Local Hero makes tricky maths all add up

Sarah Martin

Not so much a YouTube sensation as a Wootube sensation, Eddie Woo has broken the mould for high school teaching.

The 32-year-old western Sydney teacher at Cherrybrook Technology High School is perhaps Australia’s most engaging maths teacher, defying the stereotype of the cardigan-wearing, calculator-wielding educator who would send students to sleep.

Named this year’s winner of the Australia Local Hero award, Mr Woo is famous for his infectious enthusiasm for maths teaching and has a loyal “Wootube” following of more than 100,000 subscribers.

Mr Woo started posting his maths videos online in 2012 for a student who was sick with cancer and was missing classes. Soon after, the videos aimed at making maths relatable and interesting were being shared across the country.

His parents had hoped he would become a doctor, but Mr Woo, who excelled at school, chose the unconventional path and opted to pursue his passion for teaching.

He is a keen advocate for equitable education and in his spare time volunteers for an outreach program at the University of Sydney.

“This Australia Day I invite you to become a mathematician,” he said this week. “When you look at people who seem so different ... look different, who sound different and believe different things, you can be a mathematician by looking at different people and calling them all by the same name: Australians.”

2018 Local Hero Eddie Woo.