

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS?



## Future Council

**Provided by Christine Freeman**  
**Acting Principal, Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre**

**Future Council is an annual event run by Central Coast Council and Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre (EEC) that provides Stage 5 students with an understanding of local council processes and the role of the community in decision making.**

The program has been successfully running on the Central Coast for the past six years and is a fun learning experience that has an environmental focus and has strong links to the curriculum in Social Sciences / Geography.

Acting Rumbalara EEC Principal, Christine Freeman, believes the program is an excellent example of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning.

*"The Future Council program requires students to think critically and creatively and enables them to be active global citizens for a sustainable future." Rumbalara EEC is one of 25 Environmental Zoo and Education around the State that provide environmental and sustainability education opportunities as a specialised school for the Department of Education.*

### How do it work?

Schools enter a team of four potential civic leaders to participate in a mock council meeting in the Council Chambers. The meeting agenda includes a range of environmental and social issues relevant to the local community. A briefing session is held before the mock meeting to provide teachers and their student teams

with an overview of Council functions, meeting procedures and protocols. Council staff are on hand to and answer any questions. Following this meeting schools are encouraged to attend a Council meeting and stay for the first agenda item to see how a true council meeting occurs.

Participating schools receive mock Council Business Papers before the event. This document lists the items for discussion and provides a background to help students to begin their research and preparation. All topics are current and relevant to the region and are checked by Council staff to ensure they are aligned to the topics that actually appear in the real business papers. Examples of last year's topics are: 'Should Council lobby NSW Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries to advise them of their objection to the current shark control program which is currently in place in NSW' and 'Should Council support the **Ban the Bag Alliance** in lobbying for a national roll out of the South Australian ban on non-biodegradable plastic check out carry bags'.

Each school team prepare these topics in the following manner:

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS?

Topic 1 – Councillor for the topic

Topic 2 – Councillor against the topic

Topic 3 – Community spokesperson for the topic

Topic 4 – Community spokesperson against the topic.

On the day of the mock meeting an introduction to local government processes and how the decision-making process works is delivered by the Mayor or by one of Council's Executive Leadership Team.

When the meeting begins student team members occupy the chairs of the elected representatives in the Council Chambers to debate and vote on the issues. The 'Mayor' will encourage debate by calling upon 'Councillors' to voice their thoughts for or against one or more of the items. Rumbalara EEC teachers, Council's Senior Management Team and Councillors are available to support students through the process and provide advice and clarification of information.

Teachers and students have evaluated Future Council as beneficial and crucial in understanding the role the community plays in Council and how this can improve the quality of life for the region. For students at this age it is especially important as they are generally only two years off voting age.

Council Group Leader Connected Communities, Ms Julie Vaughan, said the program also highlights the importance of a learning community.

*"Through providing this exposure to Council and the decision-making processes, students can further their*

*interest in community engagement and governance and build their knowledge of large scale environmental management and social return on investment".*

One of the students who participated in the program in 2016 was quoted as saying: "The program has opened my mind to the possibility of being part of the Council in the future. It has given me more understanding on how the Council works and what I need to be able to succeed in this job. Having this job requires lots of responsibility and commitment."

## Find out more

Check out a video of a previous Future Council session by visiting: [www.rumbalara-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/programs/future-council](http://www.rumbalara-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/programs/future-council)

In 2017 Future Council will be running in Week 4 Term 4 with briefing meetings in Term 3.

For more information, contact one of the organisers below:

Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre  
Christine Freeman  
[Rumbalara-e.schools@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:Rumbalara-e.schools@det.nsw.edu.au)

Central Coast Council  
Danielle Hargreaves  
[Danielle.hargreaves@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Danielle.hargreaves@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au)

Anni Griffiths  
[anni.griffiths@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](mailto:anni.griffiths@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au)







Fairlight Beach - Sydney Harbour (DNC 2014) Photo: Drew Collins

## The freedom of the Geography Elective course

**Drew Collins, Head of Geography  
The King's School  
Author Oxford**

**Over the years some schools have run the Geography Elective course alongside many other electives in Years 9 and 10 like those offered by Technology (wood, metal, food), Art, Languages, Computing, Agriculture, History etc. Other schools, to the detriment of Geography, have not even been able to offer this as an option.**

This is not the case at The King's School where we have maintained and even increased student participation in Elective Geography over many years. One benefit of this is that it becomes a nursery for our strong Senior Geography numbers (100+). With the loss of the 3 Unit HSC course almost 20 years ago we had to adjust our methods for attracting students to senior Geography as a leading academic subject. Other subjects offering extension units have attracted senior students relatively easily because of the often 'perceived' benefit for a stronger ATAR.

We have done both – successfully run Elective Geography and maintained Senior Geography as a strong academic subject.

The freedom of the Geography Elective course has offered students a very different experience than the old Geography 7-10 syllabus could afford. We have challenged ourselves to make this a practical course, thus competing with what other courses have always done in the Tech block, on the sports fields, or computer lab, and of course the traditionally well supported Commerce class.

### How do we do it?

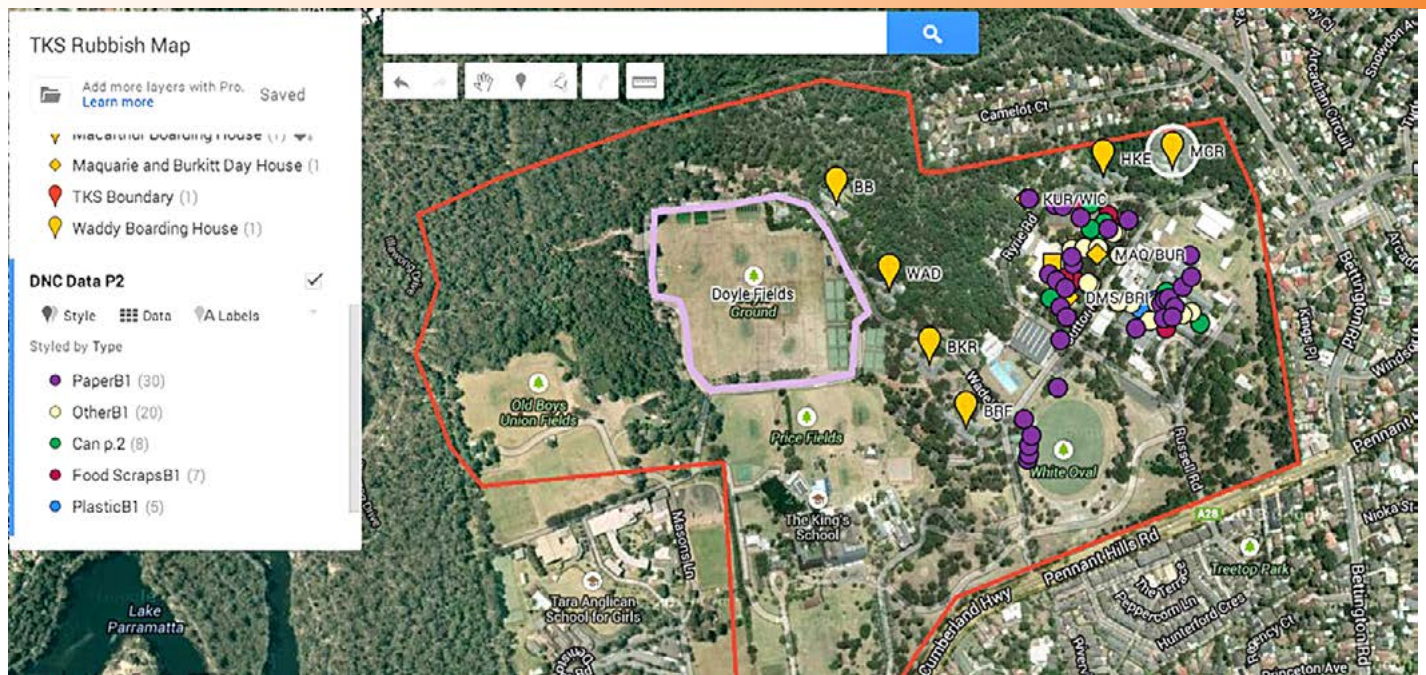
In **Year 9** we complete NESA approved units of work in ***Oceanography*** (involving snorkelling) and ***Patterns Along a Continental Transect*** (becoming a travel agent). The snorkelling component offers some challenges regarding practicalities and risk assessment, but nothing that a little bit of will and forward planning has not been able to overcome. The attractiveness of "we take you snorkelling in Term 1 when it's 35°C, what other subject can do that" is the real 'hook' for students when making their subject choices in Year 8.

We also complete two school-developed options. One in ***GIS (Geographical Information Systems)*** which has real relevance to today's workforce and is also an attractive element when students choose our course. We use computers and mobile devices a lot. The second is a good old ***Country Study*** and for this, a choice based on current events, often the next World Cup or Olympics. Brazil was perfect!

The **Year 10** course has been developed around the same principles. We include two NESA Elective Geography content areas ***Physical Geography*** and



# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS?



GIS Rubbish mapped . Photo Drew Collins

**Political Geography.** The first allows many options attractive to students (plate tectonics, weathering and erosion, hazards, biogeography). The second brings in contemporary study options like world politics, conflict and resolution for example the Middle East, Eastern Europe or East China Sea. In addition, there are two school-based units affording us the flexibility to focus on what assets are available to the school. We complete one unit under the NESA approved content area of **Global Citizenship** titled *"Raising Awareness for a Cause"* and the other entirely school developed *"Australian Natives"*.

**Raising Awareness** through servant leadership has been one of the school's most supported public events. Student driven, most recently under the expert guidance of Mr Brendan Stewart, this unit asks students to research their chosen NGO charity. Studying the methods they use to attract support gives students an understanding of real-world practicalities, which then

feeds into themselves raising awareness. Twofold via displays voted on by other students across the school and the second via a Market Day. Here groups organise, fund and return profits to their chosen charity during stalls run over a lunchtime. Competing directly against each other, students have had representatives from their charity attend, sold food products for profit (hot chips and doughnuts are a hit), chocolate fundraising boxes a plenty, pass the ball, guess the lolly jar, and dunk the teacher competitions – always a winner!

Within the grounds of the school, the unit on **Australian Natives** has students once again out and about studying the plants and animals that occupy the school grounds via identification and cataloguing. Studies also reveal introduced, weed and pest species both locally and nationally to research current management strategies and even develop their own to one day rid these from the Australian landscape.



"Raising Awareness for a Cause" SES Market Day. Photos Drew Collins



"Raising Awareness for a Cause" SES exhibit. Photos Drew Collins



# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS?

## So where does this fit in now?

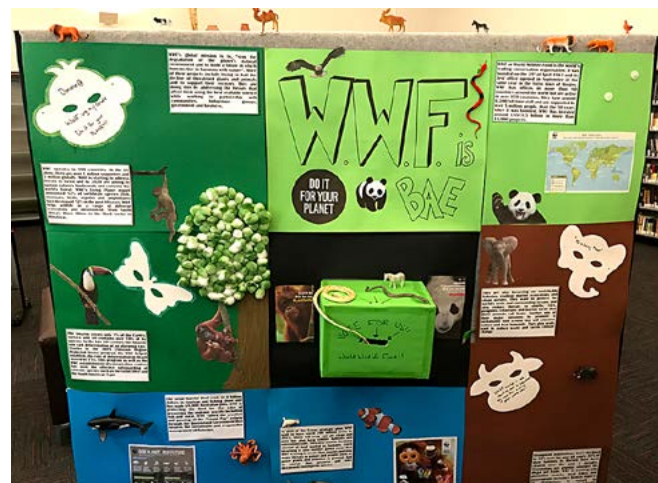
The new AC Geography 7 – 10 and revised Elective Geography courses offer this flexibility of content and delivery, with a focus on Geographical inquiry – and it is now that project based learning, student driven open-ended programs, practical and virtual fieldwork, and excursion ideas both locally and needing transport should be developed. Of course, these pedagogical options are proven to work best too for Life Skills programs.

If schools, HSIE departments and Geography teachers can give Geography the platform it deserves, it is the student who will benefit from a subject they deserve. S.T.E.M. are certainly important, but why not deliver these with Geography as their vehicle. Taking our Geography Elective course as a proven method of engagement, the 'standard' Geography course can showcase how all these subjects must fit together to work practically and politically alongside each other in the contemporary forward thinking world.

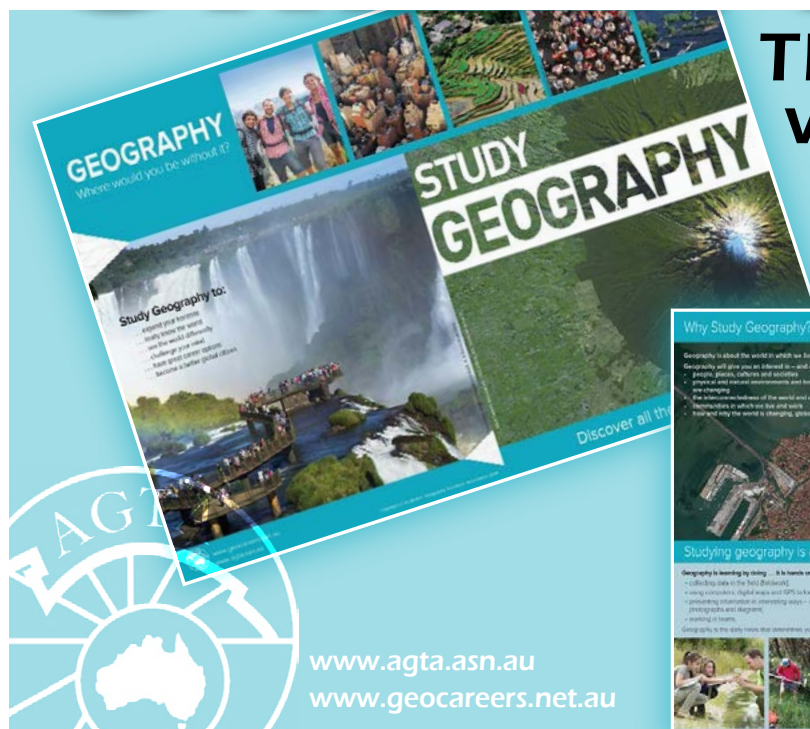
## The future for our HSC students

We must work from the grassroots. NESA has updated and in 2018 schools will implement new senior courses in English, Maths, Science and History. It is assumed Geography will be next. Firstly, we must push again for

the reintroduction of an extension course to attract the best students offering another program of study. Secondly, we must show the relevance of Geography in the modern world, we must develop courses where students see a practical subject, offering real world scenarios, and where a career pathway is equally clear for those either thinking about Geography and for those already hooked. Lastly, let us use the freedom of the Geography Elective course to propel the new junior AC courses as the fuel for active participation and in turn stronger senior student numbers and results.



WWF Exhibit for "Raising Awareness for a Cause" Photo: Drew Collins



## The many and varied career options for a geographer...



# PROMOTE THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY TO YOUR STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS

Study Geography brochure order form on page 86.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS?

## YEAR 9 GEOGRAPHY ELECTIVE – SCOPE AND SEQUENCE 2017

TIME	TOPICS	OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT TASKS
Term 1 (9 weeks + Camp)			
6 weeks	<b>Oceanography</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– The features of the world’s oceans</li><li>– The importance of the world’s oceans</li><li>– Ownership and control</li></ul>	GEE5-2, GEE5-4, GEE5-5, GEE5-7, GEE5-8, GEE5-9	<b>Assessment 1 Wk 9</b> Practical Assessment & Research Based Project (25%)
4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Snorkelling Skills Prep &amp; Practical</li></ul>		<b>Excursion Wk 7</b> Thurs 16 March
Term 2 (9 weeks)			
1 weeks	<b>School Developed Option – Geographic Information Systems (GIS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Getting to know GIS</li><li>– Getting started with maps and data</li><li>– Using web based applications</li><li>– Analysing feature relationships</li><li>– Geocaching Challenge</li><li>– Creating, editing and presenting data</li><li>• Google MyMaps</li></ul>	GEE5-1, GEE5-2, GEE5-3 GEE5-4, GEE5-5, GEE5-6, GEE5-7, GEE5-8, GEE5-9	<b>Assessment 2 Wk 5</b> Cumulative Assessment Portfolio (25%)
2 weeks			
1 week			
2 week			
1 week			
1 week			
1 week			
Term 3 (10 weeks)			
3 weeks	<b>School Developed Option – Country Study: BRAZIL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Study of country patterns</li><li>– Places of significance around the country</li><li>– A geographical issue</li><li>– People and Places</li></ul>	GEE5-1, GEE5-2, GEE5-3 GEE5-4, GEE5-5, GEE5-6, GEE5-7, GEE5-8, GEE5-9	<b>Assessment 3 Wk 9</b> In Class Test (25%)
3 weeks			
3 weeks			
Term 4 (9 weeks)			
2 weeks	<b>Interactions and Patterns along a continental transect: AFRICA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Study of continental patterns</li><li>– Places of significance along the transect</li><li>– A geographical issue</li><li>– People and Places</li></ul>	GEE5-1, GEE5-2, GEE5-3 GEE5-4, GEE5-5, GEE5-8, GEE5-9	<b>Assessment 4 Wk 5</b> ICT Based Travel Agent Project (25%)
2 weeks			
1 week			
1 week			

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS?

## YEAR 10 GEOGRAPHY ELECTIVE – SCOPE AND SEQUENCE 2017

TIME	TOPICS	OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT TASKS
Term 1 (9 weeks + Camp)			
2 weeks	<b>Physical Geography (E1)*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Landforms and Processes</li><li>Rocks, Coal-bearing sedimentary basins, Water in rocks &amp; Sandstone scenery</li><li>Weathering, Mass Movement, Erosion and Deposition</li><li>Plate Tectonics</li><li>Study of at least ONE landscape produced by Landform OR Human processes</li><li>Vegetation, Climate and Weather</li></ul>	E5.1, E5.2, E5.3, E5.4, E5.5, E5.6, E5.10, E5.11	<b>Assessment 1 Wk 8</b> Skills, Short & Extended Response Test (25%)
2 weeks			
1 week			
2 weeks			
1 week			
2 weeks			
Term 2 (9 weeks)			
5 weeks	<b>School Developed Option (E8)</b> <i>Civics &amp; Citizenship</i> “Raising Awareness for a Cause” <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Research /planning /implementation</li><li>Community involvement</li><li>Market Day</li></ul>	E5.1, E5.2, E5.3,E5.4, E5.6, E5.9, E5.10, E5.11	<b>Assessment 2 Wk 8</b> Group work (25%)
4 weeks			
Term 3 (10 weeks)			
2 weeks	<b>School Developed Option (E8)</b> <i>Australian Natives</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Terrestrial based FLORA and FAUNA</li><li>Field identification around school</li><li>Weeds, pests, and invasions</li></ul>	E5.1, E5.2, E5.3,E5.4, E5.5, E5.9, E5.10, E5.11	<b>Assessment 3 Wk 8</b> Multimedia Assignment (25%)
2 weeks			
2 weeks			
Term 3 (4 weeks) Term 4 (3 weeks)			
2 weeks	<b>Political Geography (E6)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>World political divisions, tension and conflict at a variety of scales</li><li>The roles of individuals, groups and governments in conflict resolution</li><li>Case Study: At least ONE area of political tension and conflict</li></ul>	E5.1, E5.2, E5.3,E5.4, E5.6, E5.7, E5.8, E5.9, E5.11	<b>Assessment 4 Wk 4</b> Research, Poster and Speech (25%)
3 weeks			
2 weeks			

\* needs update in 2018