

# ASPAC

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Australasian Soil and Plant Analysis Council Inc.  
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[www.aspac-australasia.com](http://www.aspac-australasia.com)  
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### FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



With the recent substantial acceleration in fertiliser prices worldwide, the need for reliable analysis to monitor soil and plant levels has increased. The ability of the LPC to continue to provide laboratories with their performance results now becomes even more important. With our association with Fertcare™, the role of the LPC will

become even more vital in the future. Under audit provisions agreed to by FIFA and ASPAC, all Fertcare C accredited advisors must use an ASPAC proficient laboratory for all analytes reported.

Ken Peverill has now resigned from many years of service to the LPC and Dave Lyons has agreed to become a member of the LPC. Ken was farewelled from the LPC at a surprise dinner held in his honour after the executive meeting and AGM, and prior to the December meeting of the LPC. Ken will continue to provide a valuable service to ASPAC as a member and mentor in various areas.



Photo: Ken Peverill (right) receiving plaque from ASPAC chairman David Orr

Changes to our constitution to bring it up to date and to comply with Victorian Consumer Affairs regulations were agreed to at the Special General Meeting held at Indooroopilly in December prior to our AGM. Future changes should only be minor and should be able to be amended at future AGMs. The minutes from the AGM will be available on the website.

Trust you all had an enjoyable festive season with family and friends.

David Orr

### George Rayment Travel Award

ASPAC Inc. would like to congratulate the winner of this year's Study Travel Awards, Ehsan Tavakkoli



#### Background - Ehsan Tavakkoli

Ehsan, a PhD student in School of Agriculture, Food and Wine at the University of Adelaide graduated with a top degree from his high school in 1999 and started to study Agricultural Science at Ferdowsi University in Mashad, Iran; where he graduated in 2004 receiving his bachelor degree of Agricultural Sciences in branch of Soil Science.

On completion of his BSc, Ehsan decided to continue his academic life in Australia, where he successfully completed his MSc degree with high distinction in soil fertility and plant nutrition in September 2006 at University of New England, Australia. During his MSc research, he focused on silicon nutrition of rice and its effect in enhancing economical and agricultural rice production. Ehsan's particular focus is on the ways that agriculture makes its environmental management decisions. His work involves the invention and extension of new techniques and processes that can help in this decision making for having a sustainable fertility and nutrition management in both soil and plant.

In July 2007, Ehsan was awarded a PhD scholarship from GRDC and the University of Adelaide to investigate the osmotic and ionic effects of salinity on growth of cereal crops in dryland farming systems. Ehsan is passionate about his chosen career path and feels privileged and honoured for the opportunity to be said student and a research scientist. He believes that education is not just about job skills but also about teaching people to be good global citizens, building cohesive societies and caring for the environment and for each other.

## New Members

ASPAC extends a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined in the last half of 2007.

Corporate Members:

- Australian Soil Monitoring Services Pty Ltd, Wembley, WA.
- Veritec, Rotorua, NZ
- Advanced Nutrients Pty Ltd., Albany Creek, QLD

Individual Members:

- Dr Andrew Fletcher (University of Queensland)
- Eshan Tavakkoli (Student, School of Food and Wine, Waite Campus, University of Adelaide)
- Ashween Ram (Lautoka, Fiji)
- Raj Setia (Student, Waite Campus, University of Adelaide)

## Technicians' Training Course in Soil Analysis

The first of what is planned to be a series of courses was held over two days at the Natural Resource Sciences Chemistry Centre, Indooroopilly, Queensland, in mid October 2007. The course was sponsored by ASPAC and free to members.

We were very pleased with the speedy registration of participants and the keen interest from people willing to give their time to help present the course. We would particularly like to thank the team at the NRSc centre for their generosity, co-operation and enthusiasm.

The course was aimed at technicians who carry out soil analyses, and our mission was to improve performance of a few methods that consistently show a wide spread of data in proficiency testing rounds. The methods chosen were pH, Cl, extractable P (Bray, Olsen and Colwell) and Phosphorous Buffer Index. Also included in the program were presentations on quality control, critical review of real data sets and an insight into how the data is used by agronomists and researchers. A selection of the presentations will be put on the website, for the benefit of members who were not able to attend. We also had a very interesting and informative tour of the laboratories.

The merry bunch of soil analysts who attended the course can be seen in the photo below:



We had participants from all Australian states (except NT), New Zealand and Fiji. There was a good spread of organisations with representatives from government, university and private laboratories.



Overall the course was well received and enjoyed by all. A summary of the feedback on general categories is given below:

	Excellent				Poor
	1	2	3	4	5
Organisation	15	4			
Venue	12	5	2		
Course Content	8	9	2		
Course Format	11	6	1	1	
Course Length	11	7		1	
Course Notes	14	5			

We are currently making plans for the next course, which will concentrate on plant analyses and be held in the latter part of 2008. Once rough details have been agreed we will again canvas member opinion on content etc.

Janice Trafford  
ACT Representative for ASPAC

## REMINDER!!!

### Applications for the 2008 Plant Nutrition Trust Award close on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2008

THE PLANT NUTRITION TRUST has been established to encourage and promote research and technology transfer in the mineral nutrition of plants, soil fertility and fertiliser and soil amendment technology, and includes areas where these impinge on other fields such as plant breeding.

THE TRUST invites applications for awards to assist in carrying out a study tour or to attend a conference or such other activity related to the stated objectives.

*Application forms can be obtained from:*

Dr Peter Randall  
CSIRO Plant Industry  
GPO Box 1600  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Fax: (02) 6246 5000  
e-mail: Peter.Randall@csiro.au



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## 2008 Study Travel Award

Each year ASPAC dedicates its Study Travel award to a long-standing contributor to the organisation. For 2008, ASPAC has the pleasure of naming the award after Rosalie Strachan.

## Background on Rosalie Strachan



Rosalie was originally employed by BHP Port Kembla as a Cadet Industrial Chemist. She worked full time as a chemist at the Central Laboratory, and studied part time.

Rosalie qualified and worked for three years in the raw materials assay laboratory and as a development chemist to assess new technology applications for Iron and Steel making.

After resigning from BHP, Rosalie travelled extensively overseas with her husband, Graham, for six months.

On return to Australia, Rosalie successfully applied for a chemist position with AFL - Australian Fertilizers Ltd at Port Kembla, where she analysed raw materials such as phosphate rocks, sulfur, sulphuric acid, fertilizer products and environmental samples from the manufacturing site for 3 years.

Rosalie became involved with soil analysis in 1983 when the AFL Chester Hill (Sydney) soil laboratory was transferred to Port Kembla. She was appointed as the soil laboratory supervisor and gained extensive expertise in method development and electronic data acquisition. The Port Kembla was the first lab to develop electronic downloading of pH readings from a Radiometer pH meter using a simple Commodore 64 computer.

In 1985 AFL and CFL (Queensland) merged to form Incitec Ltd and the decision was made to keep both laboratories.

In 1992, Rosalie was appointed as Manager for both laboratories, based in Port Kembla. In 1996 she supervised the upgrading of the Brisbane Incitec Laboratory to meet OH&S regulations. In 1999 the Port Kembla Incitec laboratory was closed and all operations centred in Brisbane. Rosalie worked as Analytical Services Manager for Incitec looking after the Brisbane soil and manufacturing laboratories. She also had a responsibility as part of the Sales and Marketing team to assess new businesses and technologies.

In 1996 Rosalie was nominated as the NSW ASPAC representative, and worked as Vice Chairman to Dr Leigh Sparrow. She attended the 5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium in Bloomington USA as the ASPAC representative.

Rosalie went on to become the ASPAC Chairperson from November 1998 to November 2000.

In 1999 Rosalie worked with Dr David Edwards and his symposium planning team to run the very successful ASPAC 6<sup>th</sup> International Symposium in Brisbane in March 1999.

During the 1998-2000 ASPAC period Rosalie initiated the investigation and development of the ASPAC P

Sorption / Buffer Index PBI test, in conjunction with a group of Australia wide researchers.

Rosalie retired from full time work in December 2001. She now works two days a week for a small family owned chemical manufacturer in Nowra.

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## News from the Soil and Plant Analysis Council (SPAC)

Change has occurred within the SPAC Group in North America.

Dr Byron Vaughan, long-serving Honorary Secretary - Treasurer of SPAC, has stepped down. He is now Vice President of A&L Eastern Labs in Virginia. He had been looking to become a lab owner for several years and now has the opportunity.

Dr Robert Miller, who is well known to many in Australasia, is the new Secretary - Treasure of the SPAC.

His official email contact is: [secretary@spcouncil.com](mailto:secretary@spcouncil.com).

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## 11th International Symposium on Soil and Plant Analysis

Preliminary details on the 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Soil and Plant Analysis have been posted on the public website of SPAC

<http://www.spcouncil.com/symposium.htm>

The Symposium is to be held at Santa Rosa, California, from 21-25 July, 2009.

Main topics at the Symposium are:

- Water Analysis
- Managing nutrients in a vineyard
- Petiole and soil testing in vineyards
- Turf analysis
- Precision Ag
- Global warming
- Management for bio-fuels.

The three workshop topics are:

- Laboratory proficiency
- Sample preservation
- Interpreting soils and petioles from vineyards.

# 2008 Joint Soils Conference

**New Zealand Society of Soil Science &  
Australian Society of Soil Science  
Incorporated**

**in conjunction with the International Year  
of Planet Earth 2008**

## **SOIL - the living skin of Planet Earth**

Palmerston North, New Zealand,

1 - 5 December 2008

More information is available on the website:

<http://conferences.massey.ac.nz/Soils2008/index.htm>

Important dates at a glance	
Abstract Deadline	1st March 2008
Early Registration	1st June 2008
Extended Abstract Deadline	1st July 2008
Pre-Conference Field Trip	28 - 30th November 2008
Conference	1 - 5th December 2008
Post-Conference Field Trips	6 - 9th December 2008

### ASPAC Inc. Executive Committee & State Representatives for 2007/08



Photo: ASPAC Inc. Executive Committee & State Representatives for 2007/08 at Indooroopilly, Nov 2007.

Left to right: Vlad Kawaljenko (NT), Roger Hill (NZ), Claire Russell (newsletter editor), Andrew Poole (treasurer), David Orr (Chairman), Paul Milham (NSW), Janice Trafford (ACT), Brian Daly (secretary), Geof Proudfoot (WA), Bruce Shelley (VIC), Teresa Fowles (SA)

Absent: Chris Dowling (Vice chairman & QLD rep)

### ASPAC Inc. Executive Committee & State Representatives 2007 - 2008

Chairperson & Tasmanian Representative  
Mr David Orr  
Ph: 0418 130 764 Fax: 03 6336 9589  
email: [dorr@impactfert.com.au](mailto:dorr@impactfert.com.au)

Vice-Chairperson & Queensland Representative  
Chris Dowling  
Ph: +61 7 3821 2651 Fax: +61 7 3821 3544  
email: [CDowling@nutrientms.com.au](mailto:CDowling@nutrientms.com.au)

Secretary  
Mr Brian Daly  
Ph: +64 6353 4901 Fax: +64 6353 4801  
email: [DalyB@landcare.co.nz](mailto:DalyB@landcare.co.nz)

Treasurer  
Andrew Poole  
Ph: +685 24345 (n.b Samoa) Fax: +61 3 5622 0806  
Mob.: +61 428 280 223  
email: [atpoole@hotmail.com](mailto:atpoole@hotmail.com)

New South Wales Representative  
Mr Paul Milham  
Ph: +61 2 6391 3899 Fax: +61 2 6391 3899  
email: [paul.milham@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:paul.milham@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

ACT Representative  
Ms Janice Trafford  
email: [jtraff@tpg.com.au](mailto:jtraff@tpg.com.au)

Victoria Representative  
Mr. Bruce Shelley  
Ph: 03 9742 8716  
email: [Bruce.Shelley@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:Bruce.Shelley@dpi.vic.gov.au)

South Australia Representative  
Teresa Fowles  
Ph: +61 8 8303 7391 Fax: +61 8 8303 7109  
email: [teresa.fowles@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:teresa.fowles@adelaide.edu.au)

Western Australia Representative  
Dr Geof Proudfoot  
Ph: 08 9434 4600 Fax: 08 9434 4611  
email: [Geof.Proudfoot@csbp.com.au](mailto:Geof.Proudfoot@csbp.com.au)

Northern Territory Representative  
Mr Vlad Kawaljenko  
Ph: 08 8999 2273 Fax: 08 8999 2111  
email: [Vlad.Kawaljenko@nt.gov.au](mailto:Vlad.Kawaljenko@nt.gov.au)

New Zealand Representative  
Dr Roger Hill  
Ph: +64 7858 2801 Fax: +64 7858 2001  
email: [Roger.Hill@hill-labs.co.nz](mailto:Roger.Hill@hill-labs.co.nz)

Website Administrator  
Mr George Hill  
Ph: +64 7858 2862 Fax: +64 7858 2001  
email: [georgerhill@gmail.com](mailto:georgerhill@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor  
Claire Russell  
Ph: 0419 004 694 Fax: 03 6336 9589  
email: [crussell@impactfert.com.au](mailto:crussell@impactfert.com.au)

#### **Published by:**

Australasian Soil & Plant Analysis Council Inc. (ASPAC),  
P.O. Box 1349, Warragul, Victoria 3820, Australia  
Registered Office - cnr Sneydes & South Roads,  
Werribee VIC 3030 Australia

**[www.aspac-australasia.com](http://www.aspac-australasia.com)**