APEN

Annual Report 2025-2026

Australasia-Pacific Extension Network



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President's Report

Noel Ainsworth



On behalf of the APEN Board of Directors, I am pleased to reflect on another successful year for APEN. Throughout 2025/26, we continued to deliver a diverse range of professional development and networking opportunities for our members, including the highly successful 2025 Conference in Brisbane.

I would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge both our current and former Board Directors who supported APEN throughout the year: Nicole Sallur, Roy Murray-Prior, Olivia Weatherburn, Olive Hood, Salman Quddus, Salman Sarwar, Felicity McIntosh, Mariah Maughan and Karen Smith. Their commitment to APEN, alongside their many professional and personal responsibilities, is greatly appreciated. Collectively, the Board achieved an impressive average attendance rate of 83% across the ten Board meetings held during the year.

As with many volunteer-led organisations, maintaining continuity of organisational knowledge and governance expertise remains an ongoing challenge. During 2025/26, we farewelled Roy Murray-Prior after he completed his maximum six years of service on the Board. We also began preparations to farewell Nicole Sallur at the 2026 AGM and said goodbye to Olivia Weatherburn and Olive Hood, who stepped down due to increasing work commitments.

"We are incredibly grateful for the contribution each of these Directors has made to APEN and the extension profession."

The Board continues to actively manage succession planning to ensure a smooth transition and minimise any impact on the organisation. As part of this work, we supported several new succession initiatives during the year, including a review of the Board skills matrix and the introduction of casual Director positions to help broaden participation and build future leadership capacity.

Despite operating within a specialist professional niche, APEN continues to play an important role in supporting extension practitioners across Australia and New Zealand. It is worth recognising that many of our members are supported by organisations that actively invest in extension capability and professional development. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Dairy Australia, NSW Local Land Services, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, the Tropical North Queensland Drought Hub, DairyNZ and Cotton RDC for their ongoing support of extension professionals.

A significant milestone this year was the transition from our long-standing secretariat arrangement with The Association Specialists (TAS) to a dedicated Executive Officer model. TAS continued to provide excellent governance and secretariat services throughout the transition period, and we sincerely thank them for their support over many years.

> *"Responding to feedback from members, the Board made the decision to invest in a professional Executive Officer role to provide a more visible and dedicated presence for the organisation."*

We were delighted to welcome Dr Sue Knights as APEN's Executive Officer late in the financial year. Sue has already begun reviewing and enhancing many of APEN's systems and processes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services delivered to members.

Key Board priorities for July to November 2025:

- Refreshing APEN's five-year budget projections
- Reviewing partnership agreements with the International Association of Facilitators
- Planning for the 2025 Conference, including Life Member and Award nominations
- Progressing website updates
- Strengthening Board succession planning and leadership development
- Reviewing APEN policies
- Conducting the annual Board evaluation and onboarding new Directors

Key Board priorities for January to June 2026:

- Refreshing the APEN Strategic Plan and developing supporting Key Performance Indicators
- Planning the 2026 calendar of webinars, conversations and member events
- Reviewing Executive and Committee Chair roles and updating bank signatories
- Evaluating the 2025 Conference from both financial and participant feedback perspectives
- Assessing the effectiveness of the 2025 mentoring program
- Recruiting and transitioning to the Executive Officer model
- Planning the 2026 membership renewal strategy
- Continuing policy reviews
- Developing and seeking Expressions of Interest to host the 2027 Conference
- Reviewing the Communications Plan and annual Communications Strategy

The innovation, creativity and professionalism within our industry were on full display at the 2025 APEN International Conference, Tech + Extension: A Powerful Partnership for Change. Congratulations and thanks to the organising team and all those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the event such a success.

One of the conference's most thought-provoking themes was the intersection of technology and extension practice. It was fascinating to explore how the creativity and complexity involved in designing extension programs sit alongside emerging opportunities offered by artificial intelligence and other digital technologies.

Year after year, I continue to be inspired by the dedication of APEN's volunteers. Their willingness to give back and support the extension profession is what makes APEN such a valuable and enduring community.

"I would particularly like to acknowledge Pat Hamilton for her outstanding contribution."

In addition to her many years of Board service, Pat has played a pivotal role through her long-standing commitment to editing the eBulletin and ExtensionNet. Her passion, expertise and generosity have benefited countless members, and I hope her enthusiasm continues to inspire the volunteers who carry this important work forward.

Finally, I would like to recognise our Regional Coordinators and the many volunteers who work alongside the Board to deliver APEN's activities and services. Your contribution strengthens both APEN and the broader network of extension professionals across Australia and New Zealand. By investing your time and expertise, you are not only supporting the profession but also investing in your own growth and development as we navigate an increasingly dynamic and rapidly changing future together.

"Thank you for your continued support of APEN.

Together, we are building a stronger and more connected extension community."



Treasurer's Report

Felicity McIntosh

Financial position

APEN continues to hold a reserve of funds to support its operations and future activities. However, the Network's financial position reflects a downward trend in overall balances over recent years, highlighting the importance of careful financial management and forward planning.



The reported balances across APEN's bank accounts and term deposits total at the end of the 20225-2026 Financial Year were $180,990.71 comprising operating funds, savings and term deposits.

2025-2026 Income

Income sources for the 2025 -2026 financial year are shown in the following table, with the main source being memberships.

It should be noted that the biennial APEN Conference, in the past has been a major source of revenue for APEN. However, in the 2025 Conference costs were $256,824 with income from the Conference of $245,408, which means APEN made a loss of $11,416.

Income Sources 2025 - 2026	Amount
Membership	$33,704
Conference	($11,416)
Events	($8,170)
Interest	$524
Other	$0
Total	$14,642

Profit and Loss comparisons for 2025 - 2026 to the two previous financial years are shown in the following table.

Profit and Loss

Australasia-Pacific Extension Network Limited

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Account	2025 - 2026	2024 - 2025	2023 - 2024
Trading Income			
Conference Income: Registrations	52,759.38	0.00	206,055.62
Conference Income: Sponsorship	0.00	(84,436.96)	73,406.65
Conference Income: Sponsorship: APEN Award	0.00	(3,600.00)	0.00
Conference Income: Sponsorship: Friends of Conference	0.00	(1,500.00)	0.00
Conference Income: Sponsorship: Gold	0.00	(12,000.00)	0.00
Conference Income: Sponsorship: Morning/Afternoon tea break	0.00	(1,000.00)	0.00
Conference Income: Sponsorship: Silver	0.00	(25,000.00)	0.00
Conference Income: Sponsorship: Welcome function	0.00	(2,500.00)	0.00
Conference: Profit	154,542.34	0.00	0.00
Conference: Sponsorship	21,862.73	146,036.96	0.00
Event: Mentoring	0.00	5,515.94	0.00
Events: other	0.00	0.00	8,250.31
Events: Roadshow	0.00	10,374.01	0.00
Membership Fees:2018/2019 Membership	0.00	(2,893.50)	0.00
Membership Fees:2019/2020 - Ordinary	0.00	(1,784.36)	0.00
Membership Fees:2019/2020 - Student	0.00	(50.00)	0.00
Membership Fees:2020/2021 - Ordinary	0.00	(22,778.45)	0.00
Membership Fees:2020/2021 - Retiree	0.00	262.50	0.00
Membership Fees:2021/2022 - ordinary membership	0.00	(9,623.50)	0.00
Membership Fees:2021/2022 Retiree membership	0.00	493.00	0.00
Membership Fees:2021/2022 Student membership	0.00	(275.00)	0.00
Membership Fees:2022/2023 Ordinary membership	0.00	(20,144.34)	0.00
Membership Fees:New - Ordinary	0.00	(1,635.50)	0.00
Membership Fees:New - Student membership	0.00	(52.50)	0.00
Membership: Business 30+	16,537.09	8,073.62	3,165.50
Membership: Ordinary	21,390.97	96,951.24	40,781.31
Membership: Overseas	132.00	0.00	0.00
Membership: Professional	3,396.89	107.27	0.00
Membership: Retiree	672.44	(755.50)	0.00
Membership: Student	98.18	1,059.50	0.00
Miscellaneous Income	0.00	472.48	0.00
Regional Event Support	0.00	(2,976.89)	0.00
Uncategorised Income	0.00	(472.48)	0.00
Total Trading Income	271,392.02	75,867.54	331,659.39
Gross Profit	**271,392.02**	**75,867.54**	**331,659.39**
Other Income			
Interest earned	0.00	(2.63)	0.00
Interest income	517.84	7,099.67	6,756.26
Interest: Accounts	0.00	(107.90)	1.23
Interest: Term Deposits	0.00	(255.52)	0.00
Total Other Income	517.84	6,733.62	6,757.49

	2025 - 2026	2024 - 2025	2023 - 2024
Operating Expenses			
Admin: Insurance	1,849.62	1,820.07	1,773.63
Admin: Legal & professional	1,528.00	0.00	0.00
APEN Award	190.18	1,250.00	0.00
ASIC Fees	192.00	1,870.00	1,584.00
Audit Fees	0.00	0.00	4,700.00
Bank charges and fees	1,011.31	1,218.52	1,236.17
Bank charges and fees: BPoint Merchant fee - 8958	0.00	(480.69)	0.00
Conference Expenses: Audio Visual	0.00	0.00	13,618.18
Conference Expenses: Catering	917.20	0.00	62,476.82
Conference Expenses: Field trips	3,563.99	0.00	0.00
Conference Expenses: Management fee	39,924.47	7,957.12	48,600.00
Conference Expenses: Personnel/speakers	16,133.32	0.00	25,902.03
Conference Expenses: Publicity & communications	0.00	0.00	2,349.85
Conference Expenses: Refunds	0.00	187.00	0.00
Conference Expenses: Secretariat	0.00	4,000.00	0.00
Conference Expenses: Social	800.00	0.00	2,100.00
Conference Expenses: Sundry	1,495.60	0.00	0.00
Conference Expenses: Venue	154,894.23	22,910.23	9,331.24
Conference Expenses: Workshop Expenses	0.00	0.00	5,543.00
Event: other	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Event: Roadshow	0.00	4,204.46	4,405.57
Event: Webinar	745.60	2,554.55	500.00
Events: Workshops	0.00	2,683.67	275.45
eWay fees	0.00	(859.95)	0.00
ExtensionNet	0.00	(1,200.00)	0.00
IT Expense/Support/Maintenance	75.00	150.00	0.00
Journal	0.00	(930.73)	0.00
Management fee	39,595.42	53,972.74	47,740.92
Meetings: Board	0.00	1,836.90	3,443.17
Meetings: Board, RCs, Committees	0.00	16,661.57	1,800.00
Membership Database Costs	0.00	(3,582.89)	1,776.14
Mentoring Scheme costs	0.00	(1,589.06)	0.00
Merchant fee	0.00	2,590.64	0.00
Miscellaneous	2,750.00	2,450.00	0.00
Publication costs	0.00	3,338.58	0.00
Secretariat: BAS Return	986.36	1,336.36	1,763.18
Secretariat: Communications consultant	18,826.36	17,670.00	14,640.00
Secretariat: Monthly disbursement fee	0.00	(2,692.46)	(788.64)
Secretariat: Secretariat Tender	535.00	0.00	0.00
Shaping Change Book: Postage	0.00	(1,207.85)	0.00
Subscription: Miscellaneous	419.53	1,246.97	1,286.34
Subscription: Software	11,184.17	1,561.95	0.00
Website: Registration/Domain/Email	129.09	35.59	1,188.94
Website: Updating	756.54	879.11	0.00
Website: Secretariat Costs	0.00	(126.71)	0.00
Total Operating Expenses	298,502.99	141,715.69	258,245.99
Net Profit	(26,593.13)	(59,114.53)	80,170.89

Financial trends and outlook

APEN's overall balances have declined over the past three years:

- End of 2024: $266,698.37
- End of 2025: $207,583.84, a decrease of 22%
- End of 2026: $180,990.71, a further decrease of 13%

This trend reflects the financial pressures experienced by the Network, particularly the loss associated with the 2025 conference.

The costs associated with transitioning administration from The Association Specialists (TAS) to the Executive Officer are also expected to have a temporary negative impact.

Financial sustainability

APEN's financial key performance indicator (KPI) requires equity at 30 June, expressed as a percentage of annual fixed operating costs in a non-conference year, to remain at or above 120%. This measure is intended to identify potential financial issues or opportunities early and enable the Board to take appropriate action.

Current projections indicate the following position:

Financial year	Projected equity	Fixed equity costs	Equity-to-cost ratio
2024 - 2025	$217,384	$85,988	253%
2025 - 2026*	$156,626	$78,250	200%
2026 - 2027	$107,615	$88,310	121%
2027 - 2028*	$118,112	$82,830	143%

**Conference years.*

The projections indicate a substantial reduction in APEN's financial buffer since 2024 - 2025. The projected ratio for 2026 - 2027 is 121%, only marginally above APEN's minimum financial Key Performance Indicator of 120%.

The 2027/28 projection assumes a $50,000 profit from the conference.

These figures reinforce the need to monitor expenditure, maintain appropriate reserves and ensure future activities are financially sustainable.

Financial management and priorities

The Treasurer and Executive Officer are undertaking a comprehensive review of APEN's accounts, financial processes and budget estimates. This includes refining the budgeting spreadsheet and strengthening the reliability of financial projections. In parallel, Tinworth & Co. is undertaking an independent review of APEN's financial records for the 2025–2026 financial year.

The transition from The Association Specialists has presented some challenges, largely due to the complexity of existing processes and systems, including the use of multiple software platforms. Addressing these challenges is an important part of the current review.

Together, this internal review and the independent assessment by Tinworth & Co. will help strengthen financial oversight, improve the consistency and clarity of reporting, and support more informed financial decision-making by the Board.

Looking ahead

The Board will continue to contribute ideas and recommendations for managing costs, strengthening revenue and identifying opportunities to support APEN's financial sustainability.

"The priority is to maintain sound financial governance while ensuring APEN has the resources to deliver value to members, support extension professionals and advance the Network's strategic objectives."

Governance & Strategy Report

Noel Ainsworth

The Governance Committee is tasked with ensuring that APEN's financial base is strong and the governance is sound.

Maintaining good governance ensures that the APEN values of integrity and professionalism are well embedded in APEN's processes such as the constitution, policies, guidelines, risk management, strategic planning, Board and Committee governance and succession, Company Secretary and contract staff operations, the annual report and the Annual General Meeting (AGM).



The Governance Committee continued to meet quarterly supported by a small but dedicated team including Noel Ainsworth (Chair), Roy Murray-Prior, Peter Long, Olivia Weatherburn and Navneet Kaur.

"With such a broad focus, in early 2026 the Committee emphasised the currency of the Strategic Plan and encouraging all Committees to adopt KPIs as a way to operationalise and report on that Plan."

The top three KPIs and responses for this Committee were:

1. APEN will maintain a minimum reserve of approximately 1.2 times the annual operating costs (presenting this information as a forecast multi-year reserve table in its Annual Report).
2. The Board conducts an annual review of the strategic plan, Constitution and top 10 policies every 3 years. (reporting on the Organisational documents and policies register to the Board).
3. How well-managed and member-focused APEN is in the Annual Board survey (reporting to the Board and in the Annual Report President's report).

APEN operates on a model that acknowledges modest membership income, and a reliance on making sure that services to members, the costs of staff and the way it utilises volunteers is designed to value every dollar. This was put to the test this year when the anticipated profit from the October 2025 Conference was not realised. The Board placed additional effort in reviewing its forward budget and its planned membership fees along with the planned financial review.

"Thanks must go to the support from the APEN Treasurer, Felicity McIntosh."

Key organisational documents were added to the APEN Policies register to ensure that the currency of all key documents is maintained.

Policies reviewed and updated in 2025 - 2026 included:

- Board & Director Evaluation;
- Code of Conduct; Privacy;
- Risk Management;
- Advertising;
- Procurement and Contractor Recruitment; and
- Social Media.

There was also an annual refresh of the Strategic plan and the five-year forward budget.

Whilst this Committee takes a fairly pragmatic approach to ensure best practice governance supports the APEN mission to supply professional extension services to its membership, the Committee remains open and responsive to the skills and focus as the Committee embraces inevitable succession in its makeup for the 2026 - 2027 year.

Executive Officer's Report

Sue Knights

Reporting period: May - June 2026

During May 2026, APEN commenced a transition in its administrative arrangements, with responsibility for the Network's administration handed over from The Association Managers (TAS) to Dr Sue Knights, who commenced as Executive Officer on 13 May 2026.



The initial period focused on onboarding, transferring systems access, reviewing records and establishing the processes required to support APEN's ongoing operations.

Key achievements and activities included:

- Administration and systems: Secured access to APEN's domain management, banking, Xero accounting software, Currinda membership platform and governance-related systems. Electronic files received from TAS were being reviewed and organised.
- Communication: Worked to resolve issues associated with transferring the info@apen.org.au email account, establishing a temporary workaround while a permanent solution remained outstanding.
- Governance and compliance: Attended the May and June Board meetings and began updating contact details and access permissions across governance platforms.
- Membership management: Issued several membership renewal email campaigns. Updated Currinda database regularly and responded to member enquiries.
- Events: Supported APEN communicators by liaising on communications activities, and coordinating webinar arrangements, including registration and technical preparation for webinars.

"The transition in administration has established the foundations for a more direct and integrated approach to APEN's administration and member support."

Looking ahead

The immediate priority was to ensure continuity of essential services while progressively consolidating access, records and operational processes following the handover. This work will continue with a focus on increasing efficiencies of operation and seeking cost reductions.

Professional Development Committee's Report

Mariah Maughan

2026 has been another productive year for APEN Professional Development (PD), with a focus on building opportunities for members to connect, learn and grow throughout the year. Following a successful conference year in 2025, the committee has focused on strengthening APEN's year-round professional development offering and preparing for what comes next.

The PD Committee focus for 2026 has been:



- Listening to our Professional Members through a member survey. Feedback reinforced the value members place on networking and connection, while also highlighting opportunities for more mentoring and professional development between conferences.
- Continuing our webinar programme, providing accessible learning and connection opportunities for members throughout the year. Engagement has been strong, with one webinar attracting 60 registrations, well above our target of 30.
- Building on the success of the APEN Mentoring Programme, with planning underway for the next programme. Feedback has highlighted the value of mentoring and the opportunity to connect experienced extension professionals with the next generation to share knowledge, experience and networks.
- Preparing for another iteration of ExtensionChat in 2027, looking to the success of previous iterations as well as future opportunities to deliver a great program for members.
- Supporting regional connection and professional development, building on the success of previous roadshows and considering how Regional Coordinators, Directors and members can help create more opportunities for connection across the APEN network.
- Celebrating and showcasing our Professional Members, with work underway to share more member stories, career journeys and insights through APEN communications. This provides an opportunity to recognise the people within our profession while helping emerging extension professionals learn from others.
- Strengthening connections with emerging extension professionals, including engagement with tertiary researchers and the Extend-Us early-career extension network.

- Looking ahead to the 2027 APEN Conference, with planning progressing and South Australia being confirmed as the next conference location.

"Thank you to Olivia Weatherbun for leading the PD Committee for most of the 2025 -2026 financial year."

As always, a big thank you to the members of the Professional Development Committee who have contributed their time, ideas and energy throughout the year. We continue to welcome new members and fresh ideas as we look forward to another exciting year of connection, learning and growth across the extension profession.

Regional Networking Committee's Report

Karen Smith

Chair: Director Olive Hood (written by incoming Chair Karen Smith)

Purpose

The Regional Networking Committee's (RNC) purpose is to:



1. Sustain a strong network across Australia and New Zealand by connecting members to each other and to the organisation through various mechanisms.

2. Create opportunities for members to interact online and/or face-to-face through sharing and promoting extension knowledge and skills.

3. Support APEN's strategy by ensuring the Board is kept informed of regional issues

For the 2025-2026 year, the RNC, through its network of Regional Coordinators across Australia and New Zealand, continued to support APEN's strategic objective of strengthening professional networks and creating opportunities for members to connect, learn and collaborate.

Activities focused on member engagement, regional networking, APEN Conversations, conference support and maintaining strong links between members and the APEN Board

2025-26 committee changes:

We farewelled four RCs during the year: Callen Thompson (NSW), Lauren Thornton (NT), Caroline Coppo (Qld), and Sarah Thompson (Vic).

APEN recognises that the efforts of RCs wax and wane according to what else is going on in their lives, both personally and professionally.

We also farewelled our chair Olive Hood (Qld), and thank her for time invested in providing direction to our committee processes. We wish them a future full of challenges and rewards.

"We were fortunate to welcome Angela Hammond (NSW) Paige Cross (SA), Belinda Nielsen (TAS), Ebony Faichney (QLD), and Lilia Jenkins (VIC) to the team. Recruitment for further coverage across our regions is ongoing."

Going forward into 2026 -2027 APEN has secured new Regional Coordinators in NT and WA onto the Networking Committee providing good ongoing capability for the team.

Regional Coordinators

NSW	NT	NZ	SA	TAS
Sue Street	Lauren Thorton*	Justine Kidd	Sandy Gunter	Tayla Field
Callen Thompson*			Paige Cross #	Belinda Nielsen #
Angela Hammond #				
QLD	**VIC**	**WA**	* outgoing Regional Coordinator	
Caroline Coppo*	Sarah Thompson*	Karen Smith	# new Regional Coordinator	
Sharna Holman	Lilia Jenkins #			
Ebony Faichney #				
Communications Editor		Pat Hamilton		

Key achievements

1. APEN Conversations – The RNC continued to deliver APEN Conversations as a flagship member networking activity. Many thanks to Sandy Gunter who has coordinated this endeavour over more than a year, creating opportunities to bring a relevant topic of interest for discussion. Throughout the year, Regional Coordinators coordinated topics, hosts, technical support and promotion of online peer-to-peer learning sessions. The committee confirmed a schedule of Conversations throughout 2025 and 2026 and continued refining the format to maximise member engagement and networking outcomes.
2. Regional networking and member engagement – Regional Coordinators continued outreach to members through region-specific communications, promotion of APEN opportunities and identification of regional issues for Board consideration. Committee discussions highlighted the ongoing importance of maintaining local relationships despite increasing pressures on volunteer time and varying regional workloads.

   The committee placed particular emphasis on:

   a. Connecting members with local networking opportunities.

b. Encouraging new member participation.

c. Promoting APEN activities and resources.

d. Sharing regional & APEN extension initiatives within the region.

3. APEN Roadshow Initiative – The RNC evaluated delivery of the APEN Roadshow program developed for focused mentoring and professional development. While several planned events were ultimately cancelled due to low registrations and seasonal pressures in some regions, valuable insights were gained regarding member preferences for professional development delivery. Working with the Professional Development Committee to anticipate a planned pipeline of relevant delivery will be key for future non-conference year local events.

4. APEN conference support – Regional Coordinators contributed to promotion and support of the 2025 APEN Conference in Brisbane. Planning discussions throughout the year focused on integrating regional networking activities, member engagement opportunities and succession planning discussions into the conference program. Through recognition of gaps within industry at the conference, further support for early career support for the extension discipline is being led by Regional Coordinator Lilia Jenkins.

Governance and committee development

Significant effort was invested in strengthening committee governance and clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Key activities included:

- Review and refinement of RAC Terms of Reference.
- Development of clearer operating procedures.
- Succession planning for Regional Coordinators.
- Review of committee workload and volunteer expectations.
- Examination of funding arrangements for regional activities.
- Alignment of RAC activities with APEN strategic priorities and performance measures.

The committee also contributed to organisational discussions around APEN strategic planning, networking KPIs and approaches to measuring member engagement and connection.

Challenges

Several challenges emerged during the reporting period.

1. Volunteer Capacity – Regional Coordinators consistently identified increasing pressures balancing APEN commitments with professional and personal responsibilities. Committee discussions highlighted the need to maintain realistic expectations regarding volunteer contributions and committee workloads.

2. Regional event participation evaluation – Attendance for some face-to-face activities, particularly Roadshows, was lower than anticipated. Feedback suggested factors included:
    - Drought and seasonal pressures.
    - Travel and attendance costs.
    - Competing demands on members' time.
    - Preference for online participation options.
    - Need to clearly articulate value to both individuals and employers.
3. Membership engagement – Ongoing discussions occurred regarding how APEN can maintain and strengthen engagement across a geographically dispersed membership while working within volunteer and financial constraints. The committee contributed ideas for improved networking, communication and member participation mechanisms.

Looking ahead

Several themes emerged from committee discussions throughout the year and will continue:

1. Networking remains one of APEN's most valued member services, particularly opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and relationship building.
2. Members increasingly prefer flexible and accessible engagement options, requiring a balance between online and face-to-face activities.
3. Regional Coordinators play a critical role as local connectors and APEN ambassadors, linking members with the organisation and bringing regional perspectives to the Board.
4. Collaboration with partner organisations and industry groups presents significant opportunities for expanding APEN's reach and delivering value to members.

Communications Committee's Report

Nicole Sallur

Committee Members: Pat Hamilton, Graham Harris, Keely Kovacevic, Emma Tilley, Lauren Thornton, Karen Smith, Emily Harrington, Lisa Yorkston, Rachael Young, Wesley Ward and Alice Long.

Ex Officio Members: Noel Ainsworth (President) and Felicity McIntosh (Treasurer).

The Communications Committee supports APEN by delivering effective communications to members and promoting the organisation to the broader extension community. During 2025 - 2026, the Committee continued to provide regular communication channels and sought opportunities to strengthen member engagement.



Key activities

During the year, the Committee delivered a range of communication activities, including:

- **Monthly eBulletin** providing updates on APEN activities, events, professional development opportunities and extension practice.
- **Social media engagement** through Facebook and LinkedIn to increase APEN's visibility and connect with a wider audience.
- **Website updates** to ensure members had access to current information and resources.
- **The biennial member survey**, with feedback shared with the Board to help guide future priorities and improvements to member services.
- **Member feedback on APEN's brand and logo**, with a review and refresh process currently underway.

While plans for a website redevelopment could not proceed due to budget constraints, the Committee intends to review and refresh website content, including the members' section, in the coming year.

Staffing

During the reporting period, Communications Coordinator Alice Long returned from maternity leave and Jo Palmer concluded her time in the role. The Committee thanks Jo for her contribution and welcomes Alice back.

Looking ahead

The Committee remains keen to welcome new members who can bring fresh ideas, skills and perspectives. We look forward to continuing to improve APEN's communications and supporting the organisation's vision and members.

Thank you

"As this will be my final report as Chair of the Communications Committee, following six years on the APEN Board, I would like to sincerely thank all current and past Committee members for their support, commitment and contributions. It has been a privilege to work alongside such a dedicated group of volunteers, and I am grateful for the role each of you has played in the Committee's achievements over the years."

Business Development Committee's Report

Salman Sarwar

The Business Development Committee (BDC) focused on income generation and advocacy during 2025 - 2026, supporting APEN's financial sustainability and strengthening recognition of extension's value.



Discussions in BDC meetings identified opportunities to involve APEN Professional Members in projects, mentoring, training and capability development services.

The Committee considered APEN's financial scenarios. Advocacy discussions highlighted the need for clear, consistent messages explaining extension and advisory roles to employers, funders and practitioners.

Potential collaboration with the Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations and individual RDCs centred on extension capability, workforce development and knowledge brokerage.

Key income generation activities

Key income generation activities included the following:

1. Reviewing Business Supporter arrangements, which accounted for 237 members across ten organisations in July 2025, representing 52 per cent of APEN's membership. Subsequent discussions focused on clarifying benefits for organisations and members and ensuring these arrangements complemented conference sponsorship.
2. Reviewing conference sponsorship opportunities and lessons for future events, including early sponsor engagement and the influence of location, timing, costs and program certainty on financial viability.
3. Identifying prospective supporters and partners across rural businesses, industry organisations and Research and Development Corporations (RDCs), with tailored approaches proposed to reflect organisational interests and APEN's capabilities.

Looking ahead

The BDC will focus on refining the Business Supporter offer, prioritising prospective partners and developing a concise value proposition for extension.

These priorities will guide further work with members, supporters and APEN's Executive Officer.

"As Chair, I thank Committee members and contributors for their time, expertise and commitment to APEN and its members."

THANK YOU!

Behind the scenes at APEN
Our community is supported by volunteers

Thank you to the people behind APEN
Our community is stronger because of you

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AUSTRALASIA PACIFIC EXTENSION NETWORK

Extending Horizons