

PREFACE

This is a record of the proceedings of the 28th annual conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia (MERGA). The theme of this conference is *Building connections: Research, theory and practice*. This is a timely theme. It reminds us of a central pillar of MERGA from the very beginning. There has always been a strong emphasis on the mutual interplay between these crucial aspects of our professional life. It is also a timely theme in the political milieu in which we find ourselves. We are at times accused of not paying enough attention to practice, whether it be the practice of members in the schoolroom, or the practice of members in university tutorial rooms. On the other hand we also get accused of being only interested in practice and do not spend enough time theorising our research. Perhaps, since we are caught in the cross fire, we are as a community rather than as individuals getting the balance between these mutually supportive activities, about right.

We are pleased to welcome any conference participants who are attending MERGA for the first time. We hope you will make yourselves known so you can be made welcome and supported. There are attendees from at least eleven countries. There are also colleagues from just about every tertiary institution in both Australia and New Zealand that has an education program. We also have attendees from a number of other university Faculties and Departments including mathematics departments. A number of attendees are from primary or secondary schools, from Ministries of Education, or private curriculum companies. This conference seems to have a very rich diversity which no doubt will enhance our thinking together.

Each of the research papers, the symposium and round table discussion abstracts accepted and printed in these proceedings were peer reviewed, without the author(s) being identified, by two experienced mathematics education researchers who followed strict guidelines that have been honed over a number of years. Where the two reviewers, who did not know the identity of the other reviewer, disagreed about the acceptability of a paper, another blind review was carried out by a third reviewer, without the two previous reviews being available to the third reviewer. Only those research papers that were accepted by two reviewers have been included in these conference proceedings.

One of the good features of the organisation of this conference has been the participation in various ways of MERGA members from all universities in Victoria that have education programs: Australian Catholic University, Ballarat University, Deakin University, La Trobe University, Melbourne University, Monash University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Victoria University. The names of the members of the Organising Committee and the Editorial Committee are listed elsewhere. We thank them and their various institutions that have provided free of charge various meeting facilities and other resources to enhance our planning. We particularly thank RMIT University for their generous support with facilities for this conference. At this time when there seems to be more and more emphasis on competition between institutions to compete for resources, it is wonderful to see that at a professional level the amount of cooperation between colleagues supersedes such motives.

We would also wish to thank the sponsor and exhibitors, who are listed elsewhere, for their support.

Colleen Vale
Chair, Conference Organising Committee

Philip Clarkson
Chief Editor