

Singleton High students the first to participate in a 'Choose Maths Day': PHOTOS

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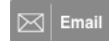
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Singleton High School (SHS) students were the first in the nation to take part in a 'Choose Maths Day'.



A new initiative designed to stop a disturbing, and steady, decline in the number of students studying advanced maths around the country.

It also aims to breakdown the perception that "boys brains are more suited to maths than girls" and thus, encourage young women to give it a go.

AMSI. (<http://amsi.org.au/>) BHP Billiton (<http://www.bhpbilliton.com/>) and 120 schools around the country, are joining forces to ensure high school students select STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects, and then continue to pursue them at university.

This collaborative effort takes a holistic approach to tackling this problem with AMSI's schools outreach officers also going into classrooms and working with teachers.

AMSI schools outreach officer in the Upper Hunter, Marcus Garrett says they are 25 schools in the region participating in the program.

"The intention is to encourage young people to consider advanced levels of mathematics because of the importance of maths in the new economy," he explains.

"The students we have chosen for today are already working at a higher level, we have intentionally targeted these kids because we want them to consider advanced maths."

He says the University of Sydney, and others, are now re-introducing maths as a pre-requisite for engineering and science degrees.

Mr Garrett explains they are also focusing on encouraging young women to study math.

"Young women's participation in advanced maths is half of that of young men in year 11 and 12 and this falls even further in tertiary education," he explains.

"This means women have remained under represented in STEM careers, that then contributes to a persistent wage gap."

The day involved students working in groups, and listening to guest speakers who link maths to the real world.

SHS principal Jo Gray says they are excited to be part of the ChooseMaths program which is designed to empower students to pursue mathematics at a higher level as well as encourage maths as a career choice.

“Being involved in this five year program will give our students exposure to industry speakers who draw links with mathematics and future associated careers. It will provide team and individual challenges and increase student engagement with the subject,” she says.

“To have the support of AMSI and BHP in this program will give a real boost to the quality of experience we are able to offer our student body.”

Mr Garrett says 40 per cent of those teaching the subject in our schools are not specialist maths teachers.



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