

## Australian Team win two bronze medals at the 2018 International Geography Olympiad in Quebec City

Congratulations to the four young Australian geography students who represented Australia at the XV International Geography Olympiad (iGeo) held in Quebec City, Canada, from July 31 to August 6. The Olympiad was organised under the auspices of the International Geographical Union (IGU) with the support of Université Laval, North America's second oldest university.

The four-member Australian team were selected through their outstanding performance in last year's Australian Geography Competition (AGC) and Geography's Big Week Out (from left to right): *Phoebe Blaxill* from St Mary's Anglican Girls' School, WA – *bronze medal*; *Harry Hall* from Trinity College (Gawler), SA; *Hannah Wright* from Walford Anglican School for Girls, SA – *bronze medal*, and *Sophie Ohlin* from Sydney Girls High School, NSW. The Australian team was accompanied by two team leaders: Kath Berg, Australian Geography Competition Committee and Liam Sloan, Geography Teachers Association of South Australia.



Forty-three countries took part in this highly prestigious one-week international competition with the Romanian team declared the overall winners at this year's event.

To test the best young geographers in the world, the iGeo programme involves three academic challenges over the course of a week: a written response test, a multimedia test and a fieldwork exercise requiring observation, cartographic representation and geographical analysis. The programme also included poster presentations by teams, a cultural session showcasing Canadian cultures, and visits to Old Quebec (a UNESCO World Heritage site) and Forêt Montmorency.

The value of the iGeo experience cannot be underestimated; participating students appreciate not only the opportunity to travel abroad and challenge themselves, but also the experience of meeting and making friends with passionate geography students from all over the world. *"The iGeo was a fantastic opportunity not only to learn about geography, hearing from bright minds in the field and undergoing insightful fieldwork, but also to make friends from all around the globe. Being around such a wide variety of international cultures, personalities and languages is a rare event, and because of it the experience was invaluable."* said Harry Hall, participating student.

Kath Berg, Australian Team Leader commented that *"The iGeo is a prestigious international contest. It inspires active interest in geographical studies among students and contributes to greater intercultural understanding through the friendships developed between students from different countries."*

The Australian team has once again scored commendable results. This highlights the strength of Australia's Year 11 and 12 geography curricula in teaching students to think, analyse and interpret information. The role of geography in schools is continuously supported by the Australian Geography Competition.

The pre-selection for the four-student team that will represent Australia at the 2019 iGeo in Hong Kong, China, is under way. Sixteen high-achieving Year 11 students from the 2018 Australian Geography Competition will soon be selected to take part in Geography's Big Week Out, a six-day training/selection event, to be held on Kangaroo Island, South Australia in early October this year.

The participation of the Australian team at the International Geography Olympiad is made possible with the support of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, Australian Geography Competition and with sponsorship of the AGC from Monash University (School of Earth, Atmosphere and Environment and School of Social Sciences), Macquarie University (Department of Geography and Planning and Department of Environmental Sciences), and The University of Queensland (School of Earth and Environmental Sciences).

The annual Australian Geography Competition is a joint initiative of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland ([www.rgsq.org.au](http://www.rgsq.org.au)) and the Australian Geography Teachers' Association (<http://www.agta.asn.au/>).

For further information about the Australian Geography Competition and its associated events, iGeo and GBWO, visit <http://www.geographycompetition.org.au/>.

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