

# GEOGRAPHIA



Geographia is the national newsletter of the Australian Geography Teachers' Association Limited.

DECEMBER 2007

*Occasional Newsletter of The Australian Geography Teachers' Association Limited*

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## AGTA Board Meeting and AGM October 2007

The 99th meeting of AGTA Limited was held in Melbourne on the weekend of 13-14 October 2007. At the AGM the new board of Directors was elected along with the appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair. The Board comprises:

### Elected Board Members

Nick Hutchinson	Chair
Malcolm McInerney	Deputy Chair
Bronwen Perry	Treasurer
Debbie Doyle	Secretary
Dr Grant Kleeman	
Margaret McIvor	
Emmy Terry	

### Other Board members include

#### Presidents of State Associations:

Rita Shepherd	GTASA
Anne-Marie Gerlach	GTAQ
Wayne Sutton	TGTA
Mike Fazio	GAWA
Dr Susan Bliss	GTANSW
Leonie Brown/Susy Puszka	GTAV



The harmony and commitment of AGTA board is evidenced by the ongoing efforts of all in fulfilling a number projects particularly: GeoCareers Website, Geography Careers Brochure, Conference 2008, publishing of Keys to Geography and the future Keys to Fieldwork, work towards the development of Professional Standards for Geography Teachers and development of the Olympics Package in partnership with the UK Geographical Association for 2008. The success of the National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition, coordinated by Kath Berg (RGSQ) is evidenced by the participation of over 85 000 students from 782 schools.

AGTA's financial position is stable which has enabled funds to be directed to projects to support school geography. This is largely due to the royalties received from Keys to Geography and the vigilance of Bronwen in reviewing and managing interest bearing deposits. Yet again, a sincere thank you to Company Treasurer Bronwen Perry, for all her continuing work and effort in furthering the healthy state of AGTA's finances.

Due to AGTA's healthy financial position, capitation fees, at this stage, are to be maintained at \$12.00.

# Promoting Geography

AGTA represents all State Geography Teachers' Associations comprising 2000 members. As membership includes schools it is estimated that 10 000 Geography Teachers are represented by this National Association.

AGTA has adopted the profile and promotion of Geography as a major initiative 2006/2007. In response to demonstrable disquiet amongst affiliates, and robust criticism of AGTA's endeavours from several quarters, AGTA Directors have built upon Justine Ferrari's newspaper journalism in The Australian to redress an ever increasing concern that the place of geography is threatened in Australian curricula. The flavour of some of the debate can be gleaned from the Futureminds website: <http://www.futureminds.com.au/educationalnews/index.cfm?FMIssueID=21@ArticleID=981>

*"James Fairgrieve had a dream. The world's first geography professor hoped his subject would 'train future citizens to imagine accurately the condition of the great world stage and so help them to think sanely about political and social problems of the world'.*

*Yet far from reaching this lofty status, geography has become largely ignored in modern classrooms around the world. This month we ask what today's students can learn from geography and what needs to be done to revive the subject.*

*In Australia, fewer students are electing to study the subject in senior high school, with half the number of year 11 and 12 students studying geography compared to ten years ago. More subject choices, the rise of vocational education in schools, and a lack of skilled enthusiastic teachers have been blamed for the shift." (Futureminds website, Issue 19, 19 October, 2006, accessed June 2007)*

In advocating that geography should be part of the core curriculum, a delegation comprising representatives from AGTA, IAG and RGSQ met with the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training. The Minister subsequently commissioned a new study into the teaching of Geography in Schools 3 -10, from Erebus International: this study investigated a range of issues

raised by the delegation.

In addition, in a recent letter to Julie Bishop regarding "Realising our Potential – Australian Government Summer School for Teachers" initiative, announced in the Federal Budget, great concern was expressed that this initiative is restricted to teachers in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy, English, Mathematics, Science and Australian History. The following key points were articulated:

1. Geography is vital to the education of every young Australian in the 21st century. The Study of Geography is essential to the economic, environmental and cultural future of Australia. Geography is important and of equal relevance in today's society as any other subject.

2. Geography teachers deserve the same opportunities to enhance their professional learning and knowledge that colleagues in other core subject areas have been provided with under this new initiative. Such an opportunity will not only enhance the expertise of teachers but ensure that students of geography are being taught to the highest possible standards.

AGTA will continue to advocate for the national recognition of Geographical Education. As stated by Alaric Maude (Associate Professor and Secretary, Institute of Australian Geographers) "geographical education helps to produce citizens able to make informed decisions on personal, local, regional, national and global issues. An understanding of Australia's geography is also important in helping young people to develop their own identity as Australians. In our view Geography is as important as History in the education of future Australians"

## Other progress (or activities) of note include:

- A submission from AGTA was accepted by the Inquiry into the Academic Standards of School Education by

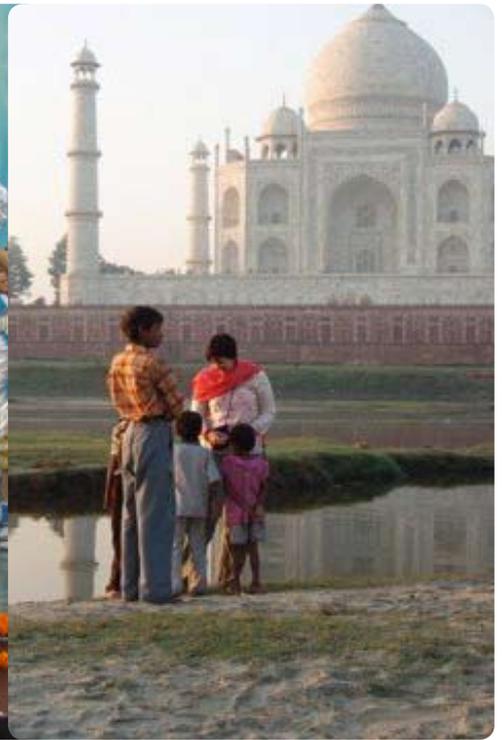
the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee. The Hansard proofs of the proceedings of 17 May 2007 are available online.

- A emailed letter to Kevin Rudd alerting the opposition of the existence of the Erebus study into Geography 3-10
- The considerable work and effort in:
  - producing promotional materials on careers,
  - the 2008 Olympics curriculum materials which are under development,
  - Geographia and poster series based on cartoons;
  - the promotion of Geography through the National Geographic Channel and the Australian Geography Competition,
  - representing members at the Spatial Science Institute, AFSSSE, NEF, IAG and the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee of Geography,
  - the annual production of AGTAs journal Geographical Education,
  - maintaining and enhancing AGTAs website and
  - the myriad of ways that all state affiliates raise the profile and promote Geography needs to be acknowledged.

These achievements continue to highlight the pivotal role that AGTA has undertaken in co-ordinating a national approach lifting the profile of Geography and promoting Geographical Education in Australia.

## AGTA will continue to:

- respond to geography-related issues being highlighted in the media;
- provide media releases;
- access free media opportunities;
- be pro-active on a state and national level;
- lobby relevant groups/organisations;
- raise the profile of geography by emphasising its relevance and promoting it as a career option.



# Report of the AEF Linking Latitudes Conference

New Delhi and Agra 30 September - Thursday 4 October 2007

Some 250 Australian and New Zealand delegates and accompanying persons participated in the fourth AEF International Conference and Fieldwork program from Saturday 22 September to Thursday 11 October. The core business of this program was the conference in New Delhi at the Habitat Centre from Sunday 23 September to Wednesday 3 October and the Jaypee Palace Hotel at Agra until Friday 5 October. However, many participants were involved in the pre conference and post conference fieldwork programs to such enticing places as Rajasthan, Dharamsala, Kolkata, Varanasi, Jaisalmer, Kochi, Goa, Kumarakom, Bhutan and Bandhavgarh - chasing tigers! Typically these fieldwork opportunities were very popular amongst participants and provided many highlights and real insights into India.

The four day conference program consisted of particular daily themes - Future India, Education India, Democratic India, Global India and

World Heritage India. Morning sessions generally consisted of an array of very relevant presentations from expert guest speakers. The afternoon sessions provided participants with stimulating site visits and expert perspectives. A particular highlight for most participants was the education site visits where groups were warmly welcomed to 14 differing schools within New Delhi. Participants witnessed the impressive standard of education provided by highly competent and committed teaching and administration staff.

A visit to Agra for the conference finale included visits to the Taj Mahal and Red Fort.

A significant number of AGTA members attended the conference including AGTA Chair Nick Hutchinson. Thanks are extended to Leonie Brown who led the pre conference fieldtrip Desert Tour in Rajasthan on behalf of AGTA.

The Fourth AEF Linking Latitudes Conference was epitomised by an

exceptionally high quality program of expert speakers and site visits. The catering and accommodation provided all the delights and challenges offered by a visit to India. AGTA was fortunate to be a Linking Latitudes Conference Partner. The number of geographic educators participating in this conference was impressive. Thank you to each affiliate for promoting this professional learning opportunity.

In conclusion a sincere thank you to Jeana Kriewaldt for her role in representing AGTA on the Conference Planning Committee, ensuring AGTA's continued profile and contribution to this conference.

## 2007 National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competition

# Geography's Big Week Out



Planning for the first Geography's Big Week Out, to be held at Noosa from 10 to 14 December 2007, is proceeding well. The members of the organising committee are: Kath Berg, RGSQ, Mark Camman, Maleny State High School, Brett Jones, Pacific Lutheran College, Mick Law, ESRI, Meegan Maguire, Spatial Technologies in Schools, and Margaret McIvor, AGTA.

Many thanks to GAWA which has undertaken to organise the 2009 Geography's Big Week Out. Mike Fazio and Emmy Terry will be part of the leadership group at Noosa.

The highest-scoring male and female students in each State and the combined Territories, who are in Year 11 or lower, have been offered places, as have the next highest male and female students (both from NSW) – a total of 16 students. In a couple of instances students have been unable to accept because of family commitments, and the place has been offered to the next ranked student.

Activities during Big Week Out will focus on fieldwork, ranging over practical activities such as investigating coastal erosion and deposition, interviewing Noosa Council staff and National Parks rangers about developments in the area, and using spatial technologies to record and analyse their fieldwork observations. Fieldwork sites will include Noosa Main Beach (with beach transects among the sunbathers!), mangroves in the Noosa estuary, the vegetation patterns of Noosa National Park, canal developments in Noosaville, and Mt Tinbeerwah in the hinterland. There will also be time for fun activities such as high-speed boating and a cooking competition with an international flavour.

Australia's team to the next International Geography Olympiad, 7-12 August 2008 in Carthage, Tunisia, will be selected from Big Week Out, with possibly one member of the team chosen from the 2008 Australian competition (see under 2008 Competition). There is some question as to whether teams will be three or four students.





## National Geographic World Championship

Australia participated in the 8th National Geographic World Championship held in San Diego, California, from 5 to 10 August 2007.

The countries taking part were: Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Mexico, Poland, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, United Kingdom & USA.

Australia's team was selected from students who excelled in the intermediate levels of the 2006 and 2007 National Geographic Channel Australian Geography Competitions:

**Mathew Beddard, St Stephen's College,**  
Gold Coast (1st in 2007)

**David Vasak, Sydney Grammar School**  
(2nd in 2007)

**Roman Zethoven, Trinity Grammar School,**  
Melbourne (1st in 2006)

Australia performed very well. In the first part of the test (70 questions x 1 mark) which covers a wide range of geographical knowledge. Canada and Poland tied for first place and Australia tied with Russia for

third place. We slipped back in the second part of the test (15 questions x 2 marks) which is very specific place knowledge. In the combined preliminary scores, Canada had the highest score, followed by USA then Mexico.

Australia was ninth. However, the top half of the field was close. The score range was 24 to 71, and Australia scored 61. In the Final Mexico was a very popular winner, with USA second and Canada third.

The program for the World Championship was excellent. SeaWorld was a sponsor so there were extended periods there including some time with their education staff. Other highlights included San Diego Zoo, Torrey Pines State Reserve and the museums in Balboa Park. On our extra day in the US, the Australian team travelled inland to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park to get a different view of Californian environments.



**Mathew Beddard**

# 2008 Competition

The Committee is considering increasing the time allowed for the Competition – currently 30 minutes plus extra time to complete preliminaries. However, we want to ensure that the test can be given during a single lesson in most schools. Given the wide variation in lesson lengths we would appreciate feedback on this.

The Committee will be introducing an additional mailing to all contact teachers. This will be late in the school year and will confirm the details of the following year's Competition. This was suggested by several teachers in the survey.

## The draft timeline for the 2008 Competition is:

### Nov 2007

Direct mail all contact teachers

### 23 Jan 2008

Direct mail all secondary schools with full Comp info

### 11 Feb 2008

Direct mail reminder to all contact teachers

### 28 Feb 2008

Deadline for entries

### 11 - 14 Mar 2008

Question packs sent out

### 31 Mar - 11 Apr 2008

School round

### early Jun 2008

Post results and certificates

### 16 Jun 2008

Final for under 16s

### 7 - 12 Aug 2008

International Geography Olympiad, Tunisia

### Dec 2009

Geography's Big Week Out

# Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Project



Thanks to Bronwen Perry for coordinating yet another Olympic Games project. Teaching and learning materials on the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games are to be developed in conjunction with the Geographical Association of UK. Anticipated publication date is April-May 2008.

The aim is to develop a distinctive geographical resource pack to support teachers teach across the primary and secondary geography curriculum, about the 2008 Olympics and in raising awareness about the Olympics and the issues surrounding the Games. The new resources will be electronic and downloadable from a specific website.

The materials will emphasise the enquiry approach, people-environment perspectives, and promote learning strategies and thinking skills.

The proposal is to partner UK and Australian writers throughout the following age groups/ key stages. Writers are not yet finalised.



## Conference 2008

David Lergessner, Rebecca Nicholas and Meegan Maguire are coordinating the 2008 conference.

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Thanks to Rob Berry the construction of the website is now complete. The conference website has been based on the AGTA website. For perusal, go to [www.agta.asn.au](http://www.agta.asn.au). The AGTA conference will be advertised through email alerts and the GTA journals.

The program for the conference is outlined on the website. It will include 2 days of STiS (Spatial Technologies in Schools) /AGTA, a day of field trips followed with a day of pure AGTA workshops. This will allow science /maths / environmental science teachers who usually attend the STiS expo to still attend.

A call for workshops has been posted on the AGTA website. Speakers and workshop presenters will also be targeted. If you know of anyone interested in speaking, please forward your ideas either the conference convenors or the AGTA conference email. We hope that the program will be finalised and published on the website by January.

The Pre and Post Conference Tour will be a two day trip to Fraser Island, organised by Trailblazer who have provided a

special price for AGTA, as they are hoping to promote their company for future school trips. The cost for the field trip is \$80. Field trips will depart on Saturday September 27 or Friday October 3.

The day-field trips have been confirmed and are currently outlined on the website. Field trip locations include:

- Brisbane Brownfield Sites;
- Why Noosa?
- The Glasshouse Legend;
- Geocaching on the Sunshine Coast;
- Protecting Cooloola.

A vibrant social program will be offered throughout the conference. Monday night boasts Barefoot Bowls and BBQ. And 'Velvet Waters' nightclub will be a 'special occasion' evening on Wednesday.

An invitation to be a trade displayer has been placed on the website. and a sponsorship package is being developed.

AGTA Awards will again be presented at the AGTA conference thanks to Rita Shepherd

The information for these awards is available on the website.

Please refer to the website for as further details are posted.



**Dr Grant Kleeman,  
Director AGTA  
- Recipient of  
MacDonald  
Holmes Medal**

James Macdonald Holmes was McCaughey Professor of Geography at the University of Sydney during the period 1929 to 1961. To commemorate his achievements over these years the Geographical Society of NSW together with the Geography Teachers' Association of NSW award, biennially, a medal bearing his portrait and name, to a person deemed to have made a distinguished contribution to the field of geographical education in Australia.

Dr. Grant Kleeman was the recipient of this prestigious award this year. Grant is currently coordinator of the Secondary Teacher Education Program at Macquarie University, researching the role that interest groups play in shaping curriculum development. During his career Grant has published 28 highly acclaimed textbooks for students in all years of high school. In 1995 Grant received the "Australian Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing".

For a number of years Grant has chaired the Editorial Committee of the Geography Bulletin. Grant has made it a priority to support young Geographers who wish to have works published in this highly respected peer reviewed journal and through his mentorship many young teachers have expanded their careers.

AGTA is proud of Grant who is a very worthy recipient of this Award.

# Affiliate News – Around the Nation

## Geography Teachers' Association of New South Wales



Approximately 480 members belong to GTANSW. Increased membership is a result of the incentive initiated last year that members pay a reduced rate at conferences.

During 2007 GTANSW/GE held over thirty professional development activities for teachers and students. Teachers attended a range of in-service activities ranging from topics such as: geographic tools, geographic information systems, teaching methodologies, external examinations, fieldwork, information and communications technologies, global education, Asia, numeracy, literacy, civics and citizenship, holistic programming and information on the NSW Institute of Teaching. Topics covered a range of contemporary, contentious global issues such as poverty, aid, refugees, human rights, water quality and quantity, endangered species, salinity, environmental management, global citizenship, managing World Heritage Sites and global warming.

All professional development activities were supported by the New South Wales Global Education Project and three country conferences (Blue Mountains, Wagga Wagga and Dubbo) were subsidised by the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP). GTANSW also coordinated three conferences with the History Teachers' Association and one with Primary, Economics/Business Studies Teachers' Associations and the Department of Education at NSW Parliament House.

GTANSW continues to manage the NSW Global Education Project (2007-2009) as well as write and present material for the Water for Life Project (NSW Cabinet) and Oceanwatch Project. Shayne Reid, Sue Field and Anne Southwell wrote the Water for Life material and Lorraine Chaffer the Oceanwatch resource that will be trialled and delivered towards the end of 2007 and during 2008.

GTANSW is supporting a new program of overseas walking tours led by a retired Geography teacher, Greg Pashley who has developed these tours in conjunction with Colin Sale, San Michele Travel and the Geographical Society of NSW. The first tour, a 22-day walking holiday in the Alps, in July 2007 took a group of 12 on a series of alpine day walks in Italy, Austria, Germany and Slovenia. The treks ventured through such regions such as the Dolomites, the Julian Alps, the Hohetauern Alps and the Otztaler. The group visited Bolzano, Salzburg and Venice. The success of the tour has led Greg to planning more walking tours in the future. Fieldwork is a great geographical tool!

The excellent, informative Geography Bulletin published four times a year was edited by Dr. Grant Kleeman and David Hamper. The journal remains the principal means by which the association promotes the study of Geography in NSW schools. The new photographic cover format and the effort made to provide material that supports the work of teachers in classrooms appears to be popular with members.

The editor is keen for more teachers to write for the Geography Bulletin to ensure a diversity of perspectives and teaching methodologies. The editorial board will also referee articles that are required for Masters and Doctoral degrees.

AGTA along with GTANSW congratulates Grant for the production of this high quality resource.

Global Education has been managed by GTANSW since 2001. About 40,000 teachers and university students attended conferences and workshops on Global Education over the six years. The project has successfully integrated transdisciplinary Global Education within Geography as well as primary HSIE, secondary HSIE (Economics, Business Studies, Commerce, Legal Studies, Studies of Religion, Society and Culture, former Asian Studies), English and Science. In 2007 (January to August) the NSW Global Education Project has provided lectures/workshops to nearly 10,000 teachers and university students.

GTANSW was awarded the Global Education NSW contract (primary and secondary) for the next three years (2007-2009). Susan Bliss is the Manager assisted by Nick Hutchinson (Chair, AGTA). The project is a consortium coordinated by GTANSW with University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Macquarie University (MQU), University of Sydney (SU) and University of Western Sydney (UWS)

Concern over the declining candidature for HSC Geography was discussed extensively at meetings. David Hamper and Grant Kleeman constructed a survey of questions sent out to all Geography teachers in NSW. The survey focused on the teachers' perceptions of Geography and why students were not selecting to study Geography in Years 11 and 12. The study provides a range of insights as to why Stage 6 Geography is not selected. A number of findings are included in the report. A full copy of the report can be found in the Geography Bulletin Volume 39 No. 3 Winter, 2007.

## Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria



Membership is 657.

A range of professional learning programs have occurred in 2007 including fieldwork, GIS, basic geospatial skills; and student lectures

GTAV's Annual Conference in August proved successful with 394 participants attended across three days. Keynote speakers were UK guests and friends Margaret Roberts and Bob Digby. The content of both presentations were relevant and attractive to those present contributing to a positive start to both days of this year's conference.

GTAV responded to the inquiry into Geography, collating members' responses. Susy Puszka and Leonie Brown (co-presidents) authored an article in

response to the Australian Primary School Principals' Association's proposal of 2 August 07 in the Age to streamline the compulsory primary school curriculum to Literacy, Numerary, Science and History arguing for the central role of Geography. We note with pleasure that their draft statement now states Literacy, Numerary, Science and Social Education (including history and geography).

AGTA's production of The Place of Geography in your Career Choice has been warmly received by GTAV members and thanks are extended to all those who were involved. It is a useful tool for the promotion of the study of Geography.

## Geographical Association of Western Australia



GAWA's membership remains healthy with 304. The membership has remained steady over the last couple of years but there is great concern that the reduction in the number of students studying Geography at Year 11 and Year 12 level may lead to a decline in membership.

GAWA organised a variety of quality professional development activities that focused on improving geographical knowledge, teaching methodologies and networking. These included:

- A professional development day for beginning teachers proved interesting in that some experienced teachers also attended.
- A GIS course was held in Term 2.
- The 2007 annual conference was held in Bunbury, in the South West of Western Australia.
- The theme of the conference, Geography for a Sustainable Future was particularly pertinent given the declining numbers of TEE geography students, the ongoing issue of global warming and sustainability and the merry-go-round called the Geography Course of Study (CoS).
- Holding the conference in Bunbury provided opportunities for a variety of fieldwork activities in the rapidly developing south west region of the State.
- The Chamber of Minerals and Energy, major sponsors of the conference, conducted field trips to various mine sites and rehabilitated areas in the region.

- A new skills based activity book, The Geographer's Toolkit has been written and will be available for the start of 2008 school year.

GAWA, as with other affiliates continues to promote geography. During 2007:

- AGTA posters were provided free to GAWA members.
- GAWA produced its own posters which were also distributed free to members.
- Multi media packages used by teachers to promote Geography were exhibited at the annual conference in Bunbury.
- Career brochures developed by AGTA were made available to members at cost recovery
- Linking the GAWA website to the AGTA website.

Issues and concerns continue to focus on the new Year 11 and 12 Geography course. Associated with this is the declining numbers of students selecting to study Geography at Year 11 and Year 12 level due to restructuring of the Courses of Study.

Maintaining its membership and revenue base along with attracting and maintaining 'volunteers' willing to act as councilors are also concerns that need to be addressed.

## Geography Teachers' Association of Queensland



Membership currently stands at 234.

GTAQ State Conference was held at the end of a very successful Geography Week at the University of Queensland on July 21. During this week students had the opportunity to visit the University for lectures and seminars as part of Geography Careers Day.

On a political note, GTAQ coordinated a meeting with Rod Welford the Queensland Minister for Education to discuss the future of SOSE in Queensland schools in light of the document "Future of School" released by the Premiers in April 2007. We await the outcome of this meeting!

Curriculum Developments in Queensland are progressing with Panel Chairs currently writing new work programs that need to be submitted this term other schools have until Term 1, 2008 to submit their new work programs.

As has been identified in other states maintaining membership is of concern when student numbers are declining in the discipline. Furthermore, schools are finding it increasingly difficult to find access to funding for memberships of associations as State Government budgetary pressures increase.

## Tasmanian Geography Teachers' Association



Membership currently stands at 12.

The current AGTA Geography posters and careers fliers were distributed to members at cost price to help them promote Geography in their schools and communities.

The Tasmanian Curriculum – the syllabus for History and Society (which will include Geography) has just been released for discussion and feedback. Society and History is an inquiry based interdisciplinary curriculum area that draws on history, geography, ecology, economics, law, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology.

It is aimed that the study of Society and History will enable all students to become

active, engaged, lifelong learners able to participate as responsible citizens and contribute to global sustainability through inquiry and analysis, and critical and reflective thinking.

Society and History during the compulsory years of schooling prepares students for subjects in the curriculum area of Studies of Society and Environment in the senior secondary years. In senior secondary studies of Behavioural Studies, Business Studies, History and Ideas and World and the Environment, students can extend their knowledge and understanding of relationships, culture, identity, democracy, systems, resources and the environment, and time, continuity and change.

Behavioural Studies	Business Studies	History and Ideas	World and the Environment
Family and Society	Accounting	Ancient Civilisations	Australia in Asia and the Pacific
Psychology	Business Studies	Australian Studies	Geography
Sociology	Economics	Issues in Society	Tasmanian Investigations
Working with Children		Legal Studies	Tourism Studies
		Modern World History	
		Religion and Philosophy	

The post Year 10 Curriculum Review has continued in the background while a major restructure of post year 10 education, which has been proposed by the Minister, is discussed. The proposal is to replace TAFE Colleges and Senior Secondary Colleges with Polytechnics and Academies. Polytechnics will teach applied courses such as VET programs and other work related courses, while Academies will

prepare students for university entrance. The present Year 11/12 Geography syllabus would presumably remain and be taught in the Academies.

As in other states Geography teachers in their schools and colleges will continue to promote the subject in an endeavour to raise its profile and increase student numbers.

## Geography Teachers' Association of South Australia



GTASA has exhibited a 10% increase in membership which currently stands at 159.

The 2007 GTASA Conference was held in June 2007 with the theme "Geography- Exploring our World". The Conference attracted an increased number of registrations. The format of the Conference was a morning key note speaker (Simon Nasht author of "Sir Hubert Wilkins: the unknown explorer and Roger Smith on day 2), workshops and then afternoon field trips. Sessions focussed on both middle school and senior Geography with support being provided for teachers of the new Year 12 course. Feedback received was very positive. GTASA appreciated the support of Anne-Marie Gerlach, from Queensland, in presenting a session.

Other professional development activities have included free spatial technology workshops and an evening session held at Flinders University on focussing on water issues. This topic was directly related to the Year 12 course and proved to be popular with 47 teachers attending. Participants were provided with a DVD of resources. A DVD with sound track of the presentations was sent to country teachers unable to attend, including 8 teachers in Darwin.

A series of 5 Centra virtual classroom training sessions were held as a joint venture between ABS, DECS and GTASA. Three sessions on use of ABS resources were led by Pat Beeson and the other two by GTASA Executive Members. This has proven to be an excellent way of allowing all teachers regardless of their location to participate in PD. Following the success of the trial, four more sessions are planned for during Term 4.

A number of activities have focused on the promotion of Geography:

- Alex Piggott and Rita Shepherd wrote an article on the need for geography to be taught as a core curriculum subject in the ACEL 'Directions in Education' publication.

- Malcolm McInerney did an interview on ABC radio on the value of students learning Geography.
- Flinders University Geography Department produced a booklet featuring careers that Geography graduates have gone into. It details how their work links to geography, salary and the actual tasks they do. This substantial booklet has been distributed to teachers of Senior Geography.
- The Wilkins Prize that recognises student's involvement in environmental initiatives was initiated in 2007 to increase the profile of geography in both primary and secondary schools. Several entries have already been received ahead of the November closing date.
- The new GTASA website has a facility for interested people to register for updates. To date 185 have done so and were sent information regularly on events, teaching resources and useful websites.

The end of the first year of teaching the new Year 12 Geography Course is approaching and there has been a mixed response to it. Year 12 numbers have increased from 2006 but it is not possible to ascertain if this is a result of the new course.

Very little information has been made available to schools on the details of the Future SACE. Schools are awaiting information on what the new tertiary entry requirements will be.

### Churchill Fellowship

Congratulations is extended to Malcolm McInerney who has been awarded a Churchill Fellowship. He is undertaking a study of Spatial Literacy in Canada, USA, Hong Kong, Europe and the UK. This should have many positive benefits for Australian teachers.

## GeoCareers Website

Rob Berry (Website Manager) is pleased to report that the GeoCareers website has been designed and uploaded. At present a number of people have been invited to submit their details to form part of the 'Meet a Geographer' section. Once these have been received this section will be updated. Currently, the major sections include Meet a Geographer, Studying Geography, Using Geography and Resources. Each of these sections will be added to and if necessary, refined as the website extends its scope.

Rob looks forward to receiving feedback about possible changes and enhancements that will meet the needs of the AGTA members.



## Professional Standards for Geography

AGTA resolved to develop standards for Geography teachers in Australia.

AGTA empowered Jeana Kriewaldt to seek funding for this project. Hearty congratulations to Jeana and the University of Melbourne, as successful recipients of an ARC Linkage Grant gaining funding for Professional Teaching Standards "Strengthening Standards of Teaching through Linking Standards and Teacher Learning: The Development of Professional standards for Teaching School Geography".

In the first phase the project will video record accomplished classroom teachers at work in two lessons. The footage will be used as prompts for teacher panels who will develop the standards. The call for teachers for teacher panels will occur in 2008.

Through a peer nomination process, the research team is currently seeking accomplished teachers of geography in Victoria, NSW and SA to participate in this project. Teachers were encouraged to provide details of professional colleagues who meet the following criteria:

1. A teaching qualification in geography or equivalent method;
2. Four or more years of teaching experience;
3. Current geography teaching experience;
4. Recognition of their accomplished geography teaching practice through one or more of the following means
  - a. Recognition by other teachers of Geography;
  - b. Recognition within their school setting;
  - c. Leadership role in the school;
  - d. Sharing of practice by offering workshops and/or through publication or other means;
  - e. Receipt of teaching award;
  - f. Student results;
  - g. Involvement in practitioner research.

We will keep you informed of the project as it continues to develop. Enquiries can be directed to [jeana@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jeana@unimelb.edu.au)

*National Geographic Channel promotes and encourages Geography education in Australian schools.*

**Next AGTA meeting: 100th meeting of the AGTA Board, 3rd-4th May 2008, Melbourne**

## AGTA Website

The major change to the website has been the addition of the AGTA 2008 conference section. This has developed into a substantial part of the website and AGTA is sure it will prove to be an important way of promoting the many aspects of the conference. As updates or revisions are made by the organising committee these will be incorporated into the website. In addition, the conference website will provide links to the online



registration as was the case for the AGTA 2006 conference held in Launceston. Later the website will include the keynote presentations and workshop papers.

AGTA sincerely thanks the National Geographic Channel (NGC) for sponsoring the publication of this newsletter.



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