

EXTENSIONNET

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The Inaugural (1999) APEN Award for Excellence in Extension



The Inaugural (1999) APEN Award for Excellence in Extension was won by Ian Simpson. He is seen here, at the 1999 APEN National Forum in Perth with the plaque which was presented to him by the then APEN President, John Bourne.

The nomination of Ian Simpson for the APEN Award for Excellence in Extension, was based on his ground-breaking work in establishing and overseeing a network of producer driven committees across southern Australia. This producer network is part of SGS (Sustainable Grazing Systems) was initiated by MLA (Meat & Livestock Australia) and is funded by a range of partners. While Ian Simpson was nominated for the award, it is recognised that the achievements belong to the Regional Producer Network as a whole.

Ian Simpson has taken the concept of producer 'participation' in an agriculture research, development and extension program, and driven it to producer 'ownership'. The success of Ian's efforts is not just anecdotal – there have been two separate, independent reviews – one of SGS as a whole, and one specifically of the Regional Producer Network. Both reviews have highlighted the quality of producers Ian attracted to the network; the power of the processes he used; and the degree of ownership, determination to achieve, and practical outcomes that are being generated by the processes.

In summary, Ian Simpson and the Regional Producer Network have established a new benchmark against which future R, D & E programs will be judged.

The four other nominations for the award were:

- ♦Mark Walton with the DNRE **Target 10** project in the Victorian Dairy Industry
- ♦Emily Gulliver, DNRE with the **Farm\$mart** project 'Laying Foundations for Our Future (Series A)."
- ♦David Francis, Greening Australia Queensland (Inc), with the **Freeway Greening Project**
- ♦Adjunct Associate Professor Bob Macadam and colleagues from the Centre for Systemic Development at

the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury, (Dennis Lambourne, Bruce McKenzie, Don Lundie-Jenkins, Garry Wallace, Elwin Turnbull, Ken Langford, Sharan KC, Roger Attwater and Roger Roberts) with the **The Industry Learning and Leadership Development Program for the Oil Palm Industry Corporation of Papua New Guinea (OPIC)**

All nominations were given Highly Commended Certificates by the Committee of Management. These high class examples of extension will be featured in following *ExtensionNets* (Ed).



New President elected at the 1999 AGM in Perth

Jane Fisher, Agriculture Victoria with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and based at Knoxfield in Melbourne, was elected to the position of President of APEN at the AGM held on 11th November, 1999 in Perth. Jane has been on the Committee of Management as a committee member since the 1998 AGM at Roseworthy, SA and was previously on the Committee of Management in 1995/96. Jane replaces John Bourne who was President from the 1996 AGM in Melbourne.



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From the Chair

Jane Fisher

It is an honour to be elected to the chair of APEN. The organisation has gained a great deal of recognition and momentum since its inception at the APEC conference on the Gold Coast in 1993. I would like to congratulate John Bourne, the second national president of APEN, on a successful presidency and to thank him for a job well done.



The new members of the national Committee of Management (CoM) are Jon Warren of AgWA, John James of the Rural Extension Centre, Gatton and Greg Cock of PIRSA. I look forward to working with those who have remained on the committee - Amabel Fulton, Sally Marsh, Horrie Poussard, John McKenzie, Chris Souness, and Emma Robinson. Dick Kuiper is returning to Holland, so we would like another committee member from New Zealand - anyone interested? (Please contact Rosemary at the Secretariat).

The committee has met twice since the AGM. It was a treat to meet some of the committee in person in Perth, and the energy and enthusiasm of the new committee promises a fascinating two years. Plans were made for developing APEN as the major carrier for extension in Australia, perhaps as centre of excellence. We hope to bring players together for a meeting in Melbourne by June 2000.

Jeff Coutts of the Rural Extension Centre has agreed to convene the 3rd International APEN Conference. The CoM has started the sponsorship ball rolling with a \$2000 loan to the organising committee.

We plan to make *ExtensionNet* a more rigorous publication, watch this space for details.

John James has negotiated for an email server for APEN members to be set up through REC, and we are revamping the membership brochure.

Horrie Poussard is keen that we remain solvent. His motion that membership fees be raised was rejected in favour of increasing the number of members we have. If you know someone who should be a member, invite them to join. If you live in an area without a chapter, and feel the need to communicate with other people in extension - start one! The Chapter will receive \$10 per financial member, and support and encouragement from all of us.

We want to service the needs of you, our membership. So let us know what direction you think that the organisation should go in, and what steps we need to take to make APEN an even bigger better and brighter organisation than it is now.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the West Australian chapter for running an excellent conference - the meeting ran to time, with some remarkable speakers, and intriguing topics. Well Done Amanda Miller, Lisa Blacklock and team.



PRESIDENTS REPORT TO THE FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



John Bourne

It is great to be able to present this 1999 report in Perth. Up until 12 months ago most of APEN's activities had occurred in the eastern states. I remember thinking as we were arranging the 1998 National Forum in Adelaide, that this was an important milestone in making APEN a national organisation. Well we now have another equally important milestone in 1999, because Amanda Miller and the WA committee have done nothing short of a superb job in organising the Forum for this year.

I am also particularly pleased that Agriculture WA have taken the opportunity to use this Forum, and the preceding two days of internal meetings, to focus on the discipline of extension. A strength of APEN is its networking across state borders, but equally APEN strives to complement the activities of state agencies (as well as private sector extension and nationally based R&D funders). I think that both have been achieved here in Perth this week.

Annual reports are times to recognise people who work tirelessly and unselfishly. There are a lot of these sorts of people in APEN, which is why we have gone from strength to strength. I can't mention everyone of course but I would like to mention a few.

We very much appreciated the input on the Committee of Management this year of **new**

members, **Jane Fisher (Vic)**, **Amabel Fulton (Tas)**, **John McKenzie (NSW)**, **Sally Marsh (WA)** and **Emma Robinson (Qld)**. We welcomed back **Horrie Poussard (Vic)** as treasurer after his consultancies in Vietnam. While Horrie was away **Bob Edgar** did a great job filling in, and although I have already thanked him several times I would like to repeat that again formally at this AGM.

Elwin Turnbull from UWSH has continued to coordinate *ExtensionNet* in a very professional manner, but has now indicated that he would like a rest from this position. APEN has relied a lot on UWSH for *ExtensionNet* editors over recent years, and we very much appreciate the work they have put in. Never-the-less we do now need a new editor and I would ask that you all think seriously about who could do this task, and pass any suggestions to Rosemary Currie.

As a follow-up to the theme of the 1998 Forum on Government and Private Sector Partnerships in Extension, **Peter Davies (NSW)** has put together a funding proposal to RIRDC for a part time consultancy to look at the factors that lead to successful partnerships. We had some initial discussions on this during the 1998 Forum, and the funding application takes this further by proposing in-depth case studies. We expect to hear if we have been successful in about a month's time.

Peter finishes his term as Vice President this year and I would like to thank him sincerely for his input over a number of years.

During the year we advertised nationally for tenders for a new **secretariat** contract. We received a number of expressions of interest and three final tenders. A subcommittee of Peter Davies, Bob Edgar, Amabel Fulton and myself assessed the tenders against a set of criteria that included an understanding of extension methods, people networks, facilities to carry out the work and a tender price.

I am very happy to confirm that **Rosemary Currie of Creative Management Services** was successful. Her tender most closely met all of the criteria, particularly an understanding of extension methods and extension people. The competition for the position was very strong and the decision reflects Roe's dedication to the secretariat and efficient and effective mode of operation.

A new initiative for 1999 has been **the inaugural award for Excellence in Extension**, suggested by Amabel Fulton early in the year. Many professional societies recognise excellence in their fields, and extension should be no different. The response to this award was quite astounding and confirmed an urgent need for such an award being available.

The Committee of Management selected a winner from a set of criteria that included, the development of extension principles in the work, evidence of efficiency and effectiveness, and the applicability of the work in the broader practice of extension. Applications were invited from either individuals or groups.

In working through this process it was very obvious that we were looking at top class examples of extension. Because this was the

inaugural award, I suspect that this first year could well have been the most difficult to judge. There is virtually no other similar mechanism of recognition, and the committee felt that we were looking at the cream of Australian extension in recent years all at once. I should add that this was quite a humbling experience.

Despite this the award was unanimously given to Ian Simpson, Extension Facilitator for Meat and Livestock Australia's Sustainable Grazing Systems Program, well done Ian.

Some other highlights for the year included some overseas visitors, in particular

- ♦ Neils Roling and Janice Jiggins from Waageningen, and
- ♦ Professor Gary Jackson from the University of Wisconsin USA. Garry held a seminar organised by Jane Fisher of the Melbourne Chapter.

There were a few things we started on during the year but didn't finish.

We still urgently need a strategic plan for APEN. The Committee of Management began a process, led by Chris Sounness, early in the year. Unfortunately Chris has been on extended leave overseas most of 1999 and so we hope that this can be finalised when he returns early next year.

Despite efforts by Horrie Poussard linking with the Pacific component of APEN has proved to be difficult. I am sure that we can continue to work on this but perhaps more importantly APEN needs now to begin to make links with relevant organisations overseas. even beyond the Pacific. APEN members visit overseas countries in a range of roles from time to time, and the opportunity is there to promote our strengths,

build links and eventually develop programs in partnership, with appropriate back-up funding.

On several occasions we have discussed an upgrade of our Website. The over-riding factor holding us back has been lack of financial resources.

APEN runs on a tight budget each year and relies on sponsorship or profits from events to top up membership subscriptions. However while sponsorship is relatively easy to justify for a particular event such as a Forum (and much appreciated), it is difficult although no less important when we come to the general running of the organisation. We need to continually approach agencies and private sector extension to support this side of APEN.

The Committee of Management cuts costs where-ever possible and has had to propose an increase in subscriptions this year.

This is my last year in the Chair as my term is up, and I would like to take this opportunity to say that I have greatly enjoyed the time, and believe we can all share in a sense of pride in developing an organisation that supports the discipline of extension.

I would like to thank our major sponsors:

Queensland Department of Primary Industries and the **Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment**, and **Agriculture WA** for their very generous support for this Forum.

Seasons greetings, and all the best for the new millenium.

*John Bourne, Chair, APEN
Committee of Management
31/10/99.*



**Treasurer's Report – See
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**APEN
welcomes all its new
members.....**

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answer any queries
about membership –
Phone 02 6024 5349
Fax 02 6056 1967
Email
rcurrie@albury.net.au**