

Preface

This is a record of the Proceedings of the 38th annual conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia (MERGA), held at the University of the Sunshine Coast. The Proceedings were published on the MERGA website at www.merga.edu.au, as well as being made available to conference delegates on a USB.

The theme of the conference was *Mathematics education in the margins*. There were several reasons for choosing this theme. First, the University of the Sunshine Coast is a regional university seen by many as being in the “margins”. The conference was therefore an opportunity to share the endeavours of the many people who teach, research, and reach out to those students who feel that their mathematical experiences are in the margins. It was also an opportunity to question the role of mathematics education in helping students come out from the margins. To that end, the keynote presentations addressed this theme with Professor Peter Sullivan presenting his work on engaging students by posing challenging mathematics tasks to prompt learning through problem solving and reasoning. He discussed how these tasks could be differentiated so that all students could achieve whilst developing persistence. Professor Tom Lowrie challenged us by stating “It is also important that our research empowers people, and that our recommendations and implications improve systems, especially for the disadvantaged.” Professor Jill Adler discussed her work with some of the world’s most marginalised teachers and students, in *schools for the very poor* in South Africa.

Presentations at the conference comprised research papers, round tables, and short communications that covered a wide variety of topics relevant to mathematics education across all countries, with a particular focus on the Australasian region. Research into mathematics education in early childhood settings, primary and secondary schools, or in tertiary institutions was presented and discussed. In accordance with established MERGA procedures, all research papers were blind peer reviewed by panels of mathematics educators with appropriate expertise in the field. Papers could be accepted for presentation only, or for both presentation and publication in the Proceedings. All papers initially accepted for presentation only were reconsidered by two members of an additional panel of independent expert reviewers. Only those research papers finally accepted for presentation and publication are published in these Proceedings. The abstracts for short communications and round tables were also blind peer reviewed. The published Proceedings include the keynote papers, research papers, and abstracts for round tables and short communications.

The Editorial Team would like to acknowledge and thank Review Panel Chairs and all reviewers for their efforts in reading and providing constructive feedback in a short timeframe. Ensuring the published papers meet high academic standards is an important and shared responsibility of the MERGA community. We would also like to thank the authors for taking the time and necessary care to use the MERGA conference paper template and guidelines before submitting their papers.

The Conference Organising Committee welcomed participants from all states and territories of Australia, as well as from many countries including Canada, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Singapore. We hope you enjoyed your time at the conference, making new connections and new friends, and that you had a chance to enjoy the Sunshine Coast and the many wonderful places to visit. We would also like to thank our Queensland-based colleagues who helped us to welcome you and show you around. We certainly enjoyed meeting you and hosting this conference.

Margaret Marshman
Chair, Conference Organising Committee and Chief Editor
Vince Geiger and Anne Bennison (Editors)