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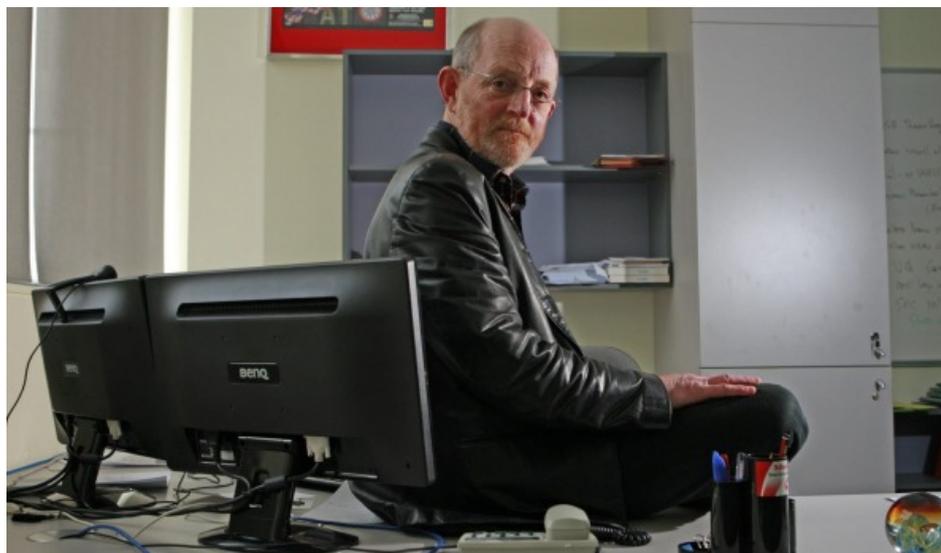
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New symposium will challenge mathematicians to solve industry problems



Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute director Geoff Prince said industry would challenge mathematicians with problems. **James Davies**



by **Tim Dodd**

A unique five-day hands-on symposium which brings mathematicians together with industry to drive innovation and save costs opens on Monday in Melbourne.

The event, AMSI Optimise, run by the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute, will expose research mathematicians to industry problems in the fast-growing field of optimisation

research.

AMSI director Geoff Prince said it would include a conference and workshops where industry people would see how highly theoretical mathematical algorithms could help their companies run more efficiently. Two industries will be the focus of this year's event – utilities and logistics.

"Research students and academics will show off their stuff and industry will challenge them with problems," he said.

It is also a training opportunity for graduate students and is expected to help PhD

students find internships with industry.

Victoria's lead scientist, Amanda Caple, who will launch the symposium, said that researchers and industry needed to harness innovation and prepare for a rapidly changing future.

She said that, by working together, industry and researchers could "identify new ways to drive efficiency".

Professor Prince said there had been an explosion in the use of optimisation to find the most efficient ways of operating in many industries. He said that as companies acquired more and more data about their operations, optimisation problems became more challenging, which drove the need for better algorithms.

He said that mathematicians had made major advances. "The mathematical improvements in commercial optimisation packages have beaten the improvements in hardware," he said.

Professor Prince also said that theoretical solutions to optimisation solutions were often applicable in widely different industries. For example a solution for an electrical network could be the same one as for a rail network, he said.



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