

# Students gather in Cairns for national 'soil judging' competition

Soil Science Australia Monday, June 21st, 2021



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Students from universities around Australia will be gathering in Cairns later this week for the 9<sup>th</sup> National Soil Judging Competition, hosted by Soil Science Australia. The event is running in the lead-up to the joint Australia/New Zealand National Soils Conference.

Teams consist of up to four students (both undergraduate and postgraduate students are permitted) and a 'coach'. The aim is less about picking the best soil but more about education and training of the students. They develop their skills in team work, communication and most importantly, describing and understanding soils and landscapes. Participants will be looking at soils around Cairns (JCU and East Trinity) as well as the Tablelands. They get two days of practice (Friday and Saturday) prior to competition on Sunday.

The event is not just for students - it is also a critical training event for academics and professionals to exchange knowledge and ensure university teaching is current with industry practice.

The event is part of a long-running partnership between Soil Science Australia and universities to train the next generation of soil scientists. This is critical to the implementation of initiatives such as the recently announced National Soil Strategy.

It is a hotly contested event with prizes given for best teams and individuals, although this year the trans-Tasman rivalry will be absent - coronavirus restrictions preventing the attendance of teams from New Zealand.

### Dr Andrew Biggs CPSS

### Soil Judging Convenor

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