

# GEOGRAPHY BULLETIN



The  
Geography Teachers Association  
of New South Wales Inc.

**Volume 55 No4 2023**

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A continental transect –  
Canada from east to west

Response from the Geography Teachers'  
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your say' consultation for Geography Years 7–10

The Anthropocene:  
A New Epoch in the Earth's History

2023 Geography's Big Week Out

Celebrating Geography Excellence:  
A Remarkable Year of Achievements

A landscape photograph showing a large, rugged mountain peak in the background, partially covered in snow. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting or rising sun breaking through. In the foreground, there is a body of water reflecting the sky and the mountain, with some reeds or grasses in the lower left corner.

**Canada from  
east to west**

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Front cover – Canadian Rockies  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Back cover – Canadian Rockies winter  
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# GEOGRAPHY BULLETIN

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# GEOGRAPHY BULLETIN



The  
Geography Teachers Association  
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Volume 55, No 4, 2023  
EDITOR: Katerina Stojanovski

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## Editorial

Welcome to Bulletin 4, the final edition of the GTANSW & ACT *Geography Bulletin* for 2023.

The focus for this year has been organising professional learning and resources to prepare Stage 6 Geography teachers to implement the new course in 2024. The much-anticipated Year 11 case studies textbooks should be ready early in the new year. Books will be sold through the GTANSW & ACT online shop.

This edition has a mix of articles including GTA's response to the "2023 Have your say" consultation for Geography Years 7–10 and GTA's annual report for 2023. The feature article "A continental transect – Canada from east to west" explores the diversity of Canada across this region. Thank you to Visual Capitalist for granting permission to republish the article – "The Anthropocene: A New Epoch in the Earth's History" written by Mark Belan. This article is relevant for Stage 6 Geography teachers to incorporate in their lessons.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the following authors who contributed material for Bulletin 4.

- Response from the Geography Teachers Association of NSW & ACT to the "2023 Have your say" consultation for Geography Years 7–10  
Dr Susan Caldis
- Appendices to support the GTA NSW & ACT Response to the "2023 Have your say" consultation for Geography Years 7–10  
Dr Susan Caldis
- A continental transect – Canada from east to west  
Dr Grant Kleeman
- 2023 Geography's Big Week Out  
James Harte, Michael Da Roza and Alex Pentz
- Celebrating Geography Excellence  
Carol Pogson

On Wednesday 25 October 2023, the GTANSW & ACT held its Annual General Meeting. At the meeting, the Council for 2023–2024 were elected. Council will meet for a planning day in December–January to set the agenda for 2024. Information about events to be held in 2024 will be communicated in the new year.

### GTANSW & ACT COUNCIL FOR 2023–2024

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## A continental transect – Canada from east to west

Dr Grant Kleeman

Banff Sunset. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Canada is a vast country. Only Russia is bigger. The nation covers 9,984,670 km<sup>2</sup> and stretches more than 5,514 km from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west, and up to 4,600 km from the Canada-USA border in the south to the Arctic Circle and Alaska in the north.



Figure 1a & b: Canada Day parade, Montreal. Canada is ethnically diverse and has embraced multiculturalism. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Canada is famous for the diversity of its landscapes and people. Canada prides itself on what it refers to as the ‘Canadian mosaic’ – a reference to multiculturalism – how the country has accommodated the cultural needs of an increasingly diverse population.

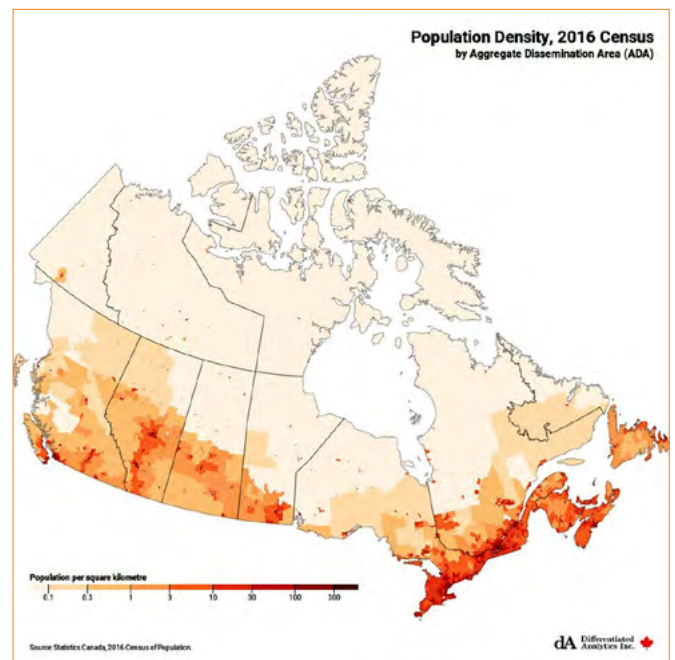


Figure 2: Canada’s population is concentrated in the south of the country.

Canada’s population is unevenly distributed across the country’s vast expanses. Of its 37.6 million people, 80 per cent live in the south of the country, within 200km of the border with the USA (see Figure 2) where the climate is less extreme. This is not surprising given that 40 per cent of the country’s landmass lies to the north of the treeline (60°N); this extraordinarily hostile and sparsely inhabited wilderness is bitterly cold in winter averaging -30°C and plagued by millions of insects in summer. Ontario is the most populous province. Nunavut is the province with the smallest population, see Figure 3.

# CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST

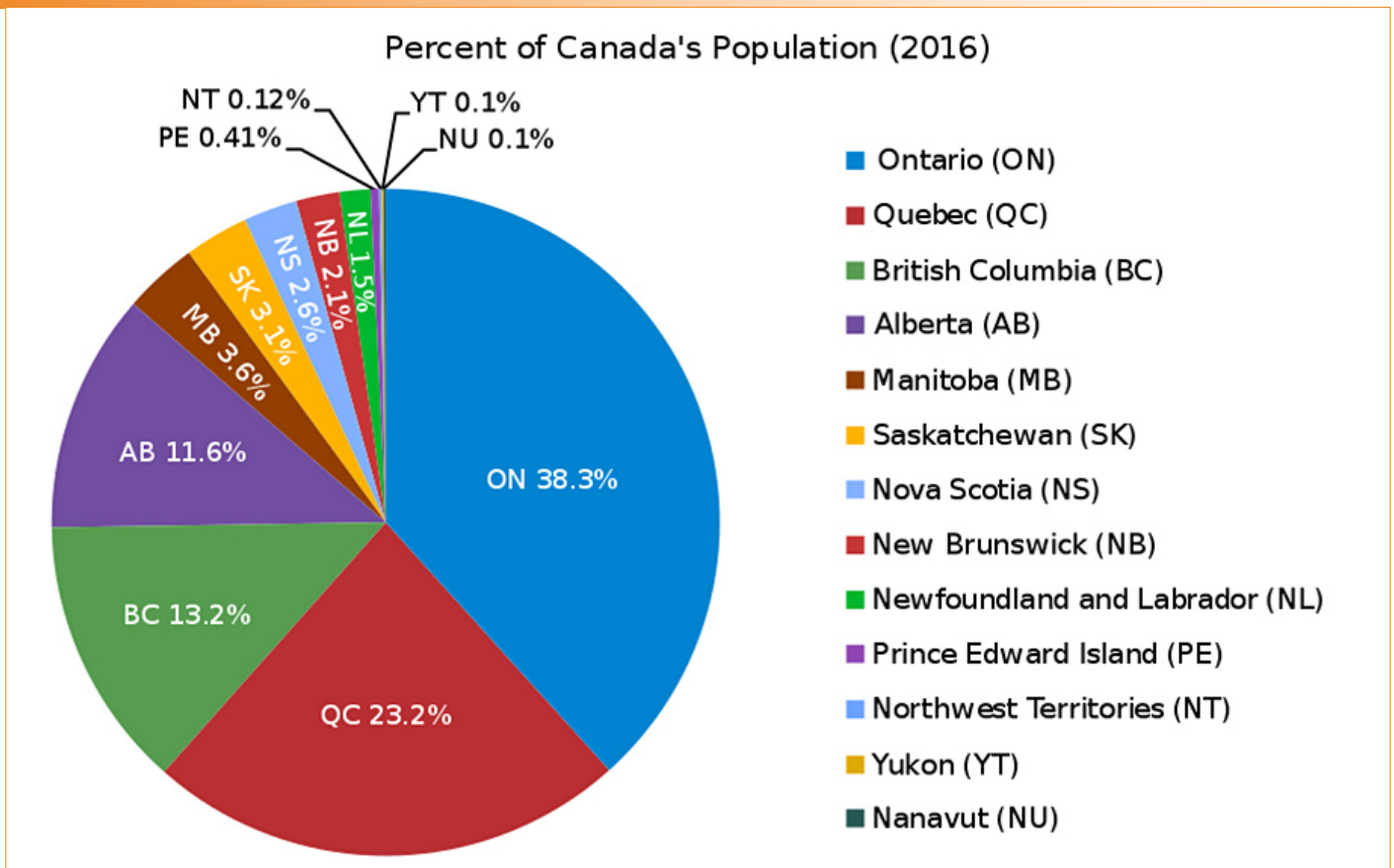


Figure 3: Distribution of the Canadian population by province and territory. Source: Supplied by author

In this article, we undertake a transect across Canada from east to west. In doing so, we explore the country's diverse of landforms, land uses and social/cultural characteristics.

## In focus: Indigenous Canadians

Canada has a rich indigenous heritage. The ancestors of the country's First Nations peoples (The Métis and Inuit) can trace their cultural heritage back 20,000 years (about one-third the time Indigenous Australians have occupied the Australian continent). Today, there just over 1.6 million people in Canada identified as Indigenous, making up 4.9 per cent of the national population. The Inuit primarily inhabit the northern regions of Canada.



Figure 4: First Nations people march against the Trans Mountain expansion. The Coast Salish peoples want to protect their spiritual land. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Their homeland, known as Inuit Nunangat, includes much of the land, water and ice contained in the Arctic region. Métis peoples are of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry and live mostly in the Prairie provinces and Ontario, but also in other parts of the country. before the arrival of Europeans Canada's Indigenous Canadians had established complex social, political, economic and cultural systems. All this was compromised by the process of colonisation and white settlement. The traditional Indigenous ways of life were forever altered. Colonial practices and policies sought to control and assimilate Indigenous peoples. These have had historic and ongoing impacts on generations of Indigenous peoples. Acts of segregation, loss of land, and lack of access to services such as healthcare and education, have had devastating consequences on the health and socio-economic well-being of Indigenous peoples.

# CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST

## Canada's physiographic divisions

Canada has seven distinct physiographic divisions, see Figures 5 and 6. From east to west, they are the Appalachians, Great Lakes - St Lawrence Lowlands, the Canadian Shield, Arctic Lands and Hudson Bay Lowlands, Interior Plains and the Western Cordillera. Each of these has its own physical and social/cultural character. On our journey from east to west, we will use these divisions to help frame our study.

Figure 5 (right): Canadian cross-section.  
Source: Supplied by author

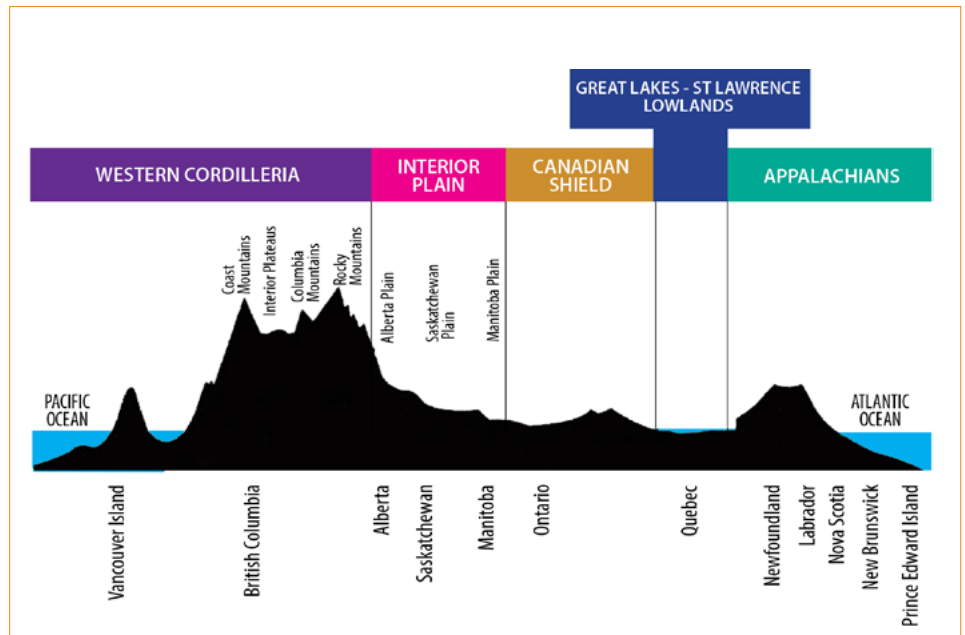
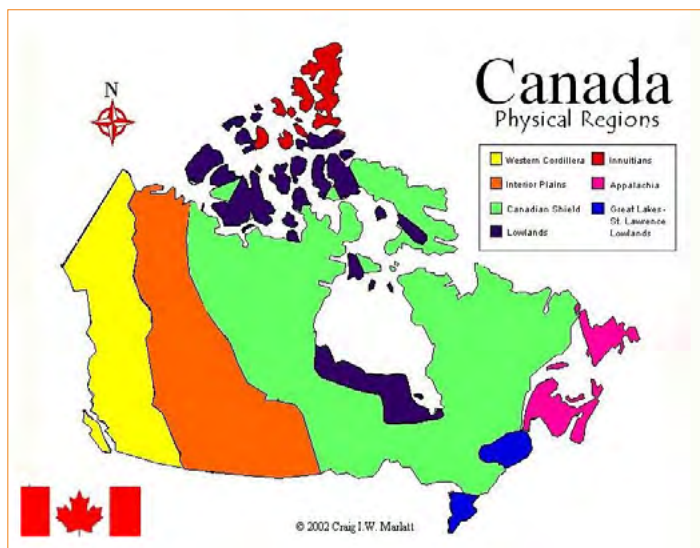


Figure 6 (below): Canada's seven distinct physiographic divisions and 10 Provinces and two territories.. Source: Supplied by author



The landscape of the provinces that make up Appalachia features spectacularly rugged coastlines and towering peaks. Low population densities mean that wild, open spaces, rich in wildlife dominate.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, massive icebergs drift along the coast and whales swim in the crystal-clear waters of the North Atlantic. Moose graze in marshlands. The Gros Moran National Park is famous for its granite mountains and deep fjords.

The provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia (Figure 7) and Prince Edward Island (Figure 8) feature coastal scenery with quiet coves and long sandy beaches.

Figure 7: Coastal landscape, Nova Scotia.  
Image supplied by author

## Appalachia and the maritime provinces

Appalachia constitutes the northern end of the Appalachian Mountains, the great highland system of eastern North America. The Appalachians extend from the Canadian provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick down through the north-eastern and eastern states of the USA to central Alabama in the south.



# CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST



Figure 8: The lush fields of Prince Edward Island. Also shown is the island's distinctive red stone and sand. Source: MKdrone on Unsplash

The first humans to occupy the area were the Paleo-Indians who spread into this part of Canada as the ice sheet retreated between 10,000-6,000 years ago. The population of the Maritimes, as this region of Canada, is known, numbers just 1.8 million. The Maritimes was among the earliest parts of Canada to be settled by Europeans.

Both the British and French showed interest in the lands of the Maritimes but it was the explorer Jacques Cartier who made the first detailed study of the region for European power and, in doing so, claimed the region for the King of France. The French established a settlement at Port-Royal, Nova Scotia, in 1605. The replica settlement is a National Historic Site of Canada (see Figure 9).



Figure 9: Port-Royal, National Historic Site of Canada. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Figure 11: (right) Panorama of Halifax. Image supplied by author



Figure 10: The City of Québec's historic streetscape. Image supplied by author

French settlers (known as Acadians) would subsequently drain and farm the fertile tidal marshes surrounding the south-eastern and north-eastern reaches of the Bay of Fundy. Over time, the Acadians built small settlements throughout what is today mainland Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as well as Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton Island, and other shorelines of the Gulf of St. Lawrence in present-day Newfoundland and Labrador, and Quebec.

The growth of English colonies along the American seaboard to the south and various European wars between England and France during the 17th and 18th brought the French presence in Acadia to the centre of world-scale geopolitical tensions. From 1621 to 1755 control of the region moved between the French and British several times until, in 1755, the British began the expulsion of the Acadians. Over the next nine years, over 12,000 Acadians of an estimated 15,000 were removed from Nova Scotia. The empty Arcadian lands were settled by British farmers.

The Acadians have left their mark on Canadian society, especially in French-speaking Quebec. Canada is distinctive in that it has two official languages – English and French.

The largest cities in the Maritime provinces are Halifax (with a population of just over 400,000), Saint John in Nova Scotia (population 126,000) and Charlottetown (the capital of Prince Edward Island – population 70,000).



Figure 12: Niagara Falls. Source Wikimedia Commons

## The Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Lowlands

The West Lowland is divided by the Niagara Escarpment and are plain-like area that was all shaped by glacial processes during the Pleistocene. The surface west of the escarpment slopes gradually south-westward through an area of rolling topography of low relief. East of the escarpment, the land rises gently northward from Lake Ontario. The Central Lowland includes the area between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers, straddling the St. Lawrence as far as the city of Québec (see Figure 10). The land is rarely more than 150 metres above sea level. The East Lowland includes Anticosti Island and several small areas bordering the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Strait of Belle Isle, as well as the Newfoundland Coastal Lowland.

The East Lowlands is one of the most densely populated, prosperous and productive regions in Canada. Major urban areas include Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa and Pembroke. About 50 per cent of Canada's population live in the region.

While the Lowlands are in the traditional territories of the Mohawk, the Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples and the Cree it attracted European immigrants and the British loyalist who fled the United States following the American Revolution. The St. Lawrence lowlands formed Canada's industrial and manufacturing heartland.



Figure 13: Ottawa, from the Parliament precinct. Source: Wikimedia Commons

## The Canadian Shield

The landscape of the Canadian Shield has been levelled by the great ice sheet that once covered it and the long period of erosion that occurred as the ice retreated to the north. Today the landscape is flat and even with the skyline interrupted by rounded or flat-topped summits and ranges of hills. Large parts of the shield are covered by water in the form of lakes, ponds and swamps. The most outstanding characteristic of the Shield is the homogeneity of the terrain.

The Hudson Bay Lowland, of northern Ontario and Manitoba, forms the main central depression on the surface of the Canadian Shield. The region is a low, swampy plain with remnant glacial features and a belt of raised beaches that border Hudson Bay.

The first of the Canadian Shield provinces is Quebec, it is the second-most populous in Canada, after Ontario, and it is the only one to have a mainly French-speaking population. French is the province's sole official language. Most of the province's population lives in in the south, in urban areas stretching along the Saint Lawrence River between Montreal and Quebec City, the provincial capital. About 50 per cent of Quebec's residents live in the Greater Montreal Area and on the Island of Montreal. The latter is home to most of the English-speaking population, as well as most English-language institutions. The Nord-du-Québec region, occupying the northern half of the province, is sparsely populated and inhabited primarily by First Nations people.

The citizens of Quebec hold firmly to the language and culture inherited from their French ancestors. Quebec City and Montreal, the province's two largest cities, are the centre of French-speaking culture in Canada. Even the architecture of the cities reflects its cultural origins. See Figure 14.

# CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST



Figure 14: Montreal streetscape. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Life in Quebec, as if life in much of continental Canada, is shaped by the climate. The climate is classified as continental with four distinct seasons. Winters are cold and snowy. Summers are warm to hot and humid. Farther north long winter seasons dominate and as a result the northern areas are marked by tundra conditions. Even in central Quebec, winters are severe. During winter outdoor activities (other than winter sports such as skiing) are kept to a minimum as people take shelter in their centrally heated homes and workplaces. Summers are keenly awaited, and outdoor activities are popular. In the Fall, the deciduous forests of the region, mount an amazing display of autumn colour. The leaf of the maple tree is the symbol of Canada and features on the country's distinctive flag.

Continuing our journey to the west, across the Canadian Shield, we enter Ontario, Canada's second-largest province, covering over a million square kilometres and stretching from the Great Lakes on the US border to the frozen shores of Hudson Bay. Much of the north of the province is a sparsely populated wilderness of turbulent rivers, extensive coniferous forests and Arctic Tundra. This is a stark contrast to the fertile lands in the south of the province. Both Toronto and Niagara Falls, Canada's largest city and its most visited tourist attraction, are found in the south of the province. Ottawa, Canada's capital city, is found in the southeast of the province.

Toronto, with a population of more than 6.5 million, is the country's largest city and its business and financial capital.) It is also an important centre for the arts and culture and is recognised as one of the most multicultural and cosmopolitan cities in the world. Five of Canada's largest banks have their headquarters in the city as is many of Canada's largest multinational corporations. The city is also one of the fastest-growing cities in North America.

Quebec and Ottawa (Canada's capital city) have retained and celebrate much of their architectural heritage. Toronto has lost significant pieces of its architectural heritage during the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, Toronto has experienced a construction boom and architectural revival, with several buildings by world-renowned architects having been built. Many of Toronto's former industrial sites close to (or in) the Downtown area have been redeveloped. This includes parts of the city's waterfront and rail yards.

Much of the city's redevelopment, especially the construction of high-rise residential towers, has been driven by Canada's one million-plus 'Snowbirds' those, largely older Canadians who head to the warmer climate of Florida and California during winter. The retention of residential property in Canada being a precondition for accessing the nation's Australian-like Medicare system. The alternative would be very expensive, a user pays medical system of the USA.



Figure 15: Toronto, with a population of more than 6.5 million, is the country's largest city and its business and financial capital. Source: Wikimedia Commons

# CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST

Toronto is one of Canada's principal centres of culture. The city's theatre and performing arts scene features more than fifty ballet and dance companies, six opera companies and two symphony orchestras. The city is home to the National Ballet of Canada, the Canadian Opera Company, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Canadian Electronic Ensemble, and the Canadian Stage Company.

Toronto, like much of Canada, is sports-obsessed. The city is represented in five major league sports, with teams in the National Hockey League (NHL), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Basketball Association (NBA), Canadian Football League (CFL), and Major League Soccer (MLS).



Figure 16: Toronto's Hockey Hall of Fame, an ice hockey Museum Dedicated to the history of the sport in Canada. Source: Wikimedia Commons

## The Interior Plains

Canada's Interior Plains occupy the region between the Canadian Shield in the east and the mountains of the Western Cordillera in the west. The fertile Interior Plains, often referred to as the Canadian Prairies, stretch across three Canadian provinces – Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

### Manitoba

The first of the plains provinces we visit on our journey to the west is Manitoba – the province that lies in the longitudinal centre of Canada. The province has just 1.4 million people spread across its almost 650,000 sq km. Its landscape ranges from arctic tundra in the north to dense boreal forest, lakes and prairie grasslands in the central and southern parts of the province. Manitoba's capital, and largest city, is Winnipeg.

Canada's First Nations people have occupied the lands of Manitoba for thousands of years. The Cree, Ojibwa, Dene, Sioux and Assiniboine peoples lived off the land in search of herds of bison. In the early 17th century,



Figure 17: Oil Wells on the Canadian Prairie. Source: Wikimedia Commons

fur traders began arriving in the area establishing settlements on the Hudson shoreline from which they headed inland in search beaver pelts and other furs.

Today, Manitoba's economy is focused on agriculture, oil, mining, electricity generation, forestry and tourism. Agriculture is critical to the state's economy and is found mostly in the southern half of the province. The most extensive agricultural activity is cattle grazing (34.6% of the land area) followed by grain production.

### Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is a province dominated by prairie grasslands and boreal forests. For thousands of years, Saskatchewan has been inhabited by various groups of First Nations groups including the members of the Sarcee, Niitsitapi, Atsina, Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine (Nakoda), Lakota and Sioux. Europeans first explored the area in 1690 and first settled in the area in 1774.

Today, Saskatchewan's population of nearly 1.2 million, mostly in the southern prairie half of the province. The northern half dominated as it is by boreal forest is sparsely populated.

Historically, Saskatchewan's economy has been based on agriculture, with wheat and canola being the main crops grown. However, with economic diversification agriculture, together with forestry, and fishing, now make up 8.9 per cent of the province's GDP. Mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction now contribute the largest share (17.05%). Saskatchewan is the world's largest exporter of potash and uranium.



Figure 18: Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan. Source: Wikimedia Commons



Figure 19: Edmonton, Alberta. Source: Wikimedia Commons

## Alberta

Alberta is the last of the plains states we visit as we continue our journey west. The province's capital, Edmonton, is located near the geographic centre of the province and is a supply and service hub for Canada's crude oil, the Athabasca oil sands and other northern resource industries. Calgary, located about 290 km to the south of Edmonton is Alberta's largest city.

Most of the northern half of the province is boreal forest while the southern quarter of the province is prairie. The Rocky Mountains run along the province's south-western boundary. Much of the unforested part of Alberta is given over either to grain production or dairying, with mixed farming more common in the north and centre, while ranching and irrigated agriculture predominate in the south.

The province's key economic sectors include energy, agriculture and petrochemicals. Alberta contains the bulk of Canada's fossil fuel reserves. Oil and natural gas occur widely, and major deposits of heavy crude oil and oil sand (see Figure 20). Alberta produces the vast majority of Canada's natural gas and crude oil and roughly half of its coal. The province's forests, which cover more than one-half of its land surface supply wood for lumber, newsprint, pulp and paper. While spruce is the principal commercial species.



Figure 20: Excavation of oil sand at Fort McMurray in Alberta, Canada. The Athabasca oil sands deposit is among the largest in the world. The bitumen contains lots of hydrocarbons but is notoriously hard to extract. It is only economically viable when world oil prices are high. It also makes a major contribution to Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Alberta is a multi-cultural society, with a variety of ethnicities and religions. The largest ethnic groups after Canadians are the English, Germans, Scottish and French. The number of immigrants coming from China, The Philippines and India have increased significantly in the last decade or so.

Calgary is internationally famous for its annual rodeo, exhibition, and festival. The Calgary Stampede, as it is known, is held every July and is billed as 'The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth' (see Figure 19). More than a million visitors flock to the city to participate in the world's largest rodeos, a parade, stage shows, concerts, agricultural competitions, chuckwagon racing, and First Nations exhibitions.



Figure 21: Bronc riding, Calgary Stampede Parade. Source: Wikimedia Commons

## The Canadian Rockies

The Canadian Rockies are the easternmost part of the Canadian Cordillera, the collective name for the mountains of Western Canada. The Rockies lie between the Interior Plains of Alberta and Rocky Mountain Trench of British Columbia.

Most visitors to the Rockies start their trip at Calgary, the closest international airport to Banff, visit Banff National Park and then drive the scenic Icefields Parkway to Jasper National Park. Moraine Lake (see Figure 22), Lake Louise and Peyto Lake are amongst the world's most iconic and most photographed, vistas. Equally beautiful is Lake Agnes (see Figure 23), which lies in the mountains above Lake Louise.

# CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST



Figure 22: Mirror Lake is one of the world's most photographed tourist destinations. Source: Wikimedia Commons



Figure 23: Lake Agnes, Banff National Park. Source: G. Kleeman

Four national parks are located within the Canadian Rockies – the Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho national parks. The four parks form part of a complex of protected areas designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The region is rich in wildlife, see Figures 21a–c).



Figure 24 c: Cougar, Jasper National Park. Source: Wikimedia Commons



Figure 24 a: Bull Elk (Wapiti), Banff National Park. Source: Wikimedia Commons



Figure 24 b: Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), Jasper National Park. Source: Wikimedia Commons

## The Western Cordillera and the Canadian Rockies

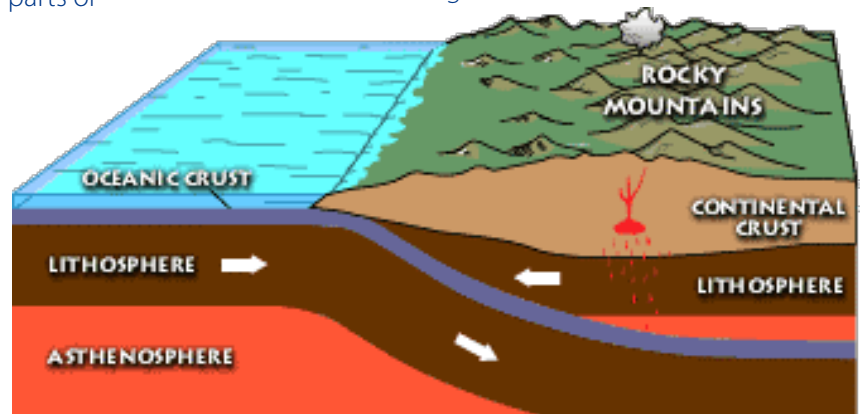
A Western Cordillera is a major system of often parallel mountain ranges separated by intervening plateaus, valleys and plains.

While the Cordillera extends from Alaska to Mexico, the Canadian portion of this system includes the Rocky Mountains and the Coast Mountains and covers most of the provinces of British Columbia, Yukon and parts of Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

The Canadian Rockies forms part of a 4,800 km range stretching from the northernmost part of British Columbia to New Mexico in the Southwestern United States. It was formed as several plates began to slide under the North American plate some 80–55 million years ago.

Figure 25: The Rocky Mountains were formed as several plates began to slide under the North American plate. Supplied by author

The angle of subduction was relatively shallow, resulting in a broad belt of mountains running down western North America. See Figure 25.



# CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST

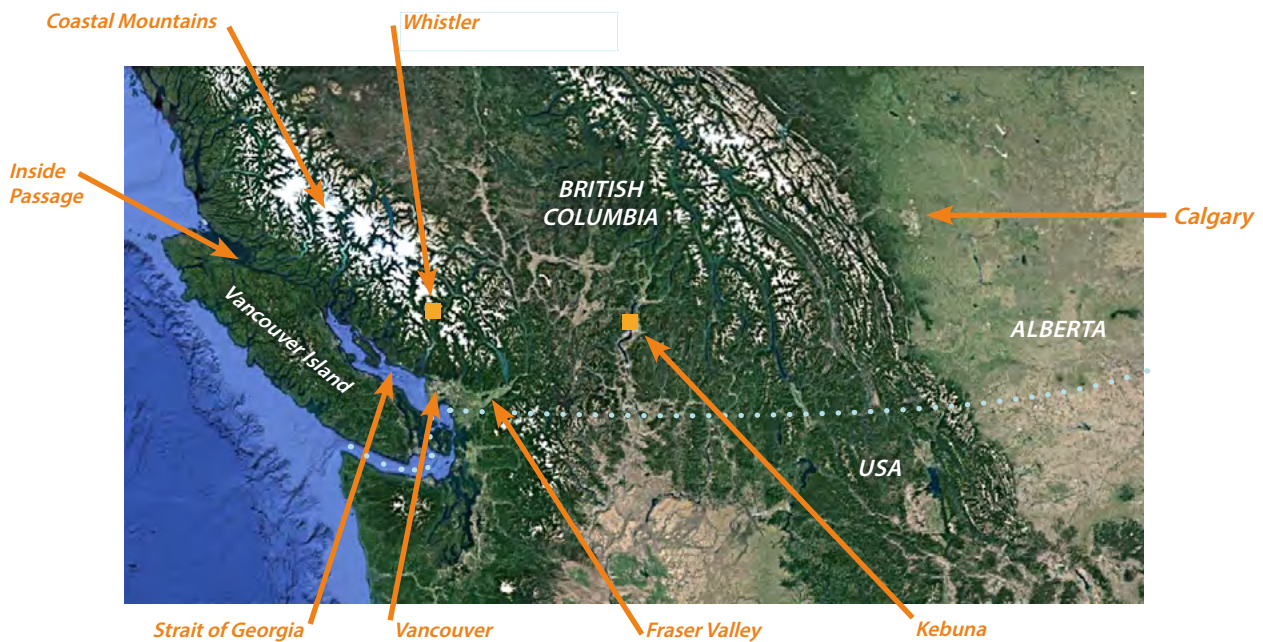


Figure 26: Landform elements of Canada's Western Cordillera. Image source: Google Earth

## British Columbia

Just to the west of the Canadian Rockies lies the Thompson-Okanagan region, an area of grassland ecosystems, numerous lakes, mountain ranges, and some of the driest places in Canada. The human history of the area dates back over 10,000 years and is rich with the indigenous culture of the Secwépemc, Syilx, Nlaka'pamux, and St'át'imc nations.

Tourism, agriculture, mining, and forestry have been the principal economic activities in the region. Ranching is widespread, and orchards and vineyards are common in the south. The natural resource-based economy in the region is, however, transforming, with an increase in renewable energy development. The Okanagan region is one of Canada's major wine-producing regions.

Further to the west, is the Mainland/Southwest region of British Columbia's, the province's most populous region. It is home to 2.8 million Canadians or 61 per cent of the province's population. The largest population centre is the City of Vancouver, a dynamic and ethnically diverse metropolitan area offering a wide range of economic opportunities. It also features a mild climate, an active lifestyle and all the amenities of a major urban centre. (See Figure 27)

Vancouver is consistently named in the top 10 of the world's most liveable cities in terms of the quality of life it offers residents. This helps to explain why Vancouver is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse cities in Canada. The city is a magnet for immigrants

seeking to maximise the opportunities for themselves and their children. Just over half the population are not native speakers of English and 50.6 per cent of residents belong to visible minority groups.

As partly a result of this diversity, Vancouver is often referred to as a 'city of neighbourhoods', each with its distinct character and ethnic mix. People of English, Scottish, and Irish heritage, historically the largest ethnic groups, together with elements of British society and culture, are still visible in some areas, especially South Granville and Kerrisdale. Germans make up the next largest ethnic group of European background and played an important role in shaping the city's early development. Today, the Chinese are the most visible ethnic group in the city. Neighbourhoods with a distinct ethnic character include Chinatown, Punjabi Market, Little Italy and Greektown.

Vancouver is the most densely populated cities in Canada. Urban planning in the city has promoted the construction of high-density residential and mixed-use developments in accessible centres, as an alternative to urban sprawl.

Vancouver's economy is based on trade and financial services, education, manufacturing, transportation, tourism and agricultural services. The development of major film production studios in Vancouver and nearby Burnaby have turned Greater Vancouver into one of the largest film production centres in North America.

# CANADA FROM EAST TO WEST



Figure 27: Vancouver is among Canada's most ethnically diverse cities. It is also one of the world's most scenic harbour cities. Source: Supplied by author

The Vancouver region also includes the communities in the Fraser Valley and world-famous Whistler ski resort to the north. Whistler is located in the Coast Mountains – a major coastal mountain range in western North America. The Coast Mountains extend from south-western Yukon to the Fraser River in the south of British Columbia.

Those who live within the region enjoy an active outdoor lifestyle, taking advantage of the region's mountains, oceans, lakes, rivers and beaches. Workers in Vancouver can, for example, head to Grouse Mountain for an evening ski or board after a day in the office.

Throughout British Columbia, as a whole, forestry remains the largest industry, see Figure 29. The province's internationally recognised natural beauty makes tourism its second-largest industry.



Figure 29: Logboom on the Fraser River, British Columbia. Rivers are used to transport logs to sorting yards. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Figure 28 (below): Residents of Vancouver can spend the evening skiing on Grouse Mountain after work or school.. Image supplied by author



## Vancouver Island

Vancouver Island (population 400,000) is 456 km in length, 100 km in wide at its widest point and covers 32,134 km<sup>2</sup>. This makes it the largest island on the west coasts of the Americas. Nearly half of the island's population live in the metropolitan area of Greater Victoria, the capital city of British Columbia. Other notable urban places on Vancouver Island include Nanaimo, Port Alberni, Parksville and Courtenay.

For thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, indigenous peoples inhabited Vancouver Island. The rich cultural conditions of these First Nations people continue to this day. The groupings, by language, are the Kwakwaka'wakw, the Nuuchahnulth and various Coast Salish peoples. While there is some overlap, Kwakwaka'wakw territory includes northern and north-western Vancouver Island and adjoining areas of the mainland, the Nuuchahnulth span most of the west coast, while the Coast Salish occupy the south-eastern Island and southern-most extremities along the Strait of Juan de Fuca (see Figure 30). Their cultures are closely linked to the natural resources abundant in the area.



Figure 31 Butchart Gardens, Victoria, Vancouver Island.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

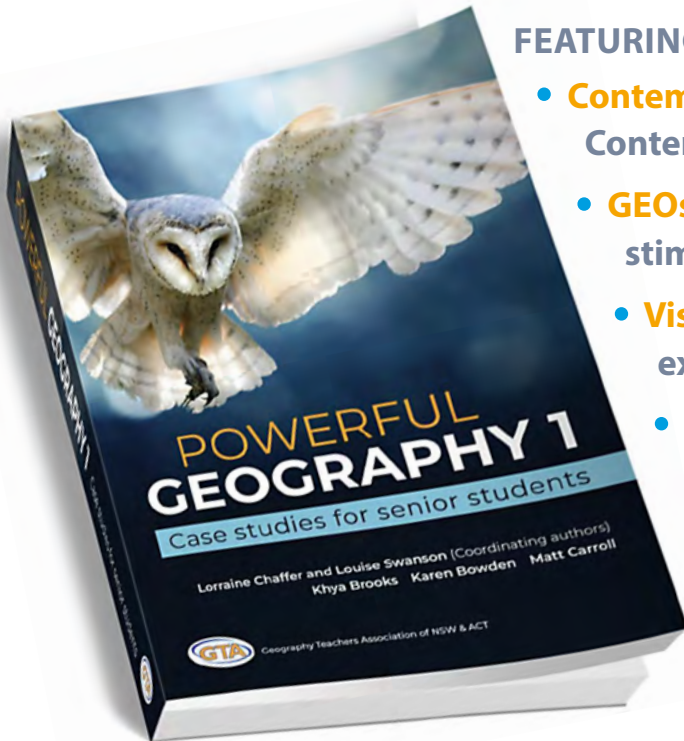
Vancouver Island's principal economic activities include tourism (see Figure 31), forestry, fishing, dairying, food processing, breweries and wineries. The island's largest city, Victoria is home to a significant number of IT and technology-based industries.



Figure 30: The Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Salish Sea, pictured from the International Space Station, separate the western-most border of the United States and Canada. Source: Wikimedia Commons

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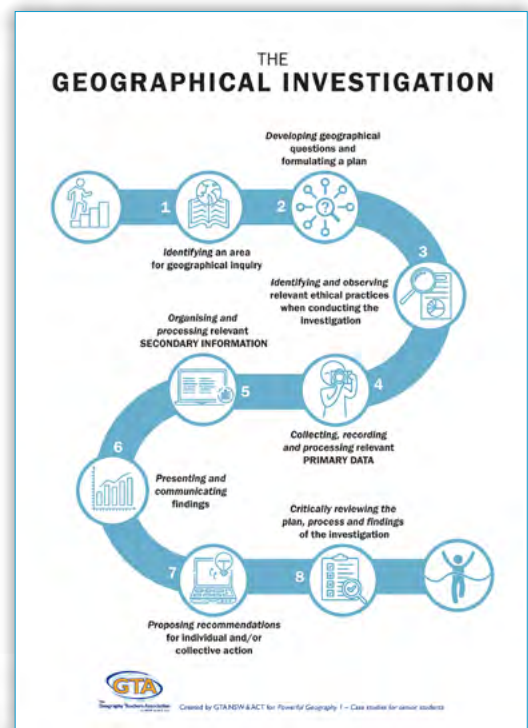
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## Response from the Geography Teachers' Association of NSW & ACT to the '2023 Have your say' consultation for Geography Years 7–10

Response written by Dr Susan Caldis on behalf of GTA NSW & ACT

### Overview

The Geography Teachers' Association of NSW and ACT (GTA NSW & ACT) are delighted to provide a response to the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) about areas of support and areas of concern with revisions to the syllabus for Geography. In highlighting our areas of concern, we also offer possible ways forward. Our response includes voices from Association membership and from Council. Focus is given to Years 7–10 (Stages 4 and 5), however, remarks also connect to the primary years and Stage 6. Key areas of the syllabus including the rationale and units across Stage 4 and Stage 5 provide structure to the response. An appendix with detailed comments follows.

In summary, areas of support for the syllabus revisions to Geography include the rationale; the intent to prioritise 'Thinking and working geographically'; fieldwork; and the scope for flexibility to support diverse learners. Areas of concern with the syllabus revisions to Geography include but are not limited to: loss of inquiry questions; lack of clarity about use of specific geographical tools within units; lack of unit-specific context about 'Thinking and working geographically' in relation to concepts, tools and content; loss of geographically distinctive and relevant content for units: 'Water in the World' and 'Food Production'.

Suggested ways forward include but are not limited to: specifying key geographical tools and skills for use within each syllabus unit; clarifying how 'Thinking and working geographically' are applied and made specific to each syllabus unit; and revisiting and reinstating geographically-focused content for 'Water in the World' and 'Food Production' as the units causing most concern. A detailed Appendix follows which further unpacks the areas identified in this response.

### Introduction

During the 'Have your say' timeframe, the Council of the GTA NSW & ACT met to review and discuss syllabus revisions. Two Executive members also ran online consultation sessions with members. This response includes the voice of members and the voice of Council. Each shares their feedback based on lived experiences from (i) regional and metropolitan locations as in-field or out-of-field teachers of geography across career stages and across Independent, Catholic and Government sectors; also from (ii) curriculum development, curriculum consultant, academic or industry contexts.

The response is structured around the following sections: diagram, rationale, and units across Stages 4 and 5. Each section addresses areas of support, areas of concern and potential ways forward.

### Diagram

This section identifies areas of support, areas of concern, and potential ways forward for the diagram which represents the intent and flow of the syllabus.

#### AREAS OF SUPPORT

"Thinking and working geographically" is consistent with science (Working scientifically) and it is about time the syllabus for geography and science became more aligned due to geography also being a science.

The diagram provides a good snapshot of the syllabus and its focus; it nicely threads together concepts, tools, inquiry and topics. It is good how the diagram emphasises the concepts, inquiry and tools are, because in programming they are the thing that you have to think most carefully about with your planning. A continuum would also be helpful.

# GTA NSW & ACT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

| AREAS OF CONCERN  | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD   |
|---|--|
| <p>Red text in the diagram – what does it mean and how is it executed in teaching? What are the ways of knowing and doing geography.</p> <p>Language and nomenclature – tools vs skills vs inquiry.</p> | <p>Clarification, how will teachers know when they are covering content, inquiry, tools.</p> |

## Rationale

This section identifies areas of support, areas of concern, and potential ways forward for the rationale overall. Focus is given to whether we can see ourselves as geography educators in the rationale and if we can also identify the distinctive core of geography and geography teaching.

| AREAS OF SUPPORT   |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| <p>The rationale suitably captures what geography and good geography teaching looks like.</p> <p>One of the things I really like in the rationale is the idea of inspiring curiosity and wonder; it is also timely to have sustainable management identified.</p> <p>Great to have fieldwork and active citizenship included in the rationale.</p> |                        |
| AREAS OF CONCERN   | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD |
| N/A  | N/A                    |

## Units across Stage 4 and Stage 5

This section identifies areas of support, areas of concern, and potential ways forward for items reaching ‘throughout’ or which are common to units across Stage 4 and Stage 5. Attention is then given to separately to Stage 4, for example Water in the World, and to Stage 5, for example Food Production.

### • Throughout

| AREAS OF SUPPORT  |
|---|
| <p>Generally, the document is okay and presents the content more concisely (and is therefore less threatening to teachers who may be out of field).</p> <p>Use of fieldwork examples, such as soil testing, is welcomed.</p> <p>Agree with central nature of Thinking and working geographically being identified throughout the syllabus (but its clarity and connection in the syllabus document needs work).</p> <p>Flexibility in teaching the content will make it easier to meet the needs of diverse learners.</p> <p>The First Nations context is embedded strongly and clearly; however, it is repetitive and the same examples are used on more than one occasion. The resources and supporting ideas about how to deliver this content effectively and respectfully must come through in the teaching notes and through clearer identification in the content descriptions.</p> <p>Good to have a reduced number of outcomes to assess and report against.</p> |

# GTA NSW & ACT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

| AREAS OF CONCERN   | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD  |
|--|---|
| <p>Lack of clarity about how to resource and address the <b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples/First Nations</b> outcome and content.</p>   | <p>Further refinement to retain the geographical focus in connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/First Nations content, particularly at a local scale. The local scale is where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content will come to life and have authenticity and relevance. It needs to be respectful, appropriate and meaningful – how can this be achieved – this is not currently clear in the syllabus.</p> <p>Ensure suitable resources and teacher training are available to teach outcome and associated content in a respectful, meaningful and non-repetitive way.</p> <p>Clarification with nomenclature – be specific and consistent – is it First Nations of Australia? is it First Nations? is it Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People? is it Indigenous or indigenous? Clarify when it is expected to focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultures and when it is expected to focus on indigenous communities from elsewhere in the world.</p> |
| <p>Lack of specificity about Thinking and working geographically which mean teachers will gloss over it to find the content descriptions. There is a lack of emphasis about how thinking and working geographically relate to concepts, tools and fieldwork.</p> | <p>Include specific examples or contextualise the 'Thinking and working geographically' statement to each unit – needs to be contextualised for each unit and in its own section.</p> <p>Include reference to developing geographical inquiry questions this could be added to the Stage 4 point "Engage with the geographical inquiry process, including developing inquiry question" and delete where appropriate as it suggests you can opt out.</p> <p>Alternatively, include an additional dot point before 'evaluate' ... inquiry process (Stage 5) in reference to Evaluating the effectiveness of an inquiry process (Stage 5).</p> <p>It would be more relevant if there was a compulsory Inquiry Task such as the old RAP from a previous syllabus, otherwise it is confusing as to how to do inquiry.</p>  |



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# GTA NSW & ACT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Loss of inquiry questions and lack of specificity about Geographical tools and skills in units.</b><br/>Geographical tools are numerous and overwhelming which will be problematic for out-of-field teachers and time-poor teachers. Greater clarity needs to occur in the syllabus so that geographical skills and tools are made explicit to teachers and therefore become more accessible to students.</p> | <p>Include in the syllabus document, appropriate and specific examples of skills and tools that can be embedded in each unit. Narrow the required range of tools and skills in each stage. Consider some tools and skills as compulsory and others as options within each unit.</p> <p>Reinstate the inquiry questions – they are the hooks for the teacher and student and provide context and framing to the unit.</p> <p>Inclusion of a junior Senior Geography Project would help to develop focus on tools, skills and questioning, and provide a meaningful opportunity to link into active citizenship.</p> <p>The tools and skills are part of the distinctiveness of geography and academic rigour of the subject. It is important to address what skills to use in each unit. The presence of, and capacity to successfully use, tools and skills also influences the calibre of student taking geography which is important for the future of the subject within and beyond school settings.</p> <p>Include virtual fieldwork e.g., Google Earth, and more local fieldwork examples that can be done easily within a lesson and part of a lesson and without any equipment or minimum, inexpensive equipment.</p> <p>Consider including a minimum number of tools and skills within each unit – the syllabus should be understood by out-of-field, early-career, and experienced teachers. Often there is one experienced teacher only in a school having to teach the course.</p> |
| <p><b>Lack of rigour</b> as part of preparation for the study of geography in Stage 6 and lack of rigour and opportunity for High Performing and Gifted Students, particularly in Stage 4.</p>  | <p>Additional and more sophisticated concepts in Stage 5 would enhance academic rigor and subject knowledge and provide a better foundation for students entering Stage 6.</p> <p>Adjust the directive terms e.g., from Explain to Analyse.</p>   |
| <p><b>Lack of links to, and alignment with, STEM</b> (especially the Science syllabus and career pathways) and lack of connection into other subjects. Geography is an interdisciplinary subject and is also considered a Science – there needs to be clear links identified into the science syllabus.</p>   | <p>Align with STEM and the science syllabus for inquiry, data collection, communication and interpretation, and also for content. Recommend alignment with career pathways in the water industry; planners, engineers, scientists, operators, comms/IT, operators etc. We need problem solvers with a wide range of skills in the industry to support communities and the environment into the future.</p> <p>Include explicit links to STEM e.g., a diagram or explanation in the front part of the syllabus, or through hyperlinks to relevant sections of Science, Mathematics, Technology – e.g., Mathematics for scale, distance, bearings; Science for fieldwork and inquiry method; Technology for geospatial technologies.</p>  |
| <p><b>Lack of timings and weightings</b> for the units.</p>   | <p>Include guidelines about timing and weighting of each unit, or clarify if all are equal.</p>   |

# GTA NSW & ACT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Conflating the communication focused outcomes</b> is not helpful, e.g., evaluates and applies a range of geographical concepts and tools to acquire process <i>and</i> communicate geographical information. In the English syllabus, the outcomes are dense and in geography it becomes really difficult to work out what to assess and it is not user-friendly for students.</p> | <p>Higher order verbs could be used in the outcomes to develop rigour. Stage 4 is a bit light on for higher ability students – students should not be prevented from moving towards analyse and evaluate if outcomes are not changing to higher-order verbs in Stage 4.</p> <p>Separate out the outcomes so that you can assess application of concepts and tools, and so that you can assess communication of geographical information.</p> |
| <p><b>Layout and structure</b> is not well aligned with Stage 6, it is hard to see progression.</p>  | <p>Revisit Stage 6 once revisions to K–10 are settled and develop as a continuum not as a silo.</p>  |
| <p><b>Footnotes are hard to navigate in their current form</b></p>   | <p>Include the footnotes under the content like Stage 6.</p>   |

## • Stage 4

| AREAS OF SUPPORT   |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Generally, the syllabus suitably considers global and First Nations perspectives, however, this is sometimes at the expense of clarity around considering the local context.</p>  |   |
| AREAS OF CONCERN   | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD  |
| <p><b>Water in the World</b> lacks inclusion about water scarcity, water security, climate change, impact on water futures, and a local context. Additionally, removal of ‘Australia’s water resources’ and the loss of local context as dot points raise concerns. We have so many examples of different sources and water challenges. Without explicit requirement to cover the local context teachers may lean towards global examples only.</p> <p>The shift from addressing the value of water from a key sub-heading to now only a dot point under a collective heading diminishes the significance of acknowledging and appreciating water beyond its economic value.</p> | <p>We recommend the syllabus addresses future challenges and opportunities in a local context relating to liveability, water security, circular economy, and emerging technologies in water management.</p> <p>Incorporate the local context and be specific about it. It is critical to incorporate the local perspective allowing for the development of an informed citizen. By including the local context, students can comprehend their local challenges such as water scarcity, drought and flood patterns, and as an informed citizen engage in region-specific solutions, practices and policies.</p> <p>The examples for ‘The nature of and responses to ... water scarcity’ ... need to include <i>causes</i> of water scarcity. The responses address causes and these causes can be analysed using examples.</p> <p>For the hazards content – the second and third dot points would best be applied to a study in the third dot point. Again, the concepts (magnitude etc) are best applied in context (the ONE study) so as to gain deeper knowledge and understanding, therefore, concepts should be clearly identified.</p> <p>Include ‘Water security’ in the strategies – this is the aim of the strategies and adds academic rigour whilst providing an opportunity for differentiation.</p> |

# GTA NSW & ACT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Landscapes and Landforms</b> lacks an overview; repetition for addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content from the primary years and years ahead; lack of opportunity to engage with depth studies.</p> | <p>The 'landform and formation' dot point could be reworded as 'overview'.</p> <p>Dreaming stories need to include different examples to those covered across K–6 and in other units across Years 7–10. Repetition will render content irrelevant, careful refinement is needed given the reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in every content Focus Area.</p> <p>Include a depth study of one landscape and its landforms because this is where processes are applied in context and provides a chance for students to learn how to explain geographical transformation of places in depth.</p> <p>For 'Causes, impacts and responses' of hazards, it should be applied to ONE hazard studied again for context and depth.</p> <p>The 'Nature' dot point could also be expressed as an overview. I think the current syllabus had it right. Why change for a lesser depth of study?</p> |
|---|---|

## • Stage 5

| AREAS OF SUPPORT   |   |
|--|---|
| N/A  |   |
| AREAS OF CONCERN   | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD  |
| <p><b>Food Production</b> reads more like Agriculture and diminishes geographical focus.</p> <p>The proposed content is insufficient in depth and breadth and has lost its geographical focus and academic rigour in content and concepts. Currently it is dry and stripped back which diminishes geographical integrity. Stage 5 sets students up for Stage 6 where conceptual understanding is very important.</p> | <p>The focus needs to remain on biomes and the issue of food security. Change the title to be geographically oriented e.g., Biomes and Food Security or Food Security. Focus the unit towards understanding the importance of biomes and sustainable agriculture which allows reference to food, fibres and career pathways, and potentially lean more into Stage 6 Geography.</p> <p>Provide an opportunity to examine globally-referenced geographical concepts such as biomes and the ecosystems and habitats within.</p> <p>Reinstate a Biomes section and include a content description about the nature and spatial distribution of biomes and a content description about biomes that produce food.</p>  |
| <p><b>Changing Places</b> needs to be reorganised so population is addressed before migration. There is a lack of coherency between urban content dot points.</p>  | <p>Population should come before migration.</p> <p>Include a move from global to national to local scales in migration.</p> <p>Include reasons for and impacts of international migration at a global scale.</p> <p>Include a new dot point about international migration to Australia; followed by a dot point about internal migration in Australia and another country; followed by changing settlements and then urban planning. This will better connect the urban section.</p> <p>In the first dot point for Urban planning, replace 'approaches' with 'strategies'. In the second point, delete strategies and include 'management of population change in one Australian city' (now it is appropriate for population to be included as part of influence on settlements).</p> |

## Closing remarks

To conclude, voices from GTA NSW & ACT members and from Council agree the main areas of support for the syllabus revisions to Geography are the rationale; the intent to prioritise 'Thinking and working geographically'; the specific inclusion of fieldwork; and the scope for flexibility to support diverse learners. Our broad areas of concern include but are not limited to: loss of inquiry questions; lack of clarity about use of specific geographical tools within units; lack of unit-specific context about 'Thinking and working geographically' in relation to concepts, tools and content; and loss of geographically-distinctive and relevant content for Water in the World and Food Production. Suggested ways forward include but are not limited to: specifying key geographical tools and skills for use within each syllabus unit; clarifying how 'Thinking and working geographically' are applied and made specific to each syllabus unit; and revisiting and reinstating geographically-focused content for Water in the World and Food Production as the units causing most concern. A detailed Appendix follows which further unpacks the areas identified in this response.

As experts in, and advocates for, quality geography education and as a representative Association for geography educators who work across school-based and non-school-based contexts, we compel the NESA team and those connected to the revision process to closely attend to the advice contained within this response. It is important to retain the integrity of geography as a subject and to ensure the reputation remains of New South Wales being a leading model of quality curriculum development and implementation for geography.

**End of report**



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|   |   |
|---|---|
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## Appendices to support the GTA NSW & ACT Response to the ‘2023 Have your say’ consultation for Geography

### Appendix 1: From an Executive member of GTA NSW & ACT Council

| AREAS OF SUPPORT  |   |
|---|---|
| Use of fieldwork examples such as soil testing  |   |
| AREAS OF CONCERN  | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD  |
| <b>Throughout:</b> Footnotes.   | Include the footnotes under the content like Stage 6.   |
| <b>Throughout:</b> Thinking and working geographically.   | Needs to be contextualised for each unit and in its own section, not under content.<br>Include in the syllabus document, appropriate and specific examples of skills and tools that can be embedded in each unit.<br>Include virtual fieldwork e.g., Google Earth, and more local fieldwork examples that can be done easily within a lesson and part of a lesson and without any equipment or minimum, inexpensive equipment.<br>Consider including a minimum number of tools and skills within each unit. – the syllabus should be understood by out-of-field, early-career teachers, and experienced teachers. Often there is one experienced teacher only in a school having to teach the course. |
| <b>Throughout:</b> Loss of inquiry questions.   | Reinstate within the syllabus document and reinforce in Teacher Advice documents such as programs.  |
| <b>Throughout:</b> Lack of links to STEM and lack of connection into other subjects.  | Include explicit links to STEM e.g., a diagram or explanation in the front part of the syllabus, or through hyperlinks to relevant sections of Science, Mathematics, Technology e.g., Mathematics for scale, distance, bearings; Science for fieldwork and inquiry method; Technology for geospatial technologies.  |
| <b>Throughout:</b> Lack of clarity about how to resource and address the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples outcome and content. | Ensure suitable resources and teacher training are available to teach outcome and associated content in a respectful, meaningful and non-repetitive way.  |
| <b>Stage 5:</b> Food Production has lost its geographical distinctiveness.  | Needs a geographically oriented title e.g., Biomes and Food Security, or Food Security.<br>Reinstate the Biomes section.<br>Include a content description about the spatial distribution of Biomes.<br>Include a content description about biomes that produce food.  |

## Appendix 2: From an Executive member of GTA NSW & ACT Council

| AREAS OF SUPPORT   |   |
|--|---|
| Generally, the document is okay and presents the content more concisely (and is therefore less threatening to teachers who may be out of field). |   |
| AREAS OF CONCERN   | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD  |
| <b>Stages 4 and 5:</b> Indigenous content (12 dot points).   | Further refinement to retain the geographical focus in connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. |
| <b>Stage 5:</b> The Food Production topic reads more like Agriculture and diminishes geographical focus.   | The focus needs to remain on biomes and the issue of food security.   |

## Appendix 3: From an Executive member of GTA NSW & ACT Council

| AREAS OF SUPPORT   |   |
|--|---|
| Overall, I like the simplification of the content points.  |   |
| Agree with central nature of Thinking and working geographically being identified throughout the syllabus. |   |
| AREAS OF CONCERN   | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD  |
| <b>Throughout:</b> The simplification of content has gone too far in some units.                           | There needs to be additional dot points to fill some perceived gaps and allow for greater depth of study.   |
| <b>Stage 5:</b> Lack of rigour as part of preparation for the study of geography in Stage 6.               | Additional and more sophisticated concepts in Stage 5 would enhance academic rigor and subject knowledge and provide a better foundation for students entering Stage 6.   |
| <b>Throughout:</b> Lack of specificity with Thinking and working geographically for each unit.             | I would like to see further refinement to include reference to developing geographical inquiry questions. This could be added to the Stage 4 point 'Engage with the geographical inquiry process, including developing inquiry question' and delete where appropriate as it suggests you can opt out.<br><br>Alternatively, include an additional dot point before 'evaluate'... inquiry process (Stage 5) in reference to Evaluating the effectiveness of an inquiry process (Stage 5).<br><br>It would be more relevant if there was a compulsory Inquiry Task such as the old RAP from a previous syllabus, otherwise it is confusing as to how to do inquiry. |
| <b>Stage 4:</b> Water in the World – lack of inclusion about water scarcity and water security.            | The examples for 'The nature of and responses to ... water scarcity'... need to include <i>causes</i> of water scarcity. The responses address causes and these causes can be analysed using examples.  |
|  | For the hazards content, the second and third dot points would best be applied to a study in the third dot point. Again, the concepts (magnitude etc) are best applied in context (the ONE study) so as to gain deeper knowledge and understanding, therefore, concepts should be clearly identified.<br><br>Include 'Water security' in the strategies – this is the aim of the strategies and adds academic rigour whilst providing an opportunity for differentiation.   |

# GTA NSW & ACT APPENDICES TO RESPONSE

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Stage 4:</b> Landscapes and Landforms – lack of overview; repetition for addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content; lack of opportunity to engage with depth studies.</p> | <p>The ‘landform and formation’ dot point could be reworded as ‘overview’.</p> <p>Dreaming stories need to include different examples to those covered across K–6 and in other units across Years 7–10. Repetition will render content irrelevant, careful refinement is needed given the reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in every content Focus Area.</p> <p>Include a depth study of one landscape and its landforms because this is where processes are applied in context and provides a chance for students to learn how to explain geographical transformation of places in depth.</p> <p>For ‘Causes, impacts and responses’ of hazards, it should be applied to ONE Hazard studied again for context and depth.</p> <p>The ‘Nature’ dot point could also be expressed as an overview. I think the current syllabus had it right. Why change for a lesser depth of study?</p> |
| <p><b>Stage 4:</b> Interconnection and Trade lacks a case study and opportunity to investigate perspectives in depth.</p>  | <p>The dot point about perspectives and responses is awkward. Most of the examples are influences - a better wording would be ‘influences and trade flow’ and put perspectives in the examples.</p> <p>Include ONE case study in the dot point for impacts.</p> <p>Include a dot point about strategies to address the impacts.</p> <p>Include a dot point about perspectives of different groups on ONE strategy to address impacts.</p> <p>Perspectives are best understood in relation to a case study on a particular issue. One dot point under this heading is not enough.</p> <p>Perspectives are an outcome and need to be referenced in a place that allows them to be unpacked in depth.</p>  |
| <p><b>Stage 5:</b> Lack of rigour as part of preparation for the study of geography in Stage 6.</p>  | <p>Additional and more sophisticated concepts in stage 5 would enhance academic rigour and subject knowledge and provide a better foundation for students entering Stage 6.</p>   |
| <p><b>Stage 5:</b> Changing places needs to be reorganised so population is addressed before migration. There is a lack of coherency between urban content dot points.</p>                     | <p>Population should come before migration.</p> <p>Include a move from global to national to local scales in migration.</p> <p>Include reasons for and impacts of international migration at a global scale.</p> <p>Include a new dot point about international migration to Australia; followed by a dot point about internal migration in Australia and another country; followed by changing settlements and then urban planning. This will better connect the urban section.</p> <p>In the first dot point for Urban planning, replace –‘approaches’ with ‘strategies’. In the second point delete strategies and include ‘management of population change in one Australian city (now it is appropriate for population to be included as part of influence on settlements.</p>   |

# GTA NSW & ACT APPENDICES TO RESPONSE

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Stage 5:</b> Food Production has lost its geographical focus and academic rigour in content and concepts. Stage 5 sets students up for Stage 6 where conceptual understanding is very important.</p> | <p>Change the title and focus of the unit to Biomes and Sustainable Agriculture which allows reference to food, fibres etc.</p> <p>Reinstate references to biomes and productivity as broad regions of the world that influence agriculture.</p> <p>Provide an opportunity to examine globally- referenced geographical concepts such as biomes and the ecosystems and habitats within them.</p>   |
| <p><b>Stage 5:</b> Environmental Management and Change lacks academic rigour and does not provide an opportunity to gain deep understanding.</p>   | <p>The role and importance of natural environments offers an opportunity to use concepts in the value examples which needs to be made more explicit, such as provisioning, supporting, cultural, regulation.</p> <p>In the Management section, wording around sustainability needs to be clarified. For example:<br/>         'Threats to environmental functioning and sustainability' or<br/>         'Measuring and assessing the management of environments for sustainability.'</p> |

## Appendix 4: From a Life member of GTA NSW & ACT Council

| AREAS OF SUPPORT  |  |
|---|--|
| Flexibility in teaching the content will make it easier to meet the needs of diverse learners.              |  |
| AREAS OF CONCERN  | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD   |
| <p><b>Throughout:</b> Thinking and working geographically lacks emphasis on the concepts and fieldwork.</p> | <p>Identify specific concepts to use in Thinking and working geographically for units.</p> <p>Clarify the concepts for use in fieldwork.</p>   |
| <p><b>Throughout:</b> Geographical tools and skills lack specificity in units.</p>                          | <p>Greater clarity needs to occur in the syllabus so that geographical skills and tools are made explicit to teachers and therefore become more accessible to students.</p> <p>The tools and skills are part of the distinctiveness of geography and academic rigour of the subject. It is important to address what skills to use in each unit. The presence of, and capacity to successfully use, tools and skills also influences the calibre of student taking geography which is important for the future of the subject within and beyond school settings.</p> |

## Appendix 5: From a Councillor of GTA NSW & ACT Council

| AREAS OF SUPPORT  |   |
|---|---|
| The syllabus offers opportunities to cater for the learning needs of diverse students.  |   |
| AREAS OF CONCERN  | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD  |
| <p><b>Throughout:</b> Lack of rigour and opportunity for High Performing and Gifted Students, particularly in Stage 4.</p>  | <p>Adjust the directive terms e.g., from Explain to Analyse.</p>  |
| <p><b>Throughout:</b> Thinking and working geographically statements are vague and lack specificity to units which mean teachers will gloss over it to find the content descriptions.</p> | <p>Include specific examples or contextualise the Thinking and working geographically statement to each unit.</p> |

# GTA NSW & ACT APPENDICES TO RESPONSE

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Throughout:</b> Geographical tools are numerous and overwhelming which will be problematic for out of field teachers and also time poor teachers.</p> | <p>Clearly link specific tools and skills to units.<br/>Make some tools and skills compulsory and others as options.<br/>Narrow the required range of tools and skills in each stage.</p> |
|---|---|

## Appendix 6: From a GTA NSW & ACT Member from Industry

The notes below summarise input from those associated with the Water industry, such as Sydney Water and Water NSW. There is concern about the content jump from global to First Nations context. Also those in the Water industry are staring down the barrel of no employees to manage demand in water management. STEM is all over this and amending Science syllabus to match so geography should also follow suit.

Australians have a complex relationship with water influenced by the country's landscape, population dynamics and climate change. We face new challenges in securing and managing water to enhance liveability, improve environmental outcomes and ensure it remains a great place to live today and for future generations.

| AREAS OF CONCERN   | POTENTIAL WAYS FORWARD   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Stage 4 Water in the World:</b> Lack of alignment with STEM and revisions to the Science syllabus.</p>   | <p>Align with STEM and the Science syllabus Recommend alignment with career pathways in the water industry; planners, engineers, scientists, operators, comms/IT, operators etc. . . We need problem solvers with a wide range of skills in the industry to support communities and the environment into the future.</p>   |
| <p><b>Stage 4 Water in the World:</b> The removal of 'Australia's water resources' as a dot point raises concerns. We have so many examples of different sources and water challenges. Without explicit requirement to cover the local context teachers may lean towards global examples only.</p>   | <p>We recommend the syllabus addresses future challenges and opportunities in a local context relating to liveability, water security, circular economy, and emerging technologies in water management.</p>  |
| <p><b>Stage 4 Water in the World:</b> Failing to incorporate the local context runs the risks individuals perceive water issues as a distant problem, doesn't apply to them and results in a lack of awareness of the urban water cycle within their community. This has the potential to undermine awareness of career pathways in water and the development of informed, responsible and active citizens in our local communities.</p> | <p>Incorporate the local context and be specific about it. While the revised syllabus adequately considers global and First Nations perspectives, it's critical to incorporate the local perspective allowing for the development of the informed citizen. By including the local context students can comprehend their local challenges such as water scarcity, drought and flood patterns, and as an informed citizen engage in region specific solutions, practices and policies.</p>   |
| <p><b>Stage 4 Water in the World:</b> Lack of focus on climate change and impact for water-futures.</p>  | <p>To reflect current and emerging water management strategies we recommend a dash point to include a focus on climate change and its impact on water in the future (water scarcity and water management). This includes liveability, urban greening and cooling, stormwater management, recycled water use and water use behaviours as management strategies based on circular economy principles and includes purified recycled water for drinking as an option to be studied. Also, considerations to the link between water and energy sources, e.g., transitioning away from coal, and into hydrogen.</p> |
| <p><b>Stage 4 Water in the World:</b> The shift of addressing the value of water from a key sub heading to a dot point under a collective heading diminishes the significance of acknowledging and appreciating water beyond its economic value.</p>   | <p>There's a need to discuss and recognise its spiritual, aesthetic significance and pivotal role it plays in our communities in positive health and well-being outcomes.</p>  |

End of Appendices.



## HSC Geography Exam Preparation Resource Package

### MEMBER ONLY OFFER

#### Downloadable 2020 - 2022 HSC lecture videos by topic.

These lectures can be used at any time until the NEW HSC is examined in 2025 after which they will be obsolete.

The lectures can be used with HSC classes for teaching topics or for revision throughout the year.

Teachers new to teaching the HSC course might use the lectures for their own professional learning.

Three topic showreels can be purchased as a full set OR individually and in any order throughout the year.

**OFFER AVAILABLE UNTIL  
THE END OF 2023.**



#### ECOSYSTEMS AT RISK

- Biophysical Interactions
- Vulnerability and Resilience
- Management and protection
- Evaluating management
- Alpine, GBR and GSR Case Studies
- Full topic overviews x 2

**9 Presentations: \$300 plus GST**



#### URBAN PLACES

- Urban Dynamics - Sydney, Campbelltown
- Urban places including Megacities and World Cities
- Urban places topic overview

**4 Presentations: \$100 plus GST**



#### PEOPLE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- Overviews and Exam advice (2020 & 2021)
- Viticulture, Cocoa, Tourism case studies
- Tamburlaine Enterprise

**6 presentations: \$200 plus GST**

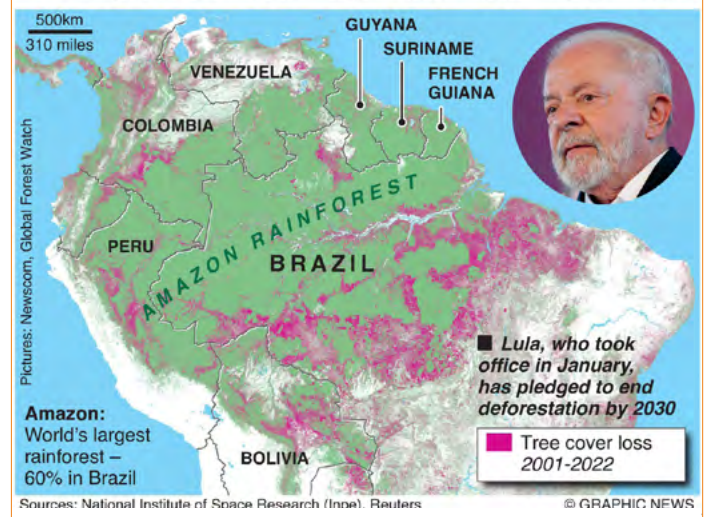
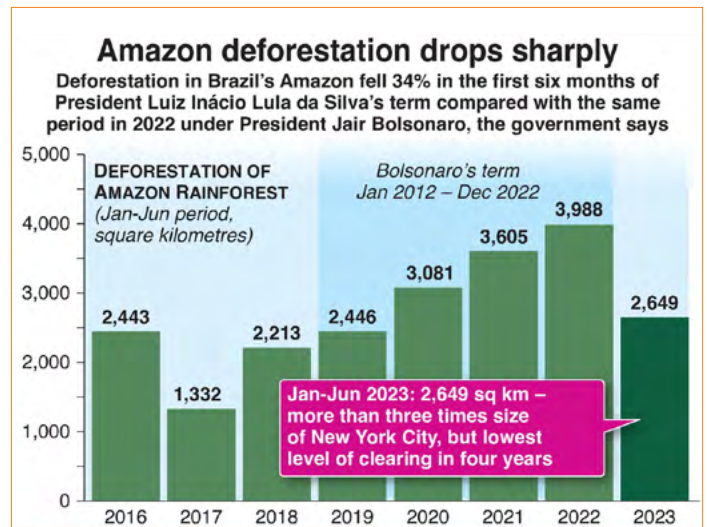
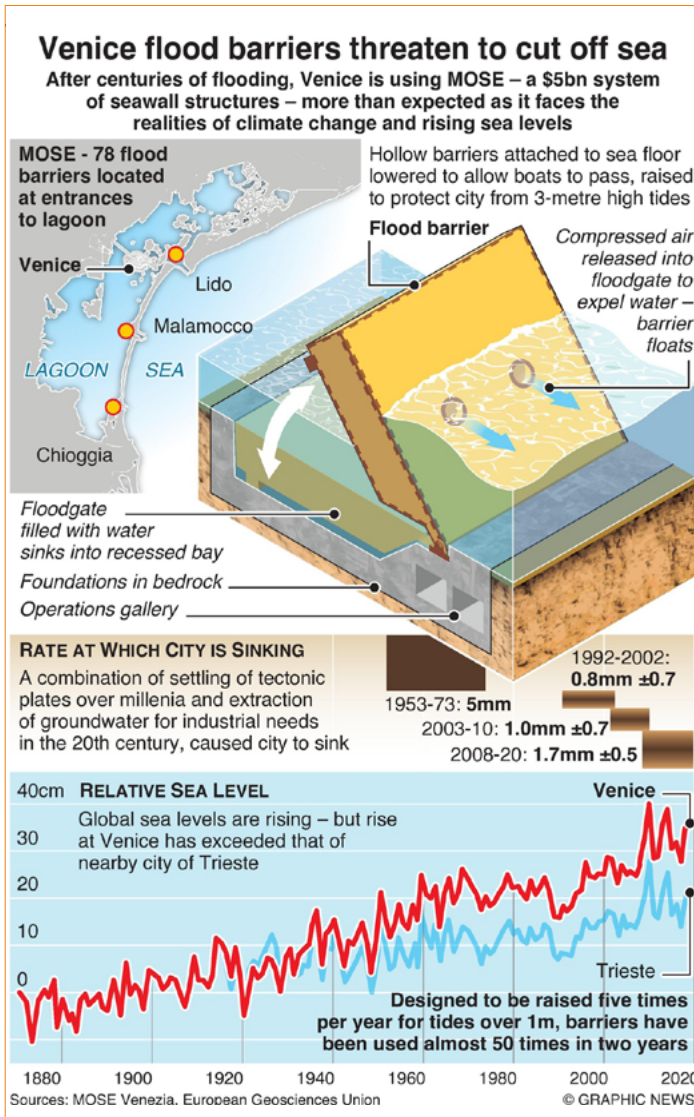
**FULL SET: \$500 PLUS GST**

[Click here to register](#)

## GRAPHIC NEWS

### Venice

1. Identify the environmental change affecting Venice.
2. What was the original plan for MOSE?
3. Why is MOSE being used much more often than planned?
4. Explain why a permanent barrier is not placed across the lagoon entrances.
5. Compare the relative sea level in Venice with Trieste since 1980. Use statistics in your answer.
6. Calculate the average yearly change in sea level for Venice between 1920 and 2020.
7. Suggest reasons why the level graph is not a smooth line indicating gradual change over time.

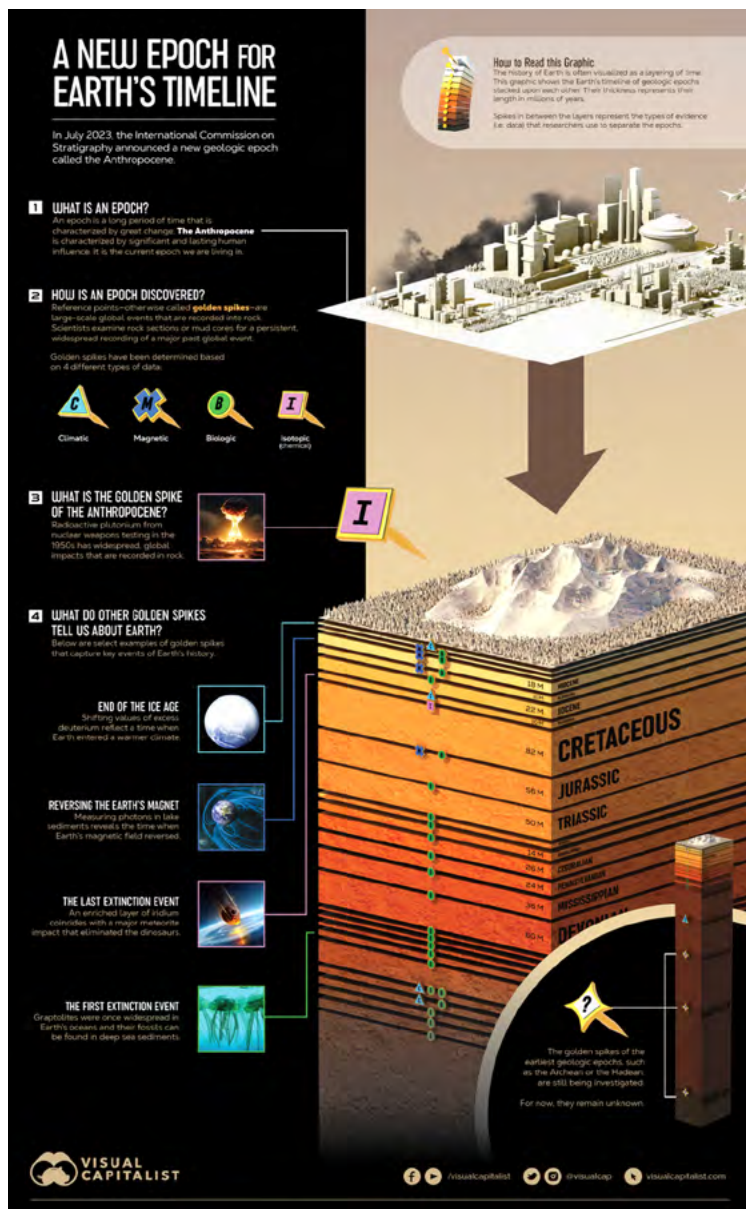


### Amazon

1. Identify the environmental change occurring in the Amazon.
2. Why did forest clearing suddenly drop in 2023?
3. Calculate the % change in deforestation between 2022 and 2023.
4. Describe the spatial distribution of deforestation in Brazil. Suggest reasons for this pattern.
5. Conduct research to check if the rate of deforestation continued to fall in the second half of 2023 and into 2024.

## The Anthropocene: A New Epoch in the Earth's History

First published – Visual Capitalist August 25, 2023, Author Mark Belan  
<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/anthropocene-new-epoch-earths-history/>



Over the course of Earth's history, there have been dramatic shifts in the landscape, climate, and biodiversity of the planet. And it is all archived underground.

Layers of the planet's crust carry evidence of pivotal moments that changed the face of the Earth, such as the ice age and asteroid hits. And scientists have recently defined the next major epoch using this geological time scale—the Anthropocene.

In this infographic we dig deep into the Earth's geological timeline to reveal the planet's shift from one epoch to another, and the specific events that separate them.

### Understanding the Geological Timeline

The Earth's geological history is divided into many distinct units, from eons to ages. The time span of each varies, since they're dependent on major events like new species introduction, as well as how they fit into their parent units.

If we were to cut a mountain in half, we could notice layers representing these changing spans of time, marked by differences in chemical composition and accumulated sediment.

Some boundaries are so distinct and so widespread in the geologic record that they are known as "golden spikes." Golden spikes can be climatic, magnetic, biological, or isotopic (chemical).

| Geochronologic unit | Time span   | Example     |
|---------------------|---|-------------|
| Eon                 | Several hundred million years to two billion years          | Phanerozoic |
| Era                 | Tens to hundreds of millions of years                       | Cenozoic    |
| Period              | Millions of years to tens of millions of years              | Quaternary  |
| Epoch               | Hundreds of thousands of years to tens of millions of years | Holocene    |
| Age                 | Thousands of years to millions of years                     | Meghalayan  |

Note: Sub epochs (between epochs and ages) have also been ratified for use in 2022 but are not yet clearly defined.

# THE ANTHROPOCENE

## Earth's Geological Timeline Leading Up to the Anthropocene

The Earth has gone through many epochs leading up to the modern Anthropocene.

These include epochs like the Early Devonian, which saw the dawn of the first early shell organisms 400 million years ago, and the three Jurassic epochs, which saw dinosaurs become the dominant terrestrial vertebrates.

Over the last 11,700 years, we have been living in the Holocene epoch, a relatively stable period that enabled human civilization to flourish. But after millennia of human activity, this epoch is quickly making way for the Anthropocene.

The Anthropocene is distinguished by a myriad of imprints on the Earth including the proliferation of plastic particles and a noticeable increase in carbon dioxide levels in sediments.



*Crawford Lake Conservation Area- Crawford Lake- Campbellville in Milton- Ontario. Source: Wikimedia Commons*

## A New Chapter in Earth's History

The clearest identified marker of this geological time shift, and the chosen golden spike for the Anthropocene, is radioactive plutonium from nuclear testing in the 1950s.

The best example has been found in the sediment of Crawford Lake in Ontario, Canada. The lake has **two distinct layers of water** that never intermix, causing falling sediments to settle in distinct layers at its bed over time.

While the International Commission on Stratigraphy announced the naming of the new epoch in July 2023, **Crawford Lake** is still in the process of getting approved as the site that marks the new epoch. If selected, our planet will officially enter the Crawfordian Age of the Anthropocene.



*Crawford Notch and Lake. Source: Wikimedia Commons*

| Epoch         | Its start (MYA = Million Years Ago) |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Holocene      | 0.01 MYA                            |
| Cretaceous    | 145.0 MYA                           |
| Pleistocene   | 2.58 MYA                            |
| Jurassic      | 201.40 MYA                          |
| Miocene       | 23.04 MYA                           |
| Triassic      | 251.90 MYA                          |
| Lopingian     | 259.50 MYA                          |
| Guadalupian   | 273.00 MYA                          |
| Cisuralian    | 300.00 MYA                          |
| Pennsylvanian | 323.40 MYA                          |
| Oligocene     | 33.90 MYA                           |
| Mississippian | 359.30 MYA                          |
| Devonian      | 419.00 MYA                          |
| Silurian      | 422.70 MYA                          |
| Ludlow        | 426.70 MYA                          |
| Wenlock       | 432.90 MYA                          |
| Llandovery    | 443.10 MYA                          |
| Ordovician    | 486.90 MYA                          |
| Furongian     | 497.00 MYA                          |
| Pliocene      | 5.33 MYA                            |



The Geography Teachers' Association of NSW & ACT

NEW

## UNPACKING THE HSC GEO EXAM

*A 3hr NESA-accredited, flexible, anywhere, anytime online learning opportunity through Open Learning*

This professional development course unpacks the HSC Geography exam using the 2021 exam as an exemplar, and so explores strong approaches for teachers to prepare their students for the HSC.

Through watching the videos, reading the materials and engaging with the discussions in this PD you should become more confident about rigorously preparing your students to interpret and answer questions, and so better prepare them for the HSC Trials and Examinations.

The course objective is for you to complete learning activities where you address the following outcomes:

- apply knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of Geography to develop engaging teaching activities (AITSL Standard 2.1.2)
- develop, select and use informal, formal, diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies to assess student learning (AITSL Standard 5.1.2)

Here are some reviews of *Unpacking the HSC Exam*:

- *Very thorough, informative, and detailed, but most of all valuable. For example, I really enjoyed hearing from the Senior Marker. Such an insightful process that I wouldn't get otherwise.*
- *This course is great! The GTA should feel so proud of the effort and expertise in putting this together.*

To access the course go to [openlearning.com/ptc-nsw/courses/geo-hsc](https://openlearning.com/ptc-nsw/courses/geo-hsc)

**COST:** \$129 (association members \$99) you can register straight away at that website, by first creating an *Open Learning* account by clicking *Join Up* or *Sign Up*, and then paying using credit card. If you want your school to pay for you, follow the instructions at [shorturl.at/goJJ4](https://shorturl.at/goJJ4) to organise an invoice. If you have any questions email [gta.elearning@gmail.com](mailto:gta.elearning@gmail.com)

Completing Unpacking the HSC Geo Exam will contribute 3 hours of NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Accredited PD in the priority area of Delivery and Assessment of NSW Curriculum/EYLF addressing standard descriptors 2.1.2, 5.1.2 from the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers towards maintaining Proficient Teacher Accreditation in NSW.

[www.openlearning.com/agta/](https://www.openlearning.com/agta/) • [gta.elearning@gmail.com](mailto:gta.elearning@gmail.com)

# STAGE 6 COMPETITION

## 2023 Geography's Big Week Out

James Harte, Michael Da Roza and Alex Pentz



The 2023 Geography's Big Week Out (GBWO) was held from 25–20 September in Darwin and Litchfield National Park. Sixteen Year 11 students from around Australia were invited to participate, based on their outstanding performances in the Australian Geography Competition.

This program is a mix of stimulating and hands-on geography activities, focusing on fieldwork and an application of geographic knowledge. The GBWO is designed to challenge and extend high-performing senior students, whilst also providing them with a week of engaging and enjoyable activities with like-minded individuals who share a passion and enthusiasm for Geography. The purpose of this week is to select four finalists to represent Australia in Dublin, Ireland, as competitors in the 2024 International Geography Olympiad, an annual competition for 16 to 19-year-old geography students from all over the world.

The students spent two days undertaking fieldwork in Litchfield National Park, investigating whether this area was being managed sustainably as a tourist attraction while still maintaining the values of a national park. Investigation methodologies included surveying tourists, interviewing park rangers, tallies and mapping of tourism infrastructure, as well as some primary research in how effective the swimmings holes are at cooling down individuals on 37<sup>o</sup> days!. Students were also offered the opportunity to participate in tourism activities in Darwin, visiting the Darwin Waterfront Precinct, museum and art gallery, and Darwin's famous deckchair cinema.



Here, they were lucky enough to view Tim Flannery's new documentary 'Climate Changers' which set the tone for an environmentally conscious fieldwork topic.

Students worked in groups throughout the week to collect their data, before collectively bringing all data

together to form a holistic understanding of tourism and sustainable practices in National Park. On the final day, students were assessed on the sustainability of the park in the style of the International Geography Olympiad. The results of which were used to determine the team representing Australia at the 2024 International Geography Olympiad.

Geography Councillors Michael, James, and Alex were supervising this program in preparation for hosting the 2024 event in New South Wales and the ACT. All information on the National Geography Competition can be found at this website: <https://geographycompetition.org.au/>. The Competition consists of mainly multiple-choice questions testing geographical knowledge and skills. All participants receive results and certificates and is assessed based on year levels. All schools are encouraged to participate as a means of assessing the geographic knowledge and capabilities of their students, with the added possibility of having students sent across Australia, and the world!



## Celebrating Geography Excellence: A Remarkable Year of Achievements

**Carol Pogson | Teacher Senior School |  
Head of Geography | Canberra Grammar School**

The Canberra Grammar School (CGS) Geography department has been a proud supporter of the Australian Geography Competition for over 24 years. The competition has enabled many Canberra Grammar students to succeed in showcasing not only their wide range of geographical knowledge but also their ability to use geographical skills, to interpret data and apply spatial analysis.

For the 24th consecutive year, CGS secured the top spot across the ACT and Northern Territory, showcasing our unwavering commitment to geographic knowledge and proficiency.

Two students Nicholas Lawrance and Isla Moore notably represented the Combined Territories at the 2023 Big Week Out in Darwin. Further, Isla Moore recently earned the prestigious opportunity to represent Australia at the 2024 iGeo in Dublin, Ireland.



Thomas Lin, a standout student in Year 12, has consistently excelled in geography throughout his senior years. His remarkable achievements include securing First Place in the Territories in Years 8, 10, and 11, ultimately earning School Colours in Year 12. In August,

Thomas and his three teammates represented Australia on the international stage at the 2023 International Geography Olympiad in Bandung, Indonesia. Thomas's exceptional performance earned him a Gold medal and a remarkable 4th Place out of 177 students. His outstanding achievements and contributions to the field of geography, are a source of great pride for the entire CGS community and the ACT.

### Thomas Lin, Year 12, shares his reflections on the 19th International Geography Olympiad held in Bandung, Indonesia

"Representing Australia at the International Geography Olympiad in Bandung was an incredible experience. From August 8 to 14, I immersed myself in the rich culture of Indonesia, participated in physical excursions, and faced rigorous testing.

The academic component was particularly challenging, comprising three tests: written response, fieldwork, and multimedia. The fieldwork test, lasting a full day, involved 8 hours of hiking, analysing, and formulating development plans for the town of Bukit Pakar. It was a test of mental and physical endurance, but the other components at the Bandung Institute of Technology were equally enriching. I secured 1st place in fieldwork and 3rd place in the written response, ultimately earning 4th place overall.

Beyond the academic challenges, my teammates and I delved into Indonesian culture, attending traditional dances and musical performances. I even learned to play the Angklung, a traditional bamboo instrument. Exploring Indonesia's physical and historical geography through excursions to Tangkuban Perahu volcano, NuArt Sculpture Park, Asia-Afrika Conference Centre, and the Grand Dutch Colonial Building was a truly enlightening experience.

However, my most significant takeaway was the relationships formed with students from diverse cultures. Interacting with nearly 50 cultures, from the Dutch to the Armenians, in a week was an honour and a privilege. The Olympiad was undoubtedly one of the best weeks of my life, and I'm grateful for the friendships that will forever remind me of this extraordinary experience."



Above: Australian team and gold awardees at the 19th International Geography Olympiad in Bandung Indonesia. Photos supplied by author.



*Western Beach, Kooljaman at Cape Leveque. Western Australia. Image Source:*

The Council of the Geography Teachers Association NSW & ACT (GTA NSW & ACT) is New South Wales (NSW) and the Australian Capital Territory's (ACT)'s professional association for teachers of geography across sectors and across primary, secondary, and initial teacher education contexts. The Association aims to support its members in their teaching, learning and assessment of Geography through active advocacy for our subject, membership engagement strategies, provision of professional learning opportunities and materials, and the development of classroom-ready resources.

The GTA's Mission is to represent the professional interests of Geography teachers in NSW and ACT and enrich geographical education more broadly in society. Our vision is to enhance geography education in NSW and ACT by providing advocacy, professional learning, resources and support.

The Association is led by a dynamic, passionate and committed team of Councillors who advocate for a future-focused approach towards geographical education. I would like to thank the GTA Council for their support throughout the year. It is through the generosity and goodwill of volunteer work that enables our core activities to be delivered. This year was my fourth year on Council and first year as President. It was a steep learning curve. This was made easier through the support and guidance that I received from all Councillors. I was fortunate to work with an experienced executive team and, by effectively collaborating, we were able to deliver a comprehensive program for our members this year. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr Susan Caldis, Lorraine Chaffer, Dr Grant Kleeman, and Rebecca Sutcliffe for your guidance, support and mentoring this year. I appreciate your positive energy and quick responses to all my questions while I was navigating through my first year leading Council. Thank you for the time that you spent listening, advising and guiding me as I learnt the ropes of how things were done.

Each Councillor has made a positive contribution to our program this year. I would like to thank the following Councillors for their work this year:

- **Stephanie Boden** – HSC Exam package and conference support
- **Kieran Bonin** – Young Geographer Awards, delivering the keynote at the Google Spatial Technologies Conference, conference support and contribution to the Bulletin
- **Dr Susan Caldis** – Mentoring, advocacy, delivered keynote at the Google Spatial Technologies Conference and conference support, AGTA Chair

# GTA NSW & ACT ANNUAL REPORT 2023

- **Lorraine Chaffer** – Stage 6 Conference, Regional Conversations, Coordinator and lead author Stage 6 Writing Project, *Geography Bulletin*, posters, advocacy and consultation for the Stage 6 syllabus with key stakeholders including EECs, AIS, and Catholic Schools Offices
- **Drew Collins** – Stage 6 Writing Project, membership engagement and conference support
- **Michael Da Roza** – ACT Representative at AGTA meetings, Geography Big Week Out
- **Amy Freshwater** – Social Media
- **James Harte** – Two HSC live events, writing the Open Learning Course for the 2022 HSC exam and attending the Geography Big Week Out
- **Chris Jenkins** – Conference support and contribution to the *Geography Bulletin*
- **Dr Grant Kleeman** – Honorary Treasurer, conference support, financial advice and AGTA Treasurer
- **John Lewis** – Conference support
- **Alex Pentz** – HSC webinar, conference support and Geography Big Week Out
- **Martin Plüss** – Ongoing contribution to the *Geography Bulletin* and conference support
- **Rebecca Sutcliffe** – Minutes Secretary, conference support, recruiting executive assistant, GTA AGTA Representative and webinars
- **Ben Terrell** – First year at being co-opted – attending meetings and understanding Council operations
- **Stephanie Vardas** – First year at being co-opted, attending meeting and understanding Council operations.

The following Councillors have resigned from Council; Dr Paul Batten, Stephanie Vardas, John Lewis, Amy Freshwater and Christopher Jenkins. Thank you for your expertise and commitment to the vision and mission of the GTA. Dr Paul Batten has stepped away from Council this year, however he continues to run the E-Learning courses. We appreciate that Paul continues to be involved in the management of these courses. John Lewis has been on Council for 20 years and has been present for many conferences and events to ensure they have run smoothly. We wish you well in the future.

The Association works in partnership with the Professional Teachers' Council of NSW (PTC NSW) to provide member services. The PTC NSW team have been a tremendous support to Council by organising conferences and webinars, *Geography Bulletin*, awards, providing virtual treasurer services and the sale of resources etc. The partnership with PTC NSW is pivotal in being able to deliver our programs to members. Thank you to Holly Challenger, Malynda Price, Jill Sillar, Ashleigh Reborado, Mai Mai Lin and David Browne for your tireless work, assistance and ongoing advice throughout this year.

Core business for GTANSW & ACT Council continues to be focused on:

- Supporting NSW and ACT geography teachers, including out-of-field, early career, teachers new to geography, and experienced specialist geography teachers.
- Supporting recommendations from '[Geography: Shaping Australia's Future 2018](#) (Decadal Plan) at a state and territory scale which is part of a national agenda for geography education in Australian schools. Examples of these recommendations include:
  - To better support and prepare out-of-field teachers of geography;
  - To demonstrate how Geography can be recognised as a partial STEM subject;
  - To actively collaborate with academic geographers in universities and professional associations such as the Geographical Society of NSW and
  - strengthen connections between school geography, university study and career pathways.

During our Annual Planning Day for 2023, Council mapped out the events for the year ahead. The professional learning activities designed and delivered by the Association for 2023 and the Councillors involved in the projects are listed below.

- (i) Stage 6 Conference for the new Geography Syllabus in metropolitan Sydney – Two days (Lorraine Chaffer, Conference Convenor). Approximately 200 teachers attended each day at the Aerial Function Centre, Sydney.

Each participant received a printed copy of the Geography Bulletin. Eleven guest speakers presented and there was a GTA speaker for each session analysis (Lorraine Chaffer and Kieran Bonin). The program included a mix of analysis of key syllabus information and Content Focus Areas across Years 11 and 12 supported by 11 expert presenters.

- (ii) GTA Stage 6 Regional Conversations across eight venues included Wagga Wagga, Nowra, Bowral, Pambula Beach, Bellingen, Ballina, Wallsend, Tamworth. Participants were 87 teachers from across 50 schools. Venues were provided free by teachers who had attended the conference and were keen to get local networks established. Attendees received access to the Stage 6 Conference Vimeo recordings and resources via a Google Drive (Lorraine Chaffer).
- (iii) E-learning short courses (online); 12 courses in total (Dr Paul Batten and James Harte). Courses include concepts, mapping, Place and Liveability, Landscapes and Landforms, Understanding the HSC 2021 and 2022.

## List of Open Learning courses

- Integrating Maps
- Concepts Part1
- Concepts Part2
- Intro to Maps
- Intro to Topo Skills
- Showcasing STEM in Geography
- Teaching *Place & Liveability* (Geo 141)
- Teaching *Place and Liveability (experienced)* (Geo 241)
- Teaching Landscapes & Landforms (Geo 142)
- Teaching Landscapes & Landforms (*experienced*) (Geo 242).

## Senior geography courses

- Analysing the 2022 HSC Geography Exam
- Understanding the HSC Geography Exam
- Unpacking the HSC Geography Exam for Students.

## (iv) Other consultation days: Lorraine Chaffer represented GTA as a presenter

- 1 x day NSW EEC State Conference Dorrigo February (80 EEC teachers)
- 2 x full days Illawarra EEC (12 hours) Stage 6 planning days (30 teachers)
- 1 x day Rumbalara EEC Stage 6 planning day (20 teachers)
- 1 x day AIS State Conference – workshop session x 2 (80 teachers)
- 1 x day CEO State Conference (40 teachers)
- 2 x full day consultations with Catholic teachers
- Bathurst (February) x 12 teachers
- Wagga (November) x 12 teachers.

## (v) Webinars presented by GTA NSW & ACT Councillors for the new Stage 6 Geography syllabus

- People, Patterns and Processes – Alex Pentz (planned for Term 4)
- Geographical Investigations – Kieran Bonin (planned for Term 4)
- Earth's Natural Systems – Lorraine Chaffer (planned for Term 4).

## (vi) Other professional learning

- Stage 6 Regional conversations for Stage 6 syllabus implementation (Lorraine Chaffer)
- Members-only event hosted by and at Google Sydney focused on the use of geospatial technologies (Katerina Stojanovski)
- Webinars presented by external providers such as Cura Education (Katerina Stojanovski).

## (vii) Resources

- Careers Posters (Lorraine Chaffer) – Sets of posters continue to be sold through the website. Posters are distributed to GTA Conference and professional learning events as a thank you bonus to participants. The posters support Geography 7–12 syllabus content areas and careers. The latest addition was an A1 careers poster QR coded to the AGTA Careers website
- HSC Exam Resource Package (Stephanie Boden)
- Downloadable 2020–2022 HSC lecture videos by topic
- Geography Bulletin
  - Bulletin 4 2022 Theme: Hopeful Geography – Editor Lorraine Chaffer. Articles were based on Hopeful Geography – moving students beyond feelings of anxiety and despair to giving them hope for the future and career opportunities using Geography.
  - Bulletin 1 2023 Theme: Spatial Technologies – Editor Lorraine Chaffer. Several articles on spatial technologies use in the geography classroom as well as other resources for 7–10.
  - Bulletin 2 2023 Theme: Stage 6 Geography. Plan Early, Plan well, Plan Together – Editor Lorraine Chaffer. This edition was a journal for the Stage 6 conference where participants could take notes and access summaries of key information from the conference. After the conference, the edition was populated with notes from expert speakers and distributed to members to use for planning.
  - Bulletin 3 2023 Theme: Resources – Editor Katerina Stojanovski. This edition had a feature article on the Mystery of Blood Falls, various resources for 7–10 to support the teaching of Geography skills and Local Geographies.

## (viii) Stage 6 Geography Text Books

- The case-studies text books *Powerful Geography 1* and *Powerful Geography 2* are currently under development. They are funded and self-published by GTA NSW & ACT. The Year 11 book will be ready for 2024 and the Year 12 book will be ready for 2025. This project is led by Lorraine Chaffer, Lead Author, Series Editor and Coordinator. Lorraine is assisted by Louise Swanson. The Author team are Lorraine Chaffer, Louise Swanson, Karen Bowden, Khya Brooks, and Matt Carroll.

## (ix) ABC Digibook

- GTA NSW & ACT consulted with ABC and provided advice in the initial stages of the development of the Landscapes and Landforms Digibook.

## Open Learning – Dr Paul Batten and James Harte

The GTA NSW & ACT's Online learning continues to support teachers with quality, anytime, anywhere, NESA-accredited professional development. The highlight of the year was another hugely successful *Unpacking the HSC Exam* series, which was fully subscribed with over a hundred participants. Around 10 other courses are running, including an HSC exam course for students, Stage 4 support courses, Geographical concept courses, and skills courses, including one co-developed with AGTA. These courses are both good value and highly successful with very positive participant feedback.

## Young Geographer Award 2022/2023 – Kieran Bonin

The 2022 Young Geographer Award was successful with a wide range of schools across the sector. Prizes were awarded in the following categories:

- NESAs Senior Geography Project (SGP)/ international baccalaureate (IB) Internal Assessment Award/ACT Equivalent Project
- Geographical Research Award
- Geography in STEM Award.

## Geography Big Week Out – Michael Da Roza, James Harte and Alex Pentz

The 2023 Geography's Big Week Out (GBWO) was held from 25 to 29 September in Darwin and Litchfield National Park. Sixteen Year 11 students from around Australia were invited to participate, based on their outstanding performances in the Australian Geography Competition. This program is a mix of stimulating and hands-on geography activities, focusing on fieldwork and an application of geographic knowledge. The GBWO is designed to challenge and extend high-performing senior students, whilst also providing them with a week of engaging and enjoyable activities with like-minded individuals who share a passion and enthusiasm for Geography. The purpose of this week was also to select four finalists to represent Australia in Dublin, Ireland, as competitors in the International Geography Olympiad, an annual competition for 16- to 19-year-old geography students from all over the world. Geography Councillors Michael, James, and Alex were supervising this program in preparation for hosting the 2024 event in New South Wales and the ACT. All information on the National Geography Competition can be found at this website: <https://geographycompetition.org.au/>

# GTA NSW & ACT Support for Teachers and Students



## Professional Learning events in Semester 2

- **Online Learning courses** – Anytime PL
- **Webinars**
- **HSC Exam Prep** – Resource package for members
- **Google Tools in the Geography classroom** – Members only

## Online Social Media Support

- **Facebook page**
- **HSC Teachers Group**
- **Primary Teachers Group**
- **Twitter @gtanswact**

## Resources

- **Geography Bulletin**
- **Geography Bulletin Guide** (Find any article)
- **Classroom Posters**
- **Scoop.it** media curation site. Topics K–12

Keep up to date with upcoming events.

Visit the GTA website **HERE**

# GTA NSW & ACT FINANCIAL REPORT 2023

## GTA NSW & ACT Annual Financial Report

GTA NSW & ACT finished the 2022-23 financial year with a small surplus of **\$86,284.00** (a modest increase on the previous year's surplus of \$73,722.00).

### Major sources of income:

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| • Conference                  | \$120,110.00 |
| • CAL                         | \$12,273.00  |
| • Event                       | \$59,740.00  |
| • Grant                       | \$500.00     |
| • Resource income             | \$928.00     |
| • Membership                  | \$109,130.00 |
| • Sales (textbooks & posters) | \$25,344.00  |
| • Other                       | \$790.00     |

**TOTAL** **\$328,815.00**

### Major areas of expenditure:

|                       |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| • COGS                | \$35,444.00 |
| • Audit               | \$2,000.00  |
| • Bookkeeping         | \$9,460.00  |
| • Capitation (AGTA)   | \$7,085.00  |
| • Conference costs    | \$83,867.00 |
| • Graphic design      | \$20,954.00 |
| • Rent                | \$16,783.00 |
| • Postage             | \$1,639.00  |
| • Secretariat         | \$12,783.00 |
| • Subscriptions       | \$9750.00   |
| • Website             | \$1,894.00  |
| • Travel              | \$3,424.00  |
| • Workshop and events | \$33,790.00 |
| • Other               | \$3,599.00  |

**TOTAL** **\$242,531.00**

**Total current assets: \$469,091.00**

**Total members funds: \$464,229.00**



**AGTA 2024**  
*a sense of place*  
2-4 October Darwin, NT

## **Sponsorship & Exhibitor Prospectus**

**Australian Geography Teachers Association Conference**  
Darwin, Northern Territory, 2 - 4 October 2024  
DoubleTree Esplanade Darwin

**A copy of the AGTA Sponsorship and Exhibitor Prospectus can be accessed [here](#).**



## Invitation to sponsors

Opportunities to support our inaugural Darwin conference



Previous conferences in other cities have attracted 150 to 200 attendees, but we know the additional cost to travel to Darwin and lingering uncertainty from the pandemic may impact on numbers. We believe the 2022 AGTA conference numbers in Hobart reflect the likely attendance pattern for our conference - 125 people. Already, the opportunity to explore Northern Australia is already generating excitement in geography teachers across Australia, and we have already approached geography bodies in Singapore and Indonesia to encourage international participation. We will be actively promoting our conference to maximise our - and your - reach.

We are likely to include some virtual sessions because we know many educators in remote parts of the Northern Territory and Australia can struggle to access face-to-face professional learning. Our sponsorship packages make it easy for our sponsors and exhibitors to engage with both our physical and virtual attendees.

We hope you will consider supporting us to make the inaugural Darwin conference a success!



## Invitation to exhibitors

As October can be a time of change in the weather, all of our exhibitor spaces are inside and in high-traffic areas close to the lecture theatre and catering spaces. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to mingle with exhibitors, where they can learn about products, services or organisations that can assist them in their teaching. Exhibitors may also include relevant items in the conference tote bags.

In addition to a physical presence, exhibitors will have the option to have a page on the conference app, which includes your logo, links, contact details and the ability to include a PDF attachment.

We are currently liaising with the venue regarding the set up of the exhibition area, so the following are subject to change. Please let us know if you have any specific requirements.

- Exhibitors will be provided with a trestle table with two chairs available
- The cost will include catering for one attendee, with an additional cost for extra people
- You will be required to provide evidence of Public Liability Insurance
- WiFi will be available
- Power will be available upon request
- Please bring everything with you that you need, including resources, banners etc. We will not be able to support with photocopying etc. at or prior to the event.

Exhibitors may like to register for social events and are very welcome to do so.

Allocation of exhibition stands will be done by the conference organising committee, based on sponsorship inclusions and date of application.





## Registering your interest

We will be accepting online registrations from sponsors and exhibitors. If you are unwilling or unable to use the online platform, please contact the conference convener, Steve Hawkins at [hello@ghtant.org.au](mailto:hello@ghtant.org.au) for alternative arrangements.

<https://agta24.au/sponsorform>



Please contact Steve Hawkins if you require any further information or to discuss your sponsorship.

[\*\*hello@ghtant.org.au\*\*](mailto:hello@ghtant.org.au)

Photo credits: Conference images are from the 2019 Festival of Teaching, which the conference conveners organised and are used with permission. It reflects how our conference will look. Images of Darwin and other locations are used under license from Canva.com. The image of the children on Page 4 is by Steve Hawkins - All Rights Reserved.







# ADVICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

## Geography Bulletin guidelines

1. *Objective:* The *Geography Bulletin* is the quarterly journal of The Geography Teachers' Association of NSW & ACT Inc. The role of the *Geography Bulletin* is to disseminate up-to-date geographical information and to widen access to new geographic teaching ideas, methods and content. Articles of interest to teachers and students of geography in both secondary and tertiary institutions are invited, and contributions of factually correct, informed analyses, and case studies suitable for use in secondary schools are particularly welcomed.

2. *Content:* Articles, not normally exceeding 5000 words, should be submitted to the GTA NSW & ACT Office by email [gta.admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:gta.admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au)

Submissions can also be sent directly to the editor: Katerina Stojanovski ([gta.admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:gta.admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au))

Articles are welcomed from tertiary and secondary teachers, students, business and government representatives. Articles may also be solicited from time to time. Articles submitted will be evaluated according to their ability to meet the objectives outlined above.

3. *Format:* Digital submission in Word format.

- Tables should be on separate pages, one per page, and figures should be clearly drawn, one per page, in black on opaque coloured background, suitable for reproduction.
- Photographs should be in high resolution digital format. An indication should be given in the text of approximate location of tables, figures and photographs.
- Every illustration needs a caption.
- Photographs, tables and illustrations sourced from the internet must acknowledge the source and have a URL link to the original context.

**Note: Please try to limit the number of images per page to facilitate ease of reproduction by teachers.**

**Diagrams created using templates should be saved as an image for ease of incorporation into the bulletin.**

**All assessment or skills tasks should have an introduction explaining links to syllabus content and outcomes. A Marking Guideline for this type of article is encouraged.**

4. *Title:* The title should be short, yet clear and descriptive. The author's name should appear in full, together with a full title of position held and location of employment.

5. *Covering Letter:* As email with submitted articles. If the manuscript has been submitted to another journal, this should be stated clearly.

6. *Photo of Contributor:* Contributors may enclose a passport-type photograph and a brief biographical statement as part of their article.

7. *References:* References should follow the conventional author-date format:

Abbott, B. K. (1980) *The Historical and Geographical Development of Muswellbrook* Newcastle: Hunter Valley Press.

Harrison, T. L. (1973a) *Railway to Jugiong* Adelaide: The Rosebud Press. (2nd Ed.)

8. *Spelling* should follow the Macquarie Dictionary, and Australian place names should follow the Geographical Place Names Board for the appropriate state.

## Refereeing

All suitable manuscripts submitted to the *Geography Bulletin* are subject to the process of review. The authors and contributors alone are responsible for the opinions expressed in their articles and while reasonable checks are made to ensure the accuracy of all statements, neither the editor nor the Geography Teachers' Association of NSW & ACT Inc accepts responsibility for statements or opinions expressed herein.

## Books for review should be sent to:

The GTA NSW & ACT Council  
PO Box 699  
Lidcombe NSW 1825

## Editions

There are four bulletins each year – two published each semester. Special Editions are created on need.

## Notice to Advertisers

'Geography Bulletin' welcomes advertisements concerning publications, resources, workshops, etc. relevant to geography education.

FULL PAGE (26 x 18cm) – \$368.50

Special issues \$649.00

HALF PAGE (18 x 13cm or 26 x 8.5cm) – \$214.50

Special Issues \$382.80

QUARTER PAGE (13 x 8.5cm or 18 x 6.5cm) – \$132.00

Special issues \$242.00

All prices include GST

## Advertising bookings should be directed to:

GTA NSW & ACT Office  
Telephone: (02) 9716 0378  
Fax: (02) 9564 2342  
Email: [gta.admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au](mailto:gta.admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au)





The  
Geography Teachers Association  
of New South Wales Inc.