



# RGSQ Bulletin

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Patron: [Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland](#)  
President: Mr John Tasker

## What's happening on Council?

The Society's Council met on Tuesday 16 April. Items of interest include:

- The lift is due to be operational from Monday 22 April so hopefully it will be working next time you visit the Society.
- The IT Management Committee has several projects on the go, including updates to the website and requesting quotes for IT management services. If you have expertise in these areas, but don't want to commit to serving on a committee, perhaps you'd be prepared to help with a time-limited project?
- The Young Geographers are reminding all members that they are welcome at their events. The upcoming one on transport, for instance, may well appeal. It will include a presentation on transport issues related to Brisbane's Olympic Games: <https://rgsq.org.au/event-5695574>
- The Society's University Prizes have been awarded to Daniel Simmich at the University of the Sunshine Coast and Tracey Walker at James Cook University. (The recipient from the University of Queensland has not yet been confirmed.)
- The map catalogue will be available on eHive very soon.
- Arrangements are well underway for the Australian team to compete in the 2024 International Geography Olympiad in Dublin.
- The Publications Committee has secured some great prizes for this year's photo competition. Keep an eye out for full details in next month's *Bulletin*.
- The housing forum was very successful. The speakers' presentations are available at: <https://rgsq.org.au/pastevents/13335195>
- The Geography Writing Competition is expecting a flurry of entries before the deadline at the end of April. Have you submitted a short story yet? <https://rgsq.org.au/event-5551067>

For further information on any item, please talk to a Councillor at a Society event, or send an email to [info@rgsq.org.au](mailto:info@rgsq.org.au).

## 2024 Thomson Medal Presentation and Thomson Oration

***Vital Learned Societies. The significance of voluntary, community-based learned societies for Australian geography's future***

***Emeritus Professor Iain Hay***

**Tuesday 7 May, 7:30pm**

Gregory Place, L1/28 Fortescue St, Spring Hill

Register: <https://rgsq.org.au/event-5670764>

We are pleased to announce that the 2024 J P Thomson Medal will be awarded to Emeritus Professor Iain Hay. The award recognises Iain's high qualities of scholarship and his contribution to the discipline of geography.



Following the medal presentation, Iain will deliver the Thomson Oration - *Vital Learned Societies. The significance of voluntary, community-based learned societies for Australian geography's future*.

In an era characterised by environmental degradation, socio-spatial polarisation, and geopolitical turmoil, geography is of vast significance. And yet the scholarly discipline of geography in Australia confronts diminished public appreciation, elimination from university programs, falling school enrolments, and the challenges of out-of-field teaching. Amid this inconsistency are beacons of hope for the discipline in the form of voluntary, community-based learned societies such as RGSSA and RGSQ. These 'people's organisations', driven by passion and fuelled by local knowledge, offer potent counterpoints to contemporary anxieties. The presentation will explore how voluntary, community-based learned societies signal hope for Australian geography.

**Bio:** Iain Hay is Matthew Flinders Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Geography at Flinders University, inaugural Director of the Royal Geographical Society of SA, and Chair of the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee for Geographical Sciences. He is former President of the Institute of Australian Geographers and (First) Vice President of the International Geographical Union.

## GEOGRAPHY IN CONVERSATION

### K'gari

Tuesday 28 May 5.30-8pm

Register: <https://rgsq.org.au/event-5700459>

Speakers: Ms Sue Sargent, K'gari (Fraser Island) World Heritage Advisory Committee (KWHAC), Adjunct Assoc Professor Kim Walker, USC, K'gari Research and Learning Centre and Assoc Professor Fiona Foley, artist and author of *Biting the Clouds: A Badtjala perspective on the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*.



*"K'gari (Fraser Island) and the surrounding waters are the traditional land and sea country of the Butchulla People.... K'gari's World Heritage listing and national park status make it a precious part of Australia's natural and cultural heritage."* Professor Paul Bertsch

Come along and take part in the discussion on the geography, ecology, fauna, flora, history, and tourism of K'gari and how the Butchulla Peoples are working to future-proof it, care for it and build strong partnerships.

Each speaker will have 8 minutes to spotlight their work.

During the Q&A forum the audience will have up to 60 minutes to ask questions of the experts on their projects.

Light refreshments are served before you settle in for an informed conversation on a topic of interest to us all.

Please post your questions on notice to:

Email [questionsonnotice@gmail.com](mailto:questionsonnotice@gmail.com)

**Date: Tuesday 28 May 2024**

**Time: 5:30 pm light refreshments – doors open @ 5:15pm**

**6:00 – 6:30 pm Presentations**

**6:30 – 7:30 Q&A Forum**

**7:30 – 8:00 Mingling**

**Place: Gregory Place, Leve 1, 28 Fortescue St. Spring Hill**

Cost: \$5.00 for refreshments, included in registration.

Cost: \$5.00 Members

\$10.00 Non-Members

\$5.00 Students

Image: Ms Sue Sargent

## GEOGRAPHY MATTERS

### Protecting Nature During the Roll-out of Renewable Energy

Tuesday 14 May 7.30-8.30pm Zoom Only

Register: <https://rgsq.org.au/event-5696154>

More than ever before our global community is feeling and seeing the impacts of climate change. As natural disasters become more frequent and severe, the pressure to quickly decarbonise and limit climate damaging emissions increases.

Australia and Queensland have come late to the transition and the speed at which we need to phase out climate damaging fossil fuel energy and switch to renewables is real. Unfortunately, this comes in a setting of poor planning laws, failing environmental protection laws and inadequate community consultation. Across Queensland large scale developments that have unacceptable impacts on nature and people have been approved time and time again under these failing laws. Large scale renewable energy is no exception to that rule. So, the question is, how can we use the transition as an opportunity to reform these laws and create an industry that actually increases biodiversity through the roll-out.

Ms Lucy Graham is the Director of the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre and Board Member of the Queensland Conservation Council. Most recently, Lucy has facilitated strategic collaborations in Queensland, bringing together Energy Corporations and Conservation leaders in Queensland to understand



how the industry and community can collaborate and lead the development of a biodiversity positive renewable energy industry. Additionally, she has been working with the government to progress planning that conserves biodiversity in the energy transition in Qld. Lucy is skilled in community engagement and understanding social licence in regional communities.

Lucy will further extend discussion of the topic with Mr Manoj Prajwal Bhattaram, a former researcher who studied the gene networks involved in ageing for his postgrad. Later on, he worked for CSIRO on crop plant genetics. Praj has worked at UQ for about a decade and a half now and has helped teach, manage, design and run undergraduate courses in ecology, molecular biology and entomology. He is absolutely fascinated by systems biology and the 'big picture' of ecosystems and feedback loops when it comes to studying ecology and the environment. Praj is currently working on a Masters to be a secondary school science teacher.



**Please note:** The Zoom link for this event is included in the confirmation email which you will receive once you have registered. You will find it at the bottom of the notice. Please keep this in a place where you can find it when needed. A reminder email will be sent with the link on the day of the event close to Close of Business hours.

This event may be recorded. If you have any questions, please email us at [info@rgsq.org.au](mailto:info@rgsq.org.au).



## Treks and Activities

### BRISBANE'S OLD INNER DAMS

Wednesday 15 May **only 7 spaces left**

For full details and to register: <https://rgsq.org.au/event-5640307>

Join us on a tour of the old inner dams of Brisbane – the city's early water supplies before the Somerset and Wivenhoe Dams



### HIDDEN VALE WILDLIFE RESEARCH STATION & U.Q. GATTON CAMPUS

Thursday 27 June

Register: <https://rgsq.org.au/event-5696123>

**Hidden Vale Wildlife Research Station**, located in Grandchester, is a remarkable hub for scientific exploration and conservation which plays a pivotal role in advancing our understanding of Australian ecosystems and safeguarding native wildlife.



**University of Queensland Gatton Campus** combines the rural traditions of its Queensland Agricultural College heritage with innovative research and teaching facilities in agriculture, animal science, veterinary science, and the environment.

Dr Gurion Ang, Director of Engagement & Advancement, School of the Environment, U.Q. will join us on the visit. We are travelling by bus.

**TIME and PLACE of DEPARTURE:** Please indicate when booking:

- A) **NORTH SIDE:** Arrive at 7.45 for 8.00am departure from Bus Stop 27 at 15 Park Avenue, Clayfield (near Eagle Junction station). Car parking in streets.
- B) **SOUTH SIDE:** Arrive at 8.15 for 8.30am departure from Brittain Park, near 172 Troughton Road, Coopers Plains. Car parking available.

## VISITS

- Arrive 10.00am at Hidden Vale for a facility tour and morning tea (provided)
- 11.30am Depart Research Station for U.Q. Gatton campus.
- 12.15pm Lunch at UQ Gatton campus dining hall for buffet lunch (provided).
- 13.15pm Guided tour of the campus. Meet some academic staff and students and learn more about what they do at UQ Gatton.
- 14.30pm Mystery to solve "Why are my lettuces dying?"
- 15.30pm Depart Gatton
- Arrive Coopers Plains approx. 17.00pm and then Clayfield approx. 17.30pm

**COST** (including morning tea and buffet lunch):  
MEMBERS \$80, NON-MEMBERS \$90

**30 registrants. Register and pay by FRIDAY 31 MAY**

Participants, please note that the outing involves bus travel up to 1.8 hours in a section. Please wear closed shoes, sun safe clothing, hat, sunscreen. Bring water.

Image: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Foundation\\_Building\\_UQ\\_Gatton\\_Campus\\_from](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Foundation_Building_UQ_Gatton_Campus_from); Heritage branch staff, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

**John Wilkinson (Event Coordinator)**

## Map Group Presentation

### How the USA States Got Their Shapes

**Presenter: Keith Treschman**

Thursday 9 July 10am

Register: <https://rgsq.org.au/event-5685249>

Keith is a member of RGSQ. He has taught Science for over 40 years in Queensland secondary schools. He holds a PhD in Astronomy, an area which he is passionate about. He has lectured on this topic onboard Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth*.



He has visited the 7 continents and enjoys geographical places, for example, Hawaii, Great Rift Valley of Africa, Galápagos Islands, Jordan River, and Antarctica.

His previous presentations to the Map Group were: Mapping the Night Sky, Areography (Geography of Mars), Life on Europa? An Application of Geography, Struve Geodetic Arc, Plate Tectonics and Seabed 2030.

On a map of the USA, one notices some straight horizontal and vertical lines, but then there are also angled lines, non-straight lines, lines with no apparently defined shape. Keith will explain these features by reference to history and geography.

**Cost:** \$5:00 which includes a special morning tea.

**Coordinator:** Kay Rees

## PORT OF BRISBANE TOUR

TAAC Report Wednesday 10 April 2024

There were 30 participants (28 members and 2 non-members) on the Port of Brisbane Tour. We were very fortunate to have a cool morning then fine weather.

Morning tea was BYO food and drink (hot water supplied) at the Colmslie Beach Reserve.



**OZ fish** in Whimbrel St, on port land, was the first stop. Robbie Porter explained the origins of the operation and the recycling of oyster shells. Shells are

collected from various restaurants and commercial shuckers (large Pacific and Rock); two stockpiles were observed. The centre collects and leaves the shells in the sun and rain for up to 6 months to sterilize these from pests and diseases. We observed the team of volunteers who were washing, cutting the steel mesh, constructing the baskets, filling and placing completed baskets on pallets waiting to be loaded onto a boat for placing in a specified site in the Bay. The operation recycles oyster shells, and steel to create new reefs for oysters to grow. A donation was given.

At the **Port of Brisbane Office and Visitor Centre** we were privileged to have Ed as our guide. He joined our bus at the Visitors centre. His depth of knowledge on the history, geography, engineering and economics of the port was amazing. The reclamation of Fisherman Island began in 1974. Rock walls were constructed. Water pumped out. Sand was pumped in and allowed to settle for up to 20 years. Bishop Island was absorbed in the construction. Concrete slabs 8m thick were placed to enable robotic infrastructure. There is a 14m deep channel to Moreton Bay.

We saw:

- The freight rail interface.
- The bulk terminal with conveyor belts, stockpiles of coal, woodchip and grain, bitumen, sun state cement, fertilizer.
- The bunker ship to transfer fuel to the cruise ships.
- The ocean cruise terminal on north shore with sky bridge
- The storage space for blades 78m in length and tower sections 55 tonnes for the Warwick wind farm.
- Roll-on/roll-off (RORO) facilities for car carriers to unload the cars from ships and await the biosecurity check for the grass seed from China.
- Container wharves DP (Dubai Ports) - high profile and Patricks - lower profile. It was interesting to see the robotics at work - how the truck logs in, goes to a specified bay, the robotic arm and claw picks up the container, lowers it on to the truck and the driver with the correct load drives away.
- Tugboat.
- Used railway carriages, scrap, waiting to be exported to South Africa and India.

The future of the port is promising economically with a throughput of \$55B per year.

**Lunch** was on the Observation Deck with a great view of the port layout. It was a catered menu of shared boxes of

assorted sandwiches, wraps and a fruit platter with a selection of soft drinks, juice and water.

**Environmental Elements** - after lunch, Penelope, the Environmental Officer, led us to Lake Lucinda (which is part of the site's runoff and storm water catchment) to see the bird life then to the Shorebird Roost with Hide. Here we observed the resident birdlife and signage for the migratory birds in season (September-March). All part of the port's commitment to maintaining habitat after the port disturbance.

We returned to Clayfield and the station by 3.15pm.

All told it was a very interesting, informative, enjoyable and unforgettable day.

Image: Iraphne Childs

**Contributed by Jeanette Lamont**

## Climate Resilience in Communities

Geography in Conversation Report 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024

The panel of speakers, Retired Major General Jake Ellwood, CEO of the Qld Reconstruction Authority and Ms Jen Basham, Qld Conservation Council, were



joined online by

Professor Ali Cheshmehzangi, the (Incoming) Head of School of Architecture, Design and Planning (ADP), UQ.

*Professor Ali Cheshmehzangi.* In the age of climate change, increasing climate disasters, droughts, and floods are occurring in the same countries at the same time. 2016 was the hottest year on record. The science has informed us that melting ice sheets and Arctic Sea ice are contributing to an increase of sea level rise by 3.3 millimetres per year. Observable temperature increases have been recorded since 1977.

There is a need for Green infrastructure with integrated strategies that will help improve resilience through co-planning, co-management, and co-design approaches, Nature based solutions emphasizing the ecosystem and stormwater management.

*Ms Jen Basham.* Climate resilience challenges vary between communities. Better housing design is needed to lower costs of living. Communities need healthy green spaces which help mitigate flooding. Jen referenced ecological fragility, where an extreme heat event in Cairns in 2018 was estimated to have killed more than 23,000, equal to about 30% of the population of speckled flying foxes. Likewise, the koala habitat requires protection and restoration.

*Ret'd Major General Jake Ellwood.* The Qld Reconstruction Authority (QRA) was formed in 2011. Jake's QRA experience with disasters has been the bushfires in 2020 and floods in 2022. Scale involving disasters increased in cost and number of houses destroyed. In the period 2019/20 – 2023/24 there have been 45 events, involving 76 Councils and a cost of \$9.6 billion. Qld is facing frequent and severe natural disasters and now has regional community resilience programs.

*Emphasis:* If you have a house, how can it be more survivable? Houses are categorized as i) if flooded, risk to inhabitants, ii) houses raided as assessed, iii) buy-backs.

Buy-backs are assessed where it involved rescue teams taking people out of harm's way. Buy-backs are seen as a last resort. Insurance companies have to recognize that homes that are more resilient need financial relief.

The three speakers agreed that disasters such as the 2022 floods demonstrate that communities can work together. Homes flooded in 2011 which were raised escaped with minimal disruption in the 2022 floods. "Build back Better" needed but insurance companies not informing people of risks. There is a need for Guidelines on a national scale – for better urban design to reduce flooding risk, and damage/loss to infrastructure. Also needed is a high-quality planning policy framework shifting away from mere adaptation strategies towards embedded recovery and transformative capacity, ultimately moving to effective mitigation strategies.

The event was very ably moderated by Stella and Graham Rush.

Photo: Peter Yard, RGSQ member

**Notes taken by James Hansen**

## Samford Valley and the 1947 Camp Mountain Rail Disaster

TAAC Report Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024

The 30 participants met the bus at the Enoggera Bus Station for a short trip to Samford Museum, unfortunately on a rainy day.

Geoff Harris, one of many volunteers at the Museum, had set up a long table and the television screen so we could comfortably enjoy the presentation during morning tea. Greg Hallam, historian for Queensland Rail, based in Toowoomba, gave us an excellent talk on the reasons and outcomes of the rail disaster on what is now McLean Road South at Camp Mountain. This is still Queensland's worst rail accident involving loss of life.



Three separate picnic trains left Central Station on Labour Day in 1947 - two from local churches and the middle train from the Customs Department. This second train came over the "divide" from Ferny Grove

and then took the slope down from the top towards Samford. There was a relatively straight downhill section culminating in a major bend to the left. The train came off the rails here with its tender and most of the carriages, leading to 6 people losing their lives and many injuries. The cause was mainly thought to be partly caused by the inexperience of the driver and fireman on this line. The guard at the rear of the train was a hero of the day by running back up the slope with red flags and positioning small detonators on the line, signalling an immediate stop for the third train. This would have avoided further disaster. Greg did a very good job at debunking the myths and conspiracy theories surrounding this whole major disaster.

Peter Burden has written a very good summary of the whole day with plenty of pictures. His book and a CD can be purchased at Samford Museum for \$15 each. A copy of the book was purchased for the RGSQ Library.

After the excellent presentation, we had a short time to visit the well-kept and interesting museum of the wider Samford area. Samford used to be noted for its many banana plantations with Samford station in the 1920s handling more bananas consigned to the Southern markets than any other station in Queensland. However, the banana bunchy top virus wiped out bananas and had spread from the Northern Rivers in NSW.

We then travelled to the Samford Bora Grounds just off Upper Wights Mountain Road, Wights Mountain. These are purported to be the best-preserved Bora Grounds in Queensland. There is an obvious raised circle of about 26m in diameter which would have been dug out by hand using sharp sticks and tomahawks carried on sheets of bark to form the outer circle. The Ring was used to initiate 12-15-year-old boys into young men (or Kippas).

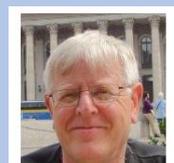
The bus then took us to view the small plaque at the actual site of the rail crash, now a paved road and adjacent to 91 Maclean Road South. All the areas visited are easily accessible, and the Samford Museum is open to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Photo: Kay Rees

**Contributed by Chris Spriggs**

### RGSQ's preferred travel agent - Integrity Travel Durack

RGSQ has partnered with **Mr Stuart Betlem, Integrity Travel Durack** as the Society's preferred travel agent. The Society will receive commissions for RGSQ group bookings and on any individual travel bookings made through Stuart by RGSQ members and their family or friends. Stuart can assist with travel plans within Australia or overseas in all aspects – car hire, accommodation, flights, train or cruise bookings and travel insurance. He will process all payments for bookings. Integrity Travel Durack is registered with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS).



**Please contact Stuart directly, mentioning that you or your family/friends are with RGSQ, for any of your future travel inquiries and assist the Society to gain financial benefits.**

**INTEGRITY TRAVEL DURACK: Stuart Betlem**  
ph (07) 3714-9111, mob 0414 903 047  
email: [stuart@integritytravel.com.au](mailto:stuart@integritytravel.com.au)  
<https://www.travelagentfinder.com.au/durack/stuart-betlem>

*Disclaimer: The Society is only making a recommendation about the services of Integrity Travel Durack and cannot be held responsible for the actions and outcomes arising from this.*

### Welcome New Members

We have much pleasure in welcoming *Christopher Zinn, Odette Paramor and Christopher Frid, Neptune Maturi, and Rana Dadpour* as new members. We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable.



**RGSQ PHOTOGRAPHIC  
COMPETITION 2024**

**GEOGRAPHIC ICONS OF  
QUEENSLAND**

From Cape York to Point Danger  
or anywhere in Outback Qld  
Entries open for members only  
1 Aug to 30 Sep 2024  
Further details coming soon

Are you ready to get those cameras clicking again?

This year, the theme is “Geographic Icons of Queensland”.

What is your favourite icon of Qld? Whatever it is, it needs to have a geographic focus. Entry conditions will be the same as previous years. We look forward to seeing what treasures you uncover.

### Contributors

Kath Berg, Manoj Prajwal Bhattaram, Iraphne Childs, Ralph Carlisle, Lucy Graham, James Hansen, Iain Hay, Jeanette Lamont, Kay Rees, Pamela Tonkin, Sue Sargent, Chris Spriggs, Keith Treschman, John Wilkinson, Peter Yard

# RGSQ Bulletin

May 2024

**Tue 7 May: 2024 Thomson Oration**

*Vital Learned Societies. The significance of voluntary, community-based learned societies for Australian geography's future*

**Thus 9 May: Map Group Presentation**

*Navigating at both Poles, now and then ...*

**Tue 14 May: Geography Matters**

*Protecting Nature During the Roll-out of Renewable Energy*

**Tue 28 May: Geography in Conversation**

*K'gari*

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The May Council will meet on the third Tuesday of the month.

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