



Chair of Directors Annual Report 2016

Dr Grant Kleeman

Chair, Australian Geography Teachers Association Limited

AGTA's principal focus in 2016 has been to support the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Geography* and its various state- and territory-based derivatives. A key element of this support has been the provision of professional learning opportunities for classroom teachers (*AGTA Geography Roadshow*), publication of a skills-based text *Geography Skills Unlocked*, ongoing promotion of *GeogSpace*, a contribution to the Australian Academy of Sciences Strategic Directions paper for the Geographical Sciences, and the development of a brochure to promote the study of Geography in schools.

AGTA's priorities for 2017

The AGTA Board agreed to focus on the following initiatives for 2017:

- a skills-based *AGTA Geography Roadshow* – a professional learning program offered in conjunction with State- and Territory-based affiliates;
- the publication of a new text-based resource – *Communicating in Geography and History*;
- the mapping of the Professional Standards for Accomplished Geography Teachers against the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Professional Teaching Standards;
- the support of primary school Geography; and
- the enhancement of the *GeogSpace* website.

Geography Skills Unlocked

Geography Skills Unlocked was published in August 2016. As the Project Coordinator, I would like to thank the lead writers, John Butler and Mick Law, and all those who contributed their professional expertise to earlier editions of the text (published under the title *Keys to Geography Skills*). I would also like to thank Nick Tapp (editor), Patrick Cannon and Kerry Cooke (designers), Guy Holt and Bruce Rankin (illustrators), Jo-Anne Ridgeway (cover designer) and Geoffrey Paterson (proof reader). Their professional expertise has contributed to what is a very impressive publication. The challenge now is to market the text nationwide. This will ensure that AGTA's considerable investment in this initiative is recouped and a surplus generated to sustain the activities of AGTA well into the future. It is envisaged that an update of the text will be

undertaken in 2018–2019 with the publication of a second edition of the textbook scheduled for early 2020.

AGTA Geography Roadshow

The *AGTA Geography Roadshow* initiative, which commenced in early 2015, continued in 2016 with events held in South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. The one-day professional learning event included both primary and secondary programs. Topics addressed included thinking geographically, inquiry in Geography, fieldwork, ICT in Geography, and developing literacy through Geography. More than 600 teachers participated in the program over the course of 2015–2016.

The AGTA Board has endorsed another such initiative for 2017. The upcoming series of *Roadshow* events will focus on Geography Skills. It will be a great opportunity to promote *Geography Skills Unlocked*.

GeogSpace

AGTA continues to promote the *GeogSpace* website. The website was an initiative of AGTA supported by the resources of Education Services Australia. This innovative web-based resource has been designed to support primary and secondary teachers implementing the *Australian Curriculum: Geography*. Developed by a team of practising Geography teachers, the site ensures that all schools across Australia have access to a unique resource that reflects best practice using current technology and pedagogies. AGTA has committed funds to ensure that the site continues to serve the needs of classroom teachers.

Standards Mapping

The mapping of the Professional Standards for Accomplished Geography Teachers against the AITSL Professional Teaching Standards will be of use to teachers undergoing the accreditation process. It will provide the subject-specific language required to demonstrate the mastery of the AITSL professional standards at the *Accomplished* level.

Other activities and initiatives

AGTA Conference

The AGTA Conference is to be held from 8–12 January 2017 in Melbourne, Victoria. The conference will feature a number of outstanding keynote speakers including Dr Rachel Carey, Professor William Cartwright, Professor David Lambert, Dr Michael Solem and Professor Bruce Rasmussen.

Conference participants will also have the opportunity to participate in a diverse education program of presentations, workshops and field trips. There will also be a pre-conference study tour to western Victoria.

The conference is being held at the University of Melbourne's Parkville campus. The campus offers a variety of unique cultural, architectural and landscape features which play an important part in the history of the City of Melbourne and the story of Victoria.

A conference coordinating committee, led by Trish Douglas, Leonie Brown and Rob Berry, has done a terrific job in developing the program and organising what will be a very successful undertaking.

Publications

Geographical Education

Geographical Education is the professional journal of AGTA and is on the DEST Register of Refereed Journals. The journal was published in print form until Volume 25, 2012. The journal has since been published in a digital format and is available on the Association's website. The ISSN for *Geographical Education* is ISSN 2204-0242.

Contributions of varying length are invited, with a maximum of 5,000 words for major articles and research reports. Shorter articles of 2,000 words, featuring classroom strategies, reflections on particular issues and practices in geography teaching, in-service education workshops, and comments on previous articles are especially welcome.

The theme for *Geographical Education* Vol. 29 is *Fieldwork Questions*. There are four articles, two of which are refereed contributions. Julian Woolhouse has contributed *A case study of progressing Geography fieldwork skills over Years 7–10*. In his article, Julian investigates the progression of fieldwork skills in Years 7–10 through an examination of evidence drawn from fieldwork booklets, fieldwork report instructions, and observations drawn from both fieldtrips and the classroom. He found that by the time

they reached Year 10 Geography students could successfully employ fieldwork skills with minimal guidance from their Geography teacher.

Aaron Bermingham has contributed an article – *Investigating the extent to which student-led inquiry is supported by fieldwork booklet design*. Aaron focused on student booklets designed to facilitate fieldwork in Years 7, 8 and 9, in particular data collection in the field. Aaron determined that, while geography students were highly engaged in their assigned fieldwork tasks, the booklets provided limited opportunities for students to plan their fieldwork inquiries, clarify their values, or reflect on the fieldwork inquiry process.

The journal's two refereed articles are:

- Dr Lou Preston article – *Field 'work' vs 'feel' trip: Approaches to out-of-class experiences* – is a qualitative content analysis of various examples of fieldwork reported in the Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria's journal, *Interaction*. She argues that school-based geography fieldwork tends to be teacher-led, focusing on knowledge acquisition and skill development rather than the affective and sensory dimensions.
- Nick Hutchinson's paper – *Landscapes both invite and defy definition* – argues in favour of approaches to fieldwork that extend beyond the all-seeing eye to engage students with their personal geographies in terms of lived practice and corporeal engagement with the landscape.

The issue also features an extensive range of book reviews sourced by Geoffrey Paterson.

Geographical Education, Volume 29, is now available on the AGTA website.

AGTA thanks Nick Hutchinson and Geoffrey Paterson for their ongoing contribution to the work of AGTA. It is greatly appreciated.

Study Geography Brochure

AGTA has funded the development of a *Study Geography* brochure. The brochure includes text and images focusing on: Why Geography?; Where can your passion for Geography take you?; and Studying Geography is a lot of fun!. The resource will be very useful for promoting the benefits of studying Geography to students and parents.

AGTA thanks Trish Douglas and the GTAV team for compiling this excellent promotional resource.

Thinking Geographically DVD

The second edition of this popular resource has an extensive range of geographical thinking examples, exercises and articles and over 50 additional *Thinkpieces*. It also features new links to Australian Curriculum resources materials, professional learning presentations, and curriculum planning suggestions.

Being a Citizen CD-ROM

A new innovative product has been released to help teachers provide opportunities for students to explore the *Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship*. Content of the *Being a citizen* resource includes: links to civics and citizenship teaching materials; political mapping classroom activities; social issues worksheets and processes; GIS and political mapping activities; links to curriculum documents and teaching materials on civics and citizenship; and professional reading links on civics and citizenship education.

Malcolm McInerney is to be congratulated on developing such an excellent educational resource.

Geographia

Geographia is AGTA's newsletter. It is used to update the broader membership on the activities of AGTA and its state- and territory-based affiliates. Julie Hearnden and Anna Hind are to be congratulated on the quality of the newsletter. It is great to see Directors from our newest affiliate making such an important contribution to the work of AGTA.

Competitions

Australian Geography Competition and Geography's Big Week Out

AGTA is again pleased to be associated with this important national initiative offered by the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland. In 2016, more than 66,000 students participated in the competition.

The Australian Geography Competition is a great opportunity to promote the study of Geography in schools. Winners of the competition can also be invited to join the International Geography Olympiad (iGeo) team and attend Geography's Big Week Out to be held on North Stradbroke Island near Brisbane in December 2016. Thank you to GTAQ for taking on responsibility for the GBWO in 2016. The 2017 and 2018 GBWO will be organised by the Geography Teachers' Association of South Australia.

International Geography Olympiad

In August, Australian students outperformed 44 other countries to win first place in the 13th International Geography Olympiad (iGeo) held in Beijing, China. Singapore, Thailand, Russia and China-Taipei were placed second, third, fourth and fifth respectively.

The Australian Team members were:

- Andreas Orsmond, Sydney Grammar School, NSW;
- Claire Yung, Narrabundah College, ACT;
- Deepan Kumar, Narrabundah College, ACT;
- Georgia Worner, Loreto College Kirribilli, NSW.

Professional advocacy

Australian Alliance of Associations in Education (AAAE)

The AAAE is a body specifically formed to represent the interests of teacher professional associations at a national level. The body's role is to lobby at a Federal level on issues affecting teachers and their professional practice. AGTA is a founding member of the newly established entity. Malcolm McInerney continues to play a leadership role in the Association.

Australian Federation of Societies for Studies of Society and Environment (AFSSSE)

AFSSSE is a consortium of four professional associations – Australian Association for Environmental Education, Australian Geography Teachers Association, Business Educators Australasia, and Social Educators Association of Australia. AFSSSE was formed in 1992 to act as the peak organisation for the broad area of study known as Studies of Society and Environment. Rob Berry continues to represent the views and interests of AGTA on AFSSSE. AGTA's ongoing affiliation with AFSSSE is to be reviewed in 2017.

National Committee for the Geographical Sciences

The AGTA Board voted to support the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee for the Geographical Science's *Strategic Directions for the Geographical Sciences*. The plan will include a focus on the contribution of school geography to the nation's strategic research priorities. The purpose of the document is

to inform policymakers – in government and industry – about the role of Geography. Contributors included Jeana Kriewaldt, John Butler, Grant Kleeman, Malcolm McInerney, Nick Hutchinson and Susan Caldis. The paper is in its final stages of preparation and will be published in 2017.

New South Wales (finally) adopts the *Australian Curriculum: Geography*

NSW is the last jurisdiction to implement the *Australian Curriculum: Geography*. In doing so, it rejected ACARA's Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum and maintained the mandatory studies in Geography (and History K–10). A syllabus document has been developed based on ACARA's originally endorsed Geography curriculum (Version 7.5). The NSW Geography Syllabus is, however, a somewhat *liberal* interpretation of the *Australian Curriculum: Geography*. The content has been pared back and topics have been swapped from year to year in Years 7 and 8 and Years 8 and 9. No commitment has yet been made to the implementation of the Geography curriculum for the senior years.

AGTA's finances

The cost of publishing *Geography Skills Unlocked* has had a negative impact on the finances of the Association. The costs involved should, however, be quickly recouped and a healthy profit generated by this important initiative. The Board is keen to make further investment in such resources, and in professional learning programs aligned to the needs of schools implementing the *Australian Curriculum: Geography* (and its various state- and territory-based derivatives). It is also keen to promote the study of Geography in schools more generally.

Malcolm McInerney

After many years of exemplary service, Malcolm McInerney completes his long tenure

as an AGTA Director. During his time as Chair (2008–2013) and the period during which he served as Immediate Past Chair (2014–2016), Malcolm made an outstanding contribution to the Association and geographical education more generally. It is by no means an understatement to state that under Malcolm's leadership the Association achieved a new level of authority. The decisive role AGTA played in the development and implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: Geography* is a mark of Malcolm's leadership as is the enhanced status and effectiveness of the Association as a representative body. He has also contributed to AGTA's emergence as a provider of professional learning and the provider a quality educational resources. Of particular note was his coordination of the *GeogSpace* initiative.

New AGTA Executive

At AGTA's Annual General Meeting on Sunday 30 October, Trish Douglas was elected Chair and Daryl Michie Deputy Chair. Susan Caldis will continue as AGTA Secretary and Grant Kleeman will take on the roles of Immediate Past Chair and Honorary Treasurer.

Thank you!

I would like to thank the AGTA Board for its support during my tenure as Chair. It has been a real privilege to lead such a wonderful organisation. It is, however, time to *pass the baton* to a younger generation of geographers. I wish my successor well and look forward to my ongoing involvement as Immediate Past Chair.

A special vote of thanks goes to Susan Caldis (AGTA Secretary), Malcolm McInerney (Immediate Past Chair), Leonie Brown (Honorary Treasurer) and Trish Douglas (Deputy Chair).

AGTA can only remain strong and relevant if each Director commits, on behalf of the affiliate they represent, to advance the aims of the Association.