



**ISSUE 140
JANUARY 2005**

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**Australian Society of Soil Science
Inc.**

**ARBN 080 783 106
ABN 96 080 783 106
www.asssi.asn.au**

The 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 six branches (Qld, NSW, Riverina, 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

Profile

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF SOIL SCIENCE Inc

Aggregation of Soil Scientists

Flocculates at SuperSoils 2004...

Over 370 delegates attended SuperSoils 2004, the 3rd Australian and New Zealand Soil Science Societies joint conference in Sydney from 5-9 December. Along with delegates from Australia and New Zealand, others hailed from Austria, Canada, Germany, India, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, the UK and USA.

Keynote speakers included Professor Donald Sparks, current president of the IUSS, Professor Johan Bouma recently Director of Research of the Environmental Resources Unit of Wageningen University and Dr Brent Clothier, the leader of the Environmental Sector of HortResearch in New Zealand and chair of the editorial advisory committee of the Australian Journal of Soil Research.

Apart from plenary sessions, the conference was structured into 16 symposia and over 180 oral papers were presented in up to 6 concurrent sessions. These were complemented by nearly 100 poster papers. Mid-conference tours visited the Hunter Valley (with stops at soil pits in vineyards and a little wine tasting), the Camden district (focusing on research facilities, both historical and current), Western Sydney (examining urban soil issues) and suburban Sydney (visiting soils and archaeological sites on the harbour and at Parramatta).



ABOVE: Some of the 370 SuperSoils delegates attend the conference welcome ceremony in the historic Quadrangle at the University of Sydney.

The

social schedule for the week was busy, with an opening ceremony and

- 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 renewal enquiries contact the ASSSI executive officer, Linda Bennison at asssi@bigpond.net.au.

phone (03) 5622 0804 or fax (03) 5622 0806.

Profile Deadlines 2005

1 Mar, 1 Jun, 1 Sep, 1 Dec

Advertising

Advertising relevant to some aspect of soil science is welcome. Banner (20cm x 4cm) and box (20cm x 12cm) advertisements which are hyperlinked to a website cost \$110 and \$220 (incl GST) per issue, respectively. Information about ASSSI conferences, courses, scholarships etc is published free. Click [here](#) for more information.

Contributions

All contributions are welcome and can be sent to the editor at jrwhite@bigpond.net.au, PO Box 936 Biloela Q 4715 phone (07) 4992 6041 or fax (07) 4992 6043.

Federal Council Meetings 2005

4 Feb, 6 May, 8 Jul, 2 Sep, 4 Nov



ABOVE: (L- R) Drs Balwant Singh (NSW), Enver Murad (Germany) and Leigh Sullivan (NSW) prepare to board the Harbour cruise .

Other conference stories:

- ▶ [Keynote presentations urge integration of hard and soft sciences](#)
- ▶ [Venue for 2006 Australian Soils Conference announced](#)
- ▶ [Best oral and poster presentations](#)

welcome reception held at the University on the Sunday evening, a BBQ dinner on Monday night and a Dinner Cruise on Sydney Harbour on Thursday night. The cruise featured conference award presentations, guest speaker Kerry O'Keefe (Irrikin ABC cricket commentator) and terrific views of the city. Apparently after the cruise, some nameless (but well known) ASSSI members decided to celebrate the end of the conference by visiting some of Sydney's night spots to practice their dance moves. Unfortunately little photographic evidence is available to support this claim.

Copies of the conference proceedings are available to purchase on CD for \$30 (including GST, postage and handling) by contacting the [ASSSI office](#), or papers can be accessed free of charge on the website of [The Regional Institute](#).

... and so it was with the addition of abundant red wine and salt water (sourced from the Sydney Harbour - EC, 51 000 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) at the Conference Dinner on Thursday evening the aggregation dispersed!

New Federal Council for ASSSI 2005-06

The ASSSI AGM held during the Supersoils conference saw the handover to a new Federal Council, all of whom were elected to positions unopposed. The new council consists of president, Neal Menzies (Qld), vice-president Stephen Cattle (NSW), secretary Steven Raine (Qld), and treasurer Cameron Gourley (Vic). This new executive will be joined in the Federal Council by Branch Presidents Jock Churchman (SA), Andrew Harley (WA), Richard MacEwan (Vic), Balwant Singh (NSW), Robin

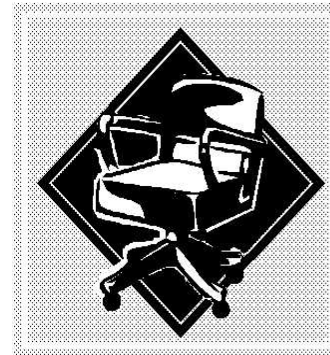


ABOVE (L- R): New Federal President, Neal Menzies (Qld) and Vice- President, Stephen Cattle (NSW).

Thwaites (Qld) and Mark Conyers (Riverina), and executive officer Linda Bennison. Jonnie White (Qld), was appointed as Profile editor, taking over from Lyn Abbot (WA).

**SUBSCRIPTION
NOTICES IN
THE MAIL**

**ASSSI
subscription
notices have been
posted in**



From the presi

The SuperSoils 2004 conference was a great success, and I congratulate Graeme Tupper and the many members of the conference organizing committee for a job well done. Indeed, this was one of the better conferences I have attended. The science was the high quality we have come to expect at our national conferences and it was a great opportunity to catch-up with soil scientists from around Australia, New Zealand, and much further afield. However, what set this meeting apart was the much higher prominence given to role of soil scientists, and to our interaction with other disciplines and the broader community. The excellent plenary presentations made by Donald Sparks, Johan Bouma, Bob Gilkes, Brent Clothier, Stuart Hill and Rebecca Lines-Kelly evoked considerable discussion, and by the conclusion of the conference there was a general consensus that soil scientists and ASSSI should be more outward looking.

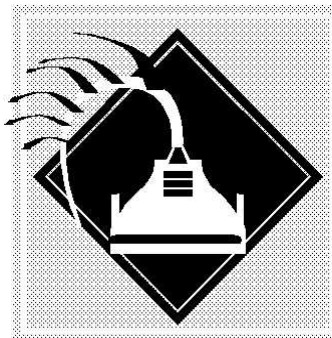
This is not a new theme, in 2000, Graham Price in his Profile President's editorial wrote "There is scope for those who feel deeply about the land and the heritage of soil science in this country, to enter into debate on the issues of soil management and soil processes, and to educate those farmers who want to understand the chemical, physical and biological processes in soils and how to apply that knowledge" (Profile 124, October 2000). The change that has taken place over the intervening four years is that we now perceive our target audience to be much broader than the farming community, and the commitment to engage others in debate about soils is more generally held by ASSSI members.

The Supersoils conference marked the end of the 2003-2004 Federal Council's term. As President, Cameron Grant's boisterous enthusiasm made this first "National" (rather than Branch based) executive a great success. Annie McNeil (Secretary), Keith Lindbeck (Treasurer) and Lyn Abbott (Newsletter editor) leave Federal Council, and I wish to extend my sincere thanks to them for their substantial input to ASSSI. The new Federal Council office bearers are Steve Cattle (Vice-president), Steve Raine (Secretary), and Cameron Gourley (Treasurer). With their help, and that of Jonnie White (Profile Editor), Linda Bennison (Executive Officer) and that of the Branch Presidents, I will do my best to maintain the momentum that recent Federal Councils have built up.

Finally, with your subscription notice, you will receive a draft of the new *Rules of the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc.* and a letter from Cameron Grant as Chair of the Constitution Review Committee explaining the need for these new Rules. Like Cameron, I encourage you to endorse this change.

Kind regards,

Neal Menzies



From the editor's desk

Your ASSSI Federal Newsletter, Profile, has a recycled editor and a new format! After a 4 year break I couldn't help myself and have once again put up my hand to co-ordinate the production of Profile. I look forward to the wonderful support and contribution from members that I enjoyed during my last stint in this role and can't wait to catch up with old friends and new members from the society.

As you have probably already noticed, Profile is now being delivered in HTML format, rather than as a PDF file. If you or a colleague are having difficulty viewing Profile, make sure that you are connected to the web when you open the delivered file, or alternatively view Profile at the [ASSSI website](#). The new format allows us to produce Profile in a way that is more conducive to its electronic distribution - the file size is smaller and the layout is better for reading on screen. Plus we can include hyperlinks to help you get to the stories of interest, or to link to further information and the websites of advertisers. I hope the change in format occurs smoothly - but chances are it won't. If you have difficulties with the viewing or formatting of this issue please [contact me](#) so we can iron out any problems prior to the March issue. Until then,

Jonnie White

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Keynote presentations urge integration of hard and soft sciences

A common theme united many of the keynote presentations at the recent SuperSoils conference - that there should be a closer integration of 'hard' and 'soft' sciences in order to improve the management of the soil resource.

This was most memorably demonstrated by Professor Johan Bouma who, during his presentation, combined a moist, soft bolus of Narrabri Vertosol with a hard, dry clod of the same soil to sculpt a 'flower' (see picture). Prof Bouma and the audience took great pleasure in his proceeding with the rest of his talk, muddy hands intact!

Prof Bouma went on to argue that soil is perceived differently by soil scientists (the 'true' soil), than by the public at large (the 'real' soil) and that both should influence society's legislation and unwritten rules about soil management (the 'right' soil). He suggested that soil scientists need to feed their traditional research more effectively into multidisciplinary teams which characterise the way soil is experienced by a wide variety of users, and which in turn will become the basis of public policy.

This presentation seemed to go some way to answering the question posed by another keynote speaker, Professor Bob Gilkes, who asked "Why, after more than a century of Australian research, do we still mismanage our soil and water?". Prof Gilkes highlighted with several case studies, that despite 100 years of ground-breaking, globally respected soils research, we have been incapable of halting widespread land degradation.



ABOVE: Professor Johan Bouma demonstrates the results when hard and soft sciences combine during his plenary presentation.



ABOVE: Over 350 delegates enjoyed keynote presentations in the auditorium at SuperSoils 2004.

Rebecca fascinated the audience with insights into how soil plays a part in language, culture, religion, the rise and fall of civilisations and even in the human diet! She lamented the fact that in urbanised Western Culture we have become disconnected from soil and provided suggestions as to how soil scientists can help get themselves and society reconnected.

All the keynote presentations at the conference were provocative and stimulating, which are welcome traits in plenary sessions. Since there was little time for debate during the plenary sessions at the conference it would be good to see some discussion of the points raised in the plenary papers in future issues of Profile.

One consequence of the disconnect between traditional research outputs and the community and policy makers is the constant pressure soils researchers are under to secure funding and justify their existence. An example of such a crisis for soils research in New Zealand was described by Brent Clothier in his keynote presentation. Dr Clothier outlined the severe budget cuts that affected many of the key research organizations in that country in 2003 and described it as the "nadir of soil science research in NZ". However, a public response from the NZSSS which generated community and political reaction has seen the opportunity for a "renaissance" for soils research in NZ. Details of how funding and research relationships have been restructured in NZ will be highlighted in a future issue of Profile.

A total re-think of accepted practices was also the theme for the presentation by Professor Stuart Hill who argued that trying to improve the sustainability of systematically unsustainable systems had achieved little. He advocated a re-design of agricultural systems and a resistance of the temptations of "denial, postponement and tinkering with existing systems".

To finish, the conference delegates were taken on an odyssey exploring the relationship between humans and soils by Rebecca Lines-Kelly.

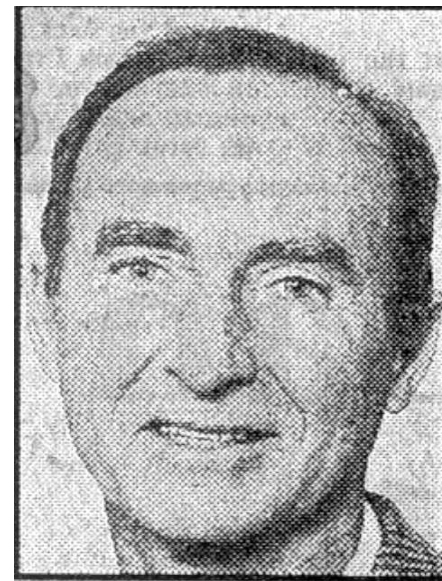
Life Membership Awarded to Dr Pat Walker

Long-time ASSSI member and former Prescott medallist (1988), Dr Pat Walker, was recently awarded Honorary Life Membership in recognition of his lifetime of eminent service to soil science and to the society.

The early days of Pat's career were spent as a Soil Surveyor with the NSW Department of Agriculture. His soil maps included the very important 'Soil Associations of the County of Cumberland' map in 1958, which covered much of the area of Greater Sydney. It has proved a valuable resource for planners, developers and advisors over the years. Pat was actually investigating river terrace soils and the chronology of soil development as far back as the 1950's with work on such rivers as the Nepean.

Most of Pat's career with CSIRO involved important fundamental research in the areas of pedogenesis, soil chronology and landscape processes. He established a chronological framework for soil development in the late Quaternary period in Australia. His work highlighted the antiquity of Australian Soils and the consequent need for special efforts in their conservation. He has made significant contributions to the understanding of erosion, transportation and redeposition of soil materials by water and the soil-stratigraphical consequences of these processes. In addition, his work has provided an understanding of the transportation of aeolian dusts and their significance in soil formation, and helped to develop a sound understanding of the meaning of soil particle-size distributions.

Pat rose to the level of Assistant Chief of the CSIRO Division of Soils and was Officer in Charge of the Division of Soils Laboratories in Canberra, before retiring from CSIRO. On retiring from CSIRO, Pat's contributions to Soil Science did not end. He immediately accepted a position as Professor of Soil Science with the University of Canberra, where he set up an advanced level course in pedology. Professor Graham Taylor of the University of Canberra made the following remarks about Pat's contribution to the University and the next generation of soil scientists: "Pat Walker joined the University of Canberra as a Professor of Soil Science. Although the University had a course in Soils running Pat's arrival gave new energy to the teaching of soils. Pat was responsible for building a new advanced-level Pedology course at the University which went a long way to encouraging students to continue further study of soils via research. Pat was, as all who know him will know, a masterful teacher who instantly gained the respect and admiration of his students. Pat also supervised a number of research students at UC, all of whom are practising in the field. I'm sure Pat's infectious enthusiasm for his subject has rubbed off on all those students, undergraduate and research, who had contact with him over his years at UC".



ABOVE: Dr Pat Walker has been awarded Honorary Life Membership of ASSSI.

Throughout his career Pat Walker has also been an enthusiastic and active member of the Australian Soil Science Society. Indeed he has held positions of office for the society including NSW Branch President, and ASSSI representative on the Australian Geoscience Council in the late 1980s where he acted as Public Officer and Treasurer.

Over the course of his career, Dr Walker has published over 70 scientific papers, chapters for books, etc and was awarded a Doctorate in Agricultural Science in 1986 by the University of Sydney for his outstanding research.

The members of the ASSSI wish to congratulate Pat on receiving Honorary Life Membership of the Society.

ASSSI 50th Anniversary Plans

This year sees the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc turn 50 and we are hoping that the members will make it a festive year to remember as befitting such an anniversary.

At the recent Federal Council Strategic Planning meeting held after the enjoyable SuperSoils 2004 conference in Sydney, it fell to me to take on the co-ordination of the 50th Anniversary activities. The following are just some of the ideas that have been mooted by the Branches and are being considered by Federal Council for support and further development. This is by no means a final list and we encourage anyone to suggest events or activities that can suitably mark the occasion. I am hopeful that all the members take an active part in these festivities and contribute to make a memorable year for the Society.

- A 50th Anniversary Committee has been formed with Robin Thwaites (Chair), Cam Grant, Richard MacEwan assisting. State representatives are yet to be nominated, although Robin Bruce has already volunteered to do the honours for the Qld Branch.
- Our immediate past President Cam Grant has already started collating brief biographies of all the Society's Honorary Life Members with photos to be mounted on the Society website. Cam is also planning the coordination of interviewing (and videotaping) all 23 of the Hon. Life Members through the relevant Branches and Branch volunteers. The intention is to produce the collective memories and experiences and anecdotes of our esteemed veteran soil scientists for posterity as a collage of the early and most influential years of soil science in Australia.
- Every State is to be encouraged to elect and adopt a State Soil. This follows the successful launch of the NSW State Soil (the Red Chromosol, in case you were unaware) and to use it as a basis for raising the awareness of soil throughout the States' communities. There are plenty of Orders (and suborders) to choose from!
- An ASSSI postage stamp series has been suggested as is currently being followed up with Australia Post
- NSW Branch have seriously suggested a TV Series along the lines of 'The Secret Life of Soils'. There is a genuine potential for achieving at least a single program if not a series of three or so. We are on the lookout for any budding soily David Attenboroughs out there. Perhaps there is a chance of a follow up series: 'The Secret Life of Soil Scientists' that could be considered.
- This is an opportunity to create a central archive of official ASSSI documents, including Federal Council Minutes and lists of office bearers. It is also suggested that there be a central archive for copies of all such paraphernalia from the Branches – again for posterity and as an historical resource. A call will go out to everyone for any and all archival material that can be accessed.
- Federal Council will announce an ASSSI new logo competition soon and there is support for a national soil photo competition (not a soil *profile* photo competition, I hope). An essay competition for Schools is also a possibility. Prizes on offer will not be insubstantial as befitting anniversary events.
- The Queensland Branch will be holding a 50th Anniversary Celebrity Lecture and Social event in the middle of the year. Perhaps other Branches would like to consider doing the same.
- A 50th Anniversary wine with State Soil labels is a popular suggestion and will be assiduously followed up very soon, especially as Vintage is just around the corner. It has been suggested that Queensland not follow this up with a local vineyard but gracefully allow WA, NSW, SA or Victoria to work on that one!

Whatever unfolds, I believe it will be a truly memorable Society year and I hope you will all involve yourselves as far as possible and make it a truly enjoyable one too.

Robin Thwaites

ASSSI Awards Conferred at SuperSoils

Several ASSSI awards were conferred during the SuperSoils conference in December 2004, including the Prescott medal, the Publication medal, the C.G. Stephens award as well as conference presentation awards for both oral and poster papers.

The **J.A. Prescott medal** is awarded annually for an outstanding contribution to soil science. In 2004 it was awarded to Prof. Alex McBratney in recognition of his achievements in using digital technologies to describe the spatial variability of soils and to predict landscape features.

The **ASSSI Publication medal** is an annual award presented to a soil scientist under the age of 35 for a publication on any subject in soil research. The award is made on the basis of scientific merit, relevance to soil science and effectiveness in communicating the paper's content to the reader. The award is normally for work carried out in Australia. In 2004 it was awarded to Dr Ron Smernik for the paper Smernik RJ, Oliver IW, Merrington G (2003). Advanced solid-state carbon-13 nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopic studies of sewage sludge organic matter: detection of organic "domains". J. Environmental Quality, 32, 1523-1533.

The **C.G. Stephens award** is a new annual national award for a PhD in soil science granted by an Australian University. The recipient of the 2003 award (for a thesis awarded in 2002) was announced at the conference with the awards committee currently deliberating on the 2004 award (it takes a long time to read a thesis!). The 2003 recipient was Dr Jonnie White for her thesis entitled 'Potassium distribution in Ferrosols and its influence on rain-fed crop production in the South Burnett region of Queensland' awarded by the University of Queensland.

Nominations for these three awards for 2005 are due by the 31st March. Please refer to the ASSSI constitution available on the [website](#) for details on how nominations should be prepared.

Conference Presentation Awards

Conference presentation awards were made for the most outstanding oral and poster papers to Leigh Sullivan for his oral paper entitled 'Sulfidic soils associated with salinity in the Murray-Darling Basin' and to Troy Baisden for a poster paper entitled 'High riverine transport of particulate organic carbon in New Zealand: potential significance of soil erosion to carbon accounting'. Awards for the best oral and poster papers submitted where the senior author is under 35 years old were presented to Alice Melland for her oral presentation 'Developing a farm nutrient loss index for grazed pastures in Australia' and to Shahriar Iqbal for the poster paper entitled 'Temporal changes in soil P pools after addition of crop residues'.

In addition, awards were presented for the best oral presentations and poster papers within each of the 16 symposia. These were presented to:



ABOVE: The ASSSI Publication Medal for 2003 was awarded to Dr Ron Smernik.

Symposia Topics	Oral	Poster
Symposium 1: Acid sulfate soil	Leigh Sullivan	R.M Poch
Symposium 2: Communicating and utilising soil information	Richard MacEwan	Inakwu O.A. Odeh
Symposium 3: Contaminant bioavailability and terrestrial ecotoxicology	Anthony Kachenko	Mark Tibbett

Symposium 4: Emerging soil analytical techniques in the laboratory and the field	Timothy Payne	Kamrunnahar Islam
Symposium 5: GIS, remote sensing and digital soil mapping	Faron Mengler	Budiman Minasny
Symposium 6: Management of soil salinity	Kylie Dodd	Harnam Gill
Symposium 7: Managing disposal of waste and wastewater on land: opportunities and challenges	Jacqui Horswell	D. Scott Fraser
Symposium 8: Pedotransfer functions and soil inference systems	Amy Hearman	Trevor H. Webb
Symposium 9: Soil and farming systems	Alice Melland	Donna Giltrap
Symposium 10: Soil and climate change	Charles Rice	W. Troy Baisden
Symposium 11: Soil formation and landscape processes	Ben Harrington	Budiman Minasny
Symposium 12: Soil health, quality and function	Melanie Whitelaw - Weckert	Tony Pattison
Symposium 13: Soil management under high nutrient regimes	Sevag Bedrossian	Rogério Cichota
Symposium 14: Soil aggregation and structural quality	Dougal Currie	Christopher Vanags
Symposium 15: Water and solute transport in soil	Ralph Meissner	Esther Bloem
Symposium 16: Water quality and soil management	David Houlbrooke	David Nash

Copies of the conference proceedings are available to purchase on CD for \$30 (including GST, postage and handling) by contacting the [ASSSI office](#), or papers can be accessed free of charge on the website of [The Regional Institute](#).

****IMPORTANT****

Updating the ASSSI Constitution

Federal Council seeks your support in introducing new *Rules of the Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated*. These will replace the old ASSSI Constitution, which has gradually become outdated since its introduction in 1955. We notified the membership at the AGM in Sydney last December that Federal Council would prepare new Rules and send them to you with your 2005 membership renewal notification. You will be asked to indicate on your Subscription Renewal Notice whether you support the adoption of the new Rules.

The basic items from the old Constitution were transferred directly into the new Rules, with minor modifications to satisfy the Incorporations Act. These do not effect Branch Bylaws so long as the Bylaws do not contradict the new Rules (highly unlikely). The new *Rules* differ from the old Constitution in several ways, including:

- Classes & Requirements for Membership (We are exploring a new category of Associate Member to engender closer ties with other societies of soil science in the Asia-Pacific region. We are also trying to broaden the membership to include people who are interested in soil science and are interested in the environment – this is in response to the rapid growth of environmental associations in Australia,

which exert increasing authority over land management decisions, but are often uninformed about soil science. ASSSI has a significant role to play here).

- Governance (We are providing clearer guidelines on how Federal Council should operate, particularly in relation to the powers of the Executive Officer).
- Finances (In accordance with the model Rules provided by the Incorporations Act, we are required to provide access to ASSSI's financial records upon request at the Federal Office; this ensures accountability at all times).
- Miscellaneous (We have introduced new Awards for our members, and the Rules for these need to be published).

The 'Objects' from the old Constitution have been deleted from the new Rules in line with the Model Rules. The Objects will be published as a separate "Statement of Purpose" on the web site to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Society this year.

A copy of the draft new Rules is available on the ASSSI [website](#) and will also be sent out with subscription renewal notices.

Is It Also Time to Refresh the Logo?

Members of the incoming and outgoing Federal Councils held a strategic planning meeting after the SuperSoils conference in December. It was suggested that as a complement to the updated constitution and 50th Anniversary activities, perhaps the society should look at updating its logo. The ASSSI logo we use at present has a very obscure history and is rarely presented consistently. At times it appears in different colours, with or without the distinct 'horizons', sometimes with a horizontal gradation of colour and occasionally with a diagonal gradation of colour. In fact, it has been suggested that the origin of the 'horizons' is an artefact of someone's printer being unable to print a clear gradation!

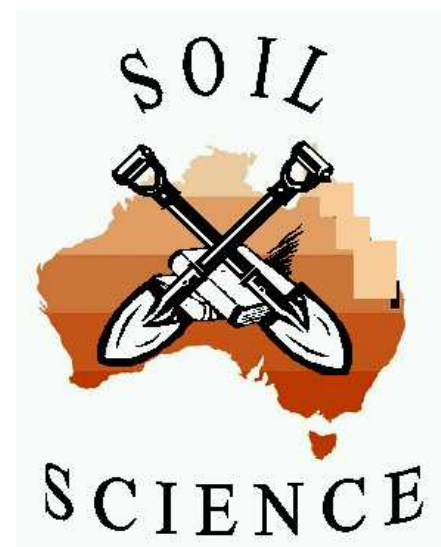
Having said this, some members are very comfortable with the logo as it stands. Of course, constantly changing a logo defeats the entire purpose of having one which is to give a body an immediately recognisable symbol. For all these reasons, Federal Council is hoping to begin some debate amongst members about the ASSSI logo design. To start the ball rolling, the meeting came up with a potential design (right) which is based on the current logo and other elements which have been used on ASSSI medals.

The Federal Council looks forward to comments, criticisms or alternative designs coming forward from members in the next few months.

Notes on Suggested Logo Design

Above is a rough draft to show the concept logo discussed at the strategic planning meeting 10/12/2004. The publication medal (which is the original design) has an auger and spade but I couldn't locate an auger thus two spades are shown. Ideal design would replace a spade with an auger.

Text layout and shape can all be improved professionally. Weird QLD coast line is the result of blocking out the ASSSI acronym text, again easily fixed by a professional.



ABOVE: One suggestion provided for updating the ASSSI logo.



Branch news

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Students Sponsored

The South Australian Branch sponsored two students to attend the SuperSoils 2004 conference, both of whom presented oral papers. Warwick Dougherty presented a paper entitled 'Rainfall simulation underestimates runoff phosphorus concentrations from dairy pastures', while Therese McBeath's paper was on the 'Influence of soil type and characteristics on wheat response to fluid and granular phosphorus fertilisers'.

QUEENSLAND

Queenslanders at SuperSoils 2004

The Queensland Branch was well represented at SuperSoils 2004 with several dozen members attending.

The branch also sponsored several students to attend, all of whom presented oral papers. Gillian Kopitke, Cara Beal, Peter Kopitke, Jessie Horton and Anna Sheldon, all from the University of Queensland's St Lucia or Gatton campuses, received sponsorship.

VICTORIA

Leeper Lecturer draws a crowd

The Victorian branch of ASSSI, in conjunction with the Institute of Land and Food Resources at Melbourne University, hosted their annual Leeper Lecture on Friday, 26 November. This year's lecturer was Prof. Johan Bouma. Prof. Bouma spoke about "Learning from the past when facing the future of soil science".

This year's Leeper Lecture was introduced by Dr Stuart Boucher, a research fellow at Monash University, who described how Leeper had influenced his early research on tunnel erosion. Dr Boucher remembered Prof. Geoffrey Leeper's "ferocious reputation" but found him to be generous, friendly and precise.

About 50 people attended the Leeper Lecture, including undergraduate and postgraduate students, researchers from the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, Melbourne University staff, private consultants and "retired" fellows.

Prof. Bouma gave an interesting, challenging and optimistic talk about the future of science, particularly soil science, in today's western society. He spoke about how the "1st wave" of science was supply driven and the second wave was demand driven. We are now in the third wave, where



ABOVE: Queensland Branch members present at SuperSoils 2004

we are reacting to the modern network society—and Prof. Bouma thinks that scientists are confused about their role. These changes follow the rapid changes in society from agricultural to industrial to service and "experiential" based economies.

Research funds are now going to consortia, not just scientists, but there is a dearth of scientific results to support policy. Prof. Bouma stated that "science has to earn again its license to research". He suggested that researchers need to form communities of scientific practice, where some do basic and/or applied research while others do the communicating and co-operation.

Prof. Bouma's lecture was followed by a lively question and discussion time.

Frank Gibbons award

Each year, the Victorian branch of ASSI presents the Frank Gibbons award. The award is for the best essay, by a student enrolled at a Victorian tertiary institution, judged on scientific merit, relevance to soil science and the effectiveness in communicating research to a scientific audience.

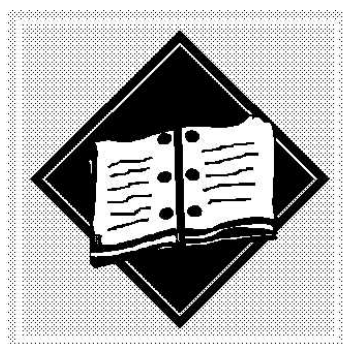
This year, the Frank Gibbons award was presented to Holly Ludeman of La Trobe University for her essay titled "Acidification of pasture soils in temperate Australia: causes and management". The award includes 2 years' membership of ASSSI and a cash prize.

Holly was presented with her award by the Victorian Branch president, Richard MacEwan, at the conclusion of the Leeper Lecture. Mrs. Pat Gibbons attended the presentation.

Kerry Greenwood



ABOVE: Dr Alice Melland (L) and Mr Richard MacEwan congratulate Ms Holly Ludeman on winning the Frank Gibbons award.



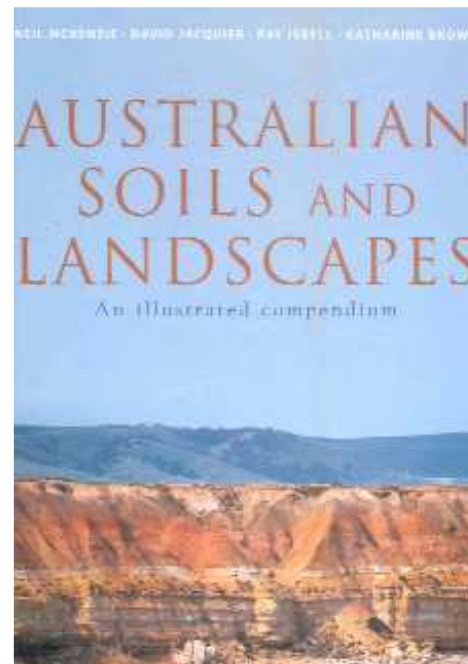
Book reviews

"Australian Soils and Landscapes: An Illustrated Compendium"

by Neil McKenzie, David Jacquier, Ray Isbell and Katharine Brown
(432 pages; CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood; ISBN 0643069585)

Reviewed by Dr Andrew Rate, School of Earth and Geographical Sciences, The University of Western Australia

The recent book "Australian Soils and Landscapes: An Illustrated Compendium" has already received considerable praise from readers more qualified than myself to judge the merits of a book which devotes considerable space to pedology. My review of necessity comes from the position that perhaps most soil scientists find themselves in, of a specialist in a sub-discipline of soil science other than pedology. It therefore may be useful to those in a similar position who find themselves, as they progress further in their soil science careers, needing to know much more than they do about soil formation and even the basis for soil classification. A further disclaimer I must make is that I am naturally approaching this book from the point-of-view of a member of teaching staff at a university. Many of my comments therefore relate to the usefulness of *Australian Soils and Landscapes* as a teaching and learning resource.



I think a book of this type was long overdue in the Australian soil science community (not least to catch up with our trans-Tasman colleagues following the publication of Les Molloy's magnificent *Soils in the New Zealand Landscape- The Living Mantle*). In terms of access to information, I would suggest that *Australian Soils and Landscapes* is superior to Molloy's seminal work, even if arguably pipped at the post as a coffee-table conversation piece. This is not to say that *Australian Soils and Landscapes* is not aesthetically pleasing; on the contrary, it is superbly presented and written. The Introduction begins prosaically, even poetically, and the authors' passion for their subject is transparent. Figures and tables are both consistently attractive and easy to follow, and there are numerous photographs of artistic quality which showcase Australian landscapes as much more than the mere shape of the soil surface. I was particularly taken with the photographs of the central Australian ferricrete on p.65, the "red chromosol" landscape on p.171, and the jarrah forest on p.187, to identify only a few. The photographs of soil profiles are similarly excellent, and several landscape photographers Australia-wide should take a bow for their contributions.

The Introduction clearly states the intended readership of the book, covering an ambitious range of prior knowledge and expertise from "interested individuals" to "professionals" in fields related to soil science. In addition, the authors make some initial suggestions about how this book might be read and used, advice which I found very helpful when reading and even re-reading. The book's general organisation into two main parts; the first being effectively a general introduction to soil science and Australian soil landscapes, and the second a compendium of representative Australian soils, is logically ordered and leads a reader through information at a gentle but attention-keeping pace. In this respect as well, this book is overdue as an accessible and attractive text for introductory soil science students, the only possible shortcoming being the price tag (admittedly, other hardcover undergraduate texts incur a similar cost these days).

Chapter 1, on the properties of soil, is ostensibly to provide supporting information to understand some of the later material. Again, however, it leads a reader through soil morphological, chemical/mineralogical, physical and biological concepts and information that could provide a starting point for an introductory university course in basic soil science. Although the level of detail is less than a purpose-written undergraduate soil science text, supplementation by a university teacher would generate a very useful resource, particularly in combination with the information on pedogenesis in Chapter 2, soil-landform relationships in Chapter 3, soil ecology in Chapter 4 and soil management in Chapter 5.

The second section of *Australian Soils and Landscapes* presents examples of soil profiles from all of the fifteen orders in the Australian Soil Classification. The geographical coverage of soil profiles is comprehensive, within reason; there are obvious justifications, for example, for

having a high representation of Organosols from Victoria and Tasmania, or tenosols from Western Australia. Each soil is given a two-page spread containing photographs of the soil profile and its characteristic landscape, tabulated and graphical data on soil morphological, chemical and physical properties, and information on distribution, soil forming factors, land capability and typical land use. The soils in this section are profitably used as cross-referenced examples in the first five chapters (especially Chapters 2 and 3). The information on each soil profile is set out so that comparisons between soils are straightforwardly made and this could easily form the basis of (yes, another) learning exercise for undergraduate students.

By now some of you will be wondering whether the publishers are paying me to pay gushing compliments to the authors of *Australian Soils and Landscapes*. I think the book and its authors deserve such acclaim, but to keep everyone happy – yes, the book is not perfect! In my frequently pedantic campaign for unambiguous English usage, I did notice that the authors, at least once or twice, used the word "level" to mean "amount" or "number"; forgivable, perhaps, but a confusing ambiguity nonetheless in a subject where the all-important soil horizons are commonly referred to as "levels" by beginning undergraduates. I found the combination of endnotes as well as a conventional reference list frustrating on occasion, but all the information cited in this book is generally easy to find. I have already moaned ever so slightly about the price.

It is not often that I read a textbook which makes me passionate about the subject of soil science, but *Australian Soils and Landscapes* is one of the few books which has managed to ignite such a spark of professional enthusiasm. Just as importantly, it is a book that I will use often, for informing myself and others and simply for the well-presented pleasure of a precious natural resource.

2006 National Soils Conference to be held in Adelaide

After considering submissions from two groups, the ASSSI Federal Council has decided that the next national soils conference will be held in Adelaide from the 3-7 December, 2006 in collaboration with the Australasian Soil and Plant Analysis Council. The council received submissions from groups in South Australia and Tasmania, and while the decision was made to hold the conference in Adelaide the Federal Council was elated by the enthusiasm shown by the Tasmanians to take on such a large task.

Immediate past federal ASSSI president, Dr Cameron Grant will convene the Conference and chair the Organising Committee with help from members of ASPAC from SA and NT. Dr Ron Smernik (winner of the 2004 ASSSI Publication Medal) will chair the Scientific Program Committee.

The theme of the conference will be "Soil Science Solving Problems". While soil scientists have a deep and passionate knowledge of soils, we find ourselves having to solve problems in disciplines well outside the traditional boundaries of soil science. Looming environmental constraints are forcing us to address problems such as low water use efficiency in irrigated agriculture, remediation of contaminated soils, and inefficient plant production on old and fragile soils. To address these issues, we have had to embrace many new technologies but these still depend on a good understanding of our soils and how to evaluate them. Despite major progress in technology over the past 10 years, there is still plenty we do not understand about soil physical, chemical and biological properties. The purpose of this conference is to highlight new advances in soil science and to demonstrate how these advances can help us solve the many problems we face. A call for expressions of interest and sponsorship will appear in the first quarter of this year.

The 2006 conference will be followed by a joint conference with NZSSS in New Zealand in 2008 and the 19th World Soils Congress in Brisbane in 2010.



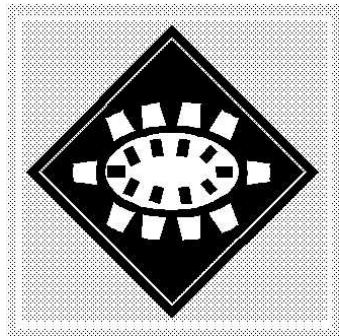
IUSS News

IUSS Celebrates 80 years

In 2004 the IUSS (formerly the International Society of Soil Science, ISSS) celebrated 80 years of existence as an international body embracing soil science and soil scientists. The ISSS was established at a meeting in Rome in May 1924 as part of the 4th International Conference on Pedology. The conference recommended more uniform methods of soil analysis, a definite nomenclature for soil classification, the preparation of agro-geological maps of Europe and the organization of soil investigations in countries where these had not yet started, and an introduction to the study of soils into the curricula of intermediary and higher schools. The newly formed ISSS decided to encourage soil research world-wide as its primary goal. Eighty years later, the ISSS is now the IUSS and the goals have not changed much!

New Awards Announced

Two awards will be presented by the IUSS for the first time at the 18th World Congress of Soil Science and are named the Dokuchaev and the Leibig awards in recognition of two of the founding fathers of soil science. The new awards will recognize outstanding contributions by scientists in two specific areas; basic (Dokuchaev) and applied (Leibig) research in soil science and will in future be awarded at each WCSS. All living members of the IUSS are eligible and must be nominated by members of the Union. Both awards consist of an engraved medal, a certificate, a US\$1000 honorarium and financial support to attend the presentation at the WCSS. Information on nomination procedures is available from the IUSS [website](#).



Federal Council minutes

The Federal Council of the Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated met for the 190th Federal Council Meeting at 12.30pm on the 5th December 2004 at the Great Hall, University of Sydney.

1. Opening & Apologies:

The meeting was held over lunch, with following in attendance: Cameron Grant (President), Neal Menzies (Vice President), Keith Lindbeck (Treasurer), Annie McNeill (Secretary), Linda Bennison (Executive Officer), Graham Price (CPSS Board Chairman), Greg Chapman (NSW President), Richard MacEwan (VIC President), Robin Thwaites (QLD President), Warwick Dougherty (SA Vice President), Andrew Harley (WA President), Jonnie White (Editor-elect Profile).
Apologies: Lynn Abbott (Editor Profile), Jock Churchman (SA President), Mark Conyers (Riverina President), Graeme Tupper (SuperSoil Convener).

2. Minutes of Federal Council Meeting 221 –Approval & Business Arising

- Minutes approved subject to changing Item 5.3: Rhythms of Dust (John Beattie): Needs to reflect fact that FC may sponsor book at some stage if John Beattie finds most of money –(originally raised by Vic Branch as suitable 50th Anniv. Project, so needs to be considered if only for token support).

Business Arising

- John Beattie book: Neal Menzies contacted JB & suggested Melb. Uni Press as potential publisher.
- IUSS report from Roger Swift / Neal Menzies: Roger Swift to give full report at AGM Tuesday Dec 7th.
- New Member follow-up: Mr Costa Nikias duly nominated & seconded by Judy Tisdall & Cameron Grant.
- Venue for 2006 ASSSI National Soils Conference (see below).
- \$50K grant from Eyre Society as advertised in Australian Geographic –Cam Grant & Greg Chapman to discuss in 2005 (to support ASSSI 50th Anniversary projects –is this a source of funds for Bruce Butler book?).

3. Reports

President's Report

SuperSoil 2004:

- NSW Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, will open Conference. This is a good result –possibly better than having Premier (no political agenda).
- I mentioned in a previous Report that Dr Peter Stephens, Pres. NZSSS wanted ASSSI & NZSSS Executives to 'get together' – I was unable to organise anything, but it may still be possible to do something informal. It will be more important to meet in 2006 because NZ Executive will run 2008 conference.
- I'm pleased to learn that *SuperSoil* will probably at least 'break even', so the Conference Account will not be diminished for 2006.

ACT Branch Closure

- Initiated by FC last year, and foreshadowed in AGM Pres Rept in Dec 2003; followed up by members of ACT Branch, including Mac Kirby. I understand there is ~\$1000 in ACT accounts (possibly more) and Constitution indicates if Branch closes, its resources must be returned to Federal Council.

ASSSI Awards:

CG Stephens Award:

- Committee completed its deliberations –winner is Dr Jonnie White –certificate + cheque for \$500 will be presented to her at 2004 AGM Tue Dec 7th.

Other Awards:

- *ASSSI Publication Medal*: to be presented to Dr Ron Smernik at Conf. Dinner, Thurs Dec 9th.
- *JA Prescott Medal Committees*: to be presented to Prof. Alex McBratney at Conf. Dinner, Thurs Dec 9th.
- *JK Taylor Medal Committee*: No nominations –Committee decided to let it go this year –nominations to be called for in 2005.

Awards Coordinator

- We established this Ex Officio position on FC at FC-220; no progress has been made toward nominating somebody for this position. I'm happy to look after this after SuperSoil.

50th Anniversary Activities

Activities are underway

- Biographies of Current Honorary Members for Life being assembled –very good response so far from the HMs –photos and reports trickling in. Hope to have this ready by March 2005. Plan is to mount material on ASSSI website.

- Interviews planned for HMs to record oral & visual history of ASSSI –CDG dealing with this.
- Proposal by Vic branch to support to John Beattie's book 'Ribbons of Dust' (on work of Bruce Butler) will be held over until 2005. We indicated to him he needs to obtain majority financial backing, but that ASSSI may consider contributing toward electronic publication. Neal Menzies will suggest some potential publishers to John, without taking on the task of publishing! If this goes ahead, it will be a good 50th Anniversary project.

Final Report

This is my last Pres Rept to FC. I would like to thank all members of FC for their support over the last 2 years. The model of including Branch Presidents in all FC meetings has worked well to keep the Branch- and Federal-bodies in touch. I would like to thank our Executive Officer, Linda Bennison, who has worked tirelessly (and patiently!) with us to keep the daily business of the Society running –she is absolutely indispensable! I would also like to thank Annie McNeill for her good work as Honorary Secretary – she maintained the momentum of the teleconferences, which the previous Council initiated. Keith Lindbeck also worked hard for us (as Honorary Treasurer) and kept an iron grip on the finances (to the point where we sometimes found it hard to spend a penny!) – thanks to you, Keith. I also want to thank Lyn Abbott (and Linda Bennison) for keeping Profile going despite many technical problems, which required far more work than planned. Thanks also to the Medal Committees which have run smoothly this year including, Prescott Medal Committee (Col Ahern, Arivand Surapaneni, Christoph Hinz), Publication Medal Committee (Phil Smethurst, Richard Bell, Heiko Daniel). I want to thank Graeme Tupper for the hard work of his team to get SuperSoil to its crescendo this year and to keep the financial side of things in the black –I look forward to participating in SuperSoil with you. Finally, I wish our new President, Neal Menzies and his FC every success in running the Society for then next 2 years.

Treasurer's report

- Finances presented, including audit of 2003 accounts, from which four issues arose from Auditor's report on 2003 accounts:
 - Auditor unable to determine income from subscriptions (corrected now –income now broken down into categories).
 - Auditor noted there were no records of authorization by FC to pay accounts (corrected now –by email)
 - Branches operating largely independently (re: finances) –we must ensure all Branches pay GST & that this is recorded. –Action Branches!
 - Accountant says Linda needs to be paid as an employee (FC disagreed with this after discussion à Keith to go back to auditor with FC views).

EO's report

- Linda provided FC with a draft set of "Rules" to be edited and sent out with the subscription renewals in early January. This will replace the current (outdated) Constitution. Cam agreed to take on editing of the document and report back at the Strategic Planning Meeting this coming Friday Dec 10th. (Action Cam).

Secretary's report

- Recent correspondences all related to issues for 50th Anniv activities (no action).

Profile Editor's Report

- No report –Lyn Abbott away (new Editor, Dr Jonnie White starts now); Lyn conveyed thanks and good wishes to new Executive.

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Branch Reports

- NSW AGM today; no other Branch reports.

4. Other business

Closure of ACT Branch

- Discussed in light of President's Rept –FC agreed to close ACT Branch, recover funds (action next FC Treasurer), & to invite ACT members to affiliate with either NSW or Riverina Branch (action EO).

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Bids for 2006 ASSSI National Soils Conference

- Two submissions (Adelaide and Hobart) were meant to be considered at this meeting, but they were not received in time to read; copies to be printed for FC prior to Strategic Planning Meeting this coming Friday Dec 10th (action EO).

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Banners for ASSSI & Branches

- It was agreed each Branch should have ASSSI banner to display at official functions; Linda to inquire about cost & report to next meeting of FC.

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50th anniversary activities

- Discussed briefly, then deferred to Strategic Planning Meeting this Fri Dec 10th.

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Money for IUSS Congress 2010

- Discussed briefly, then deferred to next Fed Council, with Neal Menzies involved.

5. Close and Next Meeting

The president declared the meeting closed at 2.30pm. Next Federal Council meeting 223 to be held 4th Feb, 2005.

New Members

The ASSSI welcomes the following new members...

Member	Branch	Interests
Mr. Kurt Deifel	Qld	ASSSI QLD Branch 2004 Undergraduate Award Winner
Ms Jessica Gutknecht	Qld	ASSSI QLD Branch 2004 Undergraduate Award Winner
Ms. Carolyn King	NSW	Contaminated soils –organic and inorganic, sodicity and salinity management issues, environmental management
Mr Ian Layden	Qld	ASSSI QLD Branch 2004 Undergraduate Award Winner Interest: Fraser Island sand dune complex
Ms Holly Ludeman	Vic	ASSSI Victorian Branch Frank Gibbons Award Winner 2004 Interest: soil acidity
Ms. Loretta McKeering	Qld	ASSSI QLD Branch 2004 Undergraduate Award Winner

Mr. Xavier Rius	SA	Member Spanish Soil Science Society
Mr Luke Wylie	Vic	Nitrous oxide emissions from intensive dairy pastures

NEW MEMBER PROFILES:

Josephine (Jo) Stokes

Works For: Primary Industries Research Victoria (PIRVic), Department of Primary Industries.

Doing: Jo conducts scientific research to develop cleaner production programs and strategies. Jo has managed several research projects over the past 5 years with the State Government, including:

- The Victorian Trials of the National Biosolids Research Program (NBRP)
- The benefits of using a fishwaste-based fertiliser for dryland cropping
- An investigation into the potential toxicity of CCA-treated timber waste if reused as mulch
- Utilisation of composted wool waste for raised-bed cropping
- The treatment and potential reuse of malting effluent
- Methods for analysing soil, plant and soil organic ameliorants
- Evaluating universal soil extractants for commercial applications.

Qualifications: PhD Applied Chemistry (Environmental), RMIT University, Melbourne.

Areas of expertise in soil science: Jo's research interests include rare earths, heavy metals and micronutrients in soils and crops from applications of waste materials and agricultural practises.

Jo's PhD thesis title was 'An Investigation of Lanthanum, Cerium and Neodymium in Soils and Soil-Plant Systems'.

Scholarships and awards:

2003 Environmental Group Study Exchange to New Zealand, sponsored by the Rotary Foundation.

1996 Australian Postgraduate Research Award, RMIT University, Melbourne.

1995 Summer Research Scholarship, CRC for Water Quality and Treatment.

1994 Roy and Iris Simmons Chemistry Award.

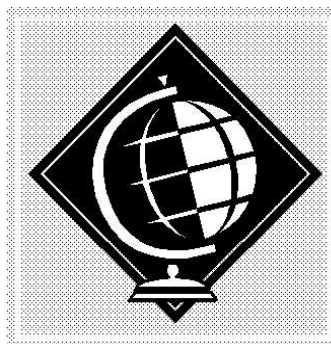
Welcome to the ASSSI Jo!!



Buy Sell and Swap

Members selling or looking for items of relevance to soil science are welcome to submit notices to the editor for inclusion in the Buy, Sell and Swap area.

WANTED: Copy of P.J. Kramer's "Plant & Soil Water Relationships" published by McGraw-Hill (1949). Contact Cameron on 08 8303 7404 or cameron.grant@adelaide.edu.au



Conferences

30 Jan - 4 Feb 2005: 9th International Symposium on Soil and Plant Analysis, Mexico
palmmail@convservices.de

24-29 April 2005: Special Symposium EGU (European Geosciences Union) Vienna, Austria
Seasonal and spatial variation in soil and sediment redox conditions; consequences for trace element mobility
<http://www.copernicus.org/EGU/ga/egu05/index.htm>

Dr Siobhán STAUNTON
UMR Rhizosphère & Symbiose
INRA place Viala
34060 Montpellier Cedex FRANCE
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Fax 33 (0)4 67 63 26 14

8-9 February 2005: UrbanSalt 2005, Riverside Theatre, Parramatta
carrie@gemspl.com.au

tel (02) 9744 5252
fax (02) 97478366

3-7 April 2005: 8th International Conference on the Biogeochemistry of Trace Elements (ICOBTE), Adelaide

16-22 May 2005: International symposium on land degradation and desertification, Brazil

Silvio Carlos Rodrigues
comland2005@ig.com.br

10-18 September 2005: 19th International Congress on Irrigation and Drainage, Beijing

Chinese National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage
cncid@iwhr.com

9-15 July 2006 - 18th World Congress of Soil Science, Philadelphia, USA

www.18wcss.org

3-7 December 2006: National Soils Conference, Adelaide

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