

Susan Caldis

Geography Educator and PhD Candidate, Macquarie University

President, Geography Teachers Association of NSW and ACT (GTANSW&ACT)
Honorary Secretary, Geographical Society of NSW (GSNSW)

Geography education and enhancing the visibility of geography in the STEM field is Susan Caldis' science.

Susan is completing her doctoral studies in geographical education and also holds several leadership roles across the professional associations for Geography. She received the Professional Teachers Council of NSW Award for *Outstanding Service to the Profession* as a result of her sustained and successful contribution to geography education.

Susan is a contributing author to the Decadal Plan for Geography, *Geography: Shaping Australia's Future*. She is a highly regarded, engaging and dynamic geography educator. Her innovative and boundary-pushing approaches towards the teaching and researching of geography education in schools and across Initial Teacher Education Programs are celebrated from the international to the local scale within teacher and academic domains.

In 2019, Susan received the *Faculty of Human Sciences Excellence in Higher Degree Research Award*. During 2019, Susan was also hosted by the Academy of Singapore Teachers and Ministry of Education as the *Outstanding Educator In Residence* for geographical education. She was appointed because of her expertise in teaching Geography through inquiry, fieldwork and real-world problem-solving scenarios with a futures-focused lens. Teaching Geography in such a way reinforces the scientific method of investigation, enhances the skills of spatial reasoning and place-based analysis, and develops an understanding about human-environment interactions in connection to place – all of which add depth to and intersect with learning in a STEM education context.

Susan lead the development of the *Australian Curriculum: Geography* at the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and ensured the content, inquiry process and progression of mapping skills were specifically written to connect with the *Australian Curriculum: Science* and *Australian Curriculum: Mathematics*. Such connections were aligned to an empirical evidence base and formed a foundation for geographical education to explicitly exist within STEM education.

In her current role as President of the Geography Teachers Association of NSW and ACT, Susan advocates for geography education to become more visible in STEM education and to become formally recognised in policy and practice as a STEM subject.

Part of Susan's advocacy includes the writing of theoretical, evidence-informed articles for peer-reviewed journals. She is also developing a national series of GeoSTEM focused workshops for teachers.

As geography provides a bridge between the sciences and social sciences; Susan's advocacy for geography and STEM education provides a bridge between research, policy and practice, and schools and academia.