



# Chair of Directors Annual Report, 2018

**Trish Douglas**

Chair, Australian Geography Teachers Association Limited

In 2018, we welcomed several new Directors to the Board due to changes in the various Affiliates. As per our Constitution, Presidents of each member state or territory Affiliate are automatically appointed to the Board. Additionally, each Affiliate has a nominated Board member. Since each Affiliate has slightly different timings for their annual general meetings, Board membership changes throughout the year. The current list of AGTA Directors is maintained on our website. AGTA Executive for 2018 consisted of me as Chair with Darryl Michie (WA) as Deputy Chair. Dr Grant Kleeman (NSW) fulfilled the roles of both Treasurer and Immediate Past Chair and Anna Griffin (WA) took on the role of Secretary. In order to foster links with tertiary institutions, we have been delighted to have a member of the Institute of Australian Geographers attend our Board meetings as an observer.

## AGTA Resources

AGTA's two current publications, *Geography skills unlocked* (published 2016) and *Geography literacy unlocked* (2017) continued to sell well throughout the year with an update and reprint of the former being required. A third book in the series, *Geography fieldwork unlocked* is currently in production. AGTA is indebted to Dr Grant Kleeman, for all his work in relation to these textbooks. The publication of these resources continues to provide an essential income stream for our organisation.

For a number of years, AGTA has also derived valuable income from the production of three CDs written by former Chair Malcolm McInerney. These resources, *Thinking geographically*, *Twenty-first century geography* and *Being a citizen*, will be discontinued in the coming year as the current format is no longer appropriate for use by most teachers. However, I wish to publicly thank Malcolm for his generosity in sharing his intellectual property with AGTA and for providing such well-regarded teacher resources.

## Priorities for 2018–2019

At the May 2018 meeting, the AGTA Board identified the following priorities for the year:

- updating the AGTA website;
- updating the links provided on *GeogSpace* website;

- promoting geography and its relevance to STEM and digital technologies;
- active promotion of geography and its links to careers in order to encourage student uptake of the subject.

## 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. Thank you to the following people who have represented AGTA at meetings involving the following organisations:

- Australian Alliance of Associations in Education: Trish Douglas;
- Australian Federation of Societies for Studies of Society and the Environment: Rob Berry/ Trish Douglas;
- Institute of Australian Geographers: Susan Caldis;
- Australian Academy of Science's National Committee of Geography: Grant Kleeman;
- Australian Geography Competition: Jamie Clothier and Anne-Marie Gerlach.

## Student Geography competitions/ activities

AGTA continues to be involved in a joint initiative with the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland (RGSQ) in the running of the annual Australian Geography Competition. In 2018, over 72,000 students across Australia participated in the competition. The competition helps raise the profile of geography both within schools and at a national level. Thank you to Bernard Fitzpatrick at RGSQ for his work in managing this event.

The top performing students in the competition are invited to participate in Geography's Big Week Out (GBWO) which forms the basis of selection for representing Australia in the International Geography Olympiad. The 2018 GBWO was again facilitated by Liam Sloan from the Geography Teachers Association of South Australia at Kangaroo Island.

A team of four students went on to represent Australia in the International Geography Olympiad in Quebec, Canada held in late July to early August. They performed extremely well, returning home with two bronze medals. Thank you to

Competition Committee member Kathryn Berg and GTASA representative Liam Sloan who accompanied the students. In 2019, China will be hosting the iGeo in Hong Kong.

### ***Geographical Education***

*Geographical Education* (ISSN 2204-0242) is the professional journal of AGTA and is on the DEST Register of Refereed Journals. The journal was published in print form until Volume 25, 2012. Since then the journal has been published in a digital format and is available on the Association's website.

Contributions of varying length are invited, with a maximum of 5,000 words for major articles and research reports. Shorter articles of 2,000 words, featuring classroom strategies, reflections on particular issues and practices in geography teaching, in-service education workshops, and comments on previous articles are especially welcome.

In 2018, the role of Journal Editor has been ably taken up by Dr Terri Bourke and Dr Rod Lane. Geoffrey Paterson continues in his roles of Reviews Editor and copy editor.

### ***Geographia***

AGTA's newsletter *Geographia* is used to update the broader membership on the activities of AGTA and its state- and territory-based Affiliates. This vital role was filled again this year by Julie Hearnden and Anna Hind (GHTANT). Their work in producing this high quality document is much appreciated.

### **AGTA Conference, October 2019**

The next Australian Geography Teachers Association Conference will be hosted by GTAQ at the Gold Coast from October 1–4 2019 with Rebecca Nicholas fulfilling the role of Conference Convenor. The 2019 conference theme is "The Innovative Geographer". In an ever changing world, the study of geography has become increasingly important. The technologies needed

to collect, manage and represent our world are constantly changing. The proliferation of *big data* and the everyday use of spatial technologies means that geography teachers need to innovate in the classroom to ensure their students have the 21st century skills they will need to be successful beyond high school. However, innovation is not only linked to technological change. Geography teachers must also be innovative in their subject knowledge, curriculum development and pedagogy, to ensure students are engaged, and develop critical, creative and collaborative skills both in the classroom and in the field.

The 2019 AGTA conference program will provide opportunities for teachers from across Australia and beyond to share and reflect on their own innovations in the geography classroom. The social activities, including Welcome Drinks and the Conference Dinner, will provide an ideal opportunity to network with fellow geographers from across the country. I hope to see many of you at what promises to be an exciting and valuable professional development.

### **Thank you**

On behalf of the Board, thank you to Rob Berry who has continued to manage the AGTA website, even when travelling. Thank you to all the AGTA Board members for their work in the past year, particularly the AGTA Executive. Being a Board member brings with it considerable responsibility and demands on personal time.

At the Annual General Meeting held on 28 October 2018, the following people were elected to the AGTA Executive for 2019:

Chair: Trish Douglas

Deputy Chair: Darryl Michie

Treasurer: Grant Kleeman

Secretary: Anna Griffin

Immediate Past Chair: Grant Kleeman.

I trust AGTA will continue to play a significant role in the strengthening of geographical education across the country in the year ahead.