

Learning more about **your soil**



Greg Chapman¹, Ian Packer¹, John Lawrie¹ and Stephen Pereira²

1 - NSW Soil Knowledge Network <http://www.nswskn.com/>

2 - Central West Local Land Services, Grenfell
<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/regions/central-west>

Soil: the interface between **geology, climate, atmosphere** and **biology**
Soil is a crucial natural resource for every farm.



How well do you know your soils? How do you check to see if you are caring for your soil or are you running it down? We help landholders understand local soil characteristics and consider sustainable farm management.

The NSW Soil Knowledge Network (SKN) runs workshops focusing on sustainable management for local soils. We do this in conjunction with organisations such as Local Land Services and would like to work more closely with Landcare.

SKN draws on soil science and expert knowledge to help tailor soil and land management for local conditions. We don't sell fertiliser, secret potions or reptile oils- but share practical knowledge. We encourage landholders to use a spade to help monitor their own soil's health.



The NSW Soil Knowledge Network (SKN) is a small non-profit group of semi-retired soil experts. Our purpose is harness and share our soil knowledge and experience to improve the management of soils in NSW

Each group member has peer recognised strengths in combinations of soil research, soil mapping, property planning or soil extension.

Conclusions

SKN has demonstrated success in designing and delivering soil workshops which meet specific local needs.

The SKN would like to hear from you.

Contact us at

nswsoilsknowledgenetwork@outlook.com

References

McInnes-Clarke, S.K., Jenkins, B.R., Rawson, A. & Murphy, B.W. (2019). Sharing soil knowledge and evaluating progress in the NSW Soil Knowledge Network. *Soil Use and Management*. doi:10.1111/sum.12502.

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SKN soil workshops

- We ask farmers what they want to know about soils in their local area. We translate technical soils info to *practical on-ground management practices to help improve soil health*
- We combine hands-on, practical theory, soil testing and soil pits. Get dirty hands and learn to look at soil
- We deliver clear soil health messages
- We present according to participant knowledge, skills and situation. We recognise that profit may not be the main driver
- We build confidence and trust through our expertise and encourage discussion of farmer-led innovations
- We provide practical take home notes.

Workshop feedback:

- At our last six workshops all landholders gave a minimum score of 7/10 and half scored 10/10
- The most popular elements were the soil pits; hands-on basic soil testing and analysis of attendee soil samples.



Other SKN activities

- Videos on soil management, reading profiles, iconic soils and soil factors e.g. sodicity, salinity – see YouTube
- 'Train the Trainer' soil workshops for Agribusiness and soil professionals
- Scanning to make unavailable soil information accessible
- Field trips for soil professionals and students
- SKN has an annual stand at the Australian National Field Day in Orange.

