

< WA NEWS

## Bunbury teacher scoops national award for inspiring Aboriginal girls to enjoy maths

**Bethany Hiatt, Education Editor**

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Tia Holt 13, Lynneya Coomer 13, Newton Moore head of Mathematics Ashley Stewart, Georgia Pepper 13, and Angel Anderson 14. Picture: Jon Gellweiler/South Western Times

Bunbury teacher Ashley Stewart has won a national award for her work inspiring Aboriginal girls to enjoy maths classes.

The Newton Moore Senior High School maths department head last week received the top teaching prize awarded by the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute for mentoring girls in maths.

Ms Stewart used hands-on projects such as building a hand-cranked phone charger to spark the interest of Year 8 Aboriginal girls in mathematical concepts.

She said that not only did the students show more interest in maths but their behaviour and attendance levels also improved.

Ms Stewart, who studied engineering before becoming a teacher six years ago, said too many girls started believing they were not good at maths at a young age. “I found there were too few women in engineering in general and I was quite bothered by that because I didn’t feel supported,” she said.

“And I felt the only way to really get more women in the field was to teach them.”

Ms Stewart said she hoped to put the \$20,000 award towards buying a computer-based program to help girls develop their spatial awareness.

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