

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 PURPOSE

The National Committee on Soil and Terrain (NCST) is a standing committee for the implementation committee of the National Soil Research Development and Extension Strategy, the Australian Soil Network (ASN). The NCST is the peak government committee coordinating information on soil and terrain issues in Australia. It is committed to ensuring access to consistent and the best available soil information on the nature, distribution, state, limitations and potential of Australia's soil resources for improved decision making and policy development. The committee is formed as a collaboration of government agencies that have a lead in soils from across Australia. It includes representatives from all states and territories with core responsibilities in soil assessment and monitoring, plus CSIRO, Department of Agriculture (including ABARES) and Geoscience Australia.

2.0 FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

(a) Goal

The goal of the NCST is to provide Australians with access to consistent and the best information on the nature, distribution, state, limitations and potential of Australia's soil resources for improved decision making and policy development. This aligns with the goals of The National Soil Research, Development and Extension Strategy to:

1. Improve effectiveness of co-investment to generate and apply new knowledge
2. Improve quality, availability and access to soil data and information
3. Improve communication and exchange of soil knowledge
4. Adopt a national approach to building future skills and capacity
5. Collaborate on development and use of physical infrastructure.

(b) Outcomes

Specifically, the NCST works to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Data and infrastructure that meets current and future needs
2. Contemporary national standards and approaches that build a capable community of practitioners
3. Accessible and fit-for-purpose information products supporting decision making
4. Coordinated and consistent technical advice regarding sustainable development to government
5. Greater recognition of soils (nature, distribution & status) as a fundamental ecosystem service provider and strategic national asset

(c) Reference to advice and recommendations

- Act as a Standing Committee for the Australian Soil Network (ASN), the implementation committee for the National Soil RD&E Strategy
- Provide national leadership, coordination and direction in soil and terrain issues and information for sustainable use and management of the soil and land resource
- Provide expert advice on policy proposals and a strategic appreciation of emerging issues and priorities on soil and terrain matters
- Advise on the implications and relevance of soils to broader land management issues

- Coordinate national soil and terrain data and information to support evidence-based policy and decision making
- Provide national advocacy for soil and terrain issues of state and national significance
- Identify trends and technologies in soil and terrain assessment and monitoring and advise on implications for sustainable use and management of the soil and land resource and regional development issues
- Provide the framework and national standards for soil and terrain assessment
- Encourage capacity building in soil and terrain matters within government agencies, educational institutions and the community.

3.0 MEMBERSHIP

The NCST comprises State, Territory or Commonwealth representatives who specialise in soil and terrain assessment and mapping. Each State or Territory is required to represent its whole jurisdiction and, where appropriate, key activities outside the agencies. This is especially important where the soil and terrain activities within a State or Territory are in more than one agency.

Experts or representatives of agencies or organisations such as Soil Science Australia, universities, not listed may be invited from time to time to ensure informed consideration of issues.

Current membership of the NCST is (as of September 2019):

Name	Agency	Jurisdiction
Mr Jason Hill (Chair)	Department of Environment and Natural Resources	Northern Territory
Mr Tim Overheu (Deputy Chair)	Department of Primary Industry and Resources	Western Australia
Dr Jane Stewart (Secretary)	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences	Commonwealth
Dr Evan Thomas	Department of Environment and Science	Queensland
Mr Doug Crawford	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	Victoria
Mr Tim Hermann	Department of Environment and Water	South Australia
Dr Darren Kidd	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment	Tasmania
Mr Brian Jenkins	Office of Environment and Heritage	New South Wales
Dr John Wilford	Geoscience Australia	Commonwealth
TBC	Department of Agriculture	Commonwealth
Mr Mike Grundy	CSIRO (Soil and Landscapes in Agriculture and Food)	Commonwealth
Mr Peter Wilson	CSIRO (National Soil Information)	Commonwealth

(a) Appointment

Members are appointed by an executive in their respective agency. Agency representatives should be in a relatively senior role and generally have responsibility and delegation to influence soil programs in their jurisdiction/agency. New members are to be advised of their responsibilities and be provided with a copy of the Terms of Reference. The committee can seek additional input from non-members with demonstrated skills, experience and knowledge to aid with provision of advice.

(b) Chair and Secretary

NCST is chaired by a member of the committee. This position is reviewed every three years, or as required, at a meeting through a nomination and balloting process. The last change of Chair was made in April 2019. An identical process is applied for the nomination and appointment of secretary.

(c) Financial Considerations

Members will fund their own costs incurred to attend meetings. The host agency for the annual meeting will fund any meeting costs, costs related to field trips or other ancillary costs. Representatives are expected to allocate resources to NCST activities such as leading working groups, chairing the committee and/or development of work plans.

4.0 CONDUCT AND DISCLOSURES

Members must comply with the pecuniary interest, conflict of interest and all other requirements imposed by their respective agencies.

5.0 MEETING PROCEDURES

The NCST, through an annual face-to-face meeting, out-of-session communication, representation on working groups and tasks undertaken by individual working group members, delivers to a work plan guided by its Terms of Reference. The annual meeting will be hosted by a different jurisdiction each year.

6.0 REPORTING

The NCST is a standing committee for the Australian Soil Network.

7.0 REVIEW

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the NCST annually.

8.0 DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Control

Document Title	NCST Terms of Reference
Version	September 2019
Document Reference Number	NCST ToR 2019_20
Document Owner	Chair, NCST
Approver and Date	NCST
Next Review	May 2020