

GEOGRAPHIA

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

JULY 2009

Occasional Newsletter of The Australian Geography Teachers' Association Limited

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The 102 AGTA meeting was held in Collingwood Melbourne at the VATE Conference Facilities.

Welcome to Trish Harris, President GAWA. Malcolm also welcomed special guest Alaric Maude secretary from the Institute of Australian Geographers.

A busy agenda faced the board reflecting the exciting time in Geography. Much has happened since October. These months have seen the implementation of the *Towards the National Geography Curriculum* initiative, planning commence for the AGTA conference 2011 in Adelaide, South Australia; many papers being

written along with an incredible amount of feedback on Geography from educators across all states. This reflects the extensive interest in the discipline of Geography.

Rob Berry now holds the position of Treasurer on the AGTA Board. All accounts have been consolidated with AGTA now actively engaged in electronic banking maximising operational efficiency. Total equity of AGTA for the 2008/2009 financial year is \$154,355.59.

AGTA 2011 Conference

The 2011 AGTA National Conference will be held in Adelaide from 10-13 January 2011. Working Title/Theme is "Geography Going National" to be held at Scotch College, Adelaide South Australia.

The tentative program includes:

- Day 1** – Exploring the national curriculum; Keynote and Workshop; social event.
- Day 2** – Exploring South Australia; Fieldwork 1 – wineries, beaches, urban; eating out in Adelaide.
- Day 3** – Exploring South Australia; Fieldwork 2 – wineries, beaches, urban; Conference Dinner.
- Day 4** – Exploring the national curriculum; Keynote and Workshops; AGM

Thank you to Mark Manuel and GTASA for the preliminary work completed to date.



Geocareers Website 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. Thanks are extended to Kath Berg, Judy Mraz and Pat Beeson in particular for their assistance in suggesting people to be approached. Each affiliate is asked to make a special effort to send Rob Berry a list of people who might be invited to submit a profile for publication. Rob is keen to diversify the website and profile young people (both national and international), who have studied geography, in other areas such as commercial enterprise, market research, park rangers, environment etc.

At present the major sections include Meet a Geographer, Studying Geography, Using

Geography and Resources. Each of these sections will be added to 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@melbpc.org.au). Rob will then contact each person nominated and provide them with a standard proforma and agreement sheet.

Most state affiliates have links to this site. This site has proven to be highly attractive to students who have been directed to the site. Please provide Rob Berry with details so he can create the link to the site.

AGTA Website www.agta.asn.au

The main changes made to the website have been the inclusion of keynote and workshop presentations from the AGTA 08 conference. These include two of the keynote presentations and six workshop sessions. Whilst it is pleasing to have these presentations available on the website it is recommended that future conference organisers advise presenters prior to the conference of the need to make their presentations available for inclusion on the AGTA website.

Other changes to the conference section include the archiving of the conference program, fieldtrip and conference tours, conference sponsors, general information, AGTA awards and contact details. The conference navigation menu has been

simplified with sections no longer required deleted. Details of the AGTA 2011 conference will be added progressively to the website as they come to hand.

Updates have been made to other sections of the website including links to the *Geographia*, the National Geography Curriculum website, standards for geography teaching and details of affiliate conferences as well as to the details of affiliates and Board members. 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. Ongoing additions are also made as required to the news section.

Agta Awards

The 2010 AGTA Awards have been conducted by South Australia over the last three years. As the next AGTA Conference is in SA affiliates are asked to consider coordinating the Awards for 2010. Affiliates are asked to provide feedback to AGTA if they are willing to coordinate this significant, high profile event.

Keys to Fieldwork

AGTA welcomed Lyn Thane publisher, Macmillan Education to the meeting. Lyn reported that the Keys to Geography Skills text, from both a publishing and geography perspective, has been highly successful with over 40,000 sales.

Keys to Fieldwork was released in November 2008 with over 1,700 sales so far. The book is clearly being purchased as class set rather than individual texts.

The book is currently being marketed at each state level with the AGTA publications highlighted within the MacMillan brochure.

Edition 2 Keys to Geography

Originally published in 2004 and now due for a second edition that AGTA endorsed in 2008. All writers for edition one did so on a voluntary basis. 35,800 books have been sold for the period ranging from 2004 till February 2008. Royalties have exceed \$120,000. Keys to Geography is clearly an Australian/AGTA niche.

Bob Digby is keen to see a parallel version of Keys to Geography for the United Kingdom market and is keen to work on such an edition. Such an edition would have the following positives for AGTA:

- Potentially significant income stream; and
- Strengthening of professional networks.

The recommendations endorsed by AGTA included:

- Production of the second edition of *Keys to Geography* with Jeana Kriewaldt as editor.
- Progress negotiations to produce the *Keys to Geography* UK edition.
- Following a positive outcome of the negotiations, AGTA to approve an allocation up to \$15,000 to recompense Bob Digby for his work (i.e. develop and market the UK edition).

Market research will be undertaken on schools and teachers using the skills book and CD (qualitative and quantitative) prior to producing a second edition of the text. It is anticipated that a manuscript would be available in September 2009 allowing marketing and sales in schools in May 2010.

Macquarienet

Australia's Online Reference Library. See the brochure graphic regarding a Special Offer – 6 months free! Quote Code AGTA09.

6 months free!

Initiative for the Environment

There is a perceived need to produce an event beyond the normal for young people. The event is to be designed to engage youth in a positive way in exploring the concept of sustainability and the related issues of climate change, energy use, resource depletion and personal lifestyle decision making.

To be effective the presentation needs to:

- be fast moving, visually powerful and use the music of today
- be supported by a student friendly website for the project – can I direct you to the UK Ordnance Survey , GIS Zone website as an example of a student friendly supporting website (<http://mapzone.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/mapzone/giszone/english/>).
- have spatial representation – using spatial technologies such as Google Earth (<http://earth.google.com/>), Gapminder (<http://www.gapminder.org/>), Worldmapper (<http://www.worldmapper.org/>), EarthCam (<http://www.earthcam.com/>) etc
- have a real-time component from various parts of the world to connect students with the macro and relevant personalities 'beamed in' (Skype or similar). This may involve live feeds to famous people talking about the issues of the presentation.
- have a strong YouTube presence and a Web 2.0 capability for inter-action after the event
- be presented as sections that stand-alone as concepts (digestible as bits)
- be approx 60-90 minutes in length – has to be long enough to make it worthwhile for schools to travel to the venue
- involve humour that is incisive, purposeful and has currency with young people
- use a large map of the world (digital) displayed as a reference point throughout the presentation – areas talked about to light up as discussed. Challenge the spatial literacy of the students.
- personalise the ideas to the footprint concept
- create follow-up competitions developed out of the presentation and build the concept of challenge through the presentation
- provide a message at the end of the presentation which the students can take away – a catchphrase with meaning and achievability (a catchphrase which is unique and different)
- develop follow-up materials for the classroom and student research projects. Develop a well designed website, thoroughly tested prior to launching, containing student activities and challenges. All schools attending to receive a copy for curriculum use

As an event aimed at attitudinal intervention, the presentation needs to:

- have currency with young people's desires, goals and environments
- connect with where young people 'are at' in their lifestyle and outlook
- be a positive message to move forward
- engender a feeling of excitement about future possibilities
- create a balance between intelligence and coolness, not to be demeaning of the intelligence or responsiveness of young people
- not give any indication of blame or denial. Not to come across as being designed to make young people deny themselves of what they desire and be a message of hope, alternatives and challenge.
- challenge the young to respond to the environmental challenges of the 21st Century
- connect young people with a spatial dimension. To move them out of their micro-world of family/friends/school/suburb and see the big picture macro world
- have a sense of 'sunshine' in terms of the future and the beauty/mystification of the natural world – build on a sense of wonder of the intricacies, inter-connections, complexities and diversity of the globe
- encourage young people to think differently and be creative in thinking and not to accept stereotypical illustrations of reality
- overtly and succinctly challenge myths that have currency among the young
- encourage young people to learn about natural and human environments. From such understandings the issues and challenges of the 21st Century can be tackled – from knowledge, skills and deep thinking and not just emotions and doomsday negativity with no answers.
- tell stories that students can connect with. Ideally these stories to be backed up with seldom discussed facts and approaches.

AGTA will continue to liaise with John Dee regarding his initiative "Do Something" and the scoping of this environmental event for students.

National Education Forum

Malcolm McInerney represented AGTA at the April meeting of NEF and identified highlights from an AGTA perspective as:

- Meeting representatives from other associations.
- Experiencing the sense of partnership and affiliation between associations in terms of the National Curriculum Board (NCB) and the future of education in Australian schools.
- Being involved in discussion on the national curriculum and the response of history, science, mathematics and history to the October Framing papers.
- Being provided with up-to-date information on the transition of young people from school and year 12 completion.

Relevant points/information/perceptions

• **English: Jan Turbill: ALEA:**

Overall, response from English teachers associations has commonality across Australia.

- The ETA's are comfortable with the Framing Paper. Initial concerns re: lack of literature in junior years has now been redressed.
- Missing early year's strategy to be literate – phonics not to be first.
- Concern about lack of the term critical literacy in the document.
- Happy with process and have been listened to by the NCB.

• **Mathematics: Judy Anderson: AAMT:**

Positives:

- Feel that it has a very close linkage to the NCB.
- Futures commitment by NCB.
- Expressed need to meet the needs of all – access and equity.
- Endorse strand organisation of the curriculum.
- 4 proficiencies seen as important for active citizens.
- Standards for problem solving and reasoning a fine goal (great opportunity for math).
- Emphasis on curriculum clarity.
- Commitment to address crowded curriculum.
- Big ideas focus for math a worthy goal.
- Commitment to make math real – connections.
- Embedding ICT throughout K-12 math across Australia.

• **Science: Peter Turnbull: ASTA:**

- Pleased with consultation and members like the paper generally.
- Framing Paper structure of knowing, doing and endeavour and its enquiry (investigative) basis is supported by SASTA.

Issues/concerns:

- Scientific literacy not allowed to be used because that is the domain of English – must use the term scientific capabilities. ASTA not happy with this and wish to challenge the NCB premise of what literacy means as a term.
- Prescribed time for subjects needs to be addressed explicitly.
- How will a year by year model work in a range of schools and systems?
- Four traditional strands to be replaced and could cause confusion for teachers.

- Lack of integration of science with other learning areas – why was there not a template for this.
- Lack of ICT integration.
- Capacity for local context not developed adequately.
- How will ACARA and assessment impact on science?
- Need to engage in pedagogical change and a professional learning strategy needs to be developed.

• **History: Richard Smith, HTAA:**

Consultation good but next stage of consultation is critical – must have classroom teachers involved.

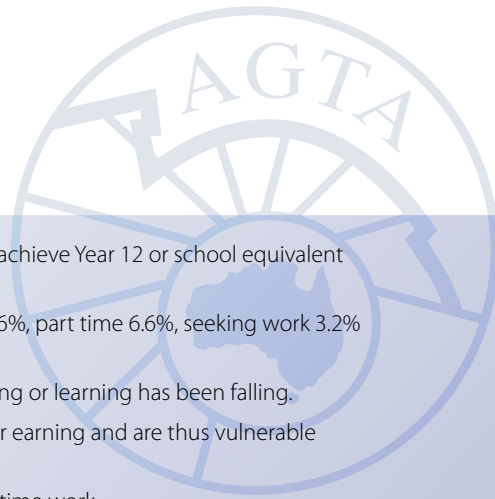
- Grave concerns about the primary years – not enough consultation with primary teachers and the time allocation not real with other pressures to teach all subjects.
- Some conceptual ideas too much for primary students to handle.
- Must be careful that secondary teachers do not dominate the writing – need to involve primary teachers.
- Fear that curriculum will be assessment driven.
- Happy with junior secondary stage and senior secondary. Want to maintain state senior courses – do not want to be forced to teach a national curriculum course in the senior years.
- Enquiry based approach needs to be used and built explicitly into the document. Amount of prescribed content is a concern.
- Need to have an integrated approach with geography etc.
- Need to create unit choices and not a massive content coverage approach.
- Serious concern about repetition of topics and its impact on student engagement.
- Recommend to build more Asian and Pacific history into the course – too western in content.
- More flexibility in structure is required.
- Want a timeline for resourcing and professional learning – associations need to be resourced to meet demands.
- Need to develop appropriate student outcomes and is it to be NAPLAN tested?
- No cross curricula examples – exemplars required.
- Limited ICT component indicated in the Framing Paper.
- HTAA's want to set history teaching requirements (History major and methodology of one year).
- Need release time for schools and associations to conduct professional learning. How do you take out primary teachers to be professionally developed?
- HTAA doubts that it has the resources to meet the needs of the NCB and the implementation of the national curriculum.

• **How young people are faring?**

Dr Lucas Walsh: Foundation for young Australians.

Report at http://www.fya.org.au/downloads/FYA_HYPAFReport_ONLINE_68pp.pdf

- 3-6% struggle to transit from school (underestimate).



- Reform agenda based on 90% to achieve Year 12 or school equivalent (TAFE Cert 3) by 2020.
 - 15-19 years old: full time work 16.6%, part time 6.6%, seeking work 3.2% and not in labour force 3.5%.
 - Proportion of teenagers not earning or learning has been falling.
 - Less girls than boys are learning or earning and are thus vulnerable (especially in time of downturn).
 - 13% of 19 year olds are not in full time work.
 - Females are more likely than males to be in full time education.
 - Not learning or earning at age 19 (SA: 31.8%).
 - Not earning or learning at age 19 is connected with school achievement.
 - Earning or learning at age 19 varies by location (major cities 46.9% in education and regional approx 20%).
 - School leavers: Part time work/seeking work and not working has grown for school leavers. 44% in full time study and 29% in full time work.
 - Year 12 completion – impacts on learning and earning potential.
 - Female school leavers more likely to enter higher education.
 - Males more likely to be in VET, apprenticeships and full time work.
 - Females more likely in marginal activities (part time work or unemployed).
 - Marginal attachment to the labour force falls as socio economic status rises.
 - In recent decades full time education has increased (higher SES highest proportion) for 20 year olds but numbers have dropped for employment.
 - Young women at greater risk of marginalisation.
- *** An at a glance document at
http://www.fya.org.au/downloads/FYA_HYPAF_AAG.final.pdf

Relevant websites associated with the event:

Foundation for Young Australians: <http://www.fya.org.au/>
 to download 'How young people are faring (2008)

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoolandwork/subs.htm>

National Education Forum (NEF): <http://www.nef.edu.au/home.html>

History Teachers Association of Australia (HTAA):
<http://www.historyteacher.org.au/>

National Curriculum Board website (NCB):
http://www.ncb.org.au/home_page.html

Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA)
 website: <http://www.acsa.edu.au/pages/page399.asp>
 Free online curriculum resources

Aligning curriculum with the goals of schooling:
http://www.acsa.edu.au/pages/images/cscnepa_3.pdf

MCEETYA Action Plan at
http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Goals_-_Action_Plan_-_draft_for_consultation.pdf

Melbourne Declaration at
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/melbourne_declaration,25979.html

Asia Pacific Regional Geography Olympiad

In 2009 Australia will participate for the first time in an Asia Pacific Regional Geography Olympiad (APRGO). APRGO 09 will be held in Tsukuba, Japan, from 1 to 6 August. It will be hosted by the Japanese Association of Geographers. Australia's team has been selected from students who took part in the 2008 Geography's Big Week Out, based primarily on the assessment item they completed, but also taking into account the students' performances during the week. The students are:

Nicole Filling, Geelong College
 Pace Huxley, Sydney Grammar School
 Alex Lawson, Brisbane Grammar School
 Patrick Mackenzie, Christ Church Grammar School, Perth

The team will be accompanied by two leaders: Kathryn Berg, RGSQ Administrator, and Margaret McIvor, AGTA Director.

Other countries taking part are Japan, Mexico and Taiwan. Team leaders are contributing to writing the questions to be used in the tests.



Simon Rowe from the Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation and OceanWatch contacted AGTA regarding the *Our valuable Estuaries* resource that is currently available in NSW. The original intent of the resource was pushed by the seafood industry to provide information to students on the impact of upstream activities on downstream industries. There is a possibility that this could be extended to other states. In addition, Simon has recently put in for a grant *Caring for Country*. A component of the funding could involve extending the development of this resource in South Australia and Victoria. Simon has provided an example of the resource. He would like to gauge the interest in the development of this resource in other states and territories so that they can begin looking at putting this resource together.

**Please contact Simon on
 (02) 9660 2262 if you are interested.**

I liked everything about Geography's Big Week Out: people, places, events, even (and I never thought I'd say this) the teachers! Pace Huxley

Geography Big Week Out

The 2008 Geography's Big Week Out was an outstanding success. Sixteen high-achieving students from all around Australia willingly gave up a week of their holidays for six full-on days of geography fieldwork at Noosa, 7-12 December. The students were inspired by Big Week Out, but so were the leaders. It is an uplifting, and challenging, experience to work with a group of such motivated and intelligent young people. Check out the website for stories and photos - www.rgsq.org.au/gbwo.htm.

The students learnt new skills, like creating a beach profile and analysing data using GIS.

They learnt about the Noosa area and its balancing act between conservation and

development. More importantly, they honed their ability to look at new situations through geographers' eyes: where are the built-up areas distributed; what effect has building a groyne had on sand movement; why does the vegetation change between here and there; what would the positives and negatives be of a major development at a particular location.

The student participants were the highest-scoring male and female Year 11 students from each state and the combined territories, plus two other high-scoring students, who took part in the senior division of the 2008 Competition. The leaders who were so appreciated by the students were:

- Kath Berg, Royal Geographical Society of Qld
- Mark Camman, Maleny State High School, Qld
- Mike Fazio, Geographical Association of WA
- Brett Jones, Pacific Lutheran College, Qld
- Mick Law, Contour Education
- Margaret McIvor, Geography Teachers' Association of Qld
- Mike Railton, Maleny State High School, Qld
- Emmy Terry, Geographical Association of WA

Mike Fazio and Emmy Terry have undertaken to organize Geography's Big Week Out in 2009

National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition



The number of students entering the 2009 Competition is provisionally 87,294 - a decrease of approximately 2,300 students from 2008. The numbers have fluctuated since our peak in 2006 and it therefore seems likely that the numbers have plateaued. We will of course continue to strongly promote the Competition to encourage an increase in participation. The drop was disappointing after the increase in media coverage last year (108 items) and the fact that several states promoted the Competition using their SOSE/HSIE/Geography "official" email networks.

Students win a place at the Final for under 16s based on their scores in the school round. As part of the naming rights agreement, the Final for under 16s is held in Sydney. The Final will be held on Monday 1 June at Foxtel Studios and will be compered by Jacinta Tynan of Sky News. National Geographic Channel will be filming the Final for later broadcasting as a short 'fill-in'. Sydney schools that entered the Competition have been invited. Malcolm McInerney will officially represent AGTA at the Final, and other AGTA members are most welcome. The prize weekend prior to the Final

will be hosted by Land's Edge, an outdoor/environmental education provider with a base at Chowder Bay on the shores of Sydney Harbour.

The student coming first at the Final will join first-placed student from last year (Miguel Vera-Cruz, Fort Street High School, Sydney) and one of the second-placed students to represent Australia at the National Geographic World Championship in Mexico City (swine flu allowing), 11-16 July 2009.

State/Territory	2009 (interim)		2008		2007	
	Students	Schools	Students	Schools	Students	Schools
ACT	2,869	17	2,852	17	1,842	13
NSW	36,571	333	37,355	342	37,863	324
NT	198	4	385	6	82	4
QLD	15,429	158	15,147	148	14,932	156
SA	4,411	42	4,863	54	4,669	48
TAS	796	17	679	18	816	16
VIC	17,361	138	18,649	145	16,559	137
WA	9,269	96	9,626	88	9,170	83
Other	390	2	30	1	20	1
TOTAL	87 294	807	89 586	819	85 953	782

Includes External Territories and overseas¹

Institute of Australian Geographers

The IAG is active in establishing study groups for academics and publishing academic articles in the area of geography.

The IAG is the principal body representing geographers and promoting the study and application of geography in Australia. IAG was founded in 1958 and since then has promoted supported and defended Australian geography. The association represents geography and those who contribute to it in Australia. The aims of the Institute, as set out in the constitution include:

- To promote the study and practice of geography;
- To advance the study of Australian geography internationally;
- To hold and sponsor meetings and conferences to present, discuss and disseminate geographical studies and research;
- To publish the results of geographical research in a journal;
- To represent the interests of professional geographers in Australia; and
- To co-operate with other organizations having kindred purposes.

Members of the IAG include geographers employed in universities and research organizations, teachers, postgraduate students, geographers in local, state and national government departments and agencies or in the business sector, and people with just a serious interest in the subject.

Malcolm met with other board members and created networks for co-operation between schools and universities in the future. Particularly in the view of the national curriculum it is very likely that the writer for the geography curriculum will be an IAG member. Malcolm also met with the National Curriculum Board Manager to discuss the *Towards a National Geography Curriculum* (<http://www.ngc.org.au/>) initiative of AGTA, IAG and RGSQ.

Relevant points/information/perceptions

- Being informed of what is happening around Australia with geography at the University level.
- Presentation to the IAG Board the pro-active initiative of AGTA in terms of the Towards a National Geography Curriculum project. The Board voted to offer its in-kind and financial support to the project.
- Presentation to the Board an agenda item concerning the status and nature of geography in Australian schools. This group of academics see that part of their role is to support and promote geographical education K-12 across Australia. Such a united front between geography teachers and academics is critical for the national curriculum processes relating to Geography to be representative and applicable to schools.
- Identification of the IAG website at <http://www.iag.org.au/home/> as an excellent resource for schools - particularly the sections on maps, trivia and geographical information as listed below:
 - o How do you know if you want to be a geographer? http://www.aag.org/Careers/To_be_a_geographer?
 - o Geography is Geography <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/perspective/stories/2007/1949749.htm>
 - o Is the world really shrinking? <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/freethinking2006/pip/hcb0r/>
 - o An overview of geography <http://geography.about.com/od/studygeography/a/geog101.htm>
 - o Trivia http://geography.about.com/od/lists/Statistics_Lists_and_Trivia.htm
 - o Maps <http://geography.about.com/od/findmaps/u/maps.htm#s2>
 - o Geographical Information <http://geography.about.com/od/physicalgeography/u/physicalcultural.htm>



ARC Linkage Project - Strengthening Standards of Teaching Through Linking Standards and Teacher Learning: The Development of Professional Standards for Teaching School Geography.

All case studies for the project have now been completed. Teacher panel meetings are being conducted currently in 5 states (Victoria, New south Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. To this point 6 panel meetings have been held in three states, with the remaining panels scheduled throughout the year.

Teacher panel meetings have seen the emergence of strong patterns. Complex geography teaching requires knowledge of general teaching pedagogy and very importantly, geography. Achievements to this point include:

- Filming of 10 classrooms over the course of two lessons. Filming was undertaken in 4 government schools (including a primary school) and 4 non-government schools.
- Tables of lesson events have been created for the bulk of lessons filmed and clips have been placed on the panel consultation website constructed by the technical support team.
- Viewing diary entries have been submitted by 38 teachers in 3 states via the GEOSTandards panel construction website.
- 32 interviews conducted with students participating in the case studies have been transcribed. Focus group data from three panel meetings have also be transcribed.
- Teachers have been recruited for all teacher panels with important assistance from many people from the AGTA board.
- One teacher panel has met twice; interviews have been conducted with 3 members of the panel regarding the relationship between teaching standards and teacher learning.

AGTA & Australian Geographic

Kylie Palmer, Administrator of the Society, Australian geographic contacted AGTA regarding the creation of links between the two Associations. Kylie also expressed interest in developing resources for teacher including national curriculum. Kylie indicated that Australian Geographic:

- Have 20 years of resources that are available to be used including articles and maps that are mainly Australian;
- Is currently updating their website and aim to provide online resources;
- Are interested in producing resources for geography teachers that relate to

current curriculums, including the national curriculum;

- Current publishers are Australian Consolidated Press whose overarching organization is PBL who also owns Channel 9.
- Has had discussions with Australian Geographic Retail who are also keen to work with schools

and provide information to the public; and that

- The Society also has Scientific Expeditions – there could be the development of a program where students are able to participate in these expeditions.

For your information Kylie provided the following contact information: KPiper@apcmagazines.com.au

WA

Geography Teachers Association of Western Australia (GAWA)

Mike Fazio finished his term as president which occurred during a very controversial time with the development of new curriculums. The new Geography course is currently being implemented in Year 11. Despite many revisions, the latest in December 2008 teachers' anecdotal evidence are generally positive.

Despite a relative decline in student numbers GAWA membership remains stable at 250. A range of factors have contributed to the fall in numbers over the last few years, particularly influential are the range of new courses available for university entrance offered by the WA Curriculum Council causing competition in subject selection. Most schools in the state that offer Geography are members.

Professional Learning activities included a session for teachers new to Geography teaching facilitated by GAWA PD Committee Members who also coordinated the collection of a range of teaching resources to support the new courses on offer for the first time in 2009. A *Towards a National Geography Curriculum Forum* was facilitated by Rob Berry and Roger Smith. Rob and Roger presented to approximately 25 people who then worked collaboratively on models of curriculum structure. The opportunity for discussion was well-received. A Winter Solstice activity will be held at Hillary's Boat Harbour with the event including breakfast, a guest speaker

and a tour of the Fisheries Department Facilities. GAWA will present the final round of TEE revision seminars in August for Year 12 students at venues both north and south of the river, as well as in Bunbury. Three Spatial Sciences and GIS events are planned for 2009 to support the use of GIS in the classroom.

Four texts books have been published by GAWA to support teachers with the introduction of the new Year 11 courses. *Hazards, Impacts and Responses* by Norm Snell was published late in 2008 and *Sustainable Planet* by Tamara Boyer was published early 2009. In the latter part of 2008, Norm Snell's *The Geographers Toolkit* was published and its companion student activity book was produced for introduction in 2009. The last edition of the *Student's Guide to the TEE Geography* compiled by Alan May has recently been published. GAWA Resources have been well-received and supported by strong sales.

Sample external exams have been provided by commercial suppliers in this state for many years. Teachers have reported to GAWA of their increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of the paper. To this end the GAWA Committee felt they needed to support teachers with an alternative resource. Two writers have been engaged to produce exams, the Year 12 TEE exam is modeled on the old syllabus which is in its last year of operation and the *Stage 2 Sample Exam* models the potential exam for the new course.

The Joseph Gentili Award honored the top Year 11 Geographer prior to 2008. Following a review the GAWA Committee decided that this award should significantly recognize the educational work of Western Australia's father of Geography.

The *Joseph Gentili Memorial Award for Excellence in Geographical Education* is conferred on a GAWA member who has made an outstanding contribution to Geographical Education. In recognition of its importance the award comes with prize money of \$2000. The 2008 inaugural winner was announced at the November AGM. It was presented to Phil Houweling, a teacher of Geography at John Calvin Christian College in Armadale.

The GAWA Bulletin has been redeveloped and now provides a greater emphasis on the provision of classroom teaching resources, articles and the publication of useful websites and events.

The 2009 planning day brought to fruition the plan to update and improve the GAWA website. A web designer has been commissioned and is currently building the new site with the Website Subcommittee. It is anticipated that the site will provide a 'login' capacity to further support the provision of service and resources to GAWA members.

GAWA will be represented at a wider 'Promoting Society and Environment Conference' to be held later in the year. It is hoped that the focus of GAWA run workshops will be to promote best practice and foster Geography literacy in lower secondary and primary years. Schools where Geography is well taught in the 'foundation years' have the capacity to grow numbers of students taking the subject in post-compulsory years.



VIC

Geography Teachers Association of Victoria (GTAV)

Kerry Bainbridge has taken over as president. Membership is currently 567 members.

Following a Strategic Planning Day held in March, facilitated by an external consultant, GTAV is re-examining its Mission Statement and will be further reviewing data the association collects for evaluating current performance. GTAV will also be reviewing its Business Plan,

completing an audit by staff and committee to determine contribution in terms of hours worked and functions undertaken.

GTAV will be celebrating its 50th year in August. Along with preparation for the celebration, Anna Chlebnikowski published an article on "The Importance of Geography". A committee "Remembering our Past" has also produced a significant booklet tracing the history of the last 50 years of the GTAV. The booklet is in the final stages of publication and will be mailed out to each member. The book is an interesting testimony to the GTAV journey.

A Trial Exam Paper for Year 12 is currently nearing publication. Writing is also taking place for a supplement to the current VCE book. This supplement will be sold with the existing book so that the most up to date information is available for Units 3 and 4. Writing has commenced for a homework/class workbook for Level 5 which includes Years 7 and 8 at secondary school.



TAS

Tasmanian Geography Teachers Association (TGTA)

Membership has increased to 19 teachers due to the increasing number of schools and colleges teaching Geography this year. Membership is provided free for all Geography teachers. Members are largely from Year 11/12 government colleges and private schools that are the only places where Geography is still being taught as a distinct subject.

Post Year 10 Review – the major re-structure of TAFE and Year 11 and 12 Colleges into Academies and Polytechnics has occurred with all of TAFE and half of the colleges making the transition in 2009. The other colleges will follow in 2010 and 2011. One of the positives of the restructure is the re-emergence of Geography as a viable subject in two of the former colleges, now called academies, where it had not been taught for a number of years. Statewide, there has been an increase in the number of schools, colleges and academies with viable Geography classes and an increase in the number of students studying Geography in 2009. This has continued the increase in numbers studying Geography, which started in 2008,

after a short period of decline.

As individuals and at association level, TGTA has established good links with the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at UTAS.

Tasmanian Geography teachers are currently awaiting the outcome of their submission to the accrediting authority regarding the future of Geography and the gradual resolution of the problems associated with the re-structure of post year 10 education.



NSW

Geography Teachers Association of New South Wales (GTANSW)

GTANSW has had a very active and successful year with the office relocating, operations restructured, employment of a professional officer and conducting over 21 professional learning activities. As a result of this the association's professional development initiatives included a focus on pedagogy, assessment, fieldwork, global education and an introduction to the resources developed as part of OceanWatch and Water for Life initiatives.

Key professional learning initiatives included:

- a series of 11 workshops targeting teachers new to geography which included a focus on

- innovative teaching. Workshops were held in both metropolitan and regional locations.
- Annual review of HSC and school Certificates.
- A series of six one day fieldwork workshops.
- An annual conference that attracted over 130 delegates.

Other initiatives included managing Global Education, conducting HSC student lectures, coordinating fieldwork competitions, participating in the HSC awards ceremony, consulting with the Board of Studies on a range of curriculum related issues and continuing to publish the Geography Bulletin.

GTANSW has appointed a professional officer to advance the interests and outreach of the Association. The Officer reports directly to the President and through this role to the Council. Key responsibilities include: provision of professional advice to the GTA Council; supporting the Associations professional

learning program, identifying possible sources of grants and revenue; and, building membership and facilitating the provision of services to members.

Lorraine Chaffer was recently presented with the Brock Rowe Award in recognition of her demonstrated commitment to the study and promotion of Geography in New South Wales. Lorraine has made a substantial contribution to the work of the Association as a Councillor. In the classroom Lorraine is widely recognized as an outstanding practitioner. She has nurtured her students to achieve very high outcomes in both the School Certificate and HSC.



QLD

Geography Teachers Association of Queensland (GTAQ)

Membership is similar to the corresponding period for 2008, that is, 167 members.

Work is currently underway on the drafting and editing of the new Year 10 Geography Guidelines for Geography. This is the first year the new Senior Geography Syllabus has been undertaken in Year 12. Monitoring of the first time through Year 11 work in February went relatively smoothly. The State Panel needs to meet to review submissions and exemplars.

GTAQ has organized four GIS and spatial technology workshops to be held in Mackay,

Townsville, Gold Coast and Toowoomba. Sessions, subsidized by GTAQ for members, are being conducted by Contour Education – Mick Law.

The Environmental Education Expo was held in March at Everton High School. The theme of the Expo was "Sustainability" and teachers were encouraged to incorporate environmental projects into their curriculum and school communities. Projects included minimizing water and energy use; recycling and reducing waste etc. Engineers Without Borders also talked about their education initiatives which involve sustainable engineering solutions in the third world and with remote Indigenous communities.

In addition to the state conference to be held in August a skills workshop is proposed for the Sunshine Coast. The field studies workshop will

be conducted in Noosa national Park.

Maintaining membership is a concern to the association especially when student numbers are declining in Geography. Furthermore, schools are finding increasingly difficult to access funding for members of associations as State Government budgetary pressures increase. This impacts on attendance at conferences with many teachers having to fund their own professional learning.



SA

Geography Teachers Association of South Australia (GTASA)

Membership is currently at 75 but is expected to increase significantly as conference registrations together with membership renewals are received.

Professional learning activities include the GTASA Conference held in May at the Education Centre in Hindmarsh. Keynote addresses focused on current research in relation to mining resources and population and water resources. Sessions also focused on both middle and senior school geography with support provided for teachers of the new Year 12 course. A special workshop on coastal management was organized for primary teachers.

Following the success of GIS training via Centra in 2008 more training is planned for 2009.

Rita will be completing her term as President in May with Alex Piggott being the incoming president.

Numbers in Year 12 Geography are increasing slightly (new course).

Future SACE - First students have commenced the course in 2009 by completing the Personal Learning Plan in Year 10.

Subject Reference Groups were formed to mould the current Year 11 and 12 curricula to fit the requirements of the new SACE. All subjects in Year 12 must have 30% external assessment and no assessment component will be used to moderate another eg exam performance will no longer be used to moderate school assessed work.

In Year 12 all students will complete a Research Project on any topic (worth 10 points- semester subject) plus 4 subjects (grouping of subjects has been abolished) In Year 12 the TER will be calculated on their 3 best subjects /20 plus the best of either their 4th subject, or ½ the 4th subject and the Research Project. With the move from 5 to 4 subjects it is likely that numbers in all subjects will decline.

Geography Curricula for Year 11 and 12 has been modified. While there are no major changes the course has been rewritten in line with Performance Standards. Moderation of work will be implemented at Year 11.



Communication Strategy

In October 2008 AGTA commissioned the development of a communications strategy as a response to the growing concern of geography professionals and educators, confirmed by the findings of the Erebus International report in 2008, that geography education in Australia is suffering a decline in the quality of teaching of the subject and falling student numbers, and that there is a critical shortage of Australians with geographical understanding and skills.

The report's findings highlighted teachers' concerns that content, rigour and skills were lost when geography was amalgamated with other subjects into the catch-all "studies of society and the environment". The report found the geography content of integrated subjects such as Studies of Society and Environment was often taught by teachers who had no training in geography and no great enthusiasm for it. The report also pointed to the shortage of suitably qualified geography teachers and the loss of priority for geography.

Consultation in 2008 with representatives from the various Australian geography organisations identified a need for a formal strategy for the promotion of geography and geography education in Australia, to be implemented alongside the development of the discipline via the new national curriculum.

The decline in the quality of the teaching of geography, a fall in student numbers and a critical shortage of professionals with geographical understanding is not the experience of Australia alone. A similar situation is occurring in other countries.

In response to this situation, the benefits of a communications strategy for geography and geography education has also been identified in the UK through its Action Plan for Geography, where a 'communications' plan is currently being implemented alongside a 'development' strand (aim of which is to secure the future of geography through essential curriculum reform, stimulating innovation and raising expectations, and by providing subject-based recognition and professional accreditation) and a 'support' strand (aim of which is to provide tools, guidance and training opportunities designed to raise levels of professional competence and confidence).

The coordinators of the UK Action Plan are willing to share their experience with our Australian geography organisations, and their lead is referred to in some sections of this strategy.

Aims

To identify a workable and cost-effective way in which the various Australian geography organisations can combine to communicate geography's educational potential and relevance in the 21st century, within a two-year time line and within a limited budget.

Objectives

The objectives of the communications strategy are as follows:

- raise the current image of geography and geography education in Australia
- increase awareness of geography and geography education in Australia
- promote the development of both the primary and secondary geography curriculum
- promote the support available for teachers of geography
- promote the relevance of geography for career prospects
- secure in the minds of policy makers, education professionals, and the wider public the nature of contemporary geography and its worthwhile contributions to the challenges facing society.

The communications strategy has a focus on informing and advising people about the benefits of geography and geography education. Representatives from the various geography organisations will be asked to be actively involved in the strategy in order for it to be effective.



Key Strategies

The following communications strategies have been identified to provide formal structure for the promotion of geography and as achievable and cost-effective ways of raising awareness, disseminating information and outcomes, enthusing and encouraging teachers, students and a more general audience about the benefits of geography.

1. Engage the services of a public relations professional.
2. Form a committee for the promotion of Geography Education in Australia.
3. Development of a Geography Education Brand.
4. Development of a central website.
5. Media Management.
6. Advertising.
7. Identification of key geography spokespeople.
8. Creation of an online university student ambassador program.
9. Identification of special events.
10. Identification of strategic partnerships.
11. Government lobbying.

AGTA agreed to the intent and direction of the Communication Strategy overall, and to identify where funds may come from – clarify and firm up a realistic budget. AGTA to develop priorities and strategies within budget parameters. To commence the process a Planning Committee has been established as a sub-committee of AGTA comprising Malcolm McInerney (SA), Trish Harris and Emmy Terry (WA); Stephen Cranby and Rob Berry (Victoria); Grant Kleeman (NSW) and Wayne Sutton (Tas).

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



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