



Performance through collaboration

Communique



3 June 2019

Greetings Soil CRC colleagues

NSW EPA joins the Soil CRC as a Partner

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA) has joined the Soil CRC as a Partner. It will contribute \$50,000 over the first two years and make a minimum 0.05 FTE in-kind contribution for the remainder of the CRC.

The EPA is the primary environmental regulator for New South Wales. It partners with business, government and the community to reduce pollution and waste, protect human health, and prevent degradation of the environment. Partnering with the Soil CRC connects the EPA with opportunities to increase recovery and reuse of organics waste with opportunities to improve soil health and productivity. Through the NSW Government's \$105.5 million Organics Infrastructure Fund, the EPA is increasing the collection and processing of food and garden waste into high quality compost that will benefit soils, whilst also diverting waste from landfill. In joining the CRC, their main interests will be around the development of new products for soil fertility and function and in better understanding how and why farmers adopt (or don't adopt) new technologies and products.

This takes the number of Soil CRC participants to 40. The Soil CRC will continue to accept new participants where they can contribute cash and capability that complements, not duplicates the existing capability of the CRC. Any new participant needs to be approved by the Board and by the Commonwealth.

Building Technical Capability in NRM and Grower Groups

As announced by email on 21 May, the Soil CRC has been awarded \$424,227 by the Australian Government to deliver a project over the next two years that builds soil technical capacity and capability in grower groups, landcare groups and NRM organisations, both within and outside of the CRC.

The project will see three communities of practice (CoPs) being established across Australia, comprising 30 participants from NRM and grower groups in areas of common interest. The participants will undertake learning activities with support from Soil CRC scientists to develop their individual and collective soil knowledge and technical capacity to more effectively extend cutting edge soil science into the broader farming community.

The call for the Project Manager resulted in 10 applications which are currently being assessed and a decision will be made shortly. Once the Project Manager is appointed, groups will be invited to express interest in enrolling a participant in the program. Travel and accommodation costs will be supported by the project, requiring just the in-kind contribution of the participant.

Call for PhD Scholarship applications

We will release a call for PhD Scholarship applications in the next few days, with applications closing on 15 July 2019. PhD students are a very important part of any CRC as it makes its contribution to building the future research capacity for its sector. The Soil CRC has a milestone target of 46 PhD commencements and has already funded 17 places through the first two rounds of projects.

As students need to be enrolled at a university, applications must be submitted by one of our eight CRC participant universities. In the spirit of the CRC, co-supervision across research partners is encouraged, as is the involvement of other CRC participants (farmer groups, industry groups etc.) in the proposed research program of the student.

Through this round, \$1.5 million will be made available over the next 3 years, which should be enough to fund 8 to 12 additional students, depending upon budget requests. Full details will be in the Guidelines when they are released, including detail of how to apply through SoilCentral.

Board meeting

The Board met at Landmark head office in Melbourne on 22 May. It discussed business development and attracting new investment, Board Director appointments, project utilisation plans and IP management, and it approved the CRC's budget for 2019-20. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for 29 August in Adelaide.



Other CEO activities

I continue to maintain a program of visiting participants and engaging with CRC staff through project and program meetings. Since the last Communique, I visited North Central CMA in Bendigo on 17 April, met with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and staff at Murdoch University in Perth on 1 May, attended the Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) conference in Fremantle on 2 May, attended and spoke at the South East Water field day on subsoil injection of liquid biosolids at Longwarry, Victoria on 14 May and met with Landmark senior managers on 22 May.

The South East Water field day was particularly notable as it was the first major public event conducted in which the Soil CRC was a partner. There were 100 attendees with interests including water and sewage management, landcare and farming and they heard about the progress made in the Soil CRC project on liquid biosolids. Congratulations to Dr Aravind Surapaneni and his colleagues at South East Water for the event.

I also attended the CRC Association conference in Adelaide on 28-30 May, where all the CRCs come together to hear and discuss items of mutual interest. A few of our participants were represented at this conference, and I had the opportunity to give a presentation on our CRC in a plenary session.

Through May, I have worked closely with Chris Murphy on business development opportunities, and have had meetings in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne with some prospective participants/partners/investors. I hope to be able to make further announcements in coming months.

Staff News

Congratulations to Millicent Crowe, Soil CRC Research Administration Officer, who has been selected to represent Australia in Ultimate Frisbee at the Asia-Oceanic Championships in China in July. If you want to know more about Ultimate Frisbee, check out www.afda.com or ask Millicent next time you are talking to her about project agreements.

Congratulations also to Joanna Kelso who gave her birth to her first child, a boy, on 26 May. Joanna worked with us for the past few months whilst Jodi was on leave and some of you would have met Joanna at the conference in April.

CEO leave and Acting CEO arrangements

I will be taking leave from this Thursday 6 June, returning Monday 8 July. Jodi McLean will be acting CEO in my absence and can be contacted at jodi.mclean@soilcrc.com.au. Please give Jodi every support in my absence.



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Conferences

- [2nd National Symposium on the Beneficial Use of Recycled Organics](#), Brisbane Qld, 20-21 June
- [19th Australian Agronomy Conference](#), Wagga Wagga NSW, 25-29 August

- [7th International Symposium on Soil Organic Matter](#), Adelaide SA, 6-11 October 2019
- [Australia New Zealand Biochar Conference and Study Tour](#), Green Triangle Region SA/Vic and Melbourne Vic, 20-26 October

Contact list

We are now forwarding this communique directly to staff in our Participant organisations who we believe should be receiving communications about the CRC. If you do not wish to receive communications directly, please unsubscribe. If there are others who wish to be on the list, please forward their names to Kathy Stokes at kathy.stokes@soilcrc.com.au.

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