



# RGSQ Bulletin

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Patron: [H.E. Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland](#)

President: Dr Iraphne Childs

## From the President

Dear Members, I write to you on behalf of the Society's Council, which held a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March. We considered our responsibilities to our members in the current public health crisis with the COVID-19 virus. While the situation is constantly changing, and we will endeavour to keep you up to date, we have made the following unanimous decisions:

- To suspend all RGSQ activities which involve our members and the public through April and May, effective immediately.
- This means that our normal scheduled monthly lectures 7 April and 5 May, including the 6 April Expert Climate Forum, are postponed. In lieu of the usual monthly lecture, you may wish to revisit the recorded lecture delivered by former RGSQ President, Professor Jamie Shulmeister, at the USC in June 2017. The lecture topic "Shrinking Glaciers? Cautionary Tales from North America and New Zealand" is still very relevant and the lecture can be accessed at <https://mediasite.usc.edu.au/Mediasite/Play/cf380808095c441faa47b8312b22a6fa1d>
- TAAC are currently working on arrangements to postpone and reschedule planned trips. Further information will be sent shortly to event and trip registrants.
- In order to minimise any risks for our dedicated volunteers, the Library and the Office will be closed for public access through April and May at least.
- With the exception of a small number of volunteers (1 or 2 at a time) who had considered the risk and were comfortable with coming in to help with Competition scanning (Bernard will contact volunteers at the appropriate time), Council strongly encourages our valued volunteers not to visit RGSQ premises to continue their usual work during the period of closure.
- The normal office email - [info@rgsq.org.au](mailto:info@rgsq.org.au) - will be functional and monitored throughout the period, so you can also communicate with us. All issues will be dealt with as best as we can under the circumstances.
- Wherever possible, we'll collectively try to keep the wheels of the Society's business turning as best we can.

- The situation will be reviewed constantly by Council executive and at its regular monthly Council meeting on 21 April (which will be a virtual meeting held via skype or zoom). We will aim to provide advice to members as things change. Wherever possible, we will attempt to reschedule activities once things return to normal, but due to factors beyond our control – such as speaker availability – some activities may have to be cancelled completely.

We trust you will appreciate the duty of care which Council feels obliged to exercise in the current circumstances, to a membership which largely falls into the highest risk category. It is our desire to limit any risks to you, by ceasing all non-essential activities. We will continue to communicate with you during this period and look forward to getting back to normal as soon as possible.

As President, I wish that you all stay well and encourage you to monitor and heed the changing medical and Government advice.

Kind regards  
Dr Iraphne Childs  
President RGSQ

Due to COVID-19 uncertainty and disruptions, the RGSQ premises will be closed to the public until at least the end of May.

If you'd like to reach us, please email [info@rgsq.org.au](mailto:info@rgsq.org.au) or phone 07 3368 2066. Please note, the Office may be unattended. If you phone, we will try to get back to you as soon as practically possible, hence **email is best**. Thank you.

We look forward to seeing you when we're over this global challenge.

In the meantime, stay curious, check out our [Resources](#) page or [Members](#) only forum on the RGSQ website.



## Information about UPCOMING EVENTS

[www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au)

Due to the shutdown of many services, TAAC has reluctantly had to postpone planned events. Details about refunds or potential to reschedule activities have been or will be communicated to all registrants. We apologise for the inconvenience but believe this is the best decision under the circumstances.

For any planned events past the end of May, we will be reviewing the situation in April and keep you informed.

### POSTPONED: 24 March SPICERS GAP DAY WALK

### POSTPONED: Wed 8 April 2020 – ST LAURENCE'S COLLEGE AND BOGGO ROAD GAOL - DAY VISIT

### POSTPONED: Fri May 8 SUMMERLAND CAMEL DAIRY

## MONTHLY LECTUERS

March and April lectures - postponed

Climate Forum – is Queensland prepare for a warming climate – postponed until further notice.

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

### KEN SUTTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY GROUP

The group will not meet until May at least.



Options are currently investigated to hold the May map group event online. Stay tuned, further details will be communicated in due course.

### 14 May 2020 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM MODERN MAPPING AND GIS TECHNIQUES

**Details:** John Tasker (RGSQ Member) will provide some insights into modern mapping and GIS techniques used by government and industry and where this technology is heading. It is hoped later to form a small group to explore options and applications for members to use this GIS technology.

### Contributors

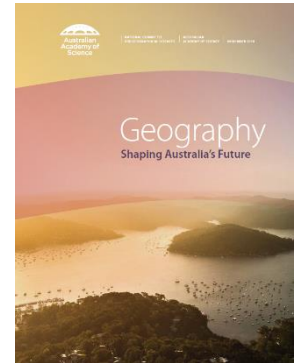
Iraphne Childs, Ken Granger, Bernard Fitzpatrick, Nicole Garofano, Len Lowry, Kay Rees, Sue Reid

## “Focus on Geography”

By Iraphne Childs

### Geography in Australian universities:

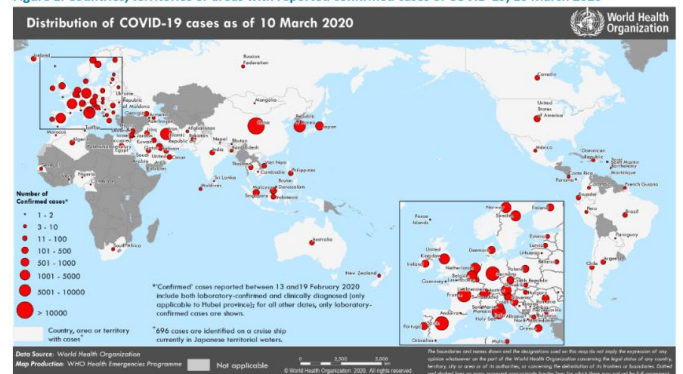
As RGSQ President, I'm fortunate to be able to represent the RGSQ at the meetings of the Australian Academy of Sciences National Committee for Geographical Sciences (NCGS). During the most recent NCGS teleconference, on 20 February, it was decided to send a letter to all Australian University Vice-Chancellors entitled “Responding to Australia's current crises: Geography's place” - emphasizing the contributions that Geography makes in tackling the challenges of our environment and society – a timely reminder following the weather events of the 2019-2020 summer and the impact of the coronavirus. Universities play a critical role in educating the next generation of professional geographers and in improving the geographical literacy of Australian citizens. We encourage universities to support more Geographers and Geography courses! The VCs have been provided with copies of **Geography: Shaping Australia's Future**, published by the Australian Academy of Science in late 2018. Prepared by the National Committee for Geographical Sciences the report presents the state of play of Geography as a discipline in Australia and provides a unified vision for Australian geography over the next decade.



### Geography and the spread of COVID-19:

In the wider world, of course, the news is full of depressing statistics and daily updates about COVID-19. Predictions of the further course of the epidemic are decisive in order to deploy targeted disease control measures. Those of you familiar with Swedish Geographer [Torsten Hägerstrand's](#) early work on **diffusion theory** will recognise that this was the basis for many early epidemiological studies by medical [geographers](#) mapping the spatial-temporal diffusion of diseases.

Figure 1. Countries, territories or areas with reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, 10 March 2020



As was presented by Dr. Thomas Sigler at our March lecture evening, the evolving field of **network-based modelling** is beneficial for an accurate forecast of epidemic outbreaks e.g. the Ebola outbreaks in West Africa. Studies are already underway using network analysis to model the spread of the COVID-19 virus in

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Hubei Province, China. The network used is composed of the cities in Hubei and their interactions (e.g. traffic flow).

I hope all RGSQ members will stay safe and avoid the virus over the weeks and months ahead.

Source: WHO Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report –50. <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200310-sitrep-50-covid-19>

References:

Geography: Shaping Australia's Future  
[www.science.org.au/geography-australias-future](http://www.science.org.au/geography-australias-future)

Prasse, B. et.al (2020) Network Prediction of the 2019-CoV Epidemic Outbreak in the Chinese Province Hubei Physics and Society 12 February  
<https://arxiv.org/abs/2002.04482v2>  
Contributed by Dr. Iraphne Childs

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## What's happening on Council

It is with great regret that Council has accepted Margaret Mclvor's resignation, due to personal circumstances, as Secretary of the RGSQ. Margaret has made tremendous contributions to the Society over many years, including as our Secretary, particularly during the challenging period of changing over to a CLG. Margaret has been a valued member of Council, a member of the Australian Geography Competition committee, a Ken Sutton Trustee and member of the Ken Sutton Memorial Award Selection panel. We will miss Margaret's wise counsel and great ideas. Margaret, we look forward to seeing you again when things have settled down, to enjoy some RGSQ activities, and to hopefully engaging with you in new capacities.

John Tasker, current Councillor and member of the AGC Committee, has generously agreed to take on the role of Secretary for RGSQ, and as a Ken Sutton Trustee, replacing Margaret. Many thanks, John. This is much appreciated.

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## REPORT: "Mapping the Night Sky"

By Kay Rees

On Tuesday 18 February, Map Group hosted its first event for 2020 with a talk on "Mapping the Night Sky" by Keith Treschman at the Society's rooms. Eighteen members were enlightened with a very comprehensive explanation on how our constellations came about and why there is not a point of Earth that can be used to calculate longitude in space.



One of those members present, Sue, offered her comments:

*"Anyone who enjoyed Keith's Mars talk last year knew they were in for an informative session and they weren't disappointed.*

*Keith has the knack of outlining difficult subjects, then explaining them in layman's terms.*

*I was prepared to be blinded by science but as usual I was delighted to be transported back 4000 years to the Sumerian civilization in Mesopotamia.*

*They ingeniously used one hand to count in their base 12 system. The thumb counted the three phalanges of each finger. Then the other hand raises a digit and the count was repeated. 5 times 12 = 60 which was handful.*

*He explained in great and fascinating detail that we still have this system both in time and navigation.*

*I won't try to summarise the hour-long content. You had to be there to really appreciate his style.*

*He had practical demonstrations and although he ran overtime it seemed a pity he had to stop.*

*Even used a spinning top to demonstrate oscillation.*

*I am sure anyone who was there will feel I haven't done justice to the morning, ably introduced by Kay Rees, her usual affable style setting the tone for the morning.*

*Thank you, Keith and Kay, for a most wide ranging and erudite topic broken into bite sized portions."*

Keith's notes are available on the website under [Resources > Past Lectures](#) 2020 for your perusal.

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## REPORT: Map Group's Visit to the Lands, Mapping and Surveying Museum

By Len Lowry

Eleven Map Group members and seven guests paid a visit to the Lands, Mapping and Surveying Museum in upper Edward Street in the City. The Museum was originally set up in 1982 to preserve the mapping and surveying history of Queensland. The Queensland Museum is the custodian for the collection with the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy providing the staff and the day to day management of the Museum.

The Museum collects and conserves all artefacts dealing with land subdivision and management, surveying instruments, reference marks and topographic and cadastral mapping artefacts. As the Museum has only recently moved to its present location, the refurbishment, displays and interpretation signage are of a very high standard.

Kaye Nardella, the Senior Curator of the Museum gave a lively presentation and brought the artefacts to life with interesting anecdotes and sometimes humorous snippets about the instruments on display. It was obvious that Kaye has a passion for her work. To have a guided tour of a museum is definitely the best way to learn our history. As expected, we were going to see the equipment behind the surveyor, cartographer and land commissioner.

We were surprised to see dense lantana marked on a plan of Nudgee in 1897, surveyors collected spider web in

the field if they had to repair the cross-hairs in their telescopes and land ballot marbles are turned so they are not a perfect sphere. If you get a chance to have a guided tour of the Lands, Mapping and Surveying Museum, it is an entertaining and interesting way to spend a few hours.

## RGSQ Geographer shines at RGS London conference



In August 2019, University of Queensland PhD Candidate, Nicole Garofano, had the honour of presenting some of her research results at the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) Annual Conference in London.

Nicole presented ***Geography, islands and plastic: How documenting the flows can contribute to change***, in a session entitled 'Sustainability, re-use and waste'. With 400+ sessions over the three-day conference, Nicole's session was appreciated as the only one which focused on the 'geography of waste'.

Attendees commented on the diversity of locations represented and the many opportunities offered to reduce elements of the waste stream. After the conference Nicole had the added privilege of working in the RGS offices in Kensington for two weeks. *Nextek*, a UK-based consulting company providing solutions to the challenges of plastic recycling, shares its London Office with the Conservation Foundation in the RGS building. *Nextek* agreed to be the industry placement host for Nicole, allowing her to work in the RGS building while contributing to plastic recycling research.

Walking in the hallowed halls of the RGS building, passing by images of Scott's Antarctic voyage and many other original explorations across the globe, was something Nicole cherishes. What a unique and informative experience for this 'almost completed' PhD candidate! For those interested in attending the 2020 RGS Conference, registration opened in March, with early-bird rates available until June.

*Photo courtesy of Nicole Garofano.*

## A CRUISE FROM SINGAPORE TO DARWIN

By Ken Granger, RGSQ member

Judy and I were fortunate to be able to take advantage of the discount offered to RGSQ members by the Australian cruise line *Coral Expeditions* to make an 18-day journey from Singapore to Darwin during February. The route taken is shown in the map.



Source: Coral Expeditions

For me the highlights of the cruise, apart from the guest lecturers, expedition leaders, fantastic staff, good food and interesting company, were the volcanic landscapes of the islands, the rainforests of Kalimantan and their inhabitants, the friendliness of the local people, and the ways in which traditional crafts and cultures have been maintained.

The most anticipated volcanic landscape was that of Anak Krakatoa, or "Child of Krakatoa". We sailed to within 10 kilometres or so of the site of the cataclysmic 1883 eruption of Krakatoa and the new island that has been building since 1926. There are so many legends about Krakatoa that it was good to place it in its geographic and historic context.

We got a lot closer to a much older volcanic landscape at Satonda Island. This island has a large crater lake that had been fresh water. That changed dramatically with the eruption of Tambora in 1815. Tambora is only 35 km away on Sumbawa Island and its eruption sent a tsunami sweeping onto Satonda replacing the fresh with sea water.

The major wildlife experience came in Central Kalimantan with a cruise by local river boats along the Sekonya River to the Tanjung Putting National Park. The Pondok Tanggui rehabilitation centre in the park maintains a feeding station to supplement the food for Orangutans that have returned to the wild and it was at the feeding station that we had our closest encounters with these magnificent apes. The first to emerge was a family of a mature male with his distinctive cheek flaps, female and youngster.



*Orangutan family Kalimantan (Judy Granger)*

On our way back downstream, we also encountered a large troupe of Proboscis Monkeys in the forest by the river. These monkeys are incredibly agile as they travel through the canopy of the rainforest using their long tails for balance. The crocodiles in the river seem to set up camp below the monkey's roosting trees in the event that a youngster falls.



*Kalimantan Proboscis Monkey (Ken Granger)*

Our other significant wildlife experience was the legendary Komodo Dragon, the largest of all lizards. There were four Dragons, each of about 3 m length, at the ranger station. They were resting and digesting a deer that they had consumed two days previously, so the rangers had little concern as long as we stayed a few metres away.

The urban centres we visited reflecting their different ethnic cultures and history. Batavia, on Java, has the colonial Dutch architecture, is strongly Muslim and has the most chaotic traffic; Banjarmasin, in East Kalimantan, is also predominantly Muslim but less formal and more colourful; waterways provide much of their transport. Sumenep, on Madura Island, is also Muslim but has a rather prosperous, carefree and colourful atmosphere with Chinese influences. Both Maumere in East Flores and Dili (Timor-Leste) are predominantly Christian thanks to early Portuguese settlement. Both seem a little dourer than any of the Muslim cities, though smiles were everywhere.

The floating markets on the Martapura River in Banjarmasin was one of the highlights. Village women paddle their canoes to the central place and trade with wholesalers, other villagers and the tourists that arrive by boat from the city. It is a very colourful and dynamic place with tropical fruits including rambutan, soursop, mangosteen, jackfruit and the pungent durian all available.

Each area visited seemed to have its own distinctive form of fabric making or decoration. Some, such as *batik*, were quite familiar, while others such as the *ikat* woven cloth of Flores were new to us. The process of creating *ikat* is quite complex beginning with the spinning of the locally grown cotton, establishing the design, the making of the vegetable dyes and then the weaving on back-strap looms. The whole process was demonstrated to us in a village in the hills behind Maumere. It was great to see that these traditions are being maintained and valued.



*Floating market, Banjarmasin (Ken Granger)*



*Weaving ikat fabric, Flores (Ken Granger)*

*"This cruise was a geographer's delight with a feast of wonderful landscapes, cultures and nature. The discount offered to RGSQ members by Coral Expeditions made it even better."*

The temperature scan at each stop to check against COVID-19 became a comforting and entertaining routine. A more detailed three-part description of the cruise and the places visited has been posted on the RGSQ website under [Resources>Geographic and Travel Notes](#)

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

We have much pleasure in welcoming Ian Peacock, Amelia Westerman, Katalin Gaal and Bianca Morzone as new members.

We hope your association with your new Society is long and mutually enjoyable.

## Australian Geography Competition

Thank you to RGSQ members who helped out with the last two Australian Geography Competition (AGC) mailouts in February and March: Kath Berg, Ralph Carlisle, Mary Comer, Roger Grimley, Margaret Hardy, Patrick McKewin, Neville McManimm, Mary and John Nowill, Peter Nunan, Kay and Graham Rees, Bob Reid, Sue Reid and Chris Spriggs. Sorry if I missed anyone!

The next major task I would like to request assistance from RGSQ members is the checking in and scanning of returned answer sheets. This will likely begin about Wednesday 15 April. The timing for RGSQ member assistance will be dependent on when and how many answer sheets are returned at any time. COVID-19 will impact on when and how many answer sheets are returned at different times. If you can provide assistance would you please let me know via:

email: [AGCcoordinator@rgsq.org.au](mailto:AGCcoordinator@rgsq.org.au);

AGC telephone: 3330 6907

Kind regards, Bernard Fitzpatrick, AGC Coordinator

# RGSQ Bulletin

April 2020

### Meeting/Lecture:

*March and April lectures postponed.  
Expert panel - 'Is Queensland prepared for a warming climate?' postponed until further notice*

### Activity:

*TAAC activities postponed, see pg. 2*

### Ken Sutton Memorial Library

*The group will not meet until May at least.*

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

[www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au) | [info@rgsq.org.au](mailto:info@rgsq.org.au)

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