

Special Issue on New Zealand Soil Research—Foreword



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In 2002, the New Zealand Society of Soil Science celebrated its 50th Jubilee, and marked this significant occasion with a Golden Jubilee Conference, ‘Back to the Future’, held in Wellington, from 25 to 29 November 2002. To celebrate further, the Society sought to publish a Special Issue to commemorate the achievements of New Zealand soil scientists. The Society is grateful to the Editorial Advisory Committee of the *Australian Journal of Soil Research* for agreeing to publish this Special Issue of recent research by Society members.

On 29 April 1952, a meeting of 32 ‘soil workers’ at the New Zealand Soil Bureau agreed to form the New Zealand Society of Soil Science. N. H. Taylor, I. J. Pohlen, and A. C. Wickens were delegated to draw up a constitution. The draft rules of the Society were passed and the first Council elected on 27 August 1952. Since then, the Society has held conferences, published books, and actively continued to inform and link members through the Society newsletter *New Zealand Soil News*. Summit Quinphos is a corporate member of the Society.

Society members have organised four significant conferences: the 25th Jubilee Conference held at Flock House, 5–9 December 1977; the “Soils with Variable Charge” conference hosting Commissions IV, V, VI, and VII of the International Society of Soil Science, held in Palmerston North, 11–18 February 1981; the second joint NZSSS and Australian Soil Science Society Conference ‘New Horizons for a New Century’, held at Lincoln, 3–8 December 2000; and the Golden Jubilee Conference. Associated with the 1981 and 2000 conferences, the Society published the following books: *Soils with Variable Charge*, edited by Dr Benny K. G. Theng, and *Jubilee Reminiscences: Fifty years of soil science memories* edited by Dr John A. Adams. Other significant Society publications include *Soils in the New Zealand Landscape: the living mantle* by Dr Les Molloy, with photography by Quentin Christie, and the *Soil Groups of New Zealand* series. For his work, Les was the first New Zealander to receive the John K. Taylor Gold Medal of the Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated. This medal is awarded every 4 years by the ASSSI for excellence in both soil research and its communication.

The Society’s Golden Jubilee Conference was very successful. It was well attended, and there was an appropriate mix of discussions about the past, the present, and the challenges

of the future. An excellent field trip covered a range of land uses and soil types, and culminated at a vineyard restaurant. All participants enjoyed a memorable conference dinner and award ceremony, where Professor Tom Walker gave the after-dinner speech and Dr Jim Pollock responded with the reply.

It has been pleasing to see how our Society membership has responded to the offer to contribute to this Special Issue of the Journal. This was at a time when a number of members were involved in the complex business of bidding for their science funds, and many papers are additional outputs over and above those required under New Zealand's contractual funding system. My thanks to Society Council member, Dr Chris McLay, for liaising with our members and the Journal editors, Jenny Fegent and Saumitra Banerjee, to ensure the quality of papers. There are 15 papers in this Special Issue, which highlight the breadth and vitality of the soil research being undertaken in New Zealand. Authors come from a number of Crown Research Institutes and universities, and there is one contribution from a private consultant. The topics address soil-related issues encountered in dairying, horticulture, and forestry, as well as environmental topics, and soil matters in Antarctica.

This Special Issue and the joint conferences organised by the New Zealand and Australian Soil Science Societies represent the strength of the ANZAC relationship between soil-minded people in our two countries. I hope this Special Issue will both strengthen this relationship, and connect antipodean soil researchers with their global colleagues.