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2023 Council Report to Members

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The Council is pleased to present its report for the Financial Year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

OVERVIEW

The past twelve months to 30 June 2023 have seen many achievements for RGSQ. The hard work and passion of the Society's members, Councillors, and staff have ensured that RGSQ has delivered on our primary objective to promote the study of geography. This report details the key achievements of the past year, which include:

- collaborating with multiple organisations, including the University of Queensland (UQ), Binna Burra Lodge (BBL), and the State Library of Queensland (SLQ)
- organising engaging events and trips across multiple committees, including Treks and Activities, Geography in Conversation, Map Group, Scientific Studies, and the Young Geographers Group
- starting the Geography Matters webinar series
- releasing collections using the eHive web-based catalogue
- supporting the Soils for Science (S4S) citizen science project
- delivering and improving the online Australia Geography Competition
- increasing RGSQ's presence on social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube)

On behalf of the RGSQ Councillors, I would like to thank everyone involved throughout the past year. I am confident that the future of our Society will bring opportunities and growth, and the continued delivery of outstanding and engaging activities to promote geography.



John Tasker
President
19 September 2023

RGSQ 2022/2023 COUNCIL

Executive

President: John TASKER
Secretary: Kath BERG
Treasurer: Annie LAU
Vice President: Vacant

Councillors

Iraphne CHILDS
Duncan COOK
Rob COOK
Patrick MOSS
Giselle PICKERING
Kerry RAYMOND
Stephen SCHWER
Pamela TONKIN

MEMBERSHIP

The membership/member profile by category as at 30 June 2023 compared to June last year is shown in the table below. The Society has seen a small but welcome increase in members in the past year. The Council decided to continue the membership referral program to encourage these referrals and is grateful to those who have referred a friend to RGSQ and benefited from the part refund of membership fees. Please note, due to website anomalies, six Life members were not included in the membership numbers reported at the 2022 Annual General Meeting. The numbers for 2022 have been corrected in the table below.

Membership Category	To June 2022		To June 2023	
	Memberships	Members	Memberships	Members
Ordinary	93	93	100	100
Household Bundle	37	76	37	75
Educational	0	0	0	0
Student*	31	31	41	41
Life	22	22	20	20
Honorary Life	1	1	1	1
Total	184	226	199	237

Table 1: Membership by category 1 July 2022-30 June 2023

*Student membership is free for the duration of student enrolment

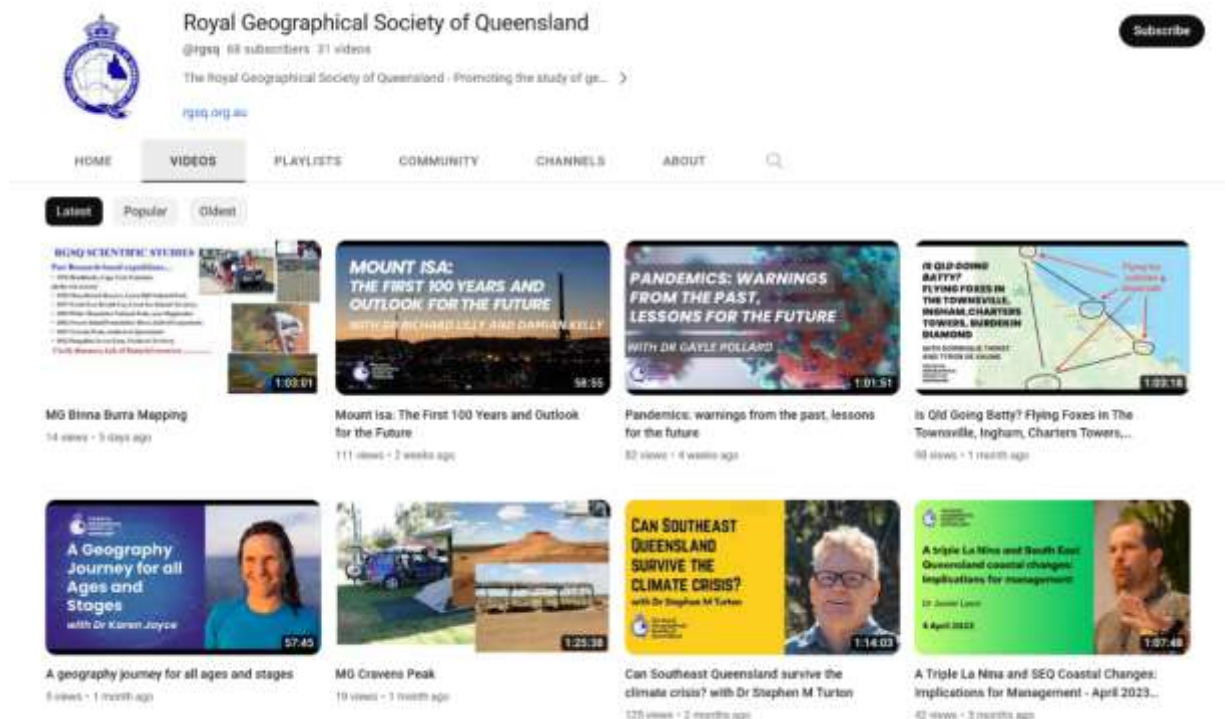
MANAGEMENT and ADMINISTRATION

The Society's paid staff consists of Lilia Darii (Business Manager), Rachel Honey (Competition Coordinator) and Rosie Catt (Administration Office Assistant). They work in collaboration with Councillors, Committee members and other Society members who contribute as volunteers.





The 2022-2023 financial year was characterized by an increase in organised events with over 40 events offered throughout the year. This included trips, presentations, lectures and, in a conference panel/discussion forum delivered in collaboration with the University of Queensland – the first for some years.

Continuing a trend that started during Covid, and in a bid to better serve members outside of Brisbane, RGSQ has increased its online offering, with most lectures and Map Group presentations delivered in hybrid mode – on-premises and by virtual link via Zoom. The Society also started a new event series that is delivered online only – Geography Matters. As most recordings are available on the Society's [YouTube channel](#) this meant an improvement in the Society's published audiovisual offerings.

The Society's YouTube channel now features over 31 recordings of presentations from the past three years, as well as some older videos.



During the year the Society increased its social media presence and the following on its social media accounts. In particular LinkedIn has seen a significant uptake with professionals.

	http://twitter.com/The_RGSQ
	Instagram: @thergsq
	YouTube/RGSQ Channel
	The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland Ltd LinkedIn
	Facebook.com/The Royal Geographical Society of Queensland

The Society received one grant during the year, a Community Heritage Grant (CHG) for Conservation and Collection Management Activities. It was used to preserve and restore several books and maps in the collection in need of urgent work. In 2023, the Society applied for another CHG grant and for a Gambling Community Benefit Fund grant to upgrade audiovisual capabilities at Gregory Place. Results of the two grants are pending.

During 2022-2023, RGSQ commenced planning its first overseas tour since Covid struck. Society members will travel to New Zealand on an RGSQ designed tour in October-November 2023. RGSQ is using the services of a travel agent for all travel arrangements and will benefit from a travel commission upon the completion of the tour.

All activities have been enthusiastically and tirelessly supported and progressed by the Society's Council, Committees, other dedicated volunteer members and office staff. Much appreciation and thanks are due to all who have assisted with these major projects. Special thanks to Graham Rees for managing the Society's website.

FINANCIAL RESULTS AND POSITION

The Society has reported an overall surplus of \$36,739 for the year to 30 June 2023, thanks to the increase in market value of investments of \$37,423 and the realised gain on investments totalling \$17,815. The operating loss was \$18,499, compared to the loss of \$28,107 in 2022. Included in the accounts were non-cash depreciation costs – \$28,484 in 2023.

	NOTE	2023 \$	2022 \$
Australian competition income	2	290,120	380,704
Other income	2	178,731	162,637
Distribution of (profit)/loss to AGTA		(6,422)	(5,938)
Employees benefit expense		(96,832)	(95,136)
Depreciation expenses		(28,484)	(32,792)
Australian competition expenses		(277,277)	(368,828)
Administrative expenses		(78,335)	(68,745)
Loss on disposal of asset		-	(9)
OPERATING PROFIT / (LOSS)		(18,499)	(28,107)
NON-OPERATING ITEMS:			
(Decrease) / Increase in market value of investments		37,423	(214,569)
Realised gain on investments		17,815	(34,093)
Special dividends received		-	92,736
TOTAL SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		36,739	(184,033)

Table 2: Income and Expenditure Statement for Year Ended 30 June 2023

RGSQ: The Society, excluding the Australian Geography Competition (AGC), had an operating loss of \$24,921. The main sources of income were from investment interest and dividends totalling \$120,357, and the AGC administration contribution to overheads (\$35,292). The largest expense was salaries. The Society has very carefully controlled expenditure, but administrative expenses have gone up significantly (14%) since last year, partly due to the high inflation rate. Major administrative expenses included body corporate fees, insurance, rates and water, computer and web expenses, and telephone expenses. While the financial statement shows a loss in the “rent received”, that is not reflective of this year’s figure but is due to the change of accounting software in the previous year that resulted in some old invoices from the rental office in the Milton building being carried over to the new system and needing to be written off.

AGC: Surplus of \$12,844 was split equally between RGSQ and AGTA, though retained for future use by AGC. Income from AGC entries was \$251,608 (down from \$281,312 in the previous year) and sponsorship was \$36,000 (compared to \$12,250). Other AGC income, mostly from an Australian government grant, was substantially down (\$84,718 compared to \$1,191). Last financial year it was inflated because a change in the auditor’s procedure meant no funds were carried forward. This financial year it is low because a change of government has meant that the 2023 grant has not yet been received although it has been approved. Major expenses include the competition management fee and salaries. GBWO expenses were low this financial year due to the longer time gap between the 2022 and 2023 events (July 2022 and September 2023), resulting in low expenditure included in this financial year as most of the expenses were paid before 1 July 2022 or after 30 June 2023. iGeo expenses were \$25,647, which is higher than last year when the event was still held virtually.

Balance Sheet: The Society continues to carefully maintain and manage its assets. The Society continues to have a strong Balance Sheet, as shown below.

	NOTE	2023 \$	2022 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	282,614	307,244
Trade and other receivables	4	52,407	61,629
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		335,021	368,873
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Investments		1,622,025	1,567,633
Property, plant and equipment	5	1,349,414	1,378,903
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		2,971,439	2,946,536
TOTAL ASSETS		3,306,460	3,315,409
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	6	23,582	76,115
Provisions	7	21,167	25,864
Amount due to associated party	8	89,416	82,994
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		134,165	184,973
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	7	14,044	8,924
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		14,044	8,924
TOTAL LIABILITIES		148,209	193,897
NET ASSETS		3,158,251	3,121,512
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		3,068,835	3,038,518
Accumulated profits reserve - competition		89,416	82,994
TOTAL EQUITY		3,158,251	3,121,512

Table 3: Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2023

Audit. Pilot Partners, the Society’s auditors, has provided an unqualified audit report as attached to the published accounts.

Outlook. The Society’s total asset position is favourable, but the Council is concerned about the low income and increasing expenses. For instance, inflation and body corporate costs continue to rapidly increase the Society’s expenses. The 2023/24 overall budget is showing a deficit of \$20,813. When excluding the depreciation of \$25,755, RGSQ will show a profit of about \$5,000. AGC is budgeted to have a small surplus of \$1,000 (shared between RGSQ and AGTA).

As listed in the Society’s strategic plan 2023-2027, one of the strategy priorities is to “diversify revenue streams” to ensure the Society has the financial capability to instigate and manage programs of value to members and society as a whole. The Society targets to increase income through organising geographic tours (under a travel industry partnership model) and to maintain a steady stream of income from managing a low-maintenance investment portfolio. The investment portfolio has been reviewed and streamlined by selling a large proportion of the portfolio and investing in High Yield Managed Funds.

RGSQ ACADEMIC PRIZES

J P Thomson Medal

Emeritus Professor Lesley Head, University of Melbourne, was awarded the 2023 J P Thomson Medal. Lesley was able to travel to Brisbane to present an in-person lecture, *The Social Life of Australian Nature: The Case of Barka/Darling River Ecocide*, at Gregory Place on 2 May this year. This was well received and attended. The Thomson Medal was presented to Lesley by The Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill, Acting Governor of Queensland.

University prizes

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

Two institutions awarded the prize in the 2022-2023 period and the recipients were:

- The University of the Sunshine Coast – Mr Alexander McKinlay
- James Cook University – Miss Ella Schirru

LECTURES

The Society offered a diverse lecture program throughout the year with exceptional presenters. Thanks to Ron Owen and his dedicated supper team of RGSQ members for providing the delicious suppers for the lectures. The 2023 Thomson Oration, *The Social Life of Australian Nature: the case of Barka/Darling River ecocide*, presented by Emeritus Professor Lesley Head was the most popular lecture of the year with 68 registrations, closely followed by the June lecture, *Can Southeast Queensland survive the climate crisis?*, delivered by Dr Stephen Turton, RGSQ member and former Councillor, and the April lecture, *A triple La Niña and Southeast Queensland coastal changes: Implications for management*, presented by Dr Javier Leon, University of the Sunshine Coast – both with 66 registrations.

All lectures were delivered both in-person and virtually via Zoom. The latter has become increasingly popular with both members and non-members. Recordings of past lectures can be viewed on the [Society's YouTube channel](#) or on the [website](#).

CITIZEN SCIENCE

In June 2023, the Society was delighted to commence its partnership with the Soils for Science citizen science project. The Soils for Science (S4S) project, led by the Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB) at the University of Queensland, is dedicated to acquiring a comprehensive collection of soil samples from various regions across Australia. Dr Zeinab Khalil, in her presentation to RGSQ members on 5 June, elaborated on the project's objective of conducting microbial studies to uncover potential novel strains of bacteria that could significantly contribute to disease prevention and the fight against antibiotic resistance.

Thanks to Annie Nguyen for undertaking to lead this project. As part of the partnership, RGSQ has committed to distributing 100 soil samples to members, their families and friends, who have access to private properties suitable for sampling.

The Society is proud to collaborate with the IMB on the Soils for Science project, as it aligns with RGSQ's commitment to scientific exploration and environmental stewardship. By participating in this citizen science initiative, members have a unique opportunity to contribute directly to groundbreaking research while gaining valuable insights into Australia's diverse microbial ecosystems.

COMMITTEES

Australian Geography Competition Committee

Members: Co-Chair K Berg (RGSQ) and Co-Chair J Davis (AGTA), S Albertson (AGTA), T Bourke (Independent, Faculty of Education, Queensland University of Technology), J Tasker (RGSQ), R Honey (ex-officio, Competition Coordinator); supplemented by S Hawkins and J Hearnden for GBWO.

Overview: The Australian Geography Competition is a joint initiative of RGSQ and the Australian Geography Teachers' Association (AGTA), administered by RGSQ with oversight from the Competition Committee under a memorandum of understanding between RGSQ and AGTA. The in-school Competition and its associated events, Geography's Big Week Out (GBWO) and Australia's participation in the International Geography Olympiad (iGeo), received sponsorship funds from the University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, Monash University, University of Queensland, Curtin University and the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience. The latter two events also received some funding from the Australian Department of Education. A large group of RGSQ volunteers make an important contribution to the success of the Competition through their assistance with large mailouts.

2023 Competition in schools: The Competition remained online this year but moved to a different provider, Janison Solutions. Changing providers enhanced the flexibility of the background administration of the Competition, and in addition, resulted in many positive comments from teachers. The Competition was held in schools from 10 to 24 May. Entries for 66,733 students were received from 712 schools – slightly down on last year.

Geography's Big Week Out: This is a fieldwork-based event for 16 top-performing Year 11 students from the Competition. The 2022 GBWO was held in Darwin and Litchfield National Park from 3 to 7 July. The July school holidays saw a resurgence of travel by Australians, with airlines not yet prepared to handle the numbers. This led to logistical and financial challenges in organising the flights for GBWO.

Students spent two days carrying out fieldwork in Litchfield National Park. They investigated whether Litchfield NP was being managed sustainably as a tourist attraction while still maintaining the values of a national park. Activities included: taking various stream measurements to assess popular swimming sites; recording numbers and demographics of visitors; interviewing visitors; mapping tourist infrastructure; and, discussing park values and threats to sustainability with a national park ranger.



Taking stream measurements in Litchfield National Park

Returning to Darwin, the students investigated whether Darwin Esplanade and the Waterfront Precinct met the principles of good design for urban public spaces. This involved some of the same activities as the students had carried out in Litchfield NP: recording numbers and demographics of visitors; interviewing visitors; mapping infrastructure – and experiencing the wave pool first-hand.

The activities were led by Steve Hawkins and Julie Hearnden, from the Geography and History Teachers' Association of the Northern Territory, and Shane Albertson and Kath Berg, from the Australian Geography Competition Committee.

International Geography Olympiad: Due to Covid-19, the 2022 International Geography Olympiad was held virtually from 11 to 18 July. The Australian team gathered on the Gold Coast to compete together. The team was supervised by leaders Kath Berg and John Tasker. The team members were:

Lucy Schwarz, Arden Anglican School, NSW
 Justine Thomas, Comet Bay College, WA
 Ioanna Vaughan-Jones, Walford Anglican School for Girls, SA
 Jessica Wang, St George Girls High School, NSW



Exploring the Gold Coast hinterland from a helicopter

As a small compensation for missing out on exploring Paris and the surrounding region, the students explored the Gold Coast and its hinterland – on the water, in the air and on the land.

The Society is proud of the achievements of all four students but special congratulations to Ioanna who was awarded a bronze medal, and Lucy on her gold medal.

Collections Committee

Members: R Cook (Convenor), R Carlisle, J Graham, K Raymond, L Darii (ex-officio)

Focus areas have been:

- Members online access to the collections catalogue using the eHive web-based system <https://ehive.com/collections/203532/the-royal-geographical-society-of-queensland>. The library catalogue of books was transferred to eHive and is available for members to search. Members can now borrow library books via a paper-based borrowing system. The library discontinued use of the old DBText catalogue for maintaining the book catalogue. Work is ongoing to add the library journals and the map collection catalogues to the online eHive catalogue, and to add searching the RGSQ catalogue to the National Library of Australia Trove system.

- Donations of RGSQ collection items to the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) where RGSQ believes that the items are able to be better preserved by SLQ, and the public will get better access to the items. This year SLQ accepted a donation of the bulk of the lantern slide collection and in return RGSQ will receive digitised images of the more important parts of the collection. Other donations are being investigated between RGSQ and SLQ.
- Preservation of collection items that have deteriorated over time: RGSQ received a fourth Community Heritage Grant (CHG) for preservation work and used the funds to contract a professional conservator to greatly improve the condition of six books and five maps.
- Laying the groundwork for building RGSQ digital collections to hold properly catalogued digital photographs and videos, maps, and other materials that RGSQ might decide to collect in pursuit of its geographical mission, including software and data collections. Activities will include the digitisation of physical collection items to make them more accessible to members online.

Led by the Committee, RGSQ submitted a further application for a CHG Collection Management and Conservation Activities grant to assist the Society with preserving significantly deteriorated priority items from the library and map collections.

The Collections Committee continues to seek members who might be interested in volunteering to assist in all areas, and particularly in managing the archives, images and artefacts collections.

Reports for the sub-groups of the Collections Committee follow.

Library Group: J Graham, N McManimm

Group members are currently cataloguing the Society's collection's journal titles and new books directly onto the new eHive online catalogue that is already available to members. The old DBText system will eventually be discontinued. Library Group completed the task of cleaning the books and journals as recommended by a recent consultant report. This process will need to be repeated every couple of years. Members can search the eHive online catalogue to identify an item and then borrow it via a paper-based borrowing system operated through the RGSQ office. Loans are to be returned into the labelled blue plastic box located within the collection.

Map Collection Group R Carlisle, P Nunan

During the year, many maps were added to the current spreadsheet. Six turn-of-the-20th-century maps in poor condition were restored with the help of a Community Heritage Grant and an application has been submitted to restore a further six. Work continues towards adding the maps to the eHive catalogue available on the internet. Six maps were digitised commercially with a view to making maps available to members via the internet.

As part of a program to create a geographic 'atmosphere' for the Society's premises, a number of maps were hung on the walls.

Finance Committee

Members: A Lau (Chair), R Cook, L Darii, I Harding, C Spriggs, J Tasker

The Finance Committee provides financial guidance to the Society's Treasurer and Council and meets during the year regarding budget, financing, and investments. There were three formal committee meetings in this reporting period to discuss budget items (particularly on how to deal with the challenges related to high inflation) and to review the Society's investment strategy. The Committee also communicates via email to actively manage the Society's investments to ensure a healthy income from interests and dividends.

Investments review: The Society's investment portfolio had 20 separate investments (excluding fixed interest), all of which are in the S&P 200. These were managed to maximise dividend income. The portfolio is reviewed on an ongoing basis, but it was becoming unwieldy to manage the performance and dividends. In reviewing the investment portfolio, the Committee considered recommendations

provided by the Society's broker Greg Parish of Bell Potter who provides a pro bono service. The Committee recommended to Council that the Society switch some of its investments to high-yield index funds, as the review showed that the yield performance in the past two years was generally below high-yield index funds. The switch will take place in the third and fourth quarters of 2023.

Auditing: The Society started working with a new auditor, Pilot Partners, in July 2022. There were minor issues in the auditing exercise due to the change in accounting software in 2021 and partial move to accrual accounting at the recommendation of the auditors, as well as change in the timing of the recognition of the grant from the Department of Education for the Australian Geography Competition. The issues were clarified and addressed through the hard work of a sub-committee led by L Darii and C Spriggs.

Geography in Conversation Committee

Members: R Kernaghan, D Kelly, N Nguyen, S and G Rush, S Schwer, P Tonkin, K Treschman

Geography in Conversation continued on from an auspicious beginning in May 2022 and offered a stellar series of topics covering the various branches of geography.

- **July - Queens' Wharf Development, Brisbane River Precincts and Lifestyles.** Speakers: Mr Paul Krautz, Project Executive Director Queen's Wharf Brisbane, and Mr Andrew Demack, Advocacy Officer Bicycle Queensland
- **August - A Power Network Fit for Purpose.** Speakers: Prof Paul Simshauser, CEO Powerlink, Mr David Shankey, Deputy Director Energy, Department of Energy and Public Works, and Mr Trevor Berrill, an advocate for consumers
- **September - Brisbane Population Growth to 2030.** Speakers: Dr Heather Shearer, Griffith University Cities Research Institute, Dr John Cowie, Manager, City Planning and Economic Development, Brisbane City Council, and Dr Amy MacMahon, MP for South Brisbane
- **November - The Bribie Island Breakthrough.** Speakers: Dr Javier Leon, Coastal Scientist and Geomorphologist, University of the Sunshine Coast, Flotilla Commander Roger Pearce, Coast Guard Caloundra, Richard Ogden, President of the Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association, and Ken Mewburn, Take Action for Pumicestone Passage
- **February - Water and Soils Natural Resource Management.** Speakers: Dr Andrew Biggs, Qld Department of Resources, Dr Piet Filet, Griffith University, Australian Rivers Institute, and Dr Robin Thwaites, Senior Research Fellow, Griffith University Precision Erosion and Sediment Management Research Group
- **March - Sustainable Action for Climate Change.** Speakers: Dr Aysin Dedekorkut-Howe, Senior Lecturer of Urban and Environmental Planning, Griffith School of Engineering and Built Environment, Dr Michelle Maloney, National Convenor, Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA), and Clare Silcock, Energy Strategist, Queensland Conservation Council
- **May - Transport Infrastructure Gold Coast to Sunshine Coast Corridor.** Prof Ian Lowe, Sustainable Population Australia, Ms Deborah Tabart, Australian Koala Foundation, and Cr Joe Natoli, Councillor, Sunshine Coast Council
- **June - Native Bees, Biodiverse Environments and Innovations in Agriculture.** Speakers: Prof Robert Henry, Director, Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation, Dr Tim Heard, Sugarbag Bees, and Mr Ryan Newis, Sustainable Agriculture Systems Theme, Centre for Planetary Health and Food Security, Griffith University

Statistics:

Month	Members	Non-Members
July	27	6
August	26	20
September	24	7
November	37	13
February	27	8
March	33	8
May	32	13
June	26	4

Table 4: Attendance at Geography in Conversation events

Aims: Geography in Conversation has four major aims: social event with networking, engage members and attract new members, raise the public profile of RGSQ, and involve a new generation of volunteers. Raising the RGSQ profile was achieved through:

- 24 guest presenters from academia, government or significant organizations
- support from Sustainable Population Australia and the Spring Hill Community Association in running two events
- establishing goodwill with other organizations; Hon Grace Grace, Member for McConnel, SEQ Community Alliance, Bribie Island Environmental Protection Association, L.E.A.N., Redlands 2030

Feedback: Feedback is collected at each event to help improve future events. For 2022-2023, four of the eight topics had been suggested on the feedback forms. Where possible suggestions for speakers were matched with a topic. The feedback has been very positive and glowing in praise for the talent and knowledge of the speakers.

The team: The moderators, John Tasker, Keith Treschman, and Stella and Graeme Rush have blossomed in that role throughout the year. Special thanks to Duncan Cook for being the guest moderator for the November 2022 event. Stephen Schwer, Riley Kernaghan, Damian Kelly, Ngoc Nguyen, Stella and Graeme Rush and Keith Treschman have researched topics and speakers, contributed to reports on events for the *Bulletin* and enabled the monthly events to run smoothly. Special thanks to Mary and John Nowill and Sue Reid for consistent and much appreciated help at the reception desk.

Geography Matters

Currently being run by the Geography in Conversation Committee: R Kernaghan, D Kelly, N Nguyen, S and G Rush, S Schwer, P Tonkin, K Treschman

From June 2023, an exciting topical discussion series has been offered by RGSQ on the second Tuesday of each month: Geography Matters. Exploring significant topics in the geographical sciences, the series aims to broaden RGSQ's engagement by focussing on topics relevant to a wide audience, including rural and remote Queenslanders. Geography Matters will be delivered via Zoom and will run for an hour each month. An expert presentation will be delivered, with an interviewer discussing the topic to draw out further analysis.

For the inaugural Geography Matters event, the Committee was proud to present Dr Karen Joyce, Associate Professor, Remote Sensing and Spatial Science, James Cook University, presenting on her topic and interviewed by John Tasker, Remote Sensing Specialist and RGSQ President. The event had 50 registrants: 34 members, 9 non-members and 7 students. Nine registrants came from postcodes outside of Brisbane. To promote the event as widely as possible Eventbrite (a ticketing website) was trialed and two people registered via that site.

Honours Committee

Members: D Wadley (Chair), K Berg, D Cook, J Holmes

Meetings: No formal meetings were either necessary or held during the financial year 2022-23 since electronic channels sufficed. In the spring of 2022, nominations for the 2023 Thomson Medal were considered and a nomination submitted to Council.



L-R: Emeritus Professor Lesley Head, 2023 Thomson medallist; The Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill, Acting Governor of Queensland; Mr John Tasker, RGSQ President

Thomson Medal: The RGSQ Council accepted the Honours Committee's recommendation regarding the 2023 Thomson Medallist. The Medal was duly awarded to Emeritus Professor Lesley Head of The University of Melbourne in recognition of her outstanding work on human-environment relations, on long-term changes in the Australian landscape and on the interactions of both prehistoric and contemporary peoples with the continent's changing environments. Members of the Honours Committee participated in the dinner engagement held for Lesley before her Oration at the Society's rooms on 2 May 2023. It was entitled *The Social Life of Australian Nature: The Case of Barka/Darling River Ecocide*.

At this well-attended meeting, The Honourable Chief Justice Helen Bowskill, Acting Governor of Queensland, presented Lesley with the 2023 Thomson Medal.

Fellowship Recommendation: It should be noted that different criteria apply for the award of the Thomson Medal (service, broadly defined, to Australian geography) and Fellowships of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland (service of various kinds to the Society).

Fellowships were conferred on Mary Comer and Chris Spriggs at the 2022 Annual General Meeting, in recognition of their long and dedicated services to the Society. Later in the year, it was recognised that Councillors have detailed knowledge of potential Fellowship recipients. For this reason, early in 2023, nomination of Fellowships was removed from the remit of the Honours Committee and will henceforth be overseen by Council.

Ken Sutton Memorial Trust: Proposed changes to the Trust are currently being considered by Crown Law in what has been a very lengthy process. Until the necessary structures are in place, further awards have been delayed.

Comment: The Honours Committee moved decisively during 2023 and not only identified a series of candidates worthy of future Thomson nomination but, from this grouping, agreed and was able to forward to Council a nominee for the 2024 award.

The Committee maintains a fifth seat which is open should any member of the Society wish to forward an expression of interest.

IT Management Committee

Members: R Cook (Chair), L Darii, J Fairbairn, K Raymond, G Rees

This new Committee was set up in May 2023. Its purpose is to advise, plan, and implement best practices for managing the Society's diverse uses of information technology (IT) and ways that its uses can be maximised to advance the Society's objectives. By June it had already given advice on trialling SharePoint to store the Society's digital collections.

Map Group Committee

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

Covid has not had as much effect on activities over the past year. In the last half of 2022 three talks presented by Map Group members were held at Gregory Place: *The History of Lamington National Park* by Neville McManimm, *The Nippon Foundation Support for Seabed 2030* by Keith Treschman and *Recreational Mapping* by Bob Reid.

The final event for the year was the usual "Show'n'Tell" where twelve objects relating to mapping were presented. The meeting concluded with the usual Christmas fare.



Map Group exploring Mundoolun Quarry, May 2023; courtesy of Graham Rees

During the first half of 2023, three talks have been presented: *Plate Tectonics* by Keith Treschman, *Moving Maps and Maps for Industry* by Alan Mayne and *Craven's Peak Mapping* by Stuart Watt.

The highlight of the year was a three-day trek to Canungra where Neville McManimm showed the group areas in the Lamington National Park rarely seen by the public. Map Group members enjoyed this trek along with great company and good weather, led by a very well-informed leader with a great sense of humour.

The effort taken by all presenters is much appreciated and the Committee thanks everyone for their support in attending these events.

Property Committee

Members: P Tonkin (Chair), D Stephens

The Property Committee managed property-related issues which occurred throughout the year, applied to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for a grant to upgrade the microphone and webcam equipment, and represented the Society on the Body Corporate. At its AGM in January, Pamela was elected Secretary of the Body Corporate Committee.

The year 2022-23 had a low number of incidents requiring attention. The main item that did was the lift. Its replacement had been on the agenda since 2021. A decision was taken to engage Innovative Lift Consulting to prepare the tender for the new lift. The Body Corporate Sinking Fund is healthy and will cover a substantial amount of the total cost. A special levy will raise the extra funds.

Three quotes were received and the successful tenderer TKE (Thyssenkrupp Elevator GmbH) came in at \$223,000.00 including GST. TKE is a company that produces elevators, escalators, moving walkways and accessible solutions, and is the fourth largest elevator manufacturer in the world behind Kone, Schindler and Otis. The lift is scheduled to be replaced in the first quarter of 2024.

Publications Committee

Members: I Childs (Chair), J Corcoran, M Hardy, K Rees

The Publications Committee met in September 2022 and March 2023. Communication and decisions at other times were achieved via email.

Scientific Studies Reports: In the interest of making past RGSQ Scientific Studies reports more widely available, Iraphne Childs liaised with Kellie Ashley, Librarian for the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Queensland (UQ), to upload the RGSQ reports to UQ Library's *eSpace* where publications are now publicly available. In November 2022, the reports were also made available on the National Library of Australia's Trove via the UQ-Trove partnership. To find out more about the reports, please visit the RGSQ website: <https://rgsq.org.au/scientificstudies>.

RGSQ Photographic Competition: In 2022 twenty members entered the competition with a total of 82 entries. Winners were selected by RGSQ members voting online:



L-R: Ron Owen, winner of the 1st prize in the 2022 Photo Competition, Tim Medhurst, Iraphne Childs

- 1st prize Ron Owen (for the 2nd year running!) – *Early morning at Lake Cootharaba, Boreen Point campsite*; prize – a voucher for an overnight stay in Binna Burra's Sky Lodge donated by Steve Noakes, Chair, Binna Burra Lodge Board of Directors and presented at the December Christmas party by Tim Medhurst
- 2nd prize Giselle Pickering – *Estuarine wetlands, Hinchinbrook Island*; prize – a wildlife drawing of native hopping mouse by Allison Carlisle
- 3rd prize Bruce Urquhart – *Blencoe Falls Top Pool, Girringun National Park, North Qld*; book prize – *Wetlands of Queensland* (Qld Museum, 2022)

The 2023 photographic competition, *Queensland's weather: the good, the bad and the ugly*, was launched in May.

History of RGSQ update: Margaret Hardy has continued her work to identify and highlight significant events and turning points in the history of the Society from 1985-2010. She has been checking Society Council records and reports and has interviewed several long-standing RGSQ members to glean their perspectives.

Scientific Studies Committee

Members: I Childs (Chair), A Lau, P Moss, T Sigler, J Tasker, S Turton

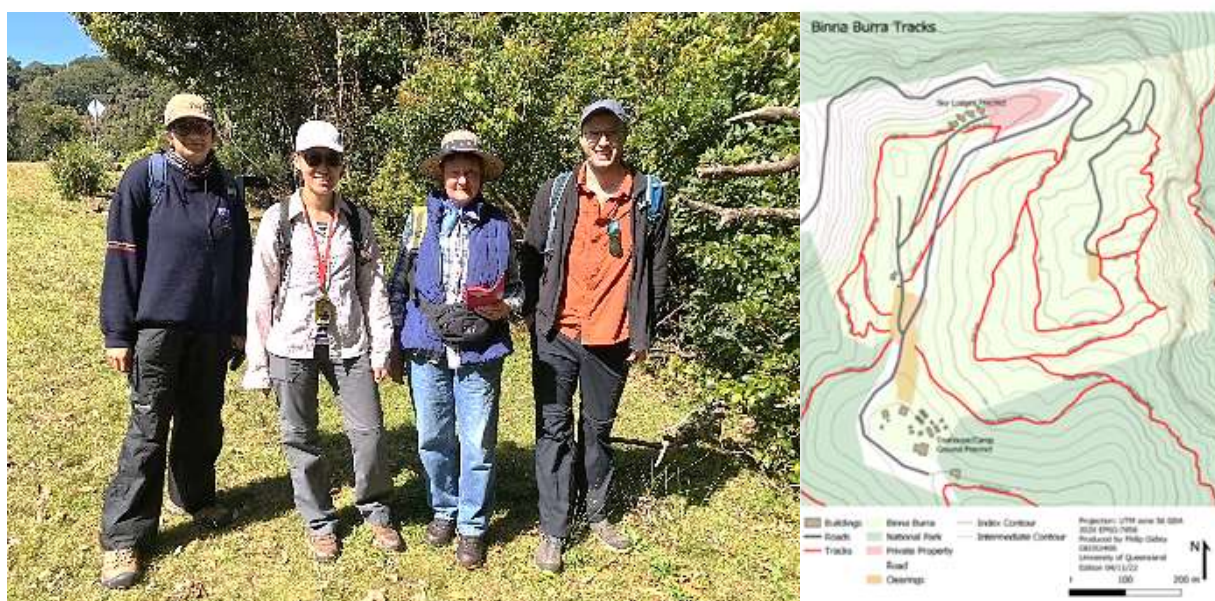
Committee members met in August, September and October 2022 and May 2023.

Mapping Walking Tracks at Binna Burra: Under a collaborative arrangement with Binna Burra Lodge (BBL) the Scientific Studies Committee undertook a project to map existing and currently closed tracks on BBL land and assess locations for possible future tracks. Members of the RGSQ team (Ralph Carlisle, Iraphne Childs, Vrinda Eswaran, Philip Gidley, Annie Lau, Neville McManimm and Giselle Pickering) were assisted by BBL's Steve Noakes, Chair, Board of Directors, and Tim Medhurst, Development and Infrastructure Senior Consultant.

Philip and Vrinda, 3rd year Geographical Science students at UQ, collected field data along the tracks using GPS and created new digital maps using QGIS software.

Their work was credited towards their Geography degrees at UQ. The report was completed in November 2022 and is available on the RGSQ website at <https://rgsq.org.au/page-18252>. Steve Noakes commented: "This is a wonderful and worthy report that will be referred to for many decades to come at Binna Burra. It is hugely appreciated by Binna Burra".

Climate Forum: On Saturday 29 October 2022, in conjunction with the UQ School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, the Committee organized a public forum: *Is Queensland prepared for a warming climate?* The program, held at UQ, included presentations by expert speakers on Queensland's climate outlook, bushfire and flood risk, health impacts, and implications for the Wet Tropics of north Queensland. A panel discussion with audience participation followed the presentations.



During fieldwork for Binna Burra Trails Mapping Project

Sample map from the project

Treks and Activities Committee (TAAC)

Members: C Spriggs (Chair), J Lamont (Secretary), R Carlisle, I Childs, R Grimley, B Reid, J Wilkinson

TAAC had a very interesting and eventful year. Two new Committee members joined: John Wilkinson and Iraphne Childs. All the outings were filled very quickly with waitlists.

We aimed to vary the days of the week, means of travel and include a variety of destinations in Brisbane and regional areas with the focus on geographical content.

Date	Activity	Coordinator	Comments
6 July 2022 Wednesday	NAIDOC Week Jinibara Woodford	Ralph Carlisle	Bus 17 participants
18 August 2022 Thursday	Roaming the Redlands Toondah Harbour	Jeanette Lamont	Bus 29 participants
5-11 September 2022 Monday-Sunday	Central Qld Trek Monto, Mount Morgan, Gladstone	Ralph Carlisle	Self-drive 16 members
25 October 2022 Tuesday	Lamington N.P. Binna Burra Tullawallal Circuit	Bob Reid and Chris Spriggs	Self-drive 19 members (10 members stayed overnight)
6 December 2022 Tuesday	Christmas Party Society premises	Committee	Over 50 members attended
7 February 2023 Tuesday	Welcome Night Society premises	Committee and Ron Owen	Presentations of 2023 events
16 March 2023 Thursday	Cross River Rail and MacArthur Museum	Roger Grimley	Own transport 23 participants
10 June 2023 Saturday	Lamington N.P. Binna Burra Caves walk	Bob Reid	Self-drive 13 participants
22 June 2023 Thursday	Archerfield Airport and God's Acre (cemetery)	Roger Grimley	Own transport 25 participants

Table 5: TAAC activities during 2022/23

It was a successful year. The activities were very well supported by members who were eager to learn and explore the environment with fellow Society members and guests.

The [Treks and Activities \(Committee\) Administration and Procedures Manual](#) was finalized and noted in the December 2022 *Bulletin*. The manual can be accessed on the Society's website under <https://rgsq.org.au/governance>. Our thanks go to Lilia and Rosie for their support throughout the year.

Young Geographers Group Committee

Members: G Pickering (Chair), N Ramsay, I Sahama, J Tasker, A Zhang

The Young Geographers have had a highly engaging and motivating year with plenty of educational and social events to build networks within the student and early career professional community. The past several months have seen the Committee deepen connections between regular attendees, and broaden connections with the wider geography community through collaboration with other geographic organisations.

These collaborations culminated in a highly successful panel evening, *Mapping Your Future: experiences, challenges and opportunities working in the geospatial industry*. The panel featured two of the new collaborators and was the largest ever Young Geographers event with 36 attendees. Participants learned

a lot about the diverse experiences of professionals working in the geospatial industry and the opportunities for graduates and career-changers that they foresee over the next few years.



L-R: Event host, Natalia Ramsay, and panel presenters – Alexandra Perry, Geoffrey Yu, Henrique Reis and John Tasker – during 'Mapping Your Future' at Gregory Place in May 2023

Looking toward the future, the Committee aims to continue engaging and connecting young geographers and strengthening RGSQ's student and early career professional community. The Committee is keen to see where the next year takes us!

ADDRESSING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The past year has seen 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*

- running more than 40 events in the past year, covering a range of topics and seeing growing attendance from members and non-members (see relevant sections above)
- launch of the Geography Matters webinar series via Zoom, to explore significant geographical topics and engage a wide audience compared to other primarily SEQ-focused events
- continuing to engage young people with geography and promote geography in schools through the Australian Geography Competition and its associated activities

2. *Enhancing membership*

- growing membership through the success of multiple initiatives, including an enhanced program of events, continued promotion of membership, and the member referral program
- providing critical opportunities for members to engage with like-minded individuals and contribute to the Society's objectives through volunteering with a committee or project
- increasing availability of hybrid events via Zoom and release of recordings on YouTube to enhance the accessibility of RGSQ events for members outside of SEQ

- overnight and day trips organised by Map Group, Treks and Activities and Young Geographers providing excellent opportunities for members to develop bonds and contribute to a vibrant and successful Society

3. *Knowledge and understanding*

- release of the library catalogue in eHive and supporting member borrowing of library books, enhancing the discoverability and accessibility of the Society's collections
- completion of the mapping project at Binna Burra, in collaboration with Binna Burra Lodge and the University of Queensland, to support future visitor enhancements
- running a whole day public forum with the UQ School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, exploring if Queensland is prepared for a warming climate

4. *Growing our reputation*

- supporting the Soils for Science (S4S) citizen science campaign, led by the UQ Institute of Molecular Bioscience, with 100 sampling kits distributed to members
- collaborating with like-minded groups, including the SEQ Community Alliance, Redland 2030, and Sustainable Population Australia, to organise events of mutual interest
- donation of the lantern slide collection to the State Library of Queensland in return for digitised images of the most important parts of this collection
- continuing participation on the National Committee for Geographical Sciences within the Australian Academy of Science, engaging in ongoing efforts to promote the importance of geography education and research
- growth in social media presence and engagement, particularly with professionals on LinkedIn

5. *Securing the future*

- establishment of the IT Management Committee to advise, plan and implement best practices for managing the Society's diverse uses of information technology
- successfully obtaining a Community Heritage Grant to support the preservation of six books and five maps, with applications for a further grant funding pending
- continued hiring of space at the Society premises by the Geography Teachers' Association of Queensland, and the Australian Geography Competition also paying for its use of space
- ongoing review of the Society's investment strategy to ensure continued returns to support operations and projects as necessary
- continued work with Woods Prince Lawyers to transition the Ken Sutton Trust into a sustainable structure supported by Crown Law

THE 2023-2024 YEAR AHEAD

There is much to progress over the coming twelve months, including the delivery of the strategic priorities in our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan:

1. **Benefits for Members** – To create, for each member, meaning, connection and value for their association with RGSQ
2. **Diversified Revenue Streams** – To ensure RGSQ has the financial capability to instigate and manage programs of value to members and society as a whole
3. **Enhancing Our Brand** – To establish a lead role in society's recognition of geography's relevance

These priorities will be delivered through several major projects and initiatives, with success measured against specific and measurable outcomes, including member and non-member participation, investment portfolio performance, and ongoing collaborative projects.

On behalf of the Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Tasker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Tasker
President
19 September 2023

APPENDIX: EVENTS

2022-2023 RGSQ organised events and activities

Council meetings were held on premises, with the Zoom option for Councillors who could not attend on premises, each month except for January.

July 2022

Tues 5: Mad Dogs and Englishmen, by Mr Henk van Paridon. *Lecture*

Wed 6: NAIDOC Week Sunshine Coast – Jinibara and Gubbi Gubbi country. *Treks and Activities*

Tues 26: Queen’s Wharf Development, Brisbane River Precincts and Lifestyles. *Geography in Conversation*

August 2022

Tues 2: Spatial Technology in the Classroom, by Mr Brett Dascombe. *Lecture*

Thurs 18: Roaming the Redlands bus trip. *Treks and Activities*

Tues 23: A Power Network Fit for Purpose. *Geography in Conversation*

September 2022

Tues 6: My Journey as a Geographer to the UN Satellite Centre, by Ms Ayeisha Sheldon. *Lecture/Young Geographers Group*

Tues 13: The Nippon Foundation Support for Seabed 2030, by Dr Keith Treschman. *Map Group*

Tues 27: Brisbane Population Growth to 2023. *Geography in Conversation*

Mon 5-Sun 11: Central Queensland Trek. *Treks and Activities*

October 2022

Tues 4: Reclaiming Lost Ground: Transitions of Mobility and Parking, by Prof Jonathan Corcoran and Dr Iraphne Childs. *Lecture*

Tues 11: Early History of Lamington National Park, by Mr Neville McManimm. *Map Group*

Tues 18: Annual General Meeting

Tues 25: Binna Burra Past and Present. *Treks and Activities*

Sat 29: Is Queensland Prepared for a Warming Climate? *Expert Panel and Public Forum*

November 2022

Tues 8: Census 2021 Results and Issues, by Dr Elin Charles-Edwards. *Lecture*

Wed 15: Mapping for Recreation and Travel, by Mr Bob Reid. *Map Group*

Tues 29: The Bribie Island Breakthrough. *Geography in Conversation*

December 2022

Mon 5: Map Group’s End of Year Show and Tell and Social, Gregory Place

Tues 6: Society’s End of Year Christmas Celebration, Gregory Place

February 2023

Tues 7: Welcome to 2023. *Presentation*

Tues 14: Plate Tectonics, by Dr Keith Treschman. *Map Group*

Tues 28: Water and Soils: Natural Resource Management. *Geography in Conversation*

March 2023

Tues 14: A Clean Energy Future for Queensland, by Ms Allison Warburton. *Lecture*

Thurs 16: Speed-networking evening. *Young Geographers Group*

Thurs 16: Cross River Rail and MacArthur Museum Event. *Treks and Activities*

Tues 28: Sustainable Action for Climate Change. *Geography in Conversation*

Thurs 30: Moving Maps and Maps for Industry, by Mr Alan Mayne. *Map Group*

April 2023

Tues 4: A Triple La Nina and Southeast Queensland Coastal Changes: Implications for Management,
by Dr Javier Leon. *Lecture*

Mon 17: 'Professionals Talk' presentation evening. *Young Geographers Group*

May 2023

**Tues 2: Thomson Oration – The Social Life of Australian Nature: Improving Diagnoses for
Environmental Futures,** by Em Prof Lesley Head. *Lecture*

Tues 9-Thurs 11: Canungra 2-Day Trek. *Map Group*

Tues 23: Transport Infrastructure Corridor Gold Coast to Sunshine Coast. *Geography in Conversation*

**Tues 30: Mapping Your Future: Experiences, Challenges and Opportunities in the Geospatial
Industry.** *Young Geographers Group*

June 2023

Mon 5: Soils for Science Presentation. *Citizen Science*

Tues 6: Can Southeast Queensland Survive the Climate Crisis? by Dr Stephen Turton. *Lecture*

Sat 10: Binna Burra Caves. *Treks and Activities*

Tues 13: A Geography Journey for all Ages and Stages. *Geography Matters*

Thurs 22: Visit to Archerfield Airport. *Treks and Activities*

Fri 23: Mapping at Craven's Peak, by Mr Stuart Watt. *Map Group*

Tues 27: Native Bees, Biodiverse Environments and Innovations in Horticulture. *Geography in
Conversation*