

New survey reveals half of Aussie adults couldn't help a year 10 student with their maths



[Westpac offers \\$99 maths app free to students](#)

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TODAY Show star Lisa Wilkinson still has nightmares about algebra after flunking the HSC maths exam — and a new study has revealed she is not alone.

Westpac's 2017 Numeracy Study found 31 per cent of Australian adults experience maths anxiety and half of all adults would struggle if asked to help with a Year 10 student's homework.

“They lost me the minute they started throwing the alphabet into maths,” Wilkinson said.

“The kids made a mistake coming to me with their maths homework, I told them to go and see their father.

“I told them: ‘Bring your English to me kids, I’ve got hours of spare time to help with that’.”

But comedian and mathematician Adam Spencer said this is the classic mistake of people with maths anxiety.



The Sunday Telegraph guest editor Lisa Wilkinson. Picture: Tim Hunter

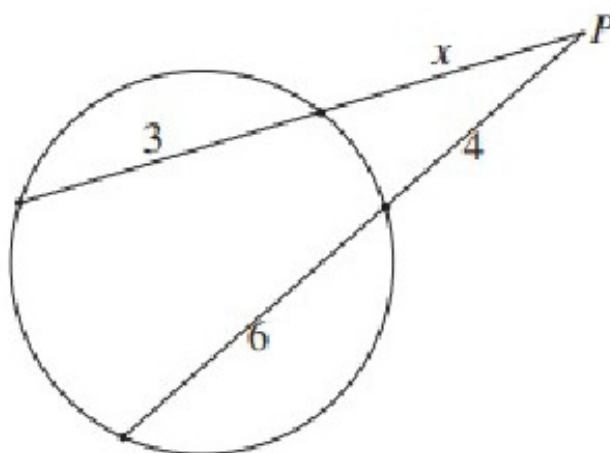
“It’s not a badge of honour to say: ‘I was terrible at maths at school’ and it’s not great when women tell their daughters to ask their dads instead, because young girls look up their mums as the greatest people in the world,” Spencer said.

Spencer’s suggestion is for parents to “get in early and go on the journey

with your kids” to understand the work — or sit them down in front of the country’s most famous maths teacher, Eddie Woo from Cherrybrook High School, on YouTube.

Another teacher who’s helping kids wrap their minds around maths is Keith Barnett from Epping North Public School, who was named the most outstanding primary teacher in the country by the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) on Thursday.

3 Two secants from the point P intersect a circle as shown in the diagram.



NOT TO
SCALE

What is the value of x ?

- (A) 2
- (B) 5
- (C) 7
- (D) 8

Could you solve this question if your child was to ask you for help?

$$\left(x + \frac{2}{x}\right)^2 - 6\left(x + \frac{2}{x}\right) + 9 = 0.$$

Is your head hurting already?

As a child I hated maths because I didn't think it had any relevance to my life, until a phenomenal teacher showed me all the amazing ways it could be used," Mr Barnett said.

"I'm now determined to make maths approachable and interesting to my students, not to mention they learn more when they're enthusiastic and having fun."

Another way to get kids interested in maths is to throw money into the mix.

Westpac has partnered with Mathspace, an online maths program, to launch Solve to Save, which reimburses the \$10 a week subscription fee into a child's account if they successfully complete their homework.



Tracey Hands with her son Finn Hutchinson smashing through homework together. Picture: Sam Ruttyn

Coogee mum Tracey Hands was delighted when her 9-year-old son Finn Hutchinson was firing up the iPad to crunch sums, even after he'd done all his school homework.

Finn's already amassed \$50 and has plans to buy a cricket bat — or an apartment in Coogee.

Fortunately, Finn doesn't rank himself among the 24 per cent of Australian children who think they're not smart enough to do maths, but he wouldn't ordinarily rush home to practice long division.

"I don't mind maths when it's easy but if it's a really hard test it starts to get a bit annoying," he said.