

## "25 Years & Flourishing"

### Celebrating 25 years of APEN's journey – and flourishing

From an Incorporated body to a company limited by guarantee and everything in between



***"It is not the strongest of species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive for change"***  
***(Charles Darwin 1809)***

#### Who is APEN?

APEN is a network representing over 600 extension professionals across Australia, New Zealand and the broader Asia Pacific Region.

#### What does APEN do?

APEN supports professional development, networking opportunities and provides a voice for extension professionals across Australia, New Zealand and the broader Asia Pacific Region.

#### What is extension?

Extension is the process of enabling change in individuals, communities and industries, by building capacity and influencing behaviour to resolve problems and create more sustainable futures through innovation,

change and learning. Extension involves a range of disciplines, including applied research and demonstration, and participatory empowerment and facilitation.

To capture a snapshot of APEN's 25-year journey, we have drawn upon a range of historical material that has been gathered, collated and preserved by the Secretariat over 25 years and through ExtensionNet, REIS Journal and Shaping Change. All of these sources can be accessed from APEN's website: [www.apen.org.au](http://www.apen.org.au)

*"Why mention this history? Because the issues we grappled with as a profession in 1993 are still with us today."*

(Mark Paine 2018)

I have really enjoyed gathering information for this 'special' issue of ExtensionNet – such a wealth of wonderful memories. I have drawn on the collective views and experiences of a diverse group of people who live in different locations across Australia and New Zealand – all working hard to make a difference in the field of extension. They have generously shared with us who they are and how their experiences have shaped and influenced what is happening around them. To grow our influence over the next 25 years, I encourage each of you to share your skills, experiences and knowledge by contributing information, brief articles, letters, upcoming events and lots and lots of stories and photos. As always, I appreciate the huge effort of our Executive Officer, Dr Roe Currie.

Warm regards

**Dr Patricia Hamilton**  
**ExtensionNet Editor**



# The Birth of APEN from 1993 -1996

## lots of team work

*Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success. (Henry Ford)*



**1993-2018 - From Terry Makin:** "As the inaugural President of APEN it gives me great pleasure and pride to see that APEN has matured into a successful and sustainable organisation which

supports and promotes the professional practitioners of extension throughout Australia and New Zealand. I must pay tribute to my colleagues who made up the core working group that was empowered to set up your organisation at the first extension conference in Brisbane in October 1993. The initial working group was Associate Professor Bob Macadam (UWS), Peter Van Beek (Principal Extension Specialist QDPI), Ian Simpson (Chief Extension Officer Dept. Agriculture NSW) and me (Dairy farmer and Director, Dairy Research and Development Corporation). What we see today evolved out of the notes on the breakfast table mats of more than 100 extension practitioners (20% female) at the working breakfast on October 13. The name Australasia- Pacific Extension Network was first suggested at this conference.

Then the challenge was to take these ideas and wishes and build from scratch an organisation that would achieve them. Systems thinking and CATWOE were put to the test.

These were exciting times and opportunities were there to build on. The new R&D Corporations had increasing funding and an interest in building extension capacity to improve farmer knowledge and management skills. The return on the research investment depended on theories and research being put into practice by farmers and land users".

**1994** "APEN has been born. The constitution has been lodged and APEN becomes Incorporated. The office of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science was appointed as our secretariat. Groups of people started to form interim regional chapters. We become a professional body." (ExtensionNet)

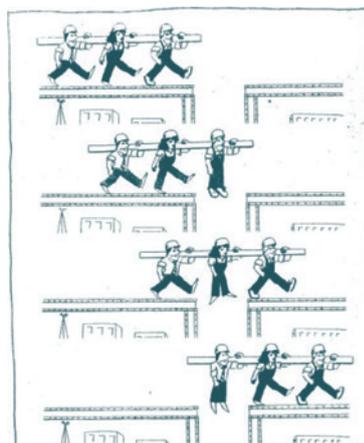
**2018 From Dr Jeff Coutts:** "APEN commenced at a time when public extension was very much being questioned and departments across Australia



were developing their specific extension policies/strategies in response to the emphasis of government's role addressing 'market failure' rather than competing with the private sector. Ironically, it was a time of high interest in extension theory and practice both here and internationally. The then Department of Primary industries (DPI) in Queensland had sent a few of us to study extension and systems theory in the US and Europe and what would now be called a 'Community of Practice' was emerging. Following the development of Queensland's extension strategy, we were funded to run a national extension conference at the Gold Coast in 1993. The concept of APEN emerged out of this conference."

**1996** Terry Makin stands down from the Presidency: "APEN has been shaped by its history of people in agricultural extension, tertiary education and Landcare who provided much of the early impetus behind APEN's inception. Yet its future can be shaped to capture the early vision of a more diverse membership around the facilitation of social change."

APEN appreciates the vision of this group of motivated and inspiring men and women with a shared purpose to create and shape change together.



### First growth involved:

- **a reason** for the establishment of the network
- to increase awareness of new issues and trends
- to develop and use new skills and methodologies
- to foster wider discussions and debates about rural issues; and
- to contribute to a growing common understanding of the purpose and value of extension.



- **branding with our name and logo** and potential of the extension network.

- "The colours of APEN's new logo, deep aqua and terracotta, are designed to communicate that the basis for all extension work is the prime elements of land and water.

- Curving the word "extension" around the world suggests the all-encompassing nature of extension work, while the eclipse containing the work "network" indicates the liveliness, energy, movement and direction of extension and its people.

- The basic rectangular shape of the rest of the logo suggests tradition and convention out of which move random geometric shapes to illustrate that extension work, while steeped in the basics, cannot and should not be contained or constrained by the past or tradition." (Vol 2 (3) ExtensionNet)

- **a Newsletter** to share our extension practices, projects and programs

- Why this Newsletter asks Peter Van Beek in the first issue. "Plans for a professional organisation for extension have been around for 25 years or more... a draft newsletter with a questionnaire was mailed out widely through state and national representatives using the Conference newsletter as a basis." The returned questionnaires "strongly suggest that the Newsletter needs to have a strong emphasis on practical articles and be representative of all parts of the Australian-Pacific area".

# What is extension? Can we agree on a definition? What do extensionists do?



*“Close your eyes for a while and imagine your extension role and particularly its impact”  
(Completing the jigsaw puzzle  
Mike Weise 2012)*

**1994 – Peter Van Beek** encouraged us to see extension in its broadest context: “as facilitators of change”. “Extensionists help to: locate/create/collate/re-format; inform/share insights/be innovative; start where they (and the farmer) are and where they are needed/wanted – so that extensionists encourage understanding and adaption.”

**1997- Amabel Fulton** suggested, “Information is an important component of extension – whether you are delivering it, accessing it, using it or helping others to use it. a reminder of the complexity of farming systems, of rural communities, of extension.”

**2001- Jeff Coutts** noted that APEN’s website offered the following definition, “Extension concerns working with people in a community to facilitate change in an environment that has social, economic and technical complexity.” He asked members if they needed to change the mindset once again? Extension’s role in society as ‘the oil’ that makes things happen - it is about interaction between people, information sharing, dialogue, learning and action.

**2001 - Peter Van Beek** challenged members as ‘sinners’ by denying “other stakeholders ‘co-ownership of extension through excluding from our definitions an

ingredient that is of vital importance to them. And we talk down to them by using a language that is not theirs. Develop, publish and promote practical descriptions to which our stakeholders can easily relate”.

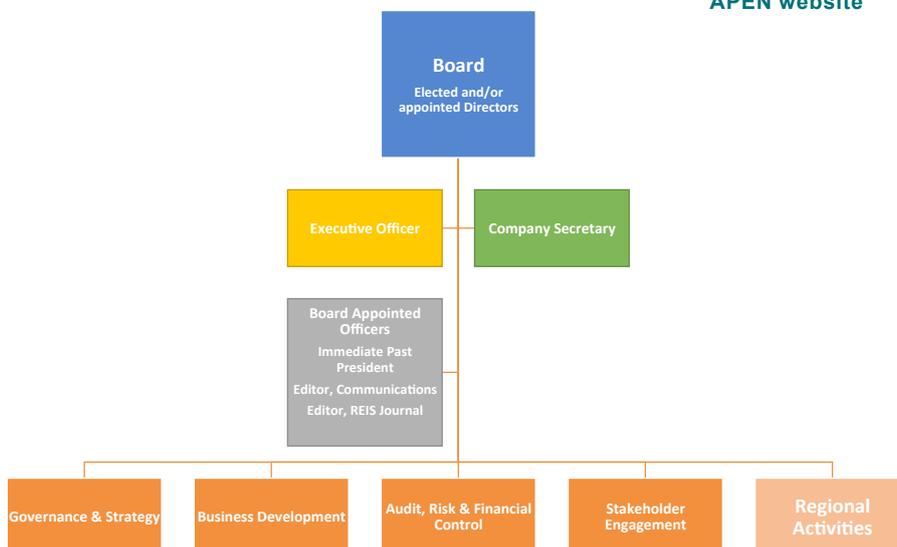
**2011 – Professor David De Kretser AC, Governor of Victoria**, in the foreword to APEN’s Shaping Change: Natural Resource Management, Agriculture and the Role of Extension book, offered the following: ‘The term Extension officially made its way into the English language in the early 1800s at Cambridge University and since that time has been variably used to describe the process by which scientific knowledge is transmitted to industry to inform those practising in the field of endeavour. Extension has been the means by which the adoption of new knowledge has changed processes within Western agricultural industries and the rising Natural Resource Management sector. Thus, extension has been responsible for providing tangible benefits to individuals and society at large from scientific discovery.’

**2011 –** “Extension is the process of enabling change in individuals, communities and industries involved in the primary industry sector and with natural resource management”. (Vanclay & Leach, Shaping Change p.6)

**2012 –** ‘The many turnings of agricultural extension in Australia’ by Warren Hunt, Colin Birch, Jeff Coutts and Frank Vanclay –Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension Vol.18 No.1, 9-26, February 2012 provides an insightful account of extension.

**2018 – APEN website:** Extension is about working with people in a community to facilitate change in an environment that has social, economic and technical complexity. This is achieved by helping people gain the knowledge and confidence, so that they want to change, and by providing support to ensure it is implemented effectively.

**2017 At a recent Special General Meeting of APEN members, the resolution was passed to transition APEN away from its present Incorporated Association status into a Company Limited by Guarantee. As part of these structural changes, it was also recognised that the APEN Constitution was modified to suit the new company structure. See APEN website**



# Leadership

*Great leaders don't set out to be a leader ... they set out to make a difference ... it is never about the position or the role ... it is always about the goal and outcomes.*

## Some thoughts from a few of APEN's leaders

Between 1996 and 2017, the leadership of John Bourne, Jane Fisher, John James, Neale Price, Tracey Gianatti, Austin McLennan, Jeanette Long and the current President Graham Harris, through volunteer management committees, have brought together talented groups of people who have generously offered their time, experience and efforts for extension agents across Australia and the Pacific, including an impressive group of ExtensionNet editors to lead APEN to go somewhere to make a difference.

The leaders whom we could contact were asked: What achievement, in your volunteer role, are you most proud of? We also took the liberty of quoting from President's reports during their tenure.

**John Bourne (1996-1999)** noted in 1997 that, "during the year, APEN achieved the milestone of 500 members. Other highlights included setting up a web page, which included the APEN Forum, a vehicle by which members could access the views of others in a discussion format and the initiation of an annual Extension Award for excellence." [Does anyone remember "the APEN Anthem" created by Helpful Productions for the after-dinner entertainment at the Fourth "National Forum" and AGM held at Roseworthy? This anthem highlighted the real need to "work together for the effectiveness of our own professional roles and by good fortune for the benefit of our clients and communities "Ed.]

**Jane Fisher (1999-2001)** – acknowledges that "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 am pleased



to share with you the good news that Horticulture Australia Limited has agreed to sponsor ExtensionNet for \$7000 per year over the next two years, and DRDC \$4000 per year."

**Dr John James (2001-2004)** – In 2002: "The challenge for us as an organisation of change management and communication specialists is to "walk the talk" ourselves." 2004 - The APEN Management Committee (MC) continued its efforts in better communicating and engaging with its members by sending out regular eBulletins, using an informal communication style to highlight items of importance to members. This and the online surveys helped us better engage with members about the proposed changes. John reflects in 2018 – "It was creating the APEN mentoring scheme, as that has enabled seasoned extension professionals to share their enthusiasm and knowledge about extension with those seeking to improve their own extension practice. After designing and implementing the scheme, I've continued my involvement as a mentor over the years. I never fail to learn something new myself from those I mentor, as they invariably have new thoughts and ideas that challenge my own behaviours. I'm thankful that others like Peter Hanrahan, Jeanette Gellard and Roe Currie have helped to keep the mentoring scheme going, so that it can continue to benefit our members."

**Neale Price (2005-2007)** – "APEN continues to work collaboratively with the Australian Farm Business Management Network to produce an Extension Farming Systems journal and I would especially like to thank Neels Botha and Roy Murray-Prior for their continuing efforts."

**Tracey Gianatti (2008-2010)** encourages members to attend the 5th International Conference in Busselton, Western Australia – "we all know there are many brilliant stories of practice change out there at the coal face – this is our chance to capture our learnings and share them with others who can benefit".

**Austin McLennan (2010-2013)** – "For me, it has always been these three sign posts – Networking, Professional Development and Representation – that have provided the focus in what APEN should be doing and the direction it should be heading – to deliver the maximum benefits to our members and the broader extension and advisor community and, by extension, to the industries and communities with which we work ... I hope it will be clear that APEN is realising its plan to be "The (leading) organisation for extension professionals" (APEN Corporate Statement) ... and that, importantly, we have been achieving this by providing a "Platform for Professional Development, Networking and Representation" (taken from the APEN Mission Statement) ... APEN has a lot of work to do to increase the recognition and esteem of the term extension. So, I would say, APEN is not stuck in an agricultural and NRM rut, rather we are barely in it. And secondly, if you are one of those people who see a rut, I invite you instead to see it as a swimming pool of opportunity, and it's time for APEN to jump in, and stop worrying about the big wide ocean outside."

**Jeanette Long (2014-2016)** Leadership is about leading a team to go somewhere to make a positive difference. It has been challenging as we progressed to become a company. I'm very proud of the success of the conference in Adelaide that I convened while in my first year as President of APEN. I was also thrilled with the amount of "on-



ground” activity including roadshows, the mentoring scheme, webinars and local events that occurred. In my final year as President, hosting the GFRAS (Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services) annual meeting in Ingham and APEN’s 2017 International Conference in Townsville was a highlight and credit to all involved.

**Graham Harris (2017-2018)** In my 12-month tenure as APEN President I have been impressed with the professionalism with which the members of the APEN Board and Roe Currie have progressed the transition of our organisation to a Company Limited by Guarantee. In that time, we have reviewed our strategic direction and are putting in place the necessary procedural documentation that will underpin the future health of APEN. I am impressed by APEN’s commitment to fostering on-going development of the extension profession within our region. We have delivered professional development opportunities through the regular webinar series organised by Leanne Isaacson and the APEN Roadshows, this year being delivered by Greg Mills from GoAhead Business Solutions. These events provide our members with excellent development opportunities and showcase the benefit of being a member of APEN. Particular thanks go to our Regional Co-ordinators for their efforts in supporting APEN throughout the regions. Planning is now underway for the 2019 APEN Conference in Darwin. I look forward to what will be another excellent conference where we can all learn from our peers and further develop our professional networks.

## Regional Coordinators

Working alongside our APEN Leaders in the Committee of Management/National Executive or finally the Management Committee, have been the Regional Coordinators (RCs), who, as volunteers, represented their regions in every state and territory in Australia and New Zealand. Some RCs even took on the roles of Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary for APEN to make the strategic decisions to successfully run the business of APEN. The 54 RCs are listed on the Honour Board on the APEN Website. Their contributions are greatly appreciated.

One RC role that became more difficult to achieve over the years was to organise at least one local event in the regions with the help of Cluster Coordinators.

With the change in APEN structure to a Company Limited by Guarantee, the management structure also changed to a Board and a permanent committee, the Regional Activities Committee (RAC). RCs are elected to the RAC and their role is to facilitate APEN activity in their region as well as providing regional input to the Board through a Regional Coordinator who is also a Board Director. Presently that conduit role is held by Chrissy Stokes from NZ.

RCs appreciate assistance in organising regional activities. APEN also has a role for an Event and Activity Coordinator. We encourage you to contact your RC if you are interested. See back page of this edition for contact details.



## APEN Secretariat

The Australian Institute of Agricultural Science were appointed as the first APEN secretariat in

1994 and the interim committee of management decided to put the role out for tender in 1995. Dr Rosemary (Roe) Currie has been providing APEN Secretariat services since July 1995. As well as being the contact and communications point for APEN and looking after the membership database and finances, the role involves assisting the APEN Board and Committees and especially the President, Treasurer and Secretary. Progress over the years has seen agendas and minutes sent by fax or mail with meetings by telephone conferencing, through email contact and use of the website for committee papers with web-conferencing, to using Dropbox for agendas and Board papers and @apen.org.au email addresses!

Working with all the APEN Committees and Editors and getting to know them all and see them grow with experience as they work for APEN’s benefit continues to be a satisfying and rewarding experience. Putting faces to APEN members names at events is a highlight of the role.



# APEN's Communication

*“Minds are like parachutes. They only function when they are open” (Thomas Dewar)*



**As extension practitioners we are professional communicators. So how do we use our communication skills? And, can we improve our communication skills?**

## **The impact of the editors of ExtensionNet**

Great stuff happens when we come together to inspire, to motivate and to influence each other. The information and ideas in ExtensionNet reflect the thinking, research, and talents which unite the APEN community. The editors bring diversity, experience, representation and networking of our members to the multi-faceted discussions surrounding extension practices across Australia and the Pacific. There have been 11 editors from the interim editor, Peter Van Beek. APEN deeply appreciates the influence of Dale Williams, Elwin Turnbull, Mark Paine, Darren Schmidt, Chrissy King, Jess Jennings, Kate Charleston, Gerry Roberts, Ian Teese, Maryse Bourgault and the current editor, Patricia Hamilton. We also acknowledge three guest editors, Sally Marsh, John James and Roe Currie.

“By providing that Human connection and faces to the people who were there, you provide another element and impetus for change” (Roger Chao, CEO Kinders Together)

From **1993-2018**, the editors have captured and recorded the moments in developing the growth of APEN. Our members, as facilitators of change, are involved in technology transfer, extending research results, working with groups of grass roots farmers, rural communities and natural resource management as advisors, consultants, communicators, project managers.

## ExtensionNet

*“a flagship publication to be proud of”*

Some snippets from APEN editorials to help you complete Mike’s jigsaw puzzle

**1993 – Peter Van Beek** asks: ‘**Why this newsletter?**’ – “Its instructions from the Steering Committee are to arrange the network through consultation and to start a newsletter as soon as possible. This is that newsletter.” Points of view were encouraged.

**In 1995, Dale Williams:** “I trust the articles go beyond a ‘show and tell’ and raise a few issues and questions for deliberation. “In 1997, “Ours is a ‘network’. It is more than a professional ‘association’. It will work if we all equally own its purpose, processes and benefits ... if we each play our roles in its shared life. “

**In 1998, Elwin Turnbull** wondered: How often have you asked? **What is the Core Business of Extension?** and, how satisfied are you with your answer? [Read Elwin’s response Vol 5 (4)] APEN has now “come of age” as a professional network. It has a sound membership base, has organised successful national and international conferences and is continuing to deliver benefits to its members. APEN provides a vehicle for extension professionals to share experiences and continue to refine their understanding and skills. (Michael Taylor Secretary Natural

Resources and Environment – a sponsor since APEN’s inception) He challenged change agents to continually respond to change, to adapt and be more innovative

**2001-2002 - Mark Paine**, in 2018 reflects on the achievements he recorded. “ExtensionNet provided the medium to discuss the implications of these changes for the profession. I became editor of ExtensionNet in 2000 and made the following comment in my first editorial:

*We can see that extension is becoming an increasingly important profession to enable society to cope with the challenges emerging in value chains, natural resource management and rural development. I believe ExtensionNet provides our profession with a capacity to learn from each other by sharing experiences and insights as we grapple with these challenges in future.*

Extension as a profession was the core theme for APEN 2001. A number of Rural Development Corporations and State Departments were questioning the role of extension and who should pay for these services. Being explicit about the unique role of the extension profession helped inform this debate. APEN 2001 stated, ‘*The extension profession has a unique mandate to stimulate innovation and support the efforts of others who seek to improve rural environments and their personal well-being.*’ The profession was defining itself in terms of knowledge management, adult learning, innovation, and participatory approaches to rural development while its future was being threatened with funding cuts from government and industry. Many of you will recall debating issues of market failure and the role of the state to stimulate innovation. ExtensionNet connected people with other teams, projects, and research from across Australasia and the Pacific during this



time. We extended our ability to facilitate, evaluate and research change. We did this in an expanding universe of issues arising in rural communities.”

**Mark’s thoughts for the future:** “*ExtensionNet* continues to feed my passion for extension, even though it is more than one and half decades since I was editor. The relevance of the extension profession to determining our future as a cohesive society has never been greater. Unfortunately, we continue to be invisible to most of the people who stand to benefit from our services.

At the launch of the *Handbook for Qualitative Research in 2000*, Yvonna Lincoln gave an impassioned acknowledgement to the contribution that agricultural extension had made to many of the approaches in the Handbook. Her message was that extension inspired much of the work now pursued by a range of applied social research disciplines. As we advance our profession through practice and research may we continue to inspire others in collegial partnerships. To cope with the challenges emerging from climate change we will require highly effective public-private partnerships.”

**2004 – Darren Schmidt** – “As professionals focused on - amongst many other things - change management, extension officers can often be conservative with their own career progression and just as frightened of change as anybody else. Take it from me: change is scary! A new year is as good a time as any to have a close look at your experiences, skill sets and qualifications and determine for yourself if you’ve changes to make”.

**2007 – Christine King** – [Ed sez ...] “The stories, in *ExtensionNet* ..., show the diversity of activities related to extension that are happening around Australia, including on-ground action, policy formulation, professional development and publication; not to mention the diversity of membership and alternative careers. What an achievement for any professional community! Thank you for sharing your stories.”

**2010 - Kate Charleston and Gerry Roberts** – “There is more than just the year-change that’s different! we (Kate and Gerry = Editors) have collaborated for the first time to edit EN. It has been enjoyable work using only the collaboration tools of email, web-conferencing and telephones... we have never met face to face! For another thing, APEN is up for change to become part of a member-driven, interactive APEN website.”

**2013 - Ian Teese** – “Organisations such as APEN rely on the voluntary contributions from members. The newsletter editors rely on the valuable contributions from APEN members to provide an informative and relevant newsletter.”

**2013-2016 Maryse Bourgault:** her thoughts in 2018 “I decided to volunteer for the role of the *ExtensionNet* editor at the 2013 Conference in Christchurch, NZ. I had a great time at the conference. I met such interesting and friendly people that I wanted a way to stay connected with this community. I knew I was leaving extension a few weeks after the conference. I’m originally trained as a research scientist, and ultimately, that is what I went back to, but for a while (15 months to be exact!), I had given up on that life. And then, a few weeks before the conference, I had an offer that convinced me to give it another try. Most conferences I went to before Christchurch were quite large (most over 500, one up to 2500 delegates), very scientific, and it would be quite rare for people to spark a conversation and introduce themselves just because they happen to stand beside each other. So, the APEN conference was truly a breath of fresh air, and I felt instantly at home among extensionists, even with my limited experience. There is no question in my mind that being editor of *ExtensionNet* has been one of the most rewarding volunteering experiences of my life. I think it is no exaggeration to say that I have gained friends for life within the management committee. I’ve also gained confidence in approaching people to ask for favours, even if I did not know them.

And I found that that most people are more than happy to share their knowledge. Being the editor of *ExtensionNet* gives you the perfect excuse to ask anyone (almost) anything!

One of my greatest challenges, I think as an Editor, was finding time. There is never enough time! Looking back, I think I should have spent more time advertising the articles that we had, linking them to Facebook and LinkedIn, tweeting them out, etc (once we had the digital edition out), because they were great pieces of advice that truly deserved to be shared as widely as possible.

Looking back, I think APEN had a profound impact on my professional life. Working in extension, even if only for a short stint, and continuing to learn about extension as the Editor, certainly helped me be a great match for my current job. I am working at a research centre at a Land-grant university in the USA, and our engagement with farmers is not only one of our greatest accomplishment but also the source of our greatest strength. I feel I owe a good part of the success of my participatory research with farmers to my involvement in APEN and the great relationships I developed then.

So, thank you all so much for your friendship, and I hope APEN celebrates another 25 years of success!

**2017- Pat Hamilton** “I am privileged to follow a line of very impressive editors of *ExtensionNet* over a period of 25 years who have been given the opportunity to interact with so many amazing extension agents. I am reminded of Mahatma Gandhi’s approach that rather than waiting for change to happen, we need to be the change we want to see – that is, we often need to see beyond the lens to progress our extension work.

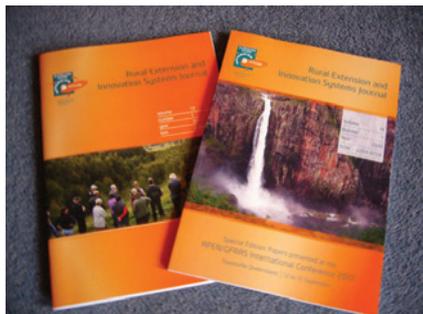
**APEN thanks our editors for keeping us “abreast of the times”.**



**“We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, while others are bright, some have weird names, but we have to learn to live in the same box.”**

**Anonymous**

# APEN's Communication



## The REIS Journal

Dr Roy Murray-Prior

The first edition of the *Rural Extension and Innovation Systems Journal*, or as it was then known, the *Extension Farming Systems Journal* was published in 2005 by the Australian Farm Business Management Network. It has always been published in hard and electronic copies with free access to the online copy. While I was the inaugural editor, the idea for the journal was the brain child of Dr Alvaro Charry from Charles Sturt University in Orange.

Professor Jim Pratley, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture at Charles Sturt University wrote the foreword for the journal which was seen as 'providing an avenue for researchers in farm business management and farming systems to provide papers focused on extension of their research or extension aspects of that research. On the other hand, professional farmers have in the *Extension Farming Systems Journal* an:

opportunity to bring their scholarship upfront and extending their achievements to interested parties. Professional extension officers, agribusiness managers and farmers will surely benefit with *Extension Farming Systems Journal* as well as other agricultural related professionals.

At that stage the journal included a *Research Forum* (refereed research articles on extension) and *Industry Forum* (articles on farm business and farming systems technology highlights with typical extension character, outstanding farm and agribusiness case-studies and leading-farmers stories). At the time I was a member of both the AFBM Network and APEN and saw the opportunity for the journal to become a forum for agricultural extension researchers and practitioners to publish their work. As a former extension practitioner, I recognised the opportunity that publication provided for them to reflect on what worked and what didn't, but also to learn from others and enhance their careers.

At the time APEN did not have a journal and did not appear to be particularly interested in supporting one. Papers presented at APEN conferences were published in various forms, but by Volume 3 in 2007 the journal was a joint publication of AFBMN and APEN although it was funded by AFBMN, with Neels Botha as the APEN editor. My strategy to gain acceptance was to show the value the journal would provide to APEN members, so when the WA branch of APEN put in a bid to hold the 2009 conference, I suggested we use the journal to publish papers from the conference. The next three issues included papers from that conference. Since then it has published papers from all APEN conferences as well as articles submitted independently.

In 2010, APEN took over management and funding of the journal and in that year changed the name to the *Rural Extension and Innovation Systems Journal*. Lisa Cowan and Sally Marsh became assistant editors in 2014 and have added new ideas and skills, in addition to sharing the workload. Following the joint APEN/GFRAS conference in 2017 the journal has begun to generate interest from international researchers, particularly from developing countries. The Editors are looking at improvements to the journal including adding sections for Literature Review papers and Keynote conference papers and getting included in citation indexes. We are also currently organising a special issue on use of digital technologies in extension.

However, our focus remains on publishing high-quality articles (not necessarily hard-core scientific papers) on extension theory and practice relevant to Australia, New Zealand and the broader Australasia-Pacific Region to support innovation and practice change by extensionists in primary industries and natural resource management. We encourage APEN members to take the challenge of sharing their work with others, using the journal to enhance their knowledge and skills, and hence make their work more enjoyable and rewarding. We would also welcome offers to help with reviewing articles for the research and practice sections by sending an email to the editor who is also happy to receive articles for publication during the year.

Roy Murray-Prior can be contacted on [reiseditor@apen.org.au](mailto:reiseditor@apen.org.au). Author instructions can be found at <http://www.apen.org.au/rural-extension-and-innovations-systems-journal>

## SHAPING CHANGE: Natural Resource Management, Agriculture and the Role of Extension

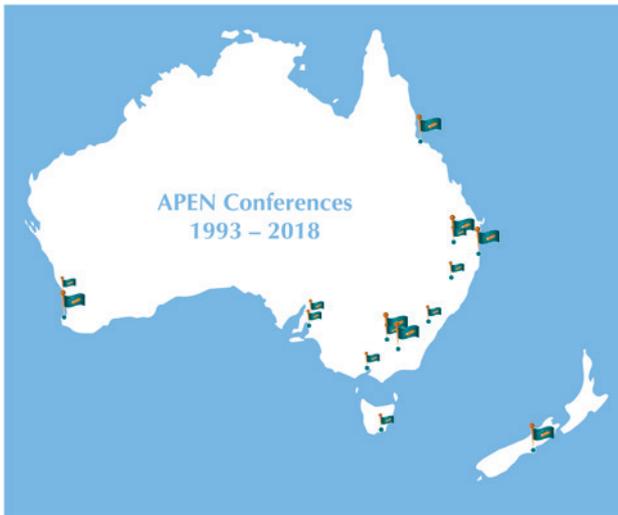


2011 "this book seeks to provide a contemporary context for a discipline that has been changing rapidly to meet new demands from agriculture, NRM and their institutional settings. It looks to the future at the kind of skills we need to rapidly develop, learn and implement so that we are equipped to engage our communities in some of the biggest challenges ever faced by human civilisation." (Introduction, Jess Jennings, Roger Packham, Dedee Woodside)

**Reflections from Jess Jennings in 2018 - *Shaping Change*** back in 2011 was collated "to provide a broad structure of knowledge for our craft for both new and experienced practitioners alike to readily access peer reviewed, professional contributions of the history, theory and practice of extension.... But another agenda lurked between the lines of *Shaping Change*, that of raising the professionalism and research standards of the extension community to better stand its ground, and grow its patch just a little, in the highly competitive marketplace of ideas and industry relevance.

The value of extension to society increases the more change we face, and there's no risk of the rate of change dropping off anytime soon, be it technological disruption, global markets, climate variation, institutional change or policy direction to name but a few of the variables that must be managed in the daily life of an extension professional."

[*Shaping Change* is a great resource as many of the articles reflect the conditions of today. Jess acquired funding from the Gardiner Foundation and 3,000 copies were published. This has enabled APEN to include a copy in each new member's welcome pack and provide it at postage only cost for any member. If you don't have your copy, please request it from Roe at [info@apen.org.au](mailto:info@apen.org.au). – Ed.]



## Conferences

APEN events bring together “professionals from the ever-emerging spectrum of extension that ranges from responsible natural resource management to productive agricultural landscapes”.

Studies reveal that there are five main reasons why people attend conferences: to learn; to be inspired; to meet like-minded people

and network; to solicit business; and the location.

The following events identify the themes of the conferences APEN has organised and delivered. A local organising committee did great work and the conferences have been well received.

**1995** - *Monitoring and Evaluation in Extension*, November, Albury, New South Wales

**1996** - *Beyond Technology Transfer*, December, Melbourne, Victoria

**1998** - *Partnerships in Extension – Extending Boundaries*, December, Roseworthy, South Australia

**1999** - *Evolving systems – challenged minds*, November, Perth, Western Australia

**2000** - *Creating a climate for change – Extension in Australasia*, October, Melbourne, Victoria

**2003** - *Extending Extension: beyond traditional boundaries, methods and ways of thinking*, November, Hobart, Tasmania

**2005** - *Building capacity for sustainable resource management ... moving a wheelbarrow full of frogs!* September, Toowoomba, Queensland

**2007** - *Capture, Consolidate & Communicate*, November, Canberra, ACT

**2011** - *Hitting a Moving Target – Sustaining Landscapes, Livelihoods and Lifestyles in a Changing World*, November, Armidale, New South Wales

**2015** - *Managing change, innovation & action in an ever-shrinking world*, November, Adelaide, South Australia



## International Conferences

The APEN International Conference, held every 4 years (2017 in conjunction with GFRAS) is an international meeting for rural advisory practitioners, researchers and academics who combine the best of extension research and practice from developing and developed countries. A wonderful opportunity to network, share knowledge and improve extension.



**1997** - *Managing Change – building knowledge and skills*, November, Albury, New South Wales

**2001** - *Exploring beyond the boundaries of extension and paving the way for a positive future for regional communities*, October, Toowoomba, Queensland

**2006** - *Practice change for sustainable communities: Exploring footprints, pathways and possibilities*, March, Beechworth, Victoria

**2009** - *Shaping Change in Communities: Dimensions of Excellence*, Busselton, Western Australia

**2013** - *Transformative Change: Chosen or Unchosen - Pathways to innovation, resilience and prosperity*, August, Christchurch, New Zealand

**2017** - *Facilitating Balanced Change for Rural and Urban Communities: Profitability & sustainability, land & sea, private & public, farms & communities* September, Townsville, Northern Queensland

**Proceedings (published papers)** for past international conferences, symposiums, conferences, forums and other APEN events can be accessed from APEN's website.

- **Writing for conferences** is an excellent way to launch your writing career and hone your writing skills. “It seems vital that we also publish our work and methods in peer-reviewed journals – if the extension profession is to be seen as more than second rate.” (Petheram, Paine & Crawford. 2008).
- **Speaking at conferences** is a great opportunity to share your knowledge and influence the discussions as you become more visible.

**[Here's your chance – Attend APEN's Conference in Darwin, September 2019. Ed.]**



## Surveys

Every few years APEN has asked members questions about themselves, their jobs and how we can help and how APEN is progressing. In 2010, APEN conducted a survey of its members to find out what activities are working and what they should change. “All surveys, whether printed or online have two competing objectives. First, we want to get as much information as possible and secondly, participants want to spend as little time as possible completing the survey. (Eds. Kate Charleston & Gerry Roberts)

[For those of you considering ‘not another survey’, read a back issue of ExtensionNet, particularly the article by Kate Roberts: Survey Monkey: Why not Elephant or Banana? - Ed.]

APEN has recently concluded its email survey of members for 2018. “It is clear that extension approaches can be used to work with issues in each of these areas – primary industries, the environment and the community – and that a number of extension practitioners already see themselves as working across all three.” (Austin McLennan) The results of this survey will be shared with the Directors and members once the results have been evaluated.

# APEN's Communication

## Awards

The APEN Award for Excellence in Extension is open to APEN members, either individuals or groups, who have demonstrated excellence in extension through a work program completed within the last five years. Awards are presented in the Open or Experienced and Young Professional (under 35 years of age) categories.



In 2009, the Young Professional Award was renamed the Amabel Fulton Award for Excellence in Extension for a Young Professional in memory of the late Amabel Fulton who was a major contributor to APEN and the development of extension in Australia. The underpinning aim of the Awards program is to showcase the achievements of our enterprising members.

[The impressive list of winners can be accessed on the APEN website. Their projects have had a profound impact on many aspects of primary production and natural resource management. Ed.]

## Mentoring

**2005** - The *Leading the future: nurturing young people in extension* national workshop in Melbourne identified the lack of mentoring as one of the major obstacles facing young extension professionals.

This was the culmination of a series of leadership workshops held around Australia and organised with Dr Amabel Fulton and Rural Development Services

**2008** - under the leadership of John James, the APEN Mentoring scheme was developed. As with any such scheme, mentees and mentors both benefit from the experience.

**2018** - The APEN Extension skills mentoring scheme is an additional service available to members only. Of course, interested non-members may join and gain immediate access to it. For all the details, please read our **information booklet** which can be accessed from the APEN website.



## Roadshows

After 10 years of organising an APEN conference or forum every year a decision was made to hold these events every second year. The Management Committee considered the issue that people who didn't attend the APEN forum or conference were not getting many APEN events. This coincided with the finish of a Cooperative Venture in Capacity Building funded project and it was decided to use a Roadshow to share the results. **In 2005**, the workshop, *Capacity building for change: what, why and how*, presented by Jeff Coutts and Kate Roberts, was held in all Australian states and was the start of the APEN Roadshow concept.

**2009** - *Fostering Rural Innovation and Change* – Ian Plowman

**2014** - *Designing Effective Events – Using Adult Learning Principles* – Andrew Huffer

The workshop was also taken to Hamilton, New Zealand

**2016** - *Program Logic* – Col Freeman

The workshop was also taken to Christchurch, New Zealand and a new pattern established.

**2018** – *Tips, Tricks and a little bit of Extension Magic* – Greg Mills



# The Impact of Technology

*“The world is becoming more connected. People, businesses and governments are increasingly moving into the virtual world to deliver and access services, obtain information, perform transactions, shop, work and interact with each other. The rapid growth in connectivity is associated with new meta-level functionality and changed organisational and individual behaviour and will fundamentally change communities.”*  
CSIRO (2012)



*Imagine life without computers now! The number one benefit of information technology is that it empowers people to do what they want to do. It lets people be creative. It lets people be productive. It lets people learn things they didn't think they could learn before, and so in a sense it is all about potential. (Steve Ballmer)*

In 2018, APEN's Communications Strategy provides guidance for project communication activities to: establish a roadmap for communication to ensure all partners are on the same page; streamline messaging; ensure all available partner communication tools are being utilised detail processes and attribution requirements. Our communication channels are: Annual Report, ExtensionNet Newsletter, e-bulletins, Media releases, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, REIS Journal, Website, Webinars.

## eBulletin

a monthly electronic newsletter from the President was established in 2004.

It contains APEN News, other news that may be of interest to members and employment opportunities as they are notified. The Reading Brace was introduced by MC member Mike Weise and is continued today with input from Denise Bewsell. The newsletter facility, with the current website, is more user friendly and it is hoped the members appreciate the new look.

## Website

The APEN website was first set up in 1997 through Charles Sturt University (<http://life.csu.edu.au/apen/>) and in 2001 a new one was set up. An upgrade was carried out in 2012 and continued to improve each year, thanks especially to the effort of member Leigh Walters who worked tirelessly in the background for several years. In 2017, APEN commissioned Snap to build a new website update and refresh our image and information. It was launched in early 2018.



*Web conferencing? No, sorry mate – this is the afterlife. Cyberspace is over there!*

## Web Conferencing

**2010** – Austin McLennan noted that web conferences would not be another “gimmick. “in particular, web-conferences are a cheap and effective way for you to hear from first class presenters who would ordinarily never make it to your corner of the world...or at least mine”.

**2018** – APEN Board, RAC and Committees conduct meetings using the Zoom software.

APEN continues to host a series of webinars on a wide range of topics to encourage members to hear from the expertise and experience of extensionists from all over Australia as well as New Zealand.

- If you would like further details on the webinars or would like to present or have a suggestion for a suitable topic, please contact the APEN Secretariat on [info@apen.org.au](mailto:info@apen.org.au).

# Social Media

*Once a new technology rolls over you, if you're not part of the steamroller, you're part of the road (Stewart Brand)*

Social Media is a vital ingredient for an organisation like APEN to reach and engage with our members and the wider audience.

And so, what happened when social media became a focus of APEN's communication strategy?

**2011** - "The march of social media is now unstoppable and extension professionals need to keep abreast of this new technology as they provide opportunities for communities to share information as well as keeping a log for future use and review of documents." ((Gerry Roberts & Kate Charleston, *ExtensionNet* Vol 18 (3))

**2014** - Cynthia Mahoney encouraged members to share ideas, experiences and content, provide feedback and even collaborate with each other through LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Cynthia's tips on how APEN members could use social media to connect can be found in *ExtensionNet* Vol 22 (1). "We can all contribute to APEN being a vibrant, engaged and participative social network in the virtual world as well as the real one." "Social Media can be a bit like a bunch of people with megaphones blurring out their messages one-way. People will cover their ears (unsubscribe) and tune that out. Use Social Media to 'listen' to and learn more about your audience". Brian J Carroll, CEO of InTouch

**2018** – We now use our ability to access people and events on a daily basis while working across Australia and New Zealand. We can see, hear what is important to our members and respond accordingly – such connectivity and so many linkages. Remember: *You control the information that you choose to enter into the system.*

*And so, to the future- a place which we are creating and shaping ...*



**Cynthia Mahoney** @cynth\_mahons · Feb 19

A sign of the times 4 @APENews - expert communicators @GoaheadGreg @JeanetteLong1 @RebeccaWallis3 @MaryseBourgault

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# Where is Extension heading?

*When it comes to the future, there are three kinds of people; those who let it happen, those who make it happen and those who wonder what happened.”*

*John M Richardson Jr.*



**APEN's three Life Members share their vision for the future of APEN**



## **Terry Makin**

25 years ago, the challenges we faced were how to build the capacity of the extension profession. Now you have successful dynamic organisation which

will enable you to focus on the challenges faced the people you serve. There is an increasing divide between rural Australia and the capital cities. Professor Richard Bawden was saying in the early 90's there were 4 stages of Agriculture; pioneering; production; productivity; and finally, persistence which we would now call sustainability. Sustainability is the area we are entering today.

Global Warming and Climate Change is with us, in fact all around us; although some of our leaders still think the future is in coal. Rural people and agriculture are in the front line and extension has an important role in facilitating the changes and adaption needed. Do we have the knowledge, technology and tools to make a difference?

First Australians had achieved sustainable land management systems over their 65,000 years of practice. There is increasing scientific evidence demonstrating and validating the relevance and depth of their knowledge. Aboriginal Ranger Programs are increasingly showing their value. Science and traditional knowledge working together.

Bill Gammage (The Greatest Estate), Bruce Pascoe (Dark Emu) and Charles Massy (The Call of the Reed Warbler) are three recent writers who have given us great background information about the land management history of this very

ancient continent and the sort of thinking that we need to build sustainability and persistence.

APEN is uniquely positioned as a national body covering all of Australia and New Zealand to facilitate and drive the changes needed to position the land management systems in both our countries to survive and regenerate; leaving the land in a better state than when we found it.

That is the challenge we face now.

## **Dr Jeff Coutts**

I am most proud that APEN commenced at a time of both a wakening and pressure on extension across Australia in the early 1990s to support those of us in extension and develop the extension profession. This was an incredible feat of bringing the different states and extension interests together – and more than that, it has persisted and grown as an organisation that is recognised across the agricultural and natural resource management sectors as the 'go-to' place for extension.



## **Dr John James**

That it continues to grow and flourish, and that it continues to be a people enabling network. For me it's all about the people... they're the ones who make a difference in the communities and industries with which we work. I hope that we continue to push the boundaries, exploring new ways of doing things, both as a professional organisation and as extension professionals.

## **Future Visions**

**The Current President, Graham Harris**



My future vision for APEN is to increase its relevance as the peak body representing the views of extension professionals within our region – encompassing the many professionals operating within Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific and Asian regions. One of the constants in the world is change – we are impacted by change and have a responsibility to assist our industries and communities to respond to this change. I believe APEN can be a leader in developing the extension profession and responding positively to change. My greatest hope is that we can increase membership of APEN and further expand the development opportunities on offer to our membership.

## **The Immediate Past President, Jeanette Long**

With extension coming back on the agricultural industry radar, I believe APEN is well placed to grow as a key professional body providing input into Government policy as well as providing professional development for members. Over many years, the Management Committee has been gathering lots of ideas and best practice for things that matter so that the voices of our members are heard in places where decisions are made. With the new Board in place along with the Regional Coordinators we have increased our reach and professionalism. APEN can expand its membership into other industries providing valuable insights into extension and practice change.



# APEN Timeline

<b>1993</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A core working group consisting of Chair Terry Makin, Farmer, Victoria, Bob Macadam, University of Western Sydney, Ian Simpson, NSW Agriculture and Peter Van Beek, Queensland Department of Primary Industries, met at the 1st Australia Pacific Extension Conference, in October on the Gold Coast to form APEN. They were ably supported by a strong steering group of members across Australia and the Pacific.</li> <li>• December – the first ExtensionNet newsletter was sent out</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporated on 9th August in Victoria</li> <li>• Logo was designed</li> <li>• Australian Institute of Agricultural Science appointed as the APEN secretariat.</li> <li>• First corporate sponsors Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Agriculture Victoria</li> </ul>	<b>1994</b>
<b>1995</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AgriLogic Consultants (later called Creative Management Services) takes over the Secretariat role</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APEN's first International conference (the second Extension conference) in Albury, NSW</li> <li>• APEN internet site launched through Charles Sturt University (<a href="http://life.csu.edu.au/apen/">http://life.csu.edu.au/apen/</a>)</li> </ul>	<b>1997</b>
<b>1999</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inaugural APEN Award for Excellence in Extension awarded at the National Forum in Perth</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APEN list server and email groups commenced operations nationally in December 2000</li> </ul>	<b>2000</b>
<b>2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Conference in Toowoomba, Qld – Open Space used</li> <li>• Launch of APEN website: <a href="http://www.apen.org.au">www.apen.org.au</a></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop to explore the possibility of a national accreditation scheme, Canberra, Joint APEN AAAC project</li> </ul>	<b>2002</b>
<b>2003</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APEN's 10th Birthday celebrated at National Forum in Hobart</li> <li>• Surveyed member's needs</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First eBulletin sent out in September 2004</li> <li>• New constitution proposed by Management Committee passed at AGM 18 November 2004</li> <li>• Chapters changed to Clusters</li> <li>• National Executive now called the Management Committee</li> </ul>	<b>2004</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another member's survey</li> <li>• APEN assisted with the establishing the State Extension Leaders Network (SELN)</li> <li>• Submission to the Australian House of Representatives Agriculture Committee into rural skills training</li> <li>• Leadership workshops held in conjunction with Rural Development Services</li> <li>• Roadshow, 9 to 23 November - Cooperative Venture for Capacity Building (CVCB)</li> </ul>	
<b>2005</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Conference at Beechworth, Vic</li> <li>• Extension Farming Systems Journal, Australian Farm Business Management Network and APEN Collaboration began</li> </ul>	<b>2006</b>
<b>2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Forum at Canberra Capture, Consolidate and Communicate (foundation for Shaping Change book)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring Scheme introduced</li> </ul>	<b>2008</b>
<b>2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Conference in Busselton, WA. Papers published in EFS Journal</li> <li>• Young Professional Award renamed the Amabel Fulton Award for Excellence in Extension by a Young Professional in memory of the late Amabel Fulton who was a major contributor to APEN and the development of extension in Australia</li> <li>• Roadshow - Fostering Rural Innovation and Change – Ian Plowman</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping Change: Natural Resource Management, Agriculture and the Role of Extension was launched (Publication)</li> <li>• Social Media arrives in APEN with Facebook, Twitter and the President's Blog</li> <li>• New constitution proposed by Management Committee passed at AGM</li> </ul>	<b>2011</b>
<b>2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start of APEN supported Enabling Change and Innovation webinar series run by John James, DAFF Qld and Citrix</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Conference, Christchurch NZ APEN'S 20th Birthday – Social Media Strategy released</li> </ul>	<b>2013</b>
<b>2014</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roadshow - Designing Effective Events – Using Adult Learning Principles – Andrew Huffer The workshop was also taken to Hamilton, New Zealand</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Survey</li> </ul>	<b>2015</b>
<b>2016</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ExtensionNet published on-line – review of APEN structure and governance</li> <li>• Roadshow - Program Logic – Col Freeman</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APEN became a Company limited by guarantee with a Board of Directors supported by Regional Coordinators and a new constitution</li> </ul>	<b>2017</b>
<b>2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roadshow - Tips, Tricks and a little bit of Extension Magic – Greg Mills</li> <li>• APEN 25 years</li> <li>• Life Memberships awarded</li> </ul>	

# 2019

• APEN Conference: Extending Horizons: Extension's role in climate, rural industries and community challenges September in Darwin

## EXTENDING HORIZONS



### APEN 2019 Conference



So many beginnings ... to capture and celebrate APEN's 25 years would fill a book. This edition of ExtensionNet has only touched the surface. There are many stories that need to be shared. The partnering of APEN with the Rural Develop Corporations for our conferences and in projects. Those who wear their APEN hats in their workplaces to remind their colleagues of the importance and benefits of extension and walking the talk through their work and research projects! This will be built on as we nurture the wisdom of professionals across Australia, New Zealand and the broader Asia Pacific Region. APEN thanks the many people who had input to this snapshot of APEN's 25 years.

**The APEN story is still unfolding**

**Remember successful networks depend on local action. It is up to you to make our network a success.**

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RC - Regional Coordinator

## Guidelines and Deadlines

*Submissions should be made in MS Word 6.0 with minimal formatting. A portrait photograph of the author is required. All photographs, figures and/or tables ought to be provided as separate files (preferably TIF or JPEG; photos scanned at 300 dpi). Feature articles should be around 1000 words and minor articles 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted material to meet space restrictions. Letters to the editor or general items of news of interest to the network are welcome. Articles should be submitted at least four weeks prior to publication.*

*Preference is given to articles that are grounded in some form of project or event.*

**Editing: Dr Pat Hamilton**

**Layout: Ross Tasker, Snap Albury Wodonga, Victoria.**

**Production management: Dr Rosemary Currie, APEN, Wodonga, Victoria.**

*Opinions expressed in ExtensionNet are not necessarily those of the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (Ltd.) unless otherwise stated.*

**Stories and photos (next edition) due to Editor 1st December 2018**