

John McLean Bennett: IUSS Jeju Award 2018

John McLean Bennett, Associate Professor of Soil Science at the University of Southern Queensland, grew up on a sheep and cattle station situated in semi-arid rangeland (New South Wales) where he developed a strong linkage to the land, agriculture and resource management. He subsequently graduated the Australian National University with a Bachelor of Science (Resource and Environmental Management) with Honours (Soil Science), and The University of Sydney with a PhD (Soil Science). Through these degrees he grew a strong appreciation for taking a systems approach to soil management, which he has taken into his leadership positions with his university and as Federal President of Soil Science Australia.

John is a soil physicist with expertise in soil structure. His research falls into three key areas, with an overarching context of soil security and digital rural futures: 1) Applied soils and irrigation projects in collaboration with agricultural/mining industries, 2) Fundamental research directed towards understanding water quality interactions with soil physical and chemical mechanisms and processes; and 3) Agricultural extension and data management. He seeks to use fundamental understanding of soil physics and chemistry to move theoretical approaches towards catchment scale prediction and decision management tools.