



# Introduction

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In 1967, a referendum approved two amendments to the Australian Constitution relating to Indigenous Australians: Aboriginal Australians were to be included in census statistics and the Federal Parliament was to be permitted to legislate specifically for Indigenous Australians.

In the same year, anti-Vietnam demonstrations erupted in state capital cities, Prime Minister Harold Holt was lost in the surf, John Newcombe won the men's tennis singles at Wimbledon and Australia Square Tower, Australia's first true skyscraper, was completed. Macquarie University, in New South Wales, saw the first intake of students, and La Trobe University in Victoria was officially opened, as was Melbourne's La Mama Theatre. A United States Naval Communication Station was declared operational near Exmouth, Western Australia; the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission planned to construct a dam that subsequently flooded Lake Pedder; and the Simpson Desert Conservation Park was proclaimed in South Australia.

Some things do not appear to change much. There were savage bushfires in Tasmania, floods in Queensland, and the All Blacks retained rugby union's Bledisloe Cup. Barnaby Joyce, the politician, actor Nicole Kidman, Tina Arena, the singer and Australian Geography Teachers' Association (AGTA), the new national association, were born.

This supplement to *Geographical Education*, 2017 contains an account of the first fifty years of the Australian Geography Teachers Association. It includes a description of its beginnings, a list of AGTA conferences, an interview regarding the early teaching career of AGTA's first president, Dr Don Biddle, a table that presents geography texts produced in 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010

juxtaposed with selected world events that took place in each of those listed years.

Each volume of *Geographical Education* is examined at the commencement of these selected decades focusing on changing theories, philosophies and methodologies, together with an attempt to capture something of the zeitgeist of each successive period through the observations of the many contributors to the journal.

There are a further three vignettes of AGTA stalwarts included in the supplement: Dr Frances Slater, Emeritus Reader, University of London; Magdelaine Wong, former AGTA secretary and president; and Rob Berry, who has been closely involved with AGTA in numerous capacities over several decades. AGTA presidents are listed in a table and recollections provided by former presidents Barrie McElroy and Roger Smith; and from Kath Berg, formerly on the secretariat of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland.

Your editor would have most liked to have met and listened to the late David Shortle, who wrote intelligently and enthusiastically in the early years of AGTA about geographical education and who fought hard against the absorption of the discipline into social studies within the secondary curriculum. Similarly, your editor regrets not attending the 1986 AGTA conference to have learned, firsthand, how to teach Geography for a Better World. The proceedings of this most influential conference were published as a book (Fien & Gerber, 1988/1986), a handbook that had considerable impact on geographical education throughout Australia and elsewhere. Professor John Morgan spoke warmly of this text in his keynote lecture, "The Australian Curriculum: Geography through the lens of geographical futures", at the 2015 AGTA conference.