



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

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 to organise an invoice. If you have any questions email 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/ • 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^o 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.