

EXTENSIONNET

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALASIA-PACIFIC
EXTENSION NETWORK (INC)

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FROM THE EDITOR

Peter Van Beek

This is the last issue of *ExtensionNet* I have put together. The next one will be put together by Sue Bestow from Western Australia. After that, who knows? I hope to see a Editorial Committee being formed at the Albury forum/AGM. My suggestion is that this committee will be based in Hawkesbury, but include people from all Chapters. If Chapters take it in turn to produce one issue each, it would take two years before the job came around again.

After four years close involvement, first with the Conference at the Gold Coast in October 1993 and then as editor, manager of the establishment process and treasurer, I need a break. Also, since leaving the Queensland DPI in February, I am no longer in the thick of things, nor do I have the

office support available I used to have. Most importantly however, it is time to give some-one else a go. Editing a newsletter like this one can be a worthwhile experience for any extension officer.



Newsletters are part of our stock in trade. They have a lot of influence and you can blow the trumpet of your own area or interest, modestly of course.

Leaving this job brings both relief and a tinge of sadness because I did like the challenge. However, it will also give me an opportunity to write more and challenge the way things are going.

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FROM THE CHAIR

Terry Makin, Interim Chair

We are reaching another milestone for APEN.

Our first Annual General Meeting will be held in Albury on Thursday,

November 30, 1995.

This meeting and the election of a Committee of Management completes the formalisation process of APEN.

Most of the original core group are not available as office bearers for the new committee. We need a minimum of 6 people elected at the AGM to

form this committee, ideally with a spread of location and gender. I believe we do not want APEN to be a male dominated network. Nomination forms have been distributed to Chapter Convenors or are available from the secretariat.

Continued over page

FROM THE CHAIR (Continued)

One of the core group's concerns is; **How can we include all our members within the organisation? How can we be "inclusive"?**

At the AGM we will have a short brainstorming session to ask members **"what are the major issues that APEN should address to provide a service to its members over the next 12 months".**

We ask those who cannot attend to **fax their issues**, one line per issue, to **the secretariat** before the AGM.

As I reflect back over the time since the International Extension Conference in Queensland when APEN was initiated, I take pleasure in what we have achieved, and I acknowledge all that we have still to achieve.

There is no doubt in my mind that the interim committee is handing over a viable organisation with a growing membership and sponsorship, served by an effective secretariat, to the first properly constituted Committee of Management. We have chapters in every state in Australia and new chapters being initiated to fill the remaining gaps. These chapters are active in running events to improve the knowledge of members. We have created a foundation that others can build on.

Yes, we still have much to do. It was apparent in our early discussions in setting up APEN that there was a lack of appreciation in senior positions of organisations of what extension is, and its value. I believe

Look forward to seeing you at the First APEN AGM, and Forum "Monitoring and Evaluation in Extension" in Albury on November 30 & December 1

APEN has started to increase awareness of the role of extension, but this is only the beginning of a process. There remains much to be done to promote the value of our profession in **the change processes** that are taking place in the community with increasing rapidity; and we need a viable organisation to do this.

Evaluation and monitoring is a key area where many of us are struggling. From my perspective I see little evidence that we have integrated this into our practice; either from a management or a grass roots' perspective. We hope that the APEN international workshop on this subject will address this need. Participation by two international experts gives a unique opportunity improve our knowledge.

Extension education is another area where we lack an integrated critical mass. The fragmentation and isolation of people in this area is inhibiting the ability for us to aggregate our knowledge and develop more rigorous extension theories that are informed by our practice. We definitely need a co-ordinated effort here to maximise our resources and impact.

Part of APEN's role is to assist in communicating and sharing our information and knowledge, and we still have scope for improvement here. This is an area where we can play a significant role and the APEN newsletter is a start in enabling us to do this. It requires a discipline from us all if we are to improve communication between our peers, chapters and organisations.

It is only through combining our energies, thoughts, and ideas in a co-operative way through APEN that we will make the progress that is necessary to achieve these desired outcomes. This will take continued dedication, enthusiasm and committed energy by all of us.



Terry Makin, Interim Chair

Thanks!

Finally I would like thank all those who have given of their time and energy to bring us to where we are today. I want to thank those people who have risen to the challenge to initiate a regional chapter as this is the key to APEN's being, its grass-roots. In particular, I thank **Peter van Beck**, our interim treasurer and editor, whose energy and commitment have been a key to our success; **Bob Macadam** and **Ian Simpson** as the interim joint secretaries who have been the other key members of the core group, and **Warren Straw** who was conscripted onto the core group to replace Peter as interim treasurer. Their commitment and belief has ensured APEN's beginnings. We wish the inaugural committee of management every success in the future.

**Nomination Form,
page 4**

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A NATIONAL EXTENSION STRATEGY?

Warren Straw, Interim Treasurer

Last year's COMEX forum (on best practices in Extension) recommended a national approach to improve extension. To that end, a working group of six, representing four states, met in Melbourne last February to develop a strategy.

The group developed a proposal for submission to rural Industries R and D Corporations. The title was 'Improving the performance of agri-industry through better extension services'. It had a number of objectives about best practice, developing a common understanding of the roles of extension, professional development and standards, and co-operation between different providers of extension services. The process would include widespread involvement of the rural industry (the customer) and extensive coverage of extension professionals.

Early discussions with Research and Development Corporations were encouraging. The final word though was advice to **integrate our strategy into the National Strategy for Agricultural Research in Australia.**

(The working group had, of course, thought of this but since the research strategy hardly mentions the word extension, we thought it would be an up-hill battle!)

So, where to now?

Do we want a national extension strategy? Is it wise to have a strategic approach that stands alone from research? Where does/should the education sector fit in the picture?

When the APEN core group discussed this matter on 9 October, one opinion was the following: 'Extension should

no longer be too closely linked to agriculture. Extension is moving into conservation, public health, regional development and many other fields. Extension is also linking end-users with sources of new information other than research, e.g. markets, policy, economics and conservation. We may need to start a dialogue within APEN about an extension strategy and start taking responsibility for our own future.'

We really need your guidance. The AGM in Albury on 30 November is your chance to voice your opinion as this matter will be placed on the agenda.

**Voice your opinion
in person
or by Fax (060) 561 967**

Annual General Meeting

APEN will hold its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Albury on Thursday, November 30. This will be the first election of office bearers under the APEN constitution. The constitution states that there will be a President, Vice president, Secretary, Treasurer and at least two other members to form a Committee of Management.

A financial member needs to be nominated by two other financial members and to have signed that they accept nomination.

Nominations need to be in the hands of the Secretariat at least 7 days before the AGM being held on November 30.

The relevant sections of the constitution are sections 21 to 25.

We need enthusiastic people prepared to fill these roles. In particular an inaugural President, Vice President and Secretary.

APEN Secretariat

Rosemary Currie
Phone (060) 245 349

PO Box 1239, Wodonga, 3689
Fax (060) 561 967

Fax Your Issue

"What are the major issues that APEN should address to provide a service to its members over the next 12 months".

APEN asks all members who cannot attend the AGM to fax their issues, one line per issue, to the secretariat (060 561 967) before the AGM (4pm Thursday November 30, 1995).

At the AGM we will have a short brain-storming session to ask members the above question and the issues faxed in will be incorporated into this process.

This will help to give the incoming Committee of Management some directions to take to fulfil the members needs.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF EXTENSION and what is APEN going to do to influence this.

*Ian Simpson, Peter Van Beek
Bob Macadam and Terry Makin*

The following themes were part of the results of a two-day workshop of the APEN Core Working Group held on 20 and 21 December 1993. The group consisted of Terry Makin, Ian Simpson, Bob Macadam and Peter Van Beek. We considered the extension environment and grouped current changes into five major themes. We present the results now as a basis for discussion during our first official Annual General Meeting on 30 November 1995 when further activities for APEN will be decided upon.

Theme 1: THE CHANGING NATURE AND SCOPE OF CLIENTS

FROM		TO
Males	to	Males and females
Focus on individuals	to	Focus on industry & community groups
Sole income from agriculture	to	Diverse income sources
Limited formal education	to	Better educated, formally and non-formally
Production driven & commodity orientated	to	Market/Sustainability motivated
Practical/adverse to theory	to	Appreciation of value of theory
Focus on farmers	to	Focus on farmers, conservationists, processors, marketers & policy makers, all clients
Users of simple management practices	to	Sophisticated approach to management
Passive & politically naive	to	Active in local groups & politically aware
Focus on more productive/responsive farmers	to	Focus on whole community

Nomination Form for Office positions in APEN

We, the undersigned, being financial members of APEN, nominate
_____ for the position of
_____ on the APEN Committee of Management
or _____ Regional Chapter [Strike out non applicable
situation]

Name _____ Signature _____

Name _____ Signature _____

Consent of Nominee

I, _____ am a financial member of APEN
and I accept the nomination for the position of

Signature _____ DATE _____

Theme 2: THE CHANGING ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT FOR EXTENSION PROVIDERS

Theme 3: THE CHANGING NATURE OF OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF EXTENSION POLICY

FROM	TO	FROM	TO
Industry driven models	to Rural development models	Public funding for technology and community service obligations (CSO)	to Private funding for technology transfer & Govt.Funds for CSO
Separated extension/ research/education	to Integrated	State Public Servants (Senior) dominating devt of extension	to Professional networking tempering/countering influence of senior public servants
Separated Biological/ Social-Ecological	to Integrated	State Government agencies dominate policy	to Multiple ownership including industry, community groups, federal government
Segmented	to Integrated		
Vertical focus	to Horizontal & vertical focus		

Theme 4: THE CHANGING NATURE OF EXTENSION AS A PROFESSION

Theme 5: THE CHANGING NATURE OF EXTENSION AS AN AREA OF THEORY GROUNDED IN PRACTICE & VICE VERSA

FROM	TO	FROM	TO
Extension officer as technical expert	to Information broker, learning facilitator	Poorly informed theoretically	to Well informed
Linear emphasis on "Things"	to Educative - emphasis on people	Practice only driven	to Practice << Theory driven
Agricultural orientation	to Rural orientation	Isolated practitioners	to Collaborative activity (Project Teams)
Not perceived as professional activity	to Perceived as professional	One-off education of practitioners	to Continuous education
Not evaluating	to Evaluating outputs/ outcomes	Emerging emphasis on specialised extension/ education/ training	to Commonplace extension/ education/ training
Information based	to Knowledge based	Formal training in agriculture	to Wider formal training
Male dominated	to Gender equality/ partnership	Recycle extension	to Thinking extension

Continued on page 6

*To understand the difference between
EDUCATION and TRAINING...*

Would you like your child to have Sex Education or Sex Training??

THE CHANGING NATURE OF EXTENSION (*Continued*)

Network:

"To enable practitioners through collaborative activity to facilitate and influence the professional development of network members and strengthen extension as a profession".

This mission is based on the premise that extension must play a significant role in National and Regional development. The mission acknowledges that a major constraint is the isolation and lack of information of the majority of extension practitioners. Control of the network will reside in the hands of individual financial subscribers to APEN.

FUNCTIONS

Possible functions of the Network were seen as *(the suggested body for undertaking the function is given in Italics)*

1. Compile a register of members: this would contain information such as members skills-interests-activities-roles, (*Network*); (the compendium could be on disc and available to members at a fee to recover cost.
2. Provide information to members via:
 - newsletter (*Network*)
 - register (*Network*)
 - readings/case Studies (*Network*)
 - journal (*Network/Chapter by rotation*)
 - e-Mail Conference (?)
3. Encourage collaborative professional development activity among members e.g. workshops, seminars, project proposals. Possible activities could include:
 - informing members of opportunities available (*Network & Chapter*);
 - obtaining seed money for formation and operation (*Network*);
 - brokering of ideas between proposers and providers (*Network & Chapter*);
 - promote collaborative professional development activities e.g. joint post graduate courses, short courses. (*Network & Chapter*);
 - facilitate transferability of formal training between institutions. (*Network*).
4. Providing learning opportunities for members via:
 - international conferences (*Network*).
 - national/regional conferences, workshops, seminars. (*Chapter*.)
 - seminars: local, national, international presenters. (*Network & Chapter*).
 - arrange activities with visiting extension experts (*Network & Chapter*).
 - arrange student/practitioner links and exchanges (*Chapter*).
 - arrange exchanges (*Network & Chapter*).
 - arrange joint sponsorship of professional development activities (*Network & Chapter*).
5. Act as an advocate for members and the extension profession:
 - lobby government funding bodies, education and research institutions, producer and community organisations on a regional, national and international level (*Network*).
 - liaise with professional organisations (AIAS, ATA, etc) (*Network*).
6. Foster formation of special interest groups such as for people interested in methods, eg Rapid Appraisal, or forming an Australasian Post Graduate School of Extension, or formulating professional standards (*Network & Chapter*).

(Note: *Network* refers to the APEN Committee of Management. *Chapter* refers to the people running local chapters).

The challenge posed by the outgoing Interim Core Working Group to the APEN members is: **'What are we as APEN members going to do to influence these developments to ensure the best results for our clients and ourselves?'**

GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND EXTENSION

This is a two year course mainly by external study, unique in Australia, for graduates with sound work experience, who wish to further their careers in management, communication and leadership in agriculture or natural resource management.

The course is run by specialists from four Colleges of the University of Melbourne, and coordinated from Longerenong.

Current enrolments are from four states and include extension agents, private consultants, rural educators and counsellors and Landcare facilitators. Participants normally complete three core subjects and five electives, over four semesters. Course fees are currently \$3600, or \$450 per single subject, e.g.

- * Human Resource Management in Agriculture
- * Systems Approaches in Agriculture and NRM
- * Agricultural Policy & International Trade
- * Rural Communication and Extension
- * Farm Financial Management
- * Rural Women - Their Work
- * Information Technology
- * Agricultural Marketing
- * Rural Development
- * Research Project
- * Agribusiness

Applications are now being taken from those wishing to start in February 1996. For further information contact the Course Coordinator: **Dr John Petheram**
Ph: (053) 622222 Fax (053) 622213
RMB 3000, Horsham, Vic 3401
 Longerenong College, Horsham
 Faculty Agriculture, Forestry & Horticulture
 University of Melbourne

COMPUTERS ON SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FARMS

How many are there? What are they used for? Who uses them?

Jill Kerby

A recent survey of over 500 members of the Agricultural Bureau in South Australia has provided some answers to these questions. The survey explored a wide range of communication and information issues, with the findings published in PISA Technical Report Number 221.

Of the 526 respondents, slightly more than a quarter (27%) said that they used a computer to assist in the management of their farm. A further 20% said they were planning (or hoping) to use a computer in the future. For those with computers, the most frequent task (41%) was financial record keeping and analysis, followed by physical record keeping and analysis (27%), farm decision support (19%), and breeding records (8%). Only 2% used their computer to communicate with other computers either to gather information or for market transactions.

Software was considered 'adequate' by half of the computer users, though a quarter considered it inadequate or were not sure. Their main concerns were cost, availability and appropriateness for their situation.

Use of computers on farms is influenced by age and education level, as shown in the figures below. Current users tend to be in the middle age group (30 to 49 years), with most potential users aged under 30. The higher the level of education, the higher the current and potential use of computers. Thus the age group over 60 years - many of whom left school well before Year 9 - tended to be both the lowest current and potential users. Some commented that they did not personally use computers, but accessed them through a consultant or a son.

Many respondents provided additional comments of the use of computers and electronic communication in their farm business. Although wide ranging in their opinions about computers, with comments such as 'computers don't pay the bills or do the hard yacka', most were generally positive. This suggests that farmers are tending to approach computing in an open-minded way at least on a level comparable to other sectors of the business community.

Figure 2: Computers Used to Assist Farm Management by age of farmer

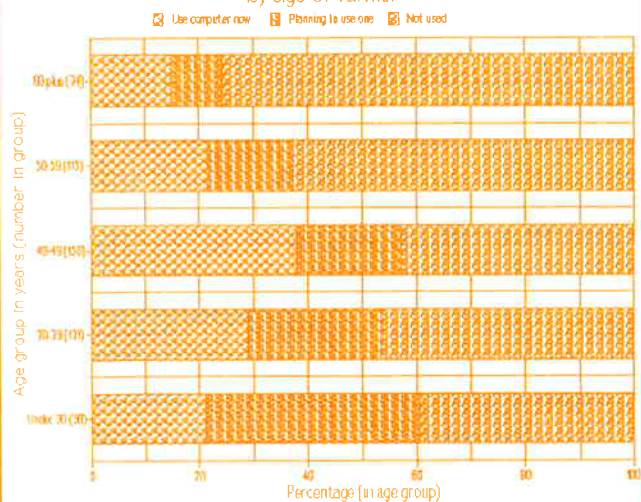
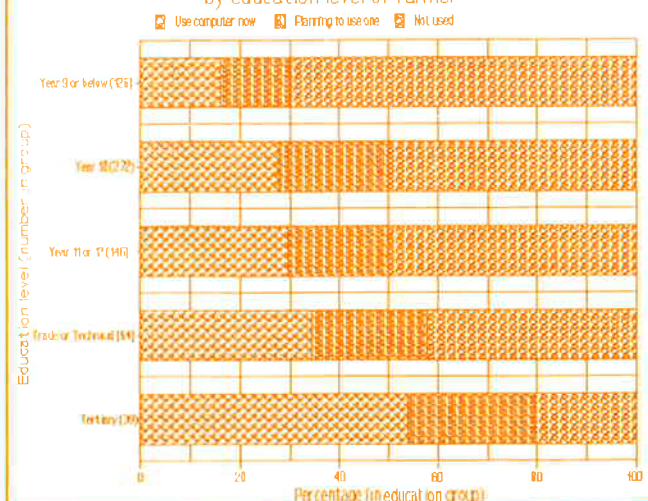


Figure 1: Computers Used to Assist Farm Management by education level of farmer



Computers are however, regarded as an on-farm management tool, rather than as a means of communication via modems and electronic networks. When asked for their preferences for obtaining information on various topics, computer diskette and networks were consistently the least preferred. Also low on the list of preferred methods were fax machines and pre-recorded telephone messages.

Jill Kerby is Senior Consultant, Programs and Services with Primary Industries South Australia
Ph: (08) 226 0350.

Her article was reprinted with permission from Economics News 24/02/95, Primary Industry SA Strategic Services

CHAPTER
ROUND UP

South East Queensland Chapter

Larissa Wilson

Invitation

The South East Queensland Chapter of APEN has now been functioning for approximately twelve months. In that time two workshops have been held with a fairly broad range of people participating. We now need to question: 'were they successful or worthwhile? What could be or should be done next?'

A meeting is planned for 1 December to create opportunities for people to mix and swap ideas and address the above questions.

This will be an informal get together over some drinks and a B-B-Q to discuss what we have or have not achieved and begin the process of setting goals for 1996.

Venue: BSES, 50 Meiers Road, Indooroopilly, commencing at 3.30 pm with a review of the year. We hope that you will be able to join us in what should be a stimulating get together. **Contact** Larissa Wilson, CRC for Tropical Pest Management, 07 3365 1851.

EDITOR: PETER VAN BEEK

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

Melbourne Chapter

David Beckinsale

Changing Behaviour - a Case Study of Road Safety in Victoria.

The Melbourne Chapter organised a Luncheon meeting for some 45 people at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Guest speaker Anton Staindl talked about *Changing Behaviour - a Case Study of Road Safety in Victoria*. Every successful campaign gets a message across to the people who need it most. The same techniques are involved whether the message involves farm management, environmental protection, healthy lifestyles or being responsible behind the wheel of a car.

The Traffic Accident Commission has been internationally recognised for its public education program which has helped to halve Victoria's road toll since 1989. Anton is the TAC Communication manager and outlined how the strategy was developed, the rationale behind the blend of education, legislation and enforcement, and the marketing of road safety in Victoria.

Before the luncheon, Agriculture Victoria held a seminar with Bill Weitkamp, an agricultural extension specialist from the USA with 30 years experience. Bill contrasted the extension services in the USA and Victoria.

South Australian Chapter

By John Bourne

More than 150 people have already indicated that they will attend the workshop on *Taking the Information Super Highway into Agriculture and Rural Industries*. The workshop will be held on Wednesday 22 November in the auditorium at the Plant Research Centre, Waite Campus Gate 2b Hartley Grove, Urrbrae, South Australia.

Speakers include Steven Johnson, Co-op Extension, University of Main, USA, Ben Wilson, CRC for Soil and Land Management, SA, Adrian Barber, Agricultural Group Primary Industries SA, Ray Dundon, Office of Information Technology, and Kym Bryceson, CRC for Soil and Land Management SA. Topics include: Information super highway benefiting growers today; Information Sources; Fax services; On-line services; Harnessing IT for land management planning; Geographic Information Systems for many uses; Tools for Information Technology; and Workshops. The day is for scientists, educators, consultants, agribusiness, managers, administrators, and extension professionals in agriculture and resource management.

INTERIM
STEERING
GROUP

SECRETARIAT

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

CORE WORKING GROUP

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

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

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

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

Peter Van Beek (Interim Editor)
9 Carlock Promenade
KARALEE QLD 4306
Ph: (07) 3294 7445 Fax: (07) 3294 7613

CONTACTS FOR APEN CHAPTERS

SE QUEENSLAND CHAPTER
Larissa Wilson
CRC for Tropical Pest M'tment,
University of Queensland, ST LUCIA 4072
Ph: (07) 3365 1860 Fax: (07) 3365 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 2300
Ph: (063) 913 748 Fax: (063) 913 208

NORTHERN NSW CHAPTER
Anne Currey
Wollongbar Agriculture Institute
Brunner 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
David Beckingsale
Agriculture Victoria
PO Box 500, EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3072
Ph: (03) 9651 7216 Fax: (03) 9651 7033

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

NORTHERN TERRITORY CHAPTER
Debbie Van Rangelrooy
Dept. Primary Industry & Fisheries
GPO Box 990, DARWIN NT 0801
Ph: (089) 892 211 Fax: (089) 892 049

SOUTH AUSTRALIA CHAPTER
John Bourne
CRC 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