

NSS life membership to Leet

PASKEVILLE agronomist Leighton "Leet" Wilksch received live membership at the Northern Sustainable Soil Group's annual general meeting on April 5.

A soil amelioration demo day at Mundooro preceded the AGM, held at the Mundooro Sporting Club.

Guest speaker was soil amelioration expert Wayne Parker from the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia; NSS had sponsorship to fly him in especially for the day.

Leet has been an NSS member for 10 years, and been its trials coordinator all that time; he has also been the group's executive officer for the past six years.

The main driver for farmer-based trial work in recent years looking at soil amelioration techniques, he spends considerable time organising trial work funding, including from GRDC, SAGIT, Northern and Yorke NRM, and Landcare.

Leet is continuing his role on the NSS committee and sees the group as a link between growers and researchers, a way to trial the latest farming techniques and deliver research information to growers.

Of all the grower groups in South Australia, the NSS is the only one that does not employ a full-time EO or secretary.

"This is a credit to Leet and the constant work he does behind the scenes," Paul Ackland said.

NSS is a grower group encompassing the northern Yorke Peninsula region; its focus is profitability and sustainability in the dune/swale landscape of NYP.

The group has had a focus on soil amelioration for the past two years, with a number of trials looking at spading, delving, spreading chicken manure, and spreading cereal straw to improve yields on low nutritional sand hills.

NSS has 60 members and sponsors, and received the Ag Excellence Award in 2011.



■ **LIFE MEMBERSHIP...** Former executive officer Chris Davey presents Leighton Wilksch with life membership at NSS AGM.



■ **GUEST SPEAKER...** At the NSS soil amelioration day are Ash Mildren, Stefan Schmitt and DAFWA guest speaker Wayne Parker.

Grains Industry Trust supports research projects

THE South Australian Grain Industry Trust has received a record 49 applications for research projects in 2017.

The trust has allocated \$3million for 26 projects covering topics such as the use of drones, frost management, nitrogen-use efficiency, copper management, molecular selection for heat stress tolerance in peas, Khapra beetle extension and cereal aphid risk assessment.

SAGIT chair Michael Treloar said the trust,

which is funded through a grower levy of 30 cents per tonne, had been pleased to be able to increase funding support this year on the back of the record-breaking South Australian harvest.

"We continue to be pleased with the quality and diversity of project applications we receive and we believe these new projects will provide some excellent outcomes for growers with a real mix of extension, communication and scientific projects," he said.

In addition, SAGIT has continued funding grower groups which are members of the Ag Excellence Alliance to cover costs associated with hosting guest speakers.

"We want to ensure growers across the state have access to a range of national and international expertise in growing the best crops they can, so it is vital we support the grower groups in bringing these experts to SA," Mr Treloar said.



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