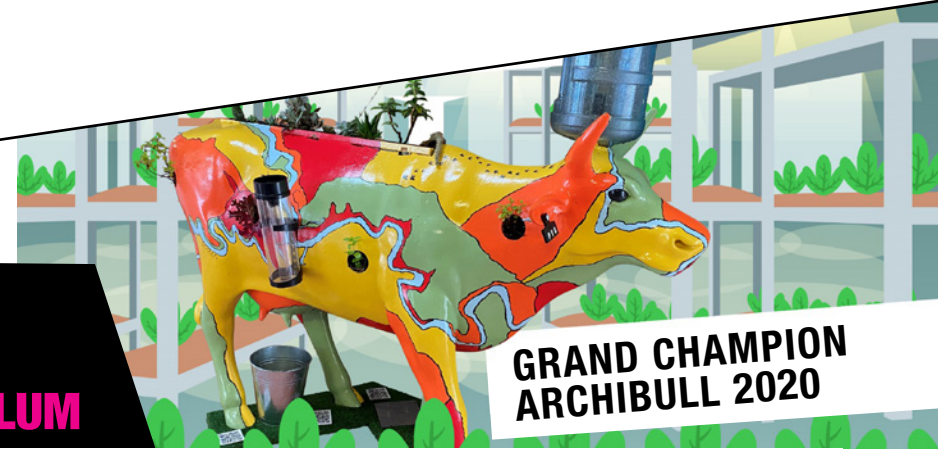


the **ARCHIBULL** PRIZE



**GRAND CHAMPION
ARCHIBULL 2020**

ARCHIBULL PRIZE CASE-STUDY: EMBEDDING AGRICULTURE IN THE GEOGRAPHY CURRICULUM

MEET LORRAINE CHAFFER WHO HAS A PASSION FOR GEOGRAPHY AND IT'S 'PLACE' IN EDUCATION

When Emeritus Professor Jim Pratley AM speaks people listen. Speaking recently in the media Jim was quoted as saying

"Agriculture as an industry doesn't engage with the education system and it's about time it did, otherwise we won't have a workforce."

The dependence on itinerant workers and students participating in gaps years is a pretty shallow strategy. I can't see that operating too long into the future.

The organisations who are operating in the space must publish their results. If you don't do it you may as well not have done it because nobody knows about it."

We are listening Jim and we look forward to sharing with the world the extraordinary impact our programs are having in Australian schools

For over a decade [Action4Agriculture](#) has connected school students to Australian agriculture through [The Archibull Prize](#) and [Young Farming Champions](#). In that time a multitude of learning areas including science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) have been employed to deliver the program. Increasingly geography teachers are embedding aspects of agriculture in the curriculum, as a direct result of participating in our programs, as it provides place and context to learning.

Lorraine Chaffer is the Vice President and 'immediate past president', of the Geography Teachers Association of NSW & ACT and has a passion for her subject. She realised there was often a lack of understanding about agriculture and that the opportunities and challenges that it presents are an important component of the geography curriculum.

"It's all about STEM [or STEAM] now and our argument is that Geography is the perfect STEM subject because we tie it all together. With geography you can link the science etc to what's going on at a place. Geography marries science and agriculture – it makes the learning authentic and linked to the real world through 'place'." she says.

To increase her agricultural knowledge Lorraine began attending an agricultural conference where she heard Young Farming Champion Dr Anika Molesworth speak on climate action.

"I saw Anika present at the Brave New World Agriculture to 2030 Conference in Sydney in November 2018. Much of what she said had links to topics in the NSW Geography Syllabus. I was impressed by Anika's positivity about the future and her message about taking action and later found a TED talk she had made the previous year. The link to geography was very strong so I approached Anika,

via Twitter, with a request to [present at the GTANSW & ACT Annual Conference](#) in Sydney – using a mix of her Brave New World and TED talks. We were not disappointed. Anika's got the practical, common sense of a farmer and the science knowledge from her academic studies, but also ideas about what needs to be done about climate change."

Through her association with Anika, Lorraine was connected with Lynne Strong and [Action4Agriculture](#) and realised the strong messages delivered through programs such as [The Archibull Prize](#) were a perfect fit for geography. She promoted the program through the official association journal, the Geography Bulletin and made [Action4Agriculture](#) the official charity of GTANSW & ACT.

The NSW Geography syllabus for Stage 5 (Year 9 and 10) has a content area centred around food, fibre and industrial production using the earth's biomes. Lorraine says that her focus has been promoting geography as an issues-based subject that integrates issues related to agriculture and the underlying science on which sustainable agriculture and food security depend. The skills developed through a study of geography marry well with the transferable employment skills developed through programs such as [The Archibull Prize](#).



“It’s great that schools are doing things that are not out of the textbook, such as participating in ‘the Archies’ and taking students to visit farms. This is demonstrating real world solutions to problems. And the great thing with geography, especially in NSW, is that we have great flexibility in what we do. We have a broad curriculum that says ‘okay, you’re talking about food production and biomes’. It’s not saying that everybody has to study rice. If there’s an issue around in agriculture in a particular year that’s what you can focus on.

Something I’m always on the lookout for is new resources, new ideas, and new ways of teaching the old stuff, but in a bit more of an exciting way. And if you can engage the kids and make them think about agriculture as an option in their future careers, open their eyes a little bit, then even better!”

To support teachers and geographers like Lorraine to incorporate agriculture into the geography curriculum [Action4Agriculture](#) establishes a two-tiered Ecosystem of Expertise:

- Building long term partnerships with best practice farms the students investigate and report on.
- Working with our [Young Farming Champions](#) to get a big picture understanding of the agriculture supply chain and the diversity of people and roles that feed and clothe us, supply us with ecosystem services and renewable energy.

Further case-studies in our geography series will look at three schools – The Lakes College (YotS), Eden College(YotS) and Pymble Ladies’ College (PLC) – and how they put the Ecosystem of Expertise into practice.

Opportunities in agriculture are the worlds best kept secret no more.

