

Chair of Director's Annual Report, 2019

Trish Douglas, Chair, Australian Geography Teachers Association Limited

In 2019, 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 2019 consisted of myself 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) continued as Secretary. We also continued to invite a representative of the Institute of Australian Geographers to attend our Board meetings as an observer in order to maintain links with the tertiary sector.

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 (AAAE): Trish Douglas;
Australian Federation of Societies for Studies of Society and the Environment (AFSSSE): Rob Berry/Trish Douglas
Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG): Susan Caldis;
Australian Academy of Science's National Committee of Geography: Grant Kleeman;
Australian Geography Competition: Julie Davis and Shane Albertson

AFSSSE was wound up early 2019 due to non-activity and funds were distributed equally to member organisations to the tune of \$4200 each. Funds received by AGTA were used to support early career teachers attending a specifically targeted masterclass at the 2019 Conference. Thank you to Rob Berry for his long standing role in attending the AFSSSE meetings as the AGTA representative.

Major Board activities in 2019

The following actions have taken priority this year:

- Updating the AGTA website: Rob Berry, website manager, attended the May Board meeting as part of the review process and ongoing changes to the website are being undertaken. We thank Rob for his time and input in this regard.
- Updating the links provided on *GeogSpace* website: see comments in the Resources section below in terms of action here
- Promoting geography and its relevance to STEM and digital technologies: papers prepared by Susan Caldis and Dr Grant Kleeman in response to Australian Academy of Science's report, *Geography: shaping Australia's future*
- Active promotion of geography and its links to careers in order to encourage student uptake of the subject – a sub-committee was established to determine a comprehensive Geography and Career Strategy involving the establishment of a website and a clearly staged promotional plan. Thank you to Anna Griffin, Rowan Harris and Joanne Wegener for their work on this to date.

AGTA Resources

A revised edition of *Geography skills unlocked* (initially published 2016) went on sale early 2019. *Geography literacy unlocked* (published 2017) continued to sell well throughout the year. A third book in the series, *Geography fieldwork unlocked* was released mid-year and has been a popular addition to school resources across Australia. 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.

Due to changes in links and curriculum, information stored on the *Geospace* website has been updated and migrated to the AGTA website. Dr Grant Kleeman updated all the support material and the F–4 Core units with Anna Griffin updating the balance of the Core units Years 5–10. This has enabled AGTA to store all the support and content files independently of ESA should the need arise for further revision in the future. Thank you to Rob Berry for uploading all this valuable teacher resource information.

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 2019, over 76 000 students across Australia participated in this competition. This 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 2019 GBWO will again be held on Kangaroo Island in December this year. Thank you GTASA for hosting the GBWO for a third year.

A team of four students went on to represent Australia in the International Geography Olympiad in Hong Kong held in late July to early August. They performed extremely well, returning home with one gold and three bronze medals. Thank you to Competition Committee member Kathryn Berg and GTASA representative Simon Roos-Freeman who accompanied the students. In 2020, Istanbul, Turkey will be hosting iGeo.

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 2019, Teresa Bourke and Dr Rod Lane have continued in the roles of Journal Editor and Geoffrey Paterson has continued in his role of Reviews Editor and copy editor. We thank them all for this valuable contribution.

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. Anna Hind has since moved to NSW and is no longer on the AGTA Board so I take the opportunity to publically thank her for her contribution.

AGTA Conference October 2019

The biennial Australian Geography Teachers Association Conference, with the theme of *The innovative Geographer*, was hosted by GTAQ on the Gold Coast from October 1-4 2019 with Rebecca Nicholas ably fulfilling the role of Conference Convenor. Over 200 people attended the conference with all Affiliates being represented as well as a number of overseas attendees. The keynote speakers and sessions were challenging, informative and relevant. All this was only possible due to the huge range of volunteers who offered workshops and gave their time in a range of ways. Additional details are provided in the Conference Report from Bec.

The 2019 AGTA conference program also provided opportunities for teachers to share and reflect on their own innovations in the geography classroom via the wide range of social activities. I particularly appreciated being able to participate in one of the two pre-conference tours – great insights to the marine life of the Great Barrier Reef as well as the chance to bond with fellow geographers.

It is anticipated that the next AGTA Conference will be hosted by GTAS in Hobart in 2021.

Thank you

On behalf of the Board, thank you to those involved in AGTA's operation over the past year. Particular thanks to fellow AGTA Executive and the Board members for their work in the past year. Everyone is busy and it is not always easy for all of you to make yourselves available – much appreciated.

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

Trish Douglas

AGTA Chair, 2019