



Dr Grant Kleeman, Editor

Welcome to the Third Edition of the *Geography Bulletin* for 2015. In this issue we continue our focus on development issues in India. We look at the impediments to development in India and the spatial patterns of human wellbeing. Also included in this edition a reflection on the Australia Geographers' Annual Conference and an article *Biophysical Interactions: Trialling a flipped approach to teaching, learning and assessment in the Geography classroom*. Susan Caldis has contributed both of these articles.

AGTA/GTA NSW *Geography Roadshow*

The first of AGTA's *Geography Roadshows* took place in Brisbane in mid-March. The second took place in Western Australia in early November. The one-day professional learning event included both a primary and secondary program. Topics addressed included thinking geographically, inquiry in Geography, fieldwork, ICT in Geography, and developing literacy through Geography.

Multiple *Roadshow* events are planned for NSW/ACT in late November. These will be held in suburban Sydney, Newcastle and Canberra (see the GTA NSW website for details).

Syllabus release: No longer a truly *national curriculum*

With the release of the NSW K–10 Geography Syllabus it is worth reflecting on the state-of-play in the implementation of the Australia Curriculum: Geography.

It is now clear that the interventions of governments have compromised the integrity of a truly national Geography curriculum F–12. Revisions have been made to the previously available Australian Curriculum following the Federal Government's Review of the Australian Curriculum chaired by Professor Ken Wiltshire AO and Dr Kevin Donnelly. The revisions are described as making the curriculum "easier to manage, particularly for primary schools, simplify the curriculum's presentation and strengthen the focus on literacy" (ACARA). Of particular concern to geographers is the decision to conflate the curriculums for History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Business Studies into a Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum. While retaining the majority of the Geography Content Descriptors it is disappointing that Geography's identity, as a distinct discipline, is lost at least in F–6.

The implementation of the Curriculum also varies significantly from state-to-state. What follows is a summary of the current *state of play*:

NSW has rejected ACARA's Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum and proceeded with mandatory studies in Geography and History K–10 using a syllabus document based on ACARA's originally endorsed History and Geography curriculums (Version 7.5). The NSW Geography Syllabus is, however, a rather *liberal* interpretation of the *Australian Curriculum: Geography*. The content has been pared back and topics have been swapped from year-to-year in Years 7 and 8 and Years 8 and 9. No commitment has been made to implementing the Geography curriculum for the senior years even though the existing document is incompatible with the new K–10 Geography Syllabus. The current senior Geography syllabus is now 15 years old.

Victoria has developed its own state-based curriculum F–10. This is closely aligned with the content descriptors of the *Australian Curriculum: Geography* but reflects Victorian priorities and standards. In the senior years Units 1 and 3 (*Hazards and Disasters* and *Changing the Land*) are based on the ACARA endorsed curriculum. However, Units 2 and 4 are substantially different, being focused on studies of tourism and human population respectively.

The ACT will transition to the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum (i.e.

Version 8.0) by December 2016. The curriculum in the senior years is closely aligned with ACARA's Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum: Geography.

In the absence of a state-based curriculum document, South Australian schools are expected to transition to ACARA's *Humanities and Social Sciences* curriculum. At the senior secondary level, the SACE Board is currently developing the new Geography curriculum for Stages 1 and 2 (Years 11 and 12), due to be implemented in 2017 at Stage 1 and 2018 for Stage 2. The curriculum has been developed with reference to the ACARA Senior Geography Curriculum with modifications to suit local requirements.

In Western Australia, an integrated *Humanities and Social Sciences* curriculum has been developed based on the *Australian Curriculum: Geography* (Version 7.5) – full implementation by 2017. Some content descriptors have been expanded in the *mandated content* and some have been placed into the *additional content* section. In the senior years, *Natural Hazards* and *Global Networks and Interconnections* are to be studied in Year 11 while *Global Environmental Change* and *Planning Sustainable Places* are studied in Year 12 – a re-sequencing of the ACARA topics.

In the absence of a state-based curriculum document, Tasmanian schools are expected to transition to ACARA's *Humanities and Social Sciences* curriculum. HASS is mandatory F–8. Geography in Years 9 and 10 is not mandated. At the senior secondary level, there are two Tasmanian Certificate of Education courses that draw on Senior Secondary Geography – Environmental Science, and Society and Geography. Both courses are pre-tertiary and provide a pathway to University entrance. The Environmental Science & Society course was redeveloped in 2013 and implemented in 2014 while Geography was redeveloped in 2014 and is being implemented in 2015.

Australian Geography Competition

GTA NSW is pleased to be associated with this important national initiative offered by AGTA and the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland. In 2015, more than 70,000 students participated in the competition nation wide.

The National Geography Competition is a great opportunity to promote the study of Geography in schools. Winners of the competition can also be invited to join the Geography Olympiad team and attend Geography's Big Week Out (this year held in New South Wales). The Australian team represented the country at the International Geography Olympiad held in Tver University and Moscow in Russia in August 2015. The Australian team consisted of: Samantha Dixon-South, Ballajura Community College, Perth; Canada Gavin, Kinross Wolaroi School, Orange; Esrom Leaman, Pembroke School, Adelaide; and Giselle Pickering, Wavell State High School, Brisbane.

After many years, responsibility for the National Geography Competition has passed from Kath Berg to Bernard Fitzpatrick, Executive Officer at the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland. Kath's longstanding involvement in the competition is greatly valued and appreciated.

A detailed Competition report is included in this issue of the *Geography Bulletin*.

Resources

New Geography skills book

Work is progressing on a replacement for *Keys to Geography Skills*. The text, *Geography Skills Unlocked*, will provide students with an up-to-date resource aligned to the requirements of the *Australian Curriculum: Geography*. Publication is scheduled for mid to late 2016.

Thinking Geographically DVD

The second edition of this popular resource has an extensive range of geographical thinking examples, exercises and articles and over 50 additional *Thinkpieces*. It also features new links to Australian Curriculum resources materials, professional learning presentations, and curriculum planning suggestions. See the GTA NSW website details.

Being a Citizen CD

A new innovative product has been released to help teachers provide opportunities for students to explore the ***Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship***. Content of the *Being a citizen* resource includes: links to civics and citizenship teaching materials; political mapping classroom activities; social issues worksheets and processes; GIS and political mapping activities; links to curriculum documents and teaching materials on civics and citizenship; and professional reading links on civics and citizenship education. See the GTA NSW website details.

Nick Hutchinson honoured

Nick Hutchinson has been awarded AGTA's Don Biddle Award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to geographical education in Australia.

Nick is one of Australia's leading geographical educators. He served as an AGTA Board Director between 2000 and 2013 and was AGTA Chair 2006–2008. Nick's contribution to geographical education extends over for 40 years in both schools and tertiary institutions in New South Wales. He is a long-standing member of the GTANSW Council and served in various leadership roles including a terms as the Association's President. Nick was a key member of the *GeogSpace* writing team (2012-2013) and a national conference convenor.

In his time as AGTA Chair, Nick played a leading role in the securing Geography's place in the Australian Curriculum and, between 2009 and 2013, was influential in shaping the nature of the curriculum developed.

Nick's commitment to Geography has left an indelible mark on school Geography in Australia and he is nationally recognised as having a deep interest in, and knowledge of, the discipline. He is widely acknowledged as an expert in his field.

Nick's contribution to AGTA and GTA NSW is ongoing. He is editor of the Association's journal ***Geographical Education***.

Congratulations Nick!

Grant Kleeman
Editor