Nomination for The Griffith Taylor Medal, 2019

Associate Professor Alaric Maude (AM)

Without question, Alaric Maude is one of Australia’s most highly respected and influential geographers. He has worked unstintingly in the fields of geography and geographic education for many years, both pre- and post-retirement. An Order of Australia award is not earned lightly. It is the most prestigious way this country has of recognising its outstanding community members, those who have made contributions that benefit society and country and whose contributions encourage and inspire those who follow. It follows that for a geographer to achieve such an award – for geography – is of major consequence. Dr Alaric Maude is cited ‘For significant service to education in the field of geography as an academic, researcher, author, and mentor’.

Alaric spent most of his academic life as a teacher, researcher and author at Flinders University, South Australia, joining the University shortly after its foundation and remaining a pillar of the discipline throughout his pre-retirement working life. Throughout he has maintained a teaching philosophy aimed at ensuring students and the broader community understand the importance of geographical education in its widest sense. He sees that all students understand the essential links between the environment and the processes and forces affecting that environment. He has always encouraged students and his peers to learn continuously and so be able to make their own contributions to the wider Australian community. Alaric has supervised either individually or jointly, more than 70 students undertaking higher level studies, from honours degrees to PhDs. His students have come from a diverse range of backgrounds, including local Australian-born students as well as many from other areas of the world. Notably Alaric strongly supported [the late] Graeme Hugo, his colleague and friend, in encouraging Flinders University to offer higher degrees to students from Indonesia, in addition to other areas of Asia. His contribution in this area led to assisting students to obtain higher degrees and encouraging long-standing links between the University and many other countries. In part this was achieved through the introduction of coursework Masters degrees – which Alaric initiated – enabling many students to accomplish their educational aims. He nurtured these international links and enabled the maintenance and expansion of further understanding between Australia and its overseas neighbours. At the broader university level Alaric was a major contributor to developing the very strong School of Geography, Population and Environment at Flinders University (and the previous Discipline and Department of Geography). He was Head of the Discipline from 1984-1989 and of the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management from 1998-2000. While working at Flinders he was a member of a number of senior committees including the Flinders University Council (1979-1985). Among other very varied major administrative positions he chaired the School of Social Sciences Higher Degrees Committee (1986-1989) and the Program in Population and Human Resources (1987-1991). He was also Director of Studies for the Bachelor of Environmental Management from 2001-2004.

Universities and other academic institutions outside Australia have welcomed and recognised Alaric’s skills and breadth of research. His wanderlust and thirst for new experiences led to Visiting Scholar roles at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, the East West Institute in Hawaii, the University of Toronto, and at West Virginia University. Such prestigious placements reflect the reach and value of his work.

It is not only as a teacher and academic leader that Alaric has made his mark. His enquiring mind has led to what he considers a ‘respectable’ publication record based on a considerably varied wealth of research. While urban centres and economic growth have been magnets for many researchers, Alaric’s interest in the periphery and regional development resulted in many publications. He was involved in an enormous research project, led by his colleague Andrew Beer,
investigating and analysing the development agencies and the individuals within them that lead to successful country towns. People outside Australia took notice and a comparative and highly collegial international study of development agencies in the United States, Northern Ireland and England followed. Further research projects considered the links between regional development and housing assistance, thus linking elements of disadvantage in ways which had not been adequately explored by previous researchers.

Alaric’s geographic contributions extend outside the university arena. He has undertaken a wide range of activities which have served the profession and increased its visibility in society. For example, Alaric has served in a number of vital roles for Australia’s professional geography organisations. He was the Journal Business Manager for *Australian Geographical Studies* from 1968 to 1973 and also Secretary for the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (SA Branch) 1967/68-1968/69. He was the Secretary of the IAG from 2004-2012 and editor of the *South Australian Geographical Journal* from 2005 until 2011. As editor he ensured the journal and society were prepared for new challenges in a changing educational environment and in an evolving society. Alaric was also a Council Member of the Australian and New Zealand Section of the Regional Science Association International from 1997-1999.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, Alaric took on the complex and difficult task of co-editing, with Deirdre Dragovich, the IAG’s series of 14 books published as the *Meridian Series: Australian Geographical Perspectives* by Oxford University Press. Titles in the series cover a range of topics representing contemporary Australian teaching and research. His commitment to ensuring the high quality of this series of books, used extensively in tertiary and higher level secondary teaching, was of great value to teaching staff who were looking for robust, relevant, locally written and locally focussed material that they could rely on at a time when there was little material focussed on Australia of national application.

Notwithstanding his significant contributions to geography and geographical education during his years of paid employment, Alaric has been remarkably productive and enormously influential since his so-called ‘retirement’.

First, Alaric played a pivotal role in devising, monitoring, and implementing the Australian curriculum in geography. He was initially a member of the steering committee and a key writer in the joint project between the Institute of Australian Geographers, the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland and the Australian Geography Teachers Association: Towards a National Geography Curriculum for Australia. He was then appointed by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as Lead Writer, and later the Writing Coach, for the preparation of the geography curriculum for Australian schools. He has continued to publish on the new curriculum, including a book on *Understanding and Teaching the Australian Curriculum: Geography for Primary Schools*, in order to assist a generation of teachers who may not have been trained in geography or geographic research methods to be confident in their approach to the new curriculum. Alaric’s contributions to the new Australian curriculum are widely recognised by the nation’s professional geographers.

Work on the curriculum and teaching the teachers continues today. Alaric has recently published a series of articles on ‘powerful’ knowledge and its relevance to geography. These articles focus on ways of thinking and communicating. He concludes ‘the concept of powerful knowledge provides a way to communicate geography to non-geographers demonstrating that these ways of thinking and understanding are both educationally valuable and not taught in any other subject’. These are powerful words about a new approach to geographical education.
Second, Alaric has been the driving force behind the development and completion of the 2018 Academy of Science’s Decadal Plan for Geography, Geography. Shaping Australia’s Future. This decadal plan sets the nation’s strategic directions for geography until 2028. It focuses on the contribution of geographical research to the wellbeing of Australia and Australians, and of Australia’s neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region. Given Alaric’s personal and professional background, this was work to which he was ideally suited to lead. Production of the plan involved: visits to almost every university in the country; a vast number of conversations and interviews with academic geographers; a national online questionnaire; consultation sessions at two conferences of the Institute of Australian Geographers; and co-ordination of the writing activities of nineteen of the nation’s leading geography scholars. The aim was a document that speaks with equal clarity and power to policy-makers, scholars and lay-readers. The outcome is a significant, coherent and concise plan that will assuredly shape the future of Australian geography.

Alaric has dedicated much of his life and work extending the importance of geography to as wide as possible an audience. He has engaged previously neutral policy makers in understanding the importance of keeping geography in the forefront of the education of young people. He has made clear to students, politicians and others the significant role geography plays in the future development of Australia and in understanding the interaction between people and places. His influence has been profound; his achievements remarkable. For decades, Alaric Maude has proven himself to be a strong, insightful, well respected and gentle person who has given an outstanding amount of himself to Australia and geography in particular.

Dr Maude’s enduring and important contributions to the profession have been acknowledged in a number of ways. In 1997, he was awarded a Professional Service Commendation by the Council of the Institute of Australian Geographers for his work on the development of the Meridian Series. In 2009, he became one of the very few Distinguished Fellows of the Institute of Australian Geographers, and in 2013 the Australian Geography Teachers Association presented him with the Don Biddle Friend of Geography Award for outstanding contributions to geographical education. And then, of course, is his more recent and significant award of Member of the Order of Australia. We believe the time has now come for the IAG to further recognise the distinguished contributions and enormous influence over contemporary Australian geography of one if its longstanding supporters. To that end we commend Dr Alaric Maude AM to the IAG as an eminently worthy recipient of The Griffith Taylor Medal.

Nominated by:

Iain Hay, Flinders University

Steve Turton, Central Queensland University

Seconded by:

Cecile Cutler, Flinders University

Phil McManus, The University of Sydney

Elaine Stratford, University of Tasmania