



Lincoln University Bledisloe Medal

Dr Allan Hewitt

‘To be a successful farmer, one must first know the nature of the soil,’ wrote Greek philosopher Xenophon around the 4th century BC.

The importance of ‘knowing the nature of the soil’ has been axiomatic in the life’s work of pedologist and Lincoln University alumnus Dr Allan Edward Hewitt.

Dr Hewitt has made an outstanding scientific contribution to soil classification, land evaluation and soil mapping in New Zealand and also overseas.

He is the sole author of the New Zealand Soil Classification, the accepted source for naming, characterising, mapping, sampling and reporting for the national inventory of soils in New Zealand.

The publication of the New Zealand Soil Classification in 1992 was acknowledged as a ‘major milestone in New Zealand soil science’. It was the culmination of some 10 years of work by Dr Hewitt and others.

To meet the demands today for digitally available descriptions of soil characteristics, Dr Hewitt pioneered the extension of his opus into New Zealand’s spatial soil information system S-map.

Dr Hewitt’s lifetime contribution to soil classification has provided the foundation for training an entire generation of undergraduates, emerging scientists and farmers with the critical skills needed for soil and land management across New Zealand.

International recognition for the New Zealand Soil Classification is evidenced by its translation into Spanish and the adoption of many of its features by China for its own national classification system.

The wide use of Dr Hewitt’s soil classification has enhanced New Zealand’s reputation for teaching and research in soil science.

Dr Hewitt is a past President of the New Zealand Soil Science Society and former Senior Pedologist and Research Leader at Landcare Research. After studying at Lincoln, he later completed a PhD in Agronomy at Cornell University.

Lincoln University’s Bledisloe Medal recognises outstanding contributions ‘advancing New Zealand’s interests’. Dr Alan Hewitt’s career in soil science readily fulfils this requirement.

Professor Bruce McKenzie
Vice-Chancellor

Bruce Gemmell
Chancellor