



Chair of Directors Annual Report 2017

Trish Douglas

Chair, Australian Geography Teachers Association Limited

In 2017, we welcomed a number of 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 2017 consisted of me as Chair, Darryl Michie (WA) as Deputy Chair. Grant Kleeman (NSW) fulfilled the roles of both Treasurer and Immediate Past Chair and Susan Caldis (NSW) continued as Secretary.

AGTA Conference January 2017

The year began with the Australian Geography Teachers Association Conference hosted by GTAV at the University of Melbourne between January 9 and 12. Significant sponsorship from both the University of Melbourne and the City of Melbourne facilitated the running 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 team were Anna Blamey, Trish Douglas, Jeana Kriewaldt, Anne Miles, Alex Rossimel, Peta Turner and Cleo Westhorpe.

Some 200 delegates attended the AGTA Conference with participants from all states and territories 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. Keynote speakers featured Dr Rachel Carey, Professor William Cartwright, Professor David Lambert, Dr Michael Solem and Professor Bruce Rasmussen.

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 GTAV in 2019.

AGTA Awards

The AGTA Conference Dinner included announcement of the AGTA Awards for geographic publications. Thank you to the GTASA team, led by Joanne Wegener, who oversaw the awards process. The recipients of these awards were:

- Middle school resource (7–10): *Geography: NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum* (Published by Cambridge University Press) – Winner;
- Senior secondary resource (11–12): *VCE Geography series* (Published by GTAV) – Winner;
- Digital resource: *Food for thought* (Published by Oxfam Australia) – Winner;
- Geographic education resource: *Interaction* Vol 44 No 1, The Fieldwork Issue (Published by GTAV) – Winner;
- *Geographical Education*, Vol 28 (2015) (Published by AGTA) – Highly commended;
- Non-commercial/Not-for-profit generated resource: *Spatial educators' toolkit* (Produced by Queensland Spatial Information Council) – Highly commended.

The Don Biddle Friend of Geography Award

Another key part of the 2017 Conference was the presentation of The Don Biddle (Friend of Geography) Award, named in honour of the founding president of AGTA, Dr Don Biddle. This award recognises and honours outstanding contributions by an individual towards geographical education in Australia through their work with AGTA. Past recipients include Kath Berg, Mark Manuel, Roger Smith, Susan Bliss, John Butler, Stephen Cranby, Alaric Maude, Rob Berry, Nick Hutchinson, Jeana Kriewaldt, Emmy Terry and Wayne Sutton. GTAV member Leonie Brown, together with Malcolm McInerney and Greg Way, both from GTASA, were presented with this award in 2017. Their full citations may be found on the AGTA website.

Leonie Brown has served the Victorian and Australian Geography community with dedication and distinction for over twenty-five years. She was an AGTA Board member for over a decade, most recently holding the role of AGTA Treasurer (2015–2016). GTAV has also benefitted

substantially from Leonie's teaching expertise. She has been an innovative teacher, leading the way with assessment and curriculum, particularly at the senior levels. Leonie has presented at both AGTA and GTAV conferences, providing sample activities and model assessment items for colleagues. She has been a willing mentor for pre-service and beginning teachers, nurturing the development of their teaching skills and encouraging young teachers in their professional journey.

Malcolm McInerney is passionate in his belief that a quality geographical education is critical for a relevant and balanced school curriculum. Malcolm's professional experience includes being President of GTASA (2004–2007); the Chair of AGTA (2008–2013); the Immediate Past Chair of the Australian Geography Teachers Association (2014–2016); founder and President of the Australian Alliance of Associations (National) in Education (AAAE) 2012–2017; member of the ACARA Australian Curriculum: Geography Advisory Panel (2009–2013) and Executive Director of the Education Services Australia GeogSpace Supporting Australian Curriculum Online project. Malcolm's expertise in spatial technologies is internationally acknowledged. He has been a strong advocate for the integration of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) into the geography curriculum of Australian schools and was a recipient of the Spatial Industry National Teacher Award (Spatial Science and Surveyors Institute of Australia in 2003).

Under Malcolm's leadership the Association achieved a new level of authority. The decisive role AGTA played in the development and implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Geography is a mark of Malcolm's leadership as is the enhanced status and effectiveness of the Association as a representative body. He has also contributed to AGTA's emergence as a provider of professional learning and the supplier of quality educational resources.

Greg Way is one of the most experienced and highly regarded geography teachers in South Australia. He served on the AGTA Board from 2012 to 2015 whilst President of GTASA and subsequently as a nominated delegate. He has presented at numerous state and AGTA conferences and was actively involved in ensuring the success of the 2011 AGTA Conference in Adelaide. He has willingly shared resources, assisted with ideas and mentored a number of geography teachers. Greg has been a leader and role model in the use of GIS and spatial technologies in the school setting in South Australia. In 2009, Greg was nominated for a D. D. Harris Award that recognised his

contribution to geography teaching, in particular his innovative use of GIS.

Other Major Activities in 2017

The AGTA Geography Roadshow, which first commenced in 2015, continued during the year. This skills-based professional learning program was offered in conjunction with state and territory based Affiliates. The program utilised the AGTA publication, *Geography skills unlocked* (published 2016), with participants being provided with a free copy of this resource. The program included both primary and secondary streams and the topics addressed included thinking geographically, inquiry in geography, fieldwork, ICT in geography, and developing literacy through geography.

An additional AGTA textbook, *Geography literacy unlocked*, was launched in 2017. This book aims to assist secondary geography students improve their written, visual and oral literacy skills. AGTA is indebted to Grant Kleeman, author of this text, for the time he devoted not only to writing this book but also in managing this project. The publication of both these resources has provided a valuable income stream for our organisation.

Priorities for 2017–2018

At the May 2017 meeting, the AGTA Board identified the following priorities for the year:

- continued provision of the AGTA skills roadshow around the country;
- updating the AGTA website;
- updating *Keys to Fieldwork* on the website;
- promoting geography and its relevance to STEM and digital technologies;
- expanding our links with careers advisors in schools to encourage the take up of geography;
- encouraging greater representation of primary and tertiary representatives on Affiliate committees.

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: Susan Caddis;
- 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: Anne-Marie Gerlach, Russell Smerdon.

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 2017, over 70,700 students across Australia participated in this competition. This competition is vital to raising the profile of geography 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 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 2017 and 2018 GBWO are facilitated by the Geography Teachers Association of South Australia at Kangaroo Island.

The team of four students who represented Australia in the International Geography Olympiad in Belgrade, Serbia in early August performed extremely well, returning home with two bronze medals. Thank you to Competition Committee members Margaret McIvor and Kathryn Berg who accompanied the students. In 2018, Canada will be hosting the iGeo in Quebec City.

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.

Nick Hutchinson has been Journal Editor since 2014. He is relinquishing this role at the end of 2017 and we thank him sincerely for the excellent job he has done in this regard. 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). Thank you to them for their high quality work in this regard.

Thank you

Thank you to Rob Berry who has continued to manage the AGTA website, often completing updates whilst travelling overseas. Finally, I would like to thank the AGTA Board for all their work in the past year. Being a Board member brings with it considerable responsibility and demands on personal time. I would particularly like to thank the 2017 AGTA Executive for their support – it has been a steep learning curve for me as new Chair with big shoes to fill. A special thank you to Susan Caldis who has filled the demanding role of AGTA Secretary for the past four years. Susan has stepped down in order to focus on her PhD studies.

At the Annual General Meeting held on 29 October 2017, the following people were elected to the AGTA Executive for 2018:

- Chair: Trish Douglas (GTAV);
- Deputy Chair: Daryl Michie (GAWA);
- Treasurer: Grant Kleeman (GTANSW);
- Secretary: Anna Griffin (GAWA);
- Immediate Past Chair: Grant Kleeman (GTANSW).

I look forward to seeing AGTA's continued success and the strengthening of geographical education across the country in the year ahead.