

Australia Day 2007: I have a dream

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I have a prediction. Or perhaps, more of a hope. Perhaps more of a hopeless dream.

The prediction is who is going to be Australian of the Year next year. But it is not a prediction over which we have no control. We can make it happen. We can turn our dream into a reality. I have a dream!

You can help my prediction come true by nominating, writing to the committee and generally engaging in advocacy for one of the greatest Australians.

Not a sportsperson. Not a politician. Not an entertainer. Not an actress. Not a B-grade celebrity. Not a political gesture. No, not any worthless such personage, however famous. I am talking about something important here.

Not another medical researcher, though they have been doing a pretty good job recently. Not even a Nobel Prize winner. Not even a Nobel Prize winner in something other than medicine. No, even better than that.

You see, by this time next year Australia will have its first Fields Medalist. This is an Australian who will have achieved the highest honour for a mathematician in the world, who has proved whole swathes of remarkable theorems, wiped out various branches of research, and generally devastated the mathematical landscape. That is Terry Tao. He is the man. And he should win - nay, he WILL win - Australian of the Year. Or maybe Young Australian of the Year, I'm not sure what the age restrictions are, but that would be a complete copout. Anything less would be a disgrace to the nation, and no fair-dinkum dinky-di beer-drinking flag-wearing Aussie could possibly disagree. That would be unAustralian. Even that small recalcitrant element of non-fair-dinkum non-dinky-di non-flag-wearing (but possibly still beer-drinking) sane people who remain in the country could not disagree either. Because every Australian is deeply appreciative of their lucky country, and don't we all know it, we're lucky that there are arbitrarily long arithmetic progressions of primes.

You can get it movin',
You can get it provin',
You can get it checking a prime.
A hard earned theorem needs a big Australian award, and the best
Australian Award is this.
You can get it arithmetin',
You can get it progressin',

You can get it any old how
Matter o' fact, he should get it now.

TERRY TAO IN 2007!

(If you don't know who Terry Tao is, you should now realise how good he is, and go forth and agitate on his behalf!)