

<h1 style="margin: 0;">Soil Science Australia</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Annual General Meeting</h2>	
	<p>DATE: 18NOV2018</p>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">AGENDA PAPER</h3>	<p>ITEM: <b>3.1</b></p>

## President's Report

### Recommendations

1. That the President's Report for 2018 be noted by the membership.

### Vote of thanks

This year has been one filled with challenges on all levels, and I am proud of our members' resilience and strength during these times. There is a distinct ability to adapt and overcome, to support one another, and to reach out to one another when times are tough. Being President of Soil Science Australia (SSA) the past two years has been an absolute privilege and rewarding, and I thank you all for having placed your trust in me and the Federal Executive to lead our organisation. The membership has been as strong in its volunteer role as ever before, not to anyone's surprise of course, but it definitely warrants noting. Without your efforts we cannot provide the services, advocate for important issues, and grow the capability and capacity of soil science for Australia. I called for all hands on deck as the strategy and various projects unfurled; the call was well answered. So, to all members, thank you sincerely.

There is a lot of effort that goes into the administrative, leadership and operational functions of Soil Science Australia. Often this goes unnoticed, so I wish to personally provide thanks to a number of people and committees here; your contributions are vital in any small way, from simply supporting and discussing us publicly, through to the running of projects. In particular, I want to mention:

- Federal Council and Federal Executive; we thank Ms Rosie Burn for invaluable work as our Executive Officer. Rosie commenced the mammoth task of documenting our processes and policies, with a significant update to the rules in 2017 to allow us to operate as a modern day organisation. Rosie was taken ill, but has made a fantastic recovery and is enjoying life to the full again;
- Branch committees and branch volunteers who has volunteered in any capacity and made branch events vibrant and well received;
- The CPSS board and assessors, Geoff Kew and David Nash. We have had some significant wins this year in CPSS due to the dedicated effort of the Board;
- The 2018 Conference Committee. Peter Bacon has lead an extremely passionate group who refused to compromise on quality. I'm sure the conference will be a success as we sit here tonight with the first day down.
- The 2018 Soil Judging Committee have continued the high quality event from 2017 and are creating a fantastic precedent for years to come. Well done.
- Our national committee members:
  - The Strategic Advisory Committee
  - Awards Committee members;
  - The Training Committee;
  - The Editorial Board;
  - The Corporate Membership Committee;
  - Soils in Schools; and,
  - The Calendar Committee.

- Our Executive Officer, Ms Kate Husband, and CPSS Administrator, Cam Grant, who have given much more than expected, once again, and do so with pleasure because they believe in the organisation and want to see its Vision and Mission upheld and a reality. Without them we would not be running at the pace and influence we currently are.
- And, once again, everyone who has volunteered in some way.

## **Highlights**

There is a full section below focussed on reporting against the 2017-2018 strategy. With so much commenced and achieved, I have provided the highlights here.

### ***Corporate membership***

It was identified that if SSA wishes to become more influential and run projects of national significance that serve members and the general public, then there is requirement to generate the revenue to support this. Our Corporate Membership program has been released in the last quarter of 2018 and we currently have our first Corporate Member. This program will be a significant income driver and provide greater exposure of SSA to industry. The Corporate Membership Committee consists of mandatory representation from each Branch and has an aim of 12 Corporate Members in the next 12 months.

### ***Website and membership platform***

Our website development was completed in early 2018 with the membership portal undergoing development to the end of 2018. The website is much improved in terms of appearance and clarity. At this stage there is a lot of functionality still to come. It is noted we are in a state of transition as we switch from Memnet as the membership managing platform, to a fully integrated platform. During this time there will be some frustrations with membership renewal, which was noted in the last round of membership updates. In this new year, we will be focussing on assisting members to renew via a Branch based membership drive. If you are having any issues renewing, we encourage you to contact your local Branch Secretary for further assistance.

As the new functionality comes online, we will be able to setup automatic renewal for members as they desire it, provide easier access to SSA stored content, publicise events and professional development in a centralised location, and provide a member-only mentor network for Q&A. We look forward to delivering this to you in the short-term.

### ***Training committee***

Training and professional development is clearly of interest to many members. The Training Committee has been formed and has commenced moving towards a structured program of professional development resources for members and general public.

The Training Committee will work closely with Working Group 6 of the Australian Soil Network to formulate national educational and professional development curricula and guidelines. This is a significant activity for SSA to be involved with and is a pivotal role for us in developing a track record of policy influence and impact. The Australian Soil Network have funded a \$50K project for this joint activity of capability and capacity stocktake and development of pathways.

### ***Positioning papers and Profile: Soil Policy Journal***

In 2018 we completed a position paper on Soil Security, working with both Labour and the LNP towards a national discussion for a new framework of land assessment that takes into account environmental, economic, social, cultural, and ecosystem services values. Initial discussions have been very fruitful, and

the government peak body for soils, the National Committee on Soils and Terrain, is joining forces with Soil Science Australia to move this new and national approach forward.

The Editorial Board was formed in 2018 also and has met a number of times to discuss the editorial aspects of the first volume of Profile: Soil Policy Journal. This volume will have the single issue and has been prepared for release at this conference. The journal will be an eRelease for the time being, and will build towards for issues in each yearly volume. Make sure to have a look at this first volume/issue and provide your thoughts back to the Editorial Board. The journal will evolve with time, and is prepared completely on volunteer time, but I think we should be proud of the high quality that we have achieved. This first release has a focus on land survey and soil security.

### ***Certified Professional Soil Scientist accreditation and CSAM***

The CPSS Board has been working tirelessly to have the CPSS CSAM specialist competency recognised in policy and has made terrific progress with a number of state governments. The CPSS Board made the decision to stand alone from the EAINZ certification, which is a strong move and I commend the Board for this decision. While EAINZ is a much bigger organisation, we have held our own and are recognised for the quality professionals we are. Well done. I look forward to the CPSS Board developing their further specialist competencies in the near term.

### ***Department of Agriculture and Water Resource***

In October this year I met with the representatives from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources to discuss Soil Science Australia and our recent activities/outputs. They commended us on our ability to deliver so much with a purely volunteer implementation base. They were suitably impressed with our approach to capability and capacity building through the various professional development activities (including future scoping), the refocus of our content towards external parties (they look forward to more content that can help inform key issues), the clarity of the new website, and our current initiative around a soil security framework. While discussions are ongoing with the Department, a level of investment in Soil Science Australia from the Department is under negotiation. Soil Science Australia will continue to work closely with the Department in advocacy.

### **Reporting against the 2017-2018 Strategy**

The 2017-2018 Soil Science Australia Strategy made a key decision to move away from the desire to become the non-governmental peak body for soils and soil science, and instead directly brand Soil Science Australia as this. "A not-for-profit that serves as the non-governmental peak body for soils and soil scientists across Australia" now adorns our website homepage, and this terminology is used in the explanation of Soil Science Australia initiatives to external organisations and media. However, it is simply not enough to just rebrand, so this assertion of being the non-governmental peak body had to be backed up with the appropriate structures, initiatives and actions. This was the intent of the 2017-2018 strategy: to build upon the hard work of previous Soil Science Australia Federal Councils, and drive Soil Science Australia to the forefront of public policy debates, and the building of professional capacity.

The 2017-2018 strategy was written in line with the vision and mission outlined in this document. During this term Soil Science Australia has fared well in regard to addressing the objectives and key activities, as outlined in the "Status" column of each table below. The following is the strategy objectives and activities as they appear in the 2017-2018 strategy document:

## **Objectives and key activities:**

The focus under each objective is on the key activities that need to be conducted in the short to medium term in order to achieve long-term relevance and sustainability.

### ***Objective 1: Communicating and advocating for the importance of soil with key stakeholders***

- 1.1 Establish a Strategic Advisory Board to guide SSA's external focus
- 1.2 Contribute to the Australian soils policy agenda through the development of Positioning Papers
- 1.3 Develop and implement a Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy
- 1.4 Contribute to the Australian Soil Network
- 1.5 Foster strong relationships with other relevant soil science organisations.

### ***Objective 2: Developing and supporting professional standards of practise in soil science:***

- 2.1 Maintain and grow the Certified Professional Soil Scientist Accreditation Program
- 2.2 Contribute to the development and refinement of Australian Standards which are relevant to Soil Science
- 2.3 Advocate for excellence in soil science education in the tertiary sector.

### ***Objective 3: Enhancing expertise and providing professional development services accessible to all***

- 3.1 Establish a Training Board to oversee the development of a nationally accessible professional development continuum
- 3.2 Create Soil Science Australia centric information access/storage
- 3.3 Organise and co-present national and international conferences and symposia
- 3.4 Support tertiary students and early career scientists.

### ***Objective 4: Supporting young Australians' educational opportunities through the development of soil science activities and teaching material for incorporation within existing Australian curriculum***

- 4.1 Develop and implement a National Soils Education Program
- 4.2 Continue to refine and develop Soils in Schools teacher guides.

### ***Objective 5: Recognising excellence in soil science within our membership base and in the wider community***

- 5.1 Recognise outstanding contribution to soils and soil science in the wider community
- 5.2 Maintain and enhance Soil Science Australia's program of recognition and awards.

### ***Objective 6: Providing value to our members and ensuring our long term sustainability.***

- 6.1 Enhance our services and events so that we attract and retain members
- 6.2 Grow income from diverse and sustainable sources
- 6.3 Manage a financially responsible and sustainable organisation
- 6.4 Ensure that Strong policies and procedures underpin SSA's operations.

## Objectives and key activities:

### ***Objective 1: Communicating and advocating for the importance of soil with key stakeholders***

	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.1	Establish a Strategic Advisory Committee to guide SSA's external focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Terms of Reference and membership</li> <li>• Recruitment of members</li> <li>• Work with Strategic Advisory Committee to identify key policy issues for consideration</li> </ul>	Federal President	December 2017	Establishment completed and committee operating. Soil Security identified as a key issues. Policy identification ongoing
1.2	Contribute to the Australian soils policy agenda through the development of Positioning Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment scanning – what are the key strategic / policy issues we need to influence</li> <li>• Who of our members should we be approaching to write policy papers – understand their specialisation, interest</li> <li>• Targeted distribution of positioning papers</li> </ul>	Federal Executive	Commencing June 2017	Soil Security identified and major Government parties engaged. Editorial Board has been commissioned to formally undertake tasks under this item as ongoing.
1.3	Develop and implement a Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder mapping – who are the key players driving the public policy, education and funding agendas in relation to soil</li> <li>• Public engagement strategy</li> <li>• Media strategy</li> <li>• Strategic communications on key issues</li> <li>• Identifying and engaging / partnering with the key government / non-government policy / advocacy groups</li> </ul>	Executive Officer	December 2017	A skeleton, just-in-time strategic approach was utilised throughout 2017/18 to allow implementation of other strategic initiatives. A more focussed CM&E strategy is completed as a part of the Future Plan document.
1.4	Contribute to the Australian Soil Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain observer status and ultimately membership of the Australian Soil Network</li> </ul>	Federal President	June 2017	Initial engagement from ASN was low, as ASN was undergoing structural leadership changes. In progress. A formal application to the ASN has been made, with a presentation of our case on 29OCT18.
1.5	Foster strong relationships with other relevant soil science organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain strong links with and contribute to IUSS</li> <li>• Maintain strong links other country's soil science societies</li> </ul>	Federal Executive	Ongoing	Throughout the term the IUSS was challenged by SSA for its relevance in influencing global agendas (in response to membership survey). The IUSS is too insular and could better serve its member countries. This point was raised in Rio by SSA(21 <sup>st</sup> WCSS Meeting) and received strong support from SSSA and BSSS. SSSA are keen to engage on a public and global communication project.

**Objective 2: Developing and supporting professional standards of practise in soil science**

	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Status</b>
2.1	Maintain and grow the Certified Professional Soil Scientist Accreditation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the value of engaging CPSS to key industry groups and government</li> <li>Maintain easy access to details of all CPSS accredited soil scientists</li> <li>Maintain and monitor relevant policies, rules, code of ethics</li> <li>Offer the CPSS program to NZ soil scientists</li> <li>Establish a 'recognised soil practitioner' pathway</li> </ul>	CPSS Chair/Federal President	Ongoing	<p>CPSS successful in gaining recognised regulatory requirement for CSAM competency.</p> <p>Offer made to NZ, with relevance to be explored through time (no immediate need)</p> <p>Recognised Soil Practitioner to be scoped by newly established Training Committee – decision that this was a professional development outcome where CPSS is a stakeholder, but the role of CPSS is for the Professional Accreditation</p> <p>Other aspects achieved and ongoing</p>
2.2	Contribute to the development and refinement of Australian Standards which are relevant to Soil Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a close working relationship with Standards Australia</li> <li>Endorse a SSA representative on relevant Standards Australia committees</li> </ul>	Federal Executive	Ongoing	There was no growth in our Stan. Aust. Membership, but this was maintained and continues to be maintained.
2.3	Advocate for excellence in soil science education in the tertiary sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and engage with primary, secondary and tertiary education stakeholders</li> <li>Undertake ongoing environmental scanning to monitor the effectiveness of soil science education</li> </ul>	Federal Executive / National Soils Education Program Committee	Ongoing	There is a clear desire for soils educational materials and engagement activities. However, the task is too large for the unfunded NSEC. Focus was changed to seeking grant money to undertake strategic analysis and scanning, as well as content creation. Not yet successful. DAWR currently (DEC18) considering funding options for SSA.

**Objective 3: Enhancing expertise and providing professional development services accessible to all**

	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Status</b>
3.1	Establish a Training Board to oversee the development of nationally accessible professional development continuum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Terms of Reference and Membership</li> <li>• Recruitment of members</li> <li>• Work with Training Board to develop professional development plan</li> <li>• Fostering of an expertise network (Training Board)</li> </ul>	Federal Executive	December 2017	Training Committee was established in Q2 2018 with ToR completed and initial Membership established. View of Committee to transition to Board subject to a financial plan and Federal Council approval. Expertise network commencing, with digital platform estimated to be complete for start 2019
3.2	Create Soil Science Australia centric information access/storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an online resource storage capability for public and members only information</li> </ul>	Federal Executive	December 2017	Designed, scoped and contracted. Digital platform estimated to be complete for start 2019
3.3	Organise and co-present national and international conferences and symposia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a national SSA conference on alternate years (alternate conferences in partnership with New Zealand Soil Science Society)</li> <li>• Encourage branches to hold conferences</li> <li>• Hold periodic symposia to identify and address key issues</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to collaborate with other organisations to present conferences and symposia</li> </ul>	Federal Executive / Branches	Ongoing	2018 National Conference to be held in NOV18. 2020 National Conference confirmed for Cairns with NZSSS engaged SSA a major partner in the Soil Security and Planetary Health Symposium (DEC18) Various Branch level symposia held throughout the year.
3.4	Support tertiary students and early career scientists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and encourage informal mentor network support in tandem with an online community</li> </ul>	Fed Executive	December 2017	Expertise network commencing, with digital platform estimated to be complete for start 2019. This portion of the strategy requires further time, but is definitely required, and should be a future focus (new member creation).

**Objective 4: Supporting young Australians' educational opportunities through the development of soil science activities and teaching material for incorporation within existing Australian curriculum**

	Strategy	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Status
4.1	Develop and implement a National Soils Education Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a five- year National Soils Education Program Strategy</li> <li>• Secure funding to engage a project manager for the strategy</li> <li>• Identify and work with key advocates to promote the Program and Soils in Schools</li> <li>• Participation in national and local events to raise awareness of the importance of soils with young Australians</li> </ul>	National Soils Education Program Committee/ Executive Officer	December 2017/ ongoing	It was identified that the NSEC required a funded position to continue to develop the information and content required. We have not been able to fill the Chair position in the short-term, which is a function of volunteer member burnout. Focus shifter to grant funding applications for the NSEC – 3 were submitted with none successful. DAWR is considering a funding injection to SSA, part of which can help scope the NSEC and provide the strategic business plan required (DAWR Decision DEC18)
4.2	Continue to refine and develop Soils in Schools teacher guides for primary and secondary students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop up to date teaching resources and activity guides</li> <li>• Participate in key conferences and events to communicate the importance of including soils in the curriculum and the availability of teacher resources</li> </ul>	National Soils Education Program Committee / Project Manager	December 2017 / ongoing	As Above. In addition, an MOU was formed with UNE for delivery of short courses and content creation. This MOU is open to all other organisations. A small number of workshops were held through this.

**Objective 5: Recognising excellence in soil science internal and external to our member base:**

	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Status</b>
5.1	Recognise outstanding contribution to soils and soil science in the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a community awards program</li> <li>• Development of professional soil science award/s at federal level</li> <li>• Nominate SSA members for national and international awards, including Australian Honours</li> </ul>	Federal Council	December 2017/ ongoing	<p>Community awards program was scoped, but was deprioritised for other key initiatives. It has been identified as a factor in the CM&amp;E Strategy, however. Development of Professional Awards at the Federal Level was considered and no changes made by Federal Council. The immediate action was to actively put forward professional members for existing awards, in particular the Fellow of Soil Science Australia. The requirement for further professional awards might be considered by Federal Council and Branch Executives into the future.</p> <p>Nomination of Australian members for external awards was undertaken by SSA, with a focus on Australia Day Honours (cannot divulge submissions to this)</p>
5.2	Maintain and enhance SSA's program of recognition and awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and promote the current SSA awards and recognition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prescott Medal</li> <li>○ JK Taylor Medal,</li> <li>○ Publication Medal</li> <li>○ CG Stephens Award</li> <li>○ LJH Teakle Medal</li> <li>○ Soil Science Australia Fellowship</li> <li>○ Soil Science Australia Conference Awards</li> <li>○ Honorary Life Membership</li> <li>○ Student awards and prizes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Federal Council/ Awards Committees	Ongoing	<p>Awards and recognition were maintained.</p> <p>There was a strong focus on professional development for students and early career at the Federal Level, with 4 students sent to the 21<sup>st</sup> WCSS as a part of the Soil Judging Team (5<sup>th</sup> overall) and two Early Career Soil Scientists provided travel bursaries to present.</p>

**6: Providing value to our members and ensuring our long term sustainability.**

	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Status</b>
6.1	Enhance our service and events so that we attract and retain members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver valued and relevant services and events to support members and prospective members</li> <li>• Strengthen membership communication and engagement</li> <li>• Structure and promote membership appropriate to all career stages and circumstances</li> <li>• Support the SSA branches</li> </ul>	Federal Executive / Executive Officer	Ongoing	<p>Membership level maintained, with a reduction in renewal that has been identified as a function of the renewal process (Steps taken to rectify).</p> <p>Membership communication was rationalised into Soil Crumbs. In late 2018 this has been somewhat ad hoc and needs to be improved in the short term (currently in a disruptive transition period)</p> <p>The focus has been on developing the key initiatives to drive membership value at all levels (individual from undergraduate through to established scientist, and corporate members). The intent of this action is to empower Branches to be able to better attract and retain members through Federal level support.</p>
6.2	Grow income from diverse and sustainable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping membership fees affordable on the one hand, while balancing the need for income generation</li> <li>• Grow the SSA membership base</li> <li>• Growing income from other core activities, such as conferences</li> <li>• Increasing support from sponsors trusts and foundations</li> <li>• Identifying fundraising opportunities</li> <li>• Developing a bequest strategy</li> <li>• Opportunities to partner with other sectors</li> </ul>	Federal Council / Executive Officer	Ongoing	<p>A realistic increase in fees was provided to meet membership basic service provision.</p> <p>Deductable Gift Status is approved, with formal certification to come.</p> <p>Financial diversification to support member services has been a focus. The key avenue employed will be through Corporate Members in the short-term, The framework for this has been prepared and implemented (1<sup>st</sup> Corp Memb secured)</p> <p>Focus of this term has been to enable growth in the 2019-2020 term.</p>

6.3	Manage a financially responsible and sustainable organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prudent management of income and expenditure according to approved budgets</li> <li>• Maximising investment income</li> <li>• Ensuring SSA has adequate people resources and engages highly skilled contractors/ employees</li> </ul>	Federal Council / Executive Officer	Ongoing	In the 2017-18 term we have implemented a lot of new initiatives designed to build membership value, attract new members and grow SSA. While there has been significant expense attached to this, we have managed a responsible budget throughout, with a financial strategy established to build income for service and strategic initiatives in the future. \$26K was spent on the digital platform, with view to recover this in the short-term through corporate membership it has facilitated. Special project income has been identified as a means to deliver initiatives; for example, we have secured \$50K through the ASN to deliver educational capability and capacity identification in the tertiary and professional development space (output career pathways identification, training requirement, and threats to soil science education identified with a strategic framework for future funding recommendation). Activities such as these will strengthen member service and perpetuate SSA through its perceived external value.
6.4	Ensure that strong policies and procedures underpin SSA's operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and regular review of a/ governance policy /risk management framework</li> </ul>	Federal Executive / Executive Officer	December 2017	Initial review completed, with The Rules updated, and risk audit conducted. A formal policies and procedures framework is needed in the short-term as identified in this term and detailed in the document below.

## In Remembrance

I would like to finish this report by taking a moment to remember three great soil scientists who departed our ranks this year: Jon Hempel, Prof Inakwu Odeh and Prof Steven Raine. All three of them made tremendous contributions to soil science and all three of them left us much too early. The response from members was beautiful and I passed the various messages onto family, whom I am sure appreciated them. There are three very strong legacies left behind for us here to carry on. It is the passionate soil scientists like Jon, Odeh and Steve who motivate us to undertake extensive volunteer roles, and excel in our professions, such that future generations may thrive. Please join me in one last vote of thanks for their contribution. To Jon, Odeh and Steve.

*Prepared by:*



**Associate Professor John McLean Bennett, CPSS**  
Federal President  
***Soil Science Australia***



18 November 2018