



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 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 (recurrie@albury.net.au).

(Continued from page1)

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 4th Annual General Meeting of APEN**

***The 3rd 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 16th 1998** to allow consideration by the Committee of Management before its April 1st 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)

APEN Chapter and Secretariat Finances - Profit & Loss for 12 months

	SA Chapter	SEQld	Tasmania	Melbo
Income				
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
Total Income	\$40.00	\$63.79	\$1,516.14	\$2,190.00
Expenditure				
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	
Total Expenses	\$64.68	\$34.53	\$2,624.51	\$3,000.00
Net Profit	-\$24.68	\$29.26	-\$1,108.37	\$2,190.00

Accumulated Funds

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 (\$1,000.00)
	Committee of Management reimbursement (\$1,000.00)
	Includes \$3,500 owed to Melbourne Chapter

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
0.00	\$975.00			\$11,870.42	\$14,215.42
0.00	\$250.00	\$195.10	\$110.00	\$20,700.00	\$21,425.10
			\$3.24	\$95.63	\$125.01
0.08		\$5.32		\$215.60	\$295.79
0.08	\$1,225.00	\$200.42	\$113.24	\$32,881.05	\$36,060.72
				\$750.00	\$750.00
				\$13,008.78	\$13,008.78
72	\$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
				\$120.00	\$767.30
	\$3.51		\$7.50	\$895.10	\$986.11
2	\$688.56	\$2.66	\$7.72	\$25,078.67	\$28,534.05
36	\$536.44	\$197.76	\$105.52	\$7,802.38	\$7,526.67
34	\$1,110.00	\$204.80	\$249.12	\$4,387.49	\$11,111.79
00	\$1,646.44	\$402.56	\$354.64	\$11,307.89	\$17,756.48

0.90), all running costs and printing (\$884.00)

bursements

Chapter from Profit from 1996 AGM Conference

(Continued from page 5)



Extension workers sharpening their listening skills as Prue Campbell describes the business. They patiently wait before putting theory to the test in the tasting of Campbell's wines at Rutherglen.

We moved on to afternoon tea at Helen and Peter Chambers' family farm. Ensuring the quality of family relationships, negotiating inputs and sharing rewards was highlighted again. The Chambers have a mixed farm and vineyard on the Murray River. However, the family's lovely rambling home became the base for one of the earlier 'homestay' initiatives ten years ago. They now maintain a 1000 bed night per year business. Helen, like Prue, has been a creative and competent energy behind this particular farm endeavour. The Chambers regularly do courses to aid their professional development eg around food hygiene. Their hospitality, sensitivity and location ensures a solid clientele through 'word of mouth', with 70% returns.

It is worthy to include some detail of Jill Briggs, Helen's friend's thoughts and experiences about rural women affecting change. Perceived limitations of small communities can be offset by their supportive, extended family-like nature. The first hurdle for women to affect change can only be jumped by

women themselves. Challenges can include finance, transportation, domestic violence and childcare. Be prepared that there will almost always be people giving negative feedback.

Jill recounted how she had come to the area 7 years previously, with one child and pregnant with another. The Community Education College suggested that the local group of interested rural women explore their interests through one day workshops. The learning environment was to be relaxing. Cost was low. Long lunch times were fun. And childcare was subsidised. The Regional Rural Women's Network was instigated about the same time. Its one day workshops were run around themes like making wills, relaxation and de Bono's 'six thinking hats'. A range of topics have been offered so that no-one felt excluded. This is emerging with a 'life of its own' with not just farming women attending. There have been 60 attending regular meetings and 70-90 at gatherings and weekend workshops. The Network published two volumes of local women's stories. It ran two weekends of workshops last year.

There was a question both within and outside the group about whether there was need for women's only forums. However, it was recognised that women learn differently when no males are present. Rural people feel isolated and not listening to by people in power. However, RRWN activities are building esteem, with more rural women now prepared to put their hands up in working for change.

Ed(Dale). Above experiences beg a question as to whether Extension can or should fit in with such creative non-traditional farm-based enterprises and activities. I think Extension should clearly play a role in rural enterprise development and rural community development. But it again highlights that extension needs to be more than transferring technology (while not denigrating technology in the process). Extension is especially about facilitating collaborative learning and networking.

*

Conference Evaluation - Part 1 - What Happened?

Report by Elwin Turnbull, UWS, Hawkesbury

I took the role of evaluating the conference for the organising committee. This report on what happened will be followed next issue by the participants views on the value of the conference.

Who Went to the Conference?

Of the 300+ people who attended the conference 174 responded to a survey. The survey indicated that the 59% of the participants who were male were an older age profile than the (41%) of females at the conference. (See Below)

Age Group	Male	Female
21-30 years	9%	41%
31-40 years	36%	41%
41- 50 years	40%	16%
51 plus years	14%	2%

(Continued next page)

The audience were mainly government extension professionals and a significant group of educators as shown in the following table. A very significant group who was not at the conference were those extension workers employed by private agribusiness. Making the organisation relevant to the needs of extension workers in agribusiness is therefore a challenge that APEN is yet to overcome.

Employment Domain	% of Respondents
Government Extension	59%
Private Extension	2%
Private Consultant	4%
Education	13%
Non Government Extension Eg Landcare	6%
Government Policy	3%
Student	2%
Research	2%
Other and no reply	4%

Why Did People Go to the Conference?

On arrival at the conference a diverse group of people gave up some of their time during the reception to describe their reasons for attending the conference. They came up with the sentence in the form of a mission statement out of an initial set of ideas¹ from each of the individuals.

Their mission in attending the conference was:

Towards discovering best practice in extension and a professional attitude to extension **Through** improving extension techniques and broadening ideas for my teaching in extension **By** sharing ideas and networking and delivering papers **In an Environment** of the current extension direction



Networking in action as Wendy Briggs, Lindsay Bull and Liz Bond share their ideas

What Happened at the Conference

The conference had Keynote speakers for each of the three days, training sessions on Wednesday (in parallel with concurrent sessions) and field trips on Thursday. The evenings were filled with social events:- a welcome; a conference dinner, and Barbecue at the Hume Weir Resort. Five concurrent sessions provided a platform for the presentation of more than 140 papers in small groups. Time was also found to fit in an AGM and an early morning "Fun Run" PHEW!

¹ Elwin Turnbull can provide an Attachment listing all of the ideas which were grouped to get the categories used in the mission statement.

The Chairs of each of the concurrent sessions prepared reports² on -: session attendance; presentation timing; methods of interaction in communication, and audience reaction as follows.

The average attendance for the 141 sessions was 21 (range 5 to 50). The ten presentations (two from each session) which attracted the largest audiences in small group sessions were:

- Extension Versus Marketing. What is the Score? - Michael Boyd.
- A Facilitated Process for Adult Learners in Difficult and Sensitive Circumstances. - Felicity Hill.
- Training - If you Grab Them by Their Learning Principles the Rest will Follow. - David Stanfield
- Exposing the Tiger - A Fresh look at the Evaluation of Extension. - Jeffrey Coutts.
- Group Process for Rural Development. What Works and Why? - Richard Clark.
- Facilitating Learning and Creating Linkages Between Researchers, Farmers and Extension Agents. - Christine King.
- Future Directions for Extension: A Participatory Learning Process for Professional Extension Development. - Christine King.
- Tools for Participatory Learning with Farmers. - Gus Hamilton.
- Starting with a Vision or the Mess. - Richard Clark
- Best Practices - Extension that Makes a Difference. - Emma Robinson and Andrew Mc Cartney

Use of Speakers Time

The chairs considered the speakers managed their short time (25 minutes) effectively with less than 10% not managing time well, as shown below.

Category	Percentage
Severely Mismanaged	0
Not Well Managed	7
Effectively Timed	47
Very Effective Time Management	34
Outstanding Timing	12

Use of Innovative Methods and Interaction in Delivery of Message

Chair reports indicated satisfaction with the effectiveness of delivery on the whole. It was rather disconcerting to find that more than 10% of the concurrent sessions were considered less than adequate by the chairs, given that the ideas were being presented at an extension conference. However it was very pleasing to see that some speakers were able to design sessions which were innovative and interactive within the short time frame.

Category	Percentage
Very Ineffective	1
Passive Delivery	12
Adequate Delivery	34
Engaging Delivery	39
Innovative and Interactive	14

Audience Reaction to Presentation

Chairs considered audience reaction to the presentations was favourable, given the time and room constraints. Over 85% of the presentations were considered to be engaging or better, from the audience point of view.

Category	Percentage
Absolute Boredom	0
Passive Acceptance	13
Engagement in the Exercise	29
Interacted Comfortably	48
Excitement About the Interaction	10

*(next issue of ExtensionNet - the participants views on the value of the conference.) **

² All presenters can get a copy of the Chairs' evaluation of their presentation by contacting Elwin Turnbull on 02 45 701418 or Fax 02 45 701255.

While I have spent a lot of time summarising the activities of the Committee of Management, much of the less visible work of APEN happens within the chapters. It is often difficult to find time to arrange and run local meetings, however it is my experience from within the SA chapter that the meetings fill a niche not provided elsewhere, for extension people to discuss and share experiences in the way we operate from day to day. Meetings don't need to be highly structured or formal, or need much organisation. A dinner meeting with discussion to follow is a good way to go for example. So for chapters that are finding meeting arrangements a bit daunting I would encourage you to plan a few quality events in the next year as the rewards are certainly there.

A future initiative that I would like to mention is a proposal to incorporate refereed articles on extension into the Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture. This has been suggested by Shaun Coffey from Rockhampton, who has convened a small working group to look at the possibility, and to perhaps launch the first issue of AJEA containing an extension component, at a forum late next year. Both Warren Straw and myself are on this working group and will continue to monitor progress. Although not an APEN initiative it is clearly something that could promote extension, and so I believe should be supported by us. We won't always have all of the good ideas from within APEN, and it is important that we are able to support appropriate initiatives when they appear.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the continuing support from our major sponsors, Queensland Department of Primary Industries, NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation and the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment. As an organisation we run on a very lean and mean budget and are continually looking at ways

of cutting costs. Never-the-less we still rely on some external support and are very grateful to our sponsors. It is important that APEN's activities compliment those of extension agencies in the different states, but also add the dimension of networking across state boundaries.

ExtensionNet in 1997

Dale Williams

The big change for *ExtensionNet* in 1997 has been the shift from six issues per year, each of eight pages length, to four issues per year, each of twelve pages. This received favourable support from membership. Overall, feedback through diverse channels about the quality of issues and the significance of *ExtensionNet's* role to extensionists has been highly appreciative.

The simple evaluation-related survey in March provided some limited but very helpful feedback for improving *ExtensionNet*.

On behalf of APEN, I would like to very much thank all past contributors to *ExtensionNet*. There have been difficulties obtaining sufficient copy for some issues. Coupling this with late submission of some articles creates delays getting *ExtensionNet* to members. Elwin Turnbull and I plan *ExtensionNet* around periods of lesser Semester workload, so any external delays lead to our internal delays during our assessment and postgraduate residential periods. I urge Chapters, groups and individuals to take more responsibility for ensuring provision of content for both individual articles and whole issues in the future. The Editorial team will produce the issues. *ExtensionNet* may run the risk of 'falling on its face' if more responses to contribution requests are not forthcoming. *ExtensionNet* is too important a tool of professional development, mutual encouragement and collaboration to allow that to happen. We have a

reasonable publication that has lots of potential for improvement. So members ... share the good things we have to offer each other. We need each other's effort!

I am stepping down from the role of *ExtensionNet* Editor after the December 1997 issue. I have been Editor for two years and a guest Editor before that.

Overseas Working Group

Horrie Poussard

The Overseas Working Group is charged with promoting the development of APEN in the Pacific (and other relevant areas) and the support of like minded professional organisations in those areas. A number of countries in the Asia-Pacific area (such as Fiji, India) have well developed professional organisations associated with agricultural and other extension activities and APEN aims to develop links with such groups for mutual benefit. Other countries rely on individual contacts in the extension field to gain further knowledge and skills in extension. While APEN was initially focused on the Australasian-Pacific region, there are opportunities for its influence to be extended to other countries in East and South East Asia. The Working Group is developing a contact list for various countries in the region.

In the original development of APEN membership criteria, individual membership subscriptions did not take into consideration the limited APEN benefits that overseas members could easily access and the level of subscription fees in relation to local economies. During 1996-97 the APEN Committee struck a new rate for overseas members of \$15 per year that provided to such members ongoing, basic contact with APEN through the newsletter, *ExtensionNet*.

AUSTRALASIA PACIFIC EXTENSION NETWORK (Inc)Web Site: <http://life.csu.edu.au/apen/>**APEN Secretariat**

Rosemary Currie, Creative Management Services

PO Box 1239, Wodonga, 3689, Australia

Phone: (02) 6024 5349 Fax: (02) 6056 1967 Email: rcurrie@albury.net.au**APEN
STEERING
GROUP****COMMITTEE OF
MANAGEMENT**

John Bourne (President)
CRC for Soil and Land M'tment
PMB 2, GLEN OSMOND 5064
Ph: (08) 8303 8675
Fax: (08) 8303 8699
Bourne.John@pi.sa.gov.au

Peter Davies (Vice President)
Dept. Land & Water Conservation
PO Box 205, DENILQUIN 2710
Ph: (03) 5881 2122
Fax: (03) 5881 5102
pdavies@dlwc.nsw.gov.au

Sue Hinton (Secretary)
63 Thistle Street
WEST LAUNCESTON 7250
Ph & Fax: (03) 6343 3470

Robert V Edgar (Treasurer)
Inst. of Land and Food Resources,
University of Melbourne,
PARKVILLE 3052
Ph & Fax: (03) 9789 2480
r.edgar@agriculture.unimelb.edu.au

Elwin Turnbull (Editor)
Uni Western Sydney-Hawkesbury,
Bourke Street
RICHMOND 2753
Ph: (02) 4570 1418
Fax: (02) 4588 5538
e.turnbull@uws.edu.au

Chris Sounness
Dept. Nat.Res. & Environment
PO Box 487,
HORSHAM 3401
Ph: (03) 5362 0741
Fax: (03) 5382 5622
c.sounness@nre.vic.gov.au

Ian Maling
CLIMA
Univ. of Western Australia
NEDLANDS WA
6009
Ph: (08) 9380 1851
Fax: (08) 9380 1140
imaling@uniwa.uwa.edu.au

Jane Wightman
QDPI, PO Box 6014
ROCKHAMPTON MC
4702
Ph: (07) 4936 0228
Fax: (07) 4936 1484
wightmj@prose.dpi.qld.gov.au

Horrie Poussard
I.P.O. Box 244
HANOI,
VIETNAM
horrie@netnam.org.vn

**CONTACTS FOR
APEN CHAPTERS**

SE QUEENSLAND
CHAPTER
Janice Timms
Q Dept Primary Industry
PO Box 46
BRISBANE 4001
Ph: (07) 3239 6541
Fax: (07) 3221 4302
timmsj@dpi.qld.gov.au

CENTRAL/WESTERN
NSW
Geoff Warr
NSW Agriculture
PO Box 865, DUBBO 2830
Ph: (02) 6881 1263
Fax: (02) 6881 1368

NORTHERN NSW
Anne Currey
PO Box 112
ALSTONVILLE 2477
Ph & Fax: (02) 6687 8173
hotstuff@om.com.au

MURRAY RIVERINA
John Lacy
NSW Agriculture
PO Box 108, FINLEY 2713
Ph: (03) 5883 1644
Fax: (03) 5883 1570

WESTERN VICTORIA
Matt McCarthy
Bendigo Agricultural Centre
PO Box 2500, BENDIGO
3554
Ph: (03) 5430 4444
Fax: (03) 5448 4982
mccarthy@goldy.agvic.gov.au

MELBOURNE CHAPTER
David Beckingsale
DNRE, PO Box 500
EAST MELBOURNE 3002
Ph: (03) 9637 8336
Fax: (03) 9637 8114
David.Beckingsale@nre.vic.gov.au

GIPPSLAND CHAPTER
Maria Rose
Agriculture Victoria
117 Johnson Street
MAFFRA 3860
Ph: (03) 5147 1533
Fax: (03) 5147 3078

NORTHERN TERRITORY
Debbie Sue Van Rangelrooy
PO Box 1278,
TENNANT CREEK NT
0861
Ph: (08) 8962 4493
Fax: (08) 8962 4480
Debbisue@ozemail.com.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Jay Cummins
Primary Industries SA
9 Old North Road
CLARE 5453
Ph: (08) 8842 3900
Fax: (08) 8842 3775
cummins.jay@pi.sa.gov.au

TASMANIA CHAPTER
Sue Hinton (see Committee of
Management)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Ian Maling (see Committee of
Management)

ACT CHAPTER
Ross Andrews
Grains Res. & Devel. Corp.
PO Box E6, QUEEN VICTORIA
TERRACE, 2600
Ph: (02) 6272 5525
Fax: (02) 6271 6430
grdc@world.net

NEW ZEALAND CHAPTER
Dick Kuiper
Farm Management Department
Massey University
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEW ZEALAND
Ph: 64 6 356 9099
Fax: 64 6 350 5680
D.Kuiper@massey.ac.nz

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

SOLOMON ISLANDS CHAPTER
David Palapu
Solomon Islands Broadcasting
Corp, PO Box 654, HONIARA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
Ph: 23159

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

EDITOR: Elwin Turnbull, UWS - Hawkesbury, Richmond NSW 2753

LAYOUT: Rosemary Currie, APEN Secretariat, PO Box 1239, Wodonga VIC 3689

PRINTING: Robyn & Greg Barlow, Snap Printing, Hume Street, Wodonga VIC 3690, Australia