**AGM report from the Chairperson**

**Year ended 2017**

2017 was a super busy year for the AGTA committee. We wrote exams, organised workshops for scholarship students, had a series of professional learning courses for teachers from across NZ, maintained our two FB pages (and twitter), kept our website vibrant and useful and grew our membership numbers.

Our membership number at the end of 2017 was around 170 member schools and a few individual members. Most of our members are now actually from outside of Auckland. It seems to us that people throughout the country are valuing the work that AGTA does – thank-you everyone for this.

The year began with a new committee rocking and rolling and ready for action.

The calendar was constructed with the first event out of the block – A course for Teachers New to teaching Geography – ten new teachers attended the afternoon session which was run by Jane Evans and myself. We had a great afternoon with advice and help for BTs and some people who were teaching geography for the first time. We went over standards (external and internal); ways to tackle things and tricks to survive your first year. The comments received afterwards were positive and I am sure the new committee will be keen to run such a course again in 2018. With the growing shortage of teachers across the country we may see more staff picking up classes with little experience. Thanks Jane and Mary for this.

Later in Term 2, we offered a course on marking externals using the 8-point system (2.3) as well as marking internals holistically. Again, it was an after-school course, well attended and valuable. Jennifer Mayne, from Kings College ran the courses with Mariska Visser (ex Avondale) and they did a fine job. I know they were nervous about running the course but reports coming through to us later suggested they were worried needlessly. There were a few comments that people wanted more help with this, especially in relation to moderators reports and also as we are having to provide more guess work when reading students external examinations.

We started our scholarship workshops in term 2. The topic of Technology in a geographic context was a tricky one but we had three fabulous workshops.

The workshops were run by the AGTA in conjunction with the School of Environment. Run at the University of Auckland, students had lectures from university lecturers, they participated in activities such as creating diagrams and writing an argument.

Mel Wall in the School of Environment co-ordinated these workshops and liaised with the lecturers. Thanks Mel for this.

The students had lectures on:

Mel Wall spoke on mobility, technology and society.

Agnieszka Leszczynski spoke on Hurricane Harvey: Geographers, technology, and the environment)

And, lastly Tom Bakker spoke about smart city systems

These workshops were well attended with around 150 to 200 students attending.

To cater for our out of Auckland members or those unable to attend, we videoed the talks and published all the resources on the website. I do hope everyone found them useful.

Thanks particularly to Steve Smith for Takapuna Grammar who videoed these events.

We had one workshop that seemed to clash with senior prize givings so in 2018 we have changed the dates – one workshop in term 1, 2 and 3. This should be a good change.

 And, the topic of freshwater has also made our planning for 2018 much easier.

The annual AGTA quiz was held once again here at St. Cuthbert’s College. We had 20 teams enter and the competition was fierce.

The results saw the lead change often over the course of the night. However, after making odd constructions with play dough, answering tricky questions about the shape of countries and completing the obligatory A – Z competition the final three teams were: Westlake Boys (3rd); Takapuna (2nd) and the winners were Mt. Albert Grammar (1st) – congratulations MAGs.

The students loved the quiz, the prizes and the food provided by our on-site caterers.

Thank-you to Claire McKay for the efforts she put in for this event – locating cool badges and getting all the prizes for the competitors.

We continued to keep the costs of our courses, quizzes and subscriptions as low as possible so they are easily accessible for you all. We do try to give you value for money. Please let us know if they are too expensive.

The other big event of the year was the provision of exams for students via our website. We ask teachers to write these for us and then we moderate them during a meeting. They are supposed to be aligned to the assessment specifications for each year. We are sure you like them because on the day we uploaded the exams our website went crazy.

In the October break I represented the AGTA at the SOCCON conference in Napier. I gave a paper on working with students who are struggling with their learning; met lots of people IRL who I only knew from Facebook posts or emails – this was excellent; and enjoyed hearing some fabulous speakers including Frances Valentine (mindlab); the retirement commissioner and many other inspiring people.

Thank-you AGTA for letting me go and represent you. I appreciated it.

The website was updated constantly throughout the year with lots of new resources being provided. Thank-you very much to everyone who contributed cool resources. I wish more of us would add things – they don’t have to be perfect – but just something simple or fun you have done – we will all appreciate it if you share. Many hands sharing make light work.

Jane Evans has represented all of us on the BOGT and has attended most of our committee meetings reporting back on nationwide issues affecting geography including debates on credit values, wording in internals and so on. We all appreciate your wisdom Jane – thank-you for all that you do for us.

Term 4 saw me taking a break from the AGTA as I concentrated on a personal matter that needed attending. The committee stepped up and organised an awesome end of year course. The speakers were great, the organisation of the day was well done and as usual much fun and laughter was had alongside the learning. Catching up with old friends and colleagues was just great too. Thank-you very much to Jane Evans, Amy Denis, Michelle Harvey, Jennifer Mayne, Gill Hanna, Hannah Wood, Mariska Visser, Claire McKay and Jane Foster for being wonderful committee members whilst I had a brief “sabbatical”.

One of the issues the committee has faced has been the issue of traffic congestion in Auckland. This has meant that committee members have struggled at times to travel across Auckland for our monthly meetings. At our last committee meeting we discussed having our meetings via Skype which would result on fewer car journeys on the road and less time travelling. I think this is definitely something the new committee could consider as this factor alone does put people off doing things after school.

This year we say farewell to:

* Mariska Visser who was our wonderful secretary. She has taken a break from teaching and is living in Switzerland enjoying the beautiful scenery (and skiing when she can – before injuring herself recently). Thank-you Mariska – you are awesome – please come back to us one day.
* Claire McKay is stepping down as Treasurer. Claire has ably stepped up to deal with our finances which is a challenging job as schools all have different systems, often fail to pay their bills or they fail to put some form of ID on the online payments which makes the job a bit of a trick. Thank-you Claire for all that you have done for AGTA.

And, congratulations must go to our committee member, Gill Hanna who recently completed her thesis – I know Gill will be pleased to have weekends to herself again. Well done!

Thank-you all for your interest and enthusiasm in teaching geography at your respective schools – our subject is in good hands.