



# Focus on Rob Berry: consummate team member

**Bruce Tamagno, Kerry Bainbridge & Gary Pollard**

Former GTAV Committee members

When Rob Berry arrived in Victoria in 1972 to teach Geography at Healesville High School, he had already had significant teaching experience in South Africa, England and Canada. In 1973, Rob was appointed to Heidelberg High School and his expertise was quickly recognised, resulting in his secondment in 1978 to be the Geography Consultant in the Northern Metropolitan Region. This marked the beginning of Rob's prodigious and continuing contribution to geographic education.

In 1979, Rob was seconded to the Education Department's Audio Visual Education Centre where, amongst his other duties, he played a leading role in the production of the highly acclaimed film, *Our Fragile Coast*. His broader expertise resulted in an appointment to the Department's Curriculum Branch Geography Team (1980–1982) where he made a significant contribution to the Secondary Geographical Education Project (SGEP).

As a GTAV Committee member from 1979, Rob quickly became involved in curriculum projects, professional development programs and the production of teaching resources. He made a dedicated contribution to the development of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE) Year 12 Geography course description, including assessment techniques and consensus moderation processes. Many teacher concerns would have been allayed by his masterful presentation to the 1980 GTAV Annual Conference on approaches to the Individual Research Project, an innovative component of the new course. Rob was editor of *Settlement Patterns*, one of seven textbooks published in 1981 as part of the GTAV's Year 12 Resources Project (Berry, 1981). His role as a long-serving member of the Year 12 Examining Panel and as its Chairperson (1983–1991) demonstrated Rob's intellect, rigour and fairness. The range of classroom resources that bears his name is exceptional: from textbooks, atlases, map sets, film and resource kits to innovative classroom applications for new learning technologies, such as the use of satellite imagery and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

His peers quickly acknowledged Rob's leadership skills. He served two terms as GTAV President

(1983–1984 and 1990–1991). Unsurprisingly, his expertise led him to a long and productive national role, firstly as a Council member of the Australian Geography Teachers' Association (AGTA) and then as AGTA President (1991–1993). In addition to contributing to a range of AGTA policy statements and publications, he was also the convenor of the 12th AGTA Conference in 1990. Rob has represented the GTAV on almost every course review and accreditation body since the early 1980s. He has been a staunch advocate for geography through his participation in an extensive list of committees and working parties responding to State and Federal governments' curriculum policies, frameworks and innovations.

Remarkably, Rob's contribution to the GTAV and AGTA grew after his return to full-time teaching in 1983 and his appointment to a succession of key school leadership positions over the next twenty years. A consummate team member, supportive colleague and a fine mentor, Rob has made an unrivalled contribution which has earned him the deep respect of close colleagues and of geography teachers within Victoria and Australia wide.

Source: B. Tamagno, K. Bainbridge & G. Pollard (2009). Rob Berry. In G. Paterson, H. Brown, G. Pollard, & B. Stringer (Eds.) *GTAV: The first 50 years* (p. 25). Camberwell South: Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria Inc.

Rob Berry has also served as AGTA Treasurer between 2008 and 2014; representative on the Australian Federation of Societies for Studies of Society and the Environment consortium; as a writer with the 'Towards National Geography Curriculum' (TNGC) Project; as website administrator for the AGTA, TNGC, Geography conferences 2008–2017, and *Geocareers* websites; as an electronic editor on the *Geospace* website; AGTA Conference Co-convenor in 2015 and 2017; and, as Co-manager for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Project that developed annotated illustrations of practice (exemplars) to support the National Professional Standards for Teachers. Rob has also revamped all of the payment procedures on the AGTA website, including the online PayPal system.