**AGM report from the Chairperson**

**Year ended 2018**

The AGTA had a fantastic year in 2018 with many things going on. The committee welcomed an outstanding group of teachers – many of whom were new to committee work. We met monthly and trialled having our meetings via Zoom so we could accommodate our committee member, Holly, from Bream Bay College. This was great to be able to do and now we are a little better at this new technology I’m sure the new committee will be able to do this so much better especially since Auckland’s traffic woes are still continuing.

2018 was a busy year for the AGTA committee. We wrote exams (we think you liked them given the huge increase in hits on the website); in junction with Mel Wall at the School of Environment, UoA, Jane Foster and myself, we organised workshops for scholarship students along the theme of Freshwater; we ran a series of after school professional learning courses for teachers from across NZ including one in the Hawkes Bay and another in Dunedin; answered copious emails and gave advice and guidance to teachers across the country; maintained our two FB pages (and twitter); kept our website vibrant and useful by adding new resources for you to use with your students. Resources added included new internal assessments, fun activities to do with your classes, adding the recorded lectures for scholarship geography and much more. We ran our popular end of year course for teachers in late November which was attended by many members and lastly, we grew our membership numbers.

Our membership number at the end of 2018 was around 204 member schools and a few individual members – this is an increase of 34 members from the previous year. In 2011, our numbers were around 65 schools, so I think this growth is a testament to the hard work and efforts of all those on the committee since that time. Our registrations to join again this year are already sitting at 170 schools. Most of our members continue to be 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 and your support.

The year (2018) began with a new committee rocking and rolling and ready for action. The calendar was constructed in our March meeting and it was indeed another busy year.

We ran a few afternoon courses in 2018 for teachers including a course on teaching scholarship and one on marking. We listen to your ideas and if you have ideas of what might be useful then please do let the committee know.

At the end of the year we ran our annual course – Making Geography Great Again – which was well received by you all. Resources from the course were uploaded onto the website for everyone to access. We couldn’t have run this course without the contribution of Aidan Daly from Hobsonville Point who put many hours into the course organising the excellent speakers, the hats and the neat challenge with the name tags. Thanks Aidan, for taking the course to the next level. Thanks also to the facilitators who lead sessions on a range of topics – we hoped to spark ideas from these sessions and give attendees things to think about as they planned for 2019 and beyond. Gareth Haddon brought us into the 21st century and we shared the guest speaker sessions on FB live – it was quite easy apparently and we had people login from across the country. It’s nice to be able to share what we manage to do in Auckland with our members across the country. Well done to the committee for all the great work and thank-you.

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.

We started our scholarship workshops in term 2. The topic of Freshwater in a geographic context was a great topic with 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 freshwater in general across the globe discussing global issues around freshwater including the concept of water wars.

Karen Fisher looked at freshwater from a human geographer’s perspective.

And, lastly Anthony Fowler, investigated the idea of freshwater in an urban context and planning needed for the future.

These workshops were well attended with around 150 to 200 students attending. I have recently received an email from two students to thank us for the course we ran – one received an outstanding scholarship and she said “It wouldn’t have happened for her without our workshops” and the other wrote to say that she “loved the challenges that the workshops provided “and that she liked getting a taste of university before she actually went. By the way she is studying Geography and Environmental Science at Canterbury this year – partially as a result of the workshops - so well-done team.

We continued 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.

And, as you know the topic for 2019 is quite challenging – planning for the 2019 workshops are underway – we hope to have a great programme for you and your students.

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: Takapuna (3rd); Mt Albert Grammar (2nd) and the winners were Mt. Albert Grammar (1st) – congratulations MAGs – again!!!!!!!

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

Thank-you to everyone for the efforts they put in for this event especially Heather Roberts who kept us all happy with food and lollies. I think the kids loved it. (My guess is that teachers had fun too!)

The other big event of the year for the committee 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 committee 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.

The website has been managed by me since we introduced it and is, I hope, a useful resource. I have updated material on the website on a daily basis adding resources, links and ideas as well as answering the many questions that arise from members (many about passwords!). 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 ideas make light work. An email was sent to everyone a few weeks ago advising you all how to add resources – do try, it’s easy to do and it would be nice to see new resources.

In the October holidays in 2018, I attended a three-day GIS course run by GIS gurus and organised by the Teachers Refresher Centre – I recommend you go if it gets offered again. At this course, AGTA hosted an early pizza and snack night at the local watering hole in Pt Chevalier – it was a great way to let the attendees know about what we do in the AGTA and how we can help.

In mid-November, I visited the Hawkes Bay geography cluster group where I spent the morning stomping around the rivers of the Hawkes Bay and considering how they could take students out into the field using the rivers – research, geographic issue came to mind immediately as well as extreme natural events (flooding) and natural processes came to mind. In the afternoon after a delicious lunch at Lindisfarne College, I ran two sessions on writing for excellence and strategies to improve literacy in our classrooms. (I also took the opportunity to visit some vineyards, walk up Te Mata Peak and stroll along the Napier waterfront). Thanks Andrew Lessard, for hosting me.

Later that month, I went to Dunedin and ran sessions on literacy with the Otago geographers and I also did a session on scholarship Geography. I had a great day with the Otago Geography teachers as well – always great to put a face to the name.

Most recently we are working, in conjunction with the Auckland City Council, to get Joseph Kerski speaking with our senior students about geography and the role of GIS in geography – there is still time to get involved! Also, he will be speaking to teachers on Monday 25th March here at St. Cuthbert’s College – will be a great talk.

One of the issues the committee has continued to face 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. We have tried running our meetings via Zoom and 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 a number of committee members:

* Isla McKnight from Westlake Girls. Isla was a great contributor to the AGTA despite her youthfulness in teaching. She has decided to embark on an OE and I think at present she is working in a vineyard in South Australia. Isla is planning on moving to Scotland to teach.
* Gareth Haddon previously from Aorere College joined us at the start of the year and he made an impact on the committee immediately – what a man. Unfortunately, for us, but fortunately for Taranaki he has moved to Inglewood College and is enjoying life down there – about to become a Dad so life will be busy plus.
* Leigh Lees-Green joined us from Marist College and then St. Ketigerns. She is now off on parental leave with baby arriving earlier this month. Best of luck with the new adventure Leigh.
* Amy Denis has been on the AGTA committee for many years and her contribution has been invaluable – she is wise and innovative always keen to contribute to everything we have done. Her family life and work commitments have increased in the past few years and she is much busier now. Her son starts school this year, so she is taking a step back to concentrate on family and new roles in her school. Thank-you Amy for all that you have done for the AGTA we appreciate it.

Jane Evans has represented all of us on the BOGT and this year has stepped down as she starts a new role. We all appreciate your wisdom Jane and look forward to you working helping Geography teachers across the country – thank-you for all that you do for us Jane!

AGTA (and all that we do) is envied by other subject areas – the vibrancy and enthusiasm of the teachers in this organisation is impressive. Thank-you all for your interest and love of teaching geography at your respective schools – our subject is in good hands.

I have loved being the chairperson of the AGTA for the past six years. I have also enjoyed being part of a wonderful organisation/committee – I looked it up in the records and it seems I’ve been on the committee for the better half of 15 years (not consecutively though you’ll be pleased to hear). The friendships I have made and the experiences I have had, have been excellent and I wouldn’t swap them. I hope to remain on the committee this year and I thoroughly recommend joining the committee - it’s some of the best professional learning you can have.

Thank-you all for your support and encouragement to me over the years, especially in 2017 which was a tough year for me. It has been a blast representing you all but it is time for fresh faces (younger ones and less wrinkled), new ideas and new initiatives to occur. I wish the new committee a great year and to you all a wonderful teaching year – one I hope is not too disrupted by too much industrial action!

Thank you

Mary Robinson

(14/3/2019)