



On the 30th November 2001, Ary van der Lely was awarded Life Membership of ASSSI through the Riverina Branch of ASSSI. He is pictured here receiving his award from the President of the Riverina Branch, Evan Christen.

Congratulations!

In this Issue

- Profiles on Linda Bennison and Adrian Webb
- Strategic Plan
- Victorian Branch Field Trip
- Presentation Speech by Evan Christen

**AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF SOIL SCIENCE
INC.**

ARBN 080 783 106

ABN 96 080 783 106

The Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated (ASSSI) was founded in 1955 to work towards the advancement of soil science in the professional, academic and technical fields. It comprises a Federal Council and seven branches (Qld, NSW, Riverina, ACT, Vic, SA and WA). Liability of members is limited.

Objectives

- To advance soil science
- To provide a link between soil scientists and members of kindred bodies within Australia and in other countries.

Specific Objectives

- To promote the field of soil science
- To further the expertise in soil science of members
- To be a forum for discussion on soil science
- To increase government and community awareness of soil science
- To liaise and cooperate with other organisations in support of mutual interests
- To encourage research and extension in soil science
- To promote wise management of the soil resource throughout Australia

Membership

For all Membership and CPSS application and renewals, subscription, queries and address changes contact Linda Bennison, ASSSI executive officer on telephone 03 5974 1758, facimile 03 5974 1141 or email asssi@gsv.com.au

ASSSI Website

<http://asssi.asn.au>

PROFILE

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Email your articles to:

organic@agric.uwa.edu.au

Advertisements

Advertisements relevant to some aspect of soil science are welcome. Charges are full page \$220, half page \$110, quarter page \$55 (GST inclusive). Information about ASSSI conferences, courses, scholarships etc is published free.

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All contributions are welcome, text preferably by email. Please send to the editor, Rachel Poulter, Soil Science and Plant Nutrition, The University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6907.

fax 08 9380 1050, email organic@agric.uwa.edu.au

Profile



From the President

2001 was a busy year for the Federal Council of ASSSI. First, Alice Bass, resigned as Executive Officer and we appointed Linda Bennison to this position. We increased the frequency of meetings of Federal Council (January, March, May, July, September, November (2 meetings)), but shortened their length as they were held via teleconference. We had considerable email communication among all members of Council prior to meetings. Teleconference meetings have allowed direct participation of Branch Presidents instead of via their proxies.

We had two changes in Federal Executive during 2001. Richard Harper replaced Judy Eastham as Federal Secretary early in the year and Rachel Poulter replaced Daniel Murphy as Profile Editor in December.

Throughout the year we spent a considerable amount of time discussing new strategic directions for ASSSI, and this issue of Profile contains a draft of our Strategic Plan 2002-6. Please send any suggestions to me about this as soon as possible as we will finalise the brochure at the meeting of Federal Council on 22 March. Most importantly, strategic initiatives include changing the way that Federal Executive is elected. Current practices are not in accord with the constitution; a national election of Vice President is required. I urge you to consider the options and let us know your opinions.

ASSSI has negotiated with AIAST a new arrangement for administration of the accreditation scheme, CPSS. ASSSI has administrative responsibility for CPSS from 1 January 2002 for one year, with the possibility of extending it indefinitely. CPSS is owned by AIAST and the Standards are jointly owned by ASSSI and AIAST. It will be managed by a new CPSS Accreditation Committee comprising 3 members of ASSSI and 1 from AIAST (not a member of ASSSI). The new committee will consider suggestions made by the ASSSI review committee over the recent years. Financial statements will be maintained separately from ASSSI accounts and an annual report, including

current and forward budgets for CPSS will be reviewed by AIAST and ASSSI Councils.

The new arrangements for CPSS will be accompanied by a major campaign to increase acceptance of accreditation of soil scientists by employers throughout Australia. It is clear that CPSS has not been widely accepted as a desirable selection criterion for new appointments. It is our intention to rigorously review all applications for CPSS to demonstrate that standards are maintained at the highest possible level. We will implement an ongoing program to raise awareness among employers of CPSS based on quality control with oversight by ASSSI of procedures and standards. Federal Council has a strong commitment to ensuring the success of the new arrangements and is pleased to have greater opportunity to promote accreditation of soil scientists throughout the profession.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the review of CPSS and to members who have joined the scheme. It will continue to be a challenge to gain wide acceptance of CPSS by employers, and we will be addressing this immediately.

Some members of the South Australian Branch of ASSSI have proposed changes to the organisation of ASSSI. Their suggestions are detailed in a Letter to the Editor (see Page 4 of this edition of Profile). I strongly support the suggestion for national elections of members of Federal Executive of ASSSI (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer). With improvements in internet communication and teleconferencing, this is now an efficient option. Indeed, the Executive Officer of ASSSI has not been located close to either of the last two Federal Executives, and this has not been a problem.

In a similar way, the introduction of teleconferencing for Federal Council Meetings and the effective use of email and proposed upgrading of the Website, has made it unnecessary to have Federal Executive located in the same place. Active participation of Branch Presidents in Federal Council has occurred during 2001 and has greatly enhanced its capacity to discuss and plan at a federal level. I greatly appreciate the support from all members of Federal Council during 2001 and look forward to ASSSI providing increased benefits to members during 2002.

Lyn Abbott



From the Editor's Desk

As this is the first Profile since taking over as editor I feel an introduction is in order. I am a 'thirdish' year PhD student at UWA, in the Soil Science and Plant Nutrition Department. I have been looking at quantifying and modelling the water balance under annual and perennial agricultural systems. Perhaps more information about myself and my research should follow in a member profile article in a future issue.

I would like to thank those members who were generous enough of their time to make contributions to this issue. There is plenty of space for feature articles, branch news, soil descriptions, member profiles, book reviews, or anything else that members would like to share, so keep them coming.

I would especially like to thank Bryony Abbott for all her effort in putting it all together.

Rachel Poulter

Nominations for ASSSI Medals for 2002

Send nominations now for
JK Taylor Medal
Prescott Medal
ASSSI Publications Medal

to Richard Harper
richardh@calm.wa.gov.au



Letters

Proposal to change ASSSI governance

We propose that Branch-level governance have executive powers dissolved and that a single Federal Executive council be elected from the whole Society's membership.

Intent

The intent of this proposal is to minimize governance and streamline the general running of our Society to make it more professional and worthy of a CPSS scheme. **Please note: the proposal is definitely NOT intended to stifle local activity in any way – quite the opposite. We strongly support 'local activity nodes' or 'local working groups'**. These work particularly well in other Societies internationally (e.g. North of England Soils Discussion Group, Eastern Canada Soil Structure and Carbon Workshops, Welsh (and Scottish) Soils Discussion Groups, etc.). In South Australia, they might include "The Eyre Peninsula Soils Discussion Group", or the "Adelaide Hills Soils Discussion Group", etc. Such groups have local identity and are flexible and focussed, yet they can form and dissolve as required without any consequences for Federal governance.

Arguments

ASSSI has a small and diminishing membership, which no longer requires subdivision of its governance to achieve its goals. In fact, some Australian States have never had the critical numbers to set up Branches in the first place (e.g. Tasmania). Some Branches ignore State boundaries altogether (e.g. Riverina), and all Branches ebb and flow with changes to their memberships, so that Branch executives are sometimes effectively abandoned (e.g. ACT currently). Closely associated with this is the fact that, with the exception of perhaps the Riverina

Letter continued from Page 4

Branch, many of ASSSI's Branches are based in the large cities and serve their rural constituents rather poorly, if at all. A larger, single, more inclusive body is required to overcome this urban/Branch-centric structure.

Second, the current dual-governance (Federal + Branch) is unnecessarily cumbersome. To illustrate this, the Federal Council was recently prevented from acting quickly on a relatively straightforward matter (small change in Branch fees to make them uniform across Australia) simply because each Branch had to approve the proposed changes – which must be voted on at general meetings, often separated by months. It becomes a rather laughable state of affairs when a federal body cannot act without the authority of its Branches, particularly in an organization that is striving to convince the general public we are nationally relevant and that our members should support a professional accreditation scheme. What advantage is it to soil scientists that their Society has separate systems of membership, financial management and accountability when they would be better served by a single centralised system (already) supported by an employed Executive Officer?

Third, most of us are too busy now to support the activities of a split-executive society. If a single, Federal body were to be active and professionally run (no slight intended to current Federal Executive, which is doing an excellent job), the Branch executives would be unnecessary. Furthermore, the single Federal body would have the mandate and resources to support a broad range of professional activities across Australia. Furthermore, a Society operating under a single governance would be able to elect the best (willing) candidates for the various positions of importance (not something we presently do under the 'pass-the-parcel' system of nominating the Federal Council). We believe the recent move by Federal Council to diminish the 'Branch-proxy' system in favour of direct participation of the Branch Presidents in teleconference meetings is a step in the right direction – but a fully elected system for all office bearers would be a further useful step along this path (and may occur in 2003).

Finally, as indicated in the **Intent**, above, a single federal structure need not stifle local activity where interest and initiative occur. The British and Canadian Societies of Soil Science very successfully run annual (broad-based) conferences at locations decided by federal executive, and they support other activities (e.g. workshops, regionally based discussion groups) that focus on more specific issues.

If we want this Society to grow and be capable of supporting a seriously professional accreditation scheme (which current Federal Executive has worked so diligently to resurrect), we need to get our house in order and present a single, public face with a simple executive structure that is supported nationally.

Cameron Grant (President, SA Branch)
Rob Bramley (Vice President, SA Branch)
Graham Merrington (Secretary, SA Branch)
Rob Fitzpatrick (immediate past-President, SA Branch)
Mike McLaughlin (previous President, SA Branch)

January 31, 2002.

Commercialisation, nationalisation and all that

The proposal to convert ASSSI from a federation of state branches to a national organisation has generated more heat than light. We need to gain the benefits of a national body without losing the considerable advantages of a regionally based organisation.

There are many advantages in shifting a lot of administrative work to a professionally run national office - especially that of managing money and maintaining the membership register. (The fee variation between states is one piece of silliness which should go). As a national body, we make substantial savings (eg insurance) and avoid many legal and accounting problems.

However, having a national administration does not mean that all activities must be run from it. There is no reason that a regional body cannot co-exist with a national administration. It can even run a bank account - it just means that the federal treasurer needs to know what is in the account and what moneys are spent on, so that the tax reports can be produced nationally.

These simple administrative arrangements are complicated by a group who want to see ASSSI changed from an academic society into an industry association that lobbies federal parliament, runs an accreditation system for consultants, and just runs a conference every two years for those interested in soil science. This can easily be done at Federal level with little need for a state branch. All the 'workers' are paid professionals and the focus business is not soil science but the representation of soil scientists in the commercial and political world.

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That is what the AIAST does for agricultural scientists. As federal vice president of AIAST I have seen it from the inside, and I don't like it. The focus becomes the business of science not the science itself. Control of the society is delegated to a paid employee who has a mainly commercial agenda. AIAST used to be a scientific society running a respected scientific journal. Now, federal AIAST business almost NEVER has anything to do with science and the journal is largely given over to agribusiness.

MY vision for the ASSSI does not exclude the commercial side, and I am comfortable with a national administration, but we should remain focused on soils knowledge as our core business. In other words we should focus on being an academic society, an organisation which encourages scientists with soils interests to get together at reasonably frequent intervals (several times a year) to discuss soil science. Our focus business should remain the ongoing exchange of information, networking, seminars, field trips, publication of scientific papers and scientific workshops. Most of these activities are essentially regional. Unless there is some organisation at regional level to balance a national body concerned with administration, then soils activities will be subordinate to commercial interests.

I hope we can provide some industry association type facilities for members who need them and they may help fund the federal office**, but there is a risk that these facilities may dominate the organisation - as they have done with AIAST. We need to maintain our focus on SOILS KNOWLEDGE and we need a separate (eg regional) grouping that can keep the focus on soils without the concerns of running a commercial enterprise. Unless we understand that, we will end up being an industry association in competition with a myriad of others providing accreditation services in agriculture, forestry, environment etc. We will not have the soils focus we need to survive.

If we decide to become a national organisation, then we CAN become an industry association also, the question is - can we risk that? or should we remain primarily a scientific society which offers a few services for those in the commercial world?

** The monetary advantages of taking the commercial path are NOT what they appear to be. It is true that the income is high, but so are the costs. The AIAST spends CONSIDERABLE time and money dealing with commercial disputes related to its accreditation scheme. Up to ten complaints per week need to be dealt with. One recent dispute cost over \$20,000 in travel and legal costs plus many hours of volunteer time. Are we ready to take that path ?

Cliff Hignett CPSS CPAg (ex SA ASSSI president, current AIAST vice president)

Support Student
Membership of
ASSSI

Submit Thesis
Abstracts for
inclusion in
next Profile
by
15 March 2002

Professionalism and Accreditation

What about simpler and cheaper ways for ASSSI to enhance professionalism rather than accreditation? For example, what about a site for member's CVs and services on the web? They could nominate referees, and if the referees are in the Association, then it's easy to look up their qualifications, and so on. The pages could include searches by category, and information on the various sorts of skills and qualifications that soil scientists have.

There's a good chance we could make the site cost neutral, or perhaps even a revenue raiser, if we make it attractive for consulting companies and equipment suppliers to advertise there. I'd find a site like that pretty useful if I were a client. And right in line with the association's objectives. Soil scientists can always get professional indemnity insurance and so on elsewhere. More qualified people than I have probably discussed all this, but I can't recall hearing any really good discussion of the pros and cons of accreditation and alternatives.

Years ago I became a CPAg through the AIAST scheme. Then when the CPSS scheme came along I joined that, largely out of consideration for the hard working ASSSI office bearers who were urging me to. But I didn't notice any benefits, couldn't see how I'd benefit in the future, and was considerably out of pocket, not to mention the numerous hassles during the long teething period, so after a few years I quit. Perhaps accreditation is more useful to soil scientists doing other sorts of work than myself. However, it's probably the very diversity of work we do that makes an accreditation scheme of doubtful merit.

Thanks for publishing Cliff Hignett's letter; I was fairly concerned about many of the things he raised, and his conclusions made sense to me. Of the 350 out of 500 Association members who aren't CPSS, I suspect a reasonable proportion might think similarly.

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CPSS Accreditation

As Chair of the ASSSI sub-committee that considered accreditation issues, I feel that I should respond to some of the comments in the recent letter by Cliff Hignett .

I am unaware of the detail of recent discussions that may (or may not) have occurred at a Federal Council level, but I have maintained contact with the Federal President on the accreditation issue and have absolutely no knowledge of proposals to:

- (a) transform ASSSI into an accreditation-focused business
- (b) require all members to be accredited, or
- (c) make accreditation compulsory for anyone working in soil science

Such imaginative but unrealistic suggestions should not be taken seriously.

I am disappointed (wearied) by continuing suggestions along the lines that an accreditation scheme is too difficult or too costly for ASSSI to run. The suggestion that ASSSI would face costs similar to the entire running cost of AIAST if it ran its own accreditation scheme is quite ridiculous, and is part of continuing noise that ASSSI is too small, incompetent, or untrustworthy, to manage or be responsible for accreditation of its own profession. With that in mind, the move to have ASSSI run the existing CPSS scheme should give us a clearer appreciation of the costs and workloads involved.

I strongly doubt that there is potential for economies of scale in having one group such as AIAST administer more than one accreditation scheme. There is more potential for economies of scale if ASSSI, for example, can draw information on CPSS members from an existing membership database. In terms of promoting accreditation, agricultural interests may not be the dominant component of those commercial activities involving soil scientists, with land development/rehabilitation and mining (both including subject areas such as acid sulphate soils, contaminated lands, erosion) becoming increasingly important. It is doubtful whether an agricultural group would be a credible advocate of soil scientist accreditation in some of those subject areas.

This also leads to the suggestion that whilst soil

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science and agriculture have been very strongly linked in the past, soil science is moving to a broader role in the management of Australian landscapes. To me, remaining mainly linked to an agricultural organisation seems inconsistent with current trends in Australian soil science.

I have discussed issues of disciplinary procedures with one other (larger) organisation that applies them. Their view is that the potential for a legal challenge to a penalty cannot be avoided, but that simply puts a strong onus on the organisation to ensure that its disciplinary procedures are fair and transparent. Legal challenges are extremely rare, as the cost of a challenge generally greatly exceeds the penalty. Penalties are typically some combination of admonishment, public naming, and/or suspension, depending on the perceived magnitude of misconduct. Given current levels of acceptance of CPSS, loss of accreditation would hardly justify spending thousands of dollars to mount a legal challenge.

Reductions in cost of PI insurance are attractive. Ask anyone who has received their bill for this year! Under the existing accreditation scheme, CPSS alone does not entitle people to discounts through AON. One must also be a member of AIAST, so the existing scheme does not offer that benefit to CPSS who are members of ASSSI only. Nor is it likely to in the future. I am advised by AON that AIAST discounts will only apply to soil scientists working in agriculture, and that soil scientists working in more “environmental” areas are excluded from those arrangements.

The sub-committee’s initial report to Federal Council identified two issues with the current accreditation system:

- (a) its content, and
- (b) its management

The present continuation of ASSSI’s arrangement with AIAST may achieve more satisfactory management of the scheme, but may not achieve the desired changes in the content of the accreditation scheme, as that scheme is owned and controlled by AIAST. Although ASSSI has negotiated a dominant role on the CPSS accreditation committee, any changes recommended by that committee will have to be approved by AIAST. The revised arrangement

could give ASSSI the control of the scheme that is necessary – provided AIAST accepts the need to have a satisfied customer. It could also be an evolutionary step in ASSSI developing the experience and confidence needed to establish an accreditation scheme wholly-owned by ASSSI.

At this stage, we need the accreditation scheme to continue. With time, and continued inputs from our members, no doubt it can continue to evolve to better meet soil scientists’ needs, and to be taken seriously by the relevant industry bodies. The major indicator of success or failure of the CPSS scheme will be the extent to which relevant Government and Industry groups are persuaded of the value of such accreditation, as that is crucial to achieving value for money for those participating in the scheme.

Rob Loch

Principal Consultant
Landloch Pty Ltd
P.O. Box 555
DARLING HEIGHTS QLD 4350

PROFILE via EMAIL

This is the first copy of Profile that has been sent directly to ASSSI members via email as a PDF file. Our Website Master, Derek Yates offers the following recommendations:

“I would strongly discourage delivery in a format such as MS word in favour of pdf. I am not a great fan of pdf but it is more or less a standard item these days, and the reader is readily available (eg ASSSI site has links) free. Formats such as word require users to have some MS or similar product which they must buy. I do not think this is acceptable, especially for members with computers not employer sponsored. People using non MS or 'lesser' applications such as works may have difficulty with word format. Pdf documents are usually smaller than eg word - which is important if email delivery is an option. I am not certain, but believe pdf has tougher security provisions.”

About the ASSSI Executive Officer Linda Bennison



Now that I have had time to settle in to the ASSSI EO position, it may be appropriate to introduce myself. I work part-time as Executive Officer for the Australian Society of Soil Science and part-time as Executive Officer for the Grassland Society of Victoria Inc.

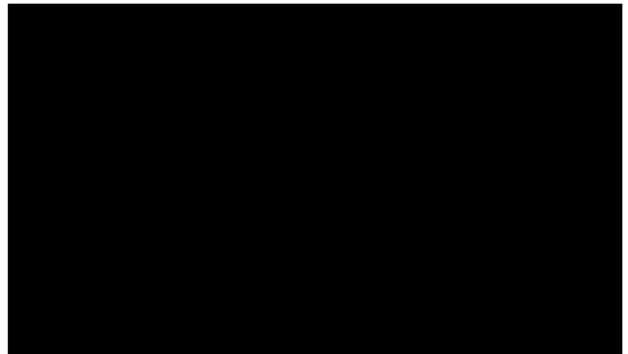
I completed a three year undergraduate Diploma of Applied Science course (Agriculture) being awarded a state government scholarship for the study. After graduating, I travelled for a year then joined a private pasture- and turf-seed company working on their plant-breeding program. In the late eighties I changed jobs and joined the Victorian Department of Agriculture at the Alexandra district office as a pasture development officer. Around this time I returned to study completing a Bachelor of Applied Science (Agriculture) jointly sharing the A.C.Drevermann Memorial Award for Major Study Project. After the birth of my first daughter I continued to work part-time however two years later with a second child due I resigned from the Department.

I then worked part-time from a home office providing database administration to the Grassland Society of Victoria Inc. and undertook some board and committee work including membership of the Port Phillip Catchment and Land Protection Board, the Westernport Catchment Implementation Committee, the Grassland Society of Victoria Inc state executive, the Victorian Seed Advisory Committee and the Western Port Regional Planning and Co-Ordination Committee Farming Sub-Committee.

During the nineties the Grassland Society doubled in size and my workload increased to include organizing their annual conference. The Society now has just over 2000 members on the database.

In 1997 I applied for and was awarded a Rural Women's Leadership Bursary by the Department of Justice and Department of Natural Resources and Environment. I used the bursary to complete a Certificate of Association Management at the Monash Mt Eliza Business School in 1998.

I now work full time as my children are both at primary school and I maintain a separate office from my residence. Although the ASSSI position is two days per week, Message Bank will take your call if I am on another call or the Internet. Please contact me if you have any queries with your membership or any suggestions on how your society can operate better.

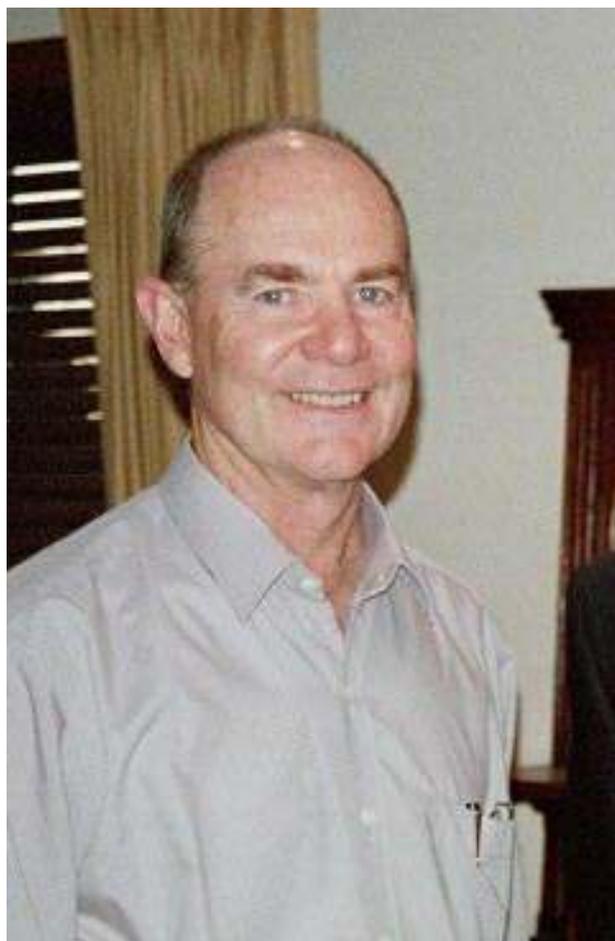


President of Queensland Branch Adrian Webb

I graduated with a degree in Agricultural Science from Queensland University back in the latter half of last century. This was enhanced to a Master degree some years later with a typical amount of angst enjoyed by external students. I had what I consider a productive and enjoyable career in Queensland DPI mainly in land resource assessment and land management research; I started with a brief stint in soil suitability surveys for irrigation before joining Ray Isbell and Graham Murtha in Townsville to carry out the Atlas of Australian Soils mapping for Sheet 7 and 10.

In late 1967 I moved to Biloela as a married man where over a 14 year period I carried out a range of soil characterisation and soil fertility studies, some ecological studies on sandalwood with Greg Beeston, and set up the Brigalow Catchment Studies on Brigalow Research Station near Theodore. Noel Dawson lured me to Brisbane in late 1980 to coordinate the development of the soil conservation research group, which subsequently formed the core of the Soil Conservation Research Branch. After a year off to do a graduate diploma in business management, I changed hats from a research scientist-cum-manager to a full time manager and had responsibilities under Kep Coughlan for a wide-ranging program of research into soil physical behaviour to tillage soil moisture and stubble, conservation tillage effects on hydrology and soil erosion and farm scale development of conservation tillage in conjunction with collaborating farmers. It was an exciting few years which culminated in the development of PERFECT expertly developed, validated and reported by Mark Littleboy with Mark Silburn, David Freebairn and cohorts in Toowoomba, central Queensland and north Queensland.

I then rejoined the Land Resources Branch as Director and had a few enjoyable and fruitful years bringing a clear focus back into the land resource assessment activities of the Department, and chasing funds to



support it. In 1992 I took opportunities under restructuring to become a consultant in my own company and have been active in several national programs through to the present.

All in all it has been an exciting time. One thing I have learned is that there are always plenty of challenges and opportunities for us as soil scientists to contribute to improved resource management. I have a passion for seeing the best available information and skills applied to our major resource management issues. I will continue pushing this in my stint as President of the Qld Branch.

ASSSI WEBSITE

Send suggestions for what
you would like to see on the
ASSSI Website to:

Linda Bennison
asssi@gsv.com.au

Life Membership

Presentation Speech by Evan Christen (President of Riverina Branch of Australian Soil Science Society) on occasion of awarding life membership to Ary van der Lely. 30/11/01

As we know Ary is one of the many people from the Netherlands who have come to Australia with expertise in land management. How Ary came to the MIA in the semi arid zone is an interesting question as he did his degree in land and water management for TROPICAL regions at Wageningen.

He came to Griffith in 1969 to join the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission as a research Officer. Initially he worked under Syd Flint and then a long period (1972-81) with Mark Stannard (also a life member).

Initially he worked on issues associated with soil suitability for rice growing, drainage in horticulture, channel seepage. Then he became involved with the MIA Integrated drainage scheme leading to the MIA L&WMP and the Coleambally L&WMP. It can be said that Ary was one of the main architects behind these plans.

Ary pioneered work on the water balance off rice, his graphs off water infiltration into different soil types are much quoted and used

in developing initial soil criteria for rice growing. He pioneered our understanding of watertable behaviour under rice growing.

He used the data from the many piezometers in the area to check watertable rise against rice area and came up with the hydraulic loading concept that restricts rice growing to 30% of the area.

He also undertook much of the work that provided our initial understanding of the groundwater processes in the MIA&CIA.

He has done much work on soil salinity assessment, introducing EM38 to the area, setting up soil salinity monitoring in the region and developing salt balances for the L&WMP's.

He has done much of the working water balances for the L&WMP's and evolved into some economics to assess the benefits of the various options in the plans.

Overall Ary has made a long and varied contribution to land and water management in the area, from improving our fundamental understanding of water movement through soils to policy development.

In light of his services to the Riverina in these areas I am very pleased that he has been awarded life membership of the Australian Society of Soil Science.



Members of the Riverina Branch with Life Member of ASSSI, Ary van der Lely

The Australian Society for Soil Science Inc. (ASSSI)

DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

2002 - 2006

“ASSSI promotes the field of soil science and its important relationship with wise management of the soil resource throughout Australia.”



website: <http://www.asssi.asn.au>

What is ASSSI?

The Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated (ASSSI) was founded in 1955 to work towards the advancement of soil science in the professional, academic and technical fields. It currently comprises a Federal Council and seven Branches (Qld, NSW, Riverina, ACT, Vic, SA and WA). Liability of members is limited.

Federal Council consists of:

Federal Executive: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer

Branch Presidents

Profile Editor

An Executive Officer is employed by ASSSI to be responsible for dealing with membership issues, promotional material and administration of CPSS.

Accreditation for soil scientists is available:
Certified Professional Soil Scientists (CPSS)

What does ASSSI do?

- Promotes soil science to the wider community as essential for natural resource management and production.
- Sets professional standards related to soil science.
- Provides a forum for wide debate of soil science issues.
- Provides opportunities for professional development in soil science.
- Coordinates a national focus on issues related to soil, its use and its management
- Provides leadership opportunities for members, including junior soil scientists
- Provides international links (IUSS) - through participation in international meetings and initiatives related to research on soil, policy development and implementation
- Participates in policy development and debate related to soils in all environments in Australia
- Takes a leadership role in discussion on education and training related to soil
- Holds conferences (joint with NZ, national and local)
- Supports the bid for IUSS Conference in 2010
- Initiates seminars, workshops, field days, field trips
- Disseminates information - books, articles, affiliation with the *Australian Journal of Soil Research*

Enduring Outputs

Nationally recognised accreditation for practicing soil scientists

High profile of soil science in the community

High profile of soil science in environmental decision-making processes

High quality educational opportunities and support for students

Benchmarking with related organizations

Effective communication among members

Effective communication with stakeholders

Effective communication within the community

International links

Affiliation with other related organizations

**Areas of strategic initiatives
related to
6 key ASSSI objectives**

1. *To support initiatives which enhance the profile of soil science in Australia*
 - Accreditation of Soil Scientists (CPSS)
 - Educational materials
 - Public presentations
 - Discussion with key government and industry sectors
2. *To enhance expertise in soil science*
 - Development opportunities for junior soil scientists
 - Seminars, workshops, training, field trips
3. *To recognise excellence in soil science*
 - Medals for excellence
 - Student prizes and travel awards
4. *To provide a forum for discussion*
 - Website, email, newsletter, seminars, conferences, workshops
5. *To increase government and community awareness of soil science*
 - Media updates
 - Workshops
6. *To promote wise management of the soil resource throughout Australia*
 - National media campaign

Australian Standards

Dr Pam Hazelton represents ASSSI on Standards Australia Subcommittee EV/9/1- Sampling of Soils. This subcommittee has most recently been developing guides for sampling and investigation of potentially contaminated soil and determination of metals in aqua regia. This is part of a process for keeping Australian Standards up to date. Detailed information about Standards can be found by visiting the Standards Australia Website at www.standards.com.au

This committee also has representatives from 18 other organizations including CSIRO Land and Water, Australian Government Analytical Laboratories, Australian Institute of Environmental Health and the National Association of Testing Authorities Australia.

Queensland Branch Activities

Old theme is soil science in action

- Refresher training course in soil science.
- Major field days. eg Sunshine Coast mountains to mangroves.
- Seminar on National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.
- Seminar with Universities giving their vision for future soil science courses.
- Ron McDonald Memorial Lecture.
- Branch flyer
- Undergraduate / Postgraduate Awards.
- Science Teachers Assn prizes.
- Sponsorship of attendance at conferences

Proposed Activities:

- Publishing abstracts of theses in newsletter.
- Promoting soil science through display of posters at schools and universities, or on web site.
- Mentor system for post graduate students.
- Overseas exchange post graduate scholarships with USA.
- Sponsorship of Newsletter in the past eg. Incitec, Woodward Clyde.

Victorian Branch Field Trip Soils of the Maribyrnong River Catchment

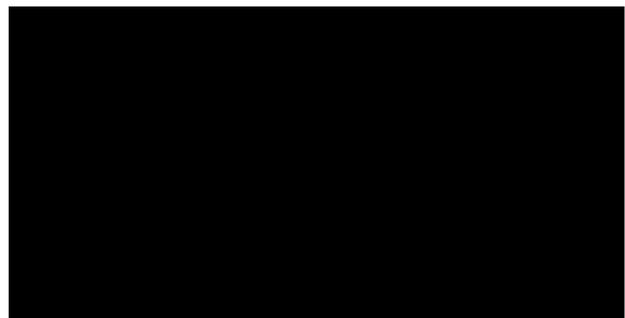
A cold and blustery November morning (a harbinger, had we known it, of Southern Victoria's cool summer to come) saw a group of Victorian soils folk gathered by the roadside in the industrial suburb of Broadmeadows to spend the day looking at soils in the catchment of Melbourne's other river, the Maribyrnong. The day was organized by Nick Uren and Jim Rowan and followed an outline put together by Jim and the late Jeff Jenkin some years ago. A number of sites were visited and a range of soils with variable properties examined. Parent materials were typical of the north west of Melbourne and included both Newer and Older Volcanics, Palaeozoic sediments and Devonian intrusives. Most sites saw spirited discussion of the profiles being examined and the factors that may have contributed to their formation. Another issue raised at a number of sites was the role of deep clay horizons in salt storage and release.

Two sites of particular interest (to this correspondent at least) were a deep soil on granodiorite at Roxburgh Park (a new subdivision in Melbourne's northern suburbs) and a soil derived from Recent Basalt near Clarkefield. At the Roxburgh Park site, the surface soil was a yellow duplex soil with a coarsely structured and dispersive subsoil (see Figure 1). The suggestion was that this was a relatively young profile. At some depth underlying this was evidence of a much more heavily weathered profile with kaolinite and iron oxides in evidence. This profile was also developed on the granodiorite but under a more tropical weathering regime, presumably during the Tertiary. This deep clay was described as being a salt reservoir in this landscape.

At the Clarkefield site the underlying geology is Recent basalt but the soil overlying this has a loamy surface with abundant fine quartz. This site stimulated discussion of the role of alluvial and aeolian processes in determining the combination of minerals that make up a soil at a given site. In this case, the surrounding Palaeozoic sediments were seen as having contributed material to the soil being formed from the weathering basalt. By contrast, a nearby site (Figure 2) had a shallow clay loam also developed on Recent basalt. In this case surface erosion has contributed to the relatively poor profile development. Carbonate lenses in the underlying weathered rock generated some discussion at this site.

As is the want of these trips, the concluding visit was the Cope-Williams Winery at Romsey, where, to the best of my recall, little attention was given to soil. Many thanks to Nick and Jim for the time and effort they put into organizing the trip and to Jim for sharing his considerable experience with us all.

**Centre for Land
Rehabilitaion**
Check our web site for
training courses:
<http://www.clr.uwa.edu.au>





GeoEnvironment 2001

As a post-graduate student you get to work hard but you also get some interesting opportunities. One such opportunity was to attend GeoEnvironment 2001. This was a conference on Environmental Geotechnics, run by the Australian and New Zealand Geotechnical Society. The conference offered me the opportunity to submit a paper to a very different sort of scene, and to attend a conference where I would be well and truly out of my comfort zone. Having had my paper accepted, I was able to obtain a University of Melbourne ILFR scholarship to fund the adventure. The conference was small, with about 150 delegates, so it was easy to meet people and network.

The conference program fell into the following streams: Soil Chemistry and Microbiology; Site Investigation and Modelling; Engineering Solutions for Contaminated Sites; Landfill Design; Managing Environmental Impacts: Toxicology and Risk Assessment, Regulation and Planning.

On the first day I felt a bit like a space cadet, but I soon got into the swing of things. There was plenty on inorganic and organic pollutants, and even some other soil scientists presenting. The papers on engineering solutions to acid sulphate soils were interesting, as was the paper titled Spontaneous combustion in open cut coal mining. I haven't encountered anything quite like this in soil science yet, thank goodness. Interestingly I found I could understand the soil physics, and it was interesting to see how engineers put their twist on properties I had hitherto only known from a soils and plant growth perspective. I enjoyed the mathematical modelling papers on this and other days, the focus being on a smaller scale than in agriculture, and with the models being used to solve very applied environmental problems.

Day two saw me at the Municipal Landfill stream, since my paper Soil design and vegetation

establishment on landfill sites: engineering constraints versus biological opportunities was in this section. Day three was toxicology and risk assessment, an unexplored area, but very interesting. The papers on the remediation of the Union Carbide site at Homebush Bay, Sydney and the Melbourne Albion Explosives Factory were also fascinating. The social and political dimensions of remediation of contaminated sites were themes that also came up in a number of papers, and lead to a lot of debate.

I was made very welcome as a soil scientist and found the conference extremely interesting. The subculture was very different to the soil science one, with case studies given equal status to research. There is quite a lot of over-lap between soil science and geotechnical engineering, and plenty of opportunities for valuable collaboration between our two societies in the future. The papers were reviewed, and the proceedings are very interesting. They will be donated to all Australian Universities in the near future, so look out for them.

Karen Smith, PhD Student,
University of Melbourne

OBITUARIES

***Obituaries for
Ray Isbell and
Lex Parker will be
included in the
next issue of
Profile***



Branch News

Victorian Branch News

Financial Assistance for Post-graduate Students
Each year the Victorian branch commits funds to assist post-graduate members present their work to ASSSI affiliated or endorsed conferences. Information of the scheme is available on the branch web site at

<http://wwwsoils.landfood.unimelb.edu.au/soils/asssi-vic/>.

Applications should be submitted by March 1 and September 1 2002. The amount awarded depends on the number of applicants and the amount of funds available. But don't be shy, send in an application.

Leeper Lecture 2001

Prof. Bob Gilkes of UWA presented this year's memorial Prof. G.W. Leeper Soil Science Lecture. His talk was titled: *Problems of Old Age, Soils on an Ancient Continent*. The lecture was well attended and the title attracted a number of members of the public who saw the lecture advertised and came along.

Bob focused on those Australian soils that occur on our most ancient landscapes. These soils represent the extremes of weathering and pedogenesis, further complicated by diverse climate changes. Many agricultural land management issues faced with these soils, such as salinity, acidity, infertility structural decline and erosion are directly related to the great age and extreme development of the soils.

Over much of our continent soils have not been rejuvenated by glaciation, vulcanicity or tectonics since before Cretaceous times. This has resulted in various symptoms of senility, including depleted nutrients and alkali reserves, inadequate external and internal drainage and massive stored salinity becoming major limitations to plant growth and management. This is in marked contrast to the young landscapes and highly fertile soils of much of Asia, Europe and North America where our agricultural competitors operate.

Many of these old soils are unable to recover easily or spontaneously from our abuse of the land due to inappropriate farming practices. So water salinity, eutrophication and pollution of water bodies, soil acidification, erosion and degradation have become major hazards. Current predictions of the national Land and Water Audit are for continuing losses of a high proportion of our land and water resources.

Bob stressed that we have arrived at this unfortunate situation through our inability to recognize the hard lessons of 5000 years of agricultural history elsewhere in the world. Other civilizations have also occupied sensitive landscapes and through inappropriate management have destroyed the soil resource and consequently their heritage. We are repeating these mistakes and will suffer the same penalties.

The realities of how much damage we have done in a short time frame in Australia were indeed sobering, and managers, politicians and scientists must take the blame for this. Indeed as a profession soil scientists have often taken the easy road, rather than getting involved in the politics and development of policy. In order to move forward in any way Australians must learn from history and recognize the particular sensitivity of many of our soils and water resources, and develop appropriate management practices for our ancient, unforgiving soils. Soil scientists should play a major role in the development of these practices and we must be more vigilant and vocal in ensuring that the Australian community recognizes the need for land managers to provide particular care for our senile soils and sensitive water resources.

Bob reminded us that Leeper was an early and persuasive advocate for rigorous scientific assessment as a basis for appropriate management of land and water. We must follow his advice if we are to ensure our land is to be preserved for the use and pleasure of future generations of Australians.

NSW Branch Report

This year part of the NSW Committee has been based west of the Blue Mountains. The Committee members are - President: Graeme Tupper, Orange; Secretary: Brian Murphy, Cowra; Treasurer: John Crichton, Orange; Western Rep.: John Lawrie, Wellington; Vice-President: Greg Chapman, Parramatta; North Coast Rep.: Joanne Walsh, Uni. Sydney Rep.: Balwant Singh; and South Coast Rep.: Roy Lawrie.

Committee members have made very worthwhile contributions to the running of the Branch. We have

had a number of Committee meetings, by phone, and these have worked quite well.

Four general meetings have been held:

UWS, Richmond: 6/7/01, speaker Lyn Abbott, ASSSI Federal President: *Soil Biological Fertility - What it is and do we use it*

DLWC Parramatta: 2/8/01, speaker Ian Hannan: *International Trends in Soil Conservation Policy*

Uni Sydney: 16/10/01, speaker Raphael Viscarra Rossel: *Development of a Method for Field Measurements of Soil pH*

Macquarie Uni: 4/12/01 AGM, speaker Geoff Humphreys: *The re-emergence of pedology: some new ideas for old problems*

Two excursions were conducted during the year. From all accounts they were both very successful. Their success depended on a number of factors: interesting technical content, good social interaction between participants, members who took responsibility for their organisation, welcoming hosts, and good weather (we were fortunate in this regard). The Golden Grapes Tour took place in May in the Bathurst-Orange districts. The Yerranderie Excursion was in November. A big thank you to all who were involved in these excursions.

For 2002 we are looking for people to organise excursions to other areas. Any ideas/volunteers?

During the year Jon Gray suggested that the NSW Branch could initiate a national soils field excursion guide. His idea is based on the "Field Geology of New South Wales" book published by NSW Department of Mineral Resources, now in its Third Edition. A "Soils" book would make the two publications excellent companion publications. The Federal Council thought that this was a good idea. The Victorian Branch has offered to contribute to it. Now we just need a member who would be willing to coordinate the project.

This year saw the publication of "Describing, Analysing and Managing Our Soil" (**DAMOS**), Invited Lectures for a Workshop held in Sydney 22-26 November 1999, Edited by Stephen Cattle and Brendan George, published by ASSSI NSW Branch and The University of Sydney. It is an excellent publication, which needs to be promoted as widely as possible. It would be great to have enough demand to warrant a Reprint run.

Through the initiative and persistence of Jon Gray, the Federal Council agreed to collaborate, and partially finance, with the NSW Department of

Land & Water Conservation to publish a **Soil Distribution Poster**. On present indications it is likely that a print run of 5000 will be needed to meet the demand.

Save Our Soils (SOS) The Branch agreed to assist with the further development of SOS, including paying for the continuing registration of the SOS Website. A Committee was formed to develop a draft plan for the SOS program. The Federal Council is interested in the possibility of adopting SOS nationally, but the initiative is to come from the NSW Branch.

Cornstalk Media: Unfortunately the Branch's Newsletter has not got off the ground for 2001. This has been primarily due to us not having an Editor. Communications with members have been by e-mail and Australia Post, greatly assisted by NSW Agriculture. For 2002 it is my intention that there will be quarterly issues of Cornstalk Media published.

Federal Council: I have represented the NSW Branch at bi-monthly Federal Council meetings, held as telephone conferences. Issues have included the development of an ASSSI Strategic Planning Process, the CPSS (accreditation) scheme, the Profile Newsletter, and soils conferences.

NSW has supported the proposal for ASSSI to conduct its own accreditation scheme. This will take place for 2002 on trial basis. There will still be an affiliation with the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology.

High priority areas in the ASSSI Strategic Plan will be implemented in 2002.

The Future Soils Conference will take place in Perth in December 2002. I urge you all to work towards participating in it.

The Australia/NZ Soils Conference in 2004 will be the responsibility of our Branch. We need to get moving on this from the beginning of 2002.

We also need to consider nominations for Life Membership well before the 30 September 2002 deadline for nominations.

Profile is due out any day. In 2002 there will be 4 issues, the first due out in January. Rachael Potter from WA is the new Profile Editor.

Linda Bennison, the new Executive Officer for the Society has settled into the job very well.

In closing I would like to thank all NSW Branch members for their loyalty and support during 2002.

Graeme Tupper
President ASSSI NSW Branch



Federal Council Minutes

Australian Society of Soil Science Inc. Minutes of the 201st Federal Council Meeting September 28, 2001 The University of Western Australia

1 Opening:

The meeting opened at 1.30 pm.

2 Attendance:

Lyn Abbott (Hon Federal President), Keith Lindbeck (Hon Federal Treasurer), Richard Harper (Hon Federal Secretary and Victorian proxy), Daniel Murphy (Profile Editor), Rachael Poulter (Riverina Proxy), Katherine Snars (Qld Proxy)
Phone: Graeme Tupper (NSW), Cameron Grant (SA)

3 Apologies:

Linda Bennison (Executive Officer), John Field (ACT), Andrew Rate (WA)

4 Business arising from 200th Federal Council minutes:

Minutes of the meeting of the 200th meeting were approved, without amendment.

5 President's Report

- a) Lyn thanked the NSW Branch for offering to present the 2004 joint ASSSI/NZ conference
- b) A complete set of responses to Strategic Planning Process or Certification documents has not been received.
- c) A discussion had taken place on the Strategic Planning Process in Adelaide recently at the SA Branch AGM. This process will continue with the Qld, Riverina and Victorian Branches. Unfortunately planned travel to these centres has been postponed due to Ansett demise; however, a Powerpoint talk will be presented and discussed by telephone instead.
- d) Points raised by the Executive Officer related to Strategic Plan need to be incorporated.

- e) CPSS: Urgent decision is required so that the scheme will be in place for January 2002. Lyn recommended that the ASSSI decide to run its own scheme in 2002 using existing Secretariat (administration by Executive officer). Some additional details need to be considered based on feedback and this must be done urgently.
- f) Guidelines for existing (now expired) CPSS arrangement with AIAST need to be reviewed, then immediate discussion held with President of AIAST, Ian Longson.

6 Executive Officer's Report

The Executive Officer's report was read.

Issues raised included:

Database: This has been brought up to date with 848 members, 242 of whom are unfinancial. Branches have all been provided with a list of members.

IUSS: The current agreement allows members to pay \$US12 up until 2003 for membership which will provide them with two issues of the handbook annually. 95 members have requested IUSS membership. From 2002, and compulsory from 2003 onwards, all members of ASSSI becoming automatic members of IUSS with a Society membership of \$US5. With our current 606 financial members this is a liability of around \$6000 depending on the exchange rate. With this membership, no journal is provided and members wishing to receive the journal will need to subscribe for \$US25 annually for the two issues. Alternative is for members to access the Newsletter via the IUSS web page to reduce membership fee.

Poster: Factors of Soil Distribution. Suggestion of mailing this out with Profile.

AJSR: Awaiting a reply from CSIRO re the AJSR cost and timing for next year. Proposal that ASSSI offer the journal but, so that non-subscribing members are not subsidizing subscribing members, a small fee is included for administration on to the AJSR fee.

ASSSI Member's Handbook. Linda suggested that a Member's Handbook be created which outlines all Society information and most importantly how the administration operates. Feedback from Members has been that they have no idea when things are happening and what they are supposed to be doing or to get for their different subscriptions. This is especially the case with the CPSS.

2 Secretary's Report

No written report.

3 Treasurer's Report

1.1 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Since the 200th Council Meeting, new accounts have been opened with the National Australia Bank. This was undertaken only because of convenient access to Branches for both the Executive officer and the Treasurer. ASSSI finances are in the process of being transferred from the St George accounts and those subsequently closed.

Balance in Bank 30 June 2001

35,153.56

Deposits

7,021.82

Bank Interest

100.66

TOTAL INCOME

42,276.04

Cheques Drawn

289413 – CSIRO Publishing 3,375.00

289415 – L Bennison 880.00

289416 - A Bass 228.28

289417 – L Bennison 880.00

289418 – ATO – GST Payment 1,221.00

289419 – L Bennison 880.00

289420 - L Bennison 3,546.28

289421 – AIAST 7,232.50

289422 – G Price 18.20

289423 – Justnet Pty Ltd 39.99

289424 – L Bennison 880.00

289425 – National Aust Bank 5,000.00

24,181.25

Govt Charges and Bank Fees 46.60

Merchants Fees (Credit Cards) 503.60

Returned Cheque 79.20

Returned Cheque fee 10.50

TOTAL EXPENSES 24,821.15

BALANCE AS PER BANK STATEMENT

17,454.89

LESS Unpresented Cheques

289426 – L Bennison 880.00

289427 –Star Printing 1,895.74 2,775.74

BOOK BALANCE OF ACCOUNT

There has been no other change in the balance of the St George accounts as audited at the end of December 2000.

Motion agreed by all with one abstention (Harper). Replies from Branches are required by Oct 31 with a special meeting of Federal Council on CPSS (16-November) with this meeting having a wider participation from within the Society.

3.3 Branch incorporation

No progress here.

3.4 Future Soil Conference (Perth, 2002)

Preliminary notices to be circulated in early October. The web-site had been organized, venues booked and support from UWA obtained.

3.5 IUSS Meeting in Thailand (2002)

Booth organized at this conference by Bob Gilkes to support the bid for the 2010 Conference.

3.6 IUSSS Committee for 2010 Conference

Katherine Snars nominated as a student member for committee.

3.7 Joint NZ/Australian Soil Conference (2004)

Motion:

“That the “NZ/Australian Soil Conference be hosted by NSW”

(Moved Grant, seconded Murphy). Passed unanimously.

3.8 Bylaw amendment

Notice that this by-law be amended next meeting.

By-Law 31 (b) states: *“It shall be organised by the Federal Council with the support of the branch which holds Federal Council offices when the conference falls due.”*

Be changed to *“It shall be organised by the Federal Council with the support of a nominated branch.”*

3.9 Non-financial members

EO is dealing with this issue. Will be revisited at the next meeting.

3.10 Collaboration on poster with Dept. Land and Water Conservation (NSW)

Further discussion following on from last meeting. Lyn suggested that the poster be endorsed. Letter from Philip Smethurst (Tas) in support. Question of financial contribution from Branches for this. Graeme Tupper suggested this could be between \$200-400, but will depend on number of copies. Federal Council decided that it would be supportive of up to \$1500.

3.11 Australian Journal of Soil Research

Report on the ASSSI member on the Board (Leigh Sullivan) will be circulated separately.

3.12 Nominations for Prescott, Publication Medal, JK Taylor Medal Committees from Branches

Cameron Grant will take over responsibility for these medals.

3.13 Nominations for Life Membership

None.

4 Other business

None.

5 Close

Meeting closed at 2.40 pm. Next Meetings CPSS Special Meeting November 16, Federal Council 202 November 30.

Australian Society of Soil Science Inc. Minutes of an extraordinary Federal Council Meeting (No. 202) on Accreditation November 16, 2001 The University of Western Australia

1 Opening:

The meeting opened at 1.33 pm. Paterson Room, Faculty of Agriculture, The University of Western Australia

2 Attendance:

Lyn Abbott (Hon Federal President), Keith Lindbeck (Hon Federal Treasurer), Richard Harper (Hon Federal Secretary), Daniel Murphy (Profile Editor), Rachael Poulter (Riverina Proxy), Katherine Snars (Victorian Proxy)
Phone: Graeme Tupper (NSW), Cameron Grant (SA), Adrian Webb (Qld), Linda Bennison (Executive Officer).

3 Apologies:

John Field (ACT), Andrew Rate (WA), Tony Weatherley (VIC)

4 Certification

Lyn discussed background to review of certification. Documents prepared by the Accreditation Review Committee had been circulated.

4.1 Moving forward:

At the previous meeting of Federal Council, the decision had been taken for ASSSI to independently

run an accreditation scheme for practicing soil scientists. However, in light of a recent discussion with Ian Longson (President of AIAST), Lyn suggested that the ASSSI fully administer the CPSS scheme for a trial period to September 30 2002 and that ASSSI becomes affiliated with the AIAST. This would allow ASSSI to use the name CPSS and ensure that an accreditation scheme is maintained into 2002 with no disruptions. All aspects of the scheme would be administered by ASSSI. Ian Longson had suggested that AIAST be paid an affiliation fee (eg \$5 per member of the ASSSI) but it was recommended that this should be per CPSS member as there is no merit in it for all members. Cameron Grant indicated that no monies should be paid during the trial period.

The success of the scheme should be assessed at the end of September 2002 so that any changes could be made in time to be implemented in 2003. It is important to note that the AIAST will retain the option for its members to join CPSS if ASSSI establishes a completely independent accreditation scheme.

Issues to be discussed with AIAST:

1. Insurance for members of CPSS
2. Standards
3. Name

A new agreement would be required for ASSSI to fully administer the CPSS Scheme in affiliation with AIAST. 136 members of ASSSI are currently members of the CPSS scheme (which is a relatively small number). We have been assured by Ian Longson that AIAST is now establishing a new secretariat that will make the creation of an effective accreditation process one of its main objectives. This could be of benefit to ASSSI even though we will fully administer the scheme ourselves. AIAST provides professional indemnity insurance but ASSSI members are not covered unless they are members of AIAST.

1 Other business

1.1 ABN

Keith will circulate advice to Branches that as the Branches are not separate entities, they cannot use individual ABN's, and should use the Society's Federal ABN.

1.2 Terroire

Cameron Grant suggested that a workshop (1-2 days) be held prior to the National Conference in December next year on soils and viticulture. Rob Bramley and Cameron Grant would run this. This was thought to be an excellent idea and would be referred to the Conference Organizing Committee.

2 Close

Meeting closed at 2.40 pm. Next Meeting of Federal Council (No. 202) will be on November 30 2001.

Australian Society of Soil Science Inc. Minutes of Federal Council Meeting 203 November 30, 2001 The University of Western Australia

Opening:

The meeting opened at 1.35 pm. Paterson Room, Faculty of Agriculture, The University of Western Australia

Attendance:

Lyn Abbott (Hon Federal President), Keith Lindbeck (Hon Federal Treasurer), Richard Harper (Hon Federal Secretary), Rachael Poulter (Riverina Proxy, Profile Editor)

Phone: Tony Weatherley (Vic), Graeme Tupper (NSW), Cameron Grant (SA), Adrian Webb (Qld), Linda Bennison (Executive Officer)

Apologies:

John Field (ACT), Andrew Rate (WA)

Business arising from 201st and 202nd

Federal Council minutes:

- a) Minutes of the meeting of the 201st meeting were approved, without amendment.
- b) The extraordinary meeting of November 16, to discuss accreditation, will be the "202nd Federal Council Meeting"
- c) Notice of by-law amendment as notified in minutes of FC 201:
By-Law 31 (b) states: "*It shall be organised by the Federal Council with the support of the branch which holds Federal Council offices when the conference falls due.*"

Be changed to "*It shall be organised by the Federal Council with the support of a nominated branch.*"

Passed unanimously.

(This change was to allow the NSW Branch to run the Joint NZSSS/ASSSI Conference in 2004. Passed unanimously.)

President's Report

Lyn considered that the meeting should resolve issues relating to:

1. Accreditation
2. Fees for 2002-2
3. Strategic initiatives for 2002

Accreditation (CPSS)

Following discussion with Ian Longson, President of AIAST, Lyn suggested that Federal Council consider the following:

- agree to an affiliation with AIAST and continue to use CPSS in 2002 with use of associated Standards (which are jointly owned with AIAST) under revised guidelines
- agree to the CPSS being administered by ASSSI (through the Executive Officer, Linda Bennison)
- agree to use a revised version of the documents circulated by the Accreditation Committee (based on the comments received from Branches over the last month or so)
- agree on a fee for accreditation for 2002
- agree to the contents of a letter to explain the new process to existing and new members of CPSS
- agree to immediate establishment of a program to promote CPSS (in addition to establishment of the necessary formalities to administer the accreditation scheme; committee membership, meeting schedules etc)

These decisions will allow a seamless continuation of accreditation for existing CPSS members and provide the opportunity for new members to join CPSS immediately.

Additional points that needed consideration were:

- the AIAST will require agreement that it continues to own CPSS (AIAST already owns CPSS).
- A committee of members of ASSSI with one (or two) members of AIAST would be formed to oversee the accreditation process (perhaps meeting once per year). ASSSI would have dominant responsibility.
- ASSSI would report back to the AIAST on progress with the administration of CPSS. [It is the intention of AIAST to provide an open process of administration of CPAg (and others under negotiation). This will be separated from other AIAST activities and become completely transparent and accountable. This is a major change in arrangements.]

- The AIAST is about to appoint an officer who will have three responsibilities and one will be to make sure the AIAST Affiliated Accreditation Schemes function effectively. I believe that this is a serious intention and that the infra-structure to support the program will be available.
- AIAST will not administer the CPSS scheme or receive the fees (apart from any affiliation fees - to be negotiated based on number of members of CPSS).
- AIAST will immediately initiate discussions with the underwriters of their professional indemnity (PI) to negotiate a PI arrangement for members of CPSS (so that members do not have to join AIAST to obtain insurance).
- AIAST will require access to CPSS by members of AIAST who might qualify for CPSS but who are not members of ASSSI. Applications would be processed as for applications by members of ASSSI and not by AIAST.

Strategic Initiatives for 2002

Lyn suggested that the strategic planning process had been in place for sufficient time for some important decisions to be made now. Other decisions can be considered subsequently.

1. That ASSSI Federal Executive becomes a National rather than a Branch-based rotating Executive. That elections are held for positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. This to be effective from 2003.
2. That Branch Presidents (or a nominee from their own Branch) participate directly in Telephone Conference Calls for Federal Council Meetings thereby removing the Proxy system.
3. That Profile becomes an electronic newsletter (available on the website) and that members who require paper copies pay the full cost of production and postage in addition to the annual ASSSI subscription fee.
4. That the funds that become available from the conversion to the electronic version of profile be used to fund competitive strategic initiatives across Australia. The intention would be that members or Branches apply for funding to support strategic initiatives that would allow the aims of ASSSI to be achieved. This would be additional to normal functions held by ASSSI (eg the National Conference) and at Branch level. The types of projects supported would depend on decisions about the strategic directions for the next year(s).

5. That the key strategic directions be identified based on discussions to date (to be reviewed regularly).
6. That the draft strategic planning document be converted to a working document immediately, so that all members have guidance on how they could best work towards achieving the objectives of ASSSI (some funding available to support key initiatives).

ASSSI has run at a loss for many years. The suggestions above would eliminate this loss and provide a resource that can be used to take new initiatives that is essential if we are to achieve our objectives.

Executive Officer's Report

An information kit has been forwarded to the Federal Executive for comment along with documents related to CPSS and budget.

A draft 2002 subscription renewal notice form was circulated for comment by all committee members and branch proxies. The major changes being

- Standard fee for ASSSI membership as discussed at the last meeting
- Paper edition of Profile at a cost and listed similar to CPSS, AJSR and IUS as optional extras.
- CPSS student accreditation at \$100. CPSS restricted to Ordinary and Student membership.
- IUSS has been included as optional for 2002.

Membership statistics are:

	Financial	Unfinancial
ASSSI	656	188
AJSR	64	
CPSS	136	
IUS	103	

Linda had discussed with Derek Yates (ASSSI web-master) the possibility of Derek providing a link to the Grassland Society of Victoria Inc web site which she maintains. This would allow direct updates of the ASSSI and CPSS membership.

Secretary's Report

Federal Council members were again asked to prepare their reports in a format suitable for inclusion in Profile. Similarly, they were asked to circulate all reports to all other members of Federal Council by email. Discussion suggested that all attachments be in Rich Text Format (.RTF).

Treasurer's Report

No Change since FC 202.

St George fixed deposit - \$49,744 renewed until July 1, 2002.

General account with St George is being closed.

Keith will contact the Branch Treasurers re the GST.

Profile Editor's Report

Dr Daniel Murphy has resigned as Profile Editor. Federal Council unanimously thanked him for his efforts. Rachael Poulter has volunteered to take on the position and is seeking contributions from members.

Branch President's Reports

Reports were received from SA, Victoria and NSW and circulated separately. Edited versions will appear in Profile.

General Business Profile

An extra-charge for hardcopies of Profile was discussed. This was to encourage use of electronic copies, which would be available of the web-site. The money saved will be used for new initiatives. It was considered that electronic distribution was effective as mail, however some members may not have access to these.

Moved Lindbeck, seconded Grant:

"From 2002, on a trial basis for one year, that those members that want a paper copy of Profile will be charged an additional \$11 a year, with the exception of retired members who will still get a free paper copy".

Passed by majority (Harper opposed), following lengthy discussion. A contrary theme (Qld) was that the newsletter was a major service of the Society; if funds were not enough to cover this, fees should be increased.

Accreditation

The President's suggestions for affiliation are outlined in her report, and these were agreed in principle. These decisions also follow those made at FC 202.

There was considerable discussion on the charges for the scheme and whether it was adequate and would be cross-subsidised by those ASSSI members who were not interested in accreditation. NSW suggested that the costs of the scheme should be transparent. Similarly, there was discussion about whether the scheme be run on a break-even basis (NSW) or used to generate funds for other initiatives (Lindbeck).

Motion: moved Tupper, seconded Lindbeck:

"That the fees for CPSS shall be based on the principle of cost-recovery with respect to all administration and promotion of the scheme, and shall be reviewed periodically".

Passed unanimously.

Motion: Moved Grant, seconded Tupper
"That the full-fee for CPSS accreditation be set at \$200 p.a. for the year 2002".

Passed unanimously.

Fees for 2002:

A fee structure was suggested by the Executive Officer.

Motion Moved Lindbeck, seconded Poulter
"That the fees for 2002 be set as suggested by the EO, with branch fees of \$11 (subject to confirmation by Branches), CPSS at \$200, no student accreditation, and a free Profile for retired members".

Passed unanimously.

ASSSI Strategic Planning Process

The President will develop comments on Strategic plan and circulate to FC.

There was some discussion re the direct election of a President and Office bearers from 2003, rather than circulating this through Branches. This centred on whether this would require a change in the Constitution, and ratification at a meeting of members, or merely changes in by-laws that could be decided by Federal Council. The President noted that the rotation of the major office bearers through the Branches was not in the Constitution.

Tony Weatherley suggested that this issue hadn't been discussed at the Victorian Branch meeting and was unwilling to move forward. Need for discussion in Profile re benefits of this move, with view to having a general vote in mid-2002. Adrian Webb concurred that the processes needed wider consultation across the membership, such as half-day workshops for each Branch.

Other business

None.

Close

Meeting closed at 3.40 pm.

Next Meeting

Federal Council 204 January 25, 1.30 pm, WST.



Conferences

22-24 Apr 2002

**Understanding Soils,
Soil Data & Land
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29 April - 1 May 2002

**Clay Mineral Society
Canberra**

14-21 Aug 2002

**17th World Congress of
Soil Science
Confronting New
Realities in the 21st
Century Bangkok
Thailand**
www.17wcss.ku.ac.th

25-30 Aug 2002

**5th International Acid
Sulfate Soils Conf.**
Tweed Heads, NSW
www.out.at/acidsoil

2-6 Dec 2002

**National Soils
Conference Australia
Soc. Soil Sci INC.
Future Soils**
www.agric.uwa.edu.au/
soils/futuress/index.html

Jan 2003

**Soil Science Society
South Africa - 50th
Anniversary Congress**
www.soils.org.za

July 2003

**International Soil Tillage
Research Organisation,
Queensland**
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Fax (07) 5460 1367
j.tullberg@mailbox.uq.edu.a

Please send
information for the
next issue of **Profile** by
15th March 2002

**INTERNATIONAL
UNION OF SOIL
SCIENCE**

**THAILAND MEETING
AUGUST 2002**

If you are attending the IUSS meeting in Thailand, please send us the title of your talk or poster so that we can include a list in the next Profile.

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www.publish.csiro.au/journal/ajsr/index.html

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