

PTCNSW Awards

Marie Bashir Medal

Lorraine Chaffer

Lorraine Chaffer has been a committed member of the Geography Teachers Association of NSW and ACT (GTA NSW & ACT) for almost 20 years. Lorraine's focus has always been the provision of Professional Learning that reaches across career-stage requirements. She has also demonstrated a passion for the creation of quality teaching resources.

Lorraine's sustained and distinguished contributions to geography education, curriculum development and pedagogical innovation have significantly enhanced the quality of geography education in schools.

Lorraine's transformative leadership of GTA NSW & ACT, her ongoing conceptualisation, design and delivery of professional learning, her focus on the needs of teachers and students in regional New South Wales, her active involvement with the NSW Education Standards Authority during the development of the New South Wales K-10 and Stage 6 Geography Syllabus and supporting resources, are testament to the scope of her contribution and influence.

During Lorraine's time on the Association's Council, she has held important roles including President (2017–2019), Geography Bulletin Editor (2014–2022), Annual Conference convenor (2017–2021), convenor of the HSC Preparation digital package (2020–present), and Stage 6 Conference Convenor (2022–present). She has also been a presenter at state and national conferences, coordinating and leading the regional conversations for the new Stage 6 Geography syllabus, and coordinating author of Powerful Geography 1 and 2 – Case studies for senior students

At the national level, Lorraine has made an active and highly-valued contribution to the Australian Geography Teachers Association (AGTA) as a Director (2017–2019) and a Nominated Director (2020–2021). Within this forum, Lorraine has demonstrated the same vision and passion for geographical education as demonstrated at the state level.

Lorraine's enormous contribution is widely recognised, being the recipient of multiple awards. In 2021, she was awarded GTA NSW & ACT Life Membership and was made a Fellow in 2009. She received the Brock Rowe Award for excellence in the teaching of Geography (2013) and the 2016 Geoff Conolly Award for an outstanding contribution to the Geography Bulletin. In 2017, Lorraine received the Professional Teachers Council NSW's Outstanding Service Award and, in 2020, the Council's Exceptional Service to the Profession Award. In 2022, Lorraine received the prestigious Macdonald Holmes Medal for her outstanding contribution to geographical education in Australia.

As GTA NSW & ACT President, Lorraine always applied the perspective of a classroom teacher—"always a Geography teacher." In so doing, she has demonstrated how to engage with teachers and enhance the Association's relevance. For example, as Editor, Lorraine reinvented the Geography Bulletin ensuring each edition had a range of classroom-ready materials, so keeping foundational geographical knowledge in an accessible form for those inexperienced in the teaching Geography.

Lorraine is an accomplished author having developed numerous highly-regarded educational resources that include textbooks and a diverse range of supplementary resources commissioned by a range of government agencies, Western Sydney University, and non-government organisations.

Lorraine has provided transformative leadership of GTA NSW & ACT and continues to enhance the Association's professional standing and the quality and scope of its support for geographical education in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Lorraine's endless pursuit of enabling quality teaching, learning and assessment of Geography, for all students, by all teachers, is thoroughly documented and widely acknowledged within the geography education community.



Outstanding Professional Service to the Association

Michael Da Roza (Councillor, ACT representative)

Michael is a caring, collaborative, and committed member of Council for the Geography Teachers Association of NSW and ACT (GTA NSW & ACT). He joined as a Councillor in 2015. Since then, Michael has enthusiastically and seriously approached the role of representing ACT geography teachers through being their local contact person, being responsible for registering Association professional learning with the Territory accreditation institution, and leading discussion with Council about the specific curriculum, resource development and networking needs in geography teachers in the ACT.

Michael joined Council as an expert geography teacher and subject leader from the ACT with extensive leadership experience in developing cross-curriculum priorities across subjects at a national scale. Michael's ability to engage with a range of interest groups in a scholarly and meaningful way, and to keep all ideas at and on the table during intensive discussion, is evident in the way he steers conversations and suggests possible ways forward during Council meetings and Planning Days. He actively contributes to strategic planning and envisioning of processes to maximise efficiency and relevance of Association's work. Michael is enabled by his scholarly thinking, classroom practice and his curriculum development experience to effectively contribute to curriculum reviews and assist with the Association's written submissions to relevant authorities. Whilst the ACT context is always front and centre, he is mindful about how ACT-specific needs and concerns fit within the context of both a national and NSW-focused perspective.

Michael is diligent and proactive in his behind-the-scenes work for Council. Such work includes proofreading articles for the Geography Bulletin and scanning the website for relevance to ACT membership, reviewing curriculum resources and professional learning workshops for their fit-for-purpose nature in an ACT context, and being available for all set-up and pull-down activities connected with the running of in-person events.

Each year, Michael represents the ACT at two national board meetings for the Australian Geography Teachers Association. During 2023, he attended Geography's Big Week Out which is the lead-in event for the International Geography Olympiad. Michael is leading the planning and preparation for NSW and ACT to host the nationally-focused Geography's Big Week Out during 2024 in the ACT.

Throughout almost a decade on Council, Michael has proven himself to be consultative, reflective and evidence-informed in his decision-making. At all times, Michael demonstrates care for people and for the work of the Association. He is an active and enthusiastic supporter of both traditional and newly-conceptualised Association events. Michael generously offers his time and insights to support geography teachers both within the ACT and NSW. He actively participates in Council initiatives and is the first to offer support and encouragement to "get the job done". In making it a priority to engage, be engaged, and make it a priority to celebrate the success of others on Council, Michael has made an exceptional contribution to the work of the Association and is a worthy recipient of the Award for Outstanding Professional Service to the Association.



Outstanding Beginning Teacher Award

Rebecca Sutcliffe (Vice President)

Rebecca is an enthusiastic, collaborative, and proactive member of Council of the Geography Teachers Association of NSW and ACT (GTA NSW & ACT) who joined as a Councillor during her final year of study in an initial teacher education program, and within four years has moved into the role of Vice President. Rebecca is a thoughtful and effective contributor to many aspects of Association's work, including being an excellent minute-taker during Council meetings. In addition to taking on a guest editor role for the Geography Bulletin and writing outstanding articles focused on Stage 5 Geography and enrichment for fast-finishers, Rebecca actively contributes to strategic planning and envisioning of processes to maximise efficiency and relevance of Association work. She leads and supports a small team in monitoring, posting, and responding to posts across Association social media platforms. Rebecca also often co-hosts online events, such as the HSC Review or webinars, and is a willing workshop presenter and assistant organiser of conferences.



Rebecca joined GTA NSW & ACT Council in 2020 as a Teacher Education Student and is currently in her fourth year of teaching. She has embraced the roles of Councillor and Vice President. Being a career-change teacher, Rebecca frequently draws on her previous career expertise in finance and project management to solve pinch-points of efficiency and effectiveness in Association activities. She confidently led the development of a role description and recruitment process for a paid Professional Officer and has been instrumental in reviewing all processes to ensure the best decisions are made for the future direction of the Association.

During 2023, Rebecca has been proxy for the President and represented GTA NSW & ACT at two national board meetings for the Australian Geography Teachers Association. Rebecca is also an active "behind the scenes" contributor to planning and preparation for NSW and ACT to host the nationally focused Geography's Big Week Out in 2024 which is the lead-in event for the International Geography Olympiad.

Throughout the four years on Council, Rebecca has proven herself to be reliable, decisive and solutions-focused. She willingly offers her time and expertise to support geography teachers across sectors and career stages, and to support the work of the Council and Executive team. In a short timeframe, and at a career-stage when focus is usually on self and seeking support from others, Rebecca has turned this around to actively engage with experts from the field and initiate development of a reciprocal relationship of sharing, learning and enrichment to enable the Association to remain relevant in representing the professional interest of geography teachers. In doing so, Rebecca has made an exceptional contribution to the work of the Association and is a worthy recipient of the Award for Outstanding Beginning Teacher.