



# 85th ANNUAL REPORT

## Geographical Society of New South Wales Inc.

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# 85th Annual Report

## Geographical Society of New South Wales

### 1. PUBLICATIONS

#### 1.1 Australian Geographer

Overall there has been a steady flow of papers – about four per month – with about 50% success rate. The turnover – usually two months – is superior to most international journals. A new topical introductory section has been instated called “Thinking Space”. These are dynamic pieces contemplating contemporary issues that affect our world. It is hoped that these pieces will get out to the wider public and demonstrate what geography in the Australian region has to offer. There is some prospect of links with the AGTA that might lead to publishing occasional high quality pieces aimed at particular parts of the curriculum. The book reviews are also slowly taking off. This year’s special issue “Migration, Land and Livelihoods: Creating Alternative Modernities in the Pacific” went to press in June.

#### 1.2 Geographical Society Web Site

The Society’s new web site was launched at the Prize Night on 6 December 2011. Its home page is at a new address <http://www.geogsoc.org.au>. The new site incorporates:

- a new style and look consistent with the Society's stationery
  - restructuring of the site map with additional content for many of the pages
  - new resources pages covering Publications , Conference Abstracts, Useful Links, Travellers Club Reports, Study Tour Reports and Members Profiles
  - a Photo Gallery of images with a geographical theme
  - a Where in the World page on which “mystery” photos are regularly posted for identification by members and visitors
  - a site search facility
- Options are now under consideration for on-line membership applications and renewals.

Web site content continues to be regularly refreshed with updates to Study Tours, Events, Awards and Resources as and when new material becomes available.

### 2. AWARDS

#### 2.1 University Student Prize Winners

The Outstanding Academic Achievement in Second-Year Geography in 2010 were awarded to the following students.

- Melinda Smart ~ University of Wollongong
- Anthony McCosker ~ University of New England
- Jessica Petherbridge ~ University of Newcastle
- Laura Woollacott ~ University of Sydney
- Nicole Ann Ashby ~ Macquarie University
- Melinda Norquay ~ University of New South Wales

- Kate Sewell ~ University of New South Wales (ADFA)

## 2.2 Macdonald Holmes Award

MacDonald Holmes Medal 2011 was awarded to Professor Richie Howitt. Professor Richie Howitt has made an outstanding contribution to Australian Geography. He has also been supportive of the work of the Geography Teachers' Association of NSW and takes a close interest in the study of Geography in schools. Richie reflects passion for education, geography and justice in his unconventional path to become Professor of Human Geography at Macquarie University.

## 3. PROGRAM OF SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

### 3.1 Fourth Year Honours Conference, 2011

The 15th Annual Geographical Society of NSW Honours Conference was successfully hosted by the University of Newcastle on Monday 14th November, 2011. In total there were 30 attendees representing four different universities and encompassing current Honours students, those who had just finished, as well as academic colleagues. There were 12 presentations given by students representing the University of Sydney, the University of Western Sydney, Macquarie University and the University of Wollongong.

The Jim Rose award for the best presentation at the conference was given to Isabelle Whitehead (USyd) for her paper titled: "Closed channels or open waters? Mekong dams, transboundary law and the Xayaburi Prior Consultation process". Jacqueline McKinnon (UoW) received the Highly Commended award for a presentation on a human geography topic for her presentation titled "Exploring attitudes and practices towards nature in the NSW State Emergency Service". Louise Kristensen (Macquarie) received the Highly Commended award for a presentation on a physical geography topic, for her paper titled "Pyrogenic remobilisation of historic leaded petrol emission in Australia".

### 3.2 Study Tours

#### **The Seventh "Best of South America" Study Tour – January, 2011 - as reported to Council Meeting - March 2011**

I am pleased to report that this was another very successful Study Tour, although it did have some minor problem ( a missed flight in particular). It ran with 25+1 participants having had 3 last-minute cancellations due to a car accidents and a serious health problem. A detailed Report was attached. It was enjoyed very much by all. The Study Tour earned commission for the Society of \$6,250 (25 x \$250), but this had been expected to be \$7,000 (28 x \$250).

#### **The "East Canada and New England in the Colourful Fall" Study Tour – September, 2011 - as reported to Council Meeting - December 2011**

This was a very successful tour in spite of having less than the minimum number of participants planned (only 14+1), but because of the improved exchange rate, its cost per person was actually \$850 less than the brochure price. The Society earned the expected built in commission of \$250 per person – \$3,500.

#### **The "Amazing Myanmar, Yunnan & Tibet" Study Tour - April/May 2012. - as reported to Council Meeting of June 2012**

This tour ended up with 23+1 participants, the ideal maximum number (divisible by 4) for six 4-berth

compartments on the Tibet train. Its twin-share price was \$8,345, with a single supplement of \$1,145, for 32 days from 24 April to 25 May, 2012, but, with the improved exchange rate, people were refunded just over \$200 each. It was a very successful tour and extremely interesting (mind-blowing!). The tour earned the Society commission of \$5,750 (\$250 per person) which was forwarded to Rosalie Atie just before departure.

### **Kiama Field Trip**

The Society sponsored a geographical excursion through the central parts of Kiama on Saturday, May 12, 2012. It was organized and led by Bruce Ryan. Sixteen participants explored the historical evolution of the town's central business district, the area's coastal geomorphology, and the local cafes.

### 3.3 The Travellers Club 2010-2011

Since I succeeded Ela Taranto as Convenor of the Club in July 2011, the following talks have been delivered:

24<sup>th</sup> July 2011: "Hot spots of the Middle East" by Stephen Codrington

11<sup>th</sup> September: "A different tale of two cities: Cincinnati Ohio and Sydney Australia" by Bruce Ryan

6<sup>th</sup> November: "From Kathmandu to Mount Everest" by Douglas Raupach

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012: "Voyage to Antarctica" by Tony Cavenagh

6<sup>th</sup> May: "The puddle-jump: the Caribbean to Australia via Panama" by David Hetherington

22<sup>nd</sup> July: "The last threads of the Iron Curtain. Transnistria and North Korea's border regions" by Stephen Codrington

The talks varied from Bruce Ryan's erudite comparison to more amateur but quite well organised deliveries. They were well received by an audience averaging 30-odd. Most ran for an hour or so, but after introducing Stephen Codrington last month as the best presenter in my experience, he spoke for an hour and 45 minutes. As far as I could see, no one in the audience went to sleep and when I invited them to question the speaker over tea and coffee (because some people needed to get away), they all held their seats and questioned him in situ.

The longstanding lucky door prize has been discontinued and the savings transferred to the speaker's book voucher.

Rosalie Atie has done an excellent job as caterer and Lee Craymer continues as doorman. I am uninformed as to the relationship between takings and catering costs.

The remaining talks for 2012 will be delivered by two well known members of the Society; the first talk for 2013 is arranged and two or three others are in prospect. However, Councillors are invited to keep in mind the need for new speakers and to suggest anyone who comes to their attention.

16<sup>th</sup> September: "Game parks of East Africa" by John Bliss

11<sup>th</sup> November: "North Sea to Black Sea: river cruising across Europe" by Colin Sale

March 2013: "The Ukraine" by Graeme Marshall

Bob Solomon  
**Convenor**

#### 4. GENERAL SOCIETY INFORMATION

##### 4.1 Archives

The Society sadly records the death of Ken Hill, its archivist, on November 8, 2011. Ken had supervised the relocation and rearrangement of the archives on several occasions, and served on Council for thirteen years. His successor is Bruce Ryan. The Society's archival collection remains housed at Storage King, 24A Anzac Street, Greenacre, NSW 2190.

##### 4.2 Council Membership

<b>PRESIDENT</b>
Professor Kevin Dunn
<b>VICE PRESIDENT X 4</b>
Associate Professor Gordon Waitt
Emeritus Professor Bruce Ryan
Mr Colin Sale
Dr Melissa Neave
<b>HONORARY TREASURERS</b>
Associate Professor Jim Forrest
Associate Professor Phil McManus
<b>HON SECRETARIES</b>
Mr Martin Pluss

Associate Professor Gordon Waitt
<b>COUNCILLORS</b>
Dr Bob Solomon
Dr Kathy Mee
Dr Natascha Klocker
Dr Emma Power
Dr John Emery
Mr Ken Hill
Mr Peter Herborn
Mr Rod Lane
<b>STUDENT COUNCIL REP</b>
Ms Alanna Kamp

##### 4.3 Planning Day Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2011

The Society heard a report on the *Australian Geographer* from a T&F publishing editor. The journal is travelling well despite global trends of decreasing subscriptions.

An *Australian Geographer* prize was tabled and plans to instate this were set in motion.

There were decisions made to rejuvenate the journal's Editorial Board, including expansion of the roles of members of the board and possible new members.

The Society's new website was previewed with a view to recommendations. The hard work of Phil McManus and John Bliss was acknowledged.

The benefits of membership to the Society were discussed and there were recommendations of working towards aligning the Society's interests with Council members' careers. However, it was acknowledged that the Society is currently quite active and does much for its members.

Councillors were prompted to begin thinking about a response to the Australian Curriculum: Geography.

Emma Power was nominated as the new representative for the Society on the Geographical Names Board.

##### 4.4 Education Sub-Committee

Education Sub-committee has engaged in a range of activities this year. The most extensive of these has been the review of the *Draft Australian Curriculum - Geography* which was released for public consultation by ACARA in October, 2011. Reviewing the document was a lengthy process which involved checking the alignment of the curriculum, content coverage, levels of cognitive demand and the integration of cross curriculum priorities. The committee has also started the process of mapping specific resources to key topics within the curriculum. This task can be completed once the final

document is released. It is hoped that links to these resources can be made available to all members through the Society's webpage in the future. The final report was submitted to ACARA on behalf of The Society in February. Members of the subcommittee would like to thank all members of Council who provided input to the review process.

#### 4.5 Marketing and Promotions Sub-Committee

The Committee met on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2012. A website overview was provided. Website traffic has been monitored since the new website went live. New practices of the Society Office notifying all members of updates to the website and encouraging them to visit other parts of the website have been instated. The website is updated regularly, particularly with Where in the World? and the Member in Profile sections of the website to profile geography and geographers, and to continually offer members and other visitors to the website something of interest.

At the meeting a decision was made to concentrate on improving and updating existing sections of the website, particularly the photographs and the news. One new section was added: Geography in the News. The decision was made to put in place online membership renewal and make it operational for 2012-2013 membership renewals.

There was discussion on how to best optimise our website so as to generate additional traffic. It was agreed to keyword every page and this has since been achieved.

Membership innovations such as introductory offers and reciprocal membership were tabled.

Martin Pluss and Gordon Waitt  
Honorary Secretaries  
Geographical Society of New South Wales

Rosalie Atie  
Office Manager  
Geographical Society of New South Wales