



EXTENSIONNET

Newsletter of the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network Ltd

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A walk through APEN's
2019 Conference -
Extending Horizons:
Extension's role in climate,
rural industry and
community challenges



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2019 Australasia-Pacific Extension Network Conference

Extending Horizons: Extension's role in climate, rural industry and community challenges

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Sophie Lapsley



The APEN Directors and the Conference team are grateful to Sophie as our "official" photographer during the conference. We deeply appreciate the generosity of her time and for sharing her expertise in recoding memorable events.

ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

"Powerful Conversations ... Lots of Socialising ... Lots of learnings"

No matter where I materialised, the conversations were robust and, like Topsy, I just grew! The socialising was vibrant. Passionate, inspirational stories were shared. Renewing 'old' connections and making new ones kept us up to date on what is happening in the extension sector – the stories kept flowing well into the night! The energy emanated from the lawns, the beachside pavilion, the grand ballrooms, the swimming pool, the bars, the bus, the field trips and even the airports ... so much to absorb, so much to reflect upon, so much I want to initiate ... so much and more...



My deep appreciation to everyone who contributed to this snapshot of ExtensionNet's conference issue– the organisers, the keynotes, the presenters, the sponsors, the delegates filling the spaces to see, hear and spread the word of extension. Being able to interact with speakers and panel members, vote in polls, and send questions by using sli.do and #APEN was a bonus. The feedback via emails, phone calls, survey, social media platforms, industry newsletters and input into ExtensionNet has been awesome – a great way to share and capture much of the magic being generated everywhere.

This APEN 2019 Conference issue takes you on a walk through the various activities, including the preconference workshops and networking events. I thank the many contributors, the organising team, the delegates (many came from afar) and the sponsors who have shared their experiences in a variety of ways. It was an event to remember!

Warm regards

Pat Hamilton, *ExtensionNet* Editor



Thanks to Jeanette Gellard who captured the many responses from the conference feedback.



A warm welcome to tropical Darwin!

Here is Jake Betros' program handbook's version

I want to personally welcome each and every one of you to the conference you and thank you for making the trip to the Top End. We know it can be a bit difficult to get to, so for that, we have made a conference worth your while, with ground-breaking workshops, adventurous field trips, top billing keynote speakers, and most importantly, plenty of time to network and meet other extension professionals! Don't forget to learn from our peers over 70 concurrent presentations and posters. I can't wait to hear presentations such as:

- Everything you need to know about extension, I learned from my cows
- If you show me your extension, I'll show you mine
- Pushing Dinosaurs Uphill

I want to thank the conference committee for the countless meetings and phone calls, as they were always willing to answer my annoying emails with advice

and assistance that this conference could not have done without. Also thank you to our professional conference organiser, Associated Advertising and Promotions, make sure you say hi to Natalie and Rosie throughout the conference!

As always, sponsors play a large part in making these conferences possible. So, thank you to each and every sponsor for the assistance provided, which will make this event as beneficial as it can be.

Once again, welcome to the APEN 2019 Conference here in the Northern Territory, known to many now as one place left in the world with enough silence or your voice to be heard, and enough space for your ideas to come to life.

Snippets from Jake's welcome at the conference

We are in the Northern Territory! Make the most of it. Among many things (climate, beaches, markets, ...) we are known for

our NT News Headlines. Our sense of humour from the NT News might need interpretation ('The Day Darwin froze ... at 18 degrees'; 'Did Aliens Steal our Mangoes'; 'Honk if Your Horny' {a buffalo, I might add}; 'Why I stuck a cracker up my clacker'; 'Fruit of the groins'.) If this is not enough, Jake asked us to select our favourite – using the sli.do tool - we were in for a conference full of surprises!

Jake's enthusiastic, welcome as Conference convenor and MC, in such a stunning location, right on the beach at the Mindil Beach Casino Resort, set the scene for what was to be a jam-packed two days of absorbing lots of useful information, networking everywhere and enjoying the warmth and ambience of the environment and the people.

Cheers,

Jacob Betros



President's Message

President Graham Harris

It was my pleasure to welcome 196 delegates to the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network conference in Darwin – the first time that we have held the conference in the Northern Territory.

We live at a time of rapid change and considerable uncertainty – a time in which extension skills are essential in assisting individuals and communities to respond to the many challenges we face. Historically, we have focused on agricultural production and natural resource management and this emphasis is likely to continue into the future. Additionally, many of the skills we possess can be of benefit more broadly within our local and international communities. The conference theme – “Extending Horizons: Extension’s role in climate, rural industry, and community challenges” reflects this broader role that extension will have.

Since our last conference in Townsville, APEN has transitioned to a company limited by guarantee with a skill based board. This has resulted in significant workload for Rosemary Currie our APEN secretariat and the Board Directors. I'd like to thank them for their efforts and their enthusiasm in establishing APEN

as the lead organisation for extension professionals “working with people to enable change and innovation in primary industries, natural resource management and communities”.

During the conference we held our AGM, the details of which will be reported in the Annual Report. I encourage you all to consider how you might support the activities of APEN, as a Director on the Board, member of one of the APEN committees, as a Regional Coordinator and/or participation in regional activities.

I'd like to sincerely thank the conference committee for their efforts in making the conference happen. I appreciated the efforts of our keynote speakers, abstract presenters and the poster presenters in delivering what I believe was an entertaining and informative program. I am pleased so many delegates made the most of this opportunity to further strengthen their extension networks and create new connections that will further the profession of extension in the Australasia-Pacific region. In particular, I'd like to thank Jake Betros for his enthusiasm as the Conference Convener, and Rosemary Currie who unfortunately

could not be with us at this conference. Their efforts went a long way to making the conference a success. I'd also like to thank the many sponsors who contributed to this success – the Northern Territory Government through their generous sponsorship of all delegates, Territory Natural Resource Management, ACIAR, CRDC, QFF, Regional Development Australia, NT Framers, GRDC, Charles Darwin University and Hort Innovation. Your sponsorship made it possible to deliver an excellent conference in Darwin. I'd also like to thank our Conference Partners for their input as well – Dreamedia, AAP Events, Menzies School of Health Research and People in Agriculture.

Finally, I'd like to thank each of the delegates attending the conference. For some of it was one of several that you have attended and for others it was your first. Feedback from the conference indicated that many of you made most of this opportunity to expand and strengthen your networks, and further the ongoing development of our profession. It was an exciting event in the Top End.

Regards, Graham



The Pre-conference Workshops

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 APEN Conference* in Darwin definitely ticked all these boxes.

To add to the experience, the 2019 Conference Committee were pleased to be able to support two professional development workshops. [I can assure you it was very hard to choose between the two. ED.]

The *Communications skills for all professionals* was delivered by Amy Hetherington (Amiable Communications).

It was a day of fun as Amy, a Darwin business owner, communication guru and comedian, combined all her skills and experiences in a most engaging and interactive way. Throughout the day, we developed and strengthened our public speaking, networked more effectively, built our communities through social media, honed an elevator pitch to enhance our brand and much more under the guidance of Amy's wonderful sense of comedy – all timed to 'perfection'!



Amy's advice: *Networking is not a dirty word*

I really think networking has a bad stigma. Genuinely because people have made the process too 'sales based' and really forgotten the real purpose – to form connections with new people.

Here are some tips to take the awkwardness out of networking and hopefully enjoy the process.

- Reframe networking. Personally, I don't believe in small talk. I think the way we approach networking needs to be less about 'filling time' or 'a boring activity' and more about how we can build relationships and meet new people. I work to genuinely enjoy the conversations I have when networking so I can leave the best impression on my new connections and feel positive about the experience.
- Provide value for free. Word of mouth is such a valuable asset for developing connection and communities and I find that conversations where you go out of your way to help others or connect them with your networks are the most valuable. Provide information, insights and contacts and be remembered for being a helpful, connected human.
- Be memorable. What's the saying: 'people may forget what you said but they'll remember how you made

them feel.' This one is essential for networking. It's not about saying everything in that moment it's about being remembered so when you follow up there's something to break the ice and connect with. Focus on being present and sharing relatable stories and asking valuable questions. They're excellent ways to make sure the person you're speaking to feels valued and remembers you as an enjoyable person to communicate with.

Inevitably the key to being a good networker is to be a good communicator and that really requires you to be in the moment. You need to listen and engage with enthusiasm and be open and generous with your stories and information.

The number one piece of advice though is to HAVE FUN! If you're having fun in a conversation other people will as well. And that's the sort of impression you want to leave with people.

We thank Amy for bringing such a wealth of knowledge and experiences and for challenging us to be better.

Three New Zealanders, Heather Collins, Chrissy Stokes and Denise Bewsell motivated us at the Fearless facilitation and great group dynamics workshop

Just under 50 people gathered in Darwin on Wednesday 11th September to be part of the Fearless Facilitation workshop! The aim of the day was to provide an interactive, hands-on workshop where the participants learnt from each other and the coaches. Topics covered included facilitation tools and techniques, with an emphasis on how groups work and group dynamics.

What was the result? Well participants commented that developing a facilitation toolbox over the day meant that "everything I learned is now in one spot to draw on when I need it!". Another said that there were "many different methods for creating conversations between participants and



Chrissy Stokes & Denise Bewsell

switching groups throughout the day." Chrissy and Denise were very pleased that what stood out to some participants was the use of chocolate in facilitation – an underutilised tool in the toolbox!!

Participants thought that next time, given the popularity of the workshop, it would be good to use a wider range of breakout spaces, or limit it to a smaller group. They were also keen to cover more on extension – including design and other tips and tricks.

Several of the participants let us know what they were heading home to try. This included setting group rules/expectations for every meeting they were a part of; utilising the ORID method in meetings and other opportunities; trying out the bus stop activity; putting up your hand to get attention and four-word introductions.

Given the success of the workshop it would be great to think about how professional development opportunities like this could be added into the next conference – so if you are working on something for APEN 2021 – add this into your planning!

[*The APEN Conference is an international biennial two-day conference, including field trips, for rural advisory practitioners, researchers and academics who combine the best extension research and practice from developing and developed countries. A wonderful opportunity to share knowledge and improve extension. The conference usually rotates between regions and is run by a local APEN Conference committee.]



Welcome Reception



Special thanks must go to the NT Government through the Tourist and Convention Bureau. Their support allowed us to increase the conference promotion effort and to set the registration fees at \$100 less than would otherwise have been possible. Given the cost to travel to this exciting destination for most of the participants, this assistance was greatly appreciated by participants and organisers alike.

On a lovely balmy evening in Darwin, Trent Lee (Larrakia Traditional Owner) welcomed us to country.

Jake Betros, APEN's 2019 Conference Convenor, set the scene and introduced President, Graham Harris who welcomed the Honourable Paul Kirby, Minister for Primary industry and Resources and formally invited him to open the conference. Minister Kirby shared the importance of agricultural extension practices (noting that his department had recently recruited new officers to work in these roles in various centres across the Territory). He highlighted the importance of partnering with Governments to provide value to rural stakeholders. It was a relaxed address as the Minister shared his enthusiasm for the Northern Territory [challenging us to make the most of all it offered] and expressed his delight in being part of such an event with people from Australia, New Zealand, and the Asian-Pacific. We enjoyed our welcome drink in such a beautiful setting.



Minister Paul Kirby

Raid Networking

Maddison Clonan, Northern Territory RAID Representative



The Researchers in Agriculture for International Development (RAID) held a networking event and panel discussion alongside the 2019 APEN Conference in Darwin on the 11th of September. The event was held in the garden of the historic Burnett House which is positioned on the cliff top of the Darwin coastline.

To open the event, Professor Andrew Campbell the CEO of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land where Burnett House stands, the Larrakia or Saltwater people.

Matt Hall, Senior Extension Officer with the NT Department of Primary Industry and Resources then introduced the panellists: Matt Brann, Host of the NT Country Hour on ABC Rural, Wendy Pritchard, Director of Corporate Communications at the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation, Clinton Muller, Senior Consultant at RM Consultancy Group and Sally Leigo, NT Project Manager at the CRC for Developing Northern Australia.

The discussion kicked off with a question to the panel about the costs of ineffective communication and extension in rural

communities. Each panellist provided great examples from their own experience, however Sally Leigo gave a great example of the risk to cattle health and mortality with ineffective communication in livestock industries. Questions on the use of social media and traditional media, communicating difficult topics, communicating effectively throughout a project and extension for all researchers were posed to the panel. The panel shared their knowledge and experience, covering off on a range of scenarios including international extension, government investment and development, regional media, on ground with farmers and communication for scientists.

Tips on maintaining relevance, ensuring adoption and managing communication activities for busy scientists were shared to conclude the panel discussion. Following this, attendees met the panellists and networked with other guests. Under the Darwin starry sky, agricultural professionals from the Top End, interstate and as far as New Zealand met, connected and shared their experiences in communication.



Mentoring with the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF)

Sixteen APEN members are mentoring trainees as part of the QFF Workforce Planning Strategy. Many of us were fortunate to share a dinner with our mentees. Face-to-face is such a bonus, although we had 'met' via webconferencing and phone calls.

The following is a summary of Diana Saunders, Policy Advisor – Workforce Planning QFF which she shared at a concurrent session on the following day.

Developing an effective career pathway into Agriculture: The Agriculture Extension Work Placement Program

A total of fifteen trainees are assisting farmers throughout the Great Barrier Reef Catchments through the Agriculture Extension Work Placement Program. Through a partnership with the Australian Government, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation's Reef Trust Partnership and the Queensland Government, the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) is delivering a one-year work placement program.

The program aims to address two issues identified by the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce and by Coutts J&R in their review of gaps and needs in extension. These issues are the need to attract and train new employees to address the current extension staff shortage identified, and to implement succession planning for the experienced extension staff that are nearing retirement and have strong networks with farmers in reef catchments.

To address the identified gaps, the program aims to improve the capacity of the early



Mentors and Mentees at the QFF dinner

career extension officers (Trainees) to perform their role by providing them with a year-long placement in suitable Host Organisations that includes mentoring from experienced advisors, relevant technical and extension training and access to networks. To deliver some of the aspects of the program, QFF has worked with APEN to provide the trainees with access to the benefits that being part of APEN has.

The mentoring component of the program includes mentors from their organisations, as well as a mentor from the APEN mentoring scheme. The inclusion of an APEN mentor benefits the trainees in getting access to an experienced extension professional who can contribute a different point of view to the extension issues they

face in their day to day, can improve access to networks in extension, and provide a sounding board for concepts and ideas, as well as increased knowledge and ideas in their mentors' particular area of expertise.

The trainees also attended the APEN 2019 conference in Darwin. The program was a great opportunity for the trainees to build their networks and to learn from extension practitioners from various industries about various approaches to extension. Key speakers at the conference helped the trainees understand the benefits of better understanding the attitudes and behaviours of farmers to enhance the uptake of sustainable farming practices.

So far, the program has proven to provide a great pathway for new people coming to the industry by acknowledging that the support and connections between industry partners, education providers and available networks such as APEN can be valuable to ensure that the graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to be an extension advisor.

APEN's Mentoring Scheme is designed as a low-cost peer mentoring system, which benefits the individuals involved, the extension profession and APEN. It 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.



The Speakers

How fortunate we were to be in the same room as John Pickering, Peter Ellerton, Andrew Campbell and Fiona Simson and listen to such a wealth of information, share their many pathways, accept their challenges on diverse issues and promises to ourselves that we could do more.

To capture everything is daunting – you will be able to read their presentations in full on the APEN website. However, here are a few snippets.

John Pickering

Whose Behaviour Should We Change? The challenge by John Pickering PhD, a behavioural scientist's perspective on extension

Q. How many behavioural scientists does it take to change a tyre?

A. One. And three others to work out why it needed to change.

Change starts with us! What can we, extension experts, scientists/researchers, policy makers, managers – everyone - do differently?

John's dynamic, motivational, inspiring presentation took us along many pathways as he covered the importance of understanding behavioural science and how we can embed these skills into extension. Topics such as rational (based on being informed) and irrational decision-making (based on emotion, opinions of other, family conditioning – not logical)

set the scene for us to understand the importance of behavioural science in extension, why some people don't think they need to change, why we sometimes see things that aren't there, understanding our own attitudes and extension practices, those of the people we work with and the social influences that affect us all.

John shared with us the 3 top learning requests:

- How to develop a better understanding of my own attitudes and behaviours
- How to best communicate with farmers and build trust and rapport
- How to motivate farmers towards change



John's challenges to us were many – provoking much thought and wanting to explore further. The final message: Change begins with us!

Peter Ellerton

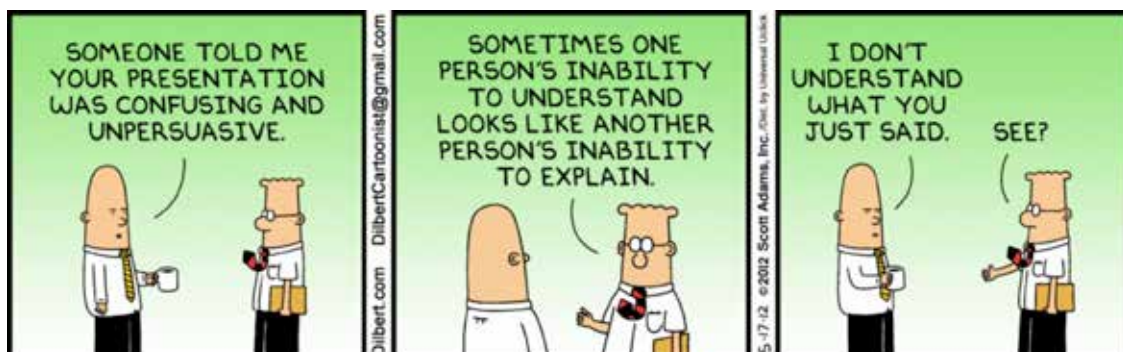
Critical Thinking: the ultimate 21st century skill "If everyone could see things as clearly as I do"

Peter Ellerton PhD is passionate about the 21st Century need for us to be Critical Thinkers. His presentation engaged the audience with cartoons, lots of information, problem solving with series of numbers [Ed. I'm still working on 1,2,3], useful resources, definitions, shared meanings, thinking collaboratively, creating narratives in people's minds, quotes [Yes! We are all rational – 'if everyone could see things clearly as I do' (Life of Brian)], the value of questioning, our cognitive biases, interacting with others. Peter defined a) what critical thinkers are not and b) what critical thinkers do.

Take home messages:

- There is no view from nowhere – public reasoning requires communities of critical thinkers
- The brain is the most important organ you have ... according to the brain
- Critical thinkers seek opportunities to think collaboratively and create narratives in people's minds
- Reason is a social competence
- Thinking is the method of intelligent learning (John Dewey)

Many of us, being reflective thinkers, are still absorbing and dissecting all the information from Peter's fascinating, presentation. There is so much more to think about.



One of Peter's many entertaining slides

Andrew Campbell Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)* Extension in the Anthropocene, but still relevant

With an opening statement that “food, water and energy are all amplified by climate change ... and there are many potential solutions around the world”, Andrew captured our attention.

Andrew, a 5th generation farmer, grew up on his family farm in the red gum grazing land at Cavendish, Victoria. He has had several careers which he mentioned to illustrate the importance of food and nutrition and what we are not doing well – “although in production terms agriculture has done well ... agricultural systems are the biggest employer of people on earth”. However, we are not feeding the world well – less than a third of all people on earth are eating a healthy diet. Andrew’s stories of the programs ACIAR are implementing in developing countries were great examples of how we can make a difference by lifting people out of poverty. The photos were stunning! “Agricultural investment, particularly agricultural research, delivers

very high returns”. If countries are able to feed themselves and clothe and house their population, and grow their own economies locally, it is better for a wider regional stability” Andrew shared with us the amazing programs

Key messages:

- It is no longer sufficient to just feed people, we need to improve nutrition
- Need to increase productivity of agriculture – water, energy and nutrient productivity
- Need to engage the urban population with agriculture and food systems. Re inventing extension: there is a narrow gap between average and best farmers – need to shorten the tail
- Important for us to become a net carbon sink and a net energy producer

We could have listened to Andrew for much longer.



[*ACIAR’s research structure focuses on ten programs of work to help developing countries use science and technology to solve local problems. The programs cover key agricultural sectors (crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry), the science needed to sustain the resource base (soil and land management, and water and climate), as well as the disciplines that generate economic and social benefits including agribusiness and social sciences.]

Fiona Simson President National Farmers Federation Agriculture’s Road to \$100 Billion

Fiona’s presentation highlighted the NFF’s 2030 roadmap – their plans and activities - through their initiatives, their programs and their policies. [A copy of her presentation can be found on the APEN website.]

The following captures some snippets of her talk

- Farmers are at the cutting edge of climate change – guided by 3 policies: energy, electricity and climate change – opportunity for agriculture to reduce emissions in the energy and land sectors – key will be sensible implementation of new transmission infrastructure.
- Collaboration and Partnerships are essential in sustaining a productive and prosperous farming community. The NFF family work collaboratively with Government, farm businesses, research and extension bodies,

education and training providers, community and value chain partners through targeting people and communities, unlocking innovation, growing sustainability underpinned by capital and risk management,

Fiona’s take home Messages:

- Australian agriculture is at a pivotal time in its history. We have such huge opportunities, but the challenges are also significant



- There is a level of momentum for the \$100B Roadmap and policy outcomes following the 2019 Election. We have a Minister(s) who have clear views on the industry and will be a strong advocate for them
- Australian agriculture has a proud history to tell and we need to tell it now. We can no longer allow others to speak on our behalf – see the NFF-led telling Our Story project – to connect the community with farmers and agriculture – [campaign materials were launched at the NFF’s 40th Anniversary gala Dinner in October]
- Initiative - 2019 Diversity in Agricultural Leadership Program

Concurrent Sessions

The conference program offered 64 extensionists [from many abstracts submitted] the opportunity to present at a concurrent session – such diversity on a wide range of research and practice. Our appreciation to everyone who shared their journey. It was hard to choose which presentation and to get from one place to another in the time allotted.

And so, trust you will learn from the presentations that the chairs of each session have captured in the following summaries.

Concurrent Session One – Technology and Innovation

Adrian Englefield's highlights

On day one of the 2019 APEN conference, the first concurrent session was held. For those who chose not to move upstairs into the Mildil beach casino and resort, the beachside pavilion was the perfect location for the technology and innovation presentations.

Attendees heard from five presenters covering a range of topics:

- Rabi Maskey (Agriculture Victoria) – Energy decision support tool for irrigation systems: A tool to improve the efficiency of your irrigation system?
- Carol Rose (NSW DPI, Total Collage) – Pushing dinosaurs uphill – Implementing digital technology in a vocational environment
- Amy Cosby (CQ University) – An evaluation of Central Queensland livestock technology workshops
- Nadeem Akmal (University of Canberra) – Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) pave the way to make farmers information poor to information rich
- Jodie Ward (Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) – What gets clicked might not get liked – measuring social media success.

The presentations covered many of the challenges to the adoption of new technologies by farmers. Rabi's presentation outlined how a detailed understanding of irrigation system engineering (or design specifications) make the range of current irrigation system assessment tools difficult to use. Agriculture Victoria has created a simple Irrigation Energy Decision Support Tool (IEDS) to improve irrigation efficiency. Visit <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/farm-management/soil-and-water/irrigation/about-irrigation> to view Agriculture Victoria irrigation resources

Nadeem Akmal discussed how many farmers (especially from developing countries) are unable to access the latest production and marketing information with the existing agricultural extension resources and inefficiencies. Nadeem highlighted innovative information/technologies for information sharing within the farming communities. Separate to Nadeem's presentation, the Food Agility CRC recently released Agtech Finder, an on-line platform with links to over 250 Agtech products for broadacre, horticulture and livestock industries. Visit Agtech Finder at <https://agtechfinder.com/>



Jodie Ward

Jodie Ward discussed how FutureBeef social media activities are used to promote events and direct producers to the FutureBeef website for the latest industry information. Often the 'liked' content did not correspond to clicks on the hyperlinked information. Jodie outlined how the findings will support future social media posts and answered questions around some of the negative aspects of social media in extension. Visit FutureBeef at <https://futurebeef.com.au/>

I would like to thank all presenters, participants and most of all Jacob Betros and the organising committee for an outstanding conference and well run event. Look forward to the next APEN conference in 2021.



Nadeem Akmal

Rural Community

Heather Collins

After a shaky start of AV not working and people arriving late, we were entertained by lots of great information

- **Niall Connolly**

- **The Great Barrier Reef – a project**

- The Great Barrier Reef (GBR) Water Science Taskforce initiated a project to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of extension service delivery through improved collaboration and coordination. Niall shared the results of the project designed to support regional coordinators and their extension networks working together more effectively.

- **Jillian Kelly**

- **Drought Smokos**

- As a practising vet, Jillian's original aim was to reduce her workload in helping farmers to handle drought. She designed her concept of creating 71 smokos where friends, neighbours could have a voice in discussing the similar issues each was experiencing in a safe environment. By building on their knowledge and utilising the community spirit they could share that they were not alone. Simple basic strategies were "sharing the load".

- **Diana Saunders**

- We asked Diana to describe her role in the Queensland Farmers'

Federation and trainee apprenticeship and mentoring program as several of our APEN members are mentors and shared their networking dinner at the Conference. [see pX]

- **Meg Humphrys**

- **Innovation in Engaging and Empowering youth within the Northern Territory Public Service: Our future leaders**

- Meg works in an environment where 8 staff are under 35, where it is a self-managed, peer supported team approach [sharing the busy times, managing the workload]. These emerging leaders are a reference group for the Board of Management where they create lots of 'buzz' as they discuss strategy and policy. Meg

shared with the audience the many benefits to young people and the benefits to organisations in including youth participation in all agriculture sectors. We learnt lots.

- **The 3-minute research thesis presentations**

- An 80,000-word PhD thesis would take 9 hours to present..... these students presented in 3 minutes using 1 slide at the APEN 2019 conference. Huge congratulations to PhD students Aaron and Chendong (University of Queensland), Amelie (Charles Darwin) and Elya (University of Tasmania). Many thanks to Les, Pat, Jeanette, Ruth and Heather for the feedback to the students. It was an awesome and rewarding lesson for everyone.



PhD Students

Sustainable Agriculture

Caroline Coppo

- **Warren Hunt**

- **How small groups served as an engine room for innovation in the Northern Territory mango industry**

- Warren presented an extension project involving up to 20 NT mango businesses and affiliated agribusiness service people from the Darwin and Katherine growing regions. Based on needs, a self-directed learning process where participants and personnel from the Department of Primary Industry and Resources collaborated in identifying areas for research and learning activities.

- **Sarah Hain | Industry Development Office (NT/WA)**

- **Trusting quantity and quality: The mango story**

- Sarah's impressive presentation showed us how major gains have been made in guaranteeing positive

consumer eating experiences through addressing the unique challenges in the NT – such as: balancing farm productivity and consumer requirements; language and cultural barriers; supply chain logistics; limitations with agribusiness support and the transient workforce.

- **Carl Larsen**

- **Learn, experience, connect – continuing to drive innovation in extension in the Australian vegetable industry**

- gave us an insight in problem and solution solving re learn (we've got you covered), experience (innovation first-hand) and connect (one-stop shop on the website) – his taken home messages

- **Clinton McGrath | Bron Ford**

- **Multi-modal extension creates real vegetable exports and an improved**

- **understanding for growers of free trade agreements**

- Take home messages: the importance of the fresh vegetable supply chain {production, fresh supply, production, fresh import, fresh export, strong monitoring and evaluation, understanding the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement (KAFTA)

- **Ian McBean | Sean Kenny**

- **A whole-of-industry approach to adoption: The Strategy for Industry Led Adoption Activities in the Sugar Industry**

- Take home messages included: an active but fragmented service delivery environment, lack of Sugar Research Australia (SRA) visibility, SRA need to coordinate and lead, time is right for new approach.

International Extension

Chair | Shayne Hyman



Dear V (as in Virginia Woolf – my diary has a name and a personality)

Chairing an International Extension Concurrent Session in a long skinny room with heaps of windows – how hard can it be? So, I did my homework and tried to learn the speakers' bios by heart – no problem. The hard part was not getting involved, remembering to show the speaker the numbered cards that count down the minutes remaining in their allotted time. It was tough!

First there was **Peter Walton** revealing the wonderful tool he has built to further agricultural extension in the Pacific Islands – who knew? And what dedication? Next came **Georgia McCarthy**, a 2017 graduate of UTAS reminding us how important extension is for practice change.

Then **Severine van Bommel** spoke of the Roundel “happy chickens” in The Netherlands and I'd just been there only weeks before and I knew firsthand what

she was talking about and how terrific it is, but I had to remember my cards and not get too excited.

Well I was exhausted by the time the legendary **Roy Murray-Prior** got up to speak! This guy is a walking definition of extension, but we were five minutes behind schedule, and people were moving in and out of the room seemingly at random, and there was noise in the foyer, so I had to close the door, and then he was done.

Finally, **Subhasis Mandal** had travelled all the way from India and his work is bang-spot-on my work with vegetables growers (okay, the scale is different), salinity and productivity. I did so want to learn more about working with marginal land and so I crept around to get a better view and then there was that rowdy person in the corridor again!

I did my part, but I don't think I'm the right person to be a Concurrent Session Chair at the APEN Conference – I'm too inquisitive Shayne



Concurrent Session Two - Climate and Environment

Chair | Dani England



Who knew that coffee was so important to getting participation in your events?

Con Simos, Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI), told us that without good coffee, attracting winemakers to any extension activities would not be possible. Con outlined how the three pillars of AWRI – its helpdesk, travelling seminars and workshops, website and on-line tools - all link together to provide the required industry uptake of new information.

Brett Littler outlined the Central Tablelands Local Land Services team's simplified response to providing its drought response in a simplified, one-page 'Bounce-back' plan. This allowed the team to remain

positive in their service delivery and ensure that the key priorities for the region were being met.

Lana Hepburn's Terrain Natural Resource Management team had also used a prioritisation process to ensure they remained focused on the key deliverables required to improve water quality outcomes for the Great Barrier Reef. Both projects demonstrated that careful priority planning can pay dividends in service delivery, assist in staff focus (and in maintaining energy levels).

Whilst Brett and Lana were in the middle of dry season delivery, **John Noonan**, Curtin University, and **Roy Murray-Prior**,

Agribiz R,D&E Services, both evaluated the delivery of the Western Australian Farm Planning Program which was delivered from 2010 – 2011 with the objective of enhancing farmer knowledge and planning skills to help increase their self-reliance and preparedness for drought and future climate challenges. The findings of the evaluation (undertaken separately) was that participants had a strategic plan and were implementing it, and that profitability and business resilience had improved.

A great session to chair!

Regards, Dani



Rural Community

Chair | Peter Long

I had the privilege of chairing a concurrent session on Day 2 of the very successful APEN Conference in Darwin. Whilst it had a Rural Community theme the five speakers were very diverse.

The session commenced with an enthusiastic outline of **Ladies in Livestock – Progressive Ladies, Productive Decisions**. **Georgie Oakes** who lives in Inverell, outlined an on-farm approach to a practical training designed to empower women across the Northern Tablelands of NSW. The established women's groups meet each other month from 10.00 to 2.00 allowing mothers with children to participate. Georgie summed up: *it is one of the most successful extension programs with a high level of interest from women in the region.*

David McGill followed by outlining his three-year role in coordinating research and capacity building of field officers in Lahore Pakistan. The focus of the current work is improving smallholder dairy and beef profitability through enhancing farm

production and value chain management. The project is delivered in collaboration with a Lahore university. Finally, David said: *there are 8 million smallholder dairy and beef farmers in Pakistan and to effectively reach farmers and their extension advisors they have developed ICT applications which have been found to be more effective than traditional linear extension approaches.*

Speaker three was **Vo The Truyen** from Perth who is the Vietnamese extension officer with the Vegetable Grower Association. There are about 220 Vietnamese growers amongst the 900 growers across WA. For many, language is a barrier to growers accessing traditional extension and information services. Vo shared: *the widespread adoption for more profitable and environmental production methods was slow with Vietnamese growers and by working to overcome the language barrier he hopes to accelerate the adoption of new technologies.*

Following was **Tracey Schultz**, a behavioural scientist who works the Office of Great Barrier Reef in Qld. She and her team work to embed behaviour insights into the delivery of agricultural practice change projects in the reef catchments with the focus of improving water quality. Tracey identified that: *in delivering projects we need to understand why people think and act the way they do and to use that understanding to change behaviour and practices.*

Finally, **John James** and **Denise Bewsell** excitingly chose the APEN Conference to launch their new Enablers of Change podcast and YouTube channel. John said: *they want to share their thoughts about different topics around enabling change, both new and old.* They will be focusing mainly on agricultural industries and regional communities. They prepared their first Podcast via Skype with John in Qld and Denise in New Zealand.

Regards, Peter



Sustainable Agriculture

Chair | Callen Thompson

During a very busy time, the highlight for me has been the APEN conference. There was a great representation from NSW members at Darwin and I think that all attendees would have found value in making the trip north. I take my hat off to the committee members who helped to create a great conference, well done. The following presentations widened my horizons and I think each of the presenters for adding to our experiences.

- **Clare Edwards**

Fostering soil and pasture health knowledge in Central Tablelands landholders

Clare shared the many aspects to – and benchmarks for – soil and pasture health in extensive grazing variable landscapes. One feature to understand is the interaction between soil chemistry, soil biology and the physical nature of the soil. Another aspect is to understand the interactions between soil health, pasture health and groundcover. An evaluation survey highlighted why the participants took the samples, queried whether they changed their practices after attending the course, and asked what actions they may have taken as a consequence.

- **Bruce Maynard**

Everything I need to know about extension, I learned from my cows

Self-Herding is a Win-Win-Win So much information to absorb. Take home messages: Animal behaviours are the key link toward a combined

future of improved production, increased landscape function and greater social connection to country. What can we do with self-herding? a) managing vegetation cover and nutrition, b) utilising a broader part of the landscape, c) ‘accelerated adaptation’ to relocations, d) mustering efficiency and opportunity gathering (stocking rate adjustment). Animals have a choice – they must not be forced - they learn to adapt to their environment and survive – we change their behaviours by communicating with them. Livestock behaviours are a mirror to our own!

- **Angela Hammond**

Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) Meat & Livestock Australia

Take home messages: PGS support practice change by matching small groups of producers who want to improve their whole-farm performance with coaches who share their knowledge, skills and experiences with practical and relevant training packages – supported learning through managing processes [monitoring and evaluation, funding contribution, feeder activities; building skills through professional development, mentoring, off-the-shelf training packages; promoting the value with values proposition, case studies, integrated communications.

- **Kylie Hopkins**

The P message: improving phosphorus nutrition management with a new extension approach



Take home message: Phosphorus nutrition is not a new issue – we’ve got new information! – Through better science, beef connect workshops, future beef webpage, seminars, webinars, new tools for ‘on-ground’ workshops, social media video and they are ready for the next wet season!

- **Breanne Brown**

Building the gap between soil testing and true practice change for improved fertiliser in the Geographe catchment of Western Australia

Breanne raised the question: What support do farmers need to change practices around fertiliser management on grazing properties? Her lively presentation gave us some answers.

Learning for future extension: Learning for future extension – knowledge alone is not enough, confidence to change practices improved with extra support over time, 1:1 model is expensive –is it better? (longitudinal study required). Take home message: agronomic support over time, and at critical times, can start bridging the gap to true practice change around fertiliser management on grazing farms.



International Extension

Chair | Jeanette Gellard

At the heart of this session were people; farmers, landholders and consumers from around the globe and how behaviour change can be facilitated using a range of approaches and in varying contexts.

Dr. Sandra Heaney (University of Canberra) outlined the application of adult education models to enhance the skills of farmers in Pakistan to undertake more effective water management. Trialling three different models, the strengths of each were analysed and amalgamated to optimise outcomes.

Clinton Muller (RM Consulting Group) presented on the ways in which Australia’s Landcare model is being deployed and

adapted by countries across the globe. From this work we have a greater understanding of the preconditions required for Landcare to flourish and the contribution Landcare can make to agriculture development.

Thivahary Geretharan (Massey University NZ, Eastern University Sri Lanka) shared with us the impact Sri Lanka’s conflicts have had on agriculture support services to farmers. It became clear that farmer expectations of support services and their interactions with service providers were shaped by their experiences with service providers during the conflict period.

Jorie Knook (University of Edinburgh) outlined for us the behaviour of landowners

in Scotland and New Zealand around the uptake of environmental practices and the role of participatory advisory programs on this.

Clinton McGrath (Queensland Dept Agriculture & Fisheries) took us on a journey along the supply chain of Queensland strawberries being exported to Hong Kong and Macua. He shared the insights gained from consumers about their purchasing and consumption habits and how this information helps meet market requirements.

Regards, Jeanette.



Concurrent Session Three - Technology and Innovation

Chair | Roy Murray-Prior

Technology and innovation highlighted the diversity of people, skills and innovative approaches represented by APEN members by showcasing:

- new twists on traditional techniques
- approaches to incorporating new media with existing techniques
- youth and experience
- extension in horticulture, animals, farming systems and enhancing human capital

but most of all it showcased outstanding extension skills.

“Counting your chickens before they hatch” was the theme of **Jude Matusiewicz’s** story of turning failure into success when

promoting the use of faecal egg counts to reduce worm resistance in horses.

Using MailChimp to deliver relevant and timely information to the viticulture industry in NSW, **Adrian Englefield** showed that new technologies can deliver newsletters faster, quicker and cheaper.

Belinda Pritchard and her colleagues are helping a young farmer’s business network in Victoria exchange ideas and overcome the tyranny of distance with a Community of Practice website to share articles they have developed via Facebook.

According to **Nicole Sallur**, FutureBeef is sharing information and experiences for beef producers across the breadth of Australia (Queensland, Northern Territory

and Western Australia) using a website, webinars, social media, eBulletins and multimedia.

Extension professionals across Australia and more broadly have an opportunity to enhance their skills by means of a range of on-line modules in agricultural extension developed and hosted by the University of Melbourne.

Insights from farmers and the facilitator into building virtual but meaningful relationships for farmers in New Zealand via on-line platforms was explored by **Heather Collins**.

In all, a fascinating illustration of diversity in extension innovation.

Regards, Roy.



Rural Community and Health

Chair | Pat Hamilton

I was fortunate to chair the session combining – Rural Community and Health – six presentations, so different and, yet, full of interconnections in proving support to enrich the experiences of rural communities in Australia, New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

- Did you know an infection untreated in the middle ear leads to a loss of hearing and your ability to read and write? **Amanda Leach** leads the research on ear and health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, at the Menzies School of Health. Her information, statistics and graphic pictures highlighted the impact and benefits of her research.
- **Jeanette Gellard and Pat Hamilton** shared how empowering women

and the critical role they now play in advancing agribusiness have radically changed the way agriculture is portrayed through designing and delivering the very successful Thriving Women 2018 Conference

- **Nadeesha Jayasena’s** analysis of the impact of smallholder participation in Sri Lanka’s milk markets through the formal market [large scale dairy processors] and the informal market [neighbours, local shop, restaurants, small scale dairy processors] has been supported to alleviate poverty and to increase production and selling – all shaped by multiple factors such as ownership, access to assets, strategies, social norms and policy support.



- “Every day, **Alexandra Hicks** takes her lunch and her enthusiasm to work in *the young farmers business program*” in the NSW Department of Primary Industries. The team captures the stories of individuals to use as models for other individuals and groups – it a very effective strategy. They also work on various communication styles to share these stories. I was very impressed that Alex used the sli.do tool to capture her audience’s reactions – a new ‘tool’ for many at the conference.



- **Margaret Ayre** presented her session, “*What counts as evidence in monitoring and evaluation for Indigenous land and sea management*” on behalf of the team at University of Melbourne. The case study revealed some possibilities and challenges in managing the sea and land effectively
- “*If you show me your extension, I’ll show you mine*” was such an engaging title that the audience increased. **Susan Casanova** is the project officer with Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM). Her journey showed us the ways in which the project team protect West Arnhem land and Kakadu from invasive species. Her slides opened our eyes to “our home is the territory” in all its glory and the challenges faced and her skills in presentation stretched our extension practices.

I was, indeed, fortunate to chair these presentations.

Regards, Pat Hamilton



Sustainable Agriculture

Chair | Anthony Kachenko

There is a growing public interest in ensuring farming systems are sustainable based on a triple bottom line approach. This session included a raft of presenters who spoke on international and local initiatives relating to sustainable farming systems. There were many takeaways from this session, with all presenters speaking passionately about the importance of designing projects from the bottom up.

For example, **Dr Iftikhar Hussain** shared his journey on the performance of two adult learning models in enhancing farmer water management skills in Pakistan and emphasised the need to respect and value the local community tradition and the need for learning program designed by farmers and other stakeholders.

Similarly, **Heidi Hatch** spoke about a new approach to providing value through extension to Burdekin cane growers in the Great Barrier Reef catchment. She

indicated a clear and concise plan, value proposition and ensuring the journey was exciting and different were keys to success.

Sue Heisswolf provided a reflection on five years in automation, robotics and sensing in Australian horticulture and emphasised that projects must focus on end users early on in research efforts and involved them via a participatory approach.

Greg Owens spoke about the success of promoting integrated pest management control in Asian vegetable crops in the Northern Territory using plots of a range of vegetables to demonstrate the principles and techniques to growers. Critical to the success was showing growers what was possible using a research farm.

Kate McCarthy shared some initiatives that Local Land Services in NSW had implemented to improving biosecurity and animal health practices amongst per-urban and absentee landholders. This included

understanding how absentee landholders access information, such as through rural real estate agents when acquiring property.

Finally, **Ruth Redfern** provided a summary of lessons in impactful extension from the first seven years of CottonInfo. Ruth highlighted the impact the program has had in driving a prosperous cotton sector and the importance of a well-resourced extension program aligned to R&D investment arising from the cotton levy.

All presenters stressed the importance of relationships including the need to build trust and respect through honest interactions and walking the talk. They also emphasised that many in extension roles are brokers of knowledge rather than walking encyclopaedias and it was OK to take a 'question on notice' rather than 'make it up'. Relationships are everything!

Regards, Anthony



Sustainable Agriculture (b)

Chair | Les Baxter

This concurrent session was comprised of six quite diverse presentations assessing the effectiveness of a range of extension approaches to sustainable agriculture and NRM systems. **Terry Parminter**, Extension in a time of regulation, **Vicki Horstman**, Peer support model as catalyst for change, **Daisy-May Denny**, Assessing the effectiveness of extension methods and engagement using biophysical space, **Callum Eastwood**, Human-centred design that works for farmers gave great presentations covering a wide range of issues.

The following two presentation summaries highlight the range of issues and approaches discussed.

Deborah Holtham from the Western Australian Department of Water and Environmental Regulation looked at unique partnerships and collaborations to answer the shared dilemma, "How do we take action so that farmland is managed to improve water quality, profitability and productivity and nutrient management?" Through a unique collaboration between

Government departments, catchment councils, the dairy industry, beef farmers and the fertiliser industry, a range of integrated data gathering exercises and extension fora such as workshops, field days and seminars were designed to enhance awareness of issues and to gain commitment to implementation of appropriate management practices across a diverse range of stakeholder groups. These practices included dairy effluent management, optimised fertiliser application, and the use of innovative approaches such as drones and NDVI mapping.

Col Freeman from the New South Wales Government Hunter Local Land Service (HLLS) discussed the use of Program Logic Theory for implementing change management practices within the HLLS. This organisation combines catchment management authorities, livestock health and pest authorities and DPI advisory services and deals with biosecurity, NRM and agricultural advisory services. HLLS used program Logic Theory based

around Bennett's Hierarchy to logically link activities to organisational strategy, and provide a more systematic approach for better results. They found some disparities between program theory and implementation logic which require some changes to the model. The learning included:

- Start with the desired outcome and work backwards
- Use programs as experiments to test hypotheses
- Embed approaches from rural sociology and adoption theory
- Segment stakeholder groups (on the basis of different needs and behaviours)
- Teak the system as you go
- Business systems are slow to adapt/change
- Management support is vital

Regards, Les



Field Trips – How do you choose?



Fortunately, [for most of us] we didn't have to choose. We were given our lunch, put on a bus and drove off to a destination which proved to be a very interesting trek. Many thanks our intrepid bus drivers who were not distracted by the constant chatter along the way. Many thanks to our tour guides on the bus and to the various guides at each of the centres.

- At the Crocodylus Park, not only did we meet some of the 1,000 of the largest reptiles [from 30cm long hatchlings to massive adults measuring over 4.8m and weighing more than half a ton!] on the planet but we also encountered big cats, primates, birds and other reptiles – an excursion sometimes not for the faint-hearted.



Crocodylus Park on display

- At the Menzies School of Health and Research, we were given the privilege of sharing one of Australia's leading medical research institutes. This institute is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians and is acknowledged on the world stage as a leader in tropical research into life-threatening illnesses

- Territory Wildlife Park – a zoo at Berry Springs on 400 ha of natural bushland representing three main habitats: woodland, wetland and the monsoon vine forest.

On display were wild-life in their natural habitats – in the tree top aviaries, strolling around a natural lagoon. As the park is large, there is a small train for visitors to see the aviaries [home to parrots, water birds, eagles and other native birds], aquariums and enclosures. The team shared their knowledge of the wildlife and the habitats in their care. It was very enjoyable experience



- Darwin Aquaculture Centre is situated on Channel Island in Darwin Harbour some 50km from the city. The centre has specific areas dedicated to algal food production and environmental control work. A bank of self-cleaning

sand filters maintains a supply of suitable sea water. The team has undertaken a range of research and development projects on pearl oysters, sea cucumbers, giant clams, prawns, barramundi, blue fin tuna, mud crabs, copepods, rotifers, algae and a number of disease investigations in the 28 years since it was established.

- Beatrice Hill Farm is the headquarters of Australia's buffalo dairy industry and runs one of Australia's biggest herd of Riverine buffalo – the breed whose milk is used to make genuine mozzarella cheese.



A buffalo with its calf on Beatrice Hill Farm (ABC Rural, Matt Brann)

Most of the farm's young buffalo are sold to dairies across Australia.

- Windows on the Wetland Visitor's Centre



Interactive displays explain the Aboriginal and European histories of the area, its ecology, seasonal changes and the abundant wildlife of the northern coastal wetlands. It is perched on Beatrice Hill, overlooking the Adelaide River floodplains. All across the Top End termites reign supreme. "Termite mounds are not inert tombstones ... they are natural vacuum cleaners ... they are an incubation chamber ... they are the lifeblood of the system" (R. Braithwaite, 1990). Australia has no herds of large animals to eat and recycle plant materials, instead this function is carried to by millions and millions of tiny, toiling termites.

Once back at the Mindil Beach Casino Resort ...time to get ready to enjoy the Dinner in the Pavillion.

Dining in NT Style

President Graham Harris welcomed everyone to the dinner and thanked Matt Brann from ABC Rural for being our Master of Ceremonies this evening. "You have entertained us well in true Territory style."

Sharing Agriculture with the LEGO® Farmer at the Gala Dinner

Aimee Snowden



What an amazing story – illustrating all the wonderful magic things about sharing someone’s passion. Aimee’s passion for agriculture and her story of how she has been able to change a world view with action is best captured by ‘her family’ she has built through LEGO®?



How did this all begin? Why LEGO®? Aimee’s engrossing chat, full of her wonderful created friends enchanted everyone – you had to be there as Aimee took us on her magic journey from her idea to her achievements now and her plans for the future.

What next? Tool kit for school children
Why agriculture? – your passion -<insert photo, 1st name, name of your school>;
IMy interests <3 main interests>; what am I good at? <list 3 subjects at school you are good at/are your favourites>

- where are you now?
- Identify all the steps on your journey
- insert photo of your LEGO ®? Character



Aimee’s future in agriculture – a big as her imagination!

It was such an awesome presentation – our deep gratitude to Aimee for taking us on a ‘magical’ journey.

APEN Awards 2019

Graham thanked the fantastic dinner speaker, Aimee Snowden from the Little Brick Pastoral. "Your impact on the world of agriculture know no bounds. I never knew how much impact the world of Lego could make to the future of sustainable agriculture. I look forward to meeting the widening field of agriculturalists."

Then, Graham had the privilege of the Award presentations.

As part of our dinner celebrations It is my pleasure to present two awards this evening.

- **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.



Sophie Lapsley

It is my pleasure that the **2019 Award for Excellence in Extension** is presented to **Sophie Lapsley**, a senior consultant at RMCG in the Vegetable Industry Education and Training. Agriculture sector.

Sophie has worked in Agriculture around the world from trout farming and dairying in the UK, wine marketing in France, agricultural testing and consultancy, soil microbiology and soil health, flower growing and dry stock farming in NZ to QA, lean management and consultancy here in Australia and so much more.

In her spare time, Sophie is a professional photographer who creates videos as well as keeping a hand in farming on a small block in the hills on the North West Coast of Tasmania.

Sophie has, over the past 3 years managed and implemented the following project: "Vegetable Industry Education and Training Initiative (VegPRO)", which had a focus on providing targeted training aimed at effectively upskilling people at all levels in the vegetable industry in all regions. The training delivered, a producer driven approach based on their needs,

consisting of ½ to 2-day workshops. Sophie made sure that trainers who delivered under VegPRO were using the latest research-based information and delivery methods.

Sophie worked closely with the Hort Innovation VegNet extension program IDOs. The IDOs provided information on needs (content and preferred trainers) in their region and assisted with getting timing and locations right.

Sophie also worked with other initiatives by government departments, relevant Hort Innovation extension projects, universities and private providers. She closely linked with RTOs, especially TAFE colleges and Skills Impact, the organisation designing approved training packages for RTOs. Sophie participated in the review of the Protected Cropping training package and is now involved with the production Horticulture and Nursery packages.

Sophie coordinated 73 training events to be delivered during the 17 months of July 2017 to November 2018. This is on average more than 1 event per week over the period when VegPRO was able to operate under a customised (according to needs) training plan. 47 of the 73 training events were delivered, just under 3 events per month. Four online courses were designed and delivered during times when coordination of face to face training was not occurring. The courses remain a project Legacy as they can be used after the project has concluded.

APEN considers Sophie to be a worthy winner of the APEN Award for excellence in Extension.

I'd like to also encourage you to consider nominating your peers for one of the APEN Awards for Excellence in Extension – in either the Open/Experienced or Amabel Fulton Young Professional Award. It is important to acknowledge the excellent work being done in the extension profession.

- The second Award this evening is a **Life Membership** awarded on the basis of contribution to the Extension profession and to APEN over a long period.

It is an absolute pleasure to present Life Membership to a very long member and friend over many years. I am privileged to announce that **Dr Ruth Nettle** has been awarded APEN's prestige Life Membership.

Ruth has been a very significant influence on extension over the last decades. She has been an active APEN member for many years and has also been proactive in the extension arena. Her work in Dairy,

the Cooperative Joint Venture in Capacity building and in projects such as the Rural Research and Development for Profit – private sector project – has encompassed very practically based projects which look at assisting change on farms as well as developing extension profession and capacity. – hence, supporting APEN's mission in promoting the role of extension in rural change.

Currently, Ruth leads the Rural Innovation Research Group (RIRG) at the University of Melbourne. Her group has actively led the thinking and training at university undergraduate and post-graduate levels – in a period where it is being lost from other Australian Universities. The distance education modules directly relevant to practicing extension officers has been a significant step in accessing accreditable training at this level. Her many papers and book chapters capture much experience and thinking around extension and its operation and has contributed a lot academically and practically.

Ruth also has a strong international presence where she and APEN Life Member Dr Jeff Coutts frequently join and share common experiences and common platforms with the European Farming Systems Conferences and the European Extension Symposium as well as sharing what we are learning in Australia, Ruth captures what is happening internationally to share back in Australia. She has also been involved in innovative extension and innovation thinking with the co-innovation project in New Zealand.

Ruth is involved in other international opportunities through her multi-disciplinary research which contributes to and extends the role of extension.



Dr Ruth Nettle

We believe that Dr Ruth Nettle fully meets the criteria to be awarded a life membership with APEN

Congratulations to our Awardees.



Rounding up the ‘Mob’ in the ‘Muster Yard’ ... a quick overview

John James & Denise Bewsell



The Muster Yard was a chance for participants to stop and reflect on what they had seen and heard at the conference. We used a modified world café approach and an ORID as the basis for a conversation amongst participants. Just a quick overview for those who need it...

Modified world café

A café style environment is created, i.e. people sitting around tables. Questions are asked and at each table this is discussed. Answers are collected (at the table and shared across the wider group). Then participants are asked to move and mix up, so that they are sitting with different people. And the process begins again.

[Note this is a VERY modified world café process and if you are interested it is worth searching out one of the many resources on this facilitation tool!]

ORID: is made up of four sets of questions. It starts with **O** for objective questions – **the facts** (what did you see or hear?). **R** is for the reflective questions – **the feelings** (what excited you? What did you struggle with?). **I** is for interpretive questions – **the what does this mean in my setting** (what does this mean for my work?). And finally, **D** is for the **decision questions** – what is the next step or action to take.

So, what did participants hear and/or say at the conference?



The keynote sessions had stuck in participants minds with a number commenting on decisions not being made rationally and that the gut and heart overrule the head. Many also highlighted the learning, sharing and connecting happening at the conference and the ability to find common ground amongst participants at the conference.

How did they feel?

Energised; overwhelmed with good ideas; inspired by the skills in the room and information shared; motivated; renewed confidence; anxious for the future (*if policy doesn't change where will agriculture be in 10 years?*); frustrated! (*not enough time*); positive; super recharged; struggling; optimistic and challenged; inspired and proud; and passionate.

What did this mean?

It meant things such as: keeping on rowing the boat and working on energy and motivation! It meant continuing to take

opportunities to collaborate and connect and learn. The conference had provided an opportunity to revive the passion for extension as well as challenging ourselves and our practices.

Finally, we asked what was one thing participants would do after the conference? And the answers ranged from small steps like subscribing to a resource they had found out about or reading up on articles or writing an article themselves to making videos for social media and looking for opportunities to collaborate.

Photo 1.b The word cloud has captured the responses. [Thanks again, Jeanette Ed.]. And so, if one of these words was yours and you haven't got around to it yet, consider this a prompt to build some time into this week and follow-up on what inspired you from the conference!

Thanks to all who contributed and made the Muster Yard a dynamic session!

[John & Denise gathered together the 'mob' for a review using sli.do. The comments are too numerous to report here. I thank Jeanette Gellard who collated the comments into a word cloud Ed].

Poster Presentations

were available in the Beachside Pavilion throughout the Conference.

Delegates took the opportunity to chat with the authors [and with others who were viewing at the same time] about their research and/or project information.

Topics were diverse and ranged from:

Connecting the NSW wine industry **[Adrian Englefield]**,

Women Empowerment through sustainable Agriculture **[Raheela Khan]**,

Equipping agricultural students for success in extension careers through a student's perspective using climate resilience **[Venkata Kadali]**,

Bringing the world to graziers through remote presentation **[Andrew KcKenzie]**,

Enabling producers to present at events **[Jed Sommerfield]**,

Developing Relationships and Trust in extension **[Rachel Hay]**,

Extension tools change business direction **[Matt Brown]**,

Weeds in Hay – managing biosecurity in drought **[Callen Thompson]**,

VegNET NSW – Monitoring to measure practice change impact! **[Sylvia Jelinek]**,

The iron Turtle Network **[Carla Eisemboerg]**,

A case study of onion seed production **[Muhammad Sajid Shahzad]**,

Using ground cover data to inform how graziers adopt to land management practices **[Daisy-May Denny]**,

Busting some myths about the non-adopting farmer **[Ruth Nettle]**,

Extension methods and engagement using biophysical data **[Timothy Moravek]**,

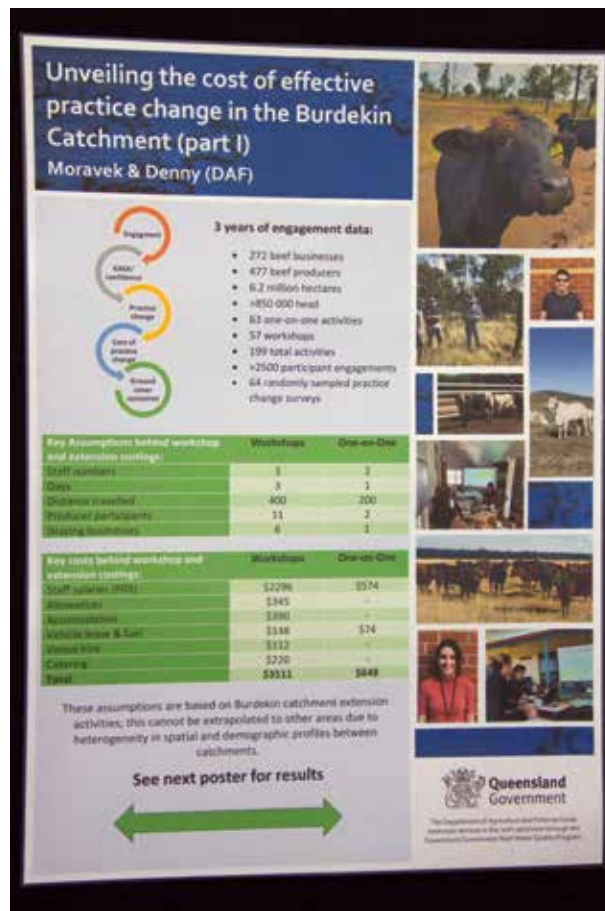
Evaluating Primary School program for community development **[Elya Richardson]**,

successful farmer-to-farmer learning based programs **[Callum Eastwood]**,

VegNET NSW – a knowledge and practice change success story **[Matthew Plunkett]**,

Border-check irrigation systems – benefits and barriers in northern Victoria **[Rabi Maskey]**,

Posters were well laid out, legible and attractively presented to capture the audience's attention. We thank the presenters for their time to share with us some very interesting programs being conducted under the banner of extension.



A chat with a difference – a bevy of panellists



Jeff Coutts

Jeff Coutts – with the help of a very capable Chrissy Stokes managing the AV roamed the Beachside Pavilion capturing the interaction between our speakers, John Pickering, Fiona Simson, Aimee Snowden and Peter Ellerton [wonderfully supported by our Convenor, Jake] and the very active audience through a question and answer session. Everyone was sparking as Jeff probed for the questions from the delegates, Chrissy captured them on the screen and the impressive panel shared the answers.



Chrissy Stokes

Unfortunately, we didn't record all the answers. However, some of the questions are captured below – you can think about how you would answer, what you would like

to explore further and whom you would like to question further.

To set the scene, Jeff posed some questions to keep the conversations flowing – here a just a few

- What does extension mean to you? What would you share with your 20-year old self about extension?
- What are your thoughts on how technical, extension officers should be? Is it critical they know a large amount of information or simply be a conduit to it?
- How do we make change acceptable?
- What can we do differently in extension to achieve practice change?
- What is the best advice you can give to young upcoming extension professionals?

The questions from the floor covered a diverse range of issues [too many to share here].

- Can critical thinking be taught? How?
- What if someone doesn't think what you said is relevant or difficult or unclear on how to apply it? What is going on with that thinking?
- What impact will fake meats etc. have on the industry given all the scrutiny in the beef industry? Do we need to prepare our producers for this paradigm shift?
- How do we start a cross -sectoral movement in extension that's not commodity-based in Australia?
- Extension gets the blame, yet, we are finding the role of Extension professionals has been dropped by a range of organisations. How do we get it

back? [Further discussion: Government and universities, in Australia, are withdrawing the implementation from delivery and training in extension. The council of deans of agriculture submitted to the competitiveness white paper recommending a 'land grant university for Australia – it fell on deaf ears!' The void is large do we need a catastrophe before government and commerce (retailers and the value chain) take note?

- Are the amazing technologies or water control available for Australian and NZ farmers? [see Andrew Campbell's slides on the APEN website].
- Population tends not to come up in climate change discussions. Educating women seems to be the best way to impact on this. Would be interested in your thoughts.
- Regional Australia has been getting more airtime recently in the circles I've been working in. Does the NFF have a standing on Regional Australia?
- How do we brand agriculture to make it "sexy" so that we encourage the next generation of agriculturists into the sector?
- Do you think that there will be greater migration of some southern farming systems in Australia's northern regions?

We thank the panel for their honesty, Jeff for his energy and empathy for capturing the questions and answers and Chrissy for her expertise in posting everything on the screen – once again the sli.do tool provided a great interactive session..

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The Wrap Up

We trust that you have enjoyed this walk through the APEN 2019 Conference: *Extending Horizons*.

We have tried to capture the many highlights – the weather, the venue, the field trips, the friendships ... hundreds of questions –thousands of answers - 200+ delegates – 5 speakers – 64 concurrent sessions – a panel with a difference – a Muster Yard – Posters – Field trips – Dinner – pre – conference workshops – networking events – industry breakfast meetings [and whenever a group got together in lots of spots] and Jake and the team excited to host a successful conference and show case the Top End.



Jake Betros

There are so many people we need to thank. We are grateful to all of you who helped each of us *extend our horizons* through your sponsorship, chats, presentations, ideas, support, listening, thought provoking questioning, sharing knowledge and experiences and your continued support for our profession.



A few take home messages:

- Relationships are everything!
- Networking is not a dirty word! [Amy Hetherington]
- Many in extension roles are brokers of knowledge rather than walking encyclopaedias [Anthony Kachenko]
- A fascinating illustration of diversity in extension innovation. [Roy Murray-Prior]
- In delivering projects we need to understand why people think and act the way they do and to use that understanding to change behaviour and practices [Tracey Schultz]
- Learning is not about thinking. Learning is knowing in action. Knowledge is effective action in the domain of existence [John Dewey]
- Be memorable: ‘people may forget what you said but they’ll remember how you made them feel

To the Conference Organising Committee:

Jake Betros (Chair), Warren Hunt, Laura Cunningham, Pieter Conradie and Greg Owens from NT, Roy Murray-Prior (Qld), Chrissy Stokes (NZ), Graham Harris (APEN President, Qld), John James (Qld), Heather Collins (NZ), Natalie Bell and Rosie Fall (AAP-professional conference organisers, NT) and Roe Currie (Vic).

It was an awesome event!

In the words of

Janna Cachola [Author]:

**“If you have a voice, use it.
If you have legs, stand up.
If you have feet, step up. If
you have each other, fight
together”.**

ENET



HOT NEWS



John James and Denise Bewsell excitingly chose the APEN Conference to launch their new Enablers of Change podcast and YouTube channel.

John said: *they want to share their thoughts about different topics around enabling change, both new and old.* They will be focusing mainly on agricultural industries and regional communities.

They prepared their first Podcast via Skype with John in Qld and Denise in New Zealand.

By the way – have you heard that out of the APEN conference an ‘**Arid Extension Alliance**’ has formed. They’ve met once via phone, and will continue to meet to swap stories, resources, news, etc. Good huh!

The Roe Currie Breast Cancer Research appeal raffle at the Conference Dinner was a great initiative. The Mindil Beach Casino Resort provided the prize. We raised \$1010 which has been passed on to **Australian Breast Cancer Research.**

[Roe is doing Ok and working behind the scenes, pacing herself, and happy to keep busy. She was thrilled to hear of this initiative. Ed.]

2021 APEN Conference

The APEN Board is excited that all roads and flights will lead to **Rotarua, New Zealand in November 2021.**

We encourage you to join us to continue our strong connections.

A piece missing from your life?



APEN has a solution!

Become the next Editor of APEN's ExtensionNet

WHY? “It gives you the perfect excuse to ask anyone [well, almost anyone] anything AND you get the opportunity to share lots of stories with our members.

CONTACT the current editor, Pat Hamilton apeneditor@apen.org.au or +61 409 180 164 to add to the missing piece to your busy life.



A very special thank you to Roe Currie. I am grateful for her support in helping me produce this ‘special’ issue of ExtensionNet as I ‘walked’ her through the conference. [Ed.]



MEMBERSHIP NEWS -

Results of the evaluation of APEN's 2018 Membership Survey

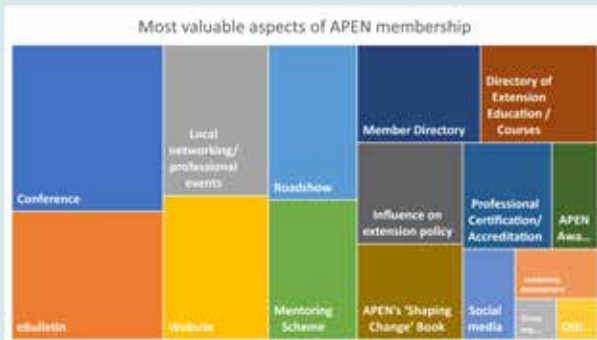
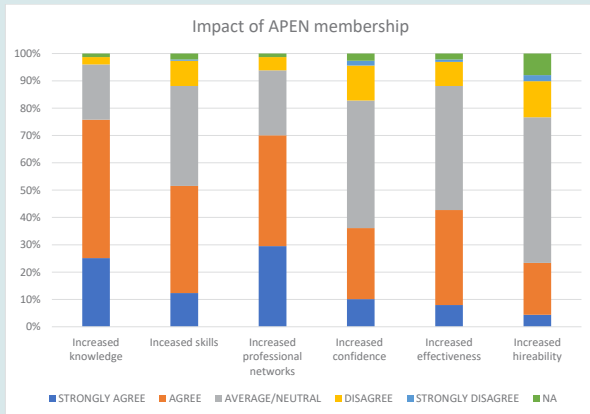
In 2017, the result of a tender process, APEN Board commissioned Austin McLennan, Principal Consultant, AJM Community & Commercial to conduct an online research campaign to identify the key value propositions for attracting and retaining APEN members.

Part 2 captured data on the APEN's value and impact:

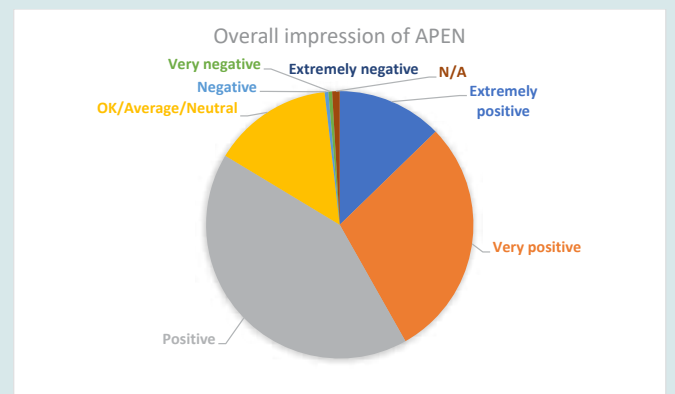
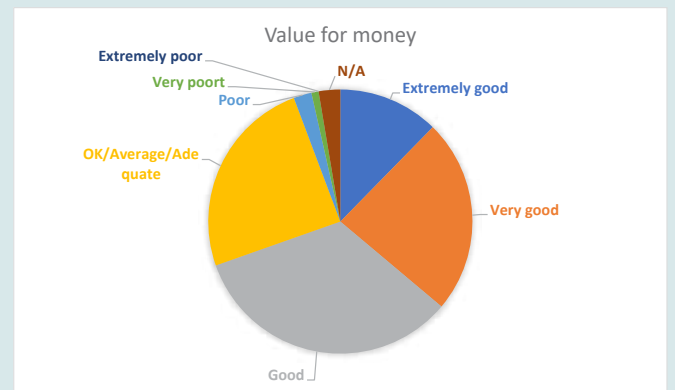
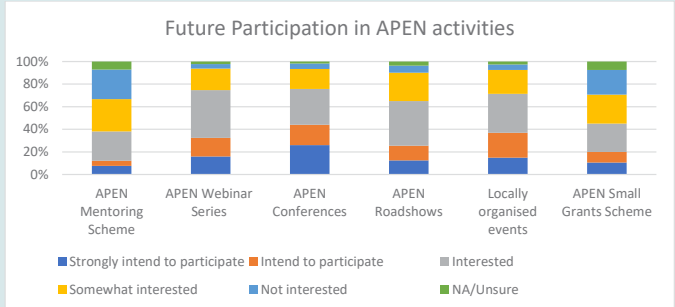
- What benefits does APEN membership bring?
- What are the most valuable aspects of APEN membership?
- What would be your future participation in APEN activities?
- Where do you get value for being a member?
- What is your overall impression of APEN?

We thank Director Jeanette Gellard for capturing all the information so succinctly and so visually. The Board and Regional Coordinators continue to work on implementing the findings.

What benefits does APEN membership bring? We posed this question in various forms to find out how APEN and its activities contribute to strengthening the capacity and professionalism of its members and the extension sector. Here's what you told us and it's a pretty positive story.



APEN Membership: Its value and impact



"25 Years & Flourishing"

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Together, we have the power to inspire, connect and deliver on new opportunities and rich experiences that can open doors to innovation and progress while growing global economies and increasing well-being (Tae Yoo)

Guidelines and Deadlines

Submissions should be made in MS Word 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.

Editor: Dr Pat Hamilton

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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 23rd December 2019