

UPDATE – Managing Australia’s Soils: national collaboration

The Australian and state and territory governments are working together to improve soil management in Australia.

Background

In October 2008, the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee, a committee of Australian, state and territory governments responsible for national natural resource policy issues, released *Managing Australia’s Soils*, a policy discussion paper which investigated soil management issues and opportunities in Australia.

A total of 101 submissions were received in response to this paper, ranging from Landcare and farmer groups to research and development organisations, and natural resource management organisations to government agencies. The submissions identified opportunities to improve the coordination of soil management and information in Australia. The discussion paper and a summary of the submissions are available at www.clw.csiro.au/aclep/publications/reports.htm.

Australian, state and territory governments, through the Natural Resource Management Standing Committee, supported the adoption of a strategic approach to soil management. A Soil Task Group was established in 2009 and is exploring opportunities for national action in three priority areas:

- research and development collaboration
- coordination of soils assessment and information, monitoring and data
- linkages of extension programs, including to the National Primary Industries Research and Development and Extension framework (information available at www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/innovation/national-primary-industries).

Soils research, development and extension stocktake

An assessment of current investment and capability in soils research, development and extension (RD&E) has been undertaken to assist in research and development collaboration including linkages of extension programs. This assessment involved government agencies; Research and Development Corporations and other research funders; the CSIRO; universities; soil laboratories; private companies undertaking soils RD&E; consultants; education, extension and training providers; industry bodies; and grower/producer groups.

To inform the assessment, a questionnaire was sent to over 120 organisations involved in funding soils RD&E, undertaking soils RD&E, training soil scientists and/or communicating the results of research and development. A shorter version was sent to agricultural consultants and a survey of individual soil scientists was undertaken. If you would like more information about the questionnaire please contact michele.barson@nrm.gov.au.

The National Committee on Soil and Terrain

The National Committee on Soil and Terrain is supporting the Soil Task Group by exploring opportunities to coordinate soils assessment and information, monitoring and data, including by linking with existing and developing work in this space.

Updates

As work progresses, stakeholder involvement will be sought. Updates on this work will be made available on this website.