

## Congratulations Team Australia

on achieving second place at the International Geography Olympiad (iGeo)  
held in Maynooth and Dublin, Ireland



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# EDITOR'S NOTE

I hate that we always seem to release each edition of Geographia later than we originally plan. As volunteers, other commitments seem to get in the way, although in this case, it was less a commitment from me, and more an adventure as I sent off for an extended sabbatical. Our graphic designer's imposition was far less relaxing – jury duty (though no doubt an interesting experience!).

I suspect there is a very strong overlap those who actively engage in the geography discipline and those who gain great satisfaction in exploring the world. My recent trip – 10 weeks in Europe – was certainly a fantastic experience and an opportunity to connect with physical and human geographies. Hiking in the High Tatras and the Dolomites, swimming off Croatian beaches, the outer space impacted Nördlinger Ries. Seeing the geopolitical divisions that still impact on daily life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, plus seeing the impacts of over tourism in hotspots saw me make a number of connections between travelling and what I might do in the classroom. Perhaps I could claim this trip for my PL log??

In this edition we get to see how the next generation makes connections between geography and travel through the iGeo report for our students who competed for Australia – and did exceedingly well! – at the Olympiad in Bangkok. As teachers and educators, I know we are all doing what we can to keep the spirit, interest and benefits of geography alive and relevant for our students. It is front and centre for our work at AGTA, and we know it is for you all, too. We greatly appreciate the work of all geography teachers across Australia and for what you are doing to enhance our discipline.

Let's hope the next Geographia is slightly more on schedule – unfortunately my bank balance means an extended trip won't be an excuse next time!

Cheers

Steve Hawkins  
Geographia editor



# AUSTRALIAN TEAM

## ACHIEVES 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE

AT INTERNATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHY  
OLYMPIAD



35<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL CONGRESS 2024  
24-30 August | Dublin, Ireland



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*"For me, the real highlight of this event was meeting so many like-minded students from around the globe" Sophie Chang*

Australia's team of four geography students achieved an outstanding second place at the International Geography Olympiad (iGeo) held in Maynooth and Dublin, Ireland, from 19 to 24 August. In addition to their second place overall, the team achieved first place in the Fieldwork component of the Olympiad. The Olympiad is organised under the auspices of the International Geographical Union.

The Australian team members were selected through their exceptional performances in last year's Australian Geography Competition and Geography's Big Week Out, a five-day training/selection event held at Litchfield National Park, NT. The team members are:

- Drew Davison, Hale School, WA
- Oliver Walsh, Barker College, NSW
- Isla Moore, Canberra Grammar School, ACT
- Sophie Chang, Camberwell Girls Grammar School, VIC

All four students earned medals. Isla and Oliver achieved silver medals, while Drew and Sophie achieved gold medals, ranking 7th and 12th respectively from 183 students. Sophie was the only female student to win a gold medal.

Sophie Chang described her experience: "For me, the real highlight of this event was meeting so many like-minded students from around the globe. It was incredible to connect with many students who also shared a passion for Geography - the conversations were endless! Another memorable aspect of iGeo was the Cultural Night, where I was able to learn about the many different identities and life experiences each student held."

Overall, it was so rewarding to learn so much from my fellow iGeo participants - both Geography and non-Geography related things!"

The International Geography Olympiad is an annual contest for the highest achieving 16 to 19-year-old geography students from around the world. Forty-six countries took part in this year's competition, with the USA achieving the top team ranking, Australia achieving second place only one point behind them, and third was Indonesia.

The iGeo programme involves three academic challenges over the course of a week: a written response test, a multimedia test and a fieldwork exercise. The programme also includes a presentation from each team in which they showcase a geographic challenge faced by their country, and events where students share cultural traditions and practices.

John Tasker, Australian Team Leader, commented: "The iGeo is a prestigious and very rigorous international contest. We are so proud of our students. Two gold and two silver medals is the best individual medal result Australia has ever achieved. But more important than the results is the opportunity to foster greater intercultural understanding through the friendships developed between students, and leaders, from different countries."

The selection of the team that will represent Australia at the 2025 iGeo in Bangkok, Thailand, will take place in September this year. Sixteen high-achieving Year 11 students from the 2024 Australian Geography Competition will take part in Geography's Big Week Out, to be held in Canberra and Jindabyne, NSW.

Costs of participating in the International Geography Olympiad are met by the Australian Geography Competition with support from the Australian Government Department of Education, the University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience and Flinders University.

The Australian Geography Competition, with its associated events, is a joint initiative of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland and the Australian Geography Teachers' Association.

For more information about the Competition visit  
[www.geographycompetition.org.au](http://www.geographycompetition.org.au).

To find out more about the International Geography Olympiads, visit  
[www.geoolympiad.org](http://www.geoolympiad.org).

For accompanying photos, or media inquiries please contact Rachel Honey,  
Australian Geography Competition Coordinator, at  
[agccoordinator@rgsq.org.au](mailto:agccoordinator@rgsq.org.au).



Photos courtesy of the Australian Geography Competition



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# PROMOTING GEOGRAPHY AS A REWARDING CAREER:

## A GEOSPATIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE IMPORTANT

Inspirational high school teachers spark enthusiasm in students and play an important role in supporting their thoughts about future career choices. Outside of their family, teachers are likely their first professional role models and inspirational teachers make a lifelong impression. Many of the authors' undergraduate students at RMIT University were inspired by their high school Geography teachers, including the author himself. However, the transition from having a passion in a particular academic field as a high school student into a meaningful career requires access to important information allowing significant decisions about future study choices and career path options.

Career 'bullseye' and path charts/trees help students navigate a myriad of possible careers and define their interest in a particular study area or future career. The GTAV careers poster 'Branching out with Geography' (<https://www.gtav.asn.au/products/careers/careers-poster-branching-out-with-geography>) effectively illustrates the many careers that Geography studies can lead to. When viewed by students in primary or early secondary school classes, these types of charts can help make an enjoyable study area (e.g. I really like science) into a potential career path (e.g. I want to be a marine biologist). They are also valuable to help students discover careers that they may never have been exposed to or heard of. For instance, a team of researchers at the University of Wollongong found in their study (Austin et al., 2021) that Year 8 students from low socioeconomic status were more likely to promote careers that were visible (e.g. teachers, trades, hospitality) or that they had been exposed to (e.g. veterinarian or doctor). Students may also turn to teachers and careers counsellors to obtain trusted advice about potential careers or future subject selection.

Promoting and supporting student queries about careers or fields of study that are not well known by careers counsellors, students and parents is more challenging. This is a present challenge in the geospatial science profession, given the specifics of job security, vocation, environment, salaries and duties are less well understood. Smith (2009) examined understandings of Geography as a vocation and a subject amongst high school Geography students and teachers in NSW and found that Geography was known by students as a vocational discipline, but not as prominently as other vocations. Furthermore, teachers did not feel that either students or teachers were aware of the options available in terms of geography-based careers.

Through interactions with industries that apply geography principles, including geospatial technologies, Geography teachers and students in high school may better identify the multitude career paths available to students in this area. Interactions with industry partners who utilise geospatial technologies will also assist teachers develop in class resources aligned with new related curriculum materials. In addition, work experience opportunities for Geography students in these industries will also assist promote Geography as a career and help parents understand associated career opportunities.

This article will outline how geospatial science represents a rewarding career that can help promote Geography in high school. It will describe the workplace environment and job duties that professionals in geospatial science experience. Many geospatial businesses and companies provide work experience opportunities for students and would be keen to assist teachers incorporating geospatial technologies in the classroom. It is hoped that this information and opportunities can help promote Geography as a career and convince school leaders to support and invest in Geography in the classroom. This article is based on aspects of the keynote presentation delivered at the 2024 Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria Conference at the RACV club in Melbourne

## The importance of geospatial technologies and geospatial science in today's world

Geospatial technologies are the foundation of geospatial science, which is a very diverse field that provides essential information required for decision-making in many sectors including energy, natural and environmental resources, planning and transportation. Geospatial technologies, such as Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) positioning, Geospatial Information Science (GIS) software and satellite Earth Observation and remote sensing have now become much easier to access and use and have been adopted widely across society. Adoption of these technologies is welcome, however since many non-geospatial experts (e.g. IT specialists and computer scientists) also now routinely use these tools in their workplaces, the identity of geospatial science is now less clear than a few decades ago. This has led to ongoing marketing challenges. This is potentially a significant reason for the decline in students studying geospatial science in tertiary education and leading to the shortage of geospatial scientists in Industry (despite an abundance of jobs as stated below). This shortage has now led to spatial scientists being listed on the Australian Government Skills Priority list.

The adoption of geospatial technologies has occurred rapidly, particularly over the last decade, alongside the release of open-source geospatial datasets (e.g. satellite imagery, GIS data). Subsequently, geospatial science specialisations, such as land use change mapping using satellite imagery, have become skills more broadly adopted across other sciences. As a practitioner of surveying and geospatial science for over 20 years, the author's main observations of this adoption are positive. However, a primary issue with the democratisation of geospatial technologies and data is their unintended misuse.

It is important to recognise that spatial data is collected at different accuracies and precisions and using different methodologies or approaches (for instance gathering information about trees while driving along a road as opposed to dividing an area into a grid and systematically gathering information). The quality of the data is often more important than the data itself and dictates what the data should be used for. An analogy the author often uses to explain this idea is that of an inaccurate hydrographic chart which only shows the location of a dangerous reef, mapped to a spatial accuracy of  $\pm 100\text{m}$ . In this instance, very few boat pilots would rely on this chart alone for safe navigation, particularly at night, with no visibility. Conversely, if this dangerous reef was mapped to  $\pm 5\text{m}$  spatial accuracy on a more accurate hydrographic chart but the boat was being navigated by a GNSS receiver only capable of positioning to  $\pm 100\text{m}$ , the pilot would still be unable to safely relate their position to the reef.

Thus, all spatial data should be considered fit-for-purpose. Knowing when and for what application a particular dataset (or geospatial technology) can be used for, requires knowledge and judgment. Today, the collection of geospatial data can be considered in many instances a technical exercise (e.g. collecting aerial imagery with a drone), however, the analysis and presentation of geospatial data is always a professional exercise and can be misunderstood by users. This was recently highlighted following social media posts during the devastating 2019–2020 Australian bushfire season. In this instance, a visualisation of the location of the fires (over a month-long period) was created using multiple satellite images and shared online (<https://anthonyhearsey.com/australia-is-burning-a-3d-visualisation>). Initially misunderstood by social media users, it was believed to be a single satellite image (rather than a compilation) and went viral, including being re-posted by the entertainer/celebrity Rihanna. The creator was later required to clarify the intent of this product

(note: the authors do not imply that this product was produced unprofessionally). Nonetheless, this product and similar others, triggered significant global concern that the entire Australian continent was on fire. As a response, Tourism Australia was required to release a statement indicating it was still safe to visit Australia.

## What are the roles, workplace conditions and likely salaries expected within the Victorian geospatial science profession?

Having the knowledge to know how spatial data can be collected (to a sufficient accuracy) or whether existing data is suitable for a specific application is an important identity/role of the geospatial science profession, particularly with the emergence of open-source data. In Australia, geospatial science companies, organisations and professionals now act as pseudo-custodians of geospatial data and provide both technical and professional services to the community. Many, but not all, of these are listed on the Geospatial Council of Australia (GCA) website (<https://geospatialcouncil.org.au>).

In Victoria in particular, there exists a wide variety of businesses and companies, ranging from small family-owned to very large international multidisciplinary companies. Typically, most tertiary graduates start in a graduate position/role embedded in a project that will consolidate their technical skills and familiarity with company processes. In a larger company, graduates might be rotated through different divisions to develop an appreciation of different roles. In many instances, the geospatial team within such businesses is relatively small and provides a specialist skillset within multidisciplinary projects.

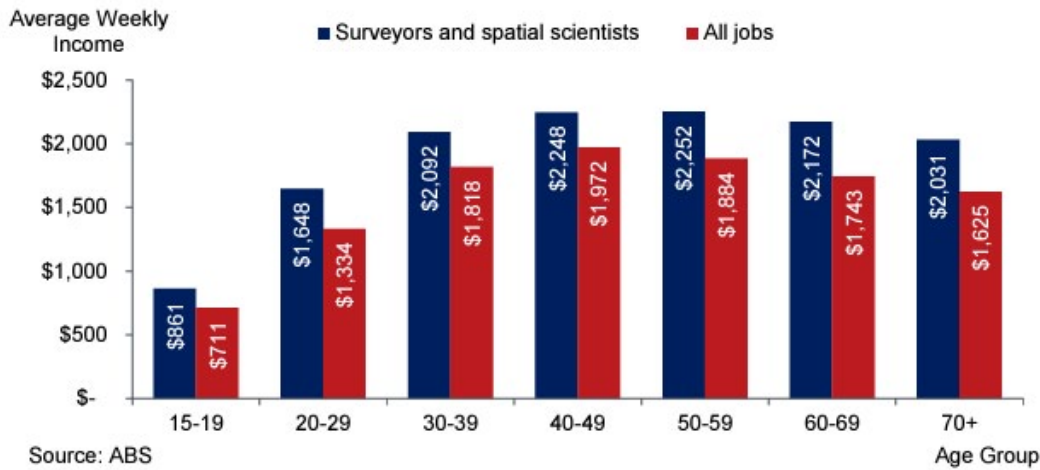
At RMIT, students within the Geospatial Science degree are employed while they are studying. Recent searches for 'geospatial' and 'GIS' employment on Seek (<https://www.seek.com.au>) return many hundreds of available positions across Australia. The variety of industries across multiple sectors that seek graduates with the skills mentioned earlier is considerable and often surprising. As expected, many roles fall within traditional fields such as government departments, councils, non-for-profit organisations and private sector. However, scientific organisations (CSIRO, Geoscience Australia), the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation (AGO) commonly recruit graduates. Other non-traditional fields of employment include the Victoria Police who use geospatial technologies to map major traffic accident scenes using laser scanning and GIS to profile criminal behaviour.

## Some example career outcomes

Careers in geospatial science can include a combination of outdoor field data collection activities utilising drones, GNSS and laser scanning surveys and/or office-based

In these workplaces, graduates require a combination of both technical and interpersonal skills. Technical skills are developed and consolidated in practice in the workplace. The use of geospatial technologies for outdoor fieldwork (data collection) is a major part of core practices and national and international travel opportunities often happen. 'Soft skills', such as communication, writing, presentation and working in a group are equally important. Duties in these workplaces include the collection, preparation, analysis and visualisation of geospatial data and generation of reports for clients. The likely weekly salaries for surveying and geospatial professionals (per age group, as shown in Figure 1 below) are extremely competitive and reflect the valuable role geospatial science contributes to society, spatial data analysis and map production





using GIS and other information software systems. Recently, this has included the incorporation of artificial intelligence. Some recent geospatial science graduate profiles are listed below. Profiling young graduates in their workplaces can be an effective marketing tool as high school students can imagine themselves undertaking these roles in their near futures. The profiles of some recent RMIT geospatial science graduates are listed here to help describe their roles in their positions

#### Olivia

Olivia is a graduate geospatial consultant in the Melbourne division of Jacobs Engineering (<https://www.jacobs.com/jacobs>). Jacobs is a large business consulting and services company that provides end-to-end solutions across many industries and fields. Olivia studied Geography in high school and, following advice from her Geography teacher, decided to study geospatial science at RMIT, a course that she was not aware existed. In her present role, Olivia works on projects related to bushfire mitigation, power, water, and defence. An important part of her role includes providing important data to ecologists, planners, engineers, and heritage advisors so they can visualise maps and make informed decisions. One of Olivia's completed projects is shown in Figure 2. This is a Multi-Criteria Analysis project that uses GIS to find the best location for a client's infrastructure based on criteria such as avoiding flood prone and ecologically sensitive areas and specific land zones. Olivia recently presented at the 2024 GTAV GeoTech – Be a Global Change Maker activity at RMIT promoting geospatial careers to female, Year 9–12 students.

#### Eloise

Eloise is a geospatial analyst in the Melbourne office of Tech Mahindra Altavec (<https://www.altavec.com>). Altavec provides end to end services for asset mapping and assessment, that includes the capture of imagery and lidar, defect identification, field management systems including auditing and compliance, digital twins and geospatial data services. Eloise studied Geography in high school and completed the Bachelor of Geospatial Science at RMIT. Presently, Eloise leads a team of four spatial analysts and is responsible for technical data delivery of bushfire prevention programs, (amongst others). Eloise is responsible for vegetation mapping and asset management around powerlines using LiDAR geospatial technology for bushfire

prevention and safety. This helps utility companies ensure their electrical networks are compliant and safe before bushfire season. An example scenario of the data that Eloise uses is illustrated in Figure 3 below and shows a point cloud containing scanned power lines and vegetation. Eloise also recently presented at the 2024 GTAV GeoTech – an activity at RMIT promoting geospatial careers to Year 9–12 female students

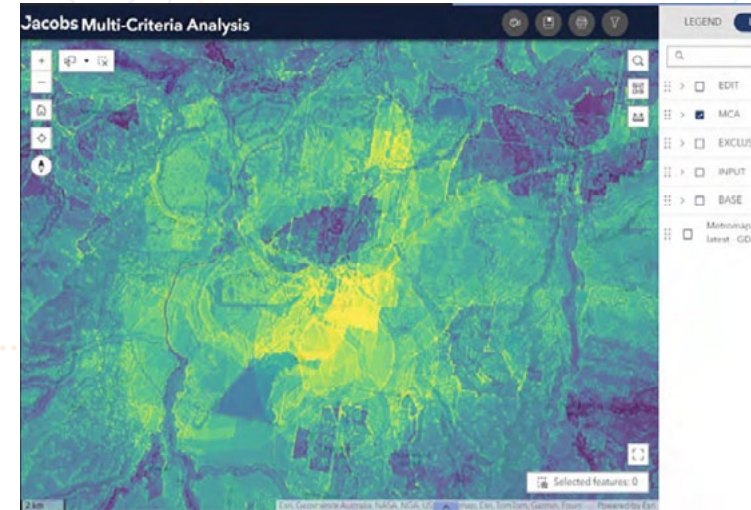


Figure 2. Left: Olivia doing field collection activities  
Top: GIS output illustrating possible locations meeting specific conditions for client's infrastructure project

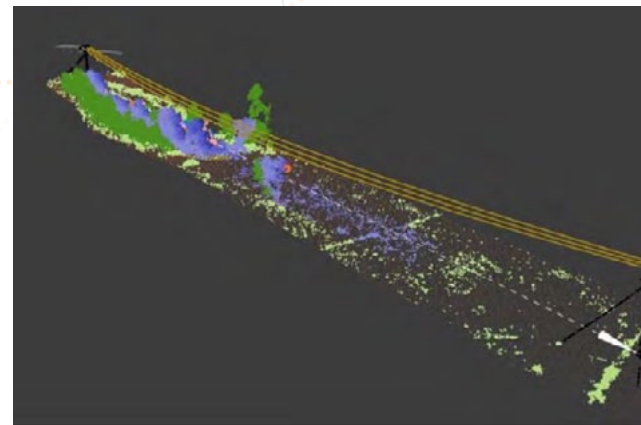


Figure 3. Right: Eloise and several colleagues undertaking field collection activities  
Top: Typical example of a point cloud laser scan showing clearance of power lines to local vegetation

Bradley

Brad studied geospatial science at RMIT and has since worked in private and public geospatial roles. Brad has worked part-time at Forest Fire Management Victoria as a Risk Analyst, using bushfire modelling and GIS to prepare for coming fire seasons (Figure 4). Brad also started a consultancy, Bespoke Maps & Data, that makes maps and provides spatial advice to private clients and charities. Brad loves doing analysis with GIS, but also notes that being able to communicate the results through maps and presentations is just as valuable. Brad often talks to senior decision-makers about geospatial concepts they are unfamiliar with and reiterates that clearly communicating these concepts is essential for decision-making.



Figure 4. Brad and one of the maps he produced for Forest Fire Management Victoria

## Work experience in the geospatial science profession

Work experience programs are an important tool for promoting careers in Geography, as they provide a bridge between high school studies and industry. Work experience programs are also an opportunity for students to better appreciate the skills required for and the conditions of a particular job (Fullarton 1999). In Victoria, many geospatial science businesses are supportive of work experience opportunities for high school students. Several professional bodies, such as the Geospatial Council of Australia (GCA) (<https://geospatialcouncil.org.au>) and the Surveying Taskforce (<https://www.alifewithoutlimits.com.au>) offer work experience opportunities for passionate high school Geography students keen to learn more about geospatial technologies. The Surveying Task Force puts students in contact with a local business after they register (online) for work experience.

Two businesses that have been very proactive in work experience programs for high school students are Spatial Vision (<https://spatialvision.com.au>) and 1Spatial (<https://1spatial.com/au>). Spatial Vision provide a work experience program designed to introduce the next generation of geospatial scientists, cartographers, analysts and climate scientists to real-life examples and practices. Through this program students see how a geospatial business works, meet staff and learn about their unique roles and what they do in those roles. Over a week, the students are introduced to GIS, learn how it is used to solve environmental and social problems, engage in hands-on activities and produce their own map based on everything they experience. High school teachers should reach out to Amanda Tyrer ([Amanda.tyrer@spatialvision.com.au](mailto:Amanda.tyrer@spatialvision.com.au)) for more information. This program is presently open each year from September to December. In 1Spatial Australia's work experience program, high school Geography students are given opportunities to experience a range of activities key to 1Spatial such as sales, support, training and management of spatial data. 1Spatial works with all levels of government (Federal, State and Local) and sectors (Utilities, Transportation, Construction and Natural Resources) providing product and services for minor to very large projects that utilise spatial data. High school teachers should reach out to Andrej Mocicka ([andrej.mocicka@1spatial.com](mailto:andrej.mocicka@1spatial.com)) for more information.

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## How can geospatial technology support teaching activities in the classroom?

Geospatial technologies are now included in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Geography classes. This relatively new change can require time to implement. For Out of Field (OOF) Geography teachers, undertaking field collection activities and using geospatial data in class might require training. Maguire (2006) showed that the highest ranked challenge (ranked by Geography teachers) to implementing spatial technologies in their classrooms was availability, accessibility, and release to conduct professional development. Maguire also noted that access to Industry support was identified as a priority area. Further, different classroom activities require specific resources that may not be available within a school. To assist, the Victorian geospatial science community could provide technical support (data collection support from geospatial technology vendors) and real-world case studies for the classroom to complement a teaching plan. This could include access to and support for the use of drones for basic mapping activities to assistance with the use of open-source satellite imagery and GIS software.

The incorporation of geospatial technologies into early secondary Geography curriculum is also an opportunity for attracting students in VCE Geography classes. Peterson et al., (2020) found that high school

students' earlier exposure to and awareness of GIS technologies were more likely to entice students into geography specific study later in their high school study. While principles related to location, place and spatial relationship can be learned without advanced technology, these concepts can also be the basis for inspiring multidisciplinary citizen science projects that link Geography to other disciplines. Furthermore, the introduction of GIS into other disciplines can help bolster Geography awareness and analysis in high school students (Peterson et al., 2020). For example, using smartphone positioning to map sampling locations can be applied to many environmental, biological and health applications. There are many citizen science projects in Australia that use geography and geospatial technologies. The Australia Citizen Science Association (<https://citizenscience.org.au/>) is a useful starting point.

RMIT Geospatial Science undergraduates are presently required to complete an engagement activity as part of their studies. Year 4 students undertake high school visits where they present about geospatial science and the work experience they have completed in industry while studying. These younger presenters resonate with high school students who can imagine themselves following a similar path. RMIT alumni are also passionate Geography supporters, and many are willing to visit high school classes. These visits can promote careers in geography with very little (or no) resources required from the teacher.

RMIT Geospatial Science has a legacy of high school engagement. Activities related to land change observations using Google Earth (or Google Earth Engine), field data collection using GNSS-enabled smart phones or 3D point cloud mapping are designed for students with little or no background of geospatial technologies. Please reach out to the author or the RMIT geospatial science program manager, Mariela Soto-Berelov ([mariela.soto-berelov@rmit.edu.au](mailto:mariela.soto-berelov@rmit.edu.au)), for further information. Some of these activities are available at the RMIT Geospatial Science website <https://rmitgeospatial.wixsite.com/rmitgeospatial/>.

### A lot can be accomplished with a little

Rewarding careers can result from studying Geography in high school. The amazing work environment and duties that many in the geospatial profession undertake in their employment is a testament to this. However, the declining number of students studying geospatial science at a tertiary level is of great concern to this profession. This mirrors the declining number of students studying Geography in high schools in Victoria. Educating and raising awareness to students, parents, careers counsellors and principals is now critical. This is vitally important to the geospatial community. Many of its members are keen to provide work experience opportunities for high school students, in class visits or assistance with technical aspects of syllabus (e.g. field surveys). Geography teachers are extremely busy and may not have the time or access to professional development opportunities to integrate geospatial technologies into their classes. Future interaction/s with Victorian high school Geography teachers and the geospatial science community are essential, will be mutually beneficial, and help promote Geography as a career. A lot can be accomplished with a little

### Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Olivia, Eloise, and Bradley for providing information and photos about their experiences with Geography and geospatial science. The author also thanks Amanda Tyrer at Spatial Vision and Andrej Mocicka for providing information about their respective businesses and providing work experience opportunities for high school students. The author is also grateful to Mariela Soto-Berelov for assistance and feedback in the production of this article.

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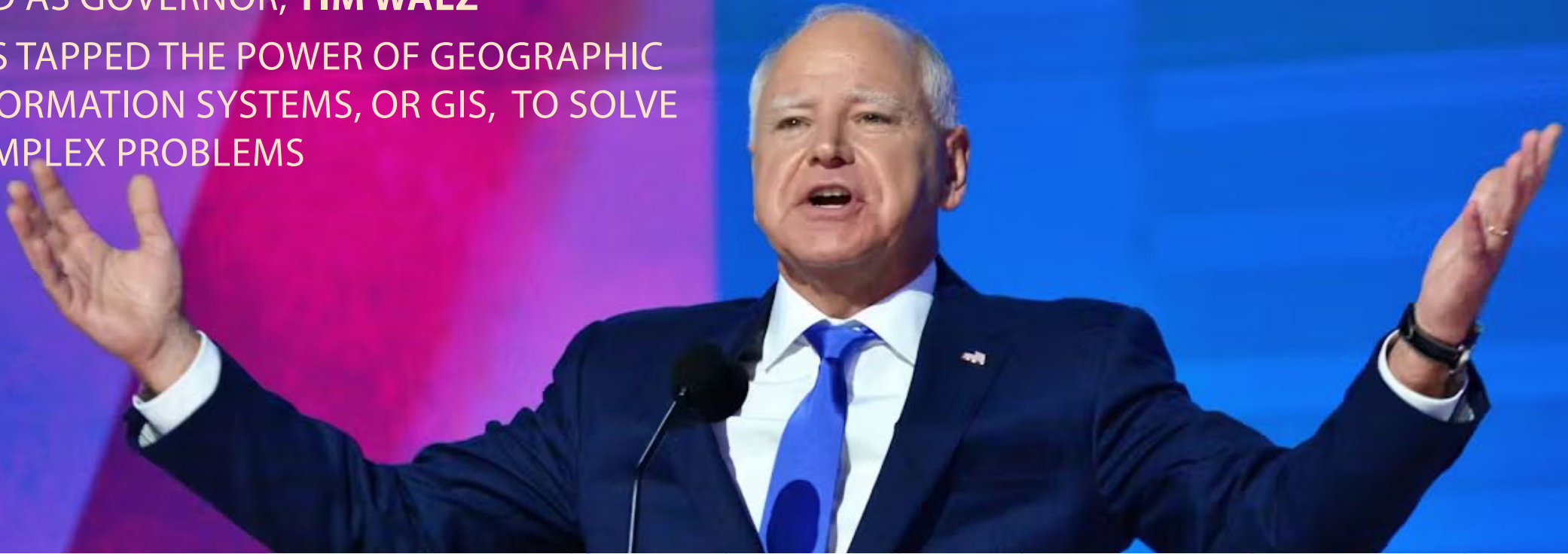
### LUCAS HOLDEN

is a lecturer in the School of Geospatial Science at RMIT University and has 22 years of tertiary teaching experience in land surveying and geospatial technologies. Lucas currently teaches land surveying, coordinate systems, GNSS positioning, and mapping. Lucas's research includes the use of GNSS positioning and remote sensing technologies to monitor volcano activity.



Image by Tom Fisk from Pixabay

# AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER AND AS GOVERNOR, **TIM WALZ** HAS TAPPED THE POWER OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS, OR GIS, TO SOLVE COMPLEX PROBLEMS



WHEN MINNESOTA GOV. TIM WALZ FIRST LEARNED ABOUT GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS, OR GIS, AS A HIGH SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY TEACHER IN THE 1990S, HE DIDN'T NEED MUCH CONVINCING ABOUT HOW USEFUL IT WOULD BE.

"I said to my colleagues, 'This is going to change the world.'" Walz recalled during a conference for professionals who use spatial data technologies, such as GIS and GPS, in July 2024, just weeks before Vice President Kamala Harris selected him as her running mate in the November 2024 presidential election.

As professors of geospatial technology and maritime studies at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, we can attest that GIS has indeed changed the world. We have seen firsthand its growing importance across multiple sectors and expect that trend to continue.

## Began in the classroom

Before entering politics, Walz taught geography – first in Alliance, Nebraska, and later at West High School in

Mankato, Minnesota – where he was an early adopter of GIS. The technology allows users to visualize, analyze and interpret data through maps.

After attending a National Geographic Summer Institute, Walz introduced his students to GIS, teaching them how to use the tool to combine geographic data with historical events like the Holocaust during World War II. By overlaying layers of information – such as environmental factors like droughts, and geopolitical issues like occupation and colonialism – they were able to identify potential sites for future genocides.

Specifically, Walz led his students at Alliance High School in an exercise in which they accurately predicted the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

This experience had a profound impact on the students, leading many to join nongovernmental organizations and work to make a difference on a global level.

## Use in government

Walz continued to rely on GIS as governor of Minnesota.

“As governor, the ability to use what I knew about mapping to convey complex issues to effect change amongst people is really important,” Walz said at the geospatial conference.

Walz is by no means the only American governor using the data-driven insights of GIS to tackle complex challenges.

Across the United States, GIS has become an indispensable tool for state governments. For example, in California, former Gov. Schwarzenegger promoted the use of GIS as a decision-making tool to combat wildfires and enhance disaster preparedness. Similarly, in Massachusetts, former Gov. Charlie Baker invested in GIS infrastructure and employed this technology to tackle the opioid crisis and expand high-speed internet access to rural areas. These examples are just a glimpse of how GIS is being leveraged in states nationwide to improve public safety, resource management and infrastructure planning.

But what exactly is GIS? And how might Walz’s experience with GIS influence a Harris-Walz administration if the duo prevails in the presidential election on Nov. 5?

## A powerful analytical tool

At its core, GIS is a crucial part of geospatial technology. It encompasses tools and techniques used to collect, analyze and manage geographic data. The data is then represented as maps.

Given Walz’s background in geography, it’s no surprise that, as governor, he used it to address some of Minnesota’s most pressing challenges. This was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. GIS played a pivotal role in enabling the Minnesota Department of Health to collaborate with other national entities. This collaboration resulted in multiple public dashboards that provided key metrics, such as case numbers, hospital capacities and critical supply inventories.

GIS also played a key role in facilitating more efficient distribution of school meals and the conservation of critical wetlands. Walz also used it to expand high-speed internet to rural areas and replace lead pipes.

## Why geography is important

Policy decisions are often shaped by more than just the differing opinions and ambitions within a government. They are also affected by the geographical perspectives that politicians bring to the table.

The significance of GIS isn’t just limited to policy — it extends to addressing some of the most complex challenges we face today, particularly in resource management. Consider oceans, for example, where unclear jurisdictional boundaries, climate change and the vulnerability of coastal communities all pose significant challenges. In that context, GIS and maps are essential. They help us identify and address threats to both people and their livelihoods.

From our experience working in marine environments, we’ve seen how GIS can foster transparency and build trust among organizations, government officials and community leaders.

GIS can also help officials evaluate and prioritize public policies. For example, when Minnesota introduced a tax credit program for families with children under 18 — especially for those too impoverished to file taxes — legislators used GIS to identify communities with low tax-filing rates.

Minnesota also offers extensive maps covering climate, jobs, workforce and the economy.

## Future use

With the fall U.S. elections approaching, the new presidential administration will face major challenges, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, addressing poverty and resolving global conflicts.

As world affairs grow more complex, combining GIS with advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and big data will be essential for planning and decision-making. The challenge now is to scale this approach to national and international levels, paving the way for a more informed world.



# “KIDS CARE DEEPLY ABOUT OUR PLANET, SO ADULTS NEED TO START LISTENING”

THIS IS WHAT A NINE-YEAR-OLD RESPONDENT TOLD US WHEN WE ASKED HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT.



Students march as part of the Fridays for Future climate movement protest in Vienna, Austria in September 2021. (AP Photo/Lisa Leutner)

In today's current political climate, many adults seem resigned to climate catastrophe and even dabble in climate change denialism. However, our survey of 1,000 youth aged eight to 14 from Canada and the United States found that children care deeply about the planet and are ready to take action.

The findings from our report were produced as part of an ongoing study with the Humanity in Motion Society, a Canadian non-profit organization focused on engaging youth as key stakeholders in advancing environmental stewardship.

Almost 90 per cent of the kids we spoke to recognize climate change as a real and urgent problem, calling for intergenerational collaboration and bolder environmental mitigation and adaptation commitments.

It turns out that our nine-year-old respondent speaks for many children. Kids know what's at stake, want a seat at the table and need adults to act with them.

### What kids told us

Many of the kids told us they regularly take action to mitigate their carbon footprint, including recycling, embracing reusable items and conserving energy. Their accounts are consistent with numerous academic studies on youth involvement in environmental citizenship.

However, many understand individual action alone is not enough. In fact, most kids recognize that systemic accountability is necessary to tackle the climate crisis. As one kid in Grade 6 shared:

*"I wish big industry and governments would stop asking us to do something when they continue to fly in private jets [and] drill for oil and more; we are asked to recycle."*

Kids have a deep understanding of current political issues, including the cost-of-living crisis and the harmful "drill baby drill" sentiments, but also underscore a stark disconnect: while we instill environmentally responsible values in our children, elected leaders remain consistently inactive on these very same issues

### Kids play active roles in knowledge sharing

The kids in this study display impressive knowledge about the steps that need to be taken to address the climate crisis. Our findings demonstrate that youth are not just passive recipients of knowledge but, rather, play an active role in being climate communicators.

For example, two thirds of our respondents say their friends learn about climate change directly from them. Even though many children note that they do not have climate clubs at school, they are curious about the role of big oil, deforestation and corporate greed in the ongoing climate crisis.

In addition to teachers and parents being the most influential sources of knowledge for children, social media content has an impact on kids' environmental behaviour and feelings of empowerment.

Specifically, our data shows that talking to others online has a significant positive relationship with reported sustainable behaviour, and that watching videos has a significant positive relationship with how much kids feel they can make a difference. One young girl reflected on using Tiktok for insights on climate change while also capturing an awareness among her generation:

*"I would say if there's a really big issue, like, I know there's something called the Climate Clock in New York... I mean, the thing with social media, you never know what's true and untrue, but that thing [Climate Clock] came on my 'For You' page...and everybody in the comments, they were saying 'this is very real, we have to do something about it.'"*

This shows that kids would benefit greatly from spaces to continue in-person environmental discussions with adults in the room. One young respondent captured the potential for meaningful engagement:

"There are a lot of things that can be done, curriculum integrations...sustainable skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and maybe explore the ecosystems and biodiversities and actually encourage students to design and implement climate-friendly projects and carry out field trips and organize visits to renewable energy sites or environmental organizations and sometimes, maybe occasionally, the school can invite climate experts, activists or scientists."

These ideas were shared by others who called on adults to lead more experiential approaches to climate education inside the classroom and beyond.

### Five calls to action

#### HERE ARE FIVE WAYS TO HELP BRING ABOUT CHANGE:

1. Adults need to step up. Adults play a critical role in shaping how youth engage in climate action. Our report found that teachers and parents, in addition to the internet, are among the most influential learning sources for youth today. Kids often take pro-environmental values, actions and cues from their parents.
2. Apathy is not an option if we want change. Youth are looking to leaders and elected officials to invest heavily in infrastructure and education to improve our environment.
3. Intergenerational collaboration promotes better environmental values. Despite the consequences of climate change, youth share a sense of optimism and emphasize the need for intergenerational responsibility.
4. Provide spaces for youth to take leadership roles and engage in climate dialogue. Kids want to do more to build a sustainable future, but don't know where to begin. Providing opportunities in the classroom and beyond are critical next steps to raise the next generation of climate leaders.
5. Promote bold action. Kids should be able to answer the call of many climate activists who recognize the need to pursue a greener economy by working together.

Our survey findings highlight a hopeful message about young people's engagement in climate action, underscoring their impressive knowledge of the systemic changes required to address the crisis.

As adults across the political spectrum bicker about climate policy, young people are growing impatient and hoping to lead the way. Our results refocus attention on the future we're creating and challenge us to listen seriously to children when they seek to address what may be their generation's greatest crisis.

# GEOGRAPHY & HISTORY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NT (GHTANT)

## AFFILIATE REPORT: MAY 2025

### Overview

GHTANT'S MEMBERSHIP IS AT 30, WHICH IS A SLIGHT INCREASE:

- 18 individual memberships
- 5 institutional memberships
- 3 life memberships
- 4 pre-service memberships

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

- Nelly Labiche (President)
- Steve Hawkins (Vice President)
- Lucy Murrell (Treasurer)
- Charleen Conroy
- Wietske Bruinsma
- Jennifer Waterhouse
- Yuliya Snoxall

At our Annual General Meeting we are hoping that we can recruit some "new blood" on our committee.

### Current initiatives

GHTANT works to provide one professional learning event each term. In Term 1 we arranged a Saturday morning workshop at the Hudson Berrimah with four workshops provided across the humanities. Geography was represented by Steve Hawkins and Yuliya Snoxall. Yuliya repeated her session on Geography Mysteries, which again went down very well and modelled a useful approach for teachers. Steve continued his focus on including digital tools in teaching and learning, but highlighting how the mapping platform What3Words could be used to engage students and develop their understanding of mapping concepts.

Our members have also been invited to attend guided tours at the Darwin Museum and Art Gallery, with an event looking at the updated Cyclone Tracy Exhibit, as well as the (more history-focused) travelling exhibition Action Film & War. We are also working with the Historical Society of the Northern Territory on their resources relating to Cyclone Tracy, and hope to include geographical elements as well in providing resources for teachers.

Coming out of the AGTA 2024 conference, the Airport Development Corporation has contacted GHTANT for support in developing curriculum resources related to the new Gurambai Trail along Rapid Creek, adjacent to

the Airport Resort. The ADC is keen to promote the space to schools, both local schools and interstate schools who pass through the airport on the way to Kakadu and other locations. This work is ongoing.

The NT Department of Education and Training is changing the way it delivers support to teachers, moving away from providing direct curriculum support and instead looking to build capacity within schools and networks to provide that support. This has opened some opportunities for GHTANT to develop networks with schools in the provision of professional learning. In the geography space, Julie Hearnden and Yulilya Snoxall will deliver a workshop on fieldwork for secondary teachers in order to build capacity in other teachers, particularly at the junior secondary level. We hope we can leverage this and gain additional members, as well as to seek new ways we can provide support.

Yuliya Snoxall continues to work closely with Dr Adam Liedloff from CSIRO on the STEM Professionals in Schools program. Adam is working with Yuliya's Stage 2 (Year 12) Geography class to support them in fieldwork. He is delivering five sessions on topics include question design, research methods, analysis and data visualisation. GHTANT is working with Yulilya and Adam to record aspects of these sessions so that we can share Adam's insight with other teachers, in order to build their capacity in teaching fieldwork skills and data analysis.

Yuliya and Adam both presented at the AGTA supported GeoNight event on Friday April 4 2025. They discussed their project and emphasised the role that CSIRO can play in supporting teachers of geography.

### Future focus

GHTANT has an AGM coming up at the end of this term. There is no new work planned, beyond continuing the work currently in place, particularly the work on Gurambai Trail, Cyclone Tracy and the CSIRO partnership. We will continue to provide PL events in Term 3 and 4, but have not yet planned these. We are hoping that an event in Alice Springs will be possible.



Image courtesy of - John Graham



Image by Petra Nesti from Pixabay



## GHTANT EVENTS

**IMAGE 1: TOP LEFT**

Dr Adam Liedloff presenting at Darwin High School with Yuliya Snoxall. Adam and Yuliya talked about their work at the 2025 GeoNight event.

**IMAGE 2: TOP CENTER**

Exploring Geography Mysteries at the Term 1 GHTANT event

**IMAGE 3: TOP RIGHT**

Touring the Museum and Art Gallery NT

**IMAGE 4: BOTTOM FAR LEFT**

Dr Adam Liedloff presenting at Darwin High School with Yuliya Snoxall. Adam and Yuliya talked about their work at the 2025 GeoNight event.

**IMAGE 4 LEFT**

Exploring Geography Mysteries at the Term 1 GHTANT event

# GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NSW & ACT

## AFFILIATE REPORT – 17TH MAY 2025

### Overview

#### CURRENT MEMBERS TO 17TH MAY 2025

- Concessional - 7
- Personal - 82
- K-6 Primary School – 3
- K-12 Schools - 12
- 7-12 High School – 273
- Pre-Service Teachers - 2
- Corporate - 3
- Total Members = 382

#### GTA Council

- President - Katerina Stojanovski
- Vice President (Immediate Past President) - Dr Susan Caldis
- Vice President – Michael Da Roza (ACT Representative)
- Vice President - Rebecca Sutcliffe
- Vice President - Kieran Bonin
- Treasurer / Public Officer - Dr Grant Kleeman
- Editor – Louise Swanson
- Councillor - Stephanie Boden
- Councillor - Lorraine Chaffer
- Councillor - Allan Cizzio
- Councillor - Sam Coburn
- Councillor - Drew Collins
- Councillor - Sidsel Farrimond
- Councillor - Bianca Mangioni
- Councillor – Dr Alexandra Pentz
- Councillor - Martin Pluss
- Councillor - Anna Roberts
- Councillor - Nicole Ryan
- Councillor - Ella Williamson

### Current Initiatives

GTANSW & ACT Annual Conference - currently being held on the 16th and 17th May at the Amora Hotel, Sydney.

GTANSW & ACT website is now live – Please note our new URL - <https://www.gtanswact.org.au/>

A reminder our contact details were updated last year - Phone - (02) 9052 6451  
Email: [admin@gtanswact.org.au](mailto:admin@gtanswact.org.au)

### Textbook for Stage 6 Geography

Our newest textbook entitled 'Powerful Geography 2' has been released.

### GBWO:

### Future Focus

Develop resources and Professional Learning to support the current HSC cohort prepare for the HSC exam. This year is the first HSC for the new syllabus.

Develop resources and Professional Learning for new K-6 and 7-10 Geography Syllabuses.



The  
**Geography Teachers Association**  
of New South Wales Inc.



# Navigating Change

## GEOGRAPHY FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

Annual Conference Fri 16 & Sat 17 May 2025, Amora Hotel, 11 Jamison St, Sydney



Geography Teachers Association NSW & ACT

# Presentations & Workshops

### Friday: All attendees

- White Rock: A hidden Crisis Gripping Australia's Underwater Forests – challenges and responses to environmental change
- Fleur Farah and Jenni Wenzel (NESA) Introduction to the new Geography 7-10 syllabus

### Friday: Options

- Rex Cooke – Navigating the new Stage 6 syllabus (repeated Saturday)
- Fleur Farah – Mapping Success – Navigating the New Geography Syllabus Support Materials
- Sam Coburn & Alan Cizzio – Geography skills
- Catia Abreu De Freitas (GSR Foundation), White Rock teaching resources workshop.
- Jenni Wenzel NESA – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Priorities content K-10
- Louise Roberts – Water and climate change
- Caroline Jerrems & Sam Butler – Thinking and Working Geographically – Stage 4 Landscapes and Landforms using laser cut models and an exhibition for primary school students
- Christian Bell – Learning locally: Developing Excursions in your local suburb
- Panel discussion – Stage 6 syllabus Q & A
- Sophie Poisel – 50°C: Climate, Heat and Resilience program.
- Dominic Iffland & Verity Normington – Geoscience Australia
- Austin Brooks – Bridging the Gap: Overcoming Fieldwork Challenges in the NSW Geography Classroom



### Saturday: All attendees

- Kal Glaznig & Cooper Chapman (Blueminds) – Turning the Tide on Eco Anxiety
- Costa Georgiadis – Cultivating Resilience: Navigating Change Through Geography, Sustainability, and Community

### Saturday: Options

- Louise Swanson and James Heafey – Our changing harbour estuary
- Kieran Bonin – The geographical investigation using YGA exemplars (repeated x 2)
- Kathy Jones – Fieldwork – Intertidal wetlands Stage 6
- Dany Yako (Peak pursuits) – Bringing Geography to Life – Practical Learning in Action
- Khya Brooks & Jade Cunningham – Differentiation in Geography Lorraine Chaffer & Louise Swanson – Effective use of Powerful Geography books and resources across Stages 5 & 6.
- Rex Cooke – Navigating the new Stage 6 syllabus (repeated from Friday)
- GTA Collaboration / Structured sharing session – Geography 7 – 10
- Sam Coburn & Alan Cizzio – Skills for out of field teachers
- Kathy Jones – Fieldwork Stages 4 & 5
- Damien McClellan – Immerse, Explore, Inspire – Field Studies

# GEOGRAPHIA REPORT – GTAQ (GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND)

## Overview

GTAQ has enjoyed a positive start to 2025, with a dedicated executive council and a strong focus on supporting geography educators across Queensland. Following the 2025 AGM, the association has seen a leadership transition and welcomed new members to the council.

**GTAQ's current membership as of May 5 stands at 213 active members.**

### THE CURRENT GTAQ COUNCIL CONSIST OF

- Erin Merrin (President)
- Kaye Schwede (Treasurer)
- Jenny Knight (Secretary)

### ELECTED COUNCIL

- Paige Pope
- Julie Davis
- Brett Dascombe
- Leisa Atkinson
- Scott Lieske
- Aaron Bates
- Donna Googe

and co-opted members Angela Darvall and Wendy Bolton. (AGM March 13, 2025)

- With Shane Albertson stepping down as President in late 2024, the council continued to operate under the leadership of Acting President Erin Merrin, who was officially elected President at the March AGM.

## Current Initiatives

GTAQ has been actively engaged in several initiatives aimed at enhancing geography education and professional development across Queensland.

The association has been engaged working on the upcoming Regional Conference (Townsville), with planning well underway by our conference convener Julie Davis.

GTAQ have also locked in the Annual Conference on August 2 (Brisbane). This event remains a cornerstone of GTAQ's professional learning calendar, offering rich opportunities for networking, sharing best practices, and engaging with the latest in geographical research and pedagogy.

Recently GTAQ began a quarterly networking event titled 'GeoGather' having our first event on May 8 that attracted a registration of 19 people. These events will take place throughout 2025 at differing locations across Queensland. Our pilot event took place in Brisbane and our second event is set to take place on the Gold Coast. In the future GTAQ may also investigate gaining sponsorship for these events. We'd love to enhance the event experience with a more elevated selection of food and beverages much like the 'People, planet, pint' model.

- In 2025 GTAQ have decided to theme the year through a general theme supporting three major events. The theme is "It's Geography - Exploring Place, Connecting People and Shaping Futures". North Queensland (Townsville) - It's Geography, Exploring Place, South-East Queensland (Brisbane) - It's Geography, Shaping Futures and Networking Events - It's Geography, Connecting People.

## Future Focus

Looking forward the association is also planning future Regional professional development events, with sessions focused on connecting teachers regionally and making them feel valued. These workshops may also be delivered in hybrid format to maximise accessibility and participation.

As with any new leadership GTAQ will be reviewing the organisations strategies and future over the coming months to ensure that GTAQ continue to support Geography teachers across Queensland and guarantee excellence in geography education. Addressing our common understanding as a council, our vision and objectives are imperative to GTAQ operations.

The GTAQ Council will further define and formalise the roles and responsibilities of its members, clearly outlining each position and the expectations associated with council membership. This initiative aims to recognise the significant contributions of every member and to highlight the substantial commitment required to serve as a volunteer on the council. This initiative is also intended to encourage increased volunteer participation, particularly through the recruitment of co-opted council members who are available to support the planning and execution of council-led events and strategic initiatives.

Finally, we hope to build our social media presence to remain connected to our members via our Facebook page, LinkedIn, website, and member emails.

## Awards/Recognition

At this stage, there are no formal awards to report for GTAQ, although this is currently in the planning phase. However, GTAQ would like to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of its long-serving council members—particularly Kaye Schwede, Julie Davis, and Jenny Knight. Without their unwavering support, dedication, and commitment, the association would not be what it is today.

**Erin Merrin,  
GTAQ President**



## GTAQ EVENTS

IMAGE 1: FAR LEFT

???

IMAGE 2: LEFT

???

IMAGE 4: BOTTOM

???



Image by Valeriia Miller from Pxabay



# GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF S.A

## GTASA PRESIDENTS REPORT

### 1. Membership

- At the current time our total membership is 85 members, with 70 paying members and 15 non-paying members (life members and pre-service teachers).

### 2. GTASA Executive Committee

- The executive committee consists of 14 active members. We continue to outsource a number of our administrative roles to Educators SA.

#### OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2021/22:

- PRESIDENTS: Domna Taverna and April Bickley
- VICE-PRESIDENT: Danielle Cross
- SECRETARY: Amber Dias

#### OTHER ROLES:

- JOURNAL EDITOR\*: Vacant
- SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER: Dani Cross
- WEBSITE MANAGER: Tammy Lamont
- EDUCATORS SA LIAISON: Amber Dias

\*looking to amend to a newsletter format

### 3. Professional Development and events

#### GIS IN THE CLASSROOM

An online workshop focusing on spatial technology was hosted online. Teachers were encouraged to explore practical ways to use GIS to enhance student learning and engagement.

#### RGSSA FIELDWORK COMPETITION

We continue to try to encourage more entries from a wider range of schools in all year levels. Applications closed 4th April.

#### SACE STAGE 1 CURRICULUM NIGHT

We will be hosting a sharing of approaches and assessment ideas at the end of the term, focused specifically on Stage 1 SACE with a combination of sharing of approaches by experienced teachers, sharing of resources and ideas and a Q and A session.

#### PEDAGOGY AND PERSPECTIVES

We hope to host a session led by experienced educators, on best practice in regard to the embedding or incorporation of Indigenous perspectives in the classroom. Cultural awareness trainers are being explored.

### 4. Publications, projects & communication

- Our biggest project of 2025 has been our application for Charity Status as a NFP to ensure we meet compliance with the ATO. Unless we applied as a charity, it was likely that we would be liable for income tax; it always has been but until now the ATO has not required it. Now it does. This NFP process has really highlighted for many Associations either the strengths or challenges of their current Constitution. EdSA has provided ongoing help to ensure our success with the ATO "integrity compliance measure", however as we move forward, we look to improve the agility, flexibility, accuracy and clarity of our Constitution.

#### SO FAR WE HAVE HAD TO

Update our organisation's details and ensure the ATO knows who our Public Officer is. set up your Digital ID and Relationship Authorisation Manager (RAM) to access Online services for business. Complete a self-review to ensure that the ATO is aware that we are taking the "charity" pathway. This will put us in a "holding position" while the ACNC processes are occurring.

- We continue to promote and sell the AGTA publications Geography Unlocked series.
- We have appointed a new website manager and are looking forward to Riley streamlining and improving our use of the website and manage our social media communications.
- 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 50 members. This group was created so that members can actively contribute to geography networking and promotion.

### 5 Action for promoting Geography

- Our committee has begun to promote events hosted by affiliate organisations
- Our Year 12 Night for SACE students will occur later in the year
- Our Annual Photo competition will run in Term 3 – we are currently seeking a new location to host the Gallery of student work
- Currently looking at how to host our fieldwork day in lieu of our conference - we have received \$1500 Sponsorship Funds from Credit Union



*Promoting and supporting the teaching and learning of geography in South Australia*

# TASMANIAN GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

## 19.7 AB TGTA AFFILIATE REPORT TO AGTA – MAY 2025

### 1. Membership

Membership currently stands at 15  
(9 Schools, 4 Individual, 1 pre-service, 1 life-member)

### 2. TGTA Committee

President: Caryn Shield  
Vice President: Erin Leder  
Secretary/Treasurer: Karen Caporelli  
TGTA Life Member: Dr Greg Calvert  
Committee Members: Debbie Claridge, Dr Bianca Colema

### 3. Professional Learning

In 2025, the TGTA has continued to prioritise supporting and upskilling teachers who are new to teaching Geography. We are pleased to have collaborated with the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to co-develop a pilot Geography Teaching Professional Development Short Course. This course aims to:

- Explore Geography as a distinct and vital discipline
- Strengthen teachers' content knowledge and geographic skills
- Support the development of effective Geography lessons
- Promote the subject by highlighting its relevance for students and other stakeholders

The course comprises six modules (approximately five hours each, totalling 30 hours), and successful completion will result in a formally recognised qualification. It is especially designed to build confidence among out-of-field teachers and will initially be offered to Tasmanian educators, with the potential for adaptation to suit other jurisdictions and curriculum frameworks.

The TGTA has also continued to offer targeted professional learning to our members. In Term 2, we will host the second workshop in our Early Secondary Geography Skills Series, focusing on High Impact Teaching Strategies for the Year 8 classroom. This follows a well-attended and highly successful session centred on the Year 7 Unit Water in the World.

### 4. Geography and STEM

The TGTA is pleased to be involved in the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People's (DECYP) current review and redevelopment of the Tasmanian STEM Framework and strategic goals. The TGTA's inclusion in consultation sessions marks a significant step forward in the recognition of Geography as a STEM discipline in Tasmania.

In addition, the Association has been granted access to promote TGTA and AGTA activities—including events, competitions, and professional learning—via the Department's new STEM Teams page. This presents an exciting opportunity to elevate Geography's profile and increase engagement across the state.



### 5. Promotion of Geography

#### FACEBOOK

The TGTA's Facebook page currently has 254 followers, an increase of 10% since May 2024. The platform remains our most effective tool for communication and outreach.

#### INSTAGRAM

The TGTA is now on Instagram. Join us at @tasgeographyteachers

#### TGTA WEBSITE

Our website continues to serve as a central hub for communication with members. Our 'Members Only' section has a growing collection of teaching resources, such as:

- Lesson and assessment plans
- Academic articles and papers
- Fieldwork resources and activity guides (developed in response to feedback from pre-service teachers)

### 6. Communication and Projects

The TGTA remains committed to promoting Geography and increasing awareness of the AGTA Careers Website. In May, we represented the Association at a large Independent Schools Careers Expo, showcasing the broad range of career pathways available through the study of Geography.

We are grateful for the support and promotional materials provided by AGTA (stickers, brochures, career banners), the Planning Institute of Australia (pens, brochures), the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (brochures), and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's New Colombo Plan (notepads). Participation in these events continues to be a powerful way to raise the visibility and value of Geography in schools and the broader community.

### 7. Issues and Challenges

While the TGTA remains active and committed, we continue to face several challenges that impact our capacity to support members:

- A slight decline in membership numbers
- Ongoing difficulty in recruiting new committee members (with teachers reporting significant workload pressures)
- Limited Geography offerings beyond Year 8 in many schools
- Reduced access to professional learning during school hours due to staffing shortages
- Restricted funding support for teachers to join multiple professional associations (many can only join one)

Despite these challenges, TGTA remains dedicated to advocating for the discipline, supporting educators, and strengthening the presence of Geography in Tasmanian schools.

**Caryn Shield**

**President Tasmanian Geography teachers Association (TGTA)**



## TGTA EVENTS

### IMAGE 1 & 2

In May, the TGTA attend the Hutchins/Collegiate Careers Expo to promote the wide range of career pathways available through the study of Geography.



Image by Joy Secret Garden from Pixabay

# GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA (GTAV) AFFILIATE REPORT TO AGTA: MAY 2025

Prepared by Genevieve Newton, GTAV Executive Officer

## Overview

### MEMBERSHIP

As of 28 April 2025, there were 612 active and pending memberships, including 332 paid and 280 free memberships. Paid membership is offered to individuals, schools, organisations, and friends of the GTAV. Free membership is offered to primary schools, pre-service teachers, life members and partner organisations.

### 2025 Management Committee Members

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CURRENTLY COMPRISES THE FOLLOWING APPOINTED MEMBERS:

- Stephen Barrett (President)
- Neil King (Vice President)
- Fiona Taylor (Vice President)
- Trish Douglas (Secretary)
- Paul Turner (Treasurer)
- Stephen Legg (Immediate Past President)
- Simone Barlow
- Maree Boyle
- Cory Capogreco
- Sam Connell
- Emma Melder
- Paul Rogers
- Karoline Walter



### Current Initiatives

THE GTAV CONTINUES TO OFFER A VARIETY OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS AND STUDENT EVENTS.

In 2025, our professional learning program includes four 1-hour webinars, a regional professional learning day in Wangaratta, two online sessions for teachers who are new to teaching VCE Geography, an in-depth online session to support out of field teachers in upskilling in Geography, and a presentation of the VCE Geography 2024 External Assessment Report.

Professional learning webinar topics include Engaging Students through the Power of Geographical Games, Fieldwork Skills, Fieldwork Assessment, and Preparing Students for the VCE Exam.

Our student program offering in 2025 includes Step Up to VCE Geography: an in-person, all-day workshop for VCE Unit 3 and 4 Geography students; GeoTech25: a school holiday workshop for Year 9-12 students; and three online VCE Student Lectures covering Unit 3, Unit 4 and exam revision.

The GeoMentoring 2025 program has been running since February, and aims to support Year 7-10 and VCE teachers. This program connects mentors and mentees through the provision of online advice and by sharing teaching and learning resources and strategies.

GTAV publishes its own teaching and learning resources, including the VCE textbook series. We also collaborate with external organisations to develop other resources. A new GTAV Trial Exam was released in March 2025, for teachers to purchase to support revision for the Unit 3 and 4 Geography Study Design (2022–2026).

In partnership with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), GTAV is playing a key role in the development of resources for the revised Victorian Curriculum F–10: Geography Version 2.0. Our work commenced towards the end of 2024, with GTAV referring authors for the F–6 Humanities materials, and project managing the development of all Years 7–10 Geography resources. These resources support teacher confidence, promote consistency in curriculum delivery, and exemplify best practice Geography education aligned with Version 2.0's expectations.

### Future Focus

From 7-9 July, GTAV will again host GeoTech, a 3-day intensive school holiday program aimed at inspiring female and non-binary students in Years 9-12 to pursue careers in geospatial and space technologies. In partnership with SheMaps and RMIT University's Space Industry Hub, this initiative was funded by the Australian Federal Government under the WISE grant program. Students will develop their skills through practical activities, and interact with female role models and industry professionals from leading organisations such as Esri Australia, FrontierSI, Google, State Control Centre, RMIT University, VicMap (DTP), and James Cook University.

The GTAV Annual Conference 2025 will be held on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 August. Day 1 (Conference Day) will be held at the RACV City Club in Melbourne, while Day 2 (Fieldwork Day) will take place at various locations. The theme this year is Teaching for A Sustainable World. Bookings will open in late May.



### GTAV Annual Conference 2025

Monday 11 August (Day 1) - RACV City Club, Melbourne

Tuesday 12 August (Day 2) - Various Locations

Bookings open late May

<https://www.gtav.asn.au/>

### Useful Website Links

GTAV EVENTS CALENDAR 2025

<https://www.gtav.asn.au/events>

### GTAV Online Shop

<https://www.gtav.asn.au/products/all-gtav-resources>



Geography Teachers'  
Association of Victoria Inc.



Providing leadership in  
geographical education



[www.agta.au](http://www.agta.au)

# GEOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA [INC.]

Encouraging the advancement, education, promotion, and practice of the science of Geography in Western Australia.

## AFFILIATES REPORT TO AGTA, OCTOBER 2024

### Overview

#### MEMBERSHIP

As of May 2025, there are 154 members of which 125 are Metropolitan Members, 27 are Regional Members, and 2 are Corporate Members. These figures include institutional and individual memberships.

### GAWA Committee 2025

#### GAWA EXECUTIVE

- President Peggy Bakalis
- Vice-President Rachel Scott
- Vice-President Sarah Williams
- Treasurer Danielle Pisconeri
- Secretary Darryl Michie
- Past-President Leo Conti

#### GAWA COMMITTEE

- Jon Wyllie
- Richard Kostecki
- Rosemary Cawley
- Rachel Scott
- Brittany Halpenny
- Tracy Sterling
- Jessica Murphy

#### GAWA OFFICE STAFF

Business Manager  
Alan May (ex officio)

#### OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Brittany Halpenny

### Current Initiatives

GAWA has just completed the first Exam Revision Seminar for Year 12 ATAR Geography Students for the Semester One Exams. This event was offered in person and online with a very pleasing attendance of over 100 students. In March our Year 11 and 12 Professional Development Day focused on the Depth Studies in the ATAR Geography Curriculum. Presentations included Bushfire management in WA, Tourism WA, Resources on the DFES website and the Yarra Yarra Carbon Neutral Strategy. A very enjoyable and interesting GeoNight this year took place again at Curtin University. This event had maximum attendance and featured Jerry Fraser, shown in the image below, who is a master, Oyster Shucker. Dr Delphine Chabanne & Dr Krista Nicholson from the Centre for Sustainable Aquatic Ecosystems, gave an outstanding presentation on the conservation and management of Dolphins in urbanised waterways.



Our promotion of Geography continues via the GAWA Website as the main form of communication used between members and the Association. Facebook, X and Instagram, are platforms that continue to be effective especially to communicate to non-GAWA members and students. Our Instagram is gawageoinsta and there are now 80 followers.

### Future Focus

The annual GAWA Conference this year is a one-day package on Friday, 8th August. The major sponsor this year is Jacaranda as well as 7 other sponsors. This year's theme, "Geography Drives Change," highlights the powerful role our subject plays in shaping the world around us. The Program offers Workshops presented by Curtin University and UWA and includes 4 Fieldtrip options in the afternoon. The day will end with a sunset safari walk through Perth Zoo followed by the conference dinner. Our second Exam Revision Seminar will take place on the 14th of September and the Professional Development Day for Years 7 to 10 will be delivered on the 14th of November.

**Peggy Bakalis**  
President of the Geographical Association of Western Australia  
May 2025 AGTA Board Meeting

