

Minutes of meeting 3 of the Soil RD&E Implementation Committee

Location: SARDI offices, Plant Research Centre, Hartley Grove, Urrbrae SA.

Date: Thursday 27th August 2015

Attendees: Iain Young (Chair), Georgina Kelly (Deputy), Neil McKenzie, Hamish Cresswell, Jennifer Alexander, Hayley Achurch (for Michele Barson), Budiman Minasny (for Damien Field, by telephone), Ian Anderson, Warwick Dougherty, Michael Crawford, Paul Lawrence, Pauline Mooney, Karen Holmes (for Noel Schoknecht, by telephone), Peter Voller (by telephone), Allan Williams, Vicki Woodburn, Cameron Allan (by telephone)

Guest: Major General the Hon. Michael Jeffery, National Advocate for Soil Health

Apologies: Michele Barson, Felice Driver, Cathy Phelps, Brenda Kranz, Jason Hill, Noel Schoknecht, Grains Research and Development Corporation, Damien Field, Adrian Loschiavo

No	Agenda Item	Discussion / comment	Decision /Action	Who	Due Date
3.1	Minutes of last meeting and correspondence	<p>Refer to agenda paper 3.1 and the minutes of the last meeting.</p> <p>Minutes of the last meeting were endorsed.</p> <p>Most actions from last meeting have been completed or progressed and many appear as agenda items for this meeting.</p> <p>Correspondence was received from Soil Science Australia requesting sponsorship of a soil judging competition.</p>	<p>Respond to Soil Science Australia declining the opportunity to sponsor the soil judging competition.</p>	Secretariat	9 th Sept

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3.2	Member updates	<p>Refer to agenda paper 3.2.</p> <p>Verbal updates were provided by members to the committee.</p> <p>CSIRO wrote to John Harvey at GRDC seeking a new representative for the committee. GRDC was unable to send a representative to the meeting but they are committed to their role as lead RDC for the strategy. The restructure has recently been taking precedence over other matters.</p> <p>The committee acknowledged Martin Blumenthal's major contribution to the development and implementation of the strategy.</p>	<p>A motion was passed to thank Martin Blumenthal for his contribution to the Soil RD&E Strategy development and implementation.</p>	Secretariat	October
3.3	Round 2 of Rural R&D for Profit	<p>Agenda paper 3.3 provided as background.</p> <p>Priority areas for investment are advanced technology, improving producer returns, biosecurity, soil, water and managing natural resources, adoption of R&D.</p> <p>Soil is a key area for a coordinated approach. The call ideas have been distributed to this committee, others involved in the first round and through the ACDA.</p> <p>Each jurisdiction has specific goals that align with Rural R&D for Profit and the needs of the RDCs. Proponents should contact the relevant RDC to discuss project ideas.</p>	<p>Vicki to distribute the consolidated priorities from all RD&E strategies.</p> <p>Members are encouraged to circulate the process widely.</p> <p>The committee recommended extending the date for the submission of ideas by a week to</p>	<p>Vicki Woodburn</p> <p>Committee members</p> <p>Vicki</p>	<p>3rd Sept</p> <p>September</p> <p>3rd Sept</p>

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		There will be a limited number of coordinated bids because of the limited funding (\$70 Million) and short timeframes. The scale of impact and involvement of multiple organizations will be a key consideration in selecting bids..	the 18 th September given that round 2 of the Rural R&D for Profit was still not open.	Woodburn	
3.4	Update from the Advocate for Soil Health	Agenda paper 3.4 provided as background. General Jeffery provided a verbal update and outlined his desire to have a major impact on issues related to food security. General Jeffery recognises the need to educate the public regarding the importance of soil as this will lead to policy development for maintaining healthy soil.			
3.5	The Fixing the Paddock Program – 100 selected case studies	Agenda paper 3.5 provided as background. General Jeffery outlined a proposal to select 100 case-study sites that demonstrate best practice in managing soil and enhancing productivity. The case studies will provide information for other land managers to implement improved management practices. Funding for this proposal could be sourced through the Rural R&D for Profit program. Committee members discussed the high cost of long term monitoring sites and the restrictive nature of managing these sites. It was suggested that a long term research program is required but funding needed to come from a source such as NCRIS because of the cost and scope. There also needed to significant commitment to building the infrastructure for data and information management in line with the Soil RD&E priorities 4 and 5. After wide-ranging discussion, the committee supported	Help develop a bid to the Rural R&D for Profit Program to support the extension aspects of the 100 case-study initiative. The scope would include identification of successful soil	Pauline Mooney to lead	October

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		the development of a Rural R&D for Profit proposal that focuses on the adoption and adaptation of knowledge aspects of the 100 case-study initiative.	management practices and the value of soil in terms of its natural capital. MLA is supportive of the proposal, although further discussion will take place with RIRDC and GRDC about the most appropriate RDC to support the project through the Rural R&D for Profit program.		
3.6	Outline of the proposed Soil RDE website	<p>Agenda paper 3.6 provided as background.</p> <p>Feedback about the initial design of the website provided was positive. The committee discussed the need for the website to act as a hub for information. Members suggested that the URL avoid acronyms and hyphens or dashes.</p>	Iain Young will consider discussion, select the URL for the website and provide further feedback as required.	Iain Young	3 rd Sept
3.7	R&I committee update	<p>Agenda paper 3.7 provided as background.</p> <p>The R&I Committee met on 26th August and Iain Young presented a verbal update on the meeting.</p> <p>The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry has adopted an inquiry into Agricultural Innovation with submissions open until 25th September. Iain Young offered to draft a response on behalf of the committee outlining the role of soil within agricultural systems and the impact of technology on soil health.</p> <p>The committee discussed the need to achieve improved integration across disciplines in a similar way to the former Land and Water Australia (LWRRDC).</p> <p>The analysis of CRC programs is due to be released soon.</p>	<p>The Committee was asked to respond to Iain Young about the level of interest in developing a submission.</p> <p>Invite Guy Roth to talk about the convergence of strategies.</p> <p>This committee will actively engage with other sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies and provide updates.</p>	<p>Committee Members</p> <p>Secretariat</p>	<p>18th Sept</p> <p>October</p>

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			<p>Send communiques from Soil RD&E meetings to all other RD&E committees.</p> <p>Members to provide details of other RD&E committees they are on to assist with engagement.</p>	<p>Secretariat</p> <p>Committee Members</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>September</p>
3.8	Options for implementing the Australian Soil Assessment Program	<p>Agenda paper 3.8 provided as background.</p> <p>The proposal for the Australian Soil Assessment Program (ASAP) is based on years of experience and a large effort by the NCST. Unlike other significant components of the natural environment (e.g. weather, climate, water resources), no national agency has a formal mandate for managing soil information (e.g. surveys, monitoring programs, measurement systems). CSIRO has taken on this role by default but the lack of a formal mandate creates a range of problems for resourcing and long term support. It was noted that Australia now only has a few long-term experiments and monitoring sites.</p> <p>The committee reconsidered the four options proposed for ASAP: creation of a new Bureau of Soil Resources (modelled on the much larger Bureau of Meteorology and Australian Bureau of Statistics); establish a mandated program within an existing Australian Government agency; establish a Cooperative Centre for Soil Resource Assessment (similar to a CRC); retain the status quo but establish a formal agreement is reached between governments, preferably via the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).</p> <p>It was agreed that a robust analysis of the benefits and</p>	<p>Frame a project description for an integrated analysis that covers the economic benefits of managing soil data and the monitoring of land-use and land-use change, and links through to agricultural productivity and sustainability.. Engage a consultant who has familiarity and credibility with the Productivity Commission.</p>	<p>Neil McKenzie and Paul Lawrence</p>	<p>?</p>

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		return on investment for ASAP. This review needed to consider market and non-market benefits of having better information on soils and their management. The analysis needed to be of a standard and scope comparable to those produced by the Productivity Commission.			
3.9	New activities	<p>Agenda paper 3.9 provided as background.</p> <p>There are a range of activities that have been identified as priorities for strategy implementation. Committee members were identified to assist with initiating the activities.</p>	<p>Iain Young will lead the communication plan preparation</p> <p>Michael Crawford will lead the development of the plain English version of the priorities along with Neil McKenzie, Peter Voller and Ian Anderson</p> <p>Georgina Kelly will lead the innovation competition or Hack-a-thon along with Iain Young, Karen Holmes, Peter Voller and Damien Field</p> <p>Warwick Dougherty will lead the register of field sites along with Michele Barson, Karen Holmes, Allan Williams and Paul Lawrence</p> <p>Neil McKenzie will lead the update on trends with Damien Field, Michael Crawford, Hamish Cresswell, Michele Barson and Peter Voller</p> <p>The pilot study into the value of knowledge exchange may be superseded by the natural capital project under General Jeffery. Pauline Mooney, Paul Lawrence, Georgina Kelly, Neil McKenzie and Iain Young will assist with this.</p>	Various members	Report back at the next meeting

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			Neil McKenzie will send the details of contacts for the previous Hack-a-thon to Georgina Kelly.		
3.10	Provisional summary of the NANORP and NSCP R&D programs	<p>Agenda paper 3.10 provided as background.</p> <p>These two research programs have involved a large number of scientists who have developed a significant body of knowledge. There will be benefits from accessing and maintaining this knowledge and associated data.</p> <p>The CCRSPI conference will be hosted by RIRDC 18-19 November in Sydney with a focus to present the results of the research to policy makers.</p>	Contact Ram Delal regarding plans for the management of the NCSP data and clarifying whether it will be accessible.	Secretariat	November
3.11	Annual Forum	<p>Agenda paper 3.11 provided as background.</p> <p>The committee supported the proposal of holding a workshop to prepare a position paper for presentation at Outlook 2016. The paper could cover institutional arrangements; the value of soil research; implications of changes in global food security for Australia; the export of our expertise and modes of implementation. It was suggested that successful participation in Outlook would also raise our profile.</p>	<p>The committee supported the sponsorship and participation in Outlook 2016.</p> <p>Members to nominate 20-25 people with economic, industry and/or policy understanding to assist with the development of a position paper for presentation at Outlook in 2016.</p>	Members	October
3.12	Budget	<p>Agenda paper 3.12 provided as background.</p> <p>The budget was presented to the committee. It was noted that a number of activities are yet to be costed.</p> <p>The committee was satisfied with the way the budget is presented.</p>			
	Next Meeting	26 th November in Sydney			

