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Performance through collaboration

CEO COMMUNIQUE

5 May 2023

Vale Julie Moulton

It is with great sadness that I inform you that Julie Moulton passed away on Thursday 27 April after a long battle with cancer. Julie worked as the Research Administration Officer for the Soil CRC from November 2019 until February 2023 when she stepped down from her position due to ill health. Many of you would know her as the friendly face, the supporting voice or the helpful email sender, responding to various requests and queries about project applications, agreements, quarterly reports, in-kind reporting and user issues with SoilCentral.

The courageous way that Julie responded to her cancer diagnosis in early 2022, took on the various treatments with gusto and confidence, celebrated the small victories and overcame the various setbacks, was an inspiration to us all. This was similar to how she approached her job, where she dealt with problems and celebrated the positive outcomes in a way that had a positive impact on her work colleagues and customers. In a team as small as the one that we have in Newcastle, the loss of a work colleague and friend has hit us all.

Donations can be made in Julie's memory at [Cancer Council Soil CRC Biggest Morning Tea](#). Cancer has touched most of us. Let's make a difference for Julie and all those who have fought and are fighting still.



Julie was a much-loved and valued member of the Soil CRC team

2023 Major Investment Round 6

The Board of the Soil CRC met last week and considered the recommendations of the Research and Adoption Committee (RAC) regarding project proposals submitted to the Soil CRC under the 2023 Major Investment Round 6 (Round 23-1). In summary, the Board approved 6 projects with a project lifetime commitment from the Soil CRC of \$2.7 m.

The RAC assessed all project submissions against the criteria outlined in the Guidelines for Proposals and subsequently ranked and prioritised them. The recommendations of the RAC were presented to the Board, who after considerable discussion, approved the recommended projects. Some projects were approved with conditions and will require modification before being contracted and we will be working with Project Leaders and their partners in coming weeks to achieve this.

The projects that have been approved by the Board under Round 23-1 are as follows (project title, project leader, lead organisation):

Program 1 – Investing in high performance soils

- Packaging Soil CRC tools to enhance the extension and adoption of improved soil management practices – Nathan Craig, West Midlands Group
- Agricultural Social Benchmarking Surveys - Part 3 – Hanabeth Luke, Southern Cross University

Program 2 – Soil performance metrics

- Commercialising the penetrometer (Bandicoot) – Marcus Hardie, University of Tasmania

Program 3 – New products to increase fertility and function

- Evaluation of agronomic benefits of biosolids biochar – Ravi Naidu, University of Newcastle

Program 4 – Integrated and precision soil management solutions

- Capitalising on six multi-state established field trials for ameliorating (sub)soil constraints – Richard Bell, Murdoch University
- Knowledge-guided machine-learning optimisation of soil constraint management – Chloe Lai, University of Southern Queensland

All Proposal Leaders and their organisations have been informed directly of the Board decisions and are now in the process of communicating to their project teams. Whilst the Project Leaders and their organisations are listed above, all projects involve collaboration between CRC participants, including farmer and grower group participants.

Further details on each of these projects will be placed on the Soil CRC website in coming weeks, including information on the value and benefit that each project will deliver to farmers, in the short or long term.

I would like to thank and acknowledge everyone who contributed to this process, especially the project leaders who coordinated the scientific thinking, the writing and the budget preparation with each of their proposed project teams.

This brings the total amount of cash funds that the Soil CRC has now committed to projects to over \$33 million.

Soil CRC Participants Conference – Save the Date!

Here is another reminder that we are holding the 2023 Soil CRC Participants Conference in Launceston, Tasmania on 29-31 August. The Tuesday (29 August) will again feature the PhD Student Workshop and project team meetings and will finish with program meetings at the end of the day, before coming together for a welcome reception. On the Wednesday (30 August), we will highlight the work of the Soil CRC through both presentations and panel discussions before celebrating with the Conference Dinner that night. And on the Thursday (31 August), we will be hosting some field trips to look at soil management issues in northern Tasmania,

I did get some responses to my call for volunteers for the Program Committee in my last Communique, but I am still looking for more input, especially from grower group and industry participants. Please [email me](#) if you are interested.

Put the dates in your calendar and look out for further updates in coming months regarding registration and other details.

Staff appointments

As announced in my last Communique, we now have Lucy Weaver working for us as our Research Administration Officer. Lucy will be your point of contact and assistance regarding SoilCentral and many

aspects of project administration and reporting. Lucy's email is lucy.weaver@soilcrc.com.au but project and SoilCentral enquiries are best directed to projects@soilcrc.com.au.

Olivia Louis has also now commenced as our new Communications Manager and has the task of managing the Soil CRC's communication channels, including the newsletter (look out for an issue next week), our [website](#), social media ([Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)) and other media. In coming weeks, Olivia will be making contact with the communications staff at our participant organisations to discuss how we can best support each other in our communications efforts. Olivia's email is olivia.louis@soilcrc.com.au.

And finally, I am now pleased to announce that we have appointed Felicity Harrop as our new Soil Knowledge Broker and she commences on Monday 8 May. Felicity had previously supported us in delivering our Building Technical Capacity project while working for North Central CMA, and she has been working for Soil Science Australia as the National Training Manager for the past 12 months. Felicity will help to connect our farmer group members with the researchers and vice versa to help ensure that the knowledge being generated by the Soil CRC is accessible and relevant. This will contribute to the Soil CRC's increased focus on adoption in the coming years. Felicity can be contacted on felicity.harrop@soilcrc.com.au.

Soil CRC Participants Commonwealth reporting process simplification

To help Participants meet their Commonwealth reporting requirements, we are simplifying the submission process. There will now be *one* date for all quarterly reporting, meaning all Non-Project In-Kind Reports (NPIKs) and Project Quarterly Reports (PQRs) will be *due 10 days post quarter closure*. The new due dates are summarised below.

Quarter (Q)	Months included in reports	Due date for NPIKs and PQRs
1	July / August / September	10 October
2	October / November / December	10 January
3	January / February / March	10 April
4	April / May / June	10 July

After the due date, reporting access within SoilCentral closes and no further in-kind contributions data submissions will be accepted for that quarter. If anyone misses the due date, any in-kind contributions not previously reported can simply be added to next quarter's reports.

The next reporting due date will be 10 July 2023, the final one for the 2022/23 year (Q4). Participants are encouraged to review their submitted data for this year and add any omissions from previous quarters to the Q4 report.

Further information about the changes and reminders will be distributed to the key contact people in the coming month. If you have any questions, please contact the Chief Operating Officer Jodi McLean (jodi.mclean@soilcrc.com.au).

CEO meetings and travel

At the end of March, I visited [Burdekin Productivity Services](#) and [Herbert Cane Productivity Services](#) in north Queensland and saw some of our research in the field. I also spoke at the annual Regenerative Cane Farming Forum, held at Ingham.

In April, I participated in a workshop with Meat and Livestock Australia in Sydney, discussing the draft findings and recommendations of the Soil CRC's study on soil research opportunities for the grazing livestock industries. I also spoke at an event organised by the Regenerative Agriculture Students Group and the SQld/NNSW Innovation Hub at Southern Cross University on Earth Day, 22 April. It was great to talk to students about the importance of soil and the work of the Soil CRC. This event was recorded and can be viewed [here](#).



Michael Crawford speaking at Southern Cross University on Earth Day

I look forward to seeing many of you at the [Soil Science Australia conference](#) in Darwin at the end of June. The [program](#) has now been released and there are many Soil CRC speakers on the program which is great. I will be a keynote speaker on the Wednesday morning, giving an overview of the Soil CRC progress to date. We are a Silver Sponsor and will be hosting the Welcome Reception, so come and say hello at our exhibition booth.

I am always happy to hear of other opportunities for engaging with Soil CRC participants across Australia.

Dr Michael Crawford

Chief Executive Officer

CRC FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE SOILS

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Contact list

We forward 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 below. 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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