

# A history of MERGA

---

This document may be incomplete. Any extra information would be appreciated. It is intended that this be a working document to be expanded as time proceeds and more information comes to light.

Judy Mousley and Helen Forgasz

The earliest years .....	1
List of MERGA1 delegates (drawn from various sources): .....	1
“MERGA” .....	3
The Constitution and the Executive.....	4
MERGA Presidents .....	5
Life members .....	5
MERGA Awards.....	6
The MERGA Early Career Award .....	6
The Beth Southwell Practical Implications Award .....	6
The MERGA Career Research Medal .....	7
The MERGA Research Award .....	7
Bursaries .....	7
The merger with MELA .....	8
Publications.....	8
Research in Mathematics Education in Australia (RMEA) .....	8
Mathematics Education Research Journal (MERJ).....	9
Mathematics Teacher Education and Development (MTED) .....	9
Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia (RiMEA): 4-year reviews of research .....	10
Books .....	11
Conferences .....	11
Conference proceedings.....	12
A note of appreciation .....	15

## The earliest years

It is believed that the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australia (MERGA) was the first national mathematics education research group to be formed anywhere in the world!

MERGA and the Mathematics Education Lecturers Association (see MELA, below) both started independently in the mid-1970s — MELA slightly before MERGA. MERGA was the brainchild of John Foyster (of the Australian Council for Educational Research - ACER) and McKenzie (Ken) Clements (from Monash University) in 1976. Ken Clements' account of the earliest days of MERGA are available online. According to Ken, "John was a really friendly, and highly intelligent, colleague. He was the one who put up the money needed to get the first MERGA conference, at Monash, 'on the road'. He was a great guy, and a bit of a dreamer. That combination was needed in order to get MERGA going". Foyster and Clements sent out notices of their intention to form MERGA late in 1976 to all known Australian universities and teachers' colleges that existed at the time, addressed to the "Mathematics Lecturers at..."

The first of what was to become an annual conference was held in May 1977, in the Rotunda at Monash University. About 100 people attended the first MERGA conference, reading papers from 9 am to about 10 pm, for three days. Graham Jones remembers the excitement well, saying "At MERGA 1 we just so excited to be part of what was happening. There were no breakout sessions and everybody presented to the whole group. ... We were certainly excited about the prospects of a MERGA organization but we did wonder whether there would be enough continuing research to sustain it. How wrong we were!". Two volumes of papers were printed. John Foyster financed the publication of the proceedings, on the understanding that he would be repaid once MERGA had generated income from conference fees.

Frank Lester (from Indiana, USA) attended and gave a paper, as did Anne Newman (Monash/ACU), and Nongnuch Wattanawaha (Thailand). Queenslanders attending (including Bill Atweh, Jack Briggs, Marjorie Carss, Peter Galbraith, Calvin Irons, and Graham Jones) meant that the state was very well represented at the first conference, as were people from Macquarie University (including John Conroy, Merv Dunkley, Lyn Outhred) and Monash (including Phil Clarkson, Ken Clements, Gilah Leder, Di Siemon, and Dick Tisher). George Booker (then from Tasmania) was the youngest participant. The President of AAMT (Graham Willis) attended and spoke.

### List of MERGA1 delegates (drawn from various sources):

Alan Larkin	Allyn T Johnson	Anne Newman
Barry McCrae	Bernard Hawkins	Beth Southwell
Bill Atweh	Bob Perry	Brian Foster
Brian Low	Brian Sherman	Bruce Devlyn
Bruce Henry	Bryce Edwards	Calvin Irons
Christopher Dunstan	Colin Barry	David Barr
Des Taylor	Di Siemon	Dick Tisher
Duncan Rasmussen	Eric Campbell	Eunice Giles
Frank Lester	George Booker	Gilah Leder



AAMT figure, was very supportive and encouraging of the idea of MERGA, and he contacted Ken Clements, asking if he could help to get MERGA up and running.

Further, MELA had recently been established and had held one conference, hence the need for such a group as MERGA may have seemed unclear. However, Foyster and Clements (and others) were convinced of the need for a research group in mathematics education somewhat like the Australian Science Education Association (now ASERA) that had been established several years beforehand (1970) by colleagues of Clements at Monash University. In fact, on the first day of the first MERGA conference, Professor Richard Tisher (of Monash Education), who was behind the formation of ASERA, spoke of his experiences in establishing ASERA.

At the second conference, it was confirmed by those present that MERGA should continue and that a constitution would be drawn up and then approved at the third conference, to be held at the then Brisbane College of Education. Graham Jones reports, "I think we were surprised with the number of papers that were submitted and accepted for MERGA 2. However, we did have ACTION sessions of some kind as I remember leading one on Teacher Education and I am sure Gilah led one on 'Girls and Mathematics'. By the end of MERGA we agreed to develop a constitution and look to set the organization in motion. If I remember correctly John Conroy and Brian Low played a big part in the development of that constitution".

Officers were elected at the third conference. Graham reports that "MERGA 3 was at Kelvin Grove CAE (now QUT) and we did pass the constitution and elect the first officers. I am guessing a little but the list went something like this: Graham Jones (President), Beth Southwell (Secretary), Gilah Leder (Treasurer) and a number of Vice Presidents: possibly John Conroy, Barry Kissane, Calvin Irons for areas like Research, Publications and Conferences. Ken Clements had either gone to India or was about to and do Missionary work." A six-page constitution was drafted. The draft constitution with minor amendments was formally adopted at the 1979 conference, and Graham who chaired the formation meeting, was also duly nominated and elected unopposed as the first President of MERGA by acclamation. Thus MERGA was formally established by May, 1979.

## "MERGA"

The name "Mathematics Education Research Group of Australia" was Ken Clements' idea. There was some debate about whether the "G" in MERGA should be soft so that the group would sound like "merger," but it was decided to go for the hard "G".

Late in the 1980s, MERGA debate began and finally a decision was made to change the name from "Mathematics Education Research of Australia" to "Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia". This move was partly fuelled by members of MERGA who had worked for periods of time in Papua New Guinea, the Pacific Islands, and in South East Asia. As well, a number of members had growing contact with their New Zealand counterparts who they had met at the then relatively new international conferences of ICME and PME during the previous 10 years. But there were few active conference participants from outside Australia until Ken Clements and the Executive in 1991 made specific overtures to people in New Zealand during the PME conference. They and were delighted when quite a group attended the conference at Western Sydney in 1992. It was during this time that a gradual increase in the number of colleagues from the Pacific Islands and South East Asia was also noticed.

About one third of MERGA members are now from New Zealand, and New Zealand has been represented on the Executive since 2002. New Zealand also hosts conferences, and one conference has been held in Singapore.



The anniversary cake at MERGA 25 in Auckland, New Zealand

There were times when MERGA struggled to establish a clear identity. In MERGA's first decade, the quality of conference presentations was varied, with some papers adding little to the field. Scholarly requirements were not consistent and proceedings varied in their style and content. Concerns raised about what was distinctly MERGA led eventually to the establishment of clear and consistent review criteria, with a focus on research. While there have been some minor changes to the criteria used in the peer-review of research papers since then, the criteria still provide a clear statement as to the values and goals of the organisation. The production of the MERGA Research Policy also helped in this regard, as manifested, for example, in the production of fully refereed conference proceedings since 1993.

But we have leapt ahead and we need to return to the earliest years of MERGA.

### The Constitution and the Executive

The first elected President was Dr Graham Jones, then of Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education—now Griffith University where Graham Jones (AM) is now Professor Emeritus. An annual membership fee was agreed upon, and regular executive meetings began to be held via telephone hook-ups.

Graham Jones was President of MERGA for 6 years, and is now a life member. He later became Director of Gold Coast CAE, Pro-VC of Griffith University, and then Professor of Mathematics at Illinois State University. Graham suggested having a number of Vice Presidents with each responsible for specific portfolios — a structure that has been retained until today with some additional and changed titles.

Around 1990, MERGA began to grow rapidly, and by 1993 there were about 300 attending the annual conferences. During the presidency of Ken Clements (1987-1993) the Executive began to work towards incorporation, and Gilah Leder (who took over the Presidency from Ken), with help from Mike Mitchelmore, brought that to fruition.

## MERGA Presidents

1979–1983	Graham Jones	1984–1986	Ken Milton
1987–1993	Ken Clements	1994–1996	Gilah Leder
1997–1999	John Malone	2000–2002	Peter Galbraith
2003–2005	Phil Clarkson	2006–2009	Judy Mousley
2010–2014	Merrilyn Goos	2014–	Tom Lowrie



Past MERGA Presidents who attended MERGA 25:

(from left) John Malone, Ken Clements, Gilah Leder, Peter Galbraith, Philip Clarkson, Ken Milton

In the mid-1980s it was decided that rather than fly executive members to the one place for executive meetings, monthly executive meetings should take place via telephone hook-ups. This proved to be a very successful and cost-effective strategy. With academics getting access to email, the need for face-to-face meetings and telephone conferences was reduced, and these days there are usually 3–4 formal meetings per year, including one on the day prior to each conference.

## Life members

Members of MERGA executive committees, conference committees, journal editors and other individuals have been asked—and offered—to do much throughout the existence of MERGA, and the Association owes much to those who have contributed. Life memberships have been awarded to people who have given service to MERGA that is well above what is normally expected, who have demonstrated significant leadership within MERGA or outstanding innovation in MERGA’s activities, and/or who have enhanced the standing of MERGA in the mathematics education community. A list of the current life members follows:

Ken Clements	John Foyster (dec.)	Peter Galbraith	Graham Jones
Gilah Leder	Ken Milton	Mike Mitchelmore	Beth Southwell (dec.)
Judith Mousley	Jane Watson		

## MERGA Awards

A number of awards and bursaries are awarded by MERGA. These are not always annual.

### The MERGA Early Career Award

In order to encourage new researchers in mathematics education, in 1989 MERGA commenced sponsoring an award to a conference presenter in the early part of her/his career, the Early Career Award. Both the written paper and the presentation are judged. A list of Early Career Award winners follows:

1989	Lyn English	1990	David Clarke, Joanne Mulligan
1991	Robyn Zevenbergen	1992	Janette Bobis
1993	Merrilyn Goos, Margaret Taplin	1994	Gloria Stillman
1995	Helen Forgasz	1996	No award
1997	Carmel Diezmann	1998	Tom Lowrie
1999	No award	2000	Tracey Smith, Gaye Williams
2001	No award	2002	No award
2003	Esther Loong, Shehenaz Adam	2004	Jillian Fox
2005	Abigail Sawyer, Nigel Calder	2006	Roberta Hunter
2007	Katie Makar, Chris Hurst	2008	Tracey Muir, Naomi Ingram
2009	Jodie Hunter	2010	Bruce Moody
2011	Amy MacDonald	2012	Annie Mitchell
2013	Ban Heng Choy	2014	Lisa Darragh
2015	Jodie Miller	2016	Lisa O'Keefe

### The Beth Southwell Practical Implications Award

In 1992, the National Key Centre for Teaching and Research in School Science and Mathematics at Curtin University offered to sponsor a further award, the Practical Implications Award (PIA). Here, conference papers are judged, along with a 2-page statement about the practical implications of the research findings. The award is now sponsored by the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT).

Beth Southwell made significant contributions to both MELA and MERGA — and today each MERGA conference has an annual Beth Southwell Practical Implications Award to honour her years of work in professional associations as well as her more general contributions to mathematics teacher education and research. In 2008, MERGA and AAMT were honoured to receive permission to rename the PIA as the Beth Southwell Practical Implications Award, in honour of the late Beth Southwell who had contributed so much to mathematics education during her lifetime.

A list of past winners of the Practical Implications Award follows:

1993	Margaret Taplin	1994	Anne Gooding
1995	Vince Geiger	1996	Glenda Anthony
1997	Lyn English	1999	Shelley Dole
2000	Merrilyn Goos	2001	Tracey Smith & Tom Lowrie
2002	Len Sparrow & Sandra Frid	2003	Tracy Smith
2006	Sue Wilson & Steve Thornton	2007	Janette Bobis
2008	Roberta Hunter	2009	No award
2010	No award	2011	Katie Makar
2012	Michael Cavanagh	2013	Peter Gould
2014	No award	2015	Jodie Hunter
2016	Bob Perry, Ann Gervasoni, Anne Hampshire, & Will O'Neill		

In 2009, two research awards were introduced: the MERGA Career Research Medal and the MERGA Research Award. These awards may be made after nominations by MERGA members or the Executive.

#### The MERGA Career Research Medal

The MERGA Career Research Medal is awarded for outstanding contributions to research in mathematics education across the years. The following people have been recipients of the MERGA Career Research Medal:

2010	Jane Watson	2011	Peter Galbraith; John Malone
2012	Lyn English	2013	Glenda Anthony; Kaye Stacey; Gilah Leder
2014	No award	2015	Bob Perry
2016	Peter Sullivan		

#### The MERGA Research Award

The MERGA Research Award is awarded for a significant recent contribution to mathematics education research. A list of recipients of the MERGA Research Award follows:

2011	Early Numeracy Research Project (ENRP) research team: Doug Clarke, Jill Cheeseman, Barbara Clarke, Ann Gervasoni, Donna Gronn, Pam Hammond, Marj Horne, Andrea McDonough, Pam Montgomery, Anne Roche, Glenn Rowley, Peter Sullivan, Ann Downton, Annie Mitchell, Rhonda Faragher, and Linda Parish.
2014	Kim Beswick

#### Bursaries

There are bursaries and other forms of support awarded each year to (a) graduate students; (b) recent graduates; and (c) teachers to attend each conference if they are making presentations.



## The merger with MELA

MELA had begun to hold national conferences (usually biennially) from 1976 onwards, but had a lower profile than MERGA. Its occasional publications were varied and irregular. In the latter years of MELA, some joint MERGA/MELA conferences were held, as there was a lot of overlap in membership. In 1996, when Gilah Leder was President of MERGA and Judy Mousley was President of MELA, it was proposed that MELA and MERGA merge, retaining the name of MERGA. A Vice President (Teaching) position was created, and this was the origin of the current Vice President (Development).

MELA members had identified some conditions for the merger, and one was the establishment of a new journal to provide an avenue for academic discussion on teacher education issues and for reporting of research in this area (see MTED, below).

## Publications

Over the years, MERGA has produced a number of publications, all of which focus on research into mathematics education.

### Research in Mathematics Education in Australia (RMEA)

MERGA's first publication of conference papers, in 1977, was called 'Research in Mathematics Education in Australia' (RMEA). Once Vice Presidents had been elected, each of the first editors of RMEA was the Vice President (Publications) of MERGA at that time, with the last edition being published in 1988. Initial issues of RMEA consisted mainly of papers presented at the annual conference, except for the 1984 and 1988 4-year reviews of research.

Later issues were not conference proceedings, but from 1996 (under the editorship of Mike Mitchelmore) the issues became solely peer-reviewed journal articles. The names of editors of RMEA, and other details of interest, are listed below.

- 1977 M. A. Clements & J. M. Foyster, ISBN 0959684409
- 1978 B. Low, M. E. Dunkley & J. Conroy, same ISBN
- 1979 W. Atweh, G. Booker, C. J. Irons, G. A. Jones, ISBN 0 959684409
- 1980 Vol. 1: B. A. Foster ISBN09059684409, & Vol. 2: K. G. Milton, same ISBN
- 1981 Vol. 1: called RMEA, no named editor  
Vol. 2: called *Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference*, ISBN 86856-151-7. Conference organizers were J. P. Baxter & A. T. Larkin
- 1982 C. Irons (VP for Publications) & D. Firth (conference organizer)  
ISBN 86856116114
- 1983 First on-going journal issue, so ISSN registration: ISSN 0812-7859. New format included listing of members of the first Publications Committee. One issue.
- 1984 Publications Committee listed. One issue.
- 1984 Summary of research, ISBN 0 95968442 5
- 1985 3 issues: Nos. 3, 4 & 5.  
Back to same ISSN, slight change of Publication Committee membership.
- 1986 Reviewing Panel listed, same ISSN number. One issue.

- 1986     Reviewing Panel listed, same ISSN number. One issue.
- 1987     Reviewing Panel listed, same ISSN number. One issue.
- 1988     2 issues. Editorial panel listed, same ISSN number. Final issue of REAM.

### Mathematics Education Research Journal (MERJ)

The proposal for MERGA to produce a new, regular journal was passed at the annual conference in 1988, held at Deakin University. So with somewhat patchy parentage, MERJ was born. The first editor of MERJ was Philip Clarkson with volume 1 appearing in 1989, and the International Standard Serial Number became (and remains to this day) ISSN 1033-21. In 2010, contact was made with Springer Publications to see if they would be interested in adding MERJ to their suite of journals. Springer agreed, and they have published MERJ since 2011. The Editors and Associate Editors of MERJ are listed below:

1989–1992	Vol. 1–4	Philip Clarkson
1993–1997	Vol. 5–9	Nerida Ellerton
1998–2000	Vol. 10–12	Michael Mitchelmore, Bill Barton, Bob Perry, Beth Southwell
2000–2003	Vol. 13–15	Bill Barton, Gail FitzSimons, Sue Gordon, Beth Southwell, Michael Thomas
2003–2006	Vol. 16–18	Helen Forgasz, Margaret Walshaw
2006–2008	Vol. 19–20	Margaret Walshaw, Gail FitzSimons, Gloria Stillman
2008–2015	Vol. 21–28	Robyn Jorgensen (Zevenbergen), Peter Grootenboer, Ray Brown
2015–	Vol. 29–	Peter Sullivan, Glenda Anthony, Vince Geiger, Dindyal Jaguthsing

### Mathematics Teacher Education and Development (MTED)

As mentioned above, conditions for the merger of MERGA and MELA included the establishment of a journal that focused on teacher education, so Mathematics Teacher Education and Development was established. The intention was to provide an avenue for articles with a focus on tertiary teaching in the field of mathematics education, just as MELA publications had in the past. It was recognised that the new publication should not detract from the focus of MERJ or the MERGA monographs, and should not compete with the publications of other professional associations.

In 1999, Mathematics Teacher Education and Development (MTED) commenced with one issue per year. In 2009, a discussion about whether to continue MTED as a stand-alone journal was held. A web-based forum, discussion at the conference’s Policy Meeting, then discussion and a decision at the AGM resulted in MTED continuing, with the aim of strengthening MTED by broadening the type and scope of articles included as well as increasing the number of issues to 3 or 4 per year. It was envisaged that this would enable the inclusion of a special issue in each volume.

The following people have been MTED Editors:

1999	Mary Klein, Ian Putt, Gloria Stillman
2000	Ian Putt, Gloria Stillman, Elizabeth Warren
2001	Peter Sullivan, Elizabeth Warren
2002–2004	Ian Putt, Elizabeth Warren, Tim Herrington

2005–2009	Sandra Frid, Len Sparrow, Merrilyn Goos
2010–2012	Jennifer Way, Janette Bobis, & Judy Anderson
2013–2015	Colleen Vale, Gaye Williams, & Leicha Bragg
2016–	Robin Averill, Fiona Ell, & Jodie Hunter

The following people have been Special Issue Editors for MTED:

1993	Phillip Clarkson
2007	Bob Perry, Carmel Deizman
2010	Janeen Lamb, Michael Gaffney & Gayle Spry
2011	Joanna Higgins & Linda Bonne
2012	Rosemary Callingham, Helen Chick, & Steve Thornton
2013/14	Susie Groves & Brian Doig
2015	Jodie Hunter, Glenda Anthony, and Roberta Hunter
2017 (in progress)	Phillip Clarkson

#### Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia (RiMEA): 4-year reviews of research

1984 saw the production of MERGA's first 4-year review of Australasian mathematics education research. Over the years, the different editors have taken varied approaches to calling for chapters and managing the authors' writing and co-writing processes.

The first volume marked the occasion of holding an ICME conference in Adelaide. Early volumes were selected papers, with some annotated bibliographies, as well as one register of mathematics education research and development in Australia. Later issues comprised extended literature reviews organised under topics selected by the relevant editorial committee together with editorial teams. In 1988 there were four topics covered (120 pp.), while recent versions have covered up to 15 topics (350–400 pp.), reflecting the growth of Australasian mathematics education research as well as the development of MERGA itself. Each issue reflects the main research interests and thrusts of its time. Some interests have appeared in nearly every issue of the publication (e.g., gender and mathematics), while others have come and gone. A list of editors and titles follows:

Year	Editors	Title
1984	J. Briggs	Summary of research in mathematics education in Australia
1988	D. Blane & G. Leder	Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia: 1983–1988
1992	B. Atweh & J. Watson	Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia: 1988–1991
1996	B. Atweh, K. Owens, & P. Sullivan	Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia, 1992–1995
2000	K. Owens & J. Mousley	Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia 1996–1999
2004	B. Perry, G. Anthony, & C. Diezmann	Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia: 2000–2003

2008	H. Forgasz, A. Barkatsas, A. Bishop, B. Clarke, S. Keast, Wee Tiong Seah, & P. Sullivan	Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia 2004–2007 (Sense Publishers)
2012	Perry, B., Lowrie, T., Logan, T., MacDonald, A., & Greenlees, J.	Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia 2008–2011 (Sense Publishers)
2016	Makar, K., Dole, S., Visnovska, J., Goos, M., Bennison, A., & Fry, K.	Research in Mathematics Education in Australasia 2012–2015 (Springer)

---

The 2008 review was published by Sense Publishers, as part of their *New Directions in Mathematics and Science Education* series. On their website, Sense commented, “In bringing this regular review of the best of Australasian mathematics education to a broader international audience for the first time, readers will recognise the outstanding contributions made by Australasian mathematics education researchers and the potential their findings have to inform and direct future directions in the field”. This issue had 355 pages with 14 reviews of research as well as some more general overviews. In the introduction, the editors noted some major shifts in the policy context of research. Like some previous issues, the 2008 issue also contained some reflections of previous editors.

In 2012, Springer took over the publication of RiMEA, with MERGA retaining editorial rights.

### Books

MERGA has also supported the publication of a number of books written by its members. Those we have a record of follow, but there may have been others. Editors and titles are listed below.

J. Mulligan & M. Mitchelmore (Eds.)	<i>Children’s number learning</i>
J. Malone, W. Atweh & J. Northfield (Eds.)	<i>Research &amp; supervision in mathematics &amp; science education</i>
W. Atweh, H. Forgasz & B. Nebres (Eds.)	<i>Sociocultural research on mathematics education: An international perspective</i>
W. Atweh, M. Goos, R. Jorgensen, & D. Siemon (Eds.)	<i>Engaging the Australian Curriculum Mathematics - Perspectives from the field (online)</i>

### Conferences

Some of the most significant contributions to the development and operations of MERGA have been the conference organisers. MERGA conferences have not only provided opportunities for researchers to have their contributions formally reviewed and to present their work to interested peers, but over the years they have also include opportunities for Special Interest Groups to meet, for members to hear addresses by invited speakers (MERGA members as well as international guests), for formal and informal meetings and major decision-making at general meetings, for the establishment of professional networks, and—most importantly—for friendships to develop.

Running a conference is a major undertaking and members of conference committees have voluntarily contributed many hours of their time to make annual conferences the productive and delightful events. It is not only the conference co-ordinators who work hard in the year leading to their conference, but also their colleagues who are members of the conference committee and editorial teams, their students (employed or volunteers), and their organisation’s administrative

staff. Universities, too, have been generous with their facilities, other infrastructure, and staff time and many senior executives have provided a warm welcome to MERGA conference participants.

Occasionally, MERGA runs a joint conference, such as it did with MELA. There have also been back-to-back conferences with the Australia Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) with a day of overlapping program and responsibility. The first such joint AAMT-MERGA conference was held in Hobart in 1990. The first completely joint MERGA/AAMT conference was held in 2011 in Alice Springs.

In 2003, two new types of conference presentations were introduced: research symposia and round-table presentations.

### Conference proceedings

The texts of the papers presented at the first MERGA conference were published before delegates arrived, and that principle has been continued. The production and publication of the annual conference proceedings is a significant job, and appreciation is due to the hard work of their editors each year and to the many MERGA members and other colleagues who have supported the people listed as editors.

As noted above, conference proceedings were mainly published in the journal RMEA in the early years, then publication was discontinued for some time. The re-introduction of published conference proceedings in 1992 was instigated by Mike Mitchelmore. As the change required approval at the 1992 AGM, the papers were compiled into proceedings only after the 1992 conference.

The conference venues and the relevant Proceedings editors are listed below.

No.	Date	Title	Conference Coordinators or Editors	Place
1	1977	Research in Mathematics Education in Australia: Papers presented to the first conference of MERGA	M. A. (Ken) Clements, & J. M. Foyster	Melbourne, Vic
2	1978	Research in mathematics education in Australia 1978	J. Conroy & M. Dunkley	Sydney, NSW
3	1979	Research in mathematics education in Australia 1979	B. Atweh, G. Booker, C. Irons, & G. Jones	Brisbane, Qld
4	1980	Research in mathematics education in Australia 1980	Volume1: B. A. Foster; Volume 2: K. G. Milton	Hobart, Tas
5	1981	Proceedings of the fifth annual conference	J. Baxter & A. Larkin	Adelaide, SA
6	1982	Proceedings of the sixth annual conference	C. J Irons & D. Firth	Melbourne, Vic
7	1983	Proceedings of the seventh annual conference	R. Mortlock, J. Malone, & B. Kissane	Perth, WA
	1984	No conference, because the International Congress for Mathematics Education was held in Adelaide.		

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Conference Coordinators or Editors</b>	<b>Place</b>
8	1985	Proceedings of the eighth annual conference	L. Grimison	Sydney, NSW
9	1986	Proceedings of the ninth annual conference	M. Dunphy	Launceston, Tas
10	1987	Proceedings of the tenth annual conference	I. Putt	Townsville, Qld
11	1988	Monograph	N. Ellerton & K. Clements	Geelong, Vic
12	1989	Proceedings of the 12th annual conference	N. Thomas	Bathurst, NSW
13	1990	Proceedings of the 13th annual conference	J. Watson	Hobart, Tas
14	1991	Proceedings of the 14th annual conference	J. Malone, T. Herrington, & D. Miller	Perth, WA
15	1992	Space: The first and final frontier	B. Southwell, B. Perry, & K. Owens	Sydney, NSW
16	1993	Contexts in mathematics education	B. Atweh, C. Kanes, M. Carss, & G. Booker	Brisbane, Qld
17	1994	Challenges in mathematics education: Constraints on construction	G. Bell, B. Wright, N. Leeson, & J. Geake	Lismore, NSW
18	1995	Galtha	B. Atweh & S. Flavel	Darwin, NT
19	1996	Technology in mathematics education	P. C. Clarkson	Melbourne, Vic
20	1997	People in mathematics education	F. Biddulph & K. Carr	Rotorua, NZ
21	1998	Teaching mathematics in new times	C. Kanes, M. Goos, & E. Warren	Gold Coast, Qld
22	1999	Making the difference	J. M. Truran & K. M. Truran	Adelaide, SA
23	2000	Mathematics education beyond 2000	J. Bana & A. Chapman	Fremantle, WA
24	2001	Numeracy and beyond	J. Bobis, B. Perry, & M. Mitchelmore	Sydney, NSW
25	2002	Mathematics education in the South Pacific	B. Barton, K. C. Irwin, M. Pfannkuch, & M. O. J. Thomas	Auckland, NZ
26	2003	MERINO: Mathematics education research: Innovation, networking, opportunity	L. Bragg, C., Campbell, G., Herbert, & J. Mousley	Geelong, Vic
27	2004	Mathematics education for the third millennium: Towards 2010	I. Putt, R. Faragher, & M. McLean	Townsville, Qld
28	2005	Building Connections: Research, Theory and Practice	P. Clarkson, A. Downton, D. Gronn, M. Horne, A. McDonough, R. Pierce, & A. Roche	Melbourne, Vic

No.	Date	Title	Conference Coordinators or Editors	Place
29	2006	Identities, cultures and learning spaces	P. Grootenboer, R. Zevenbergen, & M. Chinnappan	Canberra
30	2007	Mathematics: Essential research, essential practice	J. Watson & K. Beswick	Hobart, Tas
31	2008	Navigating currents and charting directions	M. Goos, R. Brown, & K. Makar	Brisbane, Qld
32	2009	Crossing divides	R. Hunter, B. Bicknell, & T. Burgess	Wellington, NZ
33	2010	Mathematics education for the next decade		Fremantle, WA
34	2011	Mathematics: Traditions and [New] Practices	J. Clark, B. Kissane, J. Mousley, T. Spencer, & S. Thornton	Alice Springs, NT
35	2012	Mathematics education: Expanding horizons	J. Dindyal, L. P. Cheng, & S. F. Ng	Singapore
36	2013	Mathematics education: Yesterday, today and tomorrow	V. Steinle, L. Ball, & C. Bardini	Melbourne, Vic
37	2014	Curriculum in focus: Research guided practice	J. Anderson, M. Cavanagh, & A. Prescott	Sydney
38	2015	Mathematics education in the margins	M. Marshman, V. Geiger, & A. Bennison	Sunshine Coast, Qld
39	2016	Opening Up Mathematics Education Research	B. White, M. Chinnappan, & S. Trenholm	Adelaide, SA

Tightening up the reviewing criteria, as well as increased Australasian membership and participation in the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education (IGPME, or PME as it is commonly known now), led to a relatively narrow percentage of research papers being accepted. Concerns were raised about this and in 1996 and Judy Mousley and Andy Begg drafted the *Statement Relating to Presentation of Research and Scholarly Work at MERGA Conferences*. The document lists the scope and the types of papers that may be accepted for publication in MERGA conference proceedings as well as the types of conference presentations possible. Revisions of this document in 2003 accounted for the introduction of research symposia and round-table presentations.

In later years, though, there was concern about the number of papers being rejected (up to 50%). This meant that many young (and experienced) researchers did not have the chance to present full papers and engage in subsequent discussion, could not get financial assistance to attend the conference. Some expanded and submitted their papers to journals. This also meant that for some conferences there were insufficient papers to put together a viable program so conference organisers were forced to engage further reviewers to choose the best of initially-rejected papers. Further, researchers using more unusual research approaches or writing papers that did not follow traditional patterns were having their work rejected, and frequently authors received very contradictory and/or unhelpful reviews from different individuals.

At the AGM in 2007, the Executive was asked to attend to these problems. This resulted in the trialling of 2 new processes. The first was the formation of reviewing panels (2008), a process devised by Bob Perry. This involved teams of 6-8 members and proved popular with authors because they received one more detailed and helpful review of their work, and was popular with the reviewers because of the professional development resulting from the day's work. However, the rejection rate was still too high, so at the end of 2008 the Executive took up a suggestion made at the conference's Policy Meeting: to trial the acceptance of all papers that meet very basic criteria, some only for presentation (with publication of an abstract) and some for presentation and publication in full in the proceedings. More detailed guidance about writing conference papers, then turning them into journal papers was also provided to members via the MERGA website. The effects of these changes remain to be seen.

### A note of appreciation

Thank you to Ken Clements who made significant contributions to this history. Peter Galbraith, John Malone, Phil Clarkson, Mike Mitchelmore, and Graham Jones also provided valuable information.

Judy Mousley and Helen Forgasz

2017