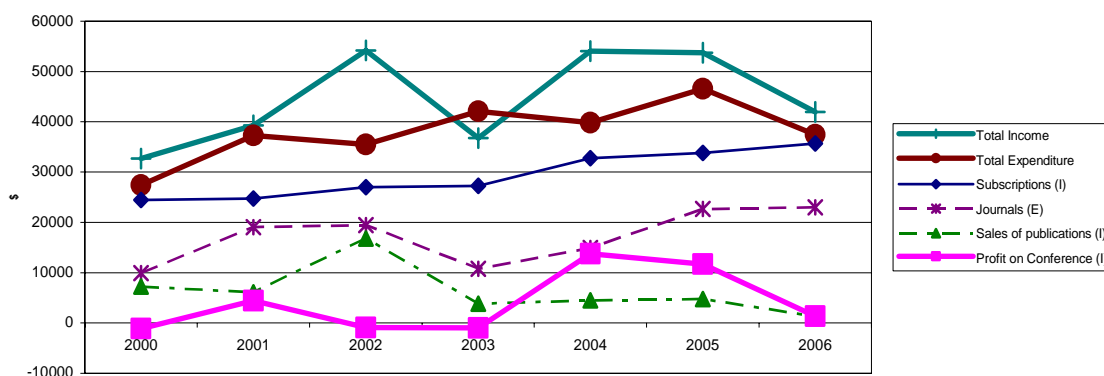
GST

While MERGA has not had to register for GST, from some discussions with AAMT it may be time to reconsider this position. Discussions will take place both with AAMT and the auditor to consider this in the future.

Changes in income

With the proposal to change the journal to online there are implications for our income. Figure 1 shows the trends in income and expenditure over the last seven years. While the journal is a substantial expense, changing this would also have an impact on our subscription income, especially our library subscriptions which could disappear altogether.

Figure 1: MERGA Income & Expenditure 2000 - 2006



Linda Galligan (Treasurer)

VP (Research) Report

Throughout 2006, there have been ongoing discussions in the broader higher education community of how to assess the quality and impact of research and the implications of a Research Quality Framework for universities and individuals. The MERGA executive has also been discussing the possible implications for our organization and this year's conference will feature an RQF panel session.

Two scholarly competitions are conducted in conjunction with the annual MERGA conference. The *Early Career Award [ECA]* is designed to encourage new entrants to mathematics education research and consists of a plaque and \$500. There are three ECA entries this year. These papers commenced with a submission through the Early Bird review process, which has been very success in helping applicants to prepare high quality papers. Special thanks to the early bird reviewers for their feedback and also the ECA judges who assess the papers before the conference and will assess the oral presentations during the conference. The winner will be announced at the conference.

The Practical Implications Award [PIA] is designed to stimulate the writing of papers on research related to mathematics teaching or learning or mathematics curricula and foster links research and professional practice. In addition to the normal eight pages research paper, up to two additional pages that address the practical implications of the research can be included. This award is sponsored by Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers [AAMT] and consists of a plaque plus \$500. Special thanks to the judging panel that consisted of two AAMT nominees and two MERGA members. This year's winners of the PIA award are Sue Wilson and Steve Thornton for their paper titled "To heal and enthuse: Developmental bibliotherapy and pre-service primary teachers' reflections on learning and teaching mathematics." This paper will be featured during the MERGA conference.

MERGA also provides *Student Bursaries* and *Research Graduate Awards* to encourage and support students and research graduates (Masters and Doctorates) to present papers at the annual MERGA conference. We have had limited applications for these bursaries and awards over the past few years and I would like to encourage all members to advertise this financial support widely to eligible individuals.

This year concludes my term as VP (Research). Special thanks to the MERGA Executive and all those who have so generously given their time and expertise to assist me with this role.

Carmel Diezmann
(VP Research)

VP (Membership) Report

At the end of 2005 the processing of membership applications and management of the database was contracted to the office of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers. The Vice President Membership retains responsibility for all aspects of membership but is no longer burdened by the routine, time-consuming tasks of mail-outs and database entry. The arrangement has worked well so far. The mailing address

for MERGA is now a AAMT maintained post-box: MERGA, PO Box 2747, Adelaide. SA 5001

The research expertise categories were revised for 2006 membership forms to bring them into line with the current activities of our members. Thank you to everyone who responded to the email requesting suggestions. Your input was invaluable in reshaping the categories. As well as being published in the Membership Directory, these categories assist conference organisers and our journal editors to identify suitable referees for papers. After the conference, a membership directory listing current members, their research activities and basic contact details will be distributed to members via email as a .pdf attachment.

Membership figures as of June 15 2006

There are 240 individual members (including conference registration members), plus 6 life members and 15 student members. This total is similar to previous years.

<i>Individual members</i>		<i>Institutional (Library) subscriptions</i>	
ACT	4	Australia	33
NSW	45	New Zealand	5
QLD	41	Asia	8
SA	11	USA	13
TAS	5	Europe	10
VIC	46	Other	7
WA	18		
New Zealand	46	Total	76
USA	9		
Asia/Pacific	12		
Europe	3		
Total	240		

Over the past twelve months 73 emails have gone out on the membership email list, mostly about available jobs, conferences and MERGA matters such as our journals or policies.

Jenni Way
VP (Membership)

VP (Publications) Report

I. Developments in 2005-2006

Three major decisions took priority since I was my last report at the 2005 AGM.

1. Change in Editors of MERJ. Two outstanding applications for the vacancy of Editorial Team for MERJ have been received after the last AGM. After a careful discussion at the Publication Committee, a decision was made to grant the responsibility for editing the Journal to a team consisting of Margaret Walshaw, Gail Fitzsimons and Gloria Stillman. All three team members have well-established research profiles in Australia, editorial experience with Australian publications, and recognised excellence in mathematics teacher education and research. It will be

remiss of me not to give equal thanks to the other submitted expression of interest that reflected outstanding merits that made our deliberations very hard. MERGA is proud of the great talent and readiness of its members to serve the organisation in our many functions.

2. Appointment of Editors for the Four Yearly Review in Mathematics Education. As the time is getting closer to 2008, the date due for our next edition of the review of research in mathematics education in the Australasian region, the Executive called for expressions for editors of this publication from the membership. Only one expression of interest was received. The Executive has the pleasure to announce that the Editorial from Monash consisting of Tasos Barkatsas, Alan Bishop, Barbara Clarke, Helen Forgasz, Stephen Keast, Wee Tiong Seah, Peter Sullivan, and Sue Willis, Undoubtedly this highly experienced and dedicated team will produce a volume of which we can be proud. It is worthwhile to mention that the Editors have already been successful in obtaining an international publisher for this book.

3. Publication Policy 21C. In its July 2005 meeting, The MERGA Executive have decided the distribution of a discussion paper by the Vice President (Publication) addressing different publication options that took into consideration our needs and resources as well as the challenges faced by MERGA due to changes on the national and international arenas. The discussion paper was sent electronically to every MERGA members with an invitation to respond and raise any issue that they like with regard to future directions in publications. Four responses were received, that in turn were circulated to members for further discussion. Nil response was obtained on the second round. In December 2005, The Executive resolves the following that commencing in the Conference in 2007, MERGA Conference Proceedings will be published electronically on the Open Access WWW every year immediately prior to the conference. Participants at the conference will receive a CD consisting of all papers presented along with their registration materials. Hard copies of the proceedings will be also made available to institutional members as part of their registration and to conference attendants for an additional price outside the conference fees. A similar motion with respect to the journals will be tabled at the 2006 meeting.

II Progress on MERGA's Publications

MERJ Editor's report

This is my final report as Editor of MERJ. I completed Issue 18(1) and the new editorial team of Margaret Walshaw, Gail FitzSimons, and Gloria Stillman have now taken over; Jill Brown remains Book Reviews editor.

I have had a most rewarding time as Editor. The work is challenging. Dealing with disappointed authors is never easy. On the whole, however, authors have been very appreciative of the efforts of the reviewers of their work. Reviewers, too, have been grateful to receive a blinded copy of the outcome letter to authors which also includes copies of all reviewers' comments. I have received comments on the value of this process as a means of professional development. It also provides the opportunity for less experienced reviewers to compare their reactions to articles with those of more experienced reviewers.

During my time as Editor, I have received tremendous support and encouragement from the MERGA VP (Publications) – currently Bill Atweh, and previously Gloria Stillman. I wish to thank them sincerely for helping me through some difficult

decisions. I would also like to thank all members of the MERJ Editorial Board who have taken their reviewing responsibilities seriously and have never let me down. The composition of the Editorial Board which was expanded in 2005 and now has an equitable representation of Australasian and international mathematics education researchers, and financial MERGA members who are both experienced and novice researchers, has worked extremely well.

Moving to ARENA as the printer of MERJ, with a typesetter preparing copy, has been a godsend. Having AAMT now distribute MERJ has also meant that copy is in the mail boxes of members virtually “hot off the press”. Sending abstracts directly to the Cunningham Library people who compile AEI has meant that MERJ contents are up-to-date on the AEI. Moves to ensure that MERJ contents are indexed in ERIC were initiated and should continue. The future of MERJ with respect to online availability is a serious issue that the MERGA Executive continues to pursue. There is little doubt that MERJ must eventually go online in some form. I wish the Executive well in making the hard decisions with respect to this issue.

Special issues

The two-year lead time for the preparation of the annual special issue has worked very well. The 2006 special issue of MERJ is near completion. It will be Issue 18(2), with Rosemary Callingham and Trevor Bond as guest editors. The theme is: *Rasch Measurement and Research in Mathematics Education*.

Report on MERJ Special Issue 18(2): Research in Mathematics Education: Insights from Rasch Modelling - We have seven papers in the final stages of editing. Only one of these is problematic at this stage. We are aiming to cut the lengths of the papers by including much of the general Rasch material in the editorial. If necessary, we will negotiate with the editors and the contributors for one of the collection to be published in a regular edition of MERJ. The collection of papers is of high quality and I believe will be interesting to a wide audience. They cover broad aspects of mathematics education including problem solving, decimals, attitudes and quality teaching. The papers also cover both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies and use a range of Rasch-based methodologies. Expected publication date is August (written by Rosemary Callingham).

The successful team for the 2007 special issue was Mike Mitchelmore and Paul White. The theme is: *Abstraction in Mathematics Learning*. The new editorial team should be calling for submissions for the 2008 special issue soon after the 2006 MERGA conference.

Statistics for MERJ: 2005 – present

- Issue 17(1) – 4 articles: 3 Australasian; 1 international
2 book reviews
- Issue 17(2) – Special Issue (*Affect and mathematics education*).
4 articles: 3 Australasian; 1 international
- Issue 17(3) – 5 articles: 1 Australasian; 4 international
2 book reviews
- Issue 18(1) – 5 articles: 1 Australasian; 4 international

As can be seen above, there has been a trend towards more articles from international colleagues being published in MERJ. The messages from this are mixed. It is a good

thing that our international colleagues are turning to MERJ as a research publication outlet. But I feel compelled to ask why we have not had more contributions from our own membership in recent times. This is a challenge for the new editorial team. Further evidence is provided by the statistics for submissions as shown below, particularly the low number received so far in 2006. Submissions in 2005 – 22 (excludes Special Issue): 6 Australasian; 16 international

- 3 published in 18(1)
- 3 accepted for 18(3)
- 1 accepted minor revisions – not allocated issue for publication;
- 2 outright reject
- 11 in various stages of “major revisions to satisfaction of editor” or “revise, re-submit, review again”
- 2 still under review

Submissions in 2006 – 4 (to end June, 2006): 2 Australasian; 2 international

- 1 “revise, re-submit, review again”
- 3 still under review

Acceptance rate

It should be noted that most authors with the outcome, “revise, re-submit, review again”, usually do not re-submit. On this basis, I would argue that the acceptance rate of MERJ for the year 2005 (excluding the Special Issue) was: 7 out of 20 (2 still under review) = 35%. As I have said before, MERJ is only as good as the authors who contribute to it and the reviewers who professionally and conscientiously decide on the merits of submitted papers. The hard work that so many MERGA members and others in the international mathematics education community have contributed to MERJ during my time as editor is much appreciated.

I wish the new editorial team much success with MERJ.

Helen Forgasz
(Editor, MERJ, 2004-2006)

MTED editors’ report

Since we took over in April last year we have had 12 submissions of manuscripts. We have also had other inquiries that have not come to a formal submission because we were able to inform the author(s) that the content was not suitable for MTED, but rather should be sent elsewhere. At this point in time, we have 2 manuscripts formally accepted. We also had one we sent back for major revisions. As of this week it looks like we have another "Accept". Everything else has been a “Reject”.

So the quality of the manuscripts as well as the number of submissions continues to be a “challenge”. After PME and MERGA last year, Marilyn and Len sent out something like 45 letters (via email) in total to people who had presented papers at the conferences that had a focus suitable for MTED. They were invited to prepare a more elaborated and expansive report of their research to submit to MTED. That did not, in the end, result in the flood of papers we had hoped for (unfortunately). It is expected that our next issue will be out in the near future. We

would like to encourage all MERGA members to consider submitting a paper to MTED so it can continue to grow.

Sandra Frid
(Co-editor MTED)

Proposal for a Publication Policy 21C

Background

In its July 2005 meeting, The MERGA Executive decided on the distribution of a discussion paper by the Vice President (Publication) addressing different publication options that took into consideration our needs and resources as well as the challenges faced by MERGA due to changes on the national and international arenas. The discussion paper was sent electronically to every MERGA members with an invitation to respond and raise any issue that they like with regard to future directions in publications. Four responses were received, that in turn were circulated to members for further discussion. Nil response was obtained on the second round. The resulting proposal was discussed by the Publication Committee and was modified accordingly.

The discussion paper identified three major issues:

1. The technological advances and the world wide movement towards open access publications.
2. The changes in the Federal Government research quality agenda that increasing focus on a wide referencing of our publications.
3. The sustainability of our publications in an age of globalisation marked by contradictory trends of competitiveness and collaboration.

In December 2005, The Executive resolved that commencing in the Conference in 2007, MERGA Conference Proceedings will be published electronically on the Open Access WWW every year immediately prior to the conference. Participants at the conference will receive a CD consisting of all papers presented along with their registration materials. Hard copies of the proceedings will be also made available to institutional members as part of their registration in the conference for an additional cost. Similarly, the Executive resolved to put the following motion to the 2006 Annual General Meeting for discussion and ratification.

Financial implications

The Treasurer advised that the journal alone costs about \$16,000 per annum to print and distribute. The concern expressed by a few members was that this saving will be offset by a loss of membership, and in particular the loss of some institutional subscriptions. The Treasure has conducted simulations on the various eventualities and their possible implications. Scenario 1 involved the loss of half of the individual membership as a result of withdrawal from the Organisation for not receiving the journal. In this unlikely case MERGA will be still be ahead by 22% of its profits. Scenario 2 involved the loss of half of the individual membership and ALL the Institutional memberships. In that extreme case we will have only lost 7% of our profits.

Undoubtedly both scenarios are very unlikely to occur since the cost of attendance at conference is tied with membership and will be reduced due to lower cost of conference proceedings. Further, institutional membership includes other benefits and

some libraries might still prefer hard copies of the journal. Finally the cost benefit from such an exercise in terms of wide access to our publication far exceeds the profit reduction even under the worse case scenario.

Motion:

a) Commencing in year 2007, all copies of all MERGA journals will be published on the Open Access WWW. Hard copies will be also made available to institutional members as part of their fees and to individual members for an additional price outside the registration fees.

b) In 2006, the Executive will investigate the alternative options to house such electronic publications that guarantee the accessibility of these publications into the distant future. MERGA will re-examine the sustainability of this policy in 2009.

Bill Atweh

Vice President (Publications)

VP (Conferences) Report

MERGA 28 was held in Melbourne from July 7-9, 2005, followed by the PME conference. Under the leadership of Colleen Vale, an extensive team of organizers from the Victorian institutions ensured that the shortened version of a MERGA conference was just as stimulating, exciting and invigorating as usual. Congratulations to all of the organizers for a job very well done. There were a number of highlights of MERGA 28:

- the research program, headed by the keynotes from Jenny Young-Loveridge and David Clarke, and supported magnificently by more than 110 refereed papers, round tables, symposia, and short communications – what a lot to fit into 3 days;
- the venues in central Melbourne, offering appropriate facilities and inner city interest;
- the social program, highlighted by the wonderful conference dinner;
- the chance to enliven professional and personal friendships made through mathematics education and MERGA.

The MERGA 29 conference team consisting of Steve Thornton (Chair) (Canberra), Tom Lowrie, Tracey Smith, Robyn Zevenbergen, Peter Grootenboer (CSU), Steve Arnold, Sue Wilson (ACU), Mohan Chinnappan, Rebecca Hudson (Wollongong) and Dawn Bartlett, ably supported by the team from the AAMT office, has worked tirelessly to ensure that the 2006 conference will be stimulating for all who attend. Exciting keynotes, an array of erudite and challenging papers from MERGA members and a wonderful conference dinner venue should ensure success.

Further ahead, organization is progressing well for MERGA 30 to be held in Hobart on July 3-6, 2007. The organizing team led by Kim Beswick (Chair), Tracey Muir and Jane Watson is planning a conference which highlights links with the AAMT conference to be held on July 6-9, 2007 at the same venue. At this early stage, some exciting high profile keynote speakers are being considered. The link with AAMT should also continue to extend the strong links between the two peak mathematics education organizations.

The MERGA 31 conference will be held from Sunday, June 29 to Wednesday, July 2, 2008 at the University of Queensland St Lucia Campus. These earlier dates will help facilitate travel arrangements for those members who are planning to attend PME and ICME in July. The conference will be organized by a team from all of the Brisbane universities with current core members:

- Merrilyn Goos, Shelley Dole, Katie Makar (The University of Queensland)
- Elizabeth Warren (Australian Catholic University)
- Steve Nisbet (Griffith University)
- Bill Atweh (Queensland University of Technology)

In their expression of interest to organize the conference, the Brisbane team made a strong plea for a conference in a warm venue after Melbourne (2005), Canberra (2006) and Hobart (2007). I am sure that the warmth of the welcome and hospitality will more than match the warmth of the climate.

There has been much consideration in the MERGA executive about the role of the Vice-President (Conferences) in the organization. Some of this is evident in constitutional changes that will be submitted to the AGM at the 2006 conference. I have enjoyed playing my part in MERGA over the last 2 years and look forward to remaining part of the association for many years to come.

I want to thank my colleagues on the MERGA executive for their support during the year and for their willingness to embrace change and to work towards the betterment of MERGA. As a founding member of MERGA it is just wonderful to see the strength of the organization and the vitality of its membership. I challenge you all to maintain your enthusiasm for MERGA and, in particular, its conferences, even under the changing research recognition and accountability regime.

Bob Perry
VP (Conferences)