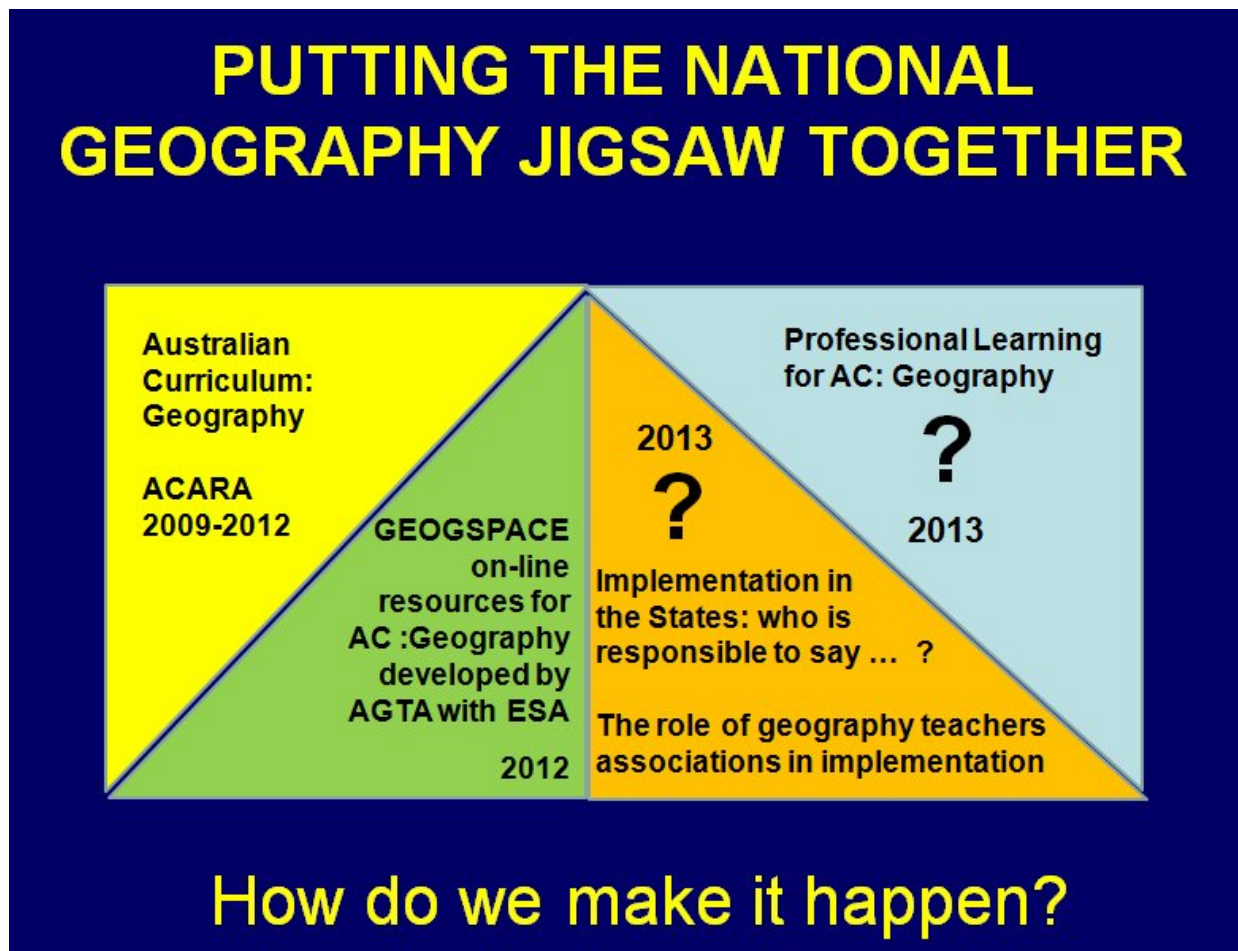


# 2012 AGM Report from the Chair

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AGTA Limited, Chair of Directors

## Putting together the National jigsaw for geography

AGTA's work in 2012 has been dominated not only with the development of the Australian Curriculum: Geography through the work of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) but also with the development of on-line resources with Education Services Australia (ESA) to support the implementation of the new curriculum. AGTA considers that both of these developments are critical for the future growth of geography in our schools and certainly warrants the energy and financial commitment AGTA has made to the process. The curriculum has reached the final stages of writing, consultation and validation and is due for release in December 2012. Whilst this work has created an increased workload and investment from AGTA and its officers, this report will show that we continue to put together the 'National Geography Jigsaw' to promote geographical education in Australia. Our work in the second half of 2012 on the new GeogSpace project is a critical piece of the jigsaw as you will see later in the report.



In this report I will briefly report on the key AGTA initiatives and happenings to provide an appreciation of why AGTA exists and how it is advancing the teaching of geography in Australia.

## **AGTA's representative work**

AGTA has an important role in representing geography teachers on a range of national committees to ensure that the voice of geography educators in schools is 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 McIvor (AGTA representative).

*Institute of Australian Geographers:* Grant Kleeman

*Australian Academy of Science's National Committee of Geography:* Grant Kleeman

*National Education Forum:* Malcolm McInerney (Executive member of the NEF)

*National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition:* Margaret McIvor

*Spatial Education Advisory Committee:* Malcolm McInerney

*ACARA Advisory Panel for Geography:* Malcolm McInerney, Rebecca Nicholas and Nick Hutchinson.

AGTA is considered an important member of these groups and as one of the associations with a 'Big picture' view of the need for representation via national umbrella organisations. AGTA has always been prepared to invest in members of its board being represented at national meetings and to participate in national association initiatives. This attitude and perception of AGTA is especially important in terms of the new initiative by the National Education Forum (NEF) to develop a National body to represent all National teacher associations. At the NEF meeting in November 2012 the proposed structure for this body was discussed after a period of association consultation. Such a body would give national associations, such as AGTA, a national voice of significance in cahoots with the other national associations when issues of National Education are discussed. Associations want to be involved in the development of education policy impacting on learning areas and teachers, not just in consultation after policy has been drafted.

## **AGTA's continued involvement in the development of ACARA'S Australian Curriculum: Geography**

In August 2012 ACARA released the revised scope and sequence of the Australian Curriculum: Geography for final consultation. AGTA continues to be heartened by ACARA's commitment to involve geography teachers and in particular AGTA in the process of curriculum development. To this end, several AGTA Board members and numerous members of AGTA affiliates have been closely involved as members of the ACARA Advisory Panels for geography over the past two years. The Australian Curriculum: Geography is due for publication in December 2012. Already AGTA's attention has turned to resource development for the new curriculum and I am sure in 2013 the issue of professional learning in geography will be at the centre of AGTA's work.

## **AGTA 2013 Geography's New Frontier Conference in Perth**

The AGTA conference in Perth from January 7-10<sup>th</sup> 2011 is almost a reality. The conference is being held at Perth College and is being convened by the Geography Association of Western Australia (GAWA). The convenor for the conference is the highly competent and

enthusiastic GAWA President, Darryl Michie. Darryl has developed a great program with plenty of field trips and classroom relevant workshops.

For many reasons this should be an exciting time for the geographers attending the conference in Perth. Professors David Lambert and Simon Catling from the United Kingdom and Professors Peter Newman and Lyn Beasley from Australia have accepted AGTA's invitation to be keynote speakers at the AGTA 2013 Conference in Perth. This is wonderful news given David Lambert and Simon Catling have considerable experience with the national curriculum in the United Kingdom. Simon Catling's experience with primary geography implementation in particular ensures that this conference will appeal to primary school teachers as well as secondary school teachers. These outstanding keynotes will be supported by over 51 workshops, 5 high quality fieldtrips and social activities every night of the conference.

The response to the conference program <http://www.agta.asn.au/conf2013/index.htm> has been very positive and we are expecting to see one of the biggest and best AGTA conferences in Perth in January 2013.

### **AITSL Exemplar Project**

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) contracted AGTA in June 2011 to develop annotated illustrations of practice (exemplars) to support the National Professional Standards for Teachers. Rob Berry and Roger Smith have been busy in 2012 developing four exemplars of good practice (three static and one dynamic) in geography teaching. The work is now complete and we are awaiting the publication of the exemplars on the AITSL site (<http://www.aitsl.edu.au/>) in the near future. AGTA thanks Rob and Roger for their very professional work on this project and look forward to an article on the project in the next edition of Geographical Education.

### **GeogSpace underway**

In March 2012 Education Services Australia (ESA) contracted AGTA to develop on-line resources to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Geography. After some workshoping on the project at the May AGTA Board meeting, the project has been named as the GeogSpace project.

The Project Management Plan for GeogSpace states that:

*GEOGSPACE is a national initiative for the improvement of primary and secondary Geography education. The project focuses on increasing the amount of inquiry-based learning undertaken by students and a commensurate reduction in the reliance on didactic pedagogies. AGTA considers that the development of the Australian Curriculum: Geography provides a unique opportunity to enhance the quality and status of geographical education in Australia. AGTA considers that curriculum implementation is as critical, if not more important, than the framing and development of the curriculum and that considerable support is required to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and capacity to deliver the curriculum to students. This concern is further heightened by the fact that we have a paucity of Geography-trained teachers in schools around Australia. It is also important to note that the proposed site will be a valuable resource for pre-service teachers and teacher educators.*

The GEOGSPACE project aims to:

- provide an online learning model for teachers to access
- create a framework to support teachers teaching Australian Curriculum: Geography
- develop the knowledge, skills and pedagogical capacity of teachers to teach geography
- be supportive of the non-geographically trained, as well as the trained geographer teacher
- cater for primary and secondary school implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Geography
- integrate ICT's relevant to the teaching of geography throughout the curriculum
- include exemplars from F-10 directly linked into the content and skills of the Australian Curriculum: Geography
- employ geographical inquiry and geographical thinking approaches throughout
- be resource rich, providing teachers with access to a range of quality geographical teaching resources available around the world.

A team of AGTA GeogSpace writers and editors are presently developing Curriculum Core and Curriculum Support units which will include resource links, classroom activities and pedagogical advice for teachers. The activities will take the form of film clips, websites and digital activities. A *GeogSpace stand-alone website* will provide a website capable of managing all traffic to the GeogSpace resources created by AGTA.

The creation of this unique resource as a website is an exciting and critical component of AGTA's work to support teachers teaching the Australian Curriculum: Geography. The GeogSpace website is due to be launched in March 2013 and will be accessible and free to all teachers around the world. There is much to look forward to with this significant piece of work for AGTA.

## **Student Geography competitions/activities**

For many years AGTA has been involved in conducting in liaison with the RGSQ and GTAQ a range of geographical competitions and activities. These initiatives are extremely important in providing an important goal for students to embark on geographical education and also raises the profile of geography in the community. I would like to thank again Kath Berg (RGSQ) and the dedicated geographical educators from the GTAQ and GTAV for all their hard work with the following activities.

**The National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition** is a joint initiative of AGTA and the RGSQ and is proudly sponsored by the National Geographic Channel. This competition continues to grow and be a great success in promoting geography in schools around Australia (<http://www.geographycompetition.org.au/>). In 2012, over 80 000 students again participated in the competition Australia wide. The U16 Final was held on the 18 June 2012 at the Foxtel Studios, Sydney. The results were: 1st Jamie Abel, 2nd Sebastian Summersby-Mitchell, 3rd Yianni Van Gelder. Congratulations to all the students who participated in this major Australian-wide event.

**The 2012 International Geography Olympiad** was held in Cologne, Germany, from 21 to 28 August. The team comprised: Anthony Chen from Radford College in Canberra, Sarah Godman from Cootamundra High School, Sarah Naco from Canberra Girls' Grammar School, and Kate Parrott from Hobart College.

**The 2011 Geography's Big Week Out** was held on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria. The participating students won their places through outstanding performances in the National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition. Thanks to Pat Beeson and the GTAV team (and as always Kath Berg and Margaret McIvor) for their great work with this outstanding and important student focused initiative. Go to <http://www.geographycompetition.org.au/geography%E2%80%99s-big-week-out> for more information on this event.

### Geocareers Website

One of AGTA's important promotional activities is the Geocareers website at [www.geocareers.net.au](http://www.geocareers.net.au). The site, developed by Rob Berry is proving to be an outstanding resource for educators and students, linking our discipline with potential careers. At present the major sections include Meet a Geographer, Studying Geography, Using Geography and Resources.

### This report shows

The world of geography in Australian schools continues to be a dynamic and exciting one for teachers and students. AGTA's capacity to deliver continues to be tested by the challenges of promoting the 'brand' of geography in the new National Education Agenda and putting together the jigsaw for the implementation of a National Curriculum for Geography. AGTA continues to meet these challenges with confidence and continues to be seen by others in the education community as an association of high standards and professionalism. Such a reputation is only possible through the support and hard work of all Directors on the AGTA Board and teacher members of affiliates.

