



APEN policy gains momentum

July forum to set scene for national summit

by Greg Leach

Management Committee (Policy)

An APEN forum that will address National Extension Policy in July is the first tangible event that will mark the culmination of several years' thinking about extension policy.

The forum, to be held in Sydney, will be a precursor to a much more significant event - a national summit likely to be held in March 2005 - that will bring together some of the major players from industry and government to plot a way forward for extension policy in Australia.

Why is APEN instigating two events to discuss extension policy? Quite simply, we want to ensure that there is a clear line with extension policy (this will be developed at the first event in Sydney) that can be negotiated and supported by a national audience at the second event (in Canberra). At the national summit negotiations will demand that our draft extension policy position is super-clear, well thought out and backed by APEN. We support that all participants in the Canberra summit will expect to 'give and take' in discussions with political, funding, academic, private and public sector stakeholders. The quest is to develop an 'extension policy' position that all can live with.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Greg Leach (right) is an extension specialist with the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy in Queensland. Here, he's talking policy over lunch with attendees at a recent APEN function in Caloundra, Qld. His email is greg.leach@nrm.qld.gov.au.

What is 'extension policy', and why do we need it?

It might help to introduce some background. In a specially convened APEN National Executive (NE)* meeting in July 2003, the policy question was put to NE members and some of APEN's funders and sponsors. The meeting considered the nature of policy at two levels:

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APEN policy gains momentum (cont'd from p1)



Long time extension expert **Jeff Coutts** has also contributed considerable intellectual input into the extension policy challenge so far

It's important to sharpen the focus on policy, and keep it sharp, so that our organisation doesn't drift into a zone of irrelevancy.



Last edition, I think I promised a shot of me that didn't look so terribly serious. This is a bit more casual, but the overall look is no more beautiful I'm afraid.

1. Extension Policy 'in-agency' – how various agricultural, NRM, environmental, conservation or development agencies support and fund extension staff and resources as a policy instrument to help bring about sustainable futures for rural and regional Australians and their landscapes
2. APEN Policy – how APEN as a peak body advocates extension's role, actively promotes it to agencies and stakeholders, lobbies for it, and defends attacks on it.

At the first level, extension policy might be as simple as maintaining a public definition of 'good' extension and promoting that definition to government departments, industry and other stakeholders. At the second level it might mean that APEN – as a peak extension organisation – informs government agencies or other bodies that is unhappy if extension is discounted, misapplied or removed from the research and development schema.

It's important to sharpen the focus on policy, and keep it sharp, so that extension and APEN doesn't drift into a zone of irrelevancy. If APEN doesn't have anything significant to say in support or defence of extension, then it will be increasingly easier to dilute, sidestep or remove extension altogether. Most APEN members know that extension has not been positioning itself well to meet the rapidly increasing needs of regionalised NRM arrangements. Nor has extension been able to match the ability of traditional science to quantify the net benefits of investment in trials, experiments and research projects, and that this is extension's

weak link. Instead, we need to make other positive claims – both qualitative and quantitative if possible – about the value of extension and ensure that these claims are heard clearly and often by funders, industry, governments, regional bodies, other key stakeholders and our peers.

It's all Greek to me

Declaring any sort of policy position inevitably tips APEN into a political arena. Whilst some members might feel uncomfortable about this, it's our argument that the world is *already* political because *people* are political (the Greek root 'polis', meaning people, gives rise to words such as police, policy, politics and metropolis). One of the central tenets of extension is that it deals with people, and APEN might be shirking its responsibilities if it takes a 'non-political' approach, and therefore non-policy approach, to doing its business.

This doesn't mean, of course, that APEN needs to be overtly political in ways that bring unwelcome attention from funders, collaborators and especially members. It is vitally important that we get the balance right between being respectful of our members' and sponsors' wishes but at the same time being firm and forthcoming about our views on the value of extension.

That's why the forthcoming Sydney forum will be focused on gathering the views of the biggest possible cross-section of APEN members as we can manage. We need to know members' views on extension policy, extension's role in shaping the eco-environment in rural Australia and how the relation-

From the editor

I admire the commitment that Greg Leach and his team have applied to the challenge of developing an extension policy (*main story*, page 1). We live in an era when wheels need to be extra squeaky to get the oil, and for too long extension has quietly endured being redirected, restructured or even wiped out. A formidable extension policy may go some way to redressing this historical pattern, and Greg and his team are the right people to do it. Take every chance to contribute to the policy discussions. As extension professionals, we may not get many more chances.

Extension officers still don't take the concept of evaluation seriously enough, although on the strength of some of the evaluation-themed papers presented at Hobart there is some brilliant thinking being done throughout APEN on this topic. I encourage all members to participate in an online survey of ExtensionNet. Although the CM and I will be very interested in the results, we also need to undertake an evaluation of this newsletter to consolidate continued funding. Follow the link to the survey in the next APEN e-bulletin.

Darren Schmidt

ships between funders, governments, regional bodies and industry should or could affect this role (see www.extensionpolicy.com.au for how you can contribute).

Get it right before we get it right

The idea of the forum is to ensure that we have a well-considered picture of what extension policy could look like before we take it to the 'big' players: funders, industry and government. This is not to say that representatives from those arenas will not be present at the forum in Sydney – they will be. Their role will be to help guide APEN in making the best decisions about what to think about, how to turn that thought into policy and how to present it in the best possible way.

Some good thinking has already been directed at how the forum should come together. A series of small meetings have taken place around Australia in the past few months and a likely focus for the forum has emerged: market failure. Although there are exceptions, in the main consultants and private advisory services ('commercial extension') have not made efforts to enable behaviour change to achieve coordinated action at the collective, catchment or landscape scale. The market failure zone also intersects with large amounts of public money and the push to regional delivery. The market failure zone will be, therefore, a key focus for the forum and a platform for further efforts in improving extension in this country and beyond.

After the forum, it's likely that we'll have only the one chance to take the concept of 'extension policy' to a much wider and much more demanding audience comprising government, the

media and the public. It's therefore important that we get everything right before we 'get it right': the details, the big picture, and the execution.

The second, larger and public summit will need to seek wide media exposure, intelligent cross-representation of relevant stakeholders and excellent political leverage. It will be aimed at securing strong and unequivocal political and institutional support for extension and putting in place the means to re-conceptualise the tenets of our profession so that it can confidently adapt to fit the needs of the present as well as the future.

APEN's legacy?

It's worth highlighting that APEN's current funders and partners support our move into the policy arena. For APEN, this is a journey into uncharted waters, but as we've tried to point out throughout this story, merely *advocating* a role for extension may no longer be enough to secure its long-term place in natural resource planning or helping people make the changes they need in order to keep rural industries viable.

In addition to advocacy, it's likely that APEN needs to actively formulate a policy that actively pushes extension into these processes in a way that makes sense to APEN members, its funders, collaborators, governments and industries. It is no longer conceivable that extension's historic sponsors – state governments – have the resources needed to 'push' extension at the state level. In this era, it is likely that extension officers will need to do this themselves through APEN.

If we get this right, it may be one of the greatest legacies APEN can leave for future extension professionals.



At the moment, the board's clean for APEN's policy position, but a series of forthcoming policy summits will start to fill in the details

Got something to say about extension policy? Is it a waste of time? Best thing that ever happened to extension? Commit your thoughts to an A4 page *this week* and send them to the policy forum., under the 'news' tab www.extensionpolicy.com.au

National Extension Policy Forum details

What: National Extension Policy Forum (a precursor to a larger national event, probably to be held in Canberra).

Where: Sydney, Australia. At the moment, a good slice of extension brainpower seems to be within driving distance of this city and many of our collaborators are in Sydney.

When: July 21-22, 2004 (Wednesday and Thursday). We'll need as much preparation as possible before the big Canberra forum next year.

Why: to flesh out a credible and workable policy position for extension and then sell this on a national scale.

Who: A group of 50 invited participants considering the input of all APEN members through the website below. Have your say!

More info: www.extensionpolicy.com.au. Everything you need to know about the forum is here.

Are you an educator?

I vividly remember a lecture I attended in my first few weeks of my education degree ...

The lecturer shouted at us -

“ Don't ever let me come into one of your classrooms and hear you teaching something new to your students!”

You could see puzzled looks on all our fresh faces. After all, isn't teaching all about providing new information?

Well, it turned out that he was making an exaggerated point to drive home the importance of finding familiar 'hooks' and 'hangers' in each of our student's minds upon which to 'attach' any 'new' content we were offering. I was truly impacted by this philosophy and it has stayed with me ever since.

Essentially, if the information we are offering is new we need to help people find ways to link this new data to things they already know to ensure it is usefully retained. And I don't believe that this only applies to genuinely new information – that is, facts previously unknown to the learner. My experience leads me to suspect that it also applies when the information being offered is not requested by the learner – when it is offered without a the learner having a perceived need to know it. This is particularly relevant to those of us in organisational and people development, since, most of what today's employees need to know, they already know. They just don't do what they know. Our role is really to lead them to the point where they just start consistently doing what they know.

Ask yourself this question ... if you sat down to plan a training session on say, 'customer service', would you a) reach for your notes (or those from a guru) on excellent customer service or b) begin planning a session that seeks only to draw out the elements of ideal customer service from within the 'gut' of your participants?

I believe that all too often the answer is a). But why? What new things about excellent service could you possibly give to a person who has had a lifetime of exposure to all grades of customer service – from the perfect to the abominable. The only thing they may not be doing, is actually doing those things they know are needed to provide excellent service.

Therefore, to improve performance, our role as human resource developers should be to extract those 'things' from our participants. They already know them – we just need to bring them to see them and to do them. Then, and only then, should we give them a set of training notes – if indeed it still proves necessary.

This is not just theory, this is what we must do to be effective in people development. It's what the word education means! From the Latin 'educere' - 'to draw out', 'to bring up' or 'to lead forth'. And a root of the word train is also, 'to draw' (most often a locomotive 'draws' its carriages along the track.) However, my experience as a school teacher, education officer, corporate trainer and developer of training products, suggests that despite this imperative, much of the of organisational and people development revolves around 'pouring in'. That is, offering information without first drawing out a need to know.

In professional training and development, this is a serious oversight. It wastes money (lots of money), it promotes lack of interest, irrelevance and cynicism, it means minimal lasting behavioural change and learning transference, lack of commitment and understanding, and often ignores existing talent.

So as L&D, OD and HR professionals we owe it to our organisations and more so to our participants to ensure we get back to the roots and start educating.

And to help you remember, let's take a look at a device from the world of pumps and dredges known as an 'eductor'.

The eductor is a beautiful piece of physics. It's a jet-type pump that contains no moving parts - it's all about its shape. Scientifically speaking, an eductor moves liquid from one place to another by entraining the pumped liquid in a rapidly flowing stream of water (otherwise known as the venturi effect). Because of the shape of the device, the flow of water creates a negative pressure (suction) that draws the other liquid in.

In short, it is a device that draws out one liquid using the movement of another.

Now, why are eductors used? Why not just use an ordinary pump? Well, there are many good reasons - and as it turns out - each with



About the author

Craig Browne has spent more than 17 years in various education and corporate training and development roles. He now specialises in developing product-based solutions for organisational and people development challenges. He is a firm believer in the idea that many of the most pressing and crucial people development issues in organisations can be solved by simply helping people to communicate more clearly, more deeply and more regularly.

Craig is the Managing Director of the Australian company, CCS Corporation and principal developer of that company's flagship product, the Compatibility Communication System - a unique face-to-face communication tool used by trainers, educators, facilitators, change managers and coaches in more than 70 countries worldwide.

*Visit his company's website
www.ccscorporation.com.au*

Diffusion of innovations

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Fostering sustainable behaviour without printing a word of information

Doug McKenzie-Mohr, a well-regarded Canadian environmental psychologist, specialises in community-based social marketing to deliver sustainable behaviour. According to his blurb, "most programs have relied upon disseminating information. Research demonstrates, however, that simply

providing information has little or no effect on what people or businesses do. But if not ads, brochures or booklets, then what?"

To answer this question, he's delivering one day workshops around Australasia in the middle of the year. Dates and contact people below:

Sydney, NSW: May 24, 2004

Information: Bryony Cooper

02 9460 2103, bryony@pbai.com.au

Monash, VIC: May 31, 2004

Information: Charles Nilsen

03 9518 34325,

CharlesN@monash.vic.gov.au

Hobart, TAS: June 4, 2004

Information: Dr. Karyl Michaels

03 6231 2564,

Karyl.Michaels@bigpond.com

Brisbane, QLD: June 7, 2004

Information: Rachel Dunn

PAPPHS@brisbane.qld.gov.au

Noosa, QLD: June 8, 2004

Information: Bruce Davidson

07 5449 5244, CEO@noosa.qld.gov.au

Perth, WA: June 10, 11, & 14, 2004

Information: Greg Allen

greg.allen@environment.wa.gov.au

Auckland, New Zealand: June 16, 17 & 18, 2004

Information: Carole Inglis

64 9 4866722, carole@wasteminz.org.nz



If ads, books or brochures don't get the information out, what will? Have a look at these workshops.

Are you an educator? (cont'd from previous page)

a poignant lesson for those of us in the world of organisational and people development:

- the educator can often perform the pumping at a faster rate than can be obtained by straight pumping with normal pumps
- the unique venturi design of an educator enable smaller pumps to circulate large volumes of solution - the educator will pump four to five litres of solution for each litre of water forced through it
- educators are good for processes such as the controlled mixing of chemicals, suspending solids, 'sweeping' debris or sludge toward a filter
- educators are good for priming other pumps
- educators don't have to use any power source other than the flow of the water - which can often be just the mains pressure
- educators can also be used to pump liquids that cannot be pumped by other portable pumps such as volatile fluids or fluids that contain small particles.

I put it to you that as organisational and people development professionals, **WE SHOULD BE EDUCATORS!**

- With the right approach and tools: we can create the 'suction' to draw out much more from our participants in a shorter time
- we can and should control how much we mix our content with what is coming out from our participants - maybe we don't even need to introduce anything!
- we can prime the learning situation
- we can use less effort - be more like learning environment managers or facilitators - use what's there
- more easily raise subjects and issues with potentially volatile responses - reduce cynicism - people do not argue with their own data - so don't pour in our data - draw out theirs.

As I suggested earlier, a key to all of this is a profound belief that in a large percentage of the people and organisational development needs of employees in today's organisations (customer service, sales, team building, vision, values, management, leadership) the people already know what to do - they just don't

always do what they know!

We need to spend our time and resources, in leading people to the point where they just start doing what they know. We need to educate from them the fundamentals that they know well and assist them to do them, use them and say them in their work practices. Socrates reputedly once said, "learning is remembering". His next words could well have been, "so just help your participants to remember". Strive to find ways and tools to help them compare the ideals they remember and hold to be true, with the reality of their current practice, and you can kiss 'pouring in' goodbye.

One word says it all, **educate**.

NOTE: this article was reprinted with permission from **Inside out**, the online newsletter of Franklin Covey Pty Ltd. For subscription details, refer to page 9.

Your APEN - your network

Tassie chapter gets busy post-forum!

Future partnerships in agriculture and natural resource management

The Tasmanian Chapter of APEN was reinvigorated as direct result of the National Forum held in Hobart last November.

Partnerships in public and private areas of rural life were a hot topic of the forum and provided the basis of a forum in March 2004, to coincide with the AGM. Five people from private and public rural industries (producers, NRM managers, agribusiness, Tasmanian Landcare Association and local and State government representatives) spoke about their experiences in forming partnerships. All speakers said their work benefited from partnerships – whether with groups or individuals. The best partnerships were those that were formed over time, with open communication between the partners and acknowledged that when the job was done the partnership either changed focus or wound up (see column right).

Inspired by the talks, the forum moved on to discuss future opportunities, with APEN playing a lead role. The group of 25 participants (many of whom became APEN members) came up with plenty of ideas:

- Finding ways to demonstrate profitable benefits of natural resource management
- Developing extension as a profession by forming better links and communication in the State
- Making use of the opportunities for provided by the approximately \$500 million that is spent by research and development corporations each year. How can we effectively take that information to people who can use it?
- Demonstrating the value of extension to those who are paying for it i.e. our employers
- Taking the first steps in developing partnerships.

A new enthusiastic committee for APEN Tasmania was elected at the AGM which followed the forum. The new committee has a solid basis for the next meeting in June where we will start planning our next event.

Time to start putting our ideas into practice!

John Pauley, General Manager of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries opened the day by speaking about the **opportunities in extension and the benefits it can provide to rural industries**. Extension professionals are essential in helping rural industries keep up with research and demonstrating the benefits of natural resource management.

In the private sector, Peter Hardman from Simplot said that **by sharing information potato growers meet and exceed their expectations** which offers a win-win for the growers and also the company.

Jodie Epper from the Tasmanian Landcare Association gave a very different example of a partnership. Jodie has been through a steep learning curve negotiating with an individual who wants the Tasmanian Landcare Association to be a beneficiary of his will. Jodie explained that the situation was a step outside the norm and presented a new way of operating. She believes **it is important to be open to new opportunities and to take on change as the outcomes can be of great benefit**.

Brett Hooper, a farmer from northern Tasmania, gave us some sound advice when forming partnerships with landowners. Time spent getting to know your client is important. He said **being invited onto someone's property was like going into someone's lounge room. To be invited in the first place, you need to gain the owner's trust**. Continuity in relationships is also important and Brett suggests extension officers are much more successful when they are in the job longer than 12 months. We would agree with that!

Roger Howlet, former General Manager of the Clarence City Council pointed out that **a sunset clause for partnerships is often necessary**. We should remember that when the job is done, it's time to examine the need for the partnership to continue.

A Special Report from
Ursula Taylor
President,
APEN Tasmania



Your APEN - your network

Melbourne APEN chapter update

45 attendees discover the effects of 'self image'

A successful first event for the year was held earlier this month with over 45 people participating in a great discussion about self stories and how they impact on learning. Facilitator Kevin Balm was the guest speaker, presenting a very stimulating body of work on "Conditions influencing on-farm implementation of education and training learning outcomes".

Kevin discussed the findings of the study, undertaken by Participative Technologies Pty Ltd completed in March 2002, that was funded to provide a better understanding of key socio-cultural conditions influencing primary producers to implement education and training learning outcomes. The study named six current self-stories or self-images to discern the relationship between producers' operating self-image and their implementation of learning outcomes. The concept of self-image used in this study is based on the work of Kenneth Boulding (1956), Maxwell Maltz (1960) and John Hattie (1992).

The six self-images that were identified during this study were:

- The fatalistic battler self-story - "Farming is an everyday battle but it's the only livelihood choice we have"
- The isolated independent self-story - "Farming is an individual pursuit and to be successful we need to be self-reliant"
- The guarded conservative self-story - "Farming practices based on past experience are serving us well, so we see no need to change"
- The farming lifestyle self-story - "We farm because the lifestyle appeals to us and it provides us with a good livelihood"
- The self-confident farm manager self-story - "To farm successfully we have to manage the operational realities of various on-farm enterprises"
- The professional business manager - "Farming is a business choice we make underpinned by a professional, managerial attitude"

The project also identified a range of conditions influencing the self-images. A condition is a form of message from one's internal and/or external socio-cultural environment serving to reinforce a supportive, or dislodge a limiting self-image. The key conditions supporting and limiting the self-images include:

- producers degree of self-awareness;
- the value they place on learning; their attitude to risk and change;
- the extent to which their needs are matched by training activities provided;
- the relationship structure between producers, providers and industry; and,
- the availability of support from family, industry and community sources.

While primary producers are key influencers of the socio-cultural environment shaping their self-stories which in turn determines implementation of learning outcomes; training providers, coordinators, industry and government by their actions, can and do, significantly influence the socio-cultural conditions influencing producers' implementation of learning outcomes.

A copy of the full report can be found on the affa website www.affa.gov.au.

Melbourne APEN's next event is a workshop on engaging small and culturally and linguistically diverse landholders. Learning new approaches from Richard Molinar, USA (University of California Cooperative Extension Service).



Act on the spark, then report it

Events like the APEN Tassie Forum seem to provide the spark for follow-up activities. If your chapter has held, or is intending to hold, follow-up events from the Tassie Forum, then please let us know at ExtensionNet.

Double exposure

Members have indicated that a number of the papers 'flagged' at the Tassie Forum deserve wider exposure in ExtensionNet. Keep an eye out for future articles.



Report from Jo Vigliaturo, President APEN Melbourne