

EXTENSIONNET

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALASIA-PACIFIC

 EXTENSION NETWORK (INC)

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From the Editor

Dale Williams

Warm greetings to all members! This is one of the more different issues of *ExtensionNet*. It is a larger issue. It is probably the first of the new breed of quarterly issues (more on that later). Its content is, in large part, different to previous issues. This one focuses much on APEN, its functions and those who carry out those functions. We felt it could be informative to share organisational aspects, given new and changing membership.

I do apologise for not getting a November-December issue to you. I am intrigued that we did not have one article supplied on the suggested theme.

Let us transform ExtensionNet into a significant and topical **dialogue**. Claire, David and Horrie have given us an example in sharing their reflections of last December's Forum. Have courage to critique what is said by others. Disagree. Discuss. Otherwise *ExtensionNet* will be little more than information and opinion transfer. Where possible, link critique and theory to realities of personal experience. No-one has all the answers 'wrapped up'. You may rather pose thoughtful questions and dilemmas. Use a letter to the Editor or write a fuller article ... better still, organise an edition around an issue of your extension interest. Please take the initiative and discuss your plans with me. The Editorial Committee will support you. Like APEN overall, *ExtensionNet* is your publication. It grows or withers depending on the degree of member participation.

I am concerned that the perspectives of this issue are overwhelming male. There are implications in that for us all



Garren Knell (Agriculture WA) and Adrian Kennelly (DNRE, Vic)

 networking in front of the poster display at the

 APEN "Beyond Technology Transfer" Forum December 1996

about broadening our perspectives, our approaches to dialogue, our ways of learning and in getting in touch with the different experiences of others. Our articles also tend to regularly come from 'professional' extensionists. So I am all the more happy for Claire's contribution.

Thanks Janice Timms, ensuring articles on behalf of APEN sponsor, Qld Dept of Primary Industries. We have QDPI sponsor articles in this issue by Richard Clark & Gavin Graham and by Gerry Roberts.

The Tasmanian Chapter will provide the major contribution to the April-June issue. Editorial copy is required by 23rd May; July-September issue by 1st August; and October-December 24th October.

Please respond to the short

 questionnaire on page 14 about the

 purpose, character and frequency of

ExtensionNet.

From the Chair

John Bourne

The APEN Forum "*Beyond Technology Transfer*" was held in Melbourne on 5th and 6th December 1996. It was a very stimulating two days for me. I would first like to congratulate the Melbourne Chapter, and in particular David Beckingsale, for an excellent program and a venue that encouraged good networking for participants.

Participants represented a range of locations, organisational affiliations and age groups. Mixing with people on the first morning immediately reinforced the value of APEN as a network. It was great to meet people who had only been names before, as well as to catch up with old friends.

The balance of presentations and case studies from both an institutional and practitioners' perspectives was very effective, as was the poster session

which allowed an even wider group of attendees to share a message. Mike Stephens' hypothetical on the Thursday evening was magic. It brought out some very innovative strategies on how to approach the customer who although faced with the right information, still didn't adopt.

The discussion sessions on Friday were very competently handled by group leaders. We were left with some good directions on what extra skills were needed to go 'Beyond the Technology

Transfer' paradigm, and where to look for them.

As incoming Chair, I am looking forward to the opportunities 1997 will bring, in particular the Conference in Albury-Wodonga. I am sure that you would also like me to express appreciation on behalf of all of us to **Terry Makin**, for his leadership of APEN since its emergence at the breakfast meeting during Aust-Pacific Extension conference at Surfer's Paradise on the Gold Coast in 1993. He

has worked hard to put APEN on the map and I am sure we all agree he has achieved that goal - **many thanks Terry**. Your efforts are much appreciated. (See his President's Report to the 1996 AGM, page 11).

The new Committee of Management met during the Melbourne Forum. It expressed a commitment to look for ways to continually improve networking and communication mechanisms within APEN. I expect to report more on that in the future. ♦

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SPONSOR'S MESSAGE: The Challenges in Designing Learning and Information Systems in Extension

Richard Clark & Gavin Graham, Qld DPI.

In the agricultural knowledge and information system there is a large 'stockpile' of information (and knowledge) which could be utilised to improve agricultural practices. This information and knowledge has largely been developed by primary producers. Primary producers operate in an environment where time and money are at a premium. These people, like many urban business managers, are motivated by profit and lifestyle.

Our experience working with agricultural producers in Central Queensland indicates a relatively small proportion of primary producers have well-formulated questions about opportunities to improve their production systems. Those who do have them 'know what they want to know'. They are motivated to find answers and to access information and knowledge through a variety of methods and systems. However, from our experience, the greater proportion of producers may be:

* aware of opportunities or information, but do not know what questions to ask

* aware of opportunities or information

or knowledge, but they perceive there is an 'overload' of information and they do not know which opportunity or information is worth following up to significantly improve their enterprise

* unaware of opportunities or information. They do not know what they do not know

* they may not be motivated to pursue opportunities, information or knowledge.

The challenge for extension is to develop learning and information systems that meet this range of situations. We have been considering this issue and are developing a conceptual framework for the design of learning and information systems in extension. We would appreciate any comments from you on these points.

*Richard Clark, Regional Extension Specialist
Gavin Graham, Senior Extension Officer
Dept Primary Industries
PO Box 5545
Rockhampton Mail Centre. Qld. 4702.*

Attention: Members who joined by coming to "Beyond Technology Transfer"

If you haven't returned the membership application form in your Conference folder, could you please send it to Rosemary at the Secretariat.

APEN'S New Committee of Management

John Bourne

It is important that members understand the role and activities of this committee, now that we have started a new year and have a new committee of management (CoM) in place. While much of the action of APEN happens within the Chapters through local meetings, seminars and workshops, it is the central committee who initiates activities and networking at a national level, across state boundaries, to the benefit of all of us.

The major activities of the CoM include:

- * Teleconferences throughout the year to discuss and implement support mechanisms for the chapters, as well as monitoring finances.

A good example of this is the new **APEN Home Page** on the Web. This was discussed at several CoM meetings before finally approaching Charles Sturt University to assist us to get it up and running. This is only the start, of course, and we hope to pursue lots more electronic opportunities to improve our networking.

- * Convening of an annual Extension Forum and National AGM jointly with a sponsoring Chapter.

18 to 21 November 1997

2nd Australasia Pacific Extension Conference

**Managing change
- building knowledge
and skills**

By committing ourselves to this each year we are able to provide a vehicle for extension people across Australia to meet, swap ideas and share experiences. Each year this event has brought new members into APEN and is helping us grow into a body that effectively represents the discipline of extension. This year we will have a **major conference in Albury**, instead of running a Forum. It will have an international flavour. It is five years since the initial APEN conference on the Gold Coast, so it is time to look at things again from a broader perspective.

- * Publishing of *ExtensionNet*

This is probably the most visible action of the CoM to most members and is certainly a very valuable one. Much of the work is carried out by the Editorial working group lead by Dale Williams and Elwin Turnbull from UWS-Hawkesbury, while the printing and distribution is arranged by Rosemary Currie at the APEN Secretariat. However, to be effective, *ExtensionNet* relies on input from the Chapters. If you haven't put in an article recently or offered to act as a guest editor then I would urge you contact Dale.

- * Seeking of sponsorship and other funding support for APEN.

We appreciate the support of our corporate sponsors (**Queensland Dept of Primary Industries, NSW Dept of Land & Water Conservation and Victorian Dept of Natural Resources and Environment**) and corporate members. We aim to be responsive to their needs, as well as continually aiming to put our activities and achievements before the wider public.

The CoM will continue to seek funding support from the Rural Research and Development Corporations where that is appropriate. Of course, activities such as seeking sponsorship are not just confined to the CoM. Many Chapters have already been very pro-active and successful in seeking support.

In order to be an effective committee it is critical that the members of the CoM represent extension activities across all states in both the private and public sectors. This year we have a good spread of members which will ensure that extension interests are well represented.



Profiles of Committee of Management Members

We thought readers might find it helpful to know something of committee members entrusted with some of APEN's functions. We have not done this before:

John Bourne

Hi, I work with the Cooperative Research Centre for Soil and Land Management at the Waite Institute, Adelaide. My commitment to extension began with a Dip Agric Extn from the Univ of Qld in 1972, under Dr Joan Tully. For me, extension is very much about facilitation. That means not doing things TO people, or even FOR people, but WITH people. We still need to develop technical skills of course, but the way we transfer technology is important, and crucial to the adoption process.

My current position is technology transfer of outcomes from our research programs. These deal primarily with soil and land degradation of farming systems, and any associated off-site effects. CRC joint venture partners are CSIRO (Soils), the Univ of Adelaide, the South Australian Minister for Primary Industries and the State of Victoria. Clients include key farmers and community groups, but more often industry, agribusiness and government agencies.

I spent the bulk of my career with QDPI as an extension agronomist. I was involved with a number of innovative extension activities in both irrigated and dryland farming systems.

My wife, three children and I live in the Adelaide Hills amongst apple and cherry orchards and an ever increasing number of vineyards. Wine production is a new local industry and so in my spare time I have attempted the odd batch of red and some apple cider. *[Will there be a sample tasting at the next Conference? Ed.]*

Rosemary Currie

After completing a Degree in Rural Science I did a PhD on 'Sheltering Behaviour and Heat Loss from Sheep'. I worked for a while with the then Department of Science and the Environment in Canberra, examining environmental impact statements, while I completed writing up my thesis. I followed Bob to Wodonga after he took a position of Dairy Extension Officer with the Dept of Agriculture. Six months later I started work at the Rutherglen Research Institute as Livestock Research Officer working on the Larger Leaner Lamb project. We looked at all aspects of lamb production from conception to the butcher shop or meat lab, including working with consumers.

Family (four boys) and a change of job for Bob from public to private consultant in his company, AgriLogic Consultants Pty Ltd meant that we cut our ties with the Department of Agriculture. As well as Farm Management Advice, AgriLogic Consultants took on the job of running a number of secretariats for Dairy Industry groups in North East Victoria and a landcare group. APEN came along at a good time for me as I was able to spend more time at work, with the boys getting older.

Interests include supporting budding Socceroos, music and live performances of all types, walking and holidays by the sea!

[We are all indebted to Roe for her great efforts on behalf of APEN during its establishment. Ed.]

Sue Hinton

Hi! I'm Sue Hinton, recently elected as the Secretary, on the Committee of Management of APEN. I am also on the committee of the Tasmanian Chapter of APEN. I live in Launceston, and work as an Agronomist for McCains Foods. I have been with McCains for a little over a year. Prior to joining McCains, I worked for 8 years as a field officer with Tasmanian Alkaloids (poppies). I moved to Tasmania in 1986 to work as a consultant for McGowan International. Most of my time was spent working on pyrethrum. Prior to moving to Tasmania, I worked as an agronomist in Toowoomba for a few years, mainly working with vegetable and fruit growers.



John (SA)



Sue (Tas)



Rosemary

I have a B App Sc (Hort Tech) and a Grad Dip of Bus in Prof Mngt. I am currently enrolled in post graduate studies in Agricultural and Resource Economics at the UNE.

Other interests include gemstone fossicking, golf, fishing, camping, bushwalking and gardening.



Ian (WA)

Ian Maling

My position is Extension coordinator, Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture, Perth. My general interests are pastures, adult learning and barriers to adoption of new technology. Cheers.

Horrie Poussard

Background in agricultural science, including 2 years in South Korea as research officer on bilateral sheep project. Joined Soil Conservation Authority in 1975 with an interest in extension on conservation issues. I completed my MAgriSc. (Melb) in 1980 in Extension and Organisational Development. State Program Manager in Soil and Water Conservation (1989-91) in Dept. Conservation and Natural Resources. Two years in Fiji working with environmental organisation, the University of the South Pacific and the Australian Education Centre. Returned to Australia in 1993 to work on new catchment legislation and write a strategy for management of the Yarra River Catchment. Resigned in 1996 to start a consultancy (Environmental Land Management) in community consultation and catchment management. Based in Melbourne.

**Horrie (Vic)****Jane Wightman**

I am Senior Extension Officer, 'Smart Move' - a three-year DRDC-funded whole farm management extension project of the Northern Dairy Region (based in Rockhampton, Qld).

Most of 1982-92 was spent farming in England (mixed dairy, sheep, cropping) and New Zealand (managing dairies), although I fitted in some station work and extensive travelling in Australia).

From 1993-95 I was District Property Management Planning Extension Officer (SW Qld) and from 1995-96 I was Regional PMP Co-ordinator (Cent. Qld).

I have a Dip Agric from Berkshire (Eng) and a MAppSc from UWS Hawkesbury.

Warren Straw

I have substantial experience in agricultural extension - as a practitioner, a manager and, for the last 2 years, as

Peter (NSW)

Principal Extension Officer with Agriculture Victoria. In these capacities I have lived and worked in several rural centres, although my base is now Melbourne.

I have two titles in my present job. As well as my statewide role as Principal Extension Officer, I am also Manager of Client relations at the Victorian Institute of Animal Science, an institute of around 220 people.

One of my passions is to help extension to continue to make a real difference to rural people and Australian agriculture. That challenge has led me to become involved in extension training and development, in numerous extension programs, in improved extension methodology and in project evaluation. My current activities include work on project evaluation and a new business skills and benchmarking program for meat producers.

I am an active member of APEN and was Treasurer for two years.

Dale Williams

G'day! My focus of the 1970's and 1980's was largely rural development in PNG and West and East Africa. A significant recurring challenge for me was understanding and working with the complexity and ever-changing needs, aspirations and circumstances of rural people with whom I lived or worked ... particularly when 'development' contexts shifted to ones of crisis, rehabilitation or adjustment. There seemed a lot of transferrable understanding to rural hardship and development challenges in Australia when I moved back here in 1989 (hence some links with rural counselling). Although I have worked for both government and non-government organisations, since about 1980 I've seen my 'extension' involvement more in terms of facilitating rural community development ... and I see that in terms of facilitating a process of action learning.

Lecturer, School of Agriculture & Rural Development, UWS Hawkesbury 1984-85 and 1989-present. I'm somewhat a study 'bunny', but the irony is that my doctoral research is my fourth postgraduate programme!

My personal interests are similar to those of Sue and Roe, but in a family of six (all studying), some self-interests become subsumed in those of the youngest four!



Now that is quite some diversity of background, expertise and interests ... and some questions about extension 'to boot'! We look forward to Peter Davies' profile in a following issue.

Please feel free to contact any of the CoM either directly (addresses etc on back page) or through the Secretariat (060 245 349)

Reflections on the December 1996 APEN Forum "Beyond Technology Transfer"

Thanks very much to Claire, David and Horrie for the following reflections ... some insightful critique and questions:

Claire Dennis, farmer and part-time facilitator, Birregurra, Vic.

I found the first day beneficial in that it presented a range of speakers who looked at the extension picture from the national level down to the local landcare and landowner level. The disturbing point that came through was the gulf between the federal departments and the people on the ground. There seemed to be little understanding of the real plight of the farmer. The evening hypothetical made several important points which illustrated the importance of understanding all the pressures to which farmers are subject. The workshop sessions, although discussion took place, at times were dominated by only a few participants. It was disappointing to learn during these sessions of the lack of extension staff who understand their clients and their complex problems, who respond to client needs rather than their perceived needs and who are prepared to change their ways of delivering extension where necessary.

David Cummings, Dept of Natural Resources and Environment, Vic.

I've been remote from the extension profession for some time and the conference was an ideal way of catching up on the current issues. Listening to practitioners did highlight the possibility of a crunch time coming. There was significant background noise asking the questions: Where are we going? Where are we trying to go? Where should we be going? While perhaps these questions were not dealt with explicitly, the forum did act as a stimulus for re-assessing directions.

The forum indicated to me that Australian society does not have a clear or common picture (dare I say vision) of what it would like rural land, rural activities and rural society to be like in say 15 years time. How can the extension profession work efficiently without this? Then the next question: what are products of extension anyway? There seemed to be considerable uncertainty amongst the professionals about this. And the final big questions:

*APEN is proud to
acknowledge the support for
the "Beyond Technology
Transfer" Forum from:*

**Grain Research and
Development Corporation**

**Melbourne University,
Longerenong College**

**Meat Research
Corporation**

**Rural Industries Research
and Development
Corporation**

**Dairy Research and
Development Corporation**

FarmSmart

**Queensland Department of
Primary Industry**

Bonlac Foods Pty Ltd

Who are the clients? What are their primary needs? How can these needs be met? How can we test that these needs have been met? These may seem excessively basic questions, but I do not think participants at the forum were working from similar answers.

Horrie Poussard, Land Management Consultant, Melbourne.

Beyond Technology Transfer, or What? Recollections of the forum immediately brought to mind the confusion about what we were talking about. People have been trying to define what is 'extension' for many years. There are nearly as many definitions as there are extension officers. However, I feel we flounder in trying to say what we do, or

who is in the extension business, or what is the process, or what are the key elements. This is because we don't have a broad agreed framework in which to operate.

We seem to be trying to pen this animal called "extension" too tightly, with different people trying to put it into different pens. Maybe we should let it initially wander free range in a big paddock. We should strip away the values we place on it to get to the core. The boundary fence should surround what we consider as the basic aim of extension which I would suggest is:

to change human behaviour.

From time to time further pieces of fencing are needed to pen up our free range 'extension' by various groups to reflect their own values and programs, such as protection of the environment, viability of individual farm families, efficient use of industry funds, outcomes in line with government policies, safe and healthy lifestyles, etc. These are add-ons to the basic notion of extension and I believe have caused confusion to coming to grips with the core aim of extension. The add-ons are important, even essential, to enable us to develop and implement effective programs that address the real needs of particular groups of today's clients, whether they be farmers, distressed communities, governments or industry. But these will change with changing circumstances and values. The core aim should define the basic nature of extension in the long term.

We attract few marketing, social welfare or educational members because they are rightly put off by the overwhelmingly dominant agricultural productivity flavour of APEN. If we are to broaden APEN's appeal beyond agricultural extension, to others in the business of changing human behaviour, we need to be able to accommodate other add-on values to an agreed core aim. ♦

SPONSOR'S MESSAGE: Having Extension Clients Know How to Learn - Some Propositional Support

Gerry Roberts, DPI Longreach, Qld

Learning how to learn is gaining increasing support as a means of working with change in our society. Support for this statement is available in the fields of formal education, agricultural education, psychology, organisational development, management and communication. Learning how to learn means consciously acquiring the skill of how to learn.

Terry Makin wrote in the July-August 1996 Issue of ExtensionNet that he would like to see some discussion about where we think extension is heading in this changing world. My thought is that we as a profession have yet to widely embrace **having our clients learning how to learn** as one of our goals. So maybe developing in clients the skill of knowing how to learn is a direction that needs to be pushed. Such a push may balance the pull of the economic rationalist planners and the pull of those of our clients who also support economic rationalism as the only basis for service delivery.

Makin earlier in his article referred to an initial APEN survey which identified **professionalism** as a focus for ourselves as extension practitioners. One aspect of professionalism for me is using already available information about how to be an extensionist and to seek guidance from both inside and outside extension. Such propositional knowledge supports my suggestion of expanding our choices to include having clients know how to learn. I have appreciated the benefit of such material in writing my current doctoral thesis.

The Macquarie Dictionary defines a proposition as "anything stated or affirmed for discussion or illustration". In that sense propositional knowledge is knowledge already accepted as accurate (affirmed) and available from sources other than our own experiences.

In relation to learning how to learn, the educationalist Carl Rogers has produced evidence that supports the notion that student-centred classrooms in formal education enable learning of a higher quality, pace and pervasiveness. His evidence comes from situations where the focus for the teacher has been to facilitate learning how to learn by students so they make the choices. James Gallagher develops a similar theme in the field of psychology. He suggests that for ill-structured problems, teachers should help students build and link knowledge (structures) across domains "instead of simply providing more and more information (assuming that the learner is merely a sponge sopping up new facts)". This he contends will shift the focus of education to emphasise the processes of thinking itself.

For agriculture, Richard Bawden writes of creating a learning environment that takes into account the complexity of contemporary agriculture. The learning environment should also provide for the development of competent agricultural technologists who know how to learn. He argues that changes in the world require attention to "mastery of ways of finding out knowledge" as well as the development of new knowledge itself. Jules Pretty and Robert Chambers have developed their support for the concept of learning how to learn from an extensive practical and theoretical consideration of agricultural situations.

Recognition of the need to provide adults with the ability to learn how to learn, has extended beyond the fields of education and psychology. Marilyn Daudelin is an organisational development consultant. She contends that providing only 'content answers' for managerial problem resolution in organisations, establishes a game of 'catch-up', while having managers knowing how to learn for themselves overcomes that difficulty. Reg Revans, of action learning fame, argues the same for management, and says that "... programmed knowledge [content answers]... is quite insufficient for keeping on top of a world like ours today". Both Daudelin and Revans say that managers can learn how to learn

using the context of the problems they come up against in their work.

I have mentioned the support of formal education, psychology, agriculture and organisational development for having our clients knowing how to learn for themselves. You may want to find other sources of knowledge about the value of learning how to learn for dealing with complex situations. Regards ... Gerry.

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[Gerry's thoughts remind me of a quote I recently wrote down, "our task in this period of unravelling, is not to patch the old patterns, but to build the loom on which new patterns will be woven" ... the loom being rural people's explicit competency of learning to learn together through exploring their shared challenges and opportunities. Ed.]

**HAVE YOU PAID
YOUR 1996/97
SUBSCRIPTION? If
not please do so or let
the APEN Secretariat
know you want to cancel
your membership!**

From Advisor to Facilitator

Cam Nicholson, govt extension officer and private consultant, Queenscliff VIC.

The following article is a section taken from a paper, 'Rural Community Development Through Formal Experiential Learning: the 'Hawkesbury Experience' by Dale Williams, Anne Stelling & Cameron Nicholson. It was presented along with a workshop at the International Community Development Society Symposium in Melbourne last year. I included Cam's story because it seemed to complement Gerry Robert's thoughts, by grounding them in experience. Ed.

Background

I have worked with the rural community all my professional career, since graduating from the University of Melbourne in 1986 with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science Degree. I have been employed as an advisory officer with Agriculture Victoria, the state-based agriculture agency. I have worked with individual landholders and community groups in the promotion of new technologies to 'solve' land degradation. Recently I have realigned my activities towards facilitating adult learning.

In 1992, I was presented with the opportunity to become involved in the Woody Yaloak Project, the first farmer land management project in Victoria to be aligned with a major corporate sponsor, Alcoa of Australia Ltd. Over a five year period, Alcoa is providing \$500,000 to the landholders to undertake activities to address the degrading of their land and water, on a catchment scale. Few restrictions were placed on the Woody Yaloak community in the design and implementation of the project except that it had to be community led (rather than driven by Government or Non Government organisations) and it needed to include the entire river catchment, in this case an area of 120,000 hectares. Because of my previous involvement with landholders in the catchment, I was invited to participate in the project and I relinquished a full time position with Agriculture Victoria in April 1993.

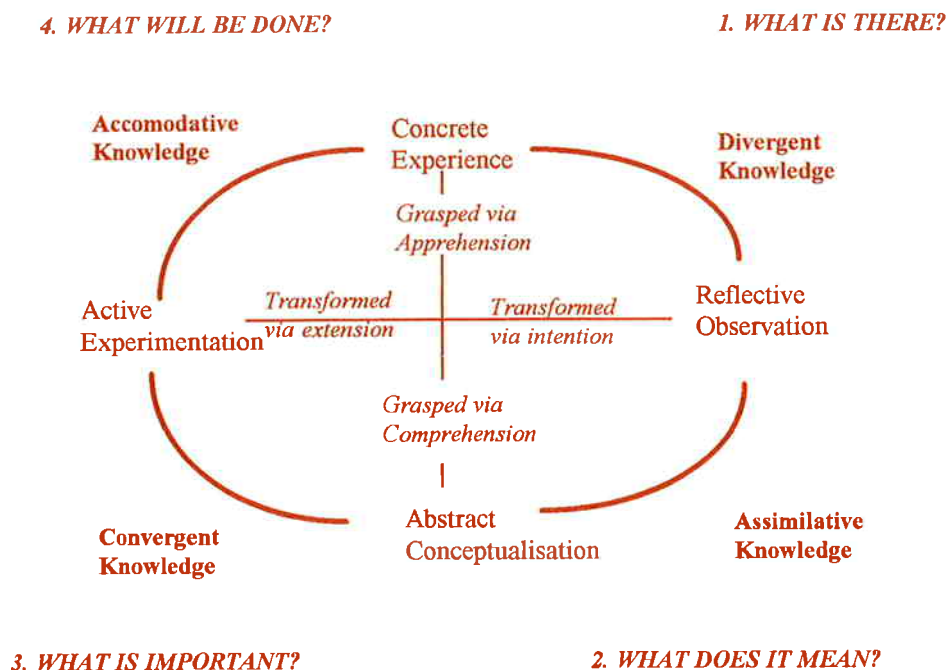
It soon became apparent the Woody Yaloak project was 'different' to previous land management work in which I had been involved. The physical issues confronting the community were the same, namely salinity, soil erosion, invasion of noxious weeds and vermin. However, the response of the Woody Yaloak people was different. I felt a need to make sense of what I was encountering, not only from a process and outcome perspective, but also to shed light on my feelings and beliefs that were shaping my thoughts and actions.

Hawkesbury's, Master of Applied Science (Agriculture and Rural Development) course provided an opportunity to reflect on my experiences, at both a project and personal level. The following describes a few insights from this reflection.

Insights using the learning cycle

Understanding the process of learning (see model below) has helped me examine the project design and explore the participatory approach to planning and implementation. I concluded this project had ingredients that were not present in previous work with Agriculture Victoria. These included:

- * A locality that was bounded, in this case a river catchment.
- * A homogeneity at one level which allows for an identity or a sense of exclusivity to be created.



* 'Space' and time to allow ideas to be developed. The initial planning took nearly 12 months, but even now the objectives are being modified to suit changing conditions.

* The ignoring, of formal structures, such as the need for a multitude of committees, detailed guidelines and procedures for less formal but clearly understood arrangements.

* A commitment by the sponsor to hand over the decision making to the people who were in the best positions to make judgements, namely the Woody Yaloak community. A management committee, elected by members of the community make the final decisions and to be 'charged' by the community to resolve any issues that may arise.

* Priority being assigned to personal relationships and group activities which created an environment where people could recognise each other's abilities and strengths.

* A recognition that participants needed to achieve some of their social, environmental and economic goals through the project.

The outcomes

The quantitative outcomes of Woody Yaloak are impressive compared to many other projects of a similar nature. Participation by the landholders is more than 65 %. Vast numbers of trees have been planted. Many hectares of pasture sown. Vermin and noxious weeds have been reduced. Participants believe the productivity of their farms is improving. However the learning environment I helped create, by individual farm visits, field days and discussion groups, has delivered outcomes not envisaged at the start of the project. My involvement has concentrated on working with individuals' experiences. Discussions are framed to help make sense of their situation to highlight possible reasons why certain situations may be occurring. Reference to their own experience and often my referral to neighbours who have been in a similar situation has helped the learning. An example may help highlight the strengthening of this community.

Landholders were interested in holding a pasture sowing discussion evening, with the aim of getting people together to share ideas and talk about their successes and failures. I asked which 'expert' they would like to invite from Agriculture Victoria as they had always had a guest speaker at these discussions in the past. Their considered response was *they* were probably more experienced than the people in Agriculture Victoria and they wanted to hold the night independently and share their own knowledge.

The approach I embraced has been recognised by the landholders. When visitors ask what is the best part about the project, the response is nearly always the 'function' I provide. This 'function' is regularly described as being a networker or a questioner. Rarely do I hear the term 'expert' used. As evidence of their commitment, landholders in the catchment now pay for my services, through a levy contributed by each participating family.

Another manifestation of this learning is the questioning of past habitual practices and beliefs. This includes:

* A recognition that a healthy catchment involves much more than just a prevention of the land and water degradation. A healthy catchment cannot be achieved without a healthy community.

* Commonly held beliefs about options to control degradation are being questioned when 'expert' solutions do not match their own experiences. There is greater recognition of the knowledge and experiences that reside within the community.

* There is questioning whether the current practices will lead to sustainable land management. The rhetoric of sustainable management is giving way to a realisation that their current practices may only be reducing obvious unsustainable practices and not producing a sustainable system.

This questioning has brought forward the design of the next phase of the project from late 1997 to mid 1996. They want to 'revisit' their previous thinking and have invited me to share in the re-design. Our agreed 'design framework' embraces the learning cycle.

Insights about my praxis, beliefs and values

I realise my extension praxis as an advisory officer with Agriculture Victoria was not well defined. I was intervening in other people's activities, often uninvited. I was using strategies that were not adequately informed and in hindsight often inappropriate or counter productive. The theory which underpinned my interventions were never made explicit. Sadly my experiences equate with other practitioners undertaking similar work.

I have become comfortable with the learning cycle, recognising it as a powerful tool in understanding my own beliefs and values. A few insights include:

* The strength and passion of my commitment to care for our future resources. I have always believed my career in the field of natural resource management just seemed to happen by chance. I now feel it was by choice, although I had never understood how important this passion was in shaping my directions.

* The enjoyment I gain from being part of a community. I grew (and am still growing) with the people of Woody Yaloak. We are in it together, co-learning, and it is us who will create the future. This motivates me and helps sustain my commitment to creating the learning environment.

* An appreciation of my need for recognition is largely satisfied by hearing outsiders praise the actions of others with whom I have learnt. I recall at the presentation of the Woody Yaloak Project to an outside group, the chief executive of Greening Australia Victoria passed comment that he thought my efforts were not recognised in the praises handed out. Yet to see the

passion and commitment one of the presenters, in this case a farmer I had worked with, provided ample reward.

* Recognising that while wide scale adoption of a participatory approach to community development will only be changed with a shift at the policy level, I am reluctant to forgo my project level work. This is because project work equips me with the legitimacy and motivation to contribute community development theory at the program and policy level. It allows me to keep in touch with the real world!

Conclusion

The Woody Yaloak Project combined with the experiential learning framework has been a watershed in my career

development. It provided the grounds to test my fledgling theories about participation, involvement and adult learning and to experience the outcomes of community development first hand. It has convinced me the 'bottom up' approach is feasible and desirable. It has established my credentials and given me the confidence to talk about my experiences.

Reference

Wilson, K & Morren, G. (1990) Systems Approaches for Improvement in Agriculture and Resource Management, Macmillan, New York. ♦

Enforcement Vs. Extension

Horrie Poussard

Ten or more years ago John Cary from Melbourne University talked about a simple model to understand many situations that involved behaviour change. John has moved on in his thinking on these issues, but I still find it useful. He called it the 'Four Ps', which sounded at the time like a 60's pop group.

They are :

- * **Prescribe** - as in the provision of information, technical and other
- * **Proscribe** - as in the use of regulations and enforcement
- * **Prices** - financial incentives and disincentives
- * **Power** - social or community power, including family influence

Any one or a combination of P's can be instrumental in changing behaviour through direct action or providing the environment for change. You can see this in the use of community education (Prescribe) coupled with regulations (Proscribe) in programs for road safety. Programs for tree growing or environmental improvement rely on the Prescribe, Prices and Power combinations. Rural Adjustment Schemes would not go ahead without significant provision for information and financial incentives.



Jo Millar (Murray Riverina Chapter, and on the 1997 Conference Committee) & Horrie Poussard (Melbourne Chapter, and APEN Treasurer) at "Beyond Technology Transfer", St Hilda's College

While this framework is fairly unsophisticated, it allows me to then be able to accommodate the use of a number of the elements that were discussed at the APEN forum. I can see a role for providing technical information (technology transfer), and maybe its use and value is more to do with when, how and why, than whether it is done at all or not.

The issue of regulation is something that extension officers shy away from and not consider as part of extension. I think it was Dr David Smith that brought it up at one forum workshop session, but no one wanted to take it on. However with exhortations to produce 'more but cleaner and greener' in agricultural and other industries, clearer guidelines, codes of practice, and regulations are going to be up there along with what we currently see as extension.

The Four P's model can accommodate regulation in the same way as it can accommodate the social influence of landcare and dairy discussion groups. The model helps me to make sense of the components of extension programs. Other models will no doubt help others. ♦



Ian Crook and Dr David Smith (both Melbourne Chapter) at "Beyond Technology Transfer"

President's Report to APEN's second Annual General Meeting 5/12/96

Terry Makin, Inaugural President

Members, it is with pleasure that I report to you on APEN's first year in operation as a fully constituted body with an elected committee of management. It has been a steady year of continuing progress to build on the foundation that the steering committee bequeathed us. I believe that we have developed a firm foundation for APEN to continue to progress.

For your information APEN was instigated at the International Extension Conference, held at Surfers Paradise in October 1993, where a steering committee was formed to set up an extension network. This committee elected a small executive committee to develop this concept and they handed over to the elected Committee of Management at the first AGM held at Albury last year.

Achievements

This year's highlight is the securing of **NSW Land and Water Conservation as major sponsors and underwriters of the proposed International Conference at Albury, November 18 - 21, 1997**. The conference committee has the organisation for this event well under way with keynote speakers lined up, and Conference Design appointed as conference organisers. This promises to set new standards in conferences as it puts into practice extension theory, ie. it will be a learning conference. I want to thank Peter Davies and his hardworking committee for their efforts and particularly Peter for securing the sponsorship and underwriting of this conference.

APEN is not viable on its membership fees alone and we rely on **our major sponsors** to be able to build our organisation. We thank the Queensland Department of Primary Industry, and Agriculture Victoria for their continuing sponsorship, and we welcome NSW Land and Water Conservation as a new corporate sponsor this year.



Terry Makin (Inaugural President), Rosemary Currie (APEN Secretariat) and Warren Straw (APEN Treasurer) before the second AGM at the "Beyond Technology Transfer" Forum

The Committee of Management of APEN has set up **working groups** to address issues that were raised at last years AGM.

I want to pay particular thanks to Dale Williams and Elwin Turnbull and the editorial group who have produced *ExtensionNet* throughout the last 12 months. *ExtensionNet* is APEN's most visible product and its critical link with members. They have produced a series of newsletters which has allowed us to share a wide range of topics, covering theory, practice and case studies in extension. It provides a means of communication to all members of APEN. It is still an under utilised communication vehicle. Where are the members letters to the editor? **We welcome members' ideas and contributions.** One of the extension professions past weaknesses has been the reluctance to write up what we do.

The resources working group has put together a database of extension material that will be available next year in either or both, electronic and printed form.

The membership group has put together a membership brochure and is looking at ways of tapping the large potential membership that is out there. APEN's membership now stands at 459.

Horrie Poussard and his overseas chapters group have started to address the Pacific issue in APEN's name. This is an area that has previously not been given a high priority.

There has been some progress in endeavouring to bring APEN into the information age on the electronic super highway. This has always been seen as a high priority by members. Very soon there will be **an internet page on the WWW and APEN members are now able to share the Australian Rural Social Research list server facility.**

We have applied to RIRDC for project funding for an executive officer. This would be extremely valuable, if we are successful, in enabling APEN to develop all these areas more quickly.

I thank all those who have contributed in any way to these achievements.

If there are members who believe that they would like to contribute in any of these areas then please give your name to Rosemary. This organisation will only be as good as our members' contributions.

Secretariat

The shift of the secretariat in July 1995 to Rosemary Currie at AgriLogic, Wodonga, has been a successful move and Rosemary has done an outstanding job in looking after APEN's secretariat and in promoting APEN and its members. On behalf of APEN I thank Rosemary for an excellent job.

Chapters

APEN has had varying success here with Tasmania running a very active chapter with the guidance of Amabel Fulton, and now Jane Fisher and their team. A new chapter was formed in the central west of

Victoria this year and they have run two successful events. Some other regional chapters have slowed but we hope they will regain enthusiasm.

A special thanks to the Melbourne chapter who have organised this excellent workshop for the Committee of Management and APEN members.

I think the number one challenge for APEN members and the Committee of Management next year is to tap the large number of potential members in Australia.

The future and its challenges

I believe that the time is right for APEN and extension. There is a growing awareness that **extension is a vital part of the change process in this increasingly complex world**. Research and development corporations are devoting more energy and resources to programs that assist producers to learn new ways of doing, eg. PROGRAZE, Target 10 etc. The Federal government has allocated \$80m over the next 5 years for Property Management Planning which it sees as an umbrella program for extension. More and more we are taking a holistic systems approach to catchments and communities as we understand the complexities and

relationships that are involved. More people are accepting that adult learning principles are a fundamental part of successful extension and APEN functions and workshops are helping to develop a sense of professionalism in extension.

The challenges for APEN are to increase membership so as to be able to improve the networks and links between practitioners and institutions. Practitioners often work in isolation and because of distances and state borders, effective communication is often difficult. APEN can help to improve knowledge sharing and develop cross institutional relationships.

As the farmers and rural communities we work with increase their knowledge base, the sophistication of their learning needs also increases. This means that people working with these communities will need to increase their knowledge base and skills to be able to meet the needs of their clients. This provides opportunities to APEN and the educational institutions whose role is to provide extension practitioners with the required learning and knowledge to carry out these more complex roles. At present the educational institutions are fragmented in their approaches to extension education. We, as a small

population with limited resources, cannot afford a less than effective system for extension education. Here is another challenge for APEN, perhaps together with the R&D corporations and educational institutions.

Thanks

I want to especially thank those who have assisted me over my term as inaugural President of APEN in the last 12 months. To my committee of management who have been essential to the steady progress that we have made this year; John Bourne, Peter Davies, Jane Fisher, Jo Millar, Warren Straw and Dale Williams. I particularly mention Warren Straw who was also the old steering committees treasurer and is standing down as APEN treasurer today. Warren has given me good counsel and helped to bring continuity to APEN.

Once again I thank the Melbourne chapter who have organised this very successful workshop.

Thank you for all coming and I hope we will see you, and all your colleagues, at next year's AGM. This will be run during APEN's International Conference at Albury, in November next year. ♦

APEN CHAPTER ROUND UP

Tasmanian Chapter

Amabel Fulton

The Tasmanian branch held its second annual general meeting in September, electing a new committee with president Jane Fisher; president-elect, Sue Hinton; treasurer Michael Horne, past-president Amabel Fulton and committee members Nathalie Jarosz, Peter Jolly, Sue Kilpatrick and Frank Walker. Out-going president, Amabel Fulton, presented her report to members, and an abbreviated version follows:

At the completion of our first year as an official committee, the Tasmanian branch has achieved quite a lot for its members (even if we do say so ourselves). Using data gathered at the initial meeting of persons interested in forming an Extension Network in 1994 and then through a survey of members' training needs we have been able to move closer to meeting members' needs in the following areas.

1. To be part of a national network
 - through the national newsletter ExtensionNet, to which we contribute
 - through representation on the national committee
 - attendance at the national AGM and conference
2. To be part of a statewide network
 - through Network News - our statewide newsletter

- the development of a membership database
- member profiles in the newsletter
- newspaper reports

3. To be offered training and networking opportunities in extension and communication
 - 'avoiding litigation' seminars
 - the visit of US extension expert Mike Murray
 - evaluation workshops with Peter van Beek
 - presentation skills workshop
 - interpersonal communication skills workshop

As outgoing president, I would like to comment on two issues which I believe need to be addressed by APEN in the future. With extension around Australia undergoing a major upheaval, there exists an opportunity, or even a need, for

APEN to have a greater public profile and start commenting on issues relating to the provision of extension and advisory services. I would like to see the Tasmanian branch make a concerted effort to play its part in increasing extension's profile.

Secondly, I would like to see the branch develop a five year strategy for achieving its goal of an improvement in the effectiveness and profile of extension. If we truly are about good extension then we really need to plan our efforts and constantly evaluate our progress towards our goals. If we can't do it, how can we expect others to?

Finally, thanks to all committee members and APEN members. We are especially grateful to the outgoing members of our committee: Andrew Baker (treasurer), Rolf Barnes and Grant Herring. The Tasmanian branch held its second annual general meeting in September, electing a new committee with Jane Fisher as President.

Jane Fisher

The Tasmanian Branch of APEN has established a reputation for innovation, enthusiasm and activity. The program for 1997 lives up to this expectation.

The branch president, Jane Fisher said "We have planned a two day workshop about the role of electronic media as an extension tool in July. We expect to have 70 members attend the workshop to learn about what things like World Wide Web are, and how they can be used effectively in extension programs".

The branch would welcome interstate delegates to their workshop. Contact Jane Fisher on (03) 6336 5201 for more information.

Program - Dates for your Diary
April - Adult education for novices
July - "Using Technology to Achieve Outcomes" - a 2 day workshop
September - Working with Difficult people

The branch sponsored committee member Sue Hinton to attend the conference and AGM in Melbourne. We found this to be most useful. Sue is our delegate on the national committee, and this gave her the opportunity to meet the rest of the committee.

APEN Tas has got political. The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPIF) has recently split its research and extension arms into two groups - the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR), and DPIF. APEN Tas has been concerned that there is little understanding of the need to plan for extension when research programs are being designed. A sub-committee of Sue Hinton, Sue Kilpatrick and Jane Fisher is lobbying the board of the newly formed research organisation, TIAR. Our goal is to have extension included in the planning of research programs. We aim to have extension carried out by the person (private or public sector) and medium most suited to the job.

We are establishing regional discussion groups, which meet quarterly to discuss issues that concern them about extension. Our members are keen - many work for small organisations, and the support and mentoring that exists in larger groups is not available. They see this as a way of developing solutions to communication problems, of networking, and keeping abreast of current extension theory in a safe environment.

Finances - we are about \$1000 in the black, a good result!

Western Victoria Chapter

Matt McCarthy

Forty-five extension professionals attended a Chapter-organised training seminar held at Horsham on 31 October last year.

A packed program included guest speakers from both the private and public extension fields. Nigel McGuckian (Consultant) and Bruce Muir (DNRE, executive) gave their perspectives.

The emphasis was on the future development of agricultural extension, however Sue Morey gave a very entertaining presentation on the highs and lows of working in rural women's health.

Garry Mackenzie from the Kondinin Group gave a detailed presentation on their achievements in information broking to Australian farmers.

A video conference with Ian Maling at the Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA) in Western Australia demonstrated the pros and cons of this medium for extension purposes.

After dinner a discussion on the future of public extension was facilitated by Peter Codd (DNRE, Colac).

Feedback from participants was very positive. Thanks to the organising group: Chris Sounness, Julie Andrew, John Petheram and Rob Norton.

The next Western Victorian Chapter meeting is due to be held at Birchip sometime in the next few months.

From the Secretariat

Rosemary Currie

We are moving office on 21 March to 282 Beechworth Road, Wodonga. Postal address and phone numbers stay the same.

CHAPTER CONTACTS

You will be receiving from the Secretariat a current list of members and their financial status by mid April. I will also send membership kits and updated pages for the Chapter Convenor Handbook.

Please note the dates for copy for *ExtensionNet* for the next few issues:

April-June issue by 23rd May;

July-September issue by 1st August;

Oct-December issue by 24th October.

MEMBERS: When notifying **CHANGE OF ADDRESS** could you please include new telephone numbers and changed job titles/organisations if appropriate so that the database can be updated.

MINI-QUESTIONNAIRE ON 'EXTENSIONNET'

Verbal feedback is that *ExtensionNet* is seen by APEN members as an important opportunity for sharing experiences and nurturing critical debate about extension practice. It is also seen as a means to inform the network of relevant resources and conferences to which people may access. Is *ExtensionNet* achieving that? Its intention has always been to encourage the emergence of a network that was not exclusive to agricultural extension 'professionals'. The vision was to nurture a network through Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific for those committed to beneficial rural change. Agrarian interests were central, but not exclusive. The vision imagined the likes of farmers, landcare and conservation participants, health educators, agricultural 'advisors' and researchers, rural sociologists, local government development officers, agribusiness folk, rural media and tertiary educators contributing to mutual understanding and encouragement in their commitment to facilitating rural well-being and development. Part of the rationale for that diversity was that none of those professions and interests were seen to exist in isolation from the others. Each was shaping and being shaped by the others and each would benefit from collaboration and from complementary perspectives to their own.

However, there have been several difficulties to date in producing *ExtensionNet*. Firstly, there have been occasions when there have been very few contributions of articles, letters to the Editor or book reviews. Secondly, Elwin and I, as editors, have struggled to be able to produce the desired six issues per year, because of our diverse responsibilities. Several folk initially offered themselves as guest editors. However, there have been no responses to 1996 requests. This has led to late issues and now a missed issue. Thirdly, current financially limited space limits numbers and length of articles. We have regular space allocated to sponsor's articles, generic APEN news, Chapter news, conference information, etc., so there is a limit of about five pages for other items.

In February, the Committee of Management discussed having four issues of *ExtensionNet*, instead of six. We saw an advantage of six issues was more continuous contact between members. Four issues allowed more manageable publishing and perhaps a larger and higher quality product (in terms of depth and diversity of articles). We plan to now produce quarterly issues, but seek your feedback on this.

We request dialogue within our membership about these issues. Past requests for written feedback have failed to illicit much response. I'm going to try four simple, leading questions. Please state the reasons for your response, as well as the opinion or suggestion. **Please mail, fax or E-mail your responses to me (see last page for details). Include any E-mail responses within the initial message, rather than as an attachment.**

* What do you see as the purpose of '*ExtensionNet*'?

* What do you like about '*ExtensionNet*'?

* What do you not like about '*ExtensionNet*'?

* What suggestions do you have, if any, for '*ExtensionNet*'?

Thankyou. **Dale Williams, Editor.**

COMING EVENTS

► *Clean-Green Agriculture: Fact or Fiction?*

Ulverstone Civic Centre, Ulverstone, Tasmania, **19th - 21st March 1997**. For further information contact Andrew Bishop, (03) 6427 7634 or abishop@aruea.dpi.tas.gov.au

► *Women, Science and Development - From Indigenous Knowledge to New Information Technologies*

The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji, will host the VIII Pacific Science Association Inter-Congress from **13-19 July, 1997**.

Information on the Inter-Congress can be found at <http://ruvc.usp.ac.fj/~psa>

c/o VIII Pacific Science Association Inter-Congress Secretariat, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji Islands (Fax 679 314007).

► *Third Australia and New Zealand Systems Conference*

The University of Queensland, Gatton, Queensland, **1 - 4 October 1997**. Contact Sally Brown

+61 (0)7 3365 6360 or sally.brown@mailbox.uq.edu.au

(See insert into *ExtensionNet*)

► *2nd Australasia Pacific Extension Conference. Managing change - building knowledge and skills*

The Albury Convention Centre, Albury, NSW, **18 to 21 November 1997**

(See following)

2nd Australasia Pacific Extension Conference, Albury, New South Wales 18 to 21 November 1997

Conference Report

Amabel Fulton

The organisation of the 1997 APEN Conference "*Managing Change - building knowledge and skills*" is well underway. Planned for November 18-21 in Albury, New South Wales, the conference aims to explore the changing face of extension, examine the potential and responsibility of the profession and build knowledge and skills for managing change.

The committee has received over 150 abstracts from all over Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and the Asia Pacific region. These range from posters to papers and workshops, covering a wide range of topics. There is something for everyone. Most of them have already been tentatively allocated to sessions but the committee will be moving a step closer to finalising this at its next meeting in Albury just before Easter. So those of you who have put one in will only have to wait until after then to hear about the progress of your abstract.

Our keynote speaker will be **Dr Jules Pretty**, Director of the Sustainable Agriculture Program at the International Institute for Environment and Development in London. Other keynote and plenary speakers are currently being selected but how many and who will largely be determined by sponsorship. Jules Pretty's visit is being supported by excellent sponsorship from the Department of Land and Water Conservation, and additional support is expected from the research and development corporations and agribusinesses. This is currently being negotiated. We will keep you up to date on that.

The main **registration brochure** will be produced before late May, following finalisation of speakers, sponsors and the conference timetable. If you have completed an expression of interest then yours should be in the mail before too long. **If you would like to lodge an expression of interest please send your details to APEN '97 Conference, c/- Conference Design Pty Ltd, PO Box 342, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006 or email conf.design@hba.trumpet.com.au.** Conference Design is also your first point of contact for more information about the conference.

Your conference organising committee

Peter Davies (Convenor), Digby Jacobs (Treasurer), Jo Millar, Tony Dunn, Amabel Fulton, Kaye Dalton, Warren Vogel, Terry Makin, Rosemary Currie and Penny Archer (Conference Design).

Information re the Conference is on the APEN Web Site:

<http://life.csu.edu.au/apen/>

**Late Abstracts must reach Conference Design by
24 March 1997**

**APEN Members are Welcome to
join the Australian Social
Research Listserver.**

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Send mail to "Majordomo@listserv.agvic.gov.au" with the following command in the body of your email message: **subscribe ausrsr-l Your Name**

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