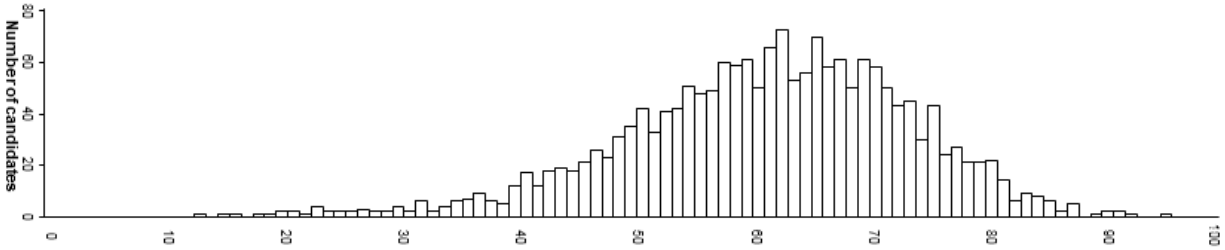
Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

Summary report for candidates on the 2015 WACE examination in
Geography Stage 3

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2015	1835	35
2014	1214	18
2013	2012	31

Examination score distribution



Summary
The 2015 Geography Stage 3 WACE examination marks had a mean of 61.34% which is a substantial increase of more than 3% on 2014 (mean 57.90%) and 2013 (mean 57.65%). The weighting of the examination components was Section One multiple-choice (20%), Section Two Short response (20%) and Section Three Extended response (Parts A and B 60%).
A Broadsheet comprising ten sources was utilised across the entire paper. It contained recent data and modelling on climate change from local to global scales from several recognised authorities (CSIRO, the Australian Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency; NASA; and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). Other contemporary geographical sources included ABS census data and satellite imagery.

The mean for Section One: Multiple-choice was 15.71(/20). Candidate scores for this section ranged from a minimum of 4.00 to a maximum of 20.00. Section Two: Short response mean was 15.41(/20) and candidate scores ranged from a minimum of 1.00 to a maximum of 20.00. In Section Three: Extended response the means were 16.03 (/30) for Part A and 14.54(/30) for Part B. Candidate scores ranged from a minimum of 1.00 to a maximum of 29.50 for Part A, and a minimum of 1.00 to a maximum of 29.50 for Part B.

Most candidates were able to complete the paper in the required time which suggests that the examination was appropriate in length and level of difficulty. Results also revealed a broad spread in the allocation of marks, ranging from 13.00% to 96.00%. Markers were in general agreement that the examination was clear and well set out, covered the breadth of the syllabus, and was well received by candidates. This was the final year of the current syllabus.

General comments
The majority of candidates completed the examination and feedback indicates that the paper was well received. The results also represent a sustained increase on earlier papers (e.g. mean 52.85% in 2012) which is attributed to greater clarity in the wording of questions, attention to detail in the marking key and the use of quality stimulus materials on the Broadsheet.

When extended responses were required some candidates provided quite short, general responses or failed to provide accurate and detailed explanation. The more applied questions, in particular, exposed those candidates with an inadequate understanding of the content of the syllabus (e.g. geographical terms, concepts, problems, processes and interactions). Candidates

were encouraged to make full use of evidence from the Broadsheet and to provide their own supporting diagrams. For example, Question 28(a) lent itself to the inclusion of an annotated sketch map showing the somewhat stellate pattern that characterises Perth's external morphology. Candidates were also referred to Source 5: Satellite image showing the Perth Metropolitan area.

The marking key was clear and appropriate for discriminating between responses.

Advice for candidates

- Become familiar with definitions for key geographical terminology and practice the application of geographical concepts.
- Practise geographical techniques such as the use of diagrams and sketches in written responses.
- Practise more effective utilisation of the Broadsheet to improve the standard of written responses.
- Practise examination technique including the meaning of key instructional verbs (e.g. the difference between 'describe' and 'outline').

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Multiple-choice

Attempted by 1835 Candidates Mean 15.71(/20) Max 20.00 Min 4.00

Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 15 and 19 recorded the highest mean scores (≥0.90) and covered aspects of topographic maps, aerial photographs, urban problems, demographic data and climate change data. The most difficult questions (< 0.59) for candidates were 7, 14, 18 and 20. These questions were concerned with topographic map interpretation (i.e. calculation of area), satellite image interpretation (i.e., calculation of distance) and the understanding of climate change data. Some candidates also experienced difficulty in identifying urban processes (Question 9: mean 0.74) and understanding urban problems (Question 13: mean 0.68).

Section Two: Short response

Attempted by 1835 Candidates Mean 15.41(/20) Max 20.00 Min 1.00

Questions 24 and 26 recorded the lowest mean scores. These questions dealt with spatial characteristics of sea level change on global scale and characteristics of Perth's rural urban fringe.

Section Three: Part A: Extended response

Attempted by 1822 Candidates

Mean 16.03(/30) Max 29.50 Min 1.00

Part A provided better answers than Part B. In Part B some candidates experienced difficulty with the terms adaptation and mitigation (as noted in 2014), as well as the requirement to refer to specific examples in 30(a), 31(a) and 31(c). For Part A Questions 28(c) and 29(c), New York and Tokyo continued to be the most commonly studied megacities. In Question 29(b), the term 'major stakeholder groups' presented difficulties for some candidates.

Section Three Part B: Extended response

Attempted by 1807 Candidates Mean 14.54(/30) Max 29.50 Min 1.00

Part A provided better answers than Part B. In Part B some candidates experienced difficulty with the terms adaptation and mitigation (as noted in 2014), as well as the requirement to refer to specific examples in 30(a), 31(a) and 31(c). For Part A Questions 28(c) and 29(c), New York and Tokyo continued to be the most commonly studied megacities. In Question 29(b), the term 'major stakeholder groups' presented difficulties for some candidates.

In part (a) of Question 30 most candidates were able to explain the concept of climate change, but some experienced difficulty with evidence for this process. The difference between recent human history and geological time was understood poorly in the context of climate change. In part (b) many candidates did not provide sufficient detail on changing spatial patterns.
In part (b) of this question most candidates were able to explain the concept of climate change, but some experienced difficulty with evidence for this process. The difference between recent human history and geological time was understood poorly in the context of climate change.

In Question 31 most candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of sustainability and describe several examples. Some candidates neglected to relate their answer to either agriculture or urban settlement and industry and answered the question without referring to these contexts.