

Media Release
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Maths can launch you into the world of space and spies

Encrypting secret codes, predicting the likelihood of asteroids hitting earth and modelling populations of species are among the career opportunities on offer to would-be mathematicians in the 21st century.

MathsReach, officially launched today by Prime Minister Helen Clark at Onehunga High School, is a new resource (available on the web and CD/DVD) designed to promote the array of opportunities in mathematics open to high school students.

The *MathsReach* teaching resource features colourful articles and interviews with mathematicians working in a range of fields. It debunks the myth that mathematics is a theoretical science of little use to the real world.

MathsReach includes interviews with New Zealand mathematicians, like James Sneyd who works on mathematical questions in physiology, and Jenny Brown who applies statistical techniques to study animal populations. The resource will also provide profiles ongoing mathematical research, problems and information demonstrating the applications of mathematics.

MathsReach is an initiative of the New Zealand Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (NZIMA), a government-funded Centre of Research Excellence hosted by The University of Auckland.

"Mathematics is highly pertinent to many of the questions asked today in industry, healthcare and business," says Professor Marston Conder, who is Co-Director of the NZIMA with Fields Medalist Vaughan Jones.

"Mathematics is often perceived as a boring, purely theoretical science. With *MathsReach*, students can get a tangible feel for the wide variety of ways maths can be used, including applications of quite fundamental parts of the subject, and we hope it inspires them to continue their maths education beyond the school classroom."

Today's launch was attended by maths teachers and principals from schools around the Auckland region. For more information see www.nzima.org.

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