

**GEOGRAPHY'S NEW FRONTIERS**  
and the  
**STAGE 6 GEOGRAPHY SYLLABUS.**  
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The major objective of the Geographical Society of New South Wales Inc is to encourage the growth and diffusion of geographical knowledge through the promotion of research, the organisation of conferences and the publication of the *Australian Geographer*.

Early in 2001 the Council of the Society discussed the possibility of sponsoring a Conference on *Changing Viewpoints in Human or in Physical Geography* to be a professional development program for geography teachers and for geographers employed in industrial or commercial enterprises.

A Conference Organising Committee was formed consisting of Drs Kevin Dunn (Chairman), Don Biddle, Gavin Doyle, Pauline McGuirk, Jes Sammut, and Associate Professor Gordon Waitt. The Committee noted that the Society had published Conference Papers on Australian Issues of interest to geographers since 1981, but there had been no Australian Conference after 1988 using a holistic approach to geographical research, and recognising the impact of research in the cognate disciplines of geography.

There are many examples of the positive impact of Conferences and the publication of their Proceedings, using a holistic approach, on geographers, geography teachers, and on curriculum development in secondary schools to be found in the United Kingdom and in Australia between the 1970's and 1990's. Well known examples are Chorley and Hagget's **Frontiers in Geographical Teaching**, Roger Lee's **Change and Tradition: Geography's New Frontiers**, Ashley Kent's **Perspectives on a Changing Geography**, Les Heathcote's **The Australian Experience**, the Society's **Environment and Development in Australia**, and the IAG's **AGS-25 Years On**.

As a result of the discussion about these publications the Organising Committee decided to support a *Conference on Geography's New Frontiers*. In order to attract geography teachers the Committee considered giving each invited speaker a copy of the relevant section of the *Stage 6 Geography Syllabus*. At a later meeting, after considering the list of outstanding geography and cognate discipline researchers, who had responded to an invitation to contribute to the Conference, it was decided that the provision of the syllabus topics to each researcher would be too restrictive, particularly for

those from other states and the members of the cognate disciplines. This review of some of the examples of the published papers demonstrates, however, that they are relevant to topics in the *Stage 6 Geography Syllabus*.

## **BIOPHYSICAL INTERACTIONS AND ECOSTEMS AT RISK**

Wayne Erskine: **New directions in catchment and river management: the expanding role of geography and environmental science** discusses integrated forest management, water yields, sustainable timber production, vegetation and woody debris in rivers creating fish habitats and increasing fish supplies, and the influence of geographers on government policies.

Bruce Thom: **Geography, planning and the law: a coastal perspective** examines how legal structures interact with land use directions in the coastal zone. The NSW Coastal Policy Act (1997) seeks to implement environmental sustainable development principles.

Andy Pitman: **The role of Australian Geography in Earth System Science and Global Change Research** describes the development of a multidisciplinary science, incorporating the biophysical and social sciences and geography, for forecasting the extent of future climatic change.

Jes Sammut: **Environmental detectives: examples of geography's role in environmental investigation** discusses geography's interdisciplinary role in environmental investigation and cites examples of the impacts of acid sulphate soils, human epidemiology and veterinary epidemiology.

Stephen Gale: **Making the European landscape: early contact environmental impact in Australia** indicates that the greatest environmental impact on vegetation and soils occurred immediately that farming commenced. In the early 1800's the physical nature of soils was transformed, rates of soil erosion skyrocketed, and vegetation was reorganised.

## **GLOBAL CHANGES**

Susan Bliss: **Global Education in the Geography Curriculum** examines the impact of technology on communication and the accelerated rate of the interdependence of countries and communities. The evolution of a global perspective and global citizenship was advocated, as was the incorporation of global education into the geography curriculum.

Graeme Hugo: **Trends in population geography** contends that Australian geographers' contribution to understanding how human populations are changing has made progress in recent years. Population geography has never been more relevant because of the increase in population mobility and its impact on economic and social change.

Kevin Dunn: **New cultural geographies in Australia: the social and spatial construction of culture and citizenship.** The shift to new cultural geography in Australia has involved analyses of the fundamentals that underpin the unevenness of citizenship, contests over the cultural ownership of space, and critical discussions of representation.

Robyn Dowling: **Gendered and feminist geographies in Australia.** Considers the ways in which a concern with gender has permeated the discipline of geography. The first section focuses on experiences of men and women within geography; the second outlines recent research.

Lesley Head: **Australian prehistoric geographies.** Prehistoric geographies as used here to encompass interdisciplinary endeavours, based in geography and archaeology, which attempt to understand interactions between humans and their environment in Australia prior to 1788.

Richie Howitt: **Indigenous Australian geographies: landscape, property and governance.** The challenge facing social science generally, and geographers in particular, is to rethink institutional arrangements for governance in Australia to properly acknowledge Indigenous Australians.

## **URBAN PLACES**

Alexander Cuthbert: **Urban design: Built form and the geography of globalisation.** Outlines trends in urban design and built form in the context of globalisation and of globalised capitalism.

David Holmes: **Globalisation and urban life.** Begins with a critical review of theories of globalisation for urban sociology, and follows with a discussion of the contemporary shopping mall as a site of the convergence of virtual forms of globalisation.

Brendan Gleeson: **Resocialising space: towards a new geography of the public realm.** Addresses the public realm and considers its contemporary context in an important Australian region, Western Sydney.

## PEOPLE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Robert Fagan: **Labour geographies and labour markets.** Reviews the emerging field of labour geography, which is one of economic geography's recent international growth frontiers. Waged-work, and formalised workplaces in which most of it is performed, are central features of everyday life in industrialised countries.

Chris Gibson: **New economic geographies.** Charts the rise of the new economic geography. It discusses the key distinctions between recent trends in economic geography and earlier paradigms, and discusses reactions and debates within the subdiscipline regarding the efficacy of some contemporary approaches.

## METHODOLOGY

Eleanor Bruce: **Advances in Australian GIS.** Recent developments in the application of GIS have included spatial analysis methods for understanding the behaviour of geographic phenomena and incorporation of the social dimension in conventional GIS.

Tony Milne: **Geography and remote sensing technologies: implications for geographical research and teaching.** Remote sensing and geographic information systems together facilitate the manipulation of spatial data in order to provide better or more appropriate information for decision-making and resource management.

There are seven other papers in **Geography's New Frontiers** of interest to geography teachers. Additional copies of the Proceedings were printed for the benefit of geography teachers who, because of other commitments, were unable to be at the Conference.

Copies of **Geography's New Frontiers** are available from the Office of The Geographical Society of NSW Inc., PO Box 162, Ryde. NSW 1680.

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