



Extending
Horizons

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APEN's Fiona Johnson excels at extension

GRDC/APEN award for excellence is well deserved

Darren Schmidt, ExtensionNet Editor

Fiona Johnson, deserving winner of the GRDC/APEN 2003 Award for Excellence in Extension, received her award aboard a cruise on the Derwent River before giving a polished presentation next day to delegates at the Forum.

Fiona, a manager of Practice Change with the Victorian DPI at Tatura, has been working in the extension field since 1979. Throughout that time, she has pushed the boundaries of what extension can achieve and has contributed a considerable body of thought to the question of 'what is extension?' and how extension can be practised more effectively.

Fiona's application showcased some of her more recent work in consolidating and managing the Community Surface Water Management Program in the Shepparton Irrigation Region of Victoria. Fiona has begun to apply a more strategic approach to the extension disciplines within her project to bring about some exciting adoption pathways through marrying advanced extension, research and community participation.

Forum delegates who heard Fiona's presentation on the Friday morning knew they were listening to an extension profes-



Fiona Johnson addresses the APEN Forum in Hobart. Fiona's 2003 Award for Excellence in Extension came in front of a very healthy field of expertly run extension projects and programs.

sional who has developed the happy knack of understanding both the limits and opportunities of extension and matching this understanding with practical, on-the-ground skills to bring about changes for the better in the community and the agricultural systems on which they depend.

Continued page 2 ...

Merry Christmas
and happy new year
to all APEN members!



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Winner of the Young Achiever Award for Excellence in Extension went to Jess Jennings (story page 2).

APEN is pleased to acknowledge the support of:



Horticulture Australia



DAIRY AUSTRALIA

Extension Excellence Award winners (cont'd from p1)

APEN is thrilled that Tom McCue from GRDC was present to present the plaques to Fiona and Jess with John James during the dinner cruise at the Forum. GRDC kindly sponsored the awards which included travel to Hobart, registration and accommodation



Fiona's presentation asked the question: "Compared to the alternatives, how efficient is extension in delivering change on the ground?" Many delegates were probably struggling to think of what constituted an 'alternative' to extension, let alone how efficient it was, but Fiona drew on several examples borrowed from the world of policy to demonstrate that people could or would change in the face of legislation, self-regulation (eg. accreditation), taxes, incentives, quotas, training and community engagement. It was a fascinating comparison.

Fiona joined a growing band of extensionists in calling for a clear understanding of the difference between human capital (the empowerment, ownership, and skills of people to manage change) and social capital

(vibrant networks within a community). Extension has often comfortably aligned with the human capital sphere, but Fiona's presentation made a convincing argument for putting more energy into community well-being.

To conclude, Fiona made a plea for the extension profession to look beyond agriculture for ideas and to continue to seek higher levels of skills amongst practitioners. Her presentation was well thought out and clearly delivered, much like

her extension work! Congratulations, Fiona.

ENT



Winner of the Young Achiever Award for Excellence in Extension was **Jess Jennings** (NSW Ag / Uni of Western Sydney - Hawkesbury, pictured right) for his work in the Profitable Pastures Project in NSW. Jess detailed his role in overseeing a project in which farmers took charge of their own learning and research agendas to improve their pastures and overall farm management practices. Jess' action research project breathed new life into the word 'participation' and his presentation at the Hobart Forum left delegates in no doubt that Jess was committed in every way to seeing how a genuinely farmer-led project would proceed.

Jess is finishing his PhD at Hawkesbury (ask about proposed completion dates at your own peril) and has recently joined the APEN National Executive (NE). Congratulations on your win, Jess.

ENT

Congratulations also go to Gerard Hogan, whose poster was judged best during the poster session at the start of the conference.



I promise to change this photo soon. I'm not this much of an egghead, I assure you (though I can't do much about the hair)

From the editor

This is the eighth ExtensionNet I've edited and (I hope) you'll be happy to know I've 'signed on' for another eight. I must say I have lots of fun putting these newsletters together, and although I can live without the stress of more deadlines it feels wonderful every three months to produce another 12 pages full of good extension stories from around the regions. As editor, I'm also able to sit with the APEN National Executive and take part in some of the discussions about where APEN is headed. These discussions are very rewarding and I try to keep you informed about them on these pages.

Thanks to all those who provided feedback on ExtensionNet on the recent online members survey. I'm happy to see that many of you are pleased with the way APEN's newsletter is produced, and I'm equally grateful for the constructive criticism. We need to do a more formal evaluation of ExtensionNet soon, so keep an eye out for details and I encourage you to respond with your comments.

The vibe at Hobart was terrific. I didn't talk to anyone who didn't have a great time, and the organisers are to be congratulated.

Best wishes of the season to you and yours.

Darren Schmidt

2003 another great year for APEN

APEN President John James outlines APEN's 2003 successes

This has been a great year for APEN, especially with our reaching our 10th birthday! The recent Tassie forum was a great meeting of the minds and was significant in helping us move forward as an organisation. It was also a defining moment for extension as a discipline, where many of us re-embraced the E word.

Much has happened since our last AGM at Tatura in Victoria, immediately after the successful APEN/AAAC joint workshop on "Managing in a time of climate and landscape change". For me, some of the highlights ...

Achievements

In my mind the main achievements for this year were:

1. The National Executive (NE) better communicating and engaging with its members. As a result of our new marketing plan, we introduced quarterly eBulletins, using an informal communication style to highlight items of importance to members. We also surveyed members to gauge their support of the cluster model, and again recently to undertake our biennial members satisfaction survey. Many have commented that have appreciated the apparent closer contact to the NE and the engagement this has brought.
2. We took a significant step forward in entering the policy arena by conducting a workshop with key stakeholders in July at Sydney. This has allowed us to map the territory and we are now moving towards a national policy summit mid 2004.
3. Funding from the Cooperative Venture allowed the NE to better develop its strategic plan (from which the cluster model emerged) and to conduct the policy workshop. The remainder of the \$20,000 funding will go towards the policy summit.



APEN President John James addresses the happy board aboard the good ship Cartela during the APEN cruise

Chapter activities

There has been some good activity occurring in some Chapters, as detailed below.

The **WA Chapter** ran three events:

1. Australian Journal of Agriculture road show at Bunbury in April 2003.
2. AGM and a talk by Neil Drew at Perth on 4 April 2003.
3. Commodity focused extension: Advantage or disadvantage? with Dr Kathy Hurly at Perth on 17 July 2003.

The **Melbourne/ Gippsland Chapter** ran three events:

1. Informing extension into the future with Kate Roberts at Melbourne on 27 November 2002.
2. Community engagement in the developing world with Ted Hayes at Melbourne on 28 August 2003 (combined with AGM).
3. Environmental Education Extension and Evaluation in the Land of the Thunder Dragon - an experience of living and working in Bhutan, with Penny Richards and John Weiss at Melbourne on 13 November 2003.

The **SE Qld/ N NSW Chapter** ran four events:

1. Dynamic Groups at Toowoomba on 21 Nov 2002.
2. Information Resources at Eumundi on 12 Feb 2003.
3. How Sweet It Is - Extension in the Sugar Industry at Kingscliff on 3 July 2003.
4. AGM at Brisbane on 5 November 2003.

The **NZ Chapter** ran a seminar on Extension Approaches and Management in Hamilton on 16 July 2003.

Of course the **Tassie Chapter** has been busy with the organising of this Forum. While it is good that these Chapters have been offering activities for members, it is a continuing concern that the rest are rather quiet.

Other activities

I have invested quite a bit of time and effort into the "cluster model" which I hope will lead our organisation into an even more effective and viable future. We will talk more about this later on.

ExtensionNet continues to go from strength to strength with Darren Schmidt at the helm. He has done a great job sourcing relevant articles and increasing the people focus of the newsletter.

The joint AAAC/APEN accreditation project progressed this year with Project Manager Mike Young spending six months assessing the demand for a National Accreditation Scheme for advisors in agriculture, NRM and related sectors.

The **National Executive** has met by teleconference every second month to progress a range of issues, all under the umbrella of the Business plan. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of the members... Greg Cock (vice-president), Heather Shaw (secretary), Jon Warren (treasurer), Darren Schmidt (editor), Paul Ainsworth, Neels Botha, Liz Kellaway, Greg Leach, Cynthia Mahoney and Jane Weatherley. I would also like to specially thank our Secretariat, Rosemary Currie, who enables most of the work to actually happen.

In all of this exciting activity the focus is people, and I take this chance to wish you all a very memorable Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

End

Happy 10th birthday, APEN!



“There was a real buzz and a real feeling about it back then because for the first time you had this group of passionate people together in the one place and founding a community of practice”

It's true! Ten short years have elapsed since a group of extension professionals met 'way back last century (1993) on Queensland's Gold Coast to put together the best and biggest extension organisation in this part of the world: APEN.

Terry Makin (still an APEN member) had the chair from the outset and he was assisted by Ian Simpson and Bob Macadam as Interim Joint Secretaries, Peter Van Beek as Interim Editor and Warren Straw as Interim Treasurer. At the first AGM in 1995, Terry was elected the Inaugural President and he was joined on the committee by Peter Davies (Vice President), Jane Fisher (Secretary), Warren Straw (Treasurer), Dale Williams and Elwin Turnbull (Joint Editors) and John Bourne and Joanne Millar. See the APEN Honour board on the APEN website: www.apen.org.au to see who else has helped get APEN where it is today.

In 1993, the world of extension was somewhat less complex than it is today. Warren Straw, now Manager of Sustainable Development with DPI Victoria, remembers that there was a great sense of professional urgency to get extension on the map and get it recognised as a legitimate network.

“There was a real buzz and a real feeling about it back then because for the first time you had this group of passionate people together in the one place and founding a community of practice,” Warren says.

“We knew it would be tough and we knew it would be a challenge to extend the network beyond the tradition realms of agricultural extension, but we felt that we were the right people to do it,” he says.

“By expanding the geography of APEN deliberately not just to the edge of Australia but into the Asia-Pacific region, we also had

the ambition and feeling that APEN

would be the peak body for this profession in this part of the world, and I think some of that has transpired.”

Warren says some of the original planned activities for APEN have proven beyond the scope of the organisation. One example was an APEN-mediated journal that reported on excellences in extension.

But he says although that journal never saw the light of day, extension developments were well covered between ExtensionNet and the extension material carried by the CSIRO journal “Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture”.

Warren says one of the challenges first identified by the original APEN executive was to find a way to expand the network to meet the needs of kindred professionals in the region who didn't necessarily go by the name of ‘extension officers’.

“From the outset, we realised that to get APEN onto a professional footing we needed to be as inclusive as possible,” Warren says.

“It's interesting to see that 10 years down the track, we're still having healthy debate about how best to include people from other industries and professions, and I think that needs to continue,” he says.

The other 10-year-old challenge, says Warren, was/is what to call the organisation.

“We had a long debate about whether to include extension in the APEN name way back then, and the discussion's still going,” he says.

“I'm still not convinced about the word ‘extension’ but there's some recognition of the name out there now because APEN's gone from strength to strength.”

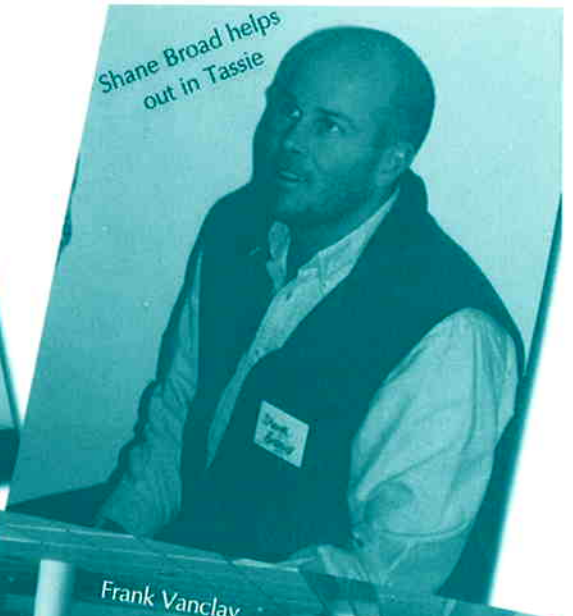
“From a point of view 10 years on, it's wonderful to have seen it happen.”

Your APEN - your network

Getting ready!



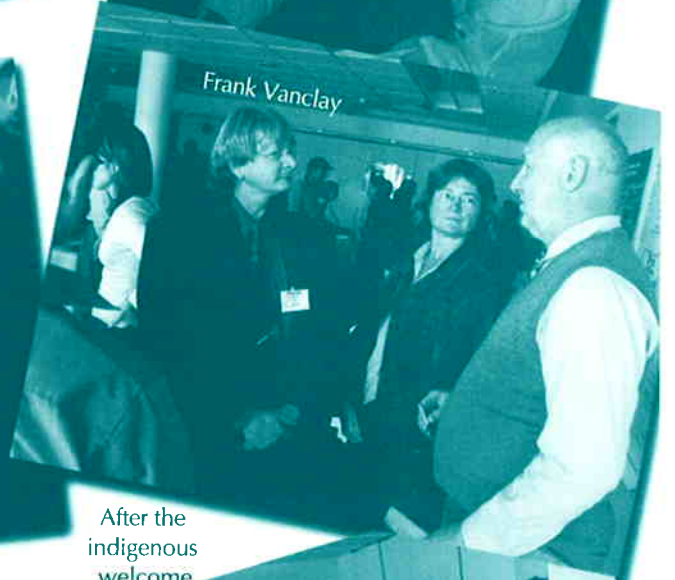
Shane Broad helps out in Tassie



Dave Mickle sees the funny side of it



Frank Vanclay



After the indigenous welcome



Jessica, Jo and Irene discuss posters

The Cartela didn't sink



Lotsa nametags!

More over the page!

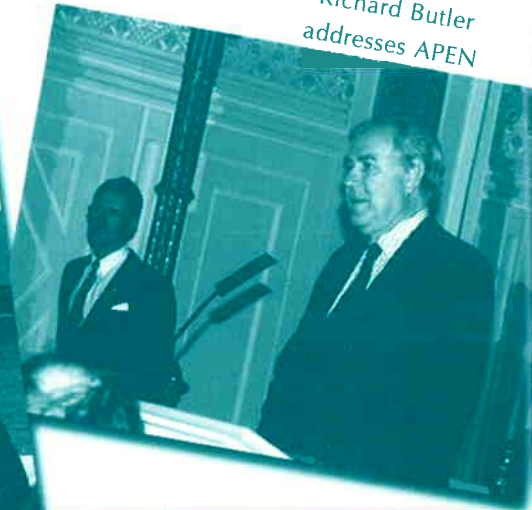
Your APEN - your network

More photos from the Hobart Forum

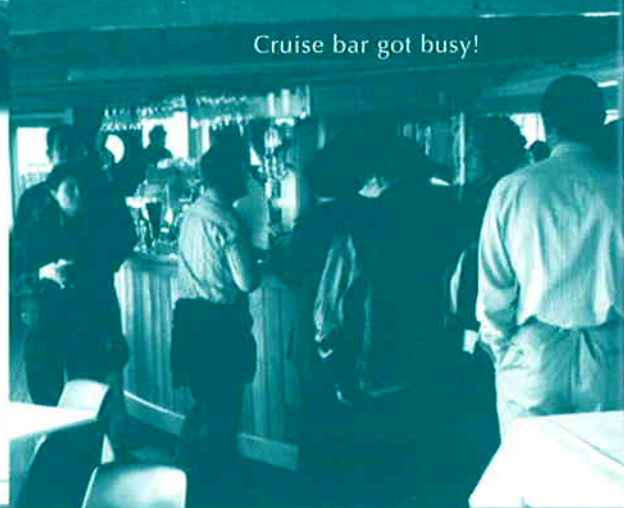
Sergio and Tony



Tas Governor
Richard Butler
addresses APEN



Cruise bar got busy!



Cruise conversations



Winery dinner. Nobody
climbed the barrel rack



Fiona accepts
GRDC award



Your APEN - your network

More photos from the Hobart Forum

Alison and Julie buying boats



It was hard to come in from smoko. What a harbour!



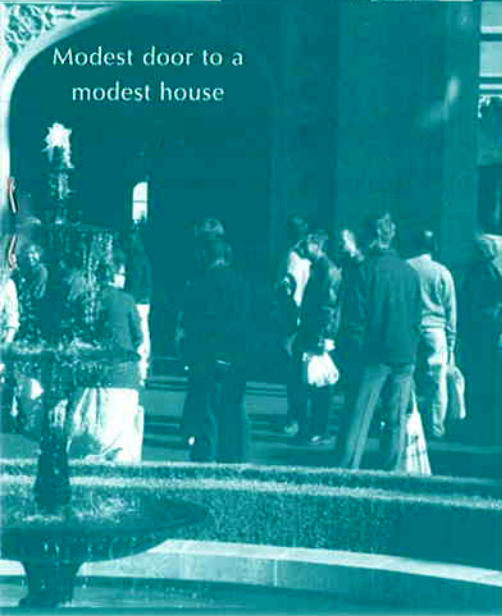
Leigh and Tony discuss governorship



Sue and Andrew slumming it at Government House



Modest door to a modest house



Derwent dialogue




John and Bob cut the 10th birthday cake. Jane stays cautious



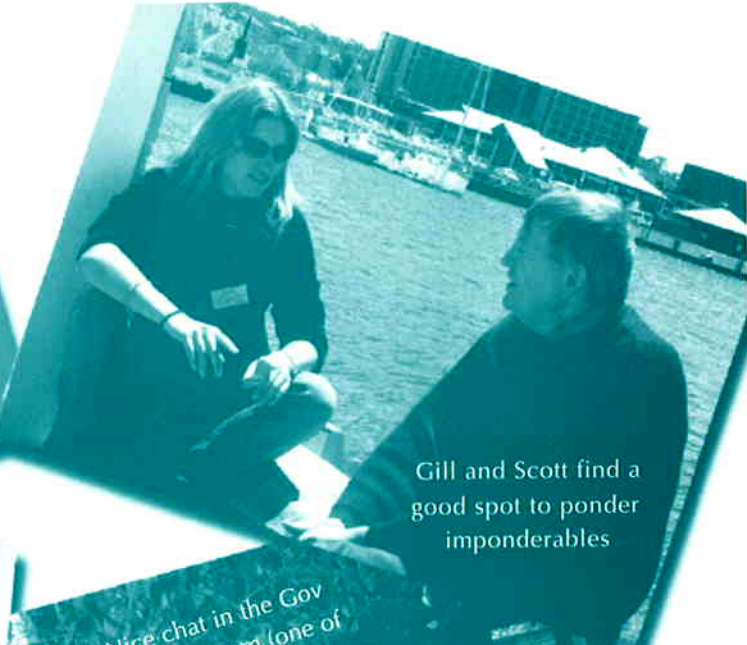
Vice-Regal conversations

Your APEN

Your APEN



Mark Paine tells
it like it is



Gill and Scott find a
good spot to ponder
imponderables



Nice chat in the Gov
House sunroom (one of
them, anyway)



Thanks for the
great venue,
Hobart!



Mark loved it



Bob Macadam on
best extension
practice



Jeff Coutts is
extending extension

The "cluster" proposal wins votes at Hobart AGM

At the APEN AGM in Hobart, it was moved that APEN discontinue the state-based chapter structure and prepare to institute a "cluster" model based on locales or regions, rather than states, as well as communities of practice.

An innovation? Surely is. There has been concern for some time that the administrative burdens for some chapters have been too onerous and have in fact prevented any meaningful APEN activities from taking place (chapter AGMs, audits, back accounts etc). The cluster model is an attempt to reinvigorate some of the regions where there is a good concentration of extension talent, but little activity, by removing these administrative burdens and allowing groups with similar interests to simply get together and explore how to do extension better.

Members attending the AGM thought it was a good innovation too and voted in favour of the proposal unanimously. Keep an eye on ExtensionNet next year for more details.

Proceedings from Hobart: where art thou?

A few members have been asking about proceedings from APEN's Hobart Forum. Just to clear things up: there's no hardcopy compendium of the presenters' papers in existence. Rather, the presenters have lodged their papers at the following website: www.regional.org.au/au/apen/2003/papers/. This website is hosted by The Regional Institute and also features papers from previous APEN forums and conferences.

APEN policy discussions move to next level

NE member **Greg Leach** has been championing the idea of APEN policy for some time. After extensive planning and consultation, a National Extension Policy Summit is planned for around the middle of 2004. APEN plans to take a lead role in gathering together the major extension providers in this part of the world to explore ideas about what extension is, what it can do, what it should do and how providers can put extension policy into practice. More news on this in 2004.



Extension online



Ever thought to yourself: "I wonder if there's a place that brings together *all* of the known documents ever written about people involved in agriculture, food production, natural resource management and rural issues?". Wonder no longer. The **Agricultural Communications Documentation Center** (US spelling) come pretty close to doing just that with more than 20 000 documents already listed in the collection. The ACDC is hosted by the University of Illinois and the stored papers, in their words, "emphasize (sic) the human and social dimensions of agriculture, not the physical or technical aspects. So you will not find in them literature about how to grow crops or raise livestock, for example. You will find

literature about human interaction in agricultural and rural settings, internationally. This is a mighty resource whichever way you look at it, but a good place to start looking is by typing web.aces.uiuc.edu/agcomdb/docctrhtml into your search bar. It's likely APEN will establish formal links with this organisation some time in the future.

Which is Australia's broadest R&D corporation? The **Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation**. RIRDC hosts a very comprehensive web page at www.rirdc.gov.au where you'll catch agricultural news, the latest research reports and much more. One of the handiest newsletters around is the monthly online newsletter at www.rirdc.gov.au/onlinenews.htm.

NE evolves to meet new challenges

A number of terms have expired for sitting NE members, and we fondly bid adieu to **Heather Shaw** from Victoria, who has been the NE Secretary and evaluation specialist for a few years now, **Paul Ainsworth** from Victoria (and more recently Sydney) who has been in charge of the membership services portfolio, and **Jon Warren** from WA who has been Treasurer as well as a voice of considerable experience for quite a while. Jon's typical reaction to some often overly-ambitious strategic planning was to plead "Are we really going to be able to actually do this?".

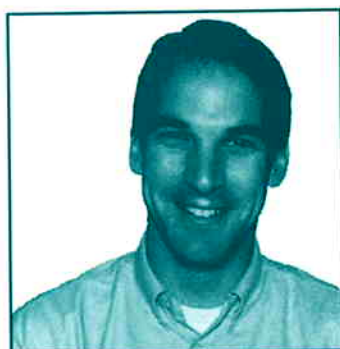
Incidentally, Paul's decision to retire was helped along with the recent arrival of twin boys. Congratulations, Ma & Pa Ainsworth!

The sitting NE, on behalf of APEN, thanks all three of these officers warmly for the time and effort they've freely given in keeping the APEN wheels rolling. These are volunteer

positions and it's not easy to find the time to commit to what are often quite demanding, but very rewarding, roles.

Heather, Paul and Jon's retirement from the NE (though not, of course, from APEN) has heralded some changes. Jane Weatherly, fresh from helping organise the Hobart Forum, will move into the Secretary's chair, where we know she'll do a great job.

And we're delighted to announce that the Treasurer's chair will be filled with one of three new NE members: Dave Bicknell from the Western Australia Department of Agriculture. The other new NE members are Jess Jennings who took out the Young Achiever in Extension Excellence at the Hobart Forum and who will add some youthful vitality and Greg Owens from the Northern Territory (great to have someone from the north on board!). A very warm welcome to the new NE members.

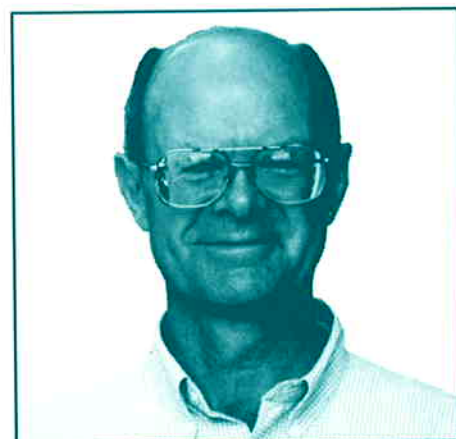


OUTGOING: Heather Shaw (top), Jon Warren (centre) and Paul Ainsworth (bottom). Thanks for your input, guys.

INCOMING

Dave Bicknell has more than 20 years experience in extension and particularly in communicating the effects of salinity. Luckily, we've persuaded Dave to take on the Treasurer's role, which was never as arduous as Jon Warren made out. Welcome to the NE, Dave.

Note: we'll have a photo of Greg Owens in the next edition



Jess Jennings piqued interest during the APEN 2001 International Conference in Toowoomba when he presented his research on the origins of extension from a focauldian perspective. He also made an insightful presentation in Hobart. See the story on Jess on page 2 of this edition of ExtensionNet.



New APEN members

Wow! Another big influx of APEN members to welcome this quarter, thanks in no small way to the Hobart Forum.

It was great to see so many new faces in Tasmania ... hope this forum was the first of many for the new members.

Marcus Hardie - land management officer (soils)

Melbourne-born Marcus's "unconventional" agricultural background included studying geology, zoology, biology (but not ag science) at uni and even after a Masters in soil physics at Ballarat University he doesn't know how he ended up in agriculture, let alone being a soil scientist. By turns, Marcus worked for the CSIRO in Canberra (forestry impacts on soils), Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations in the Whitsundays (irrigation technology) and then AUSAID doing volunteer work in northern Thailand (irrigated lychees). Some more travel and then back home for a brief resumption of play with the BSES before moving to Hobart "for a better life". Since then, Marcus has worked for the Department of most things outdoors (DPIWE). His job combines soil conservation, policy, regulation of wastewater, urban development, traditional agriculture, and "just about every soil issue you can imagine". The range of clients is similarly varied. He's currently looking at research trials of non-animal based composts, biosolids, saline pastures and 3D salinity modelling. His "research work has always been extension oriented and extension work research oriented", and Marcus believes the two are inseparable in agriculture.



Kristin den Exter - water and vegetation data support officer



Kristin lives in the Northern Rivers region of NSW and has an Applied Science (Coastal Management) with Honours from Southern Cross Uni. Her research interests include stakeholder participation and using technological tools such as geographic information systems and system dynamics modelling and she's currently studying for a PhD with a focus on the role of System Dynamics modelling for integrating science and management.

Kristin loves "anything outdoors and landcare-related". She joined APEN to learn more about what extension professionals in the Australasia Pacific do and need at the research/practice interface, but also to work towards increasing the profile and role of extension in Natural Resource Management in NSW. She "thoroughly enjoyed the APEN forum" and looks forward to working with APEN to ensure extension has a recognised role in NRM in NSW. Bewdy, Kristin.

Joseph W. Munyasi - masters student, Southern Cross Uni

Joseph graduated from Egerton University, Njoro, Kenya, with a diploma in range management and a subsequent degree in resource management and has worked for the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) for the last 14 years. He's done ecological research, focusing on rangeland resource management, and worked closely with pastoralists who have strong cultural beliefs about change. Nevertheless, Joseph has overseen much diversification and risk management introduced to his rangeland environment. Joseph also advises on gender in KARI, helping formulate proposals that are gender balanced. The Kenya government, in collaboration Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID), Australia, offered Joseph a masters programme scholarship at Southern Cross University which he'll complete soon. Joseph says networking with institutions such as APEN has been one of KARI's policies since its inception. He enjoys sharing of information with other members, which will benefit the Kenyan farming community, and has already received good feedback from forum participants about his project and presentation.



Welcome to these new members who have joined since Sept 2003

Mr Peter Ball, Tas
Ms Penny Bastock, Tas
Ms Kerry Bell, Qld
Mr Laurie Bonney, Tas
Mr Roger Broadley, Qld
Mr Shawn Butters, Vic
Mrs Carolyn Cameron, Vic
Mr Terry Campbell, Qld
Mr Peter Carr, Vic
Ms Genevieve Carruthers, NSW
Mr Dale Chapple, Qld
Ms Kristin den Exter, NSW
Dr Marg Evans, Vic
Mr Scott Glyde, Vic
Mr Dave Meikle, Qld
Ms Patricia Hamilton, SA
Mr Marcus Hardie, Tas
Mr Michael Hart, Tas
Mr Brad Hinton, ACT
Mr Merv Jessen, Qld
Mr Andrew Johnston, Tas
Dr Judy Lambert, Tas
Mr Mathias Liu, Overseas
Mr Ryan Matthews, Qld
Ms Nicole Middleton, Tas
Mr Joseph Munyasi, Kenya
Mr Graham Mussell, WA
Mr Ross Ord, ACT
Mr Mike Page, WA
Dr Len Palmer, NSW
Dr Roslyn Prinsley, ACT
Dr Petrina Quinn, Vic
Mr Michael Ransom, Vic
Mr Phil Shannon, Vic
Mr Mukund Singh, Tas
Mr Tony Somers, NSW
Mr Robin Thompson, Tas
Mr Neil Trevorrow, NSW
Mr Cameron Weeks, WA
Mr Chris Williams, Vic
Ms Claudia Wythes, ACT

More on Joseph's take on Kenyan extension in the next edition of ExtensionNet.

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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, GRIF 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 and layout: Darren Schmidt, Qld Department of Primary Industries, Kingaroy.

Production management: Rosemary Currie, APEN Secretariat, Wodonga, Victoria.

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

Letters and contributions to ExtensionNet are welcome. Suggestions for topics include marketing extension, extension theory, evaluation, or professional development.

Stories and photos (next edition) due to Editor 20th February 2004.