# The AustMS Inclusive Conference Guide

Organisers of events held under the banner of the AustMS are expected to uphold the society's values, which include respect, freedom of participation and equality of opportunity (https://austms.org.au/). This brief 'best practice guide' is intended to encourage organisers to consider a wide range of actions to enable and support diversity and inclusion, and to provide some useful reference resources.

This document is based on the "*Best Practice Guide – Developing inclusive conferences*" produced by Alice Chautard and Dr Clare Hann, Oxford University (see Resource A). Event organisers are encouraged to refer to this document for more details on this topic including further context, definition of terms and an extensive list of further considerations.

The AustMS Code of Conduct is intended to establish the standards of good conduct that are expected of all Society Members. An accompanying document details procedures for reviewing alleged failures to meet these standards and determining the consequences of any such infringements. Adherence to this code is a requirement of AustMS membership and also of participation in AustMS-sponsored events (see Resource C).

*While achieving all "gold-standards" is not always attainable, the AustMS supports all possible and feasible efforts that can be made to improve diversity and increase inclusivity in mathematics.*

## Suggested Considerations

The suggestions are grouped under five broad headings: pre-event logistics, program development, Indigenous cultural considerations, prevention and action on discrimination and harassment, and supporting attendees with carer responsibilities.

✔ PRE-EVENT LOGISTICS
- o *Before finalising the program, check that the date and time of your event does not explicitly exclude participants. Beyond time zones and the school calendars, consider whether the event dates may contravene religious holidays or impose unnecessary hardship on participants with caring responsibilities, among others.*
- o *Check that the venue, facilities and/or any online platforms are accessible and safe for all participants. This will include appropriate disability access, accessible audio-visual options, inclusive bathroom facilities and  provision of  space for religious activity.*
- o *The accessibility of an event will vary in many ways for each individual participant. As organisers, ensure that you have given every participant an opportunity to communicate their accessibility requirements with you.*
- o *Collection of registration information should be respectful of diverse identities. Consider options to provide preferred pronouns and gender-neutral titles, as well as an option not to provide such information.*
- o *Consider whether the registration pricing may exclude particular cohorts.  Can different strategies or bursaries be used to enable accessibility for all?*

- ✔ PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, SPEAKER SELECTION AND ENCOURAGING 'INCLUSIVE' PARTICIPATION
    - o *Is the speaker selection inclusive and representative of the actual diversity of the audience or field? Speaker selection should span research fields as well as different axes of diversity.*
    - o *Does the broader program structure, including social activities, support the inclusion of researchers from a range of diversity groups as well as career stages? Consider including targeted networking sessions and  appropriate social events to encourage and support different groups and their allies.*
    - o *Include appropriate signage for accessibility and incorporate the display of warnings in case of contravention of cultural taboos, for example, for Indigenous members of the audience if imagery of deceased persons is included in presentations.*
    - o *To ensure accessibility of content to all participants, including those with visual impairments, consider enabling Alt text for online imagery, communicate the option to access slides prior to an event, or allow a dissemination of pre-recorded presentations.*

- ✔ RESPECTFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND INCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE
    - o *Events should incorporate an appropriate and respectful acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land on which the event is held (see Resource D). This applies for both in-person and virtual events. Many institutions and venues will have their own advice on an appropriate format. In general, it is important to note the distinction between a Welcome to Country, which can only be carried out by a local Indigenous Elder, and an Acknowledgement of Country.*
    - o *Inclusion of Indigenous culture should not be limited to an appropriate Acknowledgement of Country. Event organisers should be conscious of cultural inclusion in all other aspects of planning as outlined throughout this guide.*

- ✔ PREVENTING AND DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION AND HARRASSMENT
    - o *The AustMS Values, Code of Conduct and reporting procedures (see Resource C) in the case of any reported violations of the Code should be clearly communicated, including prominent links available on event webpages.*
    - o *Nominated Code of Conduct points of contact should have sufficient training and/or knowledge of how to appropriately handle incidents and reports.*

- ✔ SUPPORTING ATTENDEES WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES
    - o *The venue and program should allow for facilities and accessibility for participants with caring responsibilities. This may include appropriate spaces available to feed and care for young children, having day-delegate options, information for local childcare providers or potential bursaries to support care either at home or while travelling.*

## Specific Note for the Annual Meeting of the AustMS

The Annual Meeting of the AustMS incorporates structural elements of the program to encourage and celebrate diversity, including a number of plenaries as well as special sessions. Among them, the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion special session is intended to celebrate mathematical research in diversity as well as the diversity of mathematical research. Organisers of this session should represent a range of career stages and be encouraged to incorporate a variety of activities as part of the session, such as Q&A's with members of a discussion panel and direct presentations. Pre-planning is needed, with a view for focus

topics that do not repeat those of recent sessions. It is suggested that a previous session organizer be included in the session organizer group to leverage learnings from past sessions.

## Resources

A. A "*Best Practice Guide – Developing inclusive conferences*" by Alice Chautard and Dr Clare Hann (Oxford University, https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/about/equality diversity/190522_Inclusive_Conference_Guide.pdf )

B. An "*Advice Sheet for Event Organisers*" was developed by the Women in Mathematics Special Interest Group (WIMSIG) (see https://austms.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ideas-for-event-organisers.pdf ).

C. The AustMS Code of Conduct and procedures for reported violations, https://austms.org.au/about-us/code-of-conduct/

D. Map of Indigenous Australia: refer to https://aiatsis.gov.au/whose-country-am-i and https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia