

# Maths tests 'don't add up'

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THE new NAPLAN school maths tests, partly used to create the controversial My School website, have been attacked over flaws and inconsistencies.

Junior papers are harder than tests for older students, calculator-approved papers are made up largely of questions that don't need a calculator and long division appears to have disappeared completely, according to maths teacher and education consultant Russell Boyle.

"One of the most difficult numeracy questions this year was the problem about Peta's plums. Yet this question was placed on the year 7 and not the year 9 non-calculator paper," Mr Boyle said.

"There were few questions on the calculator-approved papers in which the use of a calculator was justified. Most questions involved

## NAPLAN MATHS: YOU TAKE THE TEST

**PROBLEM 1:** Peta has some plums to give to her friends. If she gives each friend 4 plums, she will have 6 plums left over. She cannot give each friend 5 plums because she would need 4 more plums. How many plums does Peta have?

**PROBLEM 2:** A Ferris wheel turns at a constant speed. It takes 4 minutes to turn through a complete circle.

What angle does the Ferris wheel turn through in 90 seconds?

**PROBLEM 3:** A prize of \$5934 is shared equally among 15 friends. How much does each person get in dollars and cents?

**ANSWERS:** 1. Peta had 46 plums; 2. The Ferris wheel turns through 135 degrees; 3. Each person receives \$395.60.

relatively straightforward calculations best performed with pen and paper," he said.

"Long division is an important numeracy skill. It helps students to deepen and broaden their understanding of numbers.

"The long-division algorithm involves multiplication and subtraction, as well as division. It is used in

advanced algebra and coordinate geometry.

"Students who have not been drilled in long division find these areas of the secondary school mathematics curriculum particularly difficult to master," Mr Boyle said.

"The more we improve test validity, the more valid is My School," he said.