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2019-2020 Council Report to Members

The Council is pleased to present its report for the Financial Year, 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

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OVERVIEW

The twelve months to 30 June 2020 have included extraordinary circumstances which we could not have foreseen at the time of the Annual General Meeting in September 2019. It is worth noting, however, that in the second half of 2019 some major achievements were accomplished:

- **Official opening of the Society's new home, Gregory Place**, by His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey, AC, on 18th July 2019.
- **The Society's new legal structure transferring from Letters Patent to a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) and a new constitution for the Society** was finalised on 25 October 2019
- **Completion of a membership survey report *Recommendations on RGSQ Membership growth and retention*** by the UQ Business School Masters Students in October 2019.

The period since February 2020 has been very challenging as we have needed to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions. The changes we have made include:

- Cancelling and / or postponing international, domestic and local tours
- Cancelling in-house monthly lectures
- Moving to online / virtual Council and committee meetings
- Arrangements for office staff to work from home / stagger their presence at RGSQ
- Applying for government support as a not-for-profit organisation e.g. Job Keeper
- Changing deadlines for the Australian Geography Competition (AGC) and cancellation of the 2020 Geography's Big Week Out and the International Olympiad

Despite these difficult circumstances the Society has nevertheless been able to move forward on a number of fronts including:

- **RGSQ *Bulletin*** monthly publication has continued
- ***Member Connect* newsletter** was introduced and 5 issues published
- **Publications Committee** has been resurrected and has initiated two major projects
- **Scientific Studies Committee** has developed a proposal on Stradbroke Island
- **Lectures via zoom** have been successfully presented, engaging members and attracting non-members
- **Special interest groups and committees** have been planning and working behind the scenes
- The **in-school round of the AGC** has been completed despite disruptions to schools across the country
- **TAAC Administration and Procedures Manual** has been finalised and adopted

I commend to members the valiant and on-going efforts of our office staff, current Councillors and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to keep the RGSQ "afloat" and on track in difficult times this year. Their assistance, valuable perspectives and ideas to secure the Society's immediate and longer-term future have been greatly appreciated. On behalf of all RGSQ members, I extend our thanks to all who have been involved this year and hope that the future will bring opportunities to restore and introduce more activities for our vibrant Society.

Dr. Iraphne Childs, President



RGSQ ACADEMIC PRIZES

J. P. Thomson award

Professor Alaric Maude was awarded the 2020 J P Thomson Award and presented his online webinar entitled '*What makes Geography geographical?*' as the June lecture. This was well received and attended by over 60 participants.

Ken Sutton Trust award

The 2020 Ken Sutton Trust award is to **Professor Ian Rutherford, School of Geography, Univ. of Melbourne** for his work on river systems management, both within Australia and in China, and his involvement and support of high-school Geography in Victoria.

University prizes

The Society provides Academic Prizes (an engraved medal, Certificate and twelve months membership to the Society) for high achieving university students majoring in Geography.

Two (2) institutions offered the prize in the 2019-2020 period and the awardees were:

- James Cook University – Ms Hannah May Green
- The University of the Sunshine Coast – Ms Martina Lanzani

MEMBERSHIP

The membership/member profile by category as at 30 June 2020 compared to June last year is shown in the Table 1 below. Over the past year 7 Household bundles and 4 Ordinary members did not renew or resigned, with 5 life members discontinuing their membership for various reasons. Overall, RGSQ membership has been stable throughout the year, with a small uptake in numbers, particularly student memberships, with 23 more students taking up a (free) RGSQ membership. Given the COVID-19 circumstances, the Council is grateful to its members for supporting the Society and renewing their membership throughout the year.

Membership Category	To June 2019		To June 2020	
	Memberships	Members	Memberships	Members
Ordinary	90	90	86	86
Household Bundle	53	98	46	88
Educational	2	2	2	2
Student*	18	18	41	41
Life	29	29	23	23
Honorary Life	1	1	1	1
Total	193	238	199	241

Table 1.

Membership by category June 2019-June 2020

*Student memberships are free for the duration of student enrollment.

Finally, it is with sadness that we note the death of two RGSQ members:

Ian Uhlman, life member of RGSQ since 1990, passed away in April 2020. Ian participated in several Society trips including the Bourke and Beyond coach trip 1991, Trip to the Tip in 1992, the Whitsundays in 1993 and in the Currawinya Camp 2003.

Patrick McKewin, a member of RGSQ since 2015 passed away in April 2020. Many members would know Patrick from his attendance at lectures and events as well as volunteering for the Australian Geography Competition mail-outs.

MANAGEMENT and ADMINISTRATION

In the 2019-2020 Financial Year major projects have taken up the management and administrative resources of the Society, namely: the conversion to a new legal structure and ensuing changes, restructuring of AGC and RGSQ arrangements, application for two grants: (1) for a defibrillator with the Gambling Community Benefit Fund (successful) and (2) Preservation Needs Assessment Grant for RGSQ's collection as part of Community Heritage Grants. The outcome of the latter process will be announced in late October 2020; transitioning to a digital world and the cloud in the light of COVID-19 pandemic; organising a Climate forum for a large audience and development of RGSQ Traveller tours. These major projects have been tirelessly supported and progressed by the Society's Council, dedicated volunteer members and office staff. Much appreciation and thanks are due to all who have assisted with these major projects.

FINANCIAL RESULTS AND POSITION

The Society has reported an overall deficit of \$258,385 for the year to 30 June 2020, but this is after taking account of unrealised losses on investments of \$220,542. As shown below, the Society made an operating deficit of \$38,399 before accounting for the losses in investment values.

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Australian Competition Income	2	273,598	276,908
Other Income	2	277,963	294,883
Distribution of (profit)/loss to AGTA		6,286	44,688
Exploration and research		(9)	-
Employees benefit expense		(182,380)	(199,441)
Depreciation expense		(30,468)	(24,973)
Competition expense		(301,675)	(366,284)
Administrative expense		(81,218)	(129,407)
Loss on disposal asset		(496)	(754)
Profit / (Loss) from ordinary items		(38,399)	(103,626)
Extraordinary items:			
(Decrease)/Increase in market value of investments		(220,542)	154,222
Realised gain on investments		556	48,688
(Loss) / Profit for the year		(258,385)	98,530

Table 2: Income and Expenditure Statement for Year Ended 30 June 2020.

The loss or deficit above includes the deficit of the Society and half of the deficit of the Australian Geography Competition. The other half is attributable to the Australian Geography Teachers Association. We have received government support in the form of Job Keeper and cash flow boost of \$31,008, which has helped us considerably, half being credited to the AGC. Non-cash depreciation costs were \$30,000 and, if these were excluded, the cash loss would be nearer \$8000. Some further explanations follow:

RGSQ. Deficit \$32,112. Income from investments was down by \$13,500 from the previous year, and cost allocations were also down from the AGC due to a renegotiation. These were offset by the government support payments. Costs were very carefully controlled and considerably less than the previous year which included the move to new premises.

AGC. Deficit of \$12,573, of which half is charged to RGSQ. Entry fees were slightly up but sponsorships were \$12,500 below 2018/19. We were also required by the auditors to carry forward the \$30,000 sponsorship from the Department of Education since GBWO and iGeo trips have been cancelled this year. Operating costs were generally lower. A payment of \$20,000 was made to AGTA for support for Geography promotion.

Balance Sheet. The Society continues to carefully maintain and manage its assets. Despite the reduction in asset values caused by the diminution of the value of investments, the Society continues to have a strong Balance Sheet, as shown below.

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	150,275	158,708
Trade and other receivables	4	29,680	27,112
Total Current Assets		179,955	185,820
Non-Current Assets			
Investments	5	1,461,913	1,687,338
Property, plant and equipment	6,7	1,443,287	1,467,854
Total Non-Current Assets		2,905,200	3,155,192
TOTAL ASSETS		3,085,155	3,341,012
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	8	19,608	18,169
Income in Advance	9	30,641	30,000
Employee Benefits	10	17,065	13,449
Amount due to associated party	11	25,984	32,270
Total Current Liabilities		93,298	93,888
Non-Current Liabilities			
Employee Benefits	10	16,885	13,767
Total Non-Current Liabilities		16,885	13,767
TOTAL LIABILITIES		110,183	107,655
NET ASSETS		2,974,972	3,233,357
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		2,948,988	3,201,087
Accumulated profits reserve - Competition	11	25,984	32,270
TOTAL EQUITY		2,974,972	3,233,357

Table 3: Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2020.

Audit. Williams Hall Chadwick, the Society's auditors, has provided an unqualified audit report as attached to the published accounts.

Outlook. The Council is concerned that although the total asset position is very favourable, the management of the cash position and the issue of providing a balanced budget is a concern. The 2020/21 overall budget is still showing a deficit of \$49,500 (including depreciation of \$28,500). Government support still continues and at higher levels than anticipated in the Budget but it is still most important to identify new sources of income, including grants and sponsorships.

COMMITTEES, SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS, TRUSTS

COMMITTEES

Australian Geography Competition Committee

Members: Co-Chair J Davis (AGTA) and Co-Chair S Albertson (AGTA), K Berg (RGSQ), J Tasker (RGSQ), Associate Professor T Bourke (Independent, Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Queensland). Ex-officio member: B Fitzpatrick (AGC Coordinator, RGSQ)

Overview

The Australian Geography Competition (AGC) is a joint initiative of the RGSQ and the Australian Geography Teachers' Association (AGTA) administered by the RGSQ with overview from a five member Committee (see above) under a Memorandum of Understanding between RGSQ and AGTA. During the financial year, the AGC continued to promote the study of Geography within Australian schools.

The past year has seen changes within the Committee with AGTA providing greater input and Assoc. Prof. T Bourke joining the Committee, both providing greater geography education input to the decision making. With RGSQ still the major contributor to the Competition through its membership on the Committee and continued administration of the Competition, these developments will assist in strengthening the Australian Geography Competition into the future.

RGSQ Member volunteers provide an important contribution to the success of the Competition through their assistance with mailouts and the scanning of returned answer sheets. In addition, RGSQ member support helps to ensure that the Competition is affordable to a greater student audience. The geography school community does appreciate RGSQ members assistance as expressed in the following teacher's comment left on the Competition FaceBook page.



John McLaine Very thankful for the voluntary work that you do. The competition has been of great benefit to my students over many years, thank you.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · 2d



The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges in 2020. The Competition has not been immune to its influence. The Competition was to be held in schools from Wednesday 18 March to Wednesday 1 April; however, an extension for return of answer sheets was given to Friday 14 August 2020 allowing schools flexibility to sit the popular Competition. It should be noted that entry numbers were down significantly for the 2020 Competition compared to recent years with 699 (792 in 2019) schools and over 65,800 (73,500 in 2019) entries.

Geography's Big Week Out

The 2019 Geography's Big Week Out (GBWO) was again held on Kangaroo Island from Sunday 15 to Friday 20 December 2019. This is a field Geography experience for 16 high performing Year 11 students who competed in the in-School Round of the AGC. One female and one male from each State and Combined Territories (ACT, NT, and Australian External Territories), and the next nationally high performing female and male students are selected to participate in GBWO. Participation in the GBWO is a major prize for Year 11 students who have sat the competition.

The 2019 GBWO was again hosted by the Geography Teachers' Association of South Australia (GTASA) under the coordination of GTASA members Liam Sloan and Simon Roos-Freeman with on-ground support during the week from GTASA President Joanne Wegener, Geography Association of Western Australia (GAWA) GBWO 2020 and 2021 Coordinator Charissa Efthymou, and the AGC Coordinator.

The hosting of the GBWO is rotated between State Geography Teachers' Associations every two to three years and is one of the AGTA's in-kind contributions to the overall success of the AGC.

The 2020 GBWO was reluctantly cancelled due to uncertainty around COVID-19. GAWA will be hosting the 2021 GBWO in Perth.

The students who participated in the 2019 GBWO were:

<u>State</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>Her/His School</u>
Combined Territories	Sebastian Connor Tyra Kuan	Dickson College Canberra Grammar School
NSW	Brendan Tate Elita So Lauren Griffiths Noah Gong	Caringbah High School Caringbah High School Northern Beaches Secondary College - Manly Campus Sydney Grammar School
QLD	Joshua Crow Taylor Timpani	The Scots PGC College, Warwick All Saints Anglican School Senior Campus
SA	Lucy Watson Oliver Shephard-Bayly	Pembroke School Pedare Christian College
TAS	Katie Stanton William Mather	Launceston Church Grammar School The Hutchins School
VIC	Liam Morris Sonia Truong	Melbourne High School The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School
WA	Eve Fleming Quinlan Arundel	Carine Senior High School Scotch College

International Geography Olympiad

The four-student Australian Team to the 2019 16th International Geography Olympiad (iGeo) held in Hong Kong, China, performed commendably against 40 countries. This result demonstrates the strength of Australia's Year 11 and 12 Geography curricula in teaching students to think, analyse and interpret information. The 2019 Australian team, and the medals awarded, were:

- Jacob Thai, Sydney Grammar School, New South Wales, Gold medal
- Alex Shierlaw, St Peter's College, South Australia, Bronze medal
- Stefan Simic, McKinnon Secondary College, Victoria, Bronze medal
- Eleanor Smith, Kilvington Grammar School, Victoria, Bronze medal

The 2019 Team Leaders who accompanied the students to the 16th iGeo in Hong Kong were Kath Berg (AGC Committee member) and Simon Roos-Freeman (GTASA member assisting with the 2017, 2018 and 2019 GBWOs).

The students selected from the 2019 GBWO to represent Australia at the 17th iGeo in Istanbul, Turkey, in August 2020 were:

- Lauren Griffiths, Northern Beaches Secondary College - Manly Campus, New South Wales
- Lucy Watson, Pembroke School, South Australia
- Noah Gong, Sydney Grammar School, New South Wales
- Sonia Truong, The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School, Victoria

Disappointing, but entirely appropriate, was the cancellation of the 2020 iGeo due to risks presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding and Sponsors

The GBWO and Australia's participation at the iGeo are made possible through funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and university sponsors: The University of Queensland School of Earth and Environmental Sciences; and, University of Western Australia.

Collections Committee

Members: P Griggs (Chair), P Lloyd (Co-Chair), B Abnett, P Nunan, J Graham, J Fairbairn

During the year, the Collections Committee provided advice to the Archives, Map and Library Groups, assisted and progressed sorting materials and items in these collections. From July until October 2019, Peter Lloyd kindly agreed to be interim Chair of the collections committee until October 2019, when Peter Griggs resumed as chair.

Finance Committee

Members: C Spriggs (Chair), J Nowill, I Harding, I Childs, L Darii

The Finance Committee provides financial guidance to the Society's Treasurer and Council and met twice during the year regarding Budget, financing and AGC issues.

Honours Committee

Members: D Wadley (Chair), J Holmes, L Isdale, L Scanlan, D Cook

The Honours Committee provided recommendations to the Society's Council on the choice of the 2020 J P Thomson awardee – Associate Professor Alaric Maude. Alaric has not received the award in-person yet due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, but delivered an excellent online lecture in June. Fellowships were awarded to Prof Jamie Shulmeister, Tony Hillier and David Carstens. Fellowships to Tony Hillier and David Carstens were presented by the Governor, His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, at the official opening of Gregory Place on 18 July 2019. In July 2019, P Griggs stood down as chair of the Honours committee. Thanks are due to D Wadley who took over the role of Chair in September 2019 and arranged a meeting of the committee to recommend the 2020 awardees to the Society's Council.

Property Committee

Members: P Tonkin (Chair), D Stephens, N O'Connor

The Property Committee has been very active throughout the year. Among the achievements have been:

- First Aid Kits replenished following a stocktake
- Fire Warden hats and vests installed
- Stationery cupboard upgraded and a stocktake completed
- Basement storage cages emptied of obsolete items; Inventory of holdings made and filed
- RGSQ property stored with members has been returned and added to inventory
- Defibrillator grant successful and item installed
- Map hanging apparatus installed
- A second vertiplan cabinet has been installed
- Hire agreement (2 versions) drawn up and approved by Council
- Communication and presentation facilities to bring RGSQ up to date with new and online technology have been identified and a grant application is being prepared
- Floor load bearing weight as per architectural drawings has been filed for future reference
- The Office WH&S manual being finalised by Neal O'Connor and the RGSQ Business Manager
- Review of annual property insurance

StrataCare, the Body Corporate, has been meeting throughout the year and carrying out routine procedures. Items of special interest to RGSQ are:

- Fire doors have been inspected; the Body Corporate will have non-compliant doors replaced
- Body Corporate levies have been waived for the 2 periods 1 May–1 July 2020 and 1 August -1 October 2020
- Asbestos has been removed from lift brakes

The Property Committee, Pamela Tonkin, Daphne Stephens and Neal O'Connor, have been privileged to represent the Council.

Publications Committee

Members: I Childs (Chair), J Corcoran, P Griggs, I Harding, A Lau, K Rees (joined in July 2020)

The Publications committee met twice in October 2019. Matters discussed included new ideas for the RGSQ *Bulletin*, sale of existing RGSQ publications through the RGSQ website online shop and the possibility of publishing an online journal. Based on potential time, personnel and costs required for such a journal the meeting decided this was not a viable proposition for RGSQ. In 2020 the committee has initiated two projects:

- The **RGSQ Queensland Geographical landscapes photographic competition**. The first prize of a 2-night accommodation package was secured from O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat. 2nd prize 1-year free RGSQ membership. Judging will be by the Publications Committee members in early September 2020.
- Production of an **RGSQ 2021 calendar** using the best images from the photo competition, ready for sale in October 2020. RGSQ will acquire a Creative Commons by attribution license at no cost for the calendar and future RGSQ publications.

The committee is exploring paid advertising opportunities in the *Bulletin* using the framework of the media kit developed in 2019 by Business Manager L Darii. One success has been a \$250 sponsored article on the *Ravensbourne Escape* holiday accommodation. We are exploring further articles and advertising with Binna Burra Lodge, other accommodation outlets and travel companies.

Scientific Studies Committee

Members: I Childs (Chair), P Moss, A Lau, P Nunn, N O'Connor, K Scott, T Sigler, (J Shulmeister until Dec, 2019)

In September 2019 the committee resolved to develop a scientific study on Stradbroke Island to include work by scientists in both physical and human geography and incorporating a Citizen Science agenda to provide opportunities for RGSQ members and university students to volunteer in the project. In March 2020 Patrick Moss and Iraphne Childs met with two QYAC (*Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation*) staff members to discuss the RGSQ proposal. There is much scope for partnering with QYAC to address mutual research priorities. Initially this would focus on **Cultural field mapping and GIS database capture** of cultural sites around Dunwich - middens, indigenous place-names, dreaming stories, convict history, possible impacts of sea-level rise on coastal communities. Members of the committee are mainly University of Queensland staff with strong research links to Stradbroke Is. This will enable RGSQ to utilise UQ's Moreton Bay Research Centre accommodation facilities. **Stage 1** of the project is a 2-day reconnaissance visit to Stradbroke Island to confirm arrangements with QYAC and scope the fieldwork study. RGSQ Council has approved a small fund for Stage 1 of the project. It is the intention to seek external funding from Qld State and Federal research for implementation of **Stage 2**. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions on Stradbroke Is. it has not been possible to progress the project during the first half of 2020. The committee hopes to be able to conduct stage 1 in the 2nd half of 2020.

Treks and Activities Committee (TAAC)

Members: W McKenzie/C Spriggs (Co-Chairs), J Lamont (Secretary) M Comer, B Reid

TAAC had another active year which was unfortunately curtailed from February due to COVID restrictions. Events will recommence in late August. Most events were fully attended.

Date	Activity	Coordinator	Comments
21-Jul-19	Upper Yabba Valley Falls (2 days), Imbil	I Stebhens	
09-Aug-19	Upper Yabba Valley Falls (3 days), Imbil	I Stebhens	
14-Sep-19	Binna Burra Walk	M Comer	Bush Fires. Postponed to 22 October 2020
01-Nov-19	Gympie Discovery Weekend (3 days)	W McKenzie	
23-Nov-19	St Helena Island National Park	B Reid	
03-Dec-19	Christmas Party	Committee	
04-Feb-20	Welcome to New Year Party	Committee	
24-Feb-20	Spicer's Gap Walk, Aratula	B Reid	Postponed to 2 September 2020
08-Apr-20	St Laurence's Urban Farm/Boggo Road Gaol	W McKenzie	Postponed to April 2021
08-May-20	Summer Land Camel Dairy, Harrisville	J Lamont	Postponed to 7 May 2021
23-Jun-20	Amberley Heritage Museum/Ipswich Railway Workshops	R Owen	Postponed to 22 June 2021

The major trip for 2020/21 will be the Lambert Centre trek, already fully booked. The Committee has been working closely with the Map Group on the annual programs. An Administration and Procedures Manual has been developed and is now available on the website.

RGSQ TRAVELLER

Members: L Scanlan (Chair), S Scanlan, I Childs, L Darii

In the second half of 2019 much time and effort was expended by Leo and Lilia to develop two international trips for 2020 to (a) Africa in June and (b) Italy in September, securing accommodation, flights, deposits etc. Council had agreed to support RGSQ Traveller with \$15,000 from the budget for advertising widely these two trips. They were advertised in the *Australian Geographic Magazine* and *Probus Magazine*, eventually using \$6900 of the allotted funds. Unfortunately, both trips were cancelled due to a lack of participation. Ironically they would not have gone ahead due to the ongoing Covid 19 restrictions. With the complete lockdown regarding Australians travelling overseas for the foreseeable future, RGSQ Traveller is not anticipating planning overseas trips until possibly 2023 or 2024. However, should all Australian State borders open in the next 12 or 18 months, it may be possible to conduct some domestic tours to fill in the interim gap until air travel is operational and our international borders are fully opened.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Archives Group

Members: P Griggs (Coordinator), P Lloyd (Coordinator), M Allison

Between August and December 2019, members of the Archives Group met on a Monday to continue the work on creating the Society's archives. Efforts were directed towards sorting and filing loose material that was not in any specific files and checking archival box lists to ensure they were accurate and matched the files in the boxes. Due to COVID-19 restrictions no work has been conducted on the Archives in 2020. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people for their work on archival matters: Peter Lloyd and Myrl Alison for their checking and investigations into the origins of specific items and documents; Rosie Catt for typing the archival box labels; and Mary Nowill for typing the archival box lists.

Map Collection Group

Members: R Carlisle (Coordinator), P Nunan

Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic shutdown, the last year has seen much change in the Map Collection. Maps have been reviewed and re-arranged in the storage furniture. Donations of maps by members and others have been sorted and assessed. Surplus duplicate maps were donated to the Geography Teachers' Association of Qld and the Creche and Kindergarten Association for children to draw and paint on the blank reverse side. A second map Vertiplan cabinet was donated to the Society by the University of Queensland Alumni Book Fair Group and has been brought into service. Both cabinets have been stabilised by placing of counterweights in their base. Thanks to Neal O'Connor for organising and installing these. Large maps on wooden rollers have been hung and displayed in the corridor. The prospect of cataloguing the map collection and making it 'findable' on the web, along with the Library's book collection is being explored with the National Library of Australia through Trove.

Ken Sutton Memorial Library Group

Members: J Graham (Chair), N McManimm

The group meets informally on a Monday to catalogue and shelve the book collection. All books except a few older dilapidated titles now have call numbers which allows them to be shelved correctly. Some conservation work is required on these titles.

Future Projects:

- Survey the collection to determine what percentage of the books is catalogued on the computer based DBTextworks and what percentage is only catalogued in the old card catalogue.
- Determine the feasibility of upgrading DBTextworks.
- Determine the feasibility of uploading our catalogue data into Trove.

Map Group

Members: L Lowry, N McManimm and K Rees (Co-chairs)

Map Group started the new financial year with a presentation in the new premises of Gregory Place by Peter Nunan and Peter Lloyd revealing some of the secrets hidden in RGSQ's own map collection. The new space was well used by members who attended a computer workshop, a talk on "Mapping & Town Planning", an End of the Year "Show and Tell" and a talk on "Mapping the Night Sky". Outside excursions were to the Qld State Archives, a walking tour of Aboriginal Camp Sites in Nundah and a visit to the Museum of Lands, Mapping & Surveying. Our thanks to organisers Ian Francis, Graham Rees, Neil Simson, Daphne Stephens, Dr Ray Kerkove, Len Lowry and Keith Treschman. The highlight for Map Group was a 4-day Trek to Toowoomba in October 2019 coordinated by Stuart Watt who put together an extensive programme visiting various sites. The pandemic has curtailed activities however John Tasker arranged an excellent

webinar on GIS Systems and members were happy to embrace this new technology. Huge thanks must go to Bob Abnett and Ian Francis for their work and participation in Map Group activities in 2019. The new committee of Len Lowry, Neville McManimm and Kay Rees had very large shoes to fill.

Young Geographers Group

Coordinators: J Tasker and G Pickering

The Young Geographers group continues to grow, attracting new members and taking an active role to promote geography. In response to ongoing restrictions, many of the group's engagement activities shifted online, including a series of virtual open data skills sessions. University connections and social media continue to be critical tools to grow the group, organise activities, and spread geography-related news and developments. Looking into 2021, there is significant potential for growth and further collaboration to promote geography across Queensland.

TRUSTS

Ken Sutton Trust

Trustees: I Childs, C Spriggs, M McIvor (until 19 May 2020), J Tasker (from 19 May 2020)

Selection Committee members: I Childs (Chair), D Cook, A Lau, A Powell (MLA)

During the year much work has been done in the background with legal advice regularising the Trust and providing continuance for the trustees and therefore operation of the Trust. The Trust selection committee unanimously voted to offer the 2020 Ken Sutton Trust award to **Professor Ian Rutherford, School of Geography, Univ. of Melbourne**. Committee members were particularly impressed with Prof. Rutherford's multi-disciplinary work on river systems management, both within Australia and in China, but also with his involvement and support of high-school Geography in Victoria. This aligns very well with the intention of the Ken Sutton trust to provide a platform for the best Geographical research and/or Geographical education work in Australia by an Australian geographer. Due to the situation with COVID-19 in Victoria and restrictions on travel to Queensland, Professor Rutherford will present an address via an online video in October 2020. We hope to be able to bring him to Brisbane to give his in-person address at RGSQ next year.

ADDRESSING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Council, staff and members continue to address the objectives of the Society's Strategic Plan, contributing to our five broad strategic objectives.

1. *Engaging people in Geography – To continue to offer a range of services and opportunities for the Society's members to participate in, engage with and enjoy Geography through daytime activities; short and long treks within Australia and overseas; evening lectures; scientific expeditions; and, opportunities to be involved with activities that support the promotion of Geography.*

- Until March 2020 the in-house **lecture program** attracted good audiences with topics ranging from *Robotics, A.C. Gregory, Urban and Economic Networks, A centenary of Girl Guides in Queensland* and *Storm Chaser*. In June the annual Thomson oration was presented online by Professor Alaric Maude from Adelaide, and this attracted 60 virtual attendees.
- The **Map Group** program of presentations and hands-on activities, the **Archives, Map Collection and Library Groups** have continued to provide opportunities for member participation.
- **Map Group** and **TAAC** have scheduled some excellent overnight and day treks in Southeast Queensland following Queensland Health COVID guidelines.
- The **Young Geographers Group** has helped to engage younger geographers and professionals with the Society with through various activities and social media.
- The monthly **Bulletin** continues to present reports from the office, Council and special interest groups. Featured articles include *Focus on Geographical Research* bringing news of recent scientific and geographic endeavors from around Australia; '*Geographers in the Spotlight*' celebrates noted achievements of geographers and "*Get to know your Councillor*" provides personal insights and backgrounds from our new Councillors.
- The **Member Connect** newsletter including *Letters from the homefront, Geographical quizzes, Geofacts* and interesting online resources was an initiative to provide light relief and engage members during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

2. *Enhancing membership – To understand, appreciate and strengthen the Society's membership bonds and to widen the membership base, as the foundation of a vibrant and successful Society.*

- The efforts of the **Young Geographers Groups** have helped to widen the Society's membership base.
- The increased use of **Facebook** has helped to expand awareness of the Society, particularly the Society's lecture program both in Brisbane and on the Sunshine Coast. Along with the new RGSQ website capabilities, it is envisaged that greater communication among members will result from more use of social media.
- The **President's "welfare phone calls"** to members during the COVID lockdown restrictions have helped to support members and encourage them to maintain their involvement with RGSQ for the future.

3. *Knowledge and understanding – To promote geographical understanding amongst the Society's members and the wider community, to advance geographical knowledge.*

- The **Scientific Studies Committee** was resurrected with the aim of advancing geographical knowledge amongst members and the wider community. This committee has developed a research proposal to engage with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) on Stradbroke Island to conduct a Scientific Study based around Dunwich in the first instance. The project includes a citizen science component which could incorporate participation by members and the public.

- **Map Group** has offered a consistently wide variety of topics and excellent presentations available to members and the public e.g. Mapping the Night Sky in February 2020
 - The **Australian Geography Competition** with its associated events in 2019 Geography's Big Week Out (a field work type exercise) and Australia's participation in the International Geography Olympiad are excellent avenues to advance geographical knowledge in secondary schools
4. ***Growing our reputation – To further build the Society's profile and reputation, nationally and internationally, reinforcing and publicizing its role as a leader amongst related societies and a partner of choice in geographical endeavours.***
- The Society has continued its membership and participation on the **Australian Academy of the Sciences, National Committee for Geographical Sciences (NCGS)**. This enables RGSQ to increase the Society's profile within the wider geographical sciences community. The President, Dr Iraphne Childs, has represented RGSQ at the NCGS meetings in 2019 and 2020.
 - The Society is a member of the **Queensland Science Network (QSN)**, has a dedicated page on the QSN website and collaborates in various ways with the Royal Society of Queensland.
 - The President, Dr. Iraphne Childs, has initiated a **3-way Presidents' liaison and communication network** between RGSQ, the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia (RGSSA) and the Geographical Society of NSW. The first meeting via phone was held in April 2020 during which ideas for collaboration were canvassed.
 - RGSQ and has been invited and represented on various occasions at **Government House Queensland**. This enables our Society to strengthen its ties with our Patron, the governor of Queensland, and with other scientific not-for-profit organisations.
5. ***Securing the future – To enable a robust future for the Society, by increasing income sustainability, using technology effectively, and enhancing staff capabilities. To support the Society's activities, through the effective use of good business practices and evolving technologies.***
- The major downturn in the economy due to COVID-19 has had serious implications for the Society's financial resources. A high priority is being placed on **securing more future income** through domestic travel programs and grants. Our Business Manager, Lilia Darii, and the Property committee continue to investigate a wide range of private and government funding opportunities to re-build and supplement the Society's funds.
 - Upgrading the Society's **technology and presentation facilities** has resulted in communication and booking efficiencies and addressing cybersecurity by implementing appropriate measures and ongoing improvements in data management. Thanks to Graham Rees in continually monitoring and improving the Society's website
 - Enabling more virtual meetings and presentations with zoom technology will assist in widening our outreach to members and the public outside Brisbane.

THE 2020-2021 YEAR AHEAD

The uncertainty surrounding the on-going situation with COVID-19 in Queensland, across Australia and the world, means that RGSQ will need to remain vigilant in adhering to health advice and regulations, particularly given the demographic profile of our members in the older age-groups. Although we will resume activities as far as possible, the future “normal” for our Society operations in the year ahead is by no means clear.

Meanwhile, we can certainly continue to make positive progress in several ways. The incoming Council for 2020-2021 will comprise mostly re-nominating Councillors who provide continuity and wide-ranging expertise to critical deliberations. Council now has a very good mix of academic, professional and business expertise on board to lead the Society going forward.

Our grateful thanks to the Society’s treasurer, Chris Spriggs, for expertly guiding and elucidating the Society’s financial operations for several years and especially through the major challenges of 2019-2020. While Chris is stepping down from his role as treasurer and Councillor at the 2020 AGM, he has generously agreed to continue to assist with the accounts and to support the incoming treasurer. Chris intends to carry on as an enthusiastic co-chair and member of the TAAC.

Vice-President Paul Feeney will also be stepping down from Council. Paul will continue to work on two major projects: the Central Qld long walk and Queensland By Degrees. Thanks to Paul for his wise counsel during this year.

After serving as the Society’s Executive Officer from 2014-2019 and as AGC coordinator from 2019, ***Bernard Fitzpatrick*** has resigned his employment with RGSQ from September 2020 for personal reasons. We wish Bernard all the best in health and in his future endeavours.

Effort will be concentrated on projects targeted to increase income and secure the Society’s future. For example:

- Exploring financially beneficial arrangements with local travel companies such as that with Coral Expeditions for domestic tourism
- Procuring grants for RGSQ projects e.g. Scientific Studies, Archives and upgrading the boardroom facilities
- Exploring possible advertising and sponsorship arrangements for the *Bulletin*
- A new appointment in the role of AGC Coordinator in September 2020 should bring new perspectives to expand and consolidate initiatives for the AGC
- Introducing strategies to increase membership in Brisbane and outside Southeast Queensland
- Implementing ways of streaming lecture programs to reach a wider audience
- Investigating opportunities for presenting more lectures on the Sunshine Coast

On behalf of the Council



Dr Iraphne RW Childs, President

20 October 2020