

EXTENSIONNET

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALASIA-PACIFIC
EXTENSION NETWORK (INC)

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COLLATOR'S COMMENTS:

Dale Williams: This issue from the School of Agriculture and Rural Development, University of Western Sydney-Hawkesbury, blends overseas involvement by students of various programmes as well as by staff. Research and other learning activities related to the arena of extension and rural development has been significant for many years.

Students focussing study in this arena in 1995 include: 34 PhD and MSc (Hons) students, of whom 12 are overseas students; 64 'coursework' Masters or Graduate Diploma students, of whom 22 are from overseas; and a significant proportion of senior undergraduate students, of whom 3 come from overseas. All create their extension and rural development studies around their own contexts and professional praxis development.

The articles of this ExtensionNet are chosen to reflect a few themes and contexts, namely: nomadism; rural community and regional development;

formal extension education; extension strategy and practice; a changing South Africa; and interdisciplinary collaboration. I trust the articles go beyond a 'show and tell' and raise a few issues and questions for deliberation.

EXTENSION - A CHANGING ART

Assoc. Prof. Bob Macadam:



Recent experiences convince me that the scope and purpose of extension is changing, and changing fast. "Extension" itself may be a casualty, because the term connotes what is changing.

While the specific form of the new ways is unclear, it is clear that the days are numbered when experts decide what is needed and design programs to persuade clients to adopt desirable innovations. It is unfortunate, given the name of our network, that the word 'extension' is associated with the latter.

We are fond of saying at UWS Hawkesbury that 'the way one sees the

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APEN FORUM
ON

EVALUATION AND

ACCOUNTABILITY

IN EXTENSION

ALBURY WODONGA
30 NOV/1 DEC

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world determines the way one acts in it', with the corollary that if the way one acts is not working then a prerequisite for change is to see in new ways. A number of notions related to regional development emerged from a workshop with members of the farming community and government agencies held at Dubbo in June that fit with the idea of new ways of seeing the situation:

- (1) effective development will be 'out from the centre' and not 'from top to bottom' ie it will be collaborative, not hierarchical (this raises the question of what the centre is and there is little doubt the members of the farming community at the workshop saw themselves in this light);
- (2) it will not set out to change people or persuade them to subjugate their interests to those of others. Rather it will seek to align the agendas of stakeholders, through a process of collaborative learning, such that there is complementarity of effort;
- (3) there will be an expanding network over time of collaborators and a deepening of critical appreciation of what regional development entails; and
- (4) institutions have a 'vertical' orientation and a specific focus based on their particular mission and culture, in contrast to a 'horizontal' orientation within a region that incorporates relationships across a rich mix of community groups, businesses and industries. Institutions tend to emphasise economic, social or environmental considerations across different regions, whereas the orientation within a specific region incorporates economic, social and environmental considerations together and in a manner unique to the region.

The concept of collaborative learning that results in new ways of thinking and acting is central to these notions. Collaborators must include institutions, industry and community if the aim is sustainable development.

Extension was traditionally perceived as a function carried out by 'professionals' employed in specialised government agencies. In future the connecting tissue will be enthusiasm rather than institutional affiliation.

This edition of the newsletter is being collated by my colleague Dale Williams. We were asked to highlight UWS-Hawkesbury's overseas involvement in extension and rural development. One thing my experience over the years has taught me is that distinctions between 'developed' and 'developing' countries are meaningless when it comes to the question of how to facilitate sustainable development.

This was borne out again during a 3 week visit to Nepal during July where we were able to incorporate the lessons learned from the Dubbo experience into farmer, community and government participation in the formative stages of an Asian Development Bank funded project for livestock development. We were able to take the quest for continuing participation in project emergence a significant step further and I expect the lessons learned there will be incorporated into the work in Central Western New South Wales.

NOMADISM: TO BE OR NOT TO BE, THAT IS THE (DEVELOPMENT) QUESTION

Mohammed Hossein Emadi:

Developing a sustainable, social and economic future for the dwindling nomadic tribes of Iran has been the focus of the past four years of my just completed PhD. Nomadic tribes have wandered the rich pasture lands of Iran's western and northern mountains for thousands of years. Nomads have a unique tribal culture and migrate between summer and winter quarters with sheep and goat herds. All Iranian dynasties until 70 years ago were established by the nomads and the

political structure and hierarchy was based on their tribal system. Since the Shah's time nomads have been losing power and facing pressure to change. They have been blamed for ecological degradation of pasture and for causing problems when they move into towns. At the same time they are an underprivileged class. The tribes are dwindling under such pressure and they are gradually abandoning their colourful traditions as they settle in towns.

I came to UWSH with a background in agriculture and rural development in Iran. I was seeking new ways of resolving the social problems related to the traumatic change nomads were experiencing. I found new ways through a combination of action research, systems analysis and critical thinking. My work in Iran had three stages: 1) ethnographic research living with a subgroup of the Qashqai tribe in the Zagros mountains to understand their way of life and issues, 2) bringing together nomads and government officials in an action research team on

a local level to address the issues, and 3) conducting workshops with government officials on a national level to tackle the issue through the application of learning organisation theory.

I found that the Iranian government could resolve many problems related to nomads by abandoning top-down decision-making in favour of listening to nomads at a local level. Every nomad family has its own unique program for settling down, which is different to other families and to the government's strategy for them. The action research group of nomads and government workers showed that progress could be made if the government listens to what nomads want. In the process, the workshop helped officials learn alternative solutions. One solution was for the government to allow wealthier nomadic families to buy out the pasture of poorer families, giving each group a more sustainable future.

Most nomads realised they had to change and were ready to settle down. The subgroup I worked with had shrunk from 32 families to 20 in just four years. The old nomad lifestyle is rapidly disappearing. It used to be in balance with Iran's ecological, social and political environment. Now the harmony is broken and it is difficult for both nomads and the rest of the community. Unfortunately, nomads are being unfairly blamed for difficulties of adjustment. They did not cause the problem. They are the victims. I am convinced UWSH was the right choice for my PhD work, because it gave me a competency to cope with the complex situation and help create a more positive way forward for Iran's nomadic peoples.

Paul Weekly, staff member and PhD student at UWS Hawkesbury. For some thirteen years I was involved in rural development and relief activities with semi-nomadic Fulani cattle herders in West Africa. The last three years involved a participatory action research project. Important issues emerging for me were:

- * for the sake of practicality, just how inclusive number-wise should one be in collaborating with others to define needs and problems? Is full and

symmetrical participation really possible in community contexts?

- * how does one stay true to action research's commitment to collaborative learning and empowerment for all members and yet deal with distracting conflict and party agendas?

- * how does one cope with diverse needs, like the transformation over time from a relief mode to a development mode, while engaged in action research?

- * what kind of organizational culture and management enhances action research?

- * why is action research not more attractive to current donor agencies?



TOWARDS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: PHILIPPINES

Virgie Callo: I am a PhD student. My home is the rural community of San Fernando, Luzon. People there have a characteristically happy disposition. However, poverty, unemployment and undernutrition are endemic.

The first phase of our community's participatory action research explored the diverse aspirations and needs of participants. Great enthusiasm for collaborative development occurred. Technical intervention strategies were then explored, such as increased agricultural production. Unfortunately, collaborative spirit waned somewhat in the process so a third phase reclarified vision. Extensive dialogue and leadership training enabled basic needs to come to the fore, leading to a 'people's bank' evolving. The research was one of continuous learning for us all. Dialogue and sharing personal experiences brought a sense of solidarity and collective understanding.

Resulting social energy stimulated collective action!

REFORMING AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES: CAMBODIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Solieng Mak



Cambodia has struggled to develop a cohesive philosophy and structure for extension at a national level because of the lingering effects of devastating revolution and war. My PhD research at UWS Hawkesbury suggests that agricultural extension for an ethical and sustainable improvement in the context of Cambodia should adopt an agricultural change framework that refers to managing two propositional problems. The problematic issues are not about the often assumed farmer resistance to technology, but rather relate to questions of:

- * socio-cultural, political, economical and ecological factors, and

- * farmer resistance to expatriate and local experts, based on interrelationships between farmers and outsiders in terms of power relations and who holds what knowledge.

Reflections and analysis on field experiences in Sophy village reveal that possibilities for change can be explored through meaningful interactions between researcher and local farmers, when a climate of mutual understanding and consensus is built.

Wilfred Auro Gaso: I have been challenged to review our extension effectiveness in Western Province P.N.G. since starting my Graduate Diploma in Systems Agriculture this year. I have 15 years involvement in various forms of government service to the livestock industry. I have managed other extension officers in recent years. On reflection, I am concerned that I have not been able to produce the livestock extension outcomes expected by everyone. I have even victimised livestock owners in one sense by following traditional directive extension practices. In another sense I have also been a victim of my own way of thinking and acting. I can see many reasons for limited extension effectiveness and I am using my main action research graduate study to understand and improve things that we can change within the province. The research includes an action phase of two months in PNG collaborating with a team of extension offices and farmers. I am sure we can create a better provincial extension approach.

IMPROVING FORMAL EXTENSION EDUCATION: INDONESIA & MALAWI

Siti Amanah:



I lecture at the Polytechnic of Agriculture, University of Jember, Indonesia. There is a core subject on extension for all 160 first year students and an advanced elective on extension in the second half of the three year course for about 35 students. My MSc

(Hons) degree action researches ways to improve teaching and learning processes. My studies to date convince me that a more intensive experiential-based learning is needed than our old style focussing on increasing theoretical and practical knowledge of students. We want to develop how students can participate in problem solving in the surrounding community. The initial action research team includes my five extension lecturer colleagues and an education lecturer friend experienced in action research. I will train and employ four students as interviewers for the core semester and two students for the advanced semester group. We will include farmers, extension workers, university supervisors and others in our information gathering. Students as learners are expected to participate in the research process. I will be in Indonesia for eight months from July 1995 to do my action research and predict that I will complete my thesis in December, 1996.

Elwyn Turnbull and Dale Williams: In recent years government agricultural services in Malawi have undergone extensive re-orientation. The nationwide staff training programme, funded by the World Bank and GTZ (Germany), focussed on more participatory approaches to extension. Concern then shifted to ensuring new staff entering the services had a similar orientation to an interactive extension system, so re-orientation of the Natural Resources College curriculum was targeted. UWS Hawkesbury was approached to facilitate a process of "college strengthening" that comprises integration of curriculum development and staff exchange and training. We anticipate an initial three year involvement under the existing funding. However, we hope to build-in ongoing networks within and beyond Southern Africa to enhance effectiveness of more process-oriented approaches to rural development and extension education.

The two primary requests are to:

- * assist in comprehensive curriculum development, with the intention of making subject matter and extension teaching more learner-centred and responsive to the needs extensionists and rural communities

- * train college staff in classroom and field-based learner-centred learning

techniques, through in-class coaching and intensive workshops.

Some assumptions about new experiential learning-based curriculum development are:

- * it is radical in nature with regards both the process and its curriculum outcomes and also with the participants who need to see learning in new ways and to develop competencies for creating and sustaining the new approach.

- * radical change does not necessarily mean rapid change, though it will mean comprehensive change that affects every aspect of curriculum

- * all stakeholders linked with either the formal education process and/or with graduates from it (i.e. farming community, employers, researchers, etc) should participate in the process of change.

APOLOGIES FOR THE LATENESS OF

EXTENSIONNET

**Please Note:
Membership
Renewals will be
arriving soon. We
would appreciate
prompt payment.**

THANKS

(APEN Secretariat)

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR RURAL SOUTH AFRICA



Thembi Ngcobo, Nicholas Boyce and Matshitshi Ndlovu at USW - Hawkesbury

Nicholas Boyce: I was born in 1955 in a small village in the Eastern Cape and am proud of my rural heritage. I am presently doing my final year at the University of Western Sydney - Hawkesbury in the Bachelor of Applied Science in Systems Agriculture. I am just finishing a situation improvement project with the New South Africa Support Association (NSASA), which was formerly the Australian anti-apartheid ANC Support Group. When we look at South Africa, we inevitably find rural communities suffering abject poverty created by the former racist hegemony. NSASA now offers partnership with rural communities in their development.

When I return to South Africa in several months, I will be in a good position to work with rural communities in the Reconstruction and Development Program. The skills and competencies that I have developed include the empowerment of the people; people-centred development; facilitating adult learning; working with groups; effective communication; and agricultural technical skills. I am committed to the ideal of working with the people and not for them or on them. We learn together and develop together on what people want to do,

not on what I want them to do. This is the way rural people will learn to initiate, manage and own their development projects.

Thembi Ngcobo & Matshitshi Ndlovu: We are final year degree students who have developed a programme around facilitating environmentally sustainable farming; land reform in post-apartheid South Africa; and women in our changing development context.

The Human Development Index in our country is low in rural areas. Important aspects we propose are that participation, people centred development and systems approaches should be present, if social change is to be implemented in South Africa. Introduced agricultural reforms need to be linked with human capacity building or else implementing policy reform is bound to fail. The competencies we've developed in Australia are keys to opening doors for our part in South Africa's rural development programme. Within that we would like to ensure women form a vital part of the development process in providing food for their families, thus maintaining good health as well as contributing to the national economy.

FARMING SYSTEMS RESEARCH: VIETNAM

Nadarajah Sriskandarajah: I am participating as a 'systems' resource in an ACIAR-funded project on the integration of shrimp farming in existing rice fields in the Mekong River Delta. I am part of an interdisciplinary team of four Australians, their Vietnamese counterparts and farmers. Farmers traditionally protected paddies from saline water intrusion in the dry season by building dykes. Lately farmers are allowing paddies and canals to be flooded and earn substantial income from growing shrimp and prawn. They claim salt residue does not harm wet season paddy rice, because it is flushed out by fresh water.

The Farming Systems R & D Centre at the University of Cantho wanted to evaluate the sustainability of the new system. Tran Than Be, a lecturer at Cantho, completed his MSc (Hons) recently at UWS Hawkesbury researching this issue. Be's work included working with an interdisciplinary team of university staff and extension officers and 116 farm households. Physical, biological, economic and social parameters were recorded before and after integration of shrimp and paddy rice. Some important factors found to affect sustainability of the system were: high silt levels; slow salinization rates; decline in natural supply of shrimp larvae; and the risk of genetic erosion of rice varieties. The team is currently exploring further issues of export-oriented production of the new system and the challenges that may bring to the older, stable, successful rice farming system.

APEN is Proud to be Sponsored by -

the Dairy Research and Development Corporation

the Department of Primary Industries, Queensland

Agriculture Victoria

APEN NEWS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 30 NOVEMBER

1995: Members please note the very first Annual General Meeting of APEN will be conducted on the 30th November 1995 as part of an APEN, two day International Workshop to be held in Albury - Wodonga. The workshop will be conducted by Gerard Muller and Drenan Watson who will be visiting Australia at that time. The theme will be "Evaluation and Accountability in Extension".

The AGM will be held prior to the Workshop Dinner on the Thursday night and we look forward to seeing as many folk at the workshop and AGM as possible.

Look for more details in the post and the next ExtensionNet.

NEW APEN SECRETARIAT:

AgriLogic Consultants P/L is the new secretariat. AgriLogic Consultants is a consultancy firm, whose principals are Bob and Rosemary Currie. It is the successful tenderer of the national tendering process instigated by the interim management committee. The tender is for 2 years with a further 2 year option. The Australian Institute for Agricultural Science, who provided secretariat services from APEN's inception, did not tender. The interim committee called for tenders to ensure that APEN obtained the most effective service.

We look forward to a fruitful and productive relationship with AgriLogic Consultants P/L and the Curries. The new APEN address is:

**Australasia-Pacific Extension
Network**
PO Box 1239
WODONGA VIC 3689

Telephone: (060) 245 349
(015) 004 280
Facsimile: (060) 561 967

TREASURER:

Warren Straw, Principle Extension Officer, Victorian Dept of Agriculture, has been appointed Interim Treasurer and Public Officer for APEN.

MEMBERSHIP:

Let's keep reminding colleagues about our Network and urge them to join up. There are obvious benefits for all concerned with an increased membership of keen, unique people contributing to each other's professional praxis.

EXTENSIONNET

We have been getting increasing requests for publishing details and abstracts for upcoming workshops and conferences (three have come in the last month). We are a growing and diversifying network and we have more than enough articles to present and increasing news starting to come in from Chapter activities. Therefore, there may be periods when only a little space is available for conference details or a paid advertising option needs to be taken up. An ongoing issue for discussion could be ExtensionNet as a publication. A number of points come to mind for discussion at the AGM. However, any feedback and suggestions beforehand would be appreciated ... it's your paper! For instance, are there any themes you suggest for upcoming issues? The implications of gender to extension and rural development is one. Knowledge and information systems is another. And the link of the two is another more particular theme again.

*Send your comments to the
Editor
via the APEN Secretariat!*

EDITOR: PETER VAN BEEK

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

CHAPTER ROUND-UP

South Australia

By John Bourne

APEN South Australia and the AIAS have organised a workshop to look at new advances in "IT". It will be a "Hands-on" program to include a number of practical applications:

Date: Wednesday 22nd November 1995

Venue: Plant Research Centre, Waite Campus, Glen Ormond, S.A.

Theme: Taking the Information Super Highway into Agriculture

Cost: Members \$20, Non-members \$30

Further information: John Bourne, Land Management Consultant, CRC for Soil Management, PMB 2 Glen Ormond, Fax (08) 303 8699, phone (08) 303 8670.

Southern Victoria

By Horrie Poussard

Victorian APEN members were prominent at the annual conference of the Soil and Water Conservation Association of Australia (SAWCAA) held in Melbourne in early August. Nearly 200 participants tackled the conference theme - *Monitoring Catchment Health*. While most emphasis was on; the physical elements in our environment, it was opportune to talk also about monitoring the effectiveness of programs, looking at the role of LandCare groups (and other groups) in monitoring catchment health, monitoring the "people processes", and using drama and other interactive elements in community education and extension.

For further information contact Viv McWaters, at YarraCare (03) 9480 7408.

North Coast (NSW)

By Peter Davies

Over 40 people attended a lunch at Yamba in the 5th July to hear a number of speakers discuss the advantages of forming a North Coast (NSW) Chapter of APEN. Speakers included Alan Davies and Bob Dick of Southern Cross University, Larissa Wilson, convenor of the S.E. Queensland Chapter, and yours truly.

Those in attendance represented a wide range of extension professionals from the agency, educational and private sectors. It was agreed at the meeting to hold a workshop in the near future to refine the nature and modus operandi of the Chapter. Further developments will be advised. Contact Anne Currey, Wollongbar Agriculture Institute, Fax (066) 281 744, phone (066) 261 352.

Western Australia

By Peter Nash

The W.A. Chapter committee has organised three renowned speakers to share their experiences in the positives and pitfalls of becoming involved in community development. The seminar, entitled *Community Development - Tapping the Resource*, was held at the Ascot Inn, Perth on the 7th September.

Peter Newman, Director of the Institute of Science and Technology Policy at Murdoch University, discussed the power of community development. Dr Geoff Syme, Senior Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO, considered whether the people really community development and Keith Bradby, an experienced consultant, provided practical guidance on getting things done in the community.

Achieving extension objectives relies so often on having an active, involved community group. This seminar provided valuable lessons for anyone involved in extension, whether they be in the agricultural industry, local government, health or policing, or a member of a community organisation. More information can be obtained from Peter Nash, phone (090) 411 555 or Sue Bestow phone (099) 210 502.

Murray-Riverina

By John Lacy

The Murray-Riverina chapter recently held its 3rd meeting, an education workshop held at Albury on 14th July 1995.

Our two previous meetings related to planning and determining the future activities of the chapter. We decided to hold two workshops in 1995. In order to share responsibility and involve members, two teams of four people volunteered to organise each workshop.

The first workshop on Evaluation of ongoing extension work and short term

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Secretariat: PO BOX 1239 WODONGA VIC 3689, TEL: (060) 245 349 FAX: (060) 561 967

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projects in view of meeting clients' needs, was a great success with 40 people attending. The participants came from government agencies, tertiary institutions and private industry from as far afield as Bendigo, Melbourne and Wagga Wagga. We all learnt a lot from Caroline Graham, an education and research consultant who specialises in facilitating evaluation workshops. We also identified issues which we may follow up at another workshop.

Our next workshop is a Communication Workshop where we particularly want to focus on choosing methods of communication. This workshop will be held on Friday 13 October at a venue yet to be decided.

COMING EVENTS

DAIRY HORIZONS - Developing Extension Skills "A Hands on Conference" sponsored by the **DAIRY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** is being held at La Trobe University, Bundoora, Melbourne from **20 to 23 November 1995**. For more information contact: Conference Plus (03) 9602 3073 Fax (03) 9602 3400

APEN INTERNATIONAL FORUM - Evaluation and Accountability in Extension is being held in Albury on **30 November and 1 December**, Notice to follow.

The **22nd National Conference of the AUSTRALIAN FARM MANAGEMENT SOCIETY** is being held at the Federal Country Club, Launceston Tasmania from **20 to 22 March 1996** and the theme is **Farming: making the lifestyle your business**. Contact Conference Design (002) 24 3773 Fax (002) 243774

The **1996 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY** is being held at the World Congress Centre in Melbourne from **21 to 25 July 1996**. Called **Windows on the World**, the symposium will cover Economic Development, Urban Issues, Environment, Health, Research, Telecommunications, Social Action. For more information contact: The Meeting Planners Ph: 61 3 819 3700 Fax: 61 3 819 5978.

INTERIM STEERING GROUP

SECRETARIAT

PO Box 1239, WODONGA 3689
Ph: (060) 245 349 Fax: (060) 561 967

CORE WORKING GROUP

Terry Makin (Interim Chairperson)
36 Eamon Drive, VIEW BANK 3084
Phone/Fax (03) 9459 4063

Bob Macadam (Joint Secretary)
Agriculture & Rural Development
UWS - Hawkesbury, RICHMOND 2753
Ph: (045) 701 528 Fax: (045) 885 538

Ian Simpson (Joint Secretary)
NSW Agriculture
Locked Bag 21, ORANGE 2800
Ph: (063) 913 748 Fax: (063) 913 208

Warren Straw (Treasurer)
Agriculture Victoria
VIAS, 475 Mickleham Road, ATTWOOD 3049
Ph: (03) 9217 4360 Fax: (03) 9217 4299

Peter Van Beek (Editor)
9 Carlock Promenade
KARALEE 4306
Ph: (07) 294 7445 Fax: (07) 294 7613

CONTACTS FOR APEN CHAPTERS

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND CHAPTER
Richard Clark
PO Box 5545
ROCKHAMPTON MAIL CENTRE 4702
Ph: (079) 360 165 Fax: (079) 361 034

NORTHERN QUEENSLAND CHAPTER
Steward Lindsay
Department of Primary Industries
PO Box 105, INNISFAIR 4860
Ph: (070) 612 144 Fax: (070) 612 795

SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND CHAPTER
Larissa Wilson
Co-Operative Res. Centre for
Tropical Pest M'tment, University of Queensland,
ST LUCIA 4072
Ph: (07) 365 1860 Fax: (07) 365 1855

DARLING DOWNS CHAPTER
Professor Brian Roberts
University of Southern Queensland
PO Darling Heights, TOOWOOMBA 4350
Ph: (076) 622 322 Fax: (076) 624 966

CENTRAL/WESTERN NSW CHAPTER
Ian Simpson
NSW Agriculture
Locked Bag 21, ORANGE 2800
Ph: (063) 913 748 Fax: (063) 913 244

NORTHERN NSW CHAPTER
Anne Currey
Wollongbar Agriculture Institute
Bruxner Highway, WOLLONGBAR 2477
Ph: (066) 261 352 Fax: (066) 281 744

MURRAY RIVERINA CHAPTER
John Lacy
NSW Agriculture
PO Box 108, FINLEY 2713
Ph: (058) 831 644 Fax: (058) 831 570

NORTH CENTRAL VICTORIA CHAPTER
John McKinlay
Bendigo Agricultural Centre
PO Box 2500, BENDIGO 3554
Ph: (054) 304 444 Fax: (054) 484 982

SOUTHERN VICTORIA CHAPTER
Horrie Poussard
YarraCare
PO Box 8233, PRESTON 3072
Ph: (03) 9480 7408 Fax: (03) 9480 7406

GIPPSLAND CHAPTER
Maria Rose
Agriculture Victoria
117 Johnson Street, MAFFRA 3860
Ph: (051) 471 533 Fax: (051) 473 078

NORTHERN TERRITORY CHAPTER
Debbie Van Rangelrooy
Dept. Primary Industry & Fisheries
GPO Box 990, DARWIN 0801
Ph: (089) 892 211 Fax: (089) 892 048

SOUTH AUSTRALIA CHAPTER
John Bourne
CRS for Soil and Land Management
PMB 2, GLEN OSMOND 5064
Ph: (08) 303 8670 Fax: (08) 303 8699

TASMANIA CHAPTER
Andrew Baker
Dept of Primary Industries and Fisheries
PO Box 303, DEVONPORT 7310
Ph: (004) 217 617 Fax: (004) 245 142

WESTERN AUSTRALIA CHAPTER
Peter Nash
Dryland Research Institute
PO Box 432, MERREDIN 6415
Ph: (090) 411 555 Fax: (090) 411 138

ACT CHAPTER
Ross Andrews, Grains Research and
Development Corp., PO Box E6,
QUEEN VICTORIA TERRACE 2600
Ph: (06) 272 5525 Fax: (06) 271 6430

NEW ZEALAND CHAPTER
Alan McRae and Dick Kuyper
Farm Management Department
Massey University
PALMERSTON NORTH NEW ZEALAND
64 6 356 9099 64 6 350 5680

PAPUA NEW GUINEA APEN CHAPTER
Tim Kepui
Department of Agriculture and Livestock
PO Box 417, Konedobu NCD
PAPUA NEW GUINEA 0120
Ph: (675) 212 271 Fax: (675) 211 387

SOLOMON ISLANDS CHAPTER
David Palapu
Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation
PO Box 654, HONIARA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
Solomon Islands 23159