



## Media Release

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### TOP YOUNG AUSSIE MATHS STUDENTS FIGHT IT OUT

#### Students compete for places in International Maths Olympiad team

The most talented secondary school maths students from across the country gathered together at a School of Excellence held at the University of Melbourne from 2 to 11 December. The ten-day training camp was part of the process from which some of the 25 students attending will ultimately be selected to compete for a place on the six-member team that will represent Australia at the 2014 International Mathematics Olympiads (IMO).

One of the International Science Olympiads run under the auspices of UNESCO, the IMO is the largest and oldest Olympiad and more than 100 countries competing. It is the premier competition worldwide for secondary students in the field of mathematics. The first IMO was held in 1959 and Australia has competed since 1981. The Olympiads are hosted by a different country each year and in 2014 the 55<sup>th</sup> IMO will be held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 3 – 13 July.

At this year's School, 2013 gold medallist Alex Gunning from Melbourne was back, together with 2013 bronze medallist from Sydney, Seyoon Ragavan. There are six students from Victoria, 15 from New South Wales, two from Western Australia, one each from Queensland and the ACT.

At the camp the 'maths from morning to night' sessions (lectures or exams) commenced at 8am every morning, finishing at 9pm each night. It's by far the most challenging thing most of these students would have ever done.

Following the December School, participants are invited to complete some correspondence work. A number of those who attended the School will join other students from around the country to compete in the Australian Maths Olympiad (AMO) in February. Based on their performance in the AMO, 25 of these students will then qualify to participate in the Team Selection School in April, where the six team members plus a reserve are chosen. They are then assigned mentors, usually past Olympians from their own town, and undertake specially prepared exercises on a regular basis.

The Australian Mathematics Trust runs the intensive training and selection for the Mathematics and Informatics Olympiad Programs. The Trust's best-known activity is the annual Australian Mathematics Competition sponsored by Commonwealth Bank which, together with other competitions, leads to the more talented students participating in these programs.

The Trust's Executive Director, Mike Clapper, said, 'There is an urgent need to attend to the declining performance in maths by Australian students, as evidenced by the latest OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests of mathematics. The Trust's program of extracurricular activities and competitions helps to promote maths, tertiary enrolments, and to create interest in maths based careers, which is essential to addressing the technology skills shortage in this country.'

The AMT is under the trusteeship of the University of Canberra. The Mathematics Olympiads are supported by the Australian Government Department of Education through the Mathematics and Science Participation Program.

The University of Melbourne's Department of Mathematics and Statistics also provides resources to assist with education and enrichment for potential participants.

For further information, visit [www.amt.edu.au](http://www.amt.edu.au) or to arrange interviews and photographs, please contact: Mike Clapper, AMT Executive Director, [executivedirector@amt.edu.au](mailto:executivedirector@amt.edu.au), 02 6201 2440; 0419 993 893  
Angelo Di Pasquale, IMO Team Leader, [A.DiPasquale@ms.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:A.DiPasquale@ms.unimelb.edu.au), 03 8344 4306; 0402 383 248  
Ann Ronning, Manager, Australian Mathematics Trust; [ann.ronning@amt.edu.au](mailto:ann.ronning@amt.edu.au); 0401 957 150