

# Transformations in our paddocks

This morning you can't deny it - Winter is on the way! The heater was needed! The Butternut pumpkins in the backyard are very visible now on their dried vines – fruit of a compost enriched soil.

## At home

The soil in the backyard and paddocks is very dry now – the last heavy rain in January, but a memory. As David Drage said in his “In my paddock”, stopping soil erosion is now his most important job. We await in hope a good Break!



Out in the bigger paddocks, the gilgai soils are cracked and in danger of going to powder on the surface, but stubble protects them. The rams are out there enjoying the company of the ewes - doing their job on the farm.

## Hamilton

Further afield, I have been to two fantastic soil days down at Hamilton run by their Dept Eco Dev. The first was a general introduction to soils and the second more specific about sub-surface manuring of soils. There are trials in the Wimmera of this now. It will be good to hear how this well this goes in our soils.

## Global

Going into the global paddock, (yes!) I have been busy preparing for the Global Soils Week (GSW), April 19-23. It's an opportunity that was offered to me in late February, for a concept I had not yet had time to fully develop. But, I agreed, fast-tracked it, and enlarged it from a Wimmera base to an Australian one - perhaps foolishly, given the challenges!

So why do it and invite you to be a part of it? I wrote in January's “In my paddock” that “The Wimmera is our regional paddock, with fantastic food production and natural beauty, all supported by our soils.” How could I pass a unique opportunity to promote our soils, agricultural produce and tourist potential, even knowing it would be big effort and mostly unpaid (travel and accommodation paid). I would have created the on-line soils resource anyway, but the extra benefit was creating a display to promote Wimmera and Australia on a world stage for soils.

## Over to you

What do you do to put your paddock into this, to show your soils and what they produce and how you manage that? You will need half an hour. Go to the website <http://soils.enviroed4all.com.au/soil-selfies/> for the instructions on the three photos needed and comments to fill in on the form.doc . Choose your soil/use. Photos. Notes. Email them to me at [enviroed4all@gmail.com](mailto:enviroed4all@gmail.com) before Easter in time for my planning the display, later for inclusion in the web resource only.



The GSW theme is *Soils – the substance of transformation*. How does this theme fit your soils/uses and the Soil Selfies? The three photo themes support it. The close-up soil photos show the *substance*. (I'm hoping to have a display with soils graded by colours from reds through yellows, whites, browns and blacks, if I get enough contributions.) The use photos will show the *transformation*. (I'm hoping to feature agricultural produce with other uses around them eg pottery, foundations for buildings, aesthetics, mining, if I get enough contributions.) The challenge/management strategies will show the *of*, the process that make soil able to be used in these ways. (I'm hoping for natural and mechanical ways, but it will depend on contributions.)

So this is my paddock at the moment, extended out to you, going to show “Aussie Soil Selfies” to the world in Berlin, with hopefully a focus on the Wimmera! From our farm base, I cannot travel out to interview people to create this. So I've been busy on twitter, facebook, linked in, emails, media visits and phone calls. So now, I'm checking for contributions, to discover the “Soil Selfies” I will have to work with. ... exciting.... scary!



## Soils Year

As this project aims to capture individuals' valuing their soils, I hope you will look at your soils like this – it's the first aim of the IY Soils – and share with any children. I hope you will also contribute your Soil Selfies! In any case, I hope you will look at the collection in later April or early May, when I have had time to put it on the web, and see how people see soil as a substance of transformation!