

A COMMUNIQUE FROM DR MICHAEL CRAWFORD CEO OF THE CRC FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE SOILS

1 December 2017

Greetings Soil CRC colleagues

Board Meeting

The Directors held a Board Meeting at Newcastle on 29 November. Items on the agenda included the finance reports, the approval of project funds (see below), committee memberships, a review of policy requirements, a report from the investment strategy working group and the schedule for board meetings for 2018.

The Board is a skills-based board with an independent Chair and a majority of independent members, as directed by CRC Program guidelines. Prof Paul Greenfield is Chair, and the other independent members (with their area of specialty) are Ralph Hardy (finance), Anna Lavelle (IP and innovation), Robbie Sefton (communications) and Prof Roger Swift (science). The non-independent members are Malcolm Buckby (SA Grains Industry Trust), Prof Kevin Hall (University of Newcastle) and Di Parsons (Central West Farming Systems). There is currently a vacancy for a non-independent director from a Major Partner, for which Expressions of Interest are currently open, closing on 12 Dec.

The Board is scheduled to meet four times in person in 2018, with other meetings to be scheduled as teleconferences. Board meetings are scheduled for 21 February (Hobart), 30 May (Perth), 8 August (Brisbane) and 21 November (Newcastle). At each meeting, there will be an event organised with local participants and stakeholders to allow for a good exchange of information and perspectives. The Annual General Meeting will be held on 21 November in Newcastle, following the Board meeting.

Project approvals

The Board approved investment of up to \$400,000 in the first round of projects, following their consideration at the Board meeting on Wednesday. Both the Research and Adoption Panel, and the Board, were generally very impressed with the overall standard of projects, the collaborations that are proposed and the value potentially generated. In releasing the funds, the Board asked the CEO to work with Program and Project Leaders to look at potential opportunities for joint activities and workshops across projects. The purpose of this is to build synergies between projects and programs, to more effectively and efficiently use the time of participants, especially farmer group members, and to identify areas for cost efficiencies.

Operations Manager, Jodi McLean, is now working with Project Leaders to progress project agreements and the schedule for payment of funds.

Communications Officer

Katherine Seddon commenced in the position of Communications Officer (Interim) on Wednesday, initially on a 4 month contract, based at the head office of the CRC at the University of Newcastle. Katherine comes to us with more than ten years' experience as a

communications specialist, working with the not-for-profit and university sectors, and on freelance projects. Her early priorities include establishing a logo and branding for the CRC and updating the website. She will also be working closely with relevant communications staff in each of our participant organisations to ensure that our communication and publicity efforts are complementary. Katherine can be contacted at katherine.seddon@soilcrc.com.au .

Stakeholder visits and interactions

On 23 November, I visited the University of Tasmania in Hobart and met with key contributors to the Soil CRC research program. I was impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm that UTas staff are showing for the CRC, and the efforts that they want to make in connecting across disciplines and with partners across Australia.

I will be travelling to Townsville on Wednesday 6 December with Lukas Van Zwieten (DPI NSW, Program 4 Leader) and Terry Rose (Southern Cross University) to meet with sugar industry participants, including Herbert Cane Productivity Services. Having worked most of my life in the southern states, I am keen to learn more about the sugar industry and the soil issues and opportunities that it faces.

CRC holiday shutdown

The University of Newcastle, the host institution for the CRC head office, will be shut down from 15 December until 3 January, so CRC head office staff will be taking leave during that period. I will continue to work during the week of 18 December to 22 December, working from home, so any CRC business can continue to be directed through me. I will then be back at work on 3 January, ready for an exciting 2018.

Dr Michael Crawford
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CRC FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE SOILS

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