

# geographia



AGTA News  
October 2017



Sally Lightfoot Crab, Galapagos



AGTA Conference 2017,  
Melbourne January 9-12



The GeoSix and the Bushfire Story  
Year Level: 5



Welcome to the Galapagos Islands



Around the Affiliates

## AGTA Geographia 2016/2017

Welcome to the latest edition of *Geographia*, the national newsletter of the Australian Geography Teachers' Association.

For further information about AGTA you can visit our [website](#).

## AGTA Membership.

The Australian Geography Teachers Association (AGTA) has seven members being the geography professional associations in each State and Northern Territory.

Individuals, schools and other institutions, non-government organisations and businesses should join the relevant member association in each State or Territory (NT).

AGTA's 15 directors consist of two directors from each member affiliate, one being the President of the Affiliate Association and the other being nominated by the member.

Individuals can only make representation to AGTA through their association to bring issues to the national attention.

AGTA exists as a national body representing the interests of Geography Teachers across Australia.

If you have an issue that you believe would merit national attention you can raise it through your local state Geography Association.

You can inquire about membership and connect with your local associations.

[New South Wales](#)

[Northern Territory](#)

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## AGTA Conference 2017, Melbourne January 9-12

The 2017 biennial Australian Geography Teachers Association Conference was hosted by GTAV at the University of Melbourne January 9-12. The first AGTA conference was held in Sydney in 1968 and since then AGTA conferences have been held throughout Australia with the 2015 conference venturing offshore to Rotorua, New Zealand. The GTAV last hosted an AGTA Conference in 2002 so we were delighted to

have the conference return to Melbourne this year. We were particularly fortunate to have received significant sponsorship from both the University of Melbourne and the City of Melbourne and we thank them for their support of this event.

Organising this conference was truly a team effort with a sub-committee of ten GTAV members: Leonie Brown and Anne Matthews organised and

ran the pre-conference tour of 15 participants to Victoria's Western District; Rob Berry put in many hours managing the website and registrations; other members of the magnificent team were Anna Blamey, Jeana Kriewaldt, Anne Miles, Alex Rossimel, Peta Turner and Cleo Westhorpe.

Some 200 delegates participated in the AGTA Conference with participants from all states and territories



Pre-Conference Tour at the 12 Apostles



AGTA Conference Team

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## AGTA Conference 2017, Melbourne January 9-12 cont...



Keynote speakers Professor David Lambert and Dr. Michael Solem



Don Biddle award winners

as well as international attendees from New Zealand, Canada, USA, UK and Singapore. Participants were provided with an opportunity to hear from a wide range of renowned geographers as well as a diverse range of workshops and fieldtrips.

Another key part of the conference was the presentation of The Don Biddle (Friends of Geography) award which recognises and honours outstanding contributions by an individual towards geographical education in Australia through their work with AGTA.

GTAV member Leonie Brown, together with Malcolm McInerney and Greg Way, both from GTASA, were presented with this award. Their citations may be viewed on the AGTA website.

The Conference Dinner, held at the Wharf Hotel on the Wednesday evening, included

announcement of the AGTA Awards for geographic publications. Thank you to the GTASA team, led by Joanne Wegener, who oversaw the awards process. Recipients of the AGTA Awards are also listed on the website.

Overall, the AGTA Conference was a huge success, providing not only valuable professional development but also an ideal opportunity for networking. The next AGTA conference will be hosted by GTAQ in 2019 so start planning to attend now!

*Trish Douglas*

*AGTA Chair & GTAV Immediate Past President and AGTA Conference Sub-committee member*

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## 2019 AGTA Conference

AGTA is pleased to announce that the 2019 Conference will be held in sunny Queensland.

Watch this space and the [AGTA website](#) for confirmation of conference dates and location.

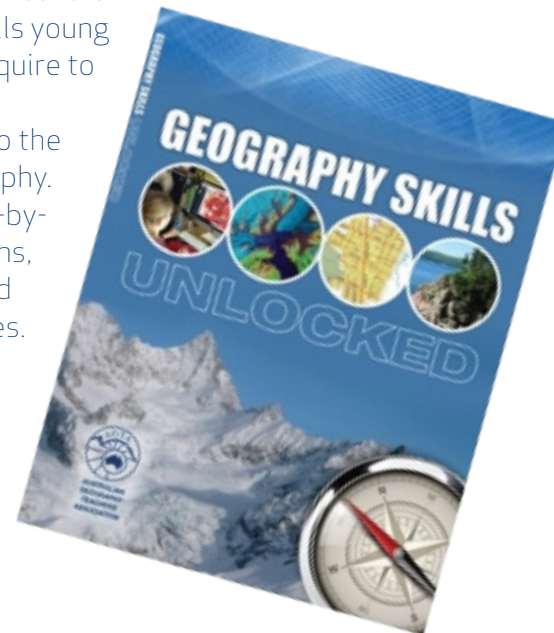
## Geography Skills Unlocked Textbook

Looking for a current textbook to support the teaching of geography skills in your classroom? Geography Skills Unlocked is written by teachers for teachers. This exciting new skills book is up-to-date with the demands and requirements of teaching geography today. Written with the Australian Curriculum and contemporary student in mind, the book covers the range of skills young geographers require to dive deeply and successfully into the study of geography. It contains step-by-step explanations, descriptions and worked examples. With a wealth of stimulus material,

it is also a great reference for teachers.

More details are available [here](#).

Contact your state or territory affiliate to order an inspection copy, or class set, today.



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## GEOGSPACE



**GEOGSPACE** is a website created by AGTA offering quality primary and secondary geography resource materials for all teachers of geography, including those that are very experienced and those just commencing their involvement. The materials will support teachers to develop their knowledge, skills and pedagogical capacity to teach geography of the highest quality.

### Featured Resource:

#### *The GeoSix and the Bushfire Story Year Level: 5*

**Theme:** Factors that shape the human and environmental characteristics of places

This learning activity aims to engage students in a story about children of their own age investigating the geographical issue of bushfires.

The story contains a lot of information about bushfire causes and prevention.

There are stopping points in the story where students can be asked to reflect, predict and research before they

read on. The story can be used to motivate, involve and instruct students about the important place of bushfires in Australia.

Visit the Geogspace website [here](#) to download the full resource and take your students through a bushfires learning experience.

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## New resource for teachers: Hunger in a World of Plenty

The world stands on the brink of an unprecedented four famines in 2017.

To help your students explore the issue behind the headlines, Oxfam Australia has created a short presentation for Year 9-10 students, based on our work in South Sudan, the Lake Chad Basin, the Horn of Africa and Yemen and aligned to the Australian and State curricula.

*Hunger in a World of Plenty* includes:

- An overview of the hunger crises
- An explanation of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and what 'Famine' really means
- Stories from 'the field'
- Suggestions of how our students can take meaningful action.

Hunger in a World of Plenty is available in two formats: PDFs of slides and a script so teachers can deliver the presentation themselves in class, and a video version to watch in class or in flipped classroom settings.

Oxfam's education resource is available at: <https://www.oxfam.org.au/hunger-in-a-world-of-plenty/>

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## Affiliate Contribution



Figure 1 Source: Galapagos\_Islands\_topographic\_map-de.svg; Eric Gaba (Sting - fr:Sting), translated by NordNordWestderivative work: MatthewStevens (talk) - Galapagos\_Islands\_topographic\_map-de.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16301316>

The following article, by Kieran O'Rourke, first appeared as part of a GAWA publication. We thank them for their generosity in sharing it with all AGTA members.

### Galapagos Geography

The Galapagos Islands are situated approximately 600 miles (1000km) west of the Ecuadorian mainland it covers a land area of roughly 4971 miles<sup>2</sup> (8000km<sup>2</sup>). The islands straddles the Equator between 1.5° north and 0.5° south, and 89° to 92° west. The highest point is the peak of Wolf Volcano on Isabela Island at 1707 metres. In total the islands have 837 miles (1350 km) of coastline, more than mainland Ecuador.

### Galapagos Geology

The estimated age of the islands is between 3 and 10 million years. The Islands lie on the Nasca tectonic plate and are the plate's primary land mass. Intense heat caused by the plates being pushed apart leads to eruptions which create new volcanoes and eventually form new islands ('Hot spot' theory). There have been around 13 volcanic eruptions in Galapagos in the last 100 years. The most recent eruptions were on the 3rd June 2008 on Isabela and in April 2009 on Fernandina.

### Charles Darwin

Darwin sailed to Galapagos on board the HMS Beagle in September 1835, when he was 26 years old. During the five weeks that he spent there, he went ashore to collect plants, rocks, insects and birds. He observed the unusual life forms and their adaptations to the harsh environment. He noted that it was possible to distinguish which island a tortoise came from by the shape of their shell. His most well-known research is of the numerous species of finches which inspired his ground-breaking theory The Origin of Species, published in 1859.

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### Protection & Conservation

In 1959, the Government of Ecuador declared all uninhabited areas of Galapagos a national park. In 1978 UNESCO designated Galapagos as the first World Heritage site and the Galapagos Marine

Reserve received the same status in 1998. The Galapagos is second only to the Great Barrier Reef National Park of Australia in terms of the size of marine area protected (130,000 km<sup>2</sup>). The Galapagos National Park Service is the main government authority which oversees the safeguarding of the islands' natural resources.



Figure 2. Bartolome Island.

### Galapagos Animals

The Galapagos penguin is the only to be found in the northern hemisphere and to breed in the tropics. A Galapagos tortoise can weigh up to 270kg with a carapace length of 1.2m and outlive most humans. The endemic Galapagos fur sea lions are the smallest among the world's seven species of fur sea lions. The Galapagos Marine Iguana is the only marine lizard to exist in the world.

The Galapagos Islands are home to the world's largest cormorant and the only one unable to fly. It has one of the world's rarest ecosystems in which the herbivores at the top of the food chain are reptiles.

The Galapagos Swallow-tailed gulls are the only gulls in the world to feed at night, while it also contains the world's largest and only red-footed booby colony.

There are 23 species of reptile in the Galapagos and all but two of those are endemic to the archipelago. The Galapagos is one of the few areas of the world where turtles are still a common sight. Over 400 species of fish have been recognised, with 41 species unique to the islands. At 30cm in length and with a large pair of venomous jaws, the endemic centipede is among the Islands' most feared animals. A lichen survey in June 2010 by the Charles Darwin Foundation uncovered more than 60 new species in the Galapagos with an estimated ten species new to science.

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## Climate & Weather

There are two seasons: December to May is warm and wet and June to December is cool and dry. Annual rainfall in the lower regions is 60-100mm and the air temperature varies between 21°-29°C. The islands' climate is determined by ocean currents. The sudden climatic change caused by El Niño can be devastating and as many as 50% of sea lions and marine iguanas can die during this time.

The convergence of three major oceanic currents brings an incredible mix of marine life to Galapagos. Despite being located in the tropics, the Islands' micro-climate is curiously dry.

During the cool season, the Humboldt Current brings relatively cold water, which produces thermal inversions that impede rainfall. At this time, a fine mist called "garúa"

is formed as cool, moist air just above the water meets a higher layer of air which is warmed by the hot sun. 'El Niño' is a phenomenon that occurs roughly every 5-7 years. The southeast trade winds slacken and cause the sea temperatures to rise dramatically and cause storms and heavy rainfall.

The majority of the archipelago's land area is covered by the brown and grey vegetation often found in deserts. The Galapagos Islands are situated in the Pacific Dry Belt, and in average years only the highest altitudes of the larger islands receive enough rainfall to support tropical plant life.

Geologically the islands are young, and much of the island's plant life reflects this; many species seem to be in the midst of the evolutionary process, which makes classifying them a difficult task. To date, the islands

are believed to be home to between 552 and 614 native species of vascular plants and approximately 825 introduced species, the majority introduced by humans. More than 30% of native plant species found in Galapagos are endemic (not found anywhere else on earth).

The flora of Galapagos can be grouped into three major vegetation zones: the coastal zone, the arid zone, and the humid highlands.

Coastal plants are found in the narrow zone near the shore and are distinctive because of their tolerance to salty conditions.

Mangrove trees are one of the most common plants found in this zone, and they serve an important role as the breeding sites for many birds, such as pelicans and frigatebirds. They also provide much needed shade regions for iguanas and sea



Figure 3. The Galapagos are a geologically young landscape.

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Figure 4. Land Iguana



Figure 5. Galapagos Falcon.

lions, as well as refuges for sea turtles.

· The dry area is the most extensive zone in Galapagos and is comprised of plant species that are highly adapted to drought-like conditions, such as succulent cacti and leafless shrubs that flower and grow leaves only in the brief rainy season.

· Located above the dry zones are the very lush and green, humid zones. In portions of this zone, Scalesia trees form a very dense forest in the humid zone, with their branches adorned with mosses, liverworts, and epiphytes—non-parasitic plants that use larger trees only for support. The humid zone is only found on the larger, higher islands. The majority of islands in the archipelago do not rise in elevation above the arid zone.

### Land Iguanas

There are three species of land iguana found in the Galapagos Islands. The well-known yellowish land iguanas is native to six islands, another is found only on the island of Santa Fe. A third species of land iguana, the pink or rosada iguana, was first seen in 1986 and remained unstudied until the 2000s. It is found only on Wolf Volcano at the northern end of Isabela Island. It has a pinkish head, and pinkish and black body and legs, often with black stripes.

### Land Birds

Of the 29 resident land birds in Galapagos, 22 are endemic at the level of species and an additional 4 are endemic at the level of subspecies. All are thought to have colonised the islands from the South American continent.

### Sea and Shore Birds

Of the 56 native bird species of Galapagos, 45 (80%) are endemic (only found in Galapagos) and 11 are indigenous (native to Galapagos but also found elsewhere). In addition to the native birds, there are 29 migrant species (migratory and native) and 64 species that have been observed once or twice. Galapagos birds can be separated into sea birds, shore and water birds, and land birds.

Island birds are one of the groups most subject to extinction worldwide following the arrival of humans. The loss of birdlife in the tropical Pacific may exceed 2000 species (a majority of which were species of flightless rails). Galapagos is the exception, primarily because humans arrived so much later than on other islands. While there are extinct bird populations on

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Figure 6. Blue footed Booby.



Figure 7. Frigatebird.

certain islands, Galapagos still retains all of its native bird species.

There are also six introduced bird species in Galapagos that have become naturalised in the wild, five of which were accidentally introduced and one was introduced for agricultural or other use.

### Sea Birds

The Galapagos Islands are a mecca for tropical seabirds, including Blue-footed, Red-footed, and Nazca Boobies, Flightless Cormorants, Great and Magnificent Frigatebirds, Red-billed Tropicbirds, Waved Albatross, Swallow-tailed Gulls, Lava Gulls, Galapagos Penguins, and many more. Seabirds provide some of the greatest opportunities to observe wildlife in the islands – especially in the large breeding colonies.

### Galapagos Boobies

The three booby populations are the most common and most frequently seen of the seabirds. All three species tend to live in groups, but in the Galapagos Islands, they range from widely distributed small colonies of Blue-footed Boobies to the larger, less frequent colonies of the Nazca Boobies, to the few huge colonies of Red-footed Boobies.

### Frigatebirds

Two of the world's five species of frigatebirds are found in Galapagos – the Magnificent Frigatebird and the Great Frigatebird. The frigatebirds or “man of war” birds got their name from their pirate-like habits. Large black birds with long wings, long hooked beaks and deeply forked tails, they are often seen soaring overhead. The male frigatebird has a bright red gular pouch that usually sits tight to the bird but can be inflated when breeding to attract the female.

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Figure 8. Pink Galapagos Flamingo.



Figure 9. Galapagos Penguins, the only penguins found in the northern hemisphere and in the tropics.

### Shore Birds

The most commonly seen shore and water birds include the Galapagos flamingo. The Galapagos Flamingo population is approximately 320-350 individuals. This is the world's smallest flamingo population and is listed as Endangered on the Red List for birds in Ecuador. The small population size has resulted in changes in breeding behaviour compared to other flamingo populations worldwide, which all need very large groups of birds for breeding to occur. Galapagos Flamingos can breed with just a few pairs present. They live in the saltwater lagoons close to the sea and filter feed primarily on brine shrimp. Young flamingos hatch with grey plumage.

The pink colour of the adults is due to aqueous bacteria and beta carotene obtained from their food supply.

The population appears stable but they are threatened by introduced animals such as rats, cats, and pigs. Intense El Niños can affect their food supply and severely impact their habitat making nesting impossible.

### Issues in the Galapagos

Early human activity on the islands was extremely damaging for the wildlife as pirates and buccaneers took giant tortoises aboard for food. 24% of plant species and 50% of vertebrate species are still considered as endangered due to human activity in earlier times. Clandestine fishing of black coral, lobster, shark fin, sea cucumber and sea horse

is incredibly destructive to the marine life. Population growth caused by tourism is putting a strain on the unique and fragile environment.

### Acknowledgement

Thank you to Debbie Kitney for permission to use her photographs in the original GAWA publication. She visited the Galapagos in 2016.

Thank you to The Galapagos Conservancy for use of their information on the flora and fauna of the islands.

### Sources:

[http://www.galapagos.org/about\\_galapagos/about-galapagos/biodiversity/reptiles/](http://www.galapagos.org/about_galapagos/about-galapagos/biodiversity/reptiles/)

<http://www.galapagosislands.com/galapagos-resources/galapagos-fast-facts.html>

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## Around the Affiliates:

### GTANSW

Planning for 2017 took place in October 2016. Several areas were targeted to increase the relevance of GTANSW and enhance benefits for members. These included:

- Increasing our online presence (Webinars, Facebook, Twitter etc)
- Undertaking a website review
- Expanding Professional Learning opportunities particularly into regional NSW via conferences and networking
- Increasing support for primary teachers
- Promoting links with pre-service teachers
- Developing networks with relevant organisations eg RFS, EECZ's, National Parks, Urban Growth NSW, universities

GTANSW events for 2017 include:

- Two-day Annual Conference in March- an extended program of 48 workshops, masterclasses, and keynote speakers attended by over 200 teachers per day with 30 exhibitors and 25 presenters. 2017 was our first year with

sponsorship and the awarding of scholarships and bursaries to teachers to attend.

- The annual 2016 HSC Review presented by HSC markers.
- Arthur Phillip Fieldwork Awards Competition and ceremony – competition to promote geographical inquiry through fieldwork.
- Top HSC Achiever Awards ceremony – Top 10 HSC students AND their teachers recognised in the Awards Ceremony during Annual Conference.
- Two Regional conferences (1 day x 2) – Bateman's Bay (South) and Tamworth (NW) · Three Skills Workshops / Roadshows
- HSC student lectures to assist HSC exam preparation

In 2017 the Geography Bulletin remains the key publication comprising four digital editions for K – 12 teachers. In addition,

two special editions are being produced to assist teachers new to senior Geography. A new Primary Online resource comprising teaching units with integrated resources will be published on the website for access by NSW primary teachers.

Recordings of many Annual Conference presentations and HSC Student Lectures have been made available on the GTANSW website to members and conference and lecture attendees.

GTANSW remains a hard-working team of volunteers with a passion for supporting Geography teachers in NSW and for that I am extremely grateful and proud of what we achieve.

Lorraine Chaffer, President

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## GHTANT

Our current total membership is 33, including 6 Institutional members.

We are pleased to have Executive members from Alice Springs and Katherine for the first time. We will be holding our AGM on June 17th.

GHTANT supported three NT members to attend the AGTA Conference in Melbourne in January. We also sponsored two members, one each from Darwin and Alice Springs to attend the GTASA conference in Adelaide in May. We would like to extend our most heartfelt thanks to GTASA for initiating this and continuing to extend such generosity to their northern neighbours!

Future PD opportunities:

- Curriculum Bytes – August 9th
- Katherine Mini Festival of Teaching – August 12th
- Festival of Teaching - August 26th

Our newsletter has been reformatted and re-branded. Tiwi to Todd is now a digitally produced and distributed newsletter which is sent to members on a quarterly basis.

GHTANT was recently represented in the preliminary meeting related to the work of the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, and will continue to be involved in the development of their education programming.

Innovations to promote Geography include long awaited workshops in Katherine and Alice Springs. GHTANT has set as a goal, a broader reach into the regions outside Darwin and this is starting to take shape. They will be the first such offerings in current council members' memory.

Anna Hind, Vice-President

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## GTAQ

At this stage of 2017 we have 237 financial members and a number of preservice teacher members.

This year we have been busy planning and implementing professional development for teachers.

On May 6th Sam and Wendy Bolton travelled to Mackay to deliver a successful professional learning session for 30 teachers from across the region. We even had three teachers fly in from Toowoomba and one teacher drive five hours to attend.

After receiving such positive feedback, Council is hoping to run a similar session in Rockhampton later this year as we endeavour to provide PD and support for teachers across our large state.

In addition we are very excited for our upcoming annual conference, which will be held on Saturday 29 July at QUT, with pre-conference field work occurring the day before. Issues and challenges for 2017:

- Continuing to connect with regional members;
- Supporting primary teachers; and
- Providing support to secondary teachers during the new developments regarding senior secondary education in Queensland.

Jamie Clothier, President

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## GTASA

GTASA has started the year with membership of 114: 58 individual members; 56 school members.

We hosted a number of professional learning events in the first half of the year. In February and March we ran a SACE Networking meeting and a Digital Mapping workshop. Our Annual 2-day conference in May was well attended by teachers from metropolitan and regional areas of South Australia, as well as two teachers from NT.

In Term 3 we plan to conduct some workshops in regional South Australia. Teachers in the South-east and mid-North of SA should look out for details of these events on our website ([www.gtasa.asn.au](http://www.gtasa.asn.au)) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/gtasa.asn.au/](https://www.facebook.com/gtasa.asn.au/)).

We will also be hosting our annual Year 12 Geography Night at Adelaide University. In October GTASA will be hosting the Big Week Out. Planning is well underway to make this event, which will be on Kangaroo Island, and worthwhile and memorable experience for the students who attend.

The new curriculum for SACE Stage 1 Geography has been taught in schools since the start of this year. In 2018 Stage 2 will be taught. Building networks with teachers across the state is a priority. To assist in achieving this we are hosting Geography Coffee Clubs throughout the year. A great chance for teachers to share ideas and learn from each other.

Joanne Wegner, President

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## TGTA

**President:** Rowan Harris

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Greg Calvert

**Immediate past president:** Debbie Claridge

**Committee members:** Caryn Shield, Karen Caporelli, Rob Owens, Rose Tyson, and Bianca Coleman

TGTA enjoyed another successful AGTA Roadshow in April, with 37 attendees from across the state. Once again, feedback was positive with the practical and skills-based aspects particularly appreciated. We hope to offer more short workshops with a focus on skill development, especially in the area of spatial technologies later in the year.

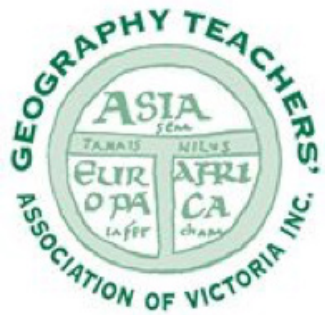
The upgrading of the TGTA website is underway and will provide a members only access area and will help with automating membership enrolment processes.

There will also be links with our newly created Facebook site for more accessible communication platforms.

The association is looking at the challenge of how to promote Geography in senior secondary (9-12) classes where Geography is an elective and competes with a wide range of subjects for student enrolments.

Rowan Harris, President

- AGTA Membership
- AGTA Conference
- 2019 AGTA Conference
- Geography Skills Unlocked Textbook
- The GeoSix and the Bushfire Story  
Year level: 5
- New resources for teachers: Hunger in a world of plenty
- Affiliate Contribution
- Around the affiliates
- GTANSW    ■ TGTA
- GHTANT    ■ GTAV
- GTAQ    ■ GTWA
- GTASA



## GTAV

GTAV had a whirlwind start to the year, hosting the AGTA 2017 Conference (see separate report). Once again we have a full committee with 19 members including practicing primary and secondary teachers, an accountant, publisher and university lecturer. After six years as GTAV President, Trish Douglas stepped down and was replaced by Sue Young – our first primary educator to hold this position. We continue to have nine staff employed.

In addition to our usual PDs held in Terms 1 and 2, GTAV is working hard to embed Geography at the primary level. In May we facilitated a Primary Conference STEM in the Outdoors in conjunction with seven other professional teaching associations plus six organisations.

As well as our usual resources, an additional VCE textbook has just been published – a revision guide for Year 12 level. Three fieldwork books (one each for primary, secondary and one VCE) are currently being developed.

Planning is well underway for the GTAV annual conference to be held 27-29 August. We are fortunate to have secured Dr Joseph Kerski, from ESRI Education USA, as a keynote speaker and workshop presenter. We look forward to his exciting presentations on spatial technology. We welcome all AGTA Affiliates to join us for this event.

Trish Douglas,  
Immediate Past GTAV President

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## GAWA

As of May 2017 GAWA has 117 members.

Our Executive Officers are:

**President:** Anna Griffin

**Vice Presidents:** Melissa Balfus and Sarah McGill

**Treasurer:** Cheryl O'Connell

**Secretary:** Lidia Di Giuseppe

**Immediate Past President:** Darryl Michie

Our first Professional Learning for both Primary and Secondary teachers occurred on 7th March 2017, AGTA Skills Roadshow, with 74 delegates attending. Presenters included Dr Grant Kleeman, Rebecca Nicholas from Contour Education QLD, Sharon McLean NSW Primary specialist teacher and Brian Rogers local educational consultant. All participants received a free copy of the Geography Unlocked textbook.

GAWA Secondary Conference will be held on the 18th and 19th August.

The Second Edition of WA ATAR Geography: Unit 3 & 4. Editors: Anna Griffin, Darryl Michie and Tracy Smith was published at the end of 2016 and has been selling very well.

[GAWA's Facebook page](#) has been an excellent way to promote Geography within teachers in WA.

Anna Griffin, President

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