



Geography Teachers' Association of S.A. Inc.

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President: Joanne Wegener

President's Report - June 2020

Twelve months ago when we met together for our last conference, none of us could have imagined what would unfold in the following year. In the last four months we have seen our world transform from one that takes global interconnections for granted, to one which now recognises the importance of place and space. This time has created new challenges for our association (as it has for all of us in one way or another).

1. Membership

- At the end of 2019 our total membership was 105 members
- Current membership for 2020 stands at 87 members: 41 individual members; 32 school members; 14 Life Members
- This year the online membership system (EdSA Gateway), managed by Educators SA, eased membership renewals for 2020. However, the postponement of our annual conference has resulted in an overall decline in membership as many schools and some individuals renew their membership around the time of the conference.
- Pre-service teachers are invited to join the association for free during their final year of study. This is an area where we could work more closely with the university Education departments to increase this uptake.
- Membership Breakdown as at 31 March 2020:

| | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Life Members | 14 | 14 |
| Individual: Country Secondary Teacher (7-12) | 11 | 10 |
| Individual: Early Career Secondary Teacher (<2 Years) | 5 | 2 |
| Individual: Metro Secondary Teacher (7-12) | 22 | 20 |
| Individual: Pre-service teacher | 5 | 5 |
| Individual: Primary School Teacher (R-6/7) | 1 | 1 |
| Individual: Retired Teacher/Friends of GTASA | 3 | 3 |
| Institution: Other Institutions | 5 | 0 |
| Institution: R-12 / Secondary | 39 | 32 |
| Total | 105 | 87 |

2. Committee

- Our committee consists of 14 active members. We continue to outsource a number of our administrative roles to Educators SA.
- Office Bearers for 2019/20:
 - PRESIDENT: Joanne Wegener
 - VICE PRESIDENT(S): Simon Miller; Fiona Greig

- TREASURER: Greg Way
- SECRETARY: Domna Margaras
- Other roles (honorarium attached):
 - JOURNAL EDITOR: Elise Walker
 - WEBSITE MANAGER: Jacob Hayes
 - CONFERENCE CONVENOR: Jeannine Malcolm
- The committee continues to meet once per term, and this year has been trialling the use of Zoom for meetings. While COVID-19 forced this upon us, it has also proved useful for country participants and would be a useful way for us to engage more country teachers on the Executive committee.
- New members are always welcome to nominate for the Executive committee.

3. Professional Development

- Our annual conference was held on Monday 3rd and Tuesday 4th June 2019. The conference theme was *Geography - shaping Australia's future*. Keynote presenter, Professor Mark Howden from the Climate Change Institute at ANU, opened the conference with a stimulating discussion around this controversial topic. Schools were invited to bring in their Year 12 Geography students to hear more about this topic. This invitation was taken up by a couple of schools. During the second day of the conference we offered two dedicated masterclasses on spatial technologies which were well received by all participants.
- In the October school holidays a strong contingent from SA, including three sponsored Early Career Teachers, attended the biennial AGTA conference on the Gold Coast. Over an action-packed week we were immersed in current thinking, pedagogy and technology relevant to the teaching and learning of Geography.
- In Term 1 we organised a networking session for SACE Geography teachers, meeting at Concordia College. This was an opportunity for teachers to hear from the SACE Board about the e-Exam format for this year, share ideas, ask questions, and generally support one another in the delivery of SACE Geography.
- We managed to host one more event in Term 1 before COVID-19 restrictions put an end to all large gatherings. Approximately 100 teachers, students and friends attended the *2040* Film Night with guest speaker Damon Gameau at the Capri Theatre in March. This event was well received by all who attended.

4. Publications, projects & communication

- We continue to stock and sell the AGTA publications *Geography Unlocked* series. All participants at last year's conference received a copy of *Geography Fieldwork Unlocked* as part of their registration.
- From the start of this year journal production will change to two issues per year, with a focus on teacher resources. Newsletters are sent out at the beginning of each term.
- Social media has become our most popular form of communication. Our Facebook page has received over 500 likes, and our Facebook Group for members only has 27 members. This group was created so that members can actively contribute to geography networking and promotion.

5. Action for promoting Geography

- In August, GTASA in conjunction with the University of Adelaide hosted our annual Year 12 Geography night at Adelaide University. Over 100 students from schools across metropolitan Adelaide attended the event.
- In 2019 we co-launched the SA Geographers Fieldwork Award with the Royal Geographical Society of SA who provided generous sponsorship to the winners. The award recognises excellence in geographical skills, particularly fieldwork. In 2020 we would like to encourage more schools to submit entries for this award.

6. Curriculum Developments

- At the end of 2019 the SACE Board announced that the 2020 Stage 2 Geography exam would be an e-Exam.

7. Issues & challenges

- Within the state, the training of skilled Geography teachers at our universities is paramount to the future of Geography in our schools. This issue is double-edged: without good Geography teachers at school, students are not undertaking the study of Geography at university. Thus, graduate teachers entering the profession are not well trained, and therefore impact the quality of geography teaching. With this in mind, GTASA is keen to continue developing strong relationships with the universities to address this challenge.

8. Other

- GTASA successfully hosted Geography's Big Week Out again in December. Liam Sloan once again led a superb camp to Kangaroo Island, eliciting the help of Simon Roos-Freeman and Joanne Wegener. This concluded a three-year term of hosting the GBWO for AGTA and the Australian Geography Competition. The 2020 GBWO has been postponed but was planned for Western Australia to host.

This report is my fifth and last report as GTASA President. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the role as your president. I am continually inspired and heartened by the stories I hear from you, fellow Geography teachers across the state. I have particularly valued the efforts of our country members who, year in, make trips to Adelaide for professional development. I'm always amazed by the creative efforts of many teachers in the teaching and learning of Geography, and am constantly amazed by the fascinating resources you keep finding and sharing with each other.

Finally, in closing this report, I want to thank the dedicated Executive committee who have supported me and trusted me throughout my time as President. While I will still be involved with GTASA going forward, I am delighted to hand over the role and responsibility to our new co-presidents with the knowledge that the association will be in good hands.

Joanne Wegener

President

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