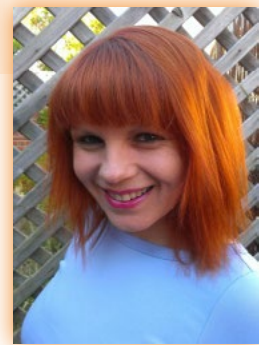


2014 FIELDWORK COMPETITION

An excerpt from the President's opening address at the Arthur Phillip Awards
Australian Catholic University, Strathfield
Friday 8 May 2015



GTA NSW President Susan Caldis

Context

The Arthur Phillip Awards is an annual event organised by the GTA NSW to recognise outstanding achievement in school Geography. We like to acknowledge the work of both the students and their teachers. This event has been superbly organised for several years by GTA NSW Councillor Grace Larobina, with unwavering support and assistance from Shreela Pradhan and Bernadette Motulalo (PTC NSW office). Our guest speaker was Associate Professor Simon Pinnegar, Director of Discipline, Planning, Urban Policy and Strategy; City Futures Research Centre; Urban Planning and Policy at the University of NSW https://www.be.unsw.edu.au/profile/simon_pinnegar Simon started his career as a Geography teacher in England before moving in to the realm of urban planning and teaching at Universities. The focus of his keynote was the link between the study of Geography and a career in urban planning – ending with the suggestion that urban planners with a background in Geography don't just see a bus stop on the side of the road, they see it as a bus stop which is part of a metropolitan or regional transport strategy. Other distinguished guests in the audience included Professor Deirdre Dragovich (Faculty of Science and Geo-sciences, University of Sydney), Darren Tayler (HSIE Inspector, BOSTES) and Carlo Tuttocore (HSIE Consultant Secondary, AISNSW). Please see the GTANSW website for further information about the Arthur Phillip Awards and our other events – <http://www.gtansw.org.au/>.

Excerpt from the President's opening address

Before we begin proceedings I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land of which we meet: the Wangal people of the Eora nation. It is upon their ancestral lands that the Australian Catholic University is built. As we share and celebrate our own knowledge, teaching, learning and research practices as part of proceedings tonight, may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.

GTA NSW has over 500 members and a Council of 20. One of our key goals is to demonstrate, promote and be ambassadors for best practice teaching methodologies

in Geography. Fieldwork is one of those methodologies and for many teachers is the key to unlocking the appeal, relevance and appreciation of Geography for their students. The British Geographers would say it is our responsibility as 'curriculum makers' to bring a Geography syllabus to life in order to create a sense of awe and wonder about the people and places that make up our world, but also to equip them with vital 21st Century skills such as critical and creative thinking, effective communication, collaboration, problem solving and the development of innovative ideas. When Geography is taught well the world around us has much greater meaning, as we are able to make sense of change, interconnections and preferred or predicted futures occurring in places around us.

Tonight is a celebration of Geography in schools: firstly via our Top 10 2014 HSC Geography students; and secondly through our award recipients for outstanding fieldwork projects. Almost 4500 students sat the HSC Geography exam last year (55% male and 45% female). This cohort has been steadily increasing over the years and as a professional association we are delighted to see steady growth in the number of students choosing Geography as part of their Stage 6 program of study.

Events such as the Arthur Phillip Awards encourage students of Geography to become immersed in their learning and investigate geographical problems of significance occurring in environments and communities either at a local level or further afield through fieldwork. It is wonderful to see new schools enter the competition alongside 'our regulars' each year, but probably what is most rewarding to see is the resurgence in fieldwork forming an integral part of teaching and learning programs in schools and an increasing number of projects in quantity and complexity being entered in to the competition each year.

Before we proceed with the Awards, I have an important message for all students and their teachers in the room tonight.

Hopefully you have noticed on your program that one of the awards is named after one of the most recognisable names in Geography education: Don Biddle. During the week I received an email from Dr Don

Biddle AM asking if I would pass on his congratulations to all the award winning students and teachers of Geography here tonight – both from the 2014 HSC cohort and from all the fieldwork project categories. By way of background, Don Biddle is the founding President of AGTA (our national professional association) and an icon of geographical education in Australia. He is an inspiration to all of the geographical educators in the room tonight and often referred to as a 'pillar of Geography'. Dr Don Biddle began his career as a primary teacher, returned to University (Sydney) and graduated with first class honours in Geography. As a result of his studies he taught Geography in high schools for several years in both regional NSW and in Sydney; and then moved in to lecturing Geography at Sydney Teachers' College. Among many leadership roles in his career, Don

is well known for the difference he made to teacher education and geographical education through his role as Deputy Principal of Sydney Teachers' College; his involvement in syllabus and exam committees for Geography; his extensive involvement in Boards of professional associations (such as the Geographical Society of NSW, the Council of Geography Teachers' Association and AGTA); and his incredible number of publications in journals, textbooks.

It is a privilege to be able to pass on his good wishes to you all; and in turn I hope you will cherish the knowledge that a revered Geography educator is applauding your work and is immensely pleased that you are enjoying your studies of Geography and helping to enhance the profile of this subject in schools.

Susan Caldis, GTA NSW President



CARE Australia has developed a website which provides teachers with resources on a range of issues related to poverty and inequality. Topics include global poverty, education, health, women's empowerment, water and hygiene, food and nutrition, climate change and responding to emergencies.

The resources are designed to provide teachers with compelling and illustrative content designed to engage students on a range of issues related to poverty and inequality. Topics cover learning modules ideal for subjects such as health and human development, social studies, geography, international studies, economics and media studies.

Each topic includes teaching tools such as fast facts, videos, and stories designed to spark curiosity and enhance classroom discussion

Teacher's Toolkit - <http://teacherstoolkit.care.org.au/>

