



# MAKE it COUNT

inspiring

achievement



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## Numeracy, mathematics and Indigenous learners

Since our last (and first) newsletter there has been plenty of action in the project's key schools and clusters: all eight key schools and clusters, our academic friends, and Indigenous community leaders and educators came together in Adelaide for our first Network Meeting. Clusters are now well on the way with their planning for 2010 and beyond; a cluster 'ning' and a network 'ning' have been created (see over); our website is up and running; we have a project ambassador (see below); the Deputy Prime Minister made a media release about the project; and project evaluation is being developed with expressions of interest invited from the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia (MERGA) to be involved.

### IN BRIEF

#### PROJECT LAUNCH

Our official launch of *Make it count: Numeracy, mathematics and Indigenous learners* took place at the [National Indigenous Education Conference](#) in Hobart on 23 November.

#### PROJECT WEBSITE

*Make it count* now has its own website. Go to: <http://makeitcount.aamt.edu.au> to find up-to-date information about the project, recommended resources, communities of learners and so on.

#### FROM THE CLUSTERS

**Nerang:** *Dare to lead* Snapshots plus teacher/student attitude surveys  
**Culunga, Alberton, Noarlunga, Orange, Hebersham:** formation of clusters  
**Gladstone & Healesville:** cluster planning days. (Summaries of cluster plans for 2010-2012 in our next newsletter).

#### NATIONAL NETWORK LEARNING COMMUNITY

See over for details on how to join.



*Make it count* ambassador Chris Matthews (centre) with teacher Brad Jarro & principal Diarmuid O'Riordan, St Peter Claver College, Nerang Cluster

### Ambassador for Make it count

*Make it count* is thrilled to announce that Dr Chris Matthews is the project's ambassador. Chris is a lecturer at Griffith University and Coordinator of the Indigenous Research Network. He is from Stradbroke Island and has a PhD



in Mathematics. Chris is both an inspiration for educators working in mathematics and numeracy with our Indigenous students and an important role model for students to aspire to. More about Chris in our next newsletter.

### National network meeting

In what was probably a first for both Indigenous education and mathematics education when *Make it count* brought together Indigenous community leaders and educators, clusters of school leaders and university academics in mathematics education. About 70 representatives from the eight clusters converged on Adelaide for this very important meeting which was instrumental in defining the

*'A stronger commitment to including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in all levels of decision making must happen. Without this the programme will not deliver to its potential. A number of Teachers and Principals need to be led to include the community; if we achieve it in this area then it should translate to other key learning areas.'*

aims of the project, the partnerships and the professional learning communities that will *make it count*. Participants were able to plan in their cluster groups and to gather together in like groups for discussion. The community leaders' group stressed the importance of their role in the project and influencing others in their communities to get involved.

### Culunga students

Nine Curtin University Bachelor of Education students descended on Culunga Aboriginal School in the Swan Valley of Perth with their lecturers (and cluster mentors) Associate Professor Len Sparrow and Dr Chris Hurst. Their visit to the school was to conduct the Early Numeracy Research Project interviews developed by Professor Doug Clarke from Australian Catholic University.

Each student at the school is being interviewed with the diagnostic tool to assess their basic Number skills. The



interview per student takes about 30 minutes and the results will be used to inform the teaching learning program and will also be used as baseline data for the *Make it count* project. The interviews will be repeated in late 2010, 2011 and 2012 as ongoing monitoring of students' learning in number.

The Curtin students gained valuable insights into a valuable assessment tool and those involved in the project at Culunga have solid data on which to base their work - a win-win!



**Connecting community with classroom**

Significant inroads in to community engagement are an unequivocally critical dimension to the *Make it count* project. At the recent Network Meeting, community leaders got together to discuss the project in relation to community engagement.

What follows is a summary from community and education leader Annette Rutherford of Education Queensland. You can also see and hear Annette talk about embedding Indigenous perspectives on our website: <http://makeitcount.aamt.edu.au>

*Community participation is about how schools invite and work with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island community. This is not only something that schools need to improve but our*



Community leaders and educators at the MiC September Network Meeting in Adelaide

*community need to be supported so that they have the capacity to work with schools rather than be informed about what schools will be doing.*

*We as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people need to be proactive in approaching schools and delivering our needs to schools and incorporating our ways of working into schools. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities and parents should*

*not sit back and wait for schools to approach us.*

*At the same time schools need to be aware that they need to change how they invite and interact with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members and make changes or modify to meet the current group of people. Schools cannot embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island perspectives in curriculum, classrooms or schools.*

**Get involved: Networked learning community**

Current practice in making a difference to learning outcomes strongly advocates the effectiveness of networked learning communities. Our work in *Make it count*

is about making the work we do really count and thus, making a difference to the numeracy and mathematics outcomes of Indigenous learners. Through authentic collaboration, an online learning community will be a valuable tool to help achieve this.

Perhaps it is time to rethink our roles and the ways in which we form partnerships, and consider new approaches to collaborative learning and improving mathematics outcomes of our Indigenous students. Also, how can we make use of emerging technologies to improve our teaching and learning?

What are the benefits?

1. Grow leaders in Indigenous education and mathematics education for the future by leaders of the present
2. Inspire others and be inspired by others
3. Collaboratively tackle some of the challenges in teaching and learning of mathematics and numeracy
4. Helps reduce isolation

It is likely that such a learning community will make a huge contribution to successful outcomes of Indigenous learners and add a new dimension to professional development in the area of mathematics and Indigenous education.

If you would like to play a role in such a community, go to <http://aamt-makeitcountnetwork.ning.com> to register.

**NETWORKED LEARNING COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT COUNT**

*Make it count* is building a national online network of leaders, teachers and Indigenous educators beyond the Clusters of schools. To register 'Sign In' at:

<http://aamt-makeitcountnetwork.ning.com>

**RESOURCES TO LOOK AT**

Check out [What Works. The Work Program's](#) new website designed to help schools plan and take action to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students.

Paper by R. Zevenbergen & R. Niesche, [Reforming Mathematics Classrooms: A case of remote Indigenous education](#) and very relevant to mainstream schools.

Go to the *Make it count* [website](#) for more resources to look at.

**Click here for a copy of Make it count Newsletter I** or email Melinda at: [admin@aamt.edu.au](mailto:admin@aamt.edu.au).

**Contact us**

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