



# EXTENSIONNET

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALASIA-PACIFIC  
EXTENSION NETWORK (INC)

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## Participative Extension: a Key to Sustainable Agriculture

Report by Amabel Fulton, University of Tasmania

Sustainable agriculture is being achieved, and its practice can be expanded through participative extension, according to keynote speaker at the 2nd Australasia Pacific Extension Conference, Mr Jules Pretty.



**Jules Pretty and others who gave the conference and international face. Sione Hausia (Tonga), Christine MacDonald (South Africa), Jules Pretty (UK), Mphoya Thobela (South Africa) and Samuel Rangae (PNG)**

Jules, the Director of the Centre for the Environment and Society at the University of Essex in the UK, said that despite much of the negative talk about sustainable agriculture - that there are too many people, that developing countries will never be able to feed themselves, that environmental degradation is inevitable and that low input agriculture is low output - there is significant evidence to the contrary. Drawing on examples from the developing world, Jules showed that sustainable agriculture is a reality, and that participative extension, with its focus on increasing social capital, is a key element of its success.

"People are the solution, not the problem", he said.

True participation is one of the critical components of success in development projects, being associated with increased mobilisation of stakeholder ownership of policies and projects; greater efficiency, understanding and social cohesion; more cost-effective services; greater transparency and accountability; increased empowering of the poor and disadvantaged and strengthened capacity of people to learn and act.

But Jules stressed that if we are to achieve sustainable agriculture, we needed to ensure that real participation (or as he terms it, interactive participation) is occurring, not just the use of the terminology to give the appearance of participation.

"Participation has become part of the language of people involved in agriculture - it has become a fashion with lots of interpretations, but only sometimes does it lead to success," he said. "Truly interactive participation is where people participate in joint analysis, develop action plans and form or strengthen local groups or institutions. The learning methods used seek multiple perspectives and groups determine how available resources are used."

In demonstrating that sustainable agriculture was already a reality, rather than just a myth, Jules referred to study of the extent and impact of sustainable

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**From the Chair**

*John Bourne*

People are still talking about the Albury conference, the range of topics covered in the sessions, the professionalism of the organising committee, the tours and social arrangements and of course the great networking with lots of new and old friends.

If you didn't manage to get to Albury then you will discover some of highlights in this edition of *ExtensionNet*, and also realise that you missed an important extension event.

In case you were not aware several groups took the opportunity to hold their own meetings as well as attending the conference. I was really pleased to see this, as it is very much part of the spirit of networking and collaboration that is APEN.

It was great to welcome our neighbours from across the Tasman and also from the Pacific. Once again we had representation from outside the Australasia-Pacific region, Jules Pretty of course from the UK, but also others from South Africa and the Middle East.

It was said several times during the three days that this conference was so successful because it was designed particularly for working practitioners, interacting with each other. At the same time I think that an important message from the key-note speakers was that even working practitioners can and should have an important part to play in policy making at a range of levels, and we should look for opportunities to make this happen.

Without going on too long I believe that the Albury conference contributed significantly to the spirit of professional extension, and we can all be proud of the part we each played.

1998 will be a new challenge. We welcome Chris Sounness and Elwin Turnbull as a new members of the Committee of Management, and at the same time thank Warren Straw and Dale Williams for their considerable efforts. Warren has been a tower of

strength as Treasurer and committee member, and of course we would not have had an *ExtensionNet* to read without Dale as editor.

Financially we are in good order at the present time, although we can not afford to become complacent about the dollars, and the agreement reached at the AGM to raise subscriptions to \$50 was a forward-looking decision.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Committee of Management to say we look forward to working with you in 1998.

✱

**From the Editor**

*Elwin Turnbull*

This edition covers the conference and since it was so rich we will have more from the most popular topics in our next Newsletter and some on the participant evaluation. We are also looking forward to an edition helped out with a Queensland flavour and another newsletter from a range of practitioners in other fields and in the Asia Pacific region. Later in 1998 we expect a joint event with the Institute so a newsletter on those events will be of interest.

One criticism of the newsletter is that it is not applied enough. The content is only as applied as the papers we receive from you all. So how about you put pen to paper and write a note or longer piece on the things that help you to be more effective in your day to day work. If you know of someone you admire for their effectiveness in extension maybe you could interview them and let us all know what you found out from them. I will be watching my mail box! ✱

**The very large and comprehensive conference proceedings ran out at the conference and there are people who did not attend who would like copies! The committee needs information on potential demand before running more copies so if you would like copies please Fax the secretariat (02 6056 1967) or email (rcurrie@albury.net.au).**

*APEN is pleased to acknowledge the support of:*



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LAND & WATER CONSERVATION



(Continued from page 1)

agriculture in 20 developing countries which found there were some 1.93 million households farming 4.1 million hectares with sustainable agriculture technologies and practices (Pretty et al, 1996). Jules argued that although this was only a small proportion of the world's agriculture, it did signal hope for not only developing countries, but for industrialised countries as well.

In facilitating farmers through the transition from conventional to sustainable agriculture, Jules said it is important that sustainable agriculture should not prescribe a defined set of technologies, practices or policies, rather it should be an evolving process of development which allows farmers and communities to adapt to changing circumstances.

Describing a development project in Northern Thailand, Jules demonstrated the power of participation. The project was concerned with developing hedge rows, integrated pest management and livestock integration. It had four phases, with the adoption to withdrawal ratios measured in each phase (shown here in brackets).

Phase 1: Cash incentives, free inputs, high adoption, no adaptation (5:1)

Phase 2: All incentives stopped, participation begins (2:1)

Phase 3: Participatory approach became embedded, whole village planning (1:1)

Phase 4: Farmers adapting and innovating, generating new technologies (3:1)



**Jules Pretty involved in leading a workshop as well as his keynote presentation**

"The hills where they lived looked the same in 1990 as they did in 1997 - but your confidence about whether they would be sustained has to be different," he said.

Jules emphasised the importance and value of natural and social capital in sustainable agriculture.

**Natural capital** refers to the stocks of plants and animals, and the ecosystems they make up, the minerals, atmosphere and water. **Social capital** refers to the structure of relations between actors and has four central aspects:

1. **Trust** - this leads to confidence and co-operation, but it takes time and breaks down easily
2. **Common rules** - this means the group interests are put ahead of the individuals through mutually agreed rules of behaviour

3. **Reciprocity** - this increases trust
4. **Connectedness** - this refers to the networks and civic engagements (clubs, societies etc.) which are vital for social capital formation and maintenance

"Natural and social capital provide the basis for economic growth and enhanced human welfare," Jules said. While they are fragile, they can increase with use. Under certain circumstances, the more they are used, the more they regenerate. But equally, they can each be rapidly diminished with the wrong kind of approach for social and economic development.

**"One of the big challenges we face is making agriculture productive in a natural capital and social capital sense, and ending up with more in the bank," he said.**

✱

## **EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

The APEN Committee of Management is looking for Expressions of Interest from APEN member(s)/Chapter to run either:

**\*An event in November/December 1998 to include the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of APEN**

**\*The 3<sup>rd</sup> Australasia Pacific National Extension Conference in November/December 1999**

A share of the profit of such an event would go back to the APEN Chapter concerned in organising the event and Rosemary at the APEN Secretariat would be willing to provide paid assistance.

The written expression of interest should include details of possible venue, topic of forum/conference, speakers/presenters and the organising committee. The expression of interest needs to be at the Secretariat by **March 16<sup>th</sup> 1998** to allow consideration by the Committee of Management before its April 1<sup>st</sup> teleconference. Please address correspondence to: **APEN Conference 1998 (or 1999), PO Box 1239, Wodonga 3689 OR email rcurrie@albury.net.au**

## Lyn Sykes: Dinner Speaker Extraordinaire!

Report by Dale Williams, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury

Lyn Sykes lives in Dubbo, NSW. She has a background in general family relationship counselling. She now works with farming couples and families supporting their way through relationship challenges and decisions. She always works collaboratively with another professional (usually a financial adviser/accountant), as she facilitates the collaborative decision-making process.

By the end of her dinner talk, Lyn had left delegates well informed, soundly challenged and laughed-out. Here are some of her thoughts:

There are reasonable resources in rural Australia for understanding and supporting change in matters relating to the environment and finance. However, there is a paucity of resources to support the human and relationship dimensions of rural change.

Healthy relationships are crucial to successfully working through the challenges confronting farming couples and families. In order for that, couples need to ensure they are emotionally, intellectually and sexually challenged, satisfied and nurtured. Be as frank asking couples how their marriage is going, as asking about the farmers' salinity issue. There is no point going on to explore a farm family's financial situation if the marriage relationship is no good.

Lyn led delegates into a humorous but informative overview of transactional analysis. She shared examples of how farm family members communicate in child-child, adult-child, child-adult patterns. She emphasised the need for adult-adult type relationships, characterised by good communication within marriage and between generations. Integrating new members into/back into the farm family is important, especially for daughters-in-law.

Lyn was adamant that people like extensionists must be growing as people in these key human aspects. The human and relationship element in rural change



Lyn Sykes grabbing her audiences' attention at the dinner

is crucial. She challenged us if we are not 'walking the talk, then don't talk the walk', because "people pick a phoney quicker than you blink your eye".

We are indebted to Lyn's whole family, in ways. Firstly she was away speaking to us on husband John's birthday. But a number of anecdotes came from funny and insightful family experiences (respectfully shared of course, says he who laughed heartedly).

Lyn finished with the following poem:

**Michelago Mick**  
**Country Hour 21/11/97**

**Now as a rule and mostly speaking**  
**A plumber's taps are always leaking**  
**An observation - rather quaint**  
**A painter's house has peeling paint**

**A tailor's trousers roughly sewn**  
**A lawn mower's lawn is all over grown**  
**Another trend beyond a joke**  
**The nurses we all know who smoke**

**Extension folk, too, a funny lot**  
**Who sometimes talk a lot of rot**  
**Though nearly all can talk the talk**  
**There's very few can walk the walk**

**They say you need a balanced life**  
**They then dessert their man or wife**

**"Just a weekend you understand**  
**I have to give this client a hand".**

**Some Rural Counsellors I know**  
**Don't know how to let things go**  
**they're so engrossed in what they do**  
**That they can't have a balanced view.**

**It really beats all comprehension**  
**The way some people see extension**  
**Will give their clients good advice**  
**They couldn't do at any price.**

**It seems if we're to get success**  
**We shouldn't do things in excess**  
**Before you tell clients what to do**  
**Look in the mirror, look at you.**

**MIKE STEVENS, YENDON (1997)**



## Conference Fieldtrips

Delegates experienced well organised half-day tours to complement the stimulating Conference sessions. Three of the four tours are reported below.

### Alternative Industries in the Ovens Valley

Report by Keryn Hunt, Rural Information Specialist, QDPI.

Listening to the informative Jo Millar, a bus load headed down the Ovens Valley. After passing the pub once owned by Mel Gibson and the tobacco and timber processing plants, we arrived at Myrtleford.

The first stop was at the Bailey family's new winery site. The family used to be in the beef and tobacco industries, but diversified into wine grapes 16 years ago. In February, they expect to begin producing their own wine and will follow with a restaurant and cellar door sales complex.

Cavedon's deer and emu complex at the base of Mt. Buffalo, was the next stop. As a tourist and an animal products enterprise it is able to spread the risk of a sometimes volatile market for deer and emu products.

So what were some issues for the extension profession? Both enterprises were focussed on managing the social, natural and economic aspects of their business. A number of generations from each family were involved in the business and it appeared that each was valued for the skills they contributed. Extension officers can be involved in successfully helping producers diversify or move out of one traditional production area into other pursuits. This can occur through large programs (eg Choices in North Qld) or individually.

It has been said before that Government extension workers work with only some agricultural enterprises and contribute in part to agricultural businesses. An Extension officer is only one person in an extensive team. This was very evident at both locations we visited as the information seeking techniques, networks and business contacts and projects were worldwide. The wine grape enterprise certainly provided an excellent example of entrepreneurship.

I welcome other comments on this bus trip in the next edition.

### Landcare and Agroforestry Tour: Mullengandra Catchment

Report by Wendy Briggs, NR&E, Colac.

The Mullengandra Landcare group is meeting the challenge of addressing gully erosion and rising water tables while diversifying income sources. This group received assistance to plant several thousand trees, as part of the Angry Anderson

Challenge to plant a million trees. Some were planted on stream sides to help stabilise erosion and others on recharge

areas to use water and prevent production loss from bogs developing on discharge areas.

The trees planted on discharge areas are being pruned to add value for saw log production, while allowing grazing to continue underneath once established. Bill McDonald's farm has shown a decrease in the areas of wet unusable ground and it is possible that water use by trees has influenced this.

In-stream deposits of rock to slow the velocity of water have complimented plantings aimed at reducing gully erosion. Run off diversions have also been created to reduce the amount of water entering the gully. Gully erosion will hopefully be slowed and further soil loss prevented by these Landcare actions.

Bill's farm is up for auction and it was interesting to note that mention of the Landcare works is made on the sales brochures. If that doesn't say trees on farms and Landcare works add value to a property then I'll eat my Conference Proceedings books!

### Women Making a Difference: Rutherglen

Report by Dale Williams (Ed), UWS Hawkesbury & Heather Shaw, DNR&E Bendigo.

The Conference's 'Rutherglen Rabble' visited two sites of inter-generational family farm enterprises near Rutherglen.

Prue Campbell led us through the Campbell's family winery, cellar sales and picnicking side of the farm - a side of the business that has benefited from her initiative, flair and warmth. The family farm dates back to the 1800's. The mixed farm, vineyard and winery has a fascinating and challenging history, with all the hallmarks of the best traditions of Australian family farming. Husband, Colin, takes major responsibility for the winery, with his brother, Malcolm, for the farm and wife, Jenny, on other responsibilities. We were impressed with the way the families (across siblings, marriage partners and four generations) were able to respect, complement and support each other in such a diverse and vibrant manner. The Campbells highlight the benefits of good family communication, good teamwork and business nous, a bit of love and a sprinkle of courage and creativity. Their regular family farm conferences at different levels are an example we could be encouraging elsewhere. PS - the wines are well worth a sip if you are in the area!

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**APEN News**

**Following are the President's Report to the third Annual General Meeting, 19/11/97, Albury Convention Centre and an expanded financial report.**

**John Bourne**

This last year has again been a year of growth for APEN. During the year we achieved the milestone of 500 members, which clearly indicates the support of extension practitioners for their own organisation that promotes their own discipline, and I am proud to be a part of that.

At last year's AGM a number of new faces appeared on the Committee of Management, including Ian Maling from WA, Sue Hinton from Tasmania and Jane Wightman from Queensland. The committee now has representation from all states except the ACT and the Northern Territory, and we need to maintain and build on this spread to ensure that APEN represents a wide range of extension perspectives. At this moment we do not have any representation outside of Australia, and I would like to address this in the coming year.

I would like to express thanks on behalf of all of us, to the core of people who worked tirelessly to get APEN up and running, and in particular I am sure I speak for everyone in thanking Terry Makin for his work as our Interim Chairman and Inaugural President. Terry put in all the "hard yards" in promoting a new organisation, arranging for its incorporation and achieving greatly needed sponsorship.

Just as hard-working has been our Vice-President, Peter Davies. Peter keeps saying he hasn't contributed much yet as Vice President but we all know that in convening the 2nd Australasian Pacific Conference he has done more than his share for APEN this year. Many thanks Peter. Your efforts are much appreciated.



**Custodians of the network bring the Members up to date at the AGM.**  
Rosemary Currie (Secretariat), John Bourne (President) and Bob Edgar (Treasurer)

<b>APEN Chapter and Secretariat Finances - Profit &amp; Loss for 12 months</b>				
	SA Chapter	SEQId	Tasmania	Melbo
<b>Income</b>				
Activities/Conference			\$1,370.00	\$2,000.00
Chapter levies/Membership	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$80.00	\$170.00
Investments			\$26.14	
Other/Sales		\$13.79	\$40.00	\$20.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>	<b>\$63.79</b>	<b>\$1,516.14</b>	<b>\$2,190.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Audit Fees				
Administration				
Bank Charges	\$0.93	\$0.33	\$8.71	\$3.00
Catering	\$10.25		\$169.00	
ExtensionNet				
Meeting Costs	\$53.50		\$514.00	
Postage		\$34.20	\$262.50	
Printing & Stationery			\$50.00	
Speakers Expenses			\$893.00	
Travel			\$647.30	
Other Expenses/Chapter Levies			\$80.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$64.68</b>	<b>\$34.53</b>	<b>\$2,624.51</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>-\$24.68</b>	<b>\$29.26</b>	<b>-\$1,108.37</b>	<b>\$2,190.00</b>
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>				
Year Start (1/7/96)	\$1,193.56	\$1,073.52	\$2,881.66	\$1,170.00
Year End (30/6/97)	\$1,168.88	\$1,102.78	\$1,773.29	\$2,170.00
Chapter/Secretariat				

Includes Teleconferences (\$1,000)  
Committee of Management re (100)  
Includes \$3,500 owed to Melbo

No organisation would ever be able to function without a well organised and efficient secretariat. Rosemary Currie is all of that and more, and I would like to acknowledge her tremendous support during the year. The two year contract for secretarial services held by Agrilogic ended mid year, with the option of two annual renegotiations. The Committee of Management was very pleased that Rosemary was interested in continuing in the role and a further one year arrangement has been renegotiated.

We welcome a new treasurer to the Committee of Management in Bob

Edgar, formerly Manager Extension Services in the Land Protection Division of the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Bob has stepped into the position in the last few months when Horrie Poussard took on consulting activities in Vietnam. Horrie is still a member of the Committee and is keen to continue his role in working with Overseas Chapters. He has provided the attached summary of the activities of the Overseas Working Group. I would also like to thank both Horrie and Warren Straw for their input and wise counsel in the general running of the Committee of Management.

During the year the Journal and Reference Lists on Agricultural Extension and Rural Development has been available to members. This was produced last year by Jeff Coutts and the Reference Resources working group. I would urge you to obtain a copy of this from the secretariat if you have not already done so. Such a list will always change as new entries are added, and Jane Wightman from Rockhampton is now working towards an updated version.

Dale Williams and Elwin Turnbull have contributed many long hours in editing *ExtensionNet* and we thank them for this. Dale has also provided an attached summary report, in which he underlines the need for all of us to continually contribute articles. I am sure there are lots of things we have written as part of our every-day activities that could be used in *ExtensionNet*, if only we took a few moments to send them on to the Editor. Rosemary Currie arranges the layout for *ExtensionNet* and we are indebted to her and to Dale and Elwin for the professional way in which our newsletter has been prepared.

Networking and communication within APEN has been boosted this year by our web page, and I would especially like to acknowledge Paul Bristow from Charles Sturt University, Albury, for setting up and maintaining this. Paul, who is not a committee member and in fact doesn't have the type of background that many of us share, has also recently set up the APEN Forum within the web page. This is a vehicle by which members can access the views of others in a discussion format, similar to that used by some other networks eg the discussion forum used by the Rural News group. This an excellent initiative so take a look at it next time you visit our web site, and use it regularly.

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

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ending 30 June 1997					
Income	Western Victoria	Murray Riverina	WA	APEN Secretariat	Total APEN
1,000.00	\$975.00			\$11,870.42	\$14,215.42
1,000.00	\$250.00	\$195.10	\$110.00	\$20,700.00	\$21,425.10
			\$3.24	\$95.63	\$125.01
1,008.00		\$5.32		\$215.60	\$295.79
1,008.00	\$1,225.00	\$200.42	\$113.24	\$32,881.05	\$36,060.72
				\$750.00	\$750.00
				\$13,008.78	\$13,008.78
1,072.00	\$0.50	\$2.66	\$0.22	\$741.10	\$787.17
	\$650.00				\$829.25
				\$7,677.25	\$7,677.25
	\$13.75			\$1,582.77	\$2,164.02
				\$10.00	\$306.70
	\$20.80			\$298.67	\$369.47
					\$893.00
	\$3.51		\$7.50	\$120.00	\$767.30
				\$895.10	\$986.11
1,202.00	\$688.56	\$2.66	\$7.72	\$25,078.67	\$28,534.05
1,368.00	\$536.44	\$197.76	\$105.52	\$7,802.38	\$7,526.67
1,644.00	\$1,110.00	\$204.80	\$249.12	\$4,387.49	\$11,111.79
1,700.00	\$1,646.44	\$402.56	\$354.64	\$11,307.89	\$17,756.48
(0.90), all running costs and printing (\$884.00) Disbursements Income Chapter from Profit from 1996 AGM Conference					