



Geography Teachers' Association of S.A. Inc.

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President's Report - May 2017

Over the last twelve months GTASA has enjoyed a growth in both membership and enthusiasm within the association. Our 80th anniversary celebrations in 2016 were a highlight for the year, which was celebrated at both the Annual Conference followed by a Birthday Dinner in May. It was great to have many of our Life Members join our celebrations in May.

1. Membership

- Current membership for 2017 stands at 114 members: 58 individual members; 56 school members. This includes 15 life members. One of our Life Members, John Sibly, sadly passed away in October.

2. Committee

- Our committee currently comprises 18 members. One of these members, Fiona Grieg, has been co-opted from the SACE Board so that we can work closely with the SACE Board in the implementation of the new SACE Geography curriculum.
- There are a number of new openings on the committee and all individual financial members of GTASA are encouraged to consider joining the Executive committee.
- Over the last 12 months the Executive committee has been developing a Strategic Plan for the association. While this plan is still a work in progress, it is helping to guide our priorities in terms of building relationships with members and providing relevant member services. The committee has made progress in the use of social media (Facebook and Twitter) as a means of communication.

3. Professional Development

- Ian Johnson and Daisy Ashby, along with the conference sub-committee have worked solidly to put together an inspiring Annual Conference (the highlight of our professional learning calendar) under the theme of *Geography in Action*. It was a great privilege to have the conference opened by His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le, Governor of South Australia. Our two keynote speakers, Associate Professor Alan Gamlen and Associate Professor Dr Melissa Nursey-Bray from the University of Adelaide, gave engaging presentations on current geographical issues.
- In August 2016, GTASA ran a 2 hour workshop at Pembroke School titled *Help! I'm teaching Geography in Semester 2*. The workshop was well attended by over 40 teachers; many new to geography, early career or out-of-field teachers.
- Two workshops were on the calendar in Term 1 of 2017. The first, a networking meeting between SACE Geography teachers provided an opportunity for teachers to informally meet and chat about some of the challenges of teaching SACE Geography. Approximately 10 people attended this meeting. The second workshop at Concordia College was focused on the use of Digital Mapping skills for the classroom. This workshop was attended by nearly 20 participants.
- GTASA is trialling a new concept this year - the *Geography Coffee Club*. Teachers can find out about the Coffee Club via our Facebook page. The Coffee Club is a chance for fellow teachers to meet informally with one another and share ideas, resources or just to give one

another moral support. The first meeting was in Term 1, and the plan is to host one of these a term at different locations across Adelaide.

- GTASA continues to offer mentor support to all of its members. Anyone seeking a mentor is encouraged to contact GTASA (admin@gtasa.asn.au)

4. Publications & projects

- The online publication of *SA Geographer* has been favourably accepted by our members. Our current editor is Elise Walker. We are currently producing three editions per year.
- The Sampson Flat bushfire Mapping Kit, launched at last year's Conference has sold well, and a second run of the publication was required to meet demand.
- GTASA is working with AGTA in the sale of the publication *Geography Skills Unlocked*. Copies of this book purchased through GTASA will result in shared profits for GTASA.
- As we move towards the end of 2017 and closer to the 2018 implementation of SACE Stage 2 Geography, GTASA is looking at ways we can effectively and economically produce resources relevant to the new curriculum and of use for teachers. If you have any great ideas for the types of resources you'd like to see produced, please let us know.

5. Action for promoting Geography

- Rita Shepherd organized another successful Year 12 Geography Night in August. This annual event was well attended by many Year 12 students and teachers. The two guest lecturers from Adelaide University – Dr John Tibby and Dr Helen Feist – gave excellent presentations on issues related to water and population from a South Australian perspective.
- Throughout the last year GTASA has encouraged and supported teachers and students through various awards. At the 2017 conference 6 students received the Wilkins prize for environmental initiatives in their schools. Scholarships have also been awarded to pre-service teachers to assist their career development and to early career teachers to attend the 2017 AGTA conference.

6. Curriculum Developments

- 2017 marked the start of the new SACE Geography course at Stage 1. Stage 2 SACE Geography is to be taught in schools from 2018.

7. Issues / problems

- Maintaining our relevance as an association is always something at the forefront of our minds. GTASA has been working with CEASA to explore ways in which we as your association can build capacity while also continuing to be relevant. In light of the increasing pressures with teaching and expectations on our profession, it is important that we navigate carefully through these times in a manner that maintains the integrity and relevance of our association for now and future geography teachers.

8. Other

- In August 2016 I attended the NT Festival of Teaching conference and presented a workshop on the new SACE Stage 1 topic *Sustainable Places*. It was a great experience to attend this conference and to see how many teaching associations had come together to support the overall advancement of teaching. The collective approach for the day was inspiring.
- As part of CEASA's World Teacher Day Award in October, GTASA was awarded a prize for *Innovative Association*. It was an absolute pleasure and privilege to receive this award, and is a credit to the tireless efforts of many members of the Executive Committee.
- Throughout the second half of 2016 GTASA was responsible for coordinating the AGTA Awards for recognizing quality resources related to the teaching of Geography. In October this year, under the coordination of Liam Sloan, GTASA will host the Australian Geography Competition's Big Week Out.
- In January, at the AGTA 2017 conference, two long standing members of our committee were awarded the Don Biddle Award. Greg Way and Malcolm McInerney were duly recognised for their efforts and contributions to geography teaching at the national level. As an association we are proud of their achievement.

I continue to enjoy my role as your president, and am inspired by the stories I hear from you, fellow geography teachers across the state. I'm blessed to be supported by a hard-working Executive committee. I look forward to the exciting year ahead and to continue growing Geography as a relevant and essential subject in our state's curriculum.

Joanne Wegener

President

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