



2022 Annual Report presented by the AGTA Chair

As Chair of the Australian Geography Teachers Association (AGTA), it is my pleasure to present the 2022 Annual Report. I write the report from the lands of the Cammeraygal People of Eora Nation and lands of the Wallumattagal Clan of Dharug Nation, whose cultures and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture this land from time immemorial. I extend my respect to Elders past and present and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the traditional and original custodians of land and waterways upon which we gather and meet. I recognise traditional custodianship is enduring and acknowledge the lands and waterways are unceded. Throughout 2022, the AGTA Board have met in person on Kaurua Country on 21 and 22 May; also on Nipaluna Country on 1 October. Throughout 2022 we have also met on multiple occasions via email and in various combinations via zoom. We acknowledge the traditional custodians, lands and waterways of the many Countries from which we come together, and from those upon which we reside, work, enjoy our leisure activities, and we notice the features of place and time.

Whilst the 2022 Annual Report is a requirement of AGTA operation, it is also an important mechanism to formally share and reflect on key items of influence and interest for geography education across Australia. The Annual Report addresses key activities and items of particular interest for geography education in 2022 and offers insights into AGTA initiatives for the year ahead.

I start the Annual Report by introducing our Board for 2022. There were a few changes to Office Bearers, Directors and Nominated Directors as a result of the Annual General Meeting in October 2021.

2022 AGTA Board - Office Bearers

I extend my thanks and appreciation to Trish Douglas (GTAV) for her wise and steady leadership as Chair of the Association over the past 5 years. Trish remains on the AGTA Board as Immediate Past President and I look forward to being able to continue our work together. I vacated the Secretary role to take on the role of Chair, and Shane Albertson (GTAQ) stepped up as Secretary. We farewelled Joanne Wegener (GTASA) as Vice Chair and welcomed Simon Miller (GTASA) into the role. Considered and clear guidance continues from Dr Grant Kleeman (GTANSW&ACT) as Treasurer.

2022 AGTA Board – Directors and nominated directors

For 2022, there was no change to representation from four affiliates: GTAQ, GAWA, TGTA and GTAV. From GTAQ Julie Davis and Shane Albertson remain as director and nominated director

respectively. From GAWA, Leo Conti continues as director and Anna Griffin continues as nominated director. Caryn Shield stays as director for TGTA with Karen Caporelli as nominated director. For GTAV, Peta Turner is director and Trish Douglas is nominated director.

There were slight changes to representation for 2022 from three affiliates: GTANSW&ACT, GTASA, and GHTANT. For GTANSW&ACT, Lorraine Chaffer departed as nominated director and Dr Grant Kleeman took on this role; Dr Susan Caldis remained as Director and Michael Da Roza continued as a non-voting representative for the ACT. For GTASA, Joanne Wegener exited as director which meant that Simon Miller stepped up to director from nominated director, and Fiona Greig joined the Board as nominated director. For GHTANT, Steve Hawkins is the director and there is no nominated director due to a small and combined History-Geography executive team in the Northern Territory.

Further information about additional roles and responsibilities of AGTA Board members is available on the Association website <https://agta.asn.au/About%20AGTA/board.php>

The remainder of the Annual Report covers core business items, and other items of note for AGTA during 2022: Direction and planning; AGTA Biennial Conference; Careers website; Journal; Australian Geography Competition, Big Week Out and Olympiad; Website; Geographia; Dr Don Biddle. Whilst the chosen items are not an exhaustive list of Association items, they have been instrumental to national dialogue and action about geography education during 2022.

Directions and planning

We have explicitly grounded and justified our thinking, planning and practice around an evidence base centred on the discipline of geography and inclusive of geography education.

An important evidence base for national planning are the key messages and recommendations in *Geography: Shaping Australia's Future*, a decadal plan for the discipline. The recommendations guide our practice, prompt thinking and encourage action around

- promoting awareness about the extent and implications of out-of-field teaching;
- developing recognition in theory and practice of geography as a STEM subject;
- fostering and strengthening connections between academic geography/ers and geography teachers;
- advocating for quality geography education in initial teacher education settings and for geography to be core learning up to Year 10 across Australia.

Further detail about the recommendations can be found in

<https://www.science.org.au/files/userfiles/support/reports-and-plans/2018/geography-decadal-plan.pdf>

Throughout 2022 we have conducted initial mapping of AGTA and affiliate activities to the above recommendations. Such mapping will continue throughout 2023 and form the foundation of a report to the National Committee for Geographical Sciences. The mapping identifies areas where our work is having impact along with areas which will require greater attention in the year ahead.

In 2022, one of our greatest impact areas is on promoting awareness about the extent and implications of **out-of-field teaching in geography**. Each affiliate is actioning this recommendation in their state or territory through targeted professional learning and overall advocacy. Affiliate activity strengthens a national approach and contributes to national impact. AGTA representatives participated in a national summit and contributed to recommendations to address out-of-field teaching in geography through policy, practice and research in the Australian National Summit On Teaching Out of Field (Hobbs et al., 2022) <https://oofas-collective.org/toofsummit>

Another area of ongoing impact is in **fostering and strengthening collaborative opportunities with academic geographers**. Again, each affiliate is actioning this recommendation in their state or territory through co-badged events with either an academic society such as GTAQ-RGSQ, GTASA-RGSSA and GTANSW&ACT-GSNSW, or with a university where geography has a strong profile such as GAWA-Curtin and TGTA-UTAS. In Victoria, GTAV have been collaborating with researchers at RMIT to produce an educator guide for *Everyday Stories of Climate Change* <https://www.gtav.asn.au/documents/item/1664>. GTAV have also been liaising with geography academics and the Royal Society of Victoria to establish 'Geography Victoria' – a rebirth of what was the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (Victoria). Again, the work of affiliates in actioning national recommendations in their state or territory feeds into the work of AGTA to demonstrate impact and success. AGTA continues to work closely with the Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG) and are delighted to see a Geography Education conference stream become a fixture in the IAG Annual Conference Program. Representatives from the AGTA Executive will participate in an AGTA-IAG co-badged webinar scheduled for November (postponed from September) entitled '*Geography: Flourish or flounder, the possibilities for geography education and the future of the discipline*'

Our **advocacy for quality geography education up to Year 10** across Australia continues through written submissions to ACARA as part of the consultation process related to a national curriculum review. Our advocacy is planned to continue in 2023 through joint lobbying and collaboration in messaging with IAG and prominent academic geographers to Education Ministers and curriculum authorities to alert them to the unsatisfactory changes to the primary years geography curriculum, occurring because of the curriculum review process. In response to release of the Australian Curriculum v9, the AGTA Board supported the development of a free 1 hour online short course focused on Primary Geography in Australia, Directions and Discussions. The short course follows an 'In-conversation with...' structure connected to professional readings and opportunities for personal reflection in conjunction with the curriculum. The importance and implications of geographical knowledge and understanding in the primary years forms the point of discussion between Associate Professor Alaric Maude and Dr Susan Caldis.

Agency of an Association is important. To strengthen the profile and presence of AGTA as a guiding, research informed and active voice for geography education, the Board are exploring national options for professional learning which exist beyond the biennial conference. One option which we are currently piloting with a view to further discussion is through an AGTA-led online learning initiative, with a low-cost, accredited, anytime-anywhere remit. Another option under discussion is an AGTA hosted online-symposium on the 'off-year' to the conference. The

symposium could rotate through focus areas related to recommendations such as geography and STEM, out-of-field teaching, quality geography education.

With the release of a Geography and STEM focused edition of *Geographical Education* at the end of 2021, AGTA work around promoting Geography as a STEM subject was paused to allow greater time and energy on other recommendations. Each affiliate has given significant attention to the promotion of geography and STEM through professional learning and collaborative opportunities with geographers or industry. There are possibilities for continuing dialogue around this recommendation in 2023 at a national scale through development of an online symposium and connected learning portal to share professional readings and engage in reflexive discussion about possibilities for future practice.

Thank you to the AGTA Board for your enthusiasm, support and willingness to discuss possibilities for moving the Association forward and strengthening our voice and presence in leading geography education across Australia. I have appreciated your collegiality, co-operation, and considered views for each point of discussion and I look forward to our continued work together.

AGTA Biennial Conference

The AGTA 2022 Conference was held between 28 – 30 September 2022 in Hobart, Tasmania after being postponed from 2021 due to Covid-related concerns. The conference theme was developed around *The Active Geographer* and conference events were hosted at the Crowne Plaza, Government House, Aura Restaurant, and Hobart Function Centre. Keynote speakers included Dr Shane Gould and Simon ‘show you maps’ Kuestenmacher.

Thank you to Karen Caporelli and Debbie Claridge for leading the conference organisation in uncertain, complex and difficult circumstances. Thank you also to the TGTA team for their support of the conference itself, and of the associated organisation prior to, during, and post the event. Thank you to ‘Team Tasmania’ a for finding solutions and creating a conference of relevance, rigour and appeal.

Careers Website

In July, the new careers website ‘Go With Geo’ was completed. The AGTA Board were delighted to proceed with a soft launch occurring amongst affiliates and then conduct a formal launch at the AGTA Conference <https://www.gowithgeo.com.au/>

Go with Geo provides information on career pathways, geography resources, study and news in geography. Career pathways includes environmental and economic change, natural hazards, human wellbeing, urban places, regional and rural Australia, coastal and marine environments, Asia-Pacific region and university courses. Geography resources includes geographer profiles, video resources, digibook, presentations, handouts, posters and career brochures.

Thank you to Dr Grant Kleeman for ensuring the project was completed during 2022 and in a financially viable way. Thank you also to Rowan Harris, Dr Greg Calvert and Anna Griffin for

conceptualising and initiating the careers website, and for your contribution to the project over time.

Journal

Geographical Education is the journal of AGTA. It is a double blind peer review publication which is open-access from a range of databases including EBSCO, and also from the AGTA website. In 2022, the journal appears in the Excellence in Research for Australia list, nominated by the Australian Centre for Educational Research.

In 2022, the AGTA Board welcomed Associate Professor Jeana Kriewaldt into the editor role. The AGTA Board were delighted to learn that Geoff Paterson will remain as Book Review Editor. However, during 2021, the AGTA Board were saddened to learn the departure of Associate Professor Terri Bourke and Associate Professor Rod Lane was imminent.

In 2018, Associate Professor Terri Bourke and Associate Professor Rod Lane commenced their term as co-editors of *Geographical Education*. They worked tirelessly as a team to bring rigour, relevance and diversity to the forefront of each edition. Themed sets of papers which span empirical, theoretical and personally reflective domains were carefully curated to promote dialogue and challenge readers to consider their thinking and practice in and about geography education. The 2021 edition of *Geographical Education* had a spotlight on Geography and STEM and concluded the “Rod and Terri era” With their combined vision, scholarship, and professionalism, they greatly enhanced the quality, relevance, and visibility of the journal. On behalf of the AGTA Board, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Terri and Rod for their years of service to the journal, their collegial approach, and their sustained interest in the work of AGTA.

The new editor for *Geographical Education*, Associate Professor Jeana Kriewaldt is well known to the AGTA Board and a highly regarded researcher of geography education in school-based and initial teacher education settings. The Board invited Jeana to the May meeting and lead discussion about strengths of and challenges facing the journal, together with possibilities for future purpose, direction and focus of the journal. We look forward to the 2022 edition of the journal and value the opportunity to provide input into its future directions. Immense thanks are extended towards Jeana for her willingness to take on the editorial role and continue active involvement with the AGTA Board and work of AGTA.

Australian Geography Competition, Big Week Out, Olympiad

Geography’s Big Week Out and Australia’s participation in the Olympiad are supported by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the University of Melbourne, and the University of New South Wales. Geography’s Big Week Out (GBWO) was held from 3 to 7 July in Darwin and Litchfield National Park. Sixteen Year 11 students from around Australia were invited to participate, based on their outstanding performances in the Australian Geography Competition. The activities were led by representatives from the Geography and History Teachers’ Association of the Northern Territory, the Geography Teachers Association of Queensland, and the Australian Geography Competition Committee. There were two days of

fieldwork in Litchfield National Park and two in Darwin. The investigations focused on ascertaining whether Litchfield NP was managed sustainably as a tourist attraction while still maintaining the values of a national park; and whether Darwin Esplanade and the Waterfront Precinct met the principles of good design for urban public spaces. Activities included: taking various stream measurements to assess popular swimming sites; recording numbers and demographics of visitors; interviewing visitors; mapping tourist infrastructure; and, discussing park values and threats to sustainability with a national park ranger. Students worked in groups, splitting tasks between group members, and then sharing their data and uploading it to a common website. On the final day of GBWO students completed a test. All activities were assessed, and a selection was made for a team to represent Australia at the 2023 International Geography Olympiad in Bandung, Indonesia.

Students who participate in the 2023 Australian Geography Competition will have the chance to represent their state or territory at the next GBWO in the Northern Territory and have an opportunity to represent Australia at the 2024 International Geography Olympiad in Dublin, Ireland.

Thank you to Julie Davis and Shane Albertson from GTAQ for coordinating and overseeing the Competition, GBWO and Olympiad in challenging circumstances. Thank you also to Kath Berg for continued involvement and contribution to this important work of AGTA and for geography in schools. As GBWO shifts towards the Northern Territory for 2022 and 2023, I would like to thank Steve Hawkins and Julie Hearnden for embracing this event knowing there were limitations related to ongoing Covid restrictions and a small community of geography teachers in the Territory.

Website

The website URL has been updated and shortened to agta.au. The au domains have been made available to companies and entities with an ABN. The website has a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) Certificate which provides authentication for the website and enables an encrypted connection. There is an ongoing request for information from affiliates about resources, events, items of note, so the AGTA website remains current and appealing. Data reveals that website traffic is down compared to an equivalent timeframe in the previous year; a downfall in traffic is attributed to static content which can become out-of-date. However, the AGTA Conference information has been timely and of quality, with rotating banners, sponsor logos, and quick links to retain vibrancy and relevance of the website. The AGTA Board would like to extend their appreciation and thanks to Rob Berry for the amount of time spent, initiative taken and attention to detail required in maintaining and developing the AGTA website.

Geographia

Geographia is an occasional and informal newsletter that reports on key activities of the AGTA Board and accessible via the AGTA website. Affiliate reports are also featured together with items of note occurring within the wider Australian community of geography and geography education. Thank you to Steve Hawkins from GHTANT for co-ordinating *Geographia*. We look forward to your continued ideation and development for the newsletter and extend our thanks to you for your time, vision and willingness in co-ordinating this project.

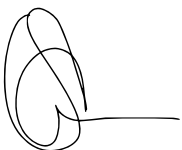
Dr Donald Sidney Biddle AM, 12 March 1923 – 21 January 2022

In January 2022, the AGTA Board were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr Don Biddle, the founding President AGTA whose influence remains to this day. It is widely known that Don's mantra of 'Geography is a living subject' shaped his actions within and beyond the geography classroom. We continue to learn from Don's sustained, active, and varied service to education through the lens of geography – participating on and Chairing School Boards, and syllabus and examination committees at state and sector levels to name a few. Additionally, we remain inspired by Don's conviction about the importance and role of collaboration demonstrated through his boundary-crossing and distinguished service to the professional associations for geography, of which the Australian Geography Teachers Association is one. The legacy of Don's contribution to professional associations continues to provide the glue which keeps us all connected across school, initial teacher education, and academic geography research contexts. Don's approach of service and advocacy for geography education is greatly admired and many AGTA Directors seek to emulate such practice – Don led by example and showed us possibilities that stand the test of time. His approach allowed geography, an often underappreciated and misunderstood subject, to have meaning, presence, relevance and rigour. It was Don's approach towards service and advocacy that led the AGTA Board to establish the *Dr Don Biddle Friend of Geography Award* in 2010. The Award recognises, through peer nomination, those who make a significant and sustained contribution to the work of the Association and in promoting geographical education across Australia.

Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed reading through and reflecting on the work of AGTA during 2022. As a Board we do important work in connecting state and territory understanding to national plans for action, and we will continue to do so. I would like to extend my appreciation to each Board member and associated representative for the role they play in shaping the future of geography education in Australia. In particular, I would like to thank Simon Miller (Vice Chair), Shane Albertson (Secretary), Dr Grant Kleeman (Treasurer) and Trish Douglas (Immediate Past Chair) who are an exceptional Executive team, full of wisdom, energy, ideas and unwavering support.

AGTA has a lot to look forward to in 2023.



Dr Susan Caldis, Chair of AGTA
September 2022