

Soil Science Australia Strategic Plan 2017-2018

Vision

As the peak body for soils and soil science, Soil Science Australia must educate, advocate and advise, at all levels, in the interest of Australian prosperity:

“Our soils are valued and protected by all, so that current and future generations of Australians can thrive”.

Mission

Our mission is to promote the importance of soil in the Australian environment, build a strong and collaborative soil science community, influence policy and development, as well as advance the professional capability of our members.

We will achieve this by:

1. Communicating and advocating for the importance of soil with key stakeholders
2. Developing and supporting professional standards of practise in soil science
3. Enhancing expertise and providing professional development services accessible to all
4. Supporting educational opportunities for young Australians through the development of soil science activities and teaching material for incorporation in the Australian curriculum
5. Recognising excellence in soil science within our membership base and in the wider community
6. Providing value to our members and ensuring our long term sustainability.

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

	Strategy	Actions
1.1	Establish a Strategic Advisory Committee to guide SSA's external focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Terms of Reference and membership • Recruitment of members • Work with Strategic Advisory Board to identify key policy issues for consideration
1.2	Contribute to the Australian soils policy agenda through the development of Positioning Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment scanning – what are the key strategic / policy issues we need to influence • Who of our members should we be approaching to write policy papers – understand their specialisation, interest • Targeted distribution of positioning papers
1.3	Develop and implement a Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder mapping – who are the key players driving the public policy, education and funding agendas in relation to soil • Public engagement strategy • Media strategy • Strategic communications on key issues • Identifying and engaging / partnering with the key government / non-government policy / advocacy groups
1.4	Contribute to the Australian Soil Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain observer status and ultimately membership of the Australian Soil Network
1.5	Foster strong relationships with other relevant soil science organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain strong links with and contribute to IUSS • Maintain strong links other country's soil science societies

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

	Strategy	Actions
2.1	Maintain and grow the Certified Professional Soil Scientist Accreditation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the value of engaging CPSS to key industry groups and government • Maintain easy access to details of all CPSS accredited soil scientists • Maintain and monitor relevant policies, rules, code of ethics • Offer the CPSS program to NZ soil scientists • Establish a 'recognised soil practitioner' pathway
2.2	Contribute to the development and refinement of Australian Standards which are relevant to Soil Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a close working relationship with Standards Australia • Endorse a SSA representative on relevant Standards Australia committees
2.3	Advocate for excellence in soil science education in the tertiary sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and engage with primary, secondary and tertiary education stakeholders • Undertake ongoing environmental scanning to monitor the effectiveness of soil science education

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

	Strategy	Actions
3.1	Establish a Training Board to oversee the development of nationally accessible professional development continuum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Terms of Reference and Membership • Recruitment of members • Work with Training Board to develop professional development plan • Fostering of an expertise network (Training Board)
3.2	Create Soil Science Australia centric information access/storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an online resource storage capability for public and members only information
3.3	Organise and co-present national and international conferences and symposia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a national SSA conference on alternate years (alternate conferences in partnership with New Zealand Soil Science Society) • Encourage branches to hold conferences • Hold periodic symposia to identify and address key issues • Identify opportunities to collaborate with other organisations to present conferences and symposia
3.4	Support tertiary students and early career scientists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and encourage informal mentor network support in tandem with an online community

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
4.1	Develop and implement a National Soils Education Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a five- year National Soils Education Program Strategy • Secure funding to engage a project manager for the strategy • Identify and work with key advocates to promote the Program and Soils in Schools • Participation in national and local events to raise awareness of the importance of soils with young Australians
4.2	Continue to refine and develop Soils in Schools teacher guides for primary and secondary students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop up to date teaching resources and activity guides • Participate in key conferences and events to communicate the importance of including soils in the curriculum and the availability of teacher resources

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

	Strategy	Actions
5.1	Recognise outstanding contribution to soils and soil science in the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a community awards program• Development of professional soil science award/s at federal level• Nominate SSA members for national and international awards, including Australian Honours
5.2	Maintain and enhance SSA's program of recognition and awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain and promote the current SSA awards and recognition:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Prescott Medal○ JK Taylor Medal,○ Publication Medal○ CG Stephens Award○ LJM Teakle Medal○ Soil Science Australia Fellowship○ Soil Science Australia Conference Awards○ Honorary Life Membership○ Student awards and prizes

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

	Strategy	Actions
6.1	Enhance our service and events so that we attract and retain members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver valued and relevant services and events to support members and prospective members • Strengthen membership communication and engagement • Structure and promote membership appropriate to all career stages and circumstances • Support the SSA branches
6.2	Grow income from diverse and sustainable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping membership fees affordable on the one hand, while balancing the need for income generation • Grow the SSA membership base • Growing income from other core activities, such as conferences • Increasing support from sponsors trusts and foundations • Identifying fundraising opportunities • Developing a bequest strategy • Opportunities to partner with other sectors
6.3	Manage a financially responsible and sustainable organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudent management of income and expenditure according to approved budgets • Maximising investment income • Ensuring SSA has adequate people resources and engages highly skilled contractors / employees
6.4	Ensure that strong policies and procedures underpin SSA's operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and regular review of a / governance policy / risk management framework