



6 June 2024

Communiqué

Leaders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mathematics Alliance (ATSIMA) and the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) along with state and territory maths associations met in person at a National Summit at the University of Adelaide on the 10-11 April 2024.

Purpose of the Summit

The Close the Gap report shows that mathematics education continues to fail Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. NAPLAN results show that the educational gap in numeracy is not closing and in some areas is widening, and the Productivity Report on Close the Gap highlights the need for the system to go beyond the business-as-usual programs.

“The latest NAPLAN results demonstrate the shocking, seemingly entrenched, and in some cases widening, gap for Indigenous students in maths,” said ATSIMA CEO and Quandamooka mathematician Professor Chris Matthews.

“For example, Year 9 Indigenous students perform, on average, at Year 5 level in numeracy.”

“That’s unacceptable. It’s an educational gap that has the potential to impact their entire lives – permanently putting the handbrakes on their career opportunities.”

The purpose of the Summit was to mobilise the mathematics education community of Australia to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in mathematics.

As a first step, all delegates at the Summit created a Commitment Statement which was signed by all delegates and, from the Commitment Statement, each State and Territory has developed a draft action plan.

Commitment Statement

This Commitment Statement is:

Our responsibility is to drive a cultural shift to make a systemic difference in mathematics education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.

We commit to:

- *truth-telling which recognises the past and builds capacity for the future*
- *building relationships by listening to and learning from and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities*
- *creating sustainable partnerships based on trust and respect*
- *leading and supporting culturally responsive practices and*
- *advocating for a shared understanding of success*

In doing so, we agree to be unwavering and accountable in actioning this commitment to achieve positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.

Next Steps

Systemic change is urgent to address mathematics education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. Based on the Commitment Statement, each maths association is now finalising their Action Plans that will be implemented in their state/territory.

Allan Dougan CEO of AAMT says: “It’s the urgent task of education leaders all around Australia to work together to address this – we simply cannot let education outcomes like this sustain and get worse.”

The next phase of the strategy is to approach the state/territory and federal education ministers to continue to drive this critical agenda in culturally responsive mathematics education.

Further Information

The Summit caught the attention of ABC Breakfast TV who interviewed ATSIMA CEO Prof. Chris Matthews during the Summit. The interview can be seen [here](#).

The Summit was generously supported by our philanthropic/corporate donors including the BHP Foundation and the Reserve Bank of Australia.

ATSIMA and AAMT along with the state and territory maths associations are looking forward to continuing our journey and collaborating with our partners.

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