



APEN

Strategic Partnering

Prospectus



Investing in people ...

Partner benefits and opportunities

Collaborating with APEN offers significant benefits for strategic partners, including access to:

- thought leaders and senior professionals from government, community, industry and private sectors involved in extension and change management, and
- more than 500 members who are working with and influencing rural and regional communities across Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific.

- extensive face-to-face and virtual networking via:
 - regional workshops, seminars and forums,
 - national forums and international conferences and
 - national and regional cluster website list-serve discussion lists.

- position and brand your organisation via:
 - the APEN website – an active communication tool for an estimated 1000 professionals in Australia and abroad
 - monthly e-news bulletins
 - four newsletters per year, and/or
 - speaking, signage and display opportunities at events.

- APEN provides your best opportunity to publicly support
 - regional and rural communities, and
 - the people playing a leading and positive role in building their futures.

- And ultimately, partnering with APEN gives you the opportunity to help drive:
 - successful adoption outcomes from research and development investments in Australia, and
 - healthy regional communities, industries and businesses.

Investing in people ...

APEN Strategic Partnering prospectus

About APEN

The Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) was created in 1993 as the leading representative organisation for people whose job involves *facilitating change in regional and rural communities* (often referred to as ‘extension’). APEN represents more than 500 professionals across Australia, Asia and New Zealand with membership significantly, especially through our collaborations in the NRM sector.

APEN provides a unique platform for people from a broad cross-section of disciplines to share knowledge, skills and experience about more effective ways to facilitate change. People primarily join the organisation because of the valuable opportunities it offers for networking and professional development. APEN members are able to improve their job skills, lift the performance of their organisations and help enrich the rural and regional communities with which they work.

APEN provides:

- a **regular program of events and activities**, including national and international conferences, which allows professionals to share new knowledge, skills and experience about facilitating change across Australia and the Pacific
- **education and training** to develop professional competencies and standards
- a **regular newsletter, *ExtensionNet***, informing of industry news, case studies, extension theory and upcoming events
- **monthly news bulletin**
- a **network that opens doors** to future employment prospects and provides relative continuity for those working on short-term contracts
- a **guide to public information** available on extension
- an active **website and list-serve**, and
- professional recognition through **an awards for excellence program**.

Importantly, APEN offers communication and support between people and organisations sharing similar aspirations and challenges and a desire to improve the practice of extension. Ultimately this enables members to achieve better outcomes for the research, development and extension organisations, departments and companies for whom they work.

APEN actively targets new members. It seeks to develop business links with other professional associations and organisations, research and development corporations, government bodies and commercial operations.

Recent achievements

APEN is proud of its recent achievements. In the past few years, it has staged training seminars, workshops, national forums and international conferences that have brought together hundreds of professionals engaged in rural and regional development.

Some examples:

- A forum in 2007 in Canberra which allowed prospective authors to highlight their chapters on a text book being developed on the “Science of Extension” to the 120 delegates.

- An international conference in Beechworth during 2006 with more than 200 delegates in attendance, which was opened by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and included a significant NRM component.
- A Natural Resource Management Symposium in Toowoomba in 2005 that brought together over 150 people to discuss *Building capacity for sustainability resource management*
- A national extension framework forum in Sydney brought together more than 50 influential professionals to discuss a nationally integrated approach to extension. This forum was a culmination of some intense APEN lobbying and organising and resulted in commitments from significant research and development corporations to continue to push for a national extension framework.
- A national forum in Hobart in 2003 helped some 180 people focus on how extension-related activities were making a real difference to Tasmania's regional development via the 'Tasmania Together' project. The 2003 forum energised local extension professionals who have since organised their own events and meetings that have led to a number of subsequent training events.
- An international conference in Toowoomba in 2001 attracted 250 delegates who heard 36 presentations that collectively explored the boundaries of extension and identified positive futures for regional communities. The conference used 'open space' methodology.
- APEN has actively nurtured a partnership with RIRDC's Cooperative Venture for Capacity Building which is focused on building capacity in rural and regional communities. This has resulted in significant support for further developing APEN and its capacities.
- Numerous workshops and seminars run by local APEN groups for members including "Effective community engagement – ideas for the new millenium" seminar by the Melbourne Chapter; A forum on evaluation in extension by the SE Qld/N NSW Chapter; a seminar on Extension Approaches and Management by the New Zealand Chapter, an "E-extension" workshop for all of the Queensland chapters video linked for the event and a presentation on Change Management in the WA Police Force from the Western Australia Chapter.
- An on-going mentoring scheme for young extension professionals
- A strategic business alliance with Australian Farm Business Management Network in relation to production of an extension Journal

Who is involved in APEN?

More than 500 APEN members play a vital role in the development of vibrant and sustainable rural and regional communities, industries and landscapes throughout Australasia. Most members work in the agriculture and natural resource management areas although membership extends to any professional involved in rural and regional development.

APEN members come from a broad range of disciplines in both the public and private sectors, including:

- federal and state government agencies
- community-based organisations
- national research, development and extension organisations
- agribusiness and agricultural consultancies
- private consultancies in the natural resource management sector
- private scientific consultancies
- conservation and wildlife preservation authorities
- education centres and
- social science research centres.

APEN was founded by some of the most respected professionals involved in extension in Australia, including Professor Bob Macadam, Warren Straw, Jeff Coutts and Terry Makin. Fifteen years on, their initiative is carried forward by the current national management committee made up of the President, Past President and Regional Coordinators from around Australia and New Zealand: Neale Price, John James, Derek Foster (QLD), Jess Jennings (NSW), Alison Medhurst (VIC), Amabel Fulton (TAS), Neels Botha (NZ), Ceris Crosby (SA), Tracy Gianatti (WA) and Greg Owens (NT). APEN's management committee combines this national representation with a diverse skill base and an allotment of 'portfolios' to various committee members who are responsible for specific tasks such as marketing, evaluation and membership services.

Targeted membership

APEN members come from a range of agricultural, natural resource management and community development backgrounds which reflect APEN's charter of helping to develop vibrant and sustainable rural and regional communities. However, the underpinning skills and philosophies in these fields are also pivotal in other endeavours such as rural health, rural leadership and governance, adult education and more and APEN has witnessed an exciting shift in membership focus toward these professions and disciplines. APEN has also recognised and is responding to the growing challenge to engage with and meet the demands of new 'non-farmer' audiences in non-urban and urban-fringe regions. Strategic alliances with kindred organisations are being continually sought in order to identify opportunities for cooperation, shared resources and more efficient outcomes per dollar invested.

Opportunities to partner with APEN

APEN is a professionally run, effective and efficient professional network that reaches into regional and remote communities right round Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific. As a volunteer organisation, APEN offers a range of opportunities to organisations keen to invest in people.

Corporate membership

By being a corporate member of APEN, your organisation gains access to one of the biggest and most effective change management networks in the country. Corporate members receive members' benefits as well as

- 10% discount on 10 or more subscriptions
- voting rights
- advertorial space in APEN's quarterly newsletter
- access to jobs advertised on the APEN list serve and
- access to a vibrant and growing market of change management professionals who are making decisions about the future of Australasia's rural and regional communities.

Conference sponsorship

APEN runs a major event every two years alternating between an international conference and a national forum. The venues for these are rotated through the regions of APEN and attract a variety of professionals from a range of disciplines. By sponsoring these conferences and forums, your organisation gains access to a committed network of extension professionals as well as leverage with government policy makers working in the agricultural, NRM and community spheres. Sponsorship fees are negotiable with the conference organisers with a sliding scale of benefits, but they normally include

- targeted exposure to a group of dedicated professionals making decisions about the future of Australasia's rural and regional communities
- exposure on all printed and on-line materials related to the conference and
- publicity in provincial and metropolitan media.

Regional workshops and seminars

APEN members operate in 'clusters' across Australia and New Zealand and frequently host smaller-scale events focused on a specific topic of interest to that cluster. Sponsors of these events gain access to a network of professionals who provide an untapped source of opportunities for collaboration, partnerships and further work. Recent workshops and seminars have focused on evaluation, knowledge management and information, change management, and community engagement in developing countries. Your organisation can either access a schedule of upcoming events (contact APEN Secretariat, details back page) to gauge the commercial potential of the workshop or propose your own event as a one-off or part of a series.

Award sponsorship

APEN formally and regularly recognises the superb work undertaken by its best members and the Award for Extension Excellence provides an opportunity to align your organisation with the best that extension can offer. Previous sponsors have enjoyed the mutual benefits that accrue from helping individuals gain the recognition they deserve as well as the reflected goodwill that comes from supporting superior professional endeavour.

Communication support and advertising

APEN publishes a quarterly newsletter and a semi-regular e-bulletin as well as hosting an active website list-serve. Supporting these media ensures that sponsors are regularly exposed to the APEN network (and beyond) and are able to profile themselves in a way that communicates directly to an influential subscriber list.

Special event support

Occasionally, and when professional demand dictates, APEN will organise special one-off events to bring minds together to address unusual or unique challenges. The National Extension Framework Summit in Sydney, 2004, was a good example of APEN detecting a need for organisations to come together to discuss issues of mutual importance. In situations like this, APEN acts as both a workshop host and an advocate, and does so in a way that transcends government boundaries and other barriers that would normally prevent such events from getting off the ground.

Supporting special events like this – usually nationally-focused and attracting high-calibre speakers and attendees – adds prestige and credibility to your organisation's reputation.

Management committee/member support

APEN's management committee takes its governance role seriously. The committee meets bi-monthly via teleconference and usually tries to dovetail face-to-face meetings with national APEN events. Your sponsorship of the team ensures your organisation

- is kept up-to-date with APEN's executive discussions
- has access to face-to-face meeting time (if desired), and
- is mentioned in relevant despatches from the management committee (for example, annual reports, speeches and funding applications).

Regional coordinator support

APEN's state co-ordinators are volunteers and are often required to help organise, publicise, evaluate and administer various events. Supporting one or more of the state co-ordinators enables your organisation to be recognised at all of the numerous state-level APEN events.

Sponsorship options

APEN is a volunteer organisation committed to working effectively with people and we recognise that support for the work we do may come along in a variety of ways. If you're interested in supporting vibrant regional and rural communities and are enthusiastic about investing in people but are unsure about an appropriate level of commitment please don't hesitate to talk to the APEN Secretariat or a member of APEN's Management Committee. There are opportunities to sponsor specific activities such as workshops, programs such as Membership Communication or just broad support of the APEN philosophy.

How to find out more...

APEN Secretariat

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