

Australian Team at the 2019 International Geography Olympiad in Hong Kong, China, Announced

Four Year 12 students will represent Australia at the XVI International Geography Olympiad to be held in Hong Kong, China, from Tuesday 30 July to Tuesday 6 August. The team was selected following their outstanding performance at last year's Geography's Big Week Out held on Kangaroo Island, South Australia. Representing Australia in Hong Kong will be:

Alex Shierlaw, St Peter's College, South Australia

Stefan Simic, McKinnon Secondary College, Victoria

Eleanor Smith, Kilvington Grammar School, Victoria

Jacob Thai, Sydney Grammar School, New South Wales

Jacob Thai, one of the students on the 2019 Australian team, described his reaction to learning he was on the team: *"You can only imagine how over the moon I was to receive the news. I was overflowing with excitement. To be invited onto a team that would compete on the international level and to represent my country is an enormous honour."*

The International Geography Olympiad is an annual competition for the best 16 to 19-year-old geography students from around the world. Held under the auspices of the International Geographical Union, the theme of the 2019 Olympiad is "Discovering a vibrant city for our smart future".

Australia's 2019 Olympiad team was chosen from sixteen high performing Year 11 students who participated in the 2018 Geography's Big Week Out - an intensive six-day residential programme with challenging geographical activities. Selection of Year 11 students to that event is based on their performance in the school round of the Australian Geography Competition.

In its 25th year, the annual Australian Geography Competition is one of the biggest contests of its kind in Australia. Held in secondary schools around the country, it tests students' understanding of the subject, as well as their geographical skills and knowledge such as map reading and data interpretation. In 2018 more than 72,000 students from over 780 schools entered the Competition.

Australia has been taking part in this highly prestigious international competition since 2006. The Australian Team at the 2020 International Geography Olympiad in Istanbul, Turkey, will be selected based on students' performance in this year's Australian Geography Competition. Students appreciate not only the opportunity to travel abroad and challenge themselves, but also the experience of making friends with students from all over the world.

Bernard Fitzpatrick, the Competition Coordinator said: *"The Australian Geography Competition, Geography's Big Week Out and the International Geography Olympiad help to increase student awareness and interest in geography. Geography is an overarching discipline that provides students with an appreciation of the spatial and temporal distributions, and of the interconnections between landscape, ecosystem, and socio-economic factors. Geography helps students understand the many facets of the world around them"*.

The four Australian students will be accompanied by two team leaders: Kath Berg, Australian Geography Competition Committee member and member of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland and Simon Roos-Freeman, one of the coordinators of Geography's Big Week Out, and member of the Geography Teachers Association of South Australia.

Costs of participating in the International Geography Olympiad and Geography's Big Week Out are met by the Australian Geography Competition with support from:

- Australian Government Department of Education and Training
- Macquarie University Department of Geography and Planning and Department of Environmental Sciences
- Monash University School of Earth Atmosphere and Environment (Physical Geography) and School of Social Sciences (Human Geography)
- The University of Queensland School of Earth and Environmental Sciences
- University of Western Australia
- Flinders University.

The Australian Geography Competition is a joint initiative of the Australian Geography Teachers' Association and the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland.

For more information about the Competition visit www.geographycompetition.org.au.

To find out more about the 2019 International Geography Olympiad in Hong Kong, China, visit <https://www.eduhk.hk/igeo2019/>.

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