

# GEOGRAPHIA

Geographia is the national newsletter of the Australian Geography Teachers' Association Limited.

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Occasional Newsletter of The Australian Geography Teachers' Association Limited

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## 105 meeting Adelaide 30 Oct 2010



### Overview

Welcome to all Board Members to the 105th AGTA meeting at Scotch College – the venue of the AGTA National Conference 2011. A special welcome was extended to Sandy Stuart (Vice President of GTASA), who will become involved extensively with AGTA as a South Australian delegate).

AGTA continues to be in a sound financial position - the balance sheet as at the 23/10/2010 shows AGTA's net assets of \$219,394.95. We need to be mindful that payments for AGTA Conference will be forthcoming in January following the

conference. The move to on-line banking has ensured a quick turn-around time for payments and invoices.

The principal activities of the company (AGTA) during the course of the year were to promote the teaching, study and application of geography in Australia, to provide channels through which teachers of geography in Australia may express opinions on educational matters and to promote and circulate the results of research into geographical education.

### New AGTA Resource

AGTA explored the potential to develop a resource for those teachers who teach geography, (both within the primary and secondary sectors) with no geographical knowledge or skills.

While AGTA cannot compete with publishers to develop student texts, the association could develop a teacher resource that could be customised each year. A model already exists for development of a "teaching geography" handbook.

Once curriculum is set in 2011 (August / September) it may be feasible to develop a resource commencing with a primary resources. A generic resource to be developed and could include literacy in geography; assessment tasks; support for teachers.

# GeoCareers

Meet a Geographer | Studying Geography | Using Geography | Resources | About us

... as it turns out, the sky



## Agta Awards

AGTA Awards entries closed on 29 October 2010. A number of entries for most categories have been received. It is evident that the AGTA Awards do raise the profile of AGTA.

Winners will be notified as soon as possible. Award Awards will be presented at AGTA Conference 2011 on the Monday night wine tasting social function.

## Awards for National Geography

Friends of AGTA Award Proposal - this initiative will provide the vehicle to thank and give recognition to individuals, groups or institutions which have made a significant contribution over an extended period of time to the work of AGTA in promoting geographical education in Australia.

The proposed award will include a framed certificate stating AGTA's appreciation of their contribution to the goal of AGTA to promote geography in Australia; and a 'coffee table' geography book. Overview of award recipients will be provided in Geographical Education and uploaded on the AGTA website.

## Going National Geography Poster

A new set of posters is being developed. At this stage the key theme is: *'Geography Going National'*. Dilemma was whether we use Australian or global images. Draft posters will be circulated to the Board for feedback within a month. The series based on themes emerging from National Curriculum will include 5 posters with natural hazards and the environment as possible topics. The posters will be applicable to both primary and secondary sectors.

## Geocareers Website [www.geocareers.net.au](http://www.geocareers.net.au)

Only minor changes and revisions have been made to the GeoCareers website. Invitations to submit profiles have been sent, however, as yet response rates have been low despite follow-up letters being sent. Each affiliate was asked at the last AGTA Board meeting to make a special effort to send Rob Berry a list of people who might be invited to submit a profile for publication.

At present the major sections include Meet a Geographer, Studying Geography, Using Geography and Resources. Additions will

be made to each of these sections and if necessary, refined as the website extends its scope.

Please forward suggestions of people who might be approached to submit a profile to Rob as there are still many career areas we would like to include. Please send the person's name, their email address and current area of employment to Rob ([rberry@agta.asn.au](mailto:rberry@agta.asn.au)). Rob will then contact each person nominated and provide them with a standard proforma and agreement sheet.

## AGTA Website [www.agta.asn.au](http://www.agta.asn.au)

The AGTA 2011 Conference section has been the major area of development on the AGTA website during the past six months. Regular updates for participants, publishers and sponsors as well as the online registration have been the key developments. The online registration has been particularly helpful and enabled both the organisers and treasurer to monitor registrations, process and reconcile payments, and manage participant numbers in accommodation, fieldtrips and workshops. In addition, information about the AGTA Awards including timelines, categories, conditions of entry and entry forms have been added.

The AusAID Pacific Neighbours: Understanding the Pacific islands resource package available from the website continues to receive regular downloads. All sections of the booklet can be downloaded in PDF format as well as PowerPoint presentations and additional resources that support teachers using the resource. The Chairperson's annual

reports (2009 and now 2010) provide much useful information for members about the achievements of AGTA. The 'Geography discussions' section provides links to Web 2.0 geography websites and provides a portal to a number of useful blogs, wikis, nings, forums, discussions and other participatory web applications that support geography teaching both in Australia and overseas. Other changes to the website include updates to the news section, Board members, affiliate details and resources. Updates have also been made to Geographia, the national geography curriculum website, standards for geography teaching and details of affiliate conferences.

Please advise Rob of any changes to these details as they become known. It is most important that affiliates forward details of changes when these occur so that the relevant pages can be updated. The listing of state conferences has been updated (where such details are known) with links to each state association's website.

# AGTA Conference 2011



The coordinating committee thanks all people who have had an input into the planning stage of AGTA Conference 2011. Scotch College and GTASA have been incredible supporters. Donations and volunteers are also demonstrating incredible support for the conference e.g. buses (Scotch College and Walford); bus drivers etc. Sponsorship is approximately \$25 000, with major sponsors include *ESRI; Australian Geographic; Pearson, Footprints, TRB SA. Some trade displays have already been booked including, Jacaranda, Oxford and, Cartographics.*

Currently over 220 people registered for the conference.

All details regarding registration, conference program including workshops, social events, pre-conference tours and general details are available on the website at [www.agta2011.com.au](http://www.agta2011.com.au). A child care centre is available on campus.

Schedule of Pre-Conference Tour of Kangaroo Island is shown opposite:

## Pre Conference Tour of Kangaroo Island

### Proposed Itinerary

Time	Wed 5th Jan	Thurs 6th Jan	Friday 7th Jan	Saturday 8th Jan
7.45 am	Depat Walford/Scotch	South Coast	North Coast	Honey Farm
10.00 am	Ferry to Penneshaw	Seal Bay	Cape Borda Lighthouse	Eucalyptus Farm
	Cape Willoughby - Lighthouse	Flinders Chase Information Centre Lunch	Flinders Chase NP	Sheep Dairy
	Windmill Bay	pm	Ravine Walk	Emu Bay
1.30 pm	Chapman River Winery (lunch)	Cape Du Couedic NP	Harveys Return Walk	(Packed Lunch)
	Antechamber Bay (swim)	Remarkable Rocks		Bay of Shoals Winery
3.00 pm	Sunset Winery	Admirals Arch	Western River Cove	Kingscote
	Pennington Bay		(Packed Lunch)	
	Flour Cask Bay			American River
5.00 pm	Pelican Feeding at Kingscote	Kelly Hill Caves	Snellings Beach	Island Beach
6.30 pm	Arrive at Timber Creek Lodge	Hanson Bay		Browns Beach
7.00 pm	Evening Meal Catered	Vivonne Bay	Stokes Bay	
		Catered Meal on the Beach	Catered Meal on the Beach	Penneshaw Hotel pre order meal
		Return to Hostel	Return to Hostel	Ferry to Cape Jervis 7.30 pm
		Pamdana Hotel	Pamdana Hotel	Return to Scotch/ Walford at 10.15pm

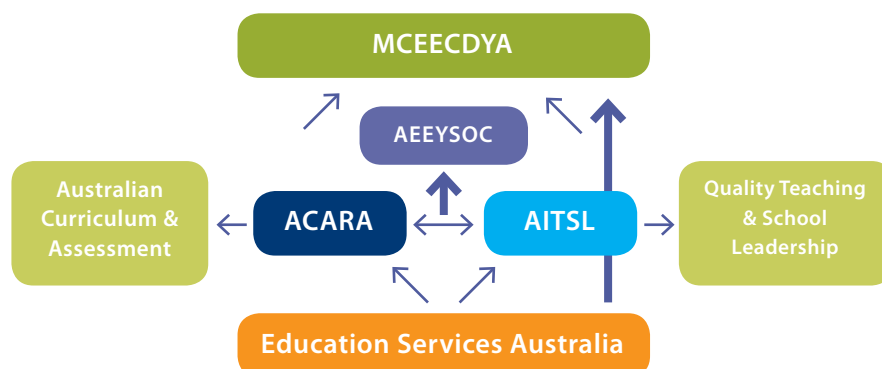
## AITSL

The AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP (AITSL) was formed in January 2010 and replaced Teaching Australia. The Institute is tasked with:

- creating new levels of teacher professionalism
- empowering school leaders with strategies that support excellence in teaching in their schools creating a new generation of leaders that can manage and develop 21st century schools.

The diagram opposite illustrates where AITSL fits into the national education architecture.

## New national education architecture



### AITSL's Work Program

The work program is detailed in the following diagram and covers four key areas:

- Standards
- Accreditation
- Professional Learning
- Research and Innovation



## Keys to Geography

The second edition of Keys to Geography has now been published. AGTA has completely redesigned the book, including text, layout, book dimensions, extent, CD ROM components, style and it looks fresh!

There have already been significant forward orders. Representatives have reported significant interest and positive feedback in relation to content, design of the pages and the cover, technology on the CD and the level and detail of supporting CD exercises.

In the past, Keys to Geography has influenced many teachers and students throughout Australia.

*Keys to Geography in the Australian Curriculum:* Keys will form part of the suite of products and educational materials created by Macmillan for the new Australian Curriculum. There are a number of avenues of growth from the new edition of Keys from AGTA including the sales of the text as an e-book and the packaging of the text with other publications.

AGTA is very proud of the significant collaboration with contributions from across Australia that has resulted in this edition.

Thank you to Nick Hutchinson and Steve Cranby for their extensive work fully revising their sections. As well, the work of Jeana Kriewaldt, Alex Robertson, Debbie Doyle, Emmy Terry, and Chris Nedkoff in contributing to the revision and Rebecca Nicholas, Mick Law and Kerry Bainbridge in writing additional text is well appreciated. Bob Digby's excellent contribution is also acknowledged.

## Patron/Spokesperson for Geography in Australia

AGTA explored this possibility a number of years ago. Is this something AGTA needs – someone that can connect with the media sector; someone who will continue to lift the profile of geography? AGTA will need to profile the role of the "patron" to ensure full understanding of the role.

AGTA would appoint someone who advocates/promotes the importance of geography in the wider forum – young people's citizenship; global issues; environmental etc.

AGTA will continue to investigate options regarding potential patron, respected by the wider community, and extend an invitation to fulfil this role.

GTA feedback on this proposal is welcome.

## NGC Australian Geography Competition

The final number of students participating in the 2010 Competition was 85,131 from 815 schools. This compares to 87,060 students from 802 schools last year. The regional distribution of the fluctuation in numbers was discussed in the last report.



In 2010, prizes to state, territory and school winners were awarded as shown in Table 1. Some additional very high-scoring students (judged across Australia not by state) also receive prizes.

The intermediate winners and the next highest scorer, Andrew Wang from North Sydney Boys' High School, took part in the Final for under 16s. The Final was held on 7 June at the Foxtel Television Centre in Sydney and the students spent the previous weekend in Sydney. The program included behind-the-scenes tours of both Taronga Zoo and the Australian Museum. The students also explored the historic Rocks area, went up a Sydney Harbour Bridge pylon and visited the Opera House to see *Glow* – a performance that mixed live theatre, animation and comic book elements.

The Final was compered by *ex-Temptation* host Ed Phillips, in front of a crowd of students, teachers and other invited guests. AGTA President Malcolm McNerney spoke at the Final. The questions covered a large range of topics: economic geography, Australian places, physical processes, and rounds of questions to

mark the International Year of Biodiversity and the International Year of Cultural Rapprochement. The stimulus material included video footage, photos and maps. The results of the Final were:

### First:

Riley Kernaghan, MacGregor State High School, Brisbane

### Second:

Allan McManus, Thomas More College, Adelaide

### Equal third:

Chris Krushka, The Hutchins School, Hobart ; Amelia Rowe, home-schooled, Maldon; VicTiffany Wu, The Hills Grammar School, Sydney

Riley won a place in the Australian team which will compete in the 2011 National Geographic World Championship. National Geographic Society has decided to hold this event in San Francisco, with the Final at Google's nearby headquarters.

National Geographic Channel broadcast a one-hour program on the Final on 18

June, repeated on 20 June, and they were pleased with the ratings.

# Alaric Maude - ACARA

The latest revision of the Geography Shape Paper was due for completion on Friday 5 November. The strategy ACARA will follow will include consultation on the Shape Paper following any required changes requested by Rob Randall; AGTA as a jurisdiction may be involved, but the process will not have an extensive consultation due to time-line constraints.

The writing group, commencing in December, will include a team of four writers and an advisory panel of four, with the two groups to work closely together. Commence with a three day workshop to flesh out the curriculum. The curriculum document will not be detailed and will leave enormous flexibility for teachers.

Helen Barrett (Primary Curriculum Professional) and Susan Caldas (Curriculum Officer) are new to ACARA within the Geography team.

The Consultation Panel, as established in 2010, will continue as the National Group, but how this will operate is uncertain.

## Issues:

- Reasons for Non-compulsory Geography in years 9 & 10:
  - Some jurisdictions wanted more flexibility to bring in subjects e.g. vocational;
  - More flexibility in QLD than NSW.
- Decision regarding whether geography will be compulsory will not be made until a curriculum is developed and looked at.
- Strategy will be employed to make geography enticing as possible, rigorous, useful and vital.
- Years 7-10 will have a stream of environmental topics that will build on the sustainability theme.

- There are overlaps with Maths and Science – Maths has abandoned maps and location;
- Science overlaps in a number of years; every year group from 7-10 links into a theme in science e.g. Year 7 Water; Year 8 Ecosystems, Systems, Biotic – opportunity to teach together. Science has very little on Geomorphology.
- The theme of Landscapes in Geography – enables the teaching of a number of themes from geomorphology through to culture; e.g. can link into hazards of surf/rips – coastal geomorphology; glacial landscapes in Europe etc.

## There are 2 significant issues:

- Implementation – can we get governments to slow down and allow the development of materials; need a year between curriculum writing and implementation in schools;
- Funding for materials – bureaucracies / publishers should not be producing materials. These should be produced by AGTA.

Reconciliation is also required between jurisdictions; everyone will have to change/ modify their thinking; AGTA will need to help with the process of transition in helping the understanding of what may need to be given up.

## Possible resources:

- Handbook for primary/secondary teachers
- Modules regarding the use of materials – particularly in Years 7-10

# Geographical Education

The AGTA Conference theme for 2011 in Adelaide of 'Going National' will provide the theme for *Volume 24*. In the Report section of the *Geographical Education* it would be valuable to have a brief overview from each affiliate of AGTA of how Geography *Going National*, is likely to impact in their area.

All of the Reports and most of the corrected articles are with the publisher for *Volume 23* of *Geographical Education*. In the review process for the article by Otto and Francis there was a requirement for the authors to substantially reduce the length of the paper. While the authors have progressed this, the article may need to be held over. Hence the article is in brackets in the list below.

## Contents for Volume 23:

### Reports

- Editorial* by Ken Purnell
- Chair's report* by Malcolm McInerney
- GEOGstandards* by Jeana Kriewaldt
- Chartered Geographer (Teacher) – Recognising outstanding Geography teaching* by Claire Wheeler
- Geography in Tasmania - now and in 3 years* by Wayne Sutton
- GEOGstandards brochure*

### Articles

- What does geography contribute to the education of young Australians?* Alaric Maude
- Implications of 21st Century change and the Geography curriculum.* Malcolm McInerney
- Developing Geography Standards: Articulating the complexity of Accomplished*
- Geography Teaching. Jeana Kriewaldt and Nick Hutchinson
- Geography teaching: Sharing the expertise.* Ken Purnell
- Teachers' perceptions of implementation of Geography Education Standards in Egypt.* Edrees Sultan
- Misconceptions in Geography.* Mustafa Ozturk and Secil Alkis
- (Gender, memory and Geography tasks.* Otto Zinser and Frances Chumney)

Reviews by Geoffrey Paterson

- HIV simulation game* by Clinton D. vander Merwe & Adrienne Rivera

A recommendation from AGTA is that *Volume 24* of *Geographical Education* – theme – AGTA Conference 2011. Articles should be submitted to the Editor at [k.purnell@cqu.edu.au](mailto:k.purnell@cqu.edu.au)

## Geography's Big Week Out

The 2010 Geography's Big Week Out was held in the Perth and Rottnest Island area from 5 to 10 December. Like the Queensland teachers before them, the WA teachers had decided to add an extra day to the program – a sure sign of their enthusiasm and commitment. A high-scoring male and female student in each State and the combined Territories, who are in Year 11 or lower, accepted places, as did the next

highest male and female student – a total of 16 students. Australia's team to the 2011 Asia Pacific Regional Geography Olympiad in Mexico in July, will be selected from this Big Week Out.

The organisation of the 2010 Big Week Out was in the capable hands of a committee of Perth teachers under the leadership of Mike Fazio, and including AGTA Directors Trish Harris and Emmy Terry.

# Annual General Meeting

The 105th Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 31 October 2010. Malcolm McNerney presented the Chair's annual report – the full report is available on the AGTA website.

Malcolm stated that 2010 has been a dynamic and significant year for geographical education in Australia. Most significantly, 2010 has seen the release by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) of the draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: geography. Although the development of an Australian Curriculum has continued to dominate much of our work this year, AGTA has been very active in promoting geographical education in Australia.

Key activities included the release of the *Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of Schools Geography*, the Australian Geography Competition, planning for the 2011 AGTA conference, managing the *Geocareers* site and continuing work with the incorporation of technology in the teaching of geography.

The research project **The Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of School Geography**, was an attempt to document and clarify the nature of exemplary geography teaching in our schools and culminated in the recently released "Professional Standards for Accomplished Teaching of School Geography". The project has developed a dynamic set of professional standards for teaching school geography, which are built on a platform of classroom practice. The standards posted at <http://www.geogstandards.edu.au> provide an important resource to enhance the quality of teacher professional learning in geography.

Malcolm acknowledged the role of AGTA representatives. He noted that AGTA has an important role in representing geography teachers on a range of national committees to ensure that the voices of geography educators are heard. Such roles are increasingly important in terms of the national focus and the national curriculum developments.

## Portfolios for the purpose of representation were allocated as follows:

- *Australian Federation of Societies for Studies of Society and the Environment*: Emmy Terry (voting representative) and

Margaret Mclvor (AGTA representative).

- *Institute of Australian Geographers*: Malcolm McNerney
- *Australian Academy of Science's National Committee of Geography*: Grant Kleeman
- *National Education Forum*: Malcolm McNerney
- *National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition*: Margaret Mclvor
- *Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute (SSSI), Spatial Education Advisory Committee*: Malcolm McNerney
- *Big Week Out*: Margaret Mclvor, Mike Fazio, Emmy Terry & Trish Harris.

Malcolm encourages all Australian geography teachers to keep informed of the ACARA process via their website at <http://www.acara.edu.au> and take advantage of the opportunities provided by ACARA and for geography teachers' associations to feed comments and ideas into the process. AGTA with other Australian associations has been particularly active over recent months to ensure our voice is heard by government. Such a profile and lobbying of the 'powers' determining the nature of the Australian Curriculum is crucial when discussing indicative times and the elective status of subjects. 2010 has seen unprecedented lobbying by the geography community to ensure that geography has sufficient status and time in the Australian Curriculum to meet the needs of the 21st Century student.

The **AGTA conference in Adelaide** from January 8-13th 2011 is almost a reality. The conference is being held at Scotch College in Adelaide and is being convened by the Geography Teachers' Association of South Australia. The convenor for the conference is the highly competent and enthusiastic Mark Manuel. Mark has developed a great program with plenty of field trips and classroom relevant workshops. The response to the conference program (<http://www.agta.asn.au/conf2011/index.htm>) has been very positive and we are expecting to see one of the biggest and best AGTA conferences in Adelaide in January.

Considering the increased profile of geography and the Australian Curriculum

for geography being imminent in 2011 we are expecting this event to be pivotal in the development of geography in Australia.

Malcolm referred to the following abstract of Dr Peter Hill, ACARA CEO, who is a keynote speaker at AGTA Conference 2011:

*"Over the years, geography as a discipline has undergone profound changes which in turn have impacted on the teaching of geography as a school subject. With the renewed focus on geography as a discrete subject within the Australian curriculum, there is an unprecedented opportunity to ensure that geography in schools reflects amazing developments in 'neogeography'. At the same time, it is timely to reassess the role geography should play in the broader curriculum of students in the 21st Century."*

Malcolm concluded his report by stating that AGTA is facing the challenges of being closely involved in the development of an Australian Curriculum for geography, promoting the 'brand' of geography in the community, integrating modern technologies into our teaching, whilst continuing our essential role as an association supporting teachers.

He thanked all directors on the AGTA Board and teacher members of affiliates for making AGTA a key organisation in the promotion of geographical education in Australia, for their support and hard work.

AGTA must look over the last 12 months as a busy year involving significant achievement.

## AGTA Constitution

Much debate and discussion was centred on the AGTA constitution particularly in terms of clarifying terminology specifically, "members" and "directors". The following motions were presented to AGTA Board as an interim until the new constitution is formulated. An AGM will be conducted in January 2011 following the AGTA Conference.

## Two motions were passed at the AGM including:

**Motion 1:** That in accordance with Clause 38 of the AGTA Constitution (The company from time to time by ordinary resolution



passed at a General meeting increase or reduce the maximum or minimum number of Directors of the Board provided that the minimum will not be less than eight) it is hereby proposed that the AGTA Board increases its number to 14 Directors, comprising the 6 Presidents or their nominee, of member associations (to be known as non-elected Directors) and eight elected individuals from member associations for the duration of the following year (As outlined in Section 1 and 5 of the letter from Scammell and Co). This number will address any inconsistencies arising from the varied interpretation of the constitution in terms of the number of Directors from affiliate members (As outlined in section 4 of the letter from Scammell & Co).

Following AGM elections the following appointments were made:

**Motion 2: Appointments - Board Positions for October 2010 to October 2011**

Malcolm McInerney - Chair  
Grant Kleeman - AGTA Deputy Chair  
Rob Berry AGTA - Company Treasurer  
Rebecca Nicholas - AGTA Company Secretary  
Jeana Kriewaldt - Public Officer

Committee Representatives & Other Responsibilities

**AFSSSE:** Emmy Terry (voting representative), Margaret McIvor (AGTA representative and Rob Berry (reserve)

**NEF:** Malcolm McInerney and Grant Kleeman (reserve)

**IAG:** Malcolm McInerney and Grant Kleeman (reserve)

**Australian Academy of Sciences National Committee of Geography:**  
Grant Kleeman

**NGC Australia Geography Competition:**  
Margaret McIvor

**Geographia:** Emmy Terry

**The Big Week Out:** Emmy Terry, Mike Fasio, Trish Harris and Margaret McIvor

**SSSI:** Malcolm McInerney and Rebecca Nicholas/Steve Cranby (reserve)

**AGTA Website/GeoCareers Website:**  
Rob Berry

**Geographical Education:** Ken Purnell

## ARC Linkage Project and Geography Standards Study

The project has now concluded although a small amount of development and maintenance work will continue. There are numerous opportunities to build this project in various ways and AGTA should consider how they might encourage teachers to use the standards and the website.

Recent progress in finalising the project has included:

### Dissemination of standards via brochure

- The Geography standards brochure was produced in July 2010. Bulk copies have been sent to the geography association in each Australian state, accompanied by text providing an overview of the project which is to be included in the Association newsletter in which the brochure is inserted.
- A national launch and workshop has been included in the program of the Australian Geography Teachers' Association Biennial Conference in Adelaide in January 2011.
- **Videod teachers and panel participants**
- Correspondence has been sent to all filmed teachers and panel participants advising of the publication of the standards and providing a copy of the brochure.

### Wider dissemination

- An online Curriculum Leadership journal article on standards was published on 16 July 2010. Professional standards for teaching school geography [http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/vol8\\_no20,29842.html?issueID=12165](http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/vol8_no20,29842.html?issueID=12165)
- An article is in production by Jeana Kriewaldt and Nick Hutchinson for consideration by peer referee in the AGTA Journal *Geographical Education*.

### Website

The website nears completion although there is still some sections to be further developed. This has been regrettably delayed because of time constraints and delays in teachers providing material.

### Use of standards website in Geography Learning Area

Each student has selected a different sample and will complete the following task:

### ASSESSMENT TASK 2 VIEWING RESPONSE

**Due Date:**

**Weighting:** 20%

**Description:** Write a critical response of no more than 800 words each to one of the weekly viewings and pose a question for discussion. Each response and your question should be emailed to your lecturer two days prior to the tutorial. You will lead the discussion in the tutorial in the next week. Your grade will consist of the written response and your contribution to leading the class discussions.

**Due Date:** Ongoing in class

**Weighting:** 20% (800 words equivalent)

Timing Guidelines for discussion component of the workshop: 1 discussion leader 10 -15 minutes.

You do not need to provide an extensive summary of the viewing in your response, but you should show that you perused the material and thought about the ideas, questions and issues it raised. Your viewing response must include a suggested discussion question (s) for the class.

The samples are proving useful in developing students understanding of geography teaching.

# Australian Geography Curriculum

Three members (Nick Hutchinson, Malcolm McInerney and Bek Nicholas – plus Trish Harris and Jeana Kriewaldt) are on the ACARA Advisory Panel for Geography. It was determined that it was the responsibility of State affiliates to provide feedback to ACARA.

## ACARA Australian Curriculum: Geography National Panel Meeting

General introduction by Helen Barratt, ACARA Curriculum Manager. Helen outlined the process to date in developing the Australian Curriculum: Geography. Significant points included:

- Shape paper consultation very successful with over 700 responses.
- Responses very supportive of the inquiry approach throughout the document.
- The responses showed general agreement with the definition, aims and rationale of the paper.
- Feedback indicated approval of the Knowledge/Understanding and Skills stands but concern about the sub-strands of place, space and environment.
- Areas requiring discussion at the consultation:
  - Definition of the terms *environment*, *biophysical*, *human geography*, *physical geography* and *sustainability* need to be clarified.
  - Is the idea of a strand to be called Inquiry a way to go?
  - Are the cross curriculum capabilities adequately described in the document?
  - Is there a balance between physical and human geography?
  - Is the suggested content for each year level age appropriate, engaging for students and necessary foundation knowledge/understanding?
  - Should spatial technology have a greater emphasis in the document and scope and sequence?
  - Are the terms citizenship and sustainability adequately described in the aims and rationale and reflected in the suggested scope and sequence?

## Relevant points/information/perceptions in regards to DECS

While there was general agreement on the overall direction of the shape paper, there were some very distinct 'hotspots' identified by the forum which require further work by

the lead writer and advisory group.

## Australian Curriculum: Geography: K-12 "hotspots" requiring attention and redrafting in the shape paper Australian Curriculum: Geography

- The *balance* between human and physical geography. Suggested that there is an over-emphasis on human geography.
- The identification and integration of the *organising ideas* for the cross curriculum priorities in geography.
- To develop the inclusion of *social and cultural sustainability* into the application of sustainability in the document.
- The balance between global perspective and the required cross curriculum emphasis on Asia.
- To work on the engagement potential of the curriculum for all levels of schooling.
- Include the *Inquiry* stand but clarify the purpose, nature and expectations of the strand. Needs to draw out big ideas/questions.
- Clarify the usage of the term *environment* and be clear what natural environment is. Is the term biophysical the best term to get across what we mean?
- The concept of *Citizenship* needs to be more evident in the developed course and reflect in a real way the Melbourne Declaration's statements about active and informed citizenship.
- To make sure that the course is not Australian-centric and inward looking and has a realistic global perspective. Should such a perspective be guided by specified case studies etc.
- Is cultural/social geography adequately covered in the suggested scope and sequence?
- Should hazards be at Year 9 and not Year 5? In schools around Australia hazards in Year 9 has been engaging, age appropriate and an effective physical

geography linkage.

- Diversity needs to focus on more than economic diversity – human diversity should be the focus.
- The importance of incorporating the concepts of climate and biomes at the age appropriate level of schooling.
- The overlap with science in the teaching of weather and landforms.
- The design of the Senior Secondary courses and the issue of K-10 overlap and curriculum entitlement for all.
- The issue of curriculum entitlement if Years 9 and 10 have elective status. Has an impact on the design of the scope and sequence in terms of curriculum entitlement.

The final ACARA Geography Advisory Group meeting was held at the ACARA officers in Sydney on 26 October 2010. The shape paper, Australian Curriculum: geography is planned to be released in December 2010 (after MCEECDYA meeting on 3 December 2010).

## Australian Geography Curriculum Implementation Proposal

A proposal was initially sent to ACARA, AITSL and Education Services Australia (ESA) in 2009. AGTA has not received a response at this stage, except from ESA. Implementation of the national curriculum is starting, and ACARA is realising that they need to play a coordination role in implementation. Jurisdictions will need to play a major role in this.

AGTA will continue to lobby regarding the implementation.



# Institute of Australian Geographers

The Council meeting for the Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG) was held in conjunction with the New Zealand Geographical Society (with IAG) Conference in Christchurch from July 5th-8th.

The IAG Council and its member has been an important player with AGTA and the RGSQ in the work of the 'Towards a National Geography Curriculum' project and in turn the work of ACARA in developing an Australian Curriculum for geography. Several of the IAG Executive have been closely involved in the ACARA process. The IAG Secretary, Associate Professor Alaric Maude is the ACARA Lead Writer for geography, Lesley Head (IAG Vice President) and Iain Hay (IAG President) who have been on the ACARA Advisory Panel. Their input is greatly valued by geography teachers in Australia and the involvement of the academic geography community in the development of a world class geography curriculum is extremely important.

**The IAG conference** is an interesting mix, with an amazing diversity of papers presented. Again it makes one ask the question; What is geography? Here are some of what were the most interesting papers when considering the development of an energetic, diverse and creative geography curriculum for schools. In terms of topic, nothing is out of bounds, as long as the lens is spatial and the context geographical. Here are just a few examples:

- Urban regeneration, drinking and young citizens: Paradoxical tensions in the governance of inner-city night time spaces.
- Degrees of responsibility: How far will tourism corporates go to assist the poor and disadvantaged?
- A landscape of well-being – towards a theory of the landscape and human well-being.
- Environmental correlates of young people's happiness.
- Young Australians in multigenerational household: trends, drivers and implications.
- Working holidays an experience or a path to migration?
- Utilising GIS in education.
- Senses of place and identity in

contemporary rural Australia: Views from Ballarat.

- Beyond greenwash, creating sustainable communities.
- The changing landscape of cemeteries in Perth, WA
- Power and politics of water governance and development.
- (Dis)located bodies: Women and class in a changing rural Australia.
- Still getting away with it: revealing geographies of the super-rich.
- Cross-cultural boundary riding – Utilising Indigenous knowledge for environmental management.
- Urban homebodies: Spatiality of masculinity and domesticity in inner Sydney.

These are just a few of the workshops to show the diversity of what is seen as geography at the university level. Naturally the conference also had plenty of the more traditional geomorphologic, climatological and economic geographies presented but the list above shows the social and cultural richness and contemporary nature of the study of geography in our universities (and applicable to the study of geography in schools).

The discussion on the **journal ratings** was interesting from the point of view that it seems so important to the IAG and the academics involved that their journal, 'Geographical Research' which has four editions per year is rated as high as possibly. Presently it is rated a 'B' journal in the Social Sciences. It is considered that to attract as high quality contributions as possible it needs to be rated even higher. In 2011 a journal edition on population should be of a great interest to geography teachers.

**IAG membership** has grown over recent years to over 470 members. The finances of the Institute are also in a healthy state with money available for scholarships and awards.

**Geoview** is an attempt by the IAG (out of

Flinders University) to publish on-line the work of undergraduates in geography. The project is having difficulty getting contributors but the IAG see this initiative as an important vehicle for undergraduates to be recognised for their work. Geoview also has the potential to be a useful resource of fieldwork and research for undergraduates and in fact senior geography students. The IAG intends to persist with this initiative and try to see if it can be promoted more.

Iain Hay presented his work as the geography discipline scholar on the **National academic standards for geography**. This high profile project is important in profiling geography at the national level. It is about describing what a geography graduate should know and can do at the end of a degree. The draft is now available for consultation until the end of September (available on-line at <http://www.altcexchange.edu.au/ltas-project-geography>). This work has considerable relevance to the efforts of the Australian Curriculum for geography to delineate what geography offers young people. These are interesting parallels to what Iain has written and what is considered 21st Century Geography in schools. The standards will require the endorsement of key stakeholders. The document is intended to be brief to help its usability. In a new regulatory environment, how it will be used is an interesting question.

Significantly, attendance at the meeting provides AGTA with:

- The opportunity to discuss with IAG Council the work of AGTA and gain their support for the promotion of geography to be taught from K-10 as a compulsory subject.
- To review the work of the IAG and to identify the synergies between the work of AGTA and academic geographers in the IAG. In view of the professional learning requirements of the Australian Curriculum: geography these links are imperative.

## Geography Teachers Association of Western Australia (GAWA)

The Association is robust and strongly supported by its membership, which remains stable at 250. The new course of study will be externally assessed for the first time this year. Following the analysis of the results there may be changes in enrolment trends. A range of schools have informed GAWA of declining numbers whilst others are reporting an increase. Most schools in the state that offer Geography are members.

In its heyday Geography in WA had over 6000 students in the senior secondary years, however, with ongoing changes to requirements and the implementation of the new curriculum numbers are steadily declining. Humanities across the board is losing students – 1-2% per annum – the big loss however, occurred about five years ago.

### Professional Development

- In June GAWA conducted a joint systems and sector professional learning activity using the Semester One GAWA Examination as an assessment work sample, marking and moderating tool. The highly focussed session was a fantastic opportunity to unpack the exam assessment type and develop strategies to improve student performance.
- This year the Conference was again held at the Esplanade River Suites from 6th to 8th of August. The program was best summated by the theme “**Expanding Horizons**”. A well received feature of the conference was the ‘expansion’ of the usual Friday night out on the town to include Saturday too.

The first keynote speaker **Winthrop Professor Kadambot Siddique** Chair in Agriculture & Director, The Institute of Agriculture, UWA presented on ‘**Climate Change and Agriculture in Australia**’. A second keynote **Professor Billie Giles-Corti**, Director of the Centre for Built Environment & Health School of Population and Health, UWA, presented ‘**How Does Neighbourhood Design Affect People’s Health?**’ The final keynote speaker **Associate Professor Tai Chee Wong** School of Humanities & Social Science Nanyang Technological University, Singapore presented on ‘**The Geography of Asian Megacities**’. All speakers provided valuable knowledge and understandings to take into the stage 3A and 3B course. It is pleasing to note that each keynote presentation is available in our members section on our GAWA website.

A significant part of each year’s conference is the offering of fieldwork with three sessions being offered this year including: **Environmental Management and Coastal Hazards; GIS and Natural Hazards** and **Inner City Urban Change and Planning**.

Feedback about the stages workshops was overwhelmingly positive and it was wonderful to see participants share their resources. GAWA greatly appreciated the amazing support of the University of Western Australia as a major sponsor. The contribution of all sponsors, supporters and Conference Committee ensured another successful event.

- A workshop was held to examine the National Geography Teaching Standards (NGTS) as a conclusion to the project undertaken by Jeana Kriewaldt and Sarah Louise North for AGTA and Melbourne University. The workshop introduced teachers to the standards and examined opportunities for professional development through the purpose built website. A sincere thank you to Jeana for her thorough work in this area.
- A joint system and sector professional development for interested Geography teachers was conducted with keynote speakers Peter Newman of Curtin University and Allan Johnstone of Murdoch University presenting on the Stage 3 WACE contexts of Urban Planning and Climate Change.
- GAWA are pleased to part sponsor six delegates to Australian Geography Teachers Conference being held in Adelaide in January 2011.

### Publications and Projects

The **GAWA Bulletin** continues to provide relevant and topical articles, classroom teaching resources and the publication of useful websites and events.

GAWA text books are now available for all western Australian courses and continue to enjoy good sales. GAWA is in the process of arranging reprints of a number of texts.

There has been terrific membership support for the GAWA Exam papers. With the implementation of the new course and its first external exam this year, there is considerable tension about the composition of the exam. It has been difficult to gauge how best to construct suitable papers and broadsheets as such we tried to build in some flexibility by sending the exams in a range of formats.

### Action for Promotion of Geography

The new GAWA website is operational (Yay!!)

All members received their login passwords last month. We congratulate our ‘Web Master’/web convener, Rob McFarlane, as he has gone above and beyond the call of duty rigorously and diligently maintaining the old site whilst working on the new template.

Behind the log in are an increasing array of assets and we hope that teachers will use the website as a mechanism for sharing good practice and resources by uploading items and ideas that contribute to good geographic education in Western Australia.

GAWA presented an ‘extraordinary’ revision seminar at UWA to students this year. With the new course there has been a hesitancy to develop a revision program without the guidance of an external exam. Fortunately and with our grateful thanks we were able to persuade Norm Snell, Deb White and Rob McFarlane to prepare an intensive revision program for interested students. Students received a comprehensive revision pack to assist them with their preparations for the WACE examination.

The **Joseph Gentilli Memorial Award for Excellence in Geographical Education** is conferred to a GAWA member who has made an outstanding contribution to Geographical Education and in recognition of its importance the award comes with prize money of \$2000. This year GAWA are delighted to have had a number of nominees, all of a high standard. GAWA congratulates Callum Cribble from Mount Barker Senior High School who was awarded the prize because of his excellent teaching, commitment and passion, use of relevant fieldwork and outstanding contribution to the geographic education of his pupils. It was fitting to have his work acknowledged in front of his peers and have this prestigious award presented at the conference.

The **John Forrest Awards** is a competition for students undertaking Geography. The number of applicants varies from year to year. The focus in 2011 will be to provide a purposeful assessment with practical application of the Geography course.

The **Big Week Out** (BWO hosted by GAWA in 2009 and 2010). Mike Fazio and the BWO Committee engaged in developing a fantastically rich and diverse Geography programme for the week in light of 2009 experiences.

ACARA conducted the Geography Forum bringing together State and Territory representatives to discuss issues raised by the release of the draft shaping paper. Workshop sessions were conducted throughout the day focussing on the key

trends of concern that emerged over the consultation period. General feedback has been positive.

### Issues or Problems

As a result of Kath Berg's work GAWA membership is well aware through the emails, media and GAWA conference that at a national level we are/may be... fighting for compulsory status in the Australian Curriculum. The hours that guide the writers of the course are outlined below but if the course is not chosen by students or schools the hours are immaterial.

**Year K-2** 16-20 hours: Compulsory

**Year 3-6** 30-40 hours: Compulsory

**Year 7-8** 50-60 hours: Compulsory

**Year 9-10** 60-80 hours: Optional

The response from Politian's both state and federal is that we should bring this up as part of the ACARA consultation. They do not realise that there is no consultation about this matter! Included here is an extract of a response Melissa Parke Federal Member for Fremantle, dated Friday, 22 October 2010 5:21 PM:

*"Thank you for your email and I apologise for the delayed reply.*

*I have enquired through Minister Garrett's office about your concerns that Geography may become an optional subject in Years 9 and 10. The Minister's office has assured me that there has been no intention expressed by ACARA to incorporate this change as part of the curriculum, and as the draft Shape of Australian Curriculum: Geography report was released for*

*public consultation from 21 June to 27 August, there's no further indication about what will be included in the curriculum. The consultation and publication of the final Australian Curriculum in the phase two learning areas is expected to occur in 2011.*

*I share your support for geography remaining a compulsory part of students' curriculum until the senior years of secondary schooling, and I thank you for bringing this important issue to my attention."*

*Kind regards*

*Melissa Parke, Federal Member for Fremantle*



## Geography Teachers Association of Victoria (GTAV)

Membership is approximately 570.

### Conference and Professional Learning

The GTAV conference was held in August with 405 attendees over three days. There were 60 presenters and 32 displays. One very moving part of the conference for this year was the presentation to Alex Lyme of the IAG Award for recognition to Geography over many years. Alex celebrated his 101st birthday recently.

Over 2010, the GTAV organised and presented 23 Professional Learning Activities, with numerous people attending each of the sessions. Recent student lectures had 600 students attending revision seminars.

### Publications

The Geoskills Books which have been published by GTAV have been selling well. Currently 1300 books have been sold for the Level 5 book and 100 for the Geoskill Book Level 6 which has just been released.

### Issues

GTAV is concerned about the number of schools who are losing the Unit 1 and

2 classes at year 11. Some schools are facing pressure as a result of the new Environmental Science course being offered in the Australian Curriculum. The GTAV is considering how to most appropriately serve the needs of members given the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and is attempting to broaden its appeal for new and younger teachers to join the committee, or to be involved with local groups.



## Tasmanian Geography Teachers Association (TGTA)

### Membership

Membership has increased to 23 with the addition of 3 government high school teachers (who attended the review of the Australian Geography Curriculum at UTAS with Alaric Maude) and one government primary teacher (who has attended the two sessions with ACARA in Sydney), with 15 of these teachers teaching Geography.

### Professional Development

A state-wide professional development day for Geography teachers was held in early December in Hobart.

### Promotion of Geography

Members have been writing to politicians re the importance of Geography not being optional in years 9 and 10 and receiving the standard feedback.

## Curriculum Developments in Tasmania

Post Year 10 Review –The re-structuring of TAFE and government Senior Secondary Colleges into the Tasmanian Academy and Tasmanian Polytechnic has been rolled back since the election and the formation of a new Labor/Green Government. The Senior Secondary Colleges have been re-instated for 2011 and will offer the full range of TCE and VET courses as they did prior to the change.

Principals will manage staff and courses at their college. TAFE will still be referred to as the Tasmanian Polytechnic and may still have an influence in the colleges as the RTO for VET courses. The expanded and very large state-wide executive structure of the Tasmanian Polytechnic may continue, but they will have smaller numbers of students and teaching staff to look after.

### Other Activities and Developments

Geography teachers from high schools and senior secondary colleges, as well

as university staff, attended information/feedback sessions with Alaric Maude on the structure of the Australian Geography.

### Issues

Changes as far back as in 1992 to the TCE halved the numbers in Geography. Subjects such as Environmental Studies have encroached on Geography with some subject disappearing entirely. Additional changes regarding the study requirement of students has also affected numbers in all schools.

With the introduction of the senior Australian Geography Curriculum not occurring until 2014 or 2015, the present TCE Geography syllabus will possibly have to be retained until then; we may have to make some changes, at least to the assessment criteria, as in the 2009 review no changes were made because of the belief that the new syllabus would be up and running in 2012.





## Geography Teachers Association of Queensland (GTAQ)

Membership is similar to the corresponding period for the past couple of years and continues to be relatively stable with 225 total members. Numbers are increasing compared to 2009.

### Professional Learning

Three spatial technology workshops facilitated by Contour - Education-Mick Law were held in 2010.

GTAQ hosted its State conference in July at the University of Queensland. The day was a success with over one hundred delegates, a range of trade and publisher displays, heaps of opportunities to mix and mingle with colleagues as well as listen to some topical professional discussions.

The University of Queensland hosted its highly successful Careers Day in July and incorporated lectures and presentations for students about the huge range of careers and options available to them at after a Geographical course of study at school or university

Geography teachers from across south-east Queensland gathered at the School of Sustainable Development in August to

part-take in a seminar provided by the staff from the Environmental Management and Science Department. The full-day program was designed to provide teachers with up-to-date research related to the new senior Geography curriculum. Associate Professor Daryl McPhee presented an interesting overview of biodiversity, including two real-life case studies on marine turtles and fisheries which provided practical examples of the importance of biodiversity. This was followed up with Professor Tor Hundloe's summary of the role of geography in the spread of the major diseases that have shaped modern man and the practice of medicine. Professor Ros Taplin provided a much needed overview of complex international Climate Change policy and the implications of these on various countries. Finally, Amy White looked at the production, trade and consumption of different foods and the impacts of changing diets on the planet and its people.

### Promotion of Geography

Meetings and submissions have been made and taken place throughout the year on a range of issues relating to Geography. These initiatives have been undertaken as joint ventures with the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland to add additional weight and emphasis to the debate / submission.

Meetings have been held with:

- National curriculum issues have been raised in letters to the Hon. Geoff Wilson Minister for Education and Training and a meeting was held with Marcia Rouen Principal Education Officer and Yvana Jones Assistant Director-General, Teaching and Learning Branch, Department of Education and Training.
- On October 13 a Geography National Panel Meeting for the Draft K-12 Australian Geography Curriculum was held in Sydney. There were 64 Geography educators in attendance representing all sectors and areas of Geography education.
- Post ACARA a meeting was held with QSA to share what happened at the panel and to establish a feel for some strong themes in the conversations that we heard during the course of the day. The second focus was to keep school communities updated and in the loop on the progress of the development of the Australian Curriculum: Geography.



## Australian Capital Territory - Sub Branch

The sub-branch has a membership of approximately 23.

### Professional Development

Members met in August to discuss issues around national curriculum and decide on what the focus for 2011 should be. Whilst the focus is still from a few schools it is hoped that with constant reminders and positive feedback the membership will increase each year.

The second professional development day was widely attended and focused on geography in the Asia - Pacific region (which aligns with one of the ACT curriculum areas. The main feature of the day was the introduction of the

DVD *The Burning Season* as a teaching resource. Deirdre Geelan from ACT DET also distributed copies of the resource *Pacific Neighbours*. Dr Janette Lindesay Associate Professor Climatology, climate variability and change science, climate vulnerability and adaptation, also lectured and ran an excellent workshop on teaching resources.

Many teachers have requested training and information about GIS/SIS. We hope to deliver professional development in this area in March 2011.

### Curriculum Developments in ACT

At least 4 teachers (representing Government, Independent & Catholic schools) and a DET representative attended the National Curriculum forum in October to contribute their views to the shape of the Geography curriculum. Conversation about mapping the ideas alongside out existing curriculum are beginning.

The ACT region sub branch has received positive feedback regarding its affiliation with the NSW GTA and subsequently AGTA. We look forward to continuing our relationship with NSWGTA and participating in the delivery and promotion of Australian Geography.

The Minister for Education in ACT is very keen to see the implementation of the National Curriculum, which is very different to the views held by NSW.

Attracting regional members is a goal for the sub branch.

## Geography Teachers Association of New South Wales (GTANSW)

Considerable effort has gone into revising and consolidating the Association's membership records to eliminate duplication. GTANSW now has 469 fully paid-up members and its objective is to secure a total membership of at least 500 by the end of 2011.

Geography teachers in the ACT have formed a sub-branch of the GTA. Led by Karen Tuhan and Carol Pogson, the sub-branch members have written to publically acknowledge the support the GTA has provided this year. It has enabled them to provide much needed professional development in the region. Newcastle-based Geography teachers have also expressed interest in developing a closer relationship with the Association.

### Professional development initiatives

The GTA's year got off to a busy start with a range of professional development activities. The first major event was the *HSC Examination Review*. This involved an analysis of the 2010 HSC Geography examination by experienced markers and teachers. In response to the demands of the membership, this activity was held in three locations this year using different presenters at each location – *Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, St. Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong, and Merewether High School, Newcastle*.

The second major activity was the *HSC Geography Awards Ceremony*. This event, held at Parliament House Sydney on Friday 26 February, was an opportunity to recognise the hard work and success of the top ten students at the 2009 HSC Geography examination. Recognition was also given to the teachers of these students. Professor Kevin Dunn and Dr Emma Power, both from the University of Western Sydney, assisted in the presentation of the awards and spoke of the importance and relevance of Geography in today's world.

The third major Professional Development initiative was a series of four workshops focusing on Geography skills and the School Certificate. The main audience of this program was teachers of Geography with limited knowledge of the Geography skills required for the School Certificate Test in Geography. The day included a focus on research and fieldwork skills together with examination techniques.

The next major professional development initiative was a series of workshops – *Making a difference by teaching about water in Geography*. The workshops were based in the Sydney Water region of Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra and were sponsored by the Water for Life project and focussed on case studies of local water efficiency projects and fieldwork opportunities. Each workshop in the series was different, using local speakers from schools, government agencies and business organisations and included a practical session or inspection of a water project.

Another major professional development initiative was a Global Education-based series of workshops – *Using contemporary resources in Global Geography*. The workshops focused on quality teaching using contemporary resources in the classroom. The resources used had application from Years 7-12. A central feature of these workshops was the DVD: *The Burning Season*, which is a documentary on climate change, threatened habitats and land degradation. The movie uses a case study on rainforest burning in Indonesia to investigate these issues and what can be done to change it. Teachers attending the workshop received a copy of the DVD.

As part of our commitment to the development of a sub-branch in the ACT the GTA conducted a School Certificate workshop based on the theme – What is Geography? The workshop provided an introduction to the discipline of Geography. It was specifically designed to meet the needs of teachers teaching Geography without a background in Geography.

The next major initiative was a well-attended *urban planning workshop*. Teachers attending the workshop received a class set of the urban planning books for Sydney.

Another major success was the *HSC mini conference*. The conference, which focused on People and Economic activity included presentations on global tourism and the challenges facing the global wine and viticulture industries.

The Association's annual series of *HSC lectures* continues to grow in popularity. Experienced teachers, HSC markers and academics provided students with a range of insights aimed at enhancing their performance in the HSC.

The final major event was the Association's Annual Conference held at Parliament House in Macquarie Street. The theme of the conference was: *Sustainability: Energy,*

*urban residential landscapes, population and migration*. The Conference program featured lectures by Dr Ben McNeill who spoke about Energy use sustainability; Dr Emma Power who addressed the issue of *Social and environmental sustainability: An examination of Sydney's changing residential landscape*; and Professor Kevin Dunn who focused on the cultural and social sustainability of Australia's current population settings. There were also workshops on *Food fairness and sustainability* by Ms Elizabeth Morgan and *Climate change and sustainability* by Rod Yule.

The GTA has been supportive of the project to develop a set of national standards for Geography teachers. The standards were introduced and launched during the conference by Nick Hutchinson.

Another, major initiative has been the Association's engagement with the Australian Geography Curriculum. A forum was held to develop and endorse the Association's ACARA submission. Members of the Association have also participated in the National Consultation process and the campaign to ensure that Geography retains its important place within the school curriculum. While the size of GTA's program has expanded significantly in recent years there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. These include:

- ensuring that the program is not too narrowly focused;
- the need to involve the younger members of Council in the delivery of the professional development program; and
- the need to meet the challenge of supporting the introduction of the National Curriculum for Geography.

The GTA was founded on the principal of volunteerism – the motive for participation being the enhancement of the association and the discipline we have devoted our professional lives to. If we can sustain this principal the future of the Association is assured.



## Geography Teachers Association of South Australia (GTASA)

Membership is currently 107.

### Professional Development

GTASA Conference May 2010: two Professors from Adelaide and Flinders Universities were keynote speakers and they were greeted with enthusiasm. Prof Barry Brook gave an overview of the climate change situation nationally and globally. In addition he spoke about the outcomes of the Copenhagen summit.

Prof Iain Hay introduced delegates to the geographies of the superrich. It was a fascinating look at how individuals or groups with access to large amounts of money are changing the geography of areas around the world.

Flinders University also hosted a PD evening for teachers of the senior years (but any level could attend). The focus was on Water issues with presentations from 2 academics who have been conducting significant research on water issues in Asia. A DVD of resources was provided for all delegates.

Adelaide University hosted the annual year 12 evening in August. This allowed current year 12 students and teachers to enjoy presentations from the leading academics at the University on topics that are part of the Year 12 Geography Syllabus.

### Publications and Projects

A new map kit has been published and was ready for sale at the annual conference. The resource focused on the urban-rural fringe in the northern areas of Adelaide. Each set comprises a class set of 30 maps and editable questions are available on the GTASA website. Solutions are provided with the pack. These resources are very popular. Teachers can also create their own questions and they have proven popular in trial examinations.

The Y12 SACE Geography Study Guide was published and was also available at the conference. While some revision took place for 2010, GTASA are expecting there to be significant changes made to the booklet for 2011 due to the Y12 course changes for next year and this will be reflected in the new guide.

### Action for Promotion of Geography

Strongly worded and forthright letters have been written to the CEO of the SACE board, the Minister for Education and the Leader for the opposition regarding the place of geography as a subject in schools. GTASA intends to submit additional letters to all of these stakeholders as well as going nationally regarding the Australian Curriculum.

GTASA continue to conduct the following competitions:

- Wilkins Prize: for students involved in environmental action. This is popular particularly in rural areas with some terrific work being done as a result.
- The DD Harris Award for excellence in teaching is hotly contested each year and is a real opportunity to recognise people and groups who are doing some very innovative things in the teaching of geography. The DD Harris Scholarship is awarded to applicants from the two Universities offering geography in their teaching degrees. It is a bursary competitively awarded to outstanding young teachers who are intending to teach geography. We have numerous applications and the shortlisted candidates are interviewed and two awards made.

The SA Geographer (journal) is becoming a real conduit in promoting geography and to debate the projected changes that they might bring.

The annual conference was again well attended with much interest in the likely changes to be brought by the Australian

Curriculum. There is also a large amount of concern about the impact of the New SACE on geography numbers across the state.

In August GTASA hosted a Forum to respond to the Draft Shape paper for the Australian Geography Curriculum. It was well attended and a response was developed which was submitted on line as well as a more detailed response letter.

### Curriculum Developments

The roll out of the New SACE continues into Stage 2 next year signalling significant assessment changes for all subjects although content appears to be unchanged for geography.

### Issues

There is widespread concern about the rapidly falling numbers of students selecting to study geography at the senior level but particularly at the Y12 level. Changes to the SACE have reduced the number of subjects needed and this has had a major impact on the likely numbers for 2011. In 2010 around 1200 studied geography at Y12 with predictions suggesting it could be as low as 400 in 2011. (Only 2 government schools will be running Geography classes in 2011). It is hoped that there will be some recovery in 2012 as there is a small cohort of Year 11 students in 2011. A number of humanities subjects have also been decimated by changes to the curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum continues to be an item of interest to all our members.

2011 AGTA Conference: Planning is almost complete and registrations are rolling in.

GTASA have approached the Northern Territory regarding the establishment of a sub branch and are awaiting a response.



## NEXT MEETINGS:

14 January 2011 – Venue: Adelaide • 14-15 May 2011 – Venue: Sydney

*National Geographic Channel promotes and encourages Geography education in Australian schools.*

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