

OLYMPIAD NEWS

The 1985 International Mathematical Olympiad held in Finland was a most successful one for Australian participants. The Australian team was quite representative of the country although three students were from N.S.W. including the two team members who were in year 11. The other four students all received awards with Andrew Hassell (Christ Church Grammar School, W.A.), gaining a gold medal finishing seventh placed student overall, John Graham (St. Ignatius' College, N.S.W.) gaining a silver medal and bronze medals to both Shane Booth (Wangancie Park High School, Victoria) and Alasdair Grant (Melbourne C of E Grammar, Victoria).

The second pleasing outcome of the I.M.O. was the number of questions that were well done by the Australian team with all members making a good attempt at or a complete solution to at least one question. This is the first time that this has been the case. Andrew Hassell in gaining a gold medal completed five of the six questions successfully while John Graham missed by one mark in gaining full marks on the first paper (three questions).

As in each year the results of the Australian team have gradually improved one may conclude that the attempts to identify talented students is improving also. The identification begins with the A.M.C. which identifies students with outstanding skill in their normal school work. In N.S.W. other examinations such as the I.B.M. competition run by the University of N.S.W. and the N.S.W. Mathematics Olympiad run by the Mathematical Association of N.S.W. identify those students who have extended their mathematical skills beyond that which is expected in the school syllabus. Other states have similar identification procedures. However it must be stressed that students who have succeeded at the I.M.O. and have an interest in mathematics beyond that which depends on the assistance of others. The examinations help organizers identify the students but the interest and development is very much a personnel commitment. From such examinations a number of students are asked if they would like to sit for the Australian Institute Finals, held in October and from then, approximately 40 students are given weekly exercises for three months prior to the Australian

to the Australian Mathematical Olympiad held in March. The team is selected on their performance in this examination.

The only other outside assistance that is given to students is the Training School sponsored by I.B.M. held in Sydney during the May vacation. At this school students participate in discussion led by mathematicians, group problem solving and individual problem solving. All written work is marked and important sessions are held discussing this written work.

It is hoped that any student who enjoys Parabola, enjoys attempting the challenging problems set in this magazine and who has the ability and perserverance to excell in mathematics will ensure that his or her name is identified by one of the processes suggested. Further information can be obtained by contacting the writer.

Mr. G. Ball,
Dept. of Pure Mathematics,
University of Sydney, 2001.

