



## News release

4 December 2009

# Flushing out changes for national award

New discoveries into soil physics could change the way farmers apply fertilisers in a rain-strapped future.

La Trobe University's Dr Clayton Robert Butterly has been honoured with one of Australia's most prestigious science accolades for students, the CG Stephens Award.

The award is presented annually by the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc (ASSSI) for the best PhD thesis in soil science.

The CG Stephens Award Committee said: "The work is particularly topical, given the forecast changes to global weather patterns, more erratic rainfall patterns and high-intensity summer thunderstorms.

"Dr Butterly found that increases in phosphorus (P) after rewetting were transient and rapid immobilisation of P by microbes occurred, which might limit the availability of this nutrient to plants."

The thesis, undertaken at the University of Adelaide, could help manage soil carbon and soil nutrients.

Dr Butterly was announced as the award winner at the Leeper Lecture, held in Melbourne on November 27.

Mr MacEwan said: "The work comprised soil chemical and biological methodology in well-designed and executed experiments, using a wide range of soils from different climates.

"The thesis was written in a clear concise manner, with great attention to detail. The conclusions were soundly supported by the evidence reported."

ASSSI works toward the advancement of soil science in the professional, academic and technical fields.

**ENDS**

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