

EXTENSIONNET

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The Inaugural (1999) APEN Award for Excellence in Extension



The Inaugural (1999) APEN Award for Excellence in Extension was won by Ian Simpson. He is seen here, at the 1999 APEN National Forum in Perth with the plaque which was presented to him by the then APEN President, John Bourne.

The nomination of Ian Simpson for the APEN Award for Excellence in Extension, was based on his ground-breaking work in establishing and overseeing a network of producer driven committees across southern Australia. This **producer network** is part of SGS (Sustainable Grazing Systems) was initiated by MLA (Meat & Livestock Australia) and is funded by a range of partners. While Ian Simpson was nominated for the award, it is recognised that the achievements belong to the Regional Producer Network as a whole.

Ian Simpson has taken the concept of producer 'participation' in an agriculture research, development and extension program, and driven it to producer 'ownership'. The success of Ian's efforts is not just anecdotal – there have been two separate, independent reviews – one of SGS as a whole, and one specifically of the Regional Producer Network. Both reviews have highlighted the quality of producers Ian attracted to the network; the power of the processes he used; and the degree of ownership, determination to achieve, and practical outcomes that are being generated by the processes.

In summary, Ian Simpson and the Regional Producer Network have established a new benchmark against which future R, D & E programs will be judged.

The four other nominations for the award were:

- ♦ Mark Walton with the DNRE **Target 10 project** in the Victorian Dairy Industry
- ♦ Emily Gulliver, DNRE with the **Farm\$mart project 'Laying Foundations for Our Future (Series A).'**
- ♦ David Francis, Greening Australia Queensland (Inc), with the **Freeway Greening Project**
- ♦ Adjunct Associate Professor Bob Macadam and colleagues from the Centre for Systemic Development at

the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury, (Dennis Lambourne, Bruce McKenzie, Don Lundie-Jenkins, Garry Wallace, Elwin Turnbull, Ken Langford, Sharan KC, Roger Attwater and Roger Roberts) with the **The Industry Learning and Leadership Development Program for the Oil Palm Industry Corporation of Papua New Guinea (OPIC)**

All nominations were given Highly Commended Certificates by the Committee of Management. These high class examples of extension will be featured in following *ExtensionNets* (Ed).



New President elected at the 1999 AGM in Perth

Jane Fisher, Agriculture Victoria with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and based at Knoxfield in Melbourne, was elected to the position of President of APEN at the AGM held on 11th November, 1999 in Perth. Jane has been on the Committee of Management as a committee member since the 1998 AGM at Roseworthy, SA and was previously on the Committee of Management in 1995/96. Jane replaces John Bourne who was President from the 1996 AGM in Melbourne.



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APEN is pleased to acknowledge the support of:



From the Chair

Jane Fisher

It is an honour to be elected to the chair of APEN. The organisation has gained a great deal of recognition and momentum since its inception at the APEC conference on the Gold Coast in 1993. I would like to congratulate John Bourne, the second national president of APEN, on a successful presidency and to thank him for a job well done.



The new members of the national Committee of Management (CoM) are Jon Warren of AgWA, John James of the Rural Extension Centre, Gatton and Greg Cock of PIRSA. I look forward to working with those who have remained on the committee - Amabel Fulton, Sally Marsh, Horrie Poussard, John McKenzie, Chris Sounness, and Emma Robinson. Dick Kuiper is returning to Holland, so we would like another committee member from New Zealand - anyone interested? (Please contact Rosemary at the Secretariat).

The committee has met twice since the AGM. It was a treat to meet some of the committee in person in Perth, and the energy and enthusiasm of the new committee promises a fascinating two years. Plans were made for developing APEN as the major carrier for extension in Australia, perhaps as centre of excellence. We hope to bring players together for a meeting in Melbourne by June 2000.

Jeff Coutts of the Rural Extension Centre has agreed to convene the 3rd International APEN Conference. The CoM has started the sponsorship ball rolling with a \$2000 loan to the organising committee.

We plan to make *ExtensionNet* a more rigorous publication, watch this space for details.

John James has negotiated for an email server for APEN members to be set up through REC, and we are revamping the membership brochure.

Horrie Poussard is keen that we remain solvent. His motion that membership fees be raised was rejected in favour of increasing the number of members we have. If you know someone who should be a member, invite them to join. If you live in an area without a chapter, and feel the need to communicate with other people in extension - start one! The Chapter will receive \$10 per financial member, and support and encouragement from all of us.

We want to service the needs of you, our membership. So let us know what direction you think that the organisation should go in, and what steps we need to take to make APEN an even bigger better and brighter organisation than it is now.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the West Australian chapter for running an excellent conference - the meeting ran to time, with some remarkable speakers, and intriguing topics. Well Done Amanda Miller, Lisa Blacklock and team.

PRESIDENTS REPORT TO THE FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



John Bourne

It is great to be able to present this 1999 report in Perth. Up until 12 months ago most of APEN's activities had occurred in the eastern states. I remember thinking as we were arranging the 1998 National Forum in Adelaide, that this was an important milestone in making APEN a national organisation. Well we now have another equally important milestone in 1999, because Amanda Miller and the WA committee have done nothing short of a superb job in organising the Forum for this year.

I am also particularly pleased that Agriculture WA have taken the opportunity to use this Forum, and the preceding two days of internal meetings, to focus on the discipline of extension. A strength of APEN is its networking across state borders, but equally APEN strives to complement the activities of state agencies (as well as private sector extension and nationally based R&D funders). I think that both have been achieved here in Perth this week.

Annual reports are times to recognise people who work tirelessly and unselfishly. There are a lot of these sorts of people in APEN, which is why we have gone from strength to strength. I can't mention everyone of course but I would like to mention a few.

We very much appreciated the input on the Committee of Management this year of **new**

members, **Jane Fisher (Vic)**, **Amabel Fulton (Tas)**, **John McKenzie (NSW)**, **Sally Marsh (WA)** and **Emma Robinson (Qld)**. We welcomed back **Horrie Poussard (Vic)** as treasurer after his consultancies in Vietnam. While Horrie was away **Bob Edgar** did a great job filling in, and although I have already thanked him several times I would like to repeat that again formally at this AGM.

Elwin Turnbull from UWSH has continued to coordinate *ExtensionNet* in a very professional manner, but has now indicated that he would like a rest from this position. APEN has relied a lot on UWSH for *ExtensionNet* editors over recent years, and we very much appreciate the work they have put in. Never-the-less we do now need a new editor and I would ask that you all think seriously about who could do this task, and pass any suggestions to Rosemary Currie.

As a follow-up to the theme of the 1998 Forum on Government and Private Sector Partnerships in Extension, **Peter Davies (NSW)** has put together a funding proposal to RIRDC for a part time consultancy to look at the factors that lead to successful partnerships. We had some initial discussions on this during the 1998 Forum, and the funding application takes this further by proposing in-depth case studies. We expect to hear if we have been successful in about a month's time.

Peter finishes his term as Vice President this year and I would like to thank him sincerely for his input over a number of years.

During the year we advertised nationally for tenders for a new **secretariat** contract. We received a number of expressions of interest and three final tenders. A subcommittee of Peter Davies, Bob Edgar, Amabel Fulton and myself assessed the tenders against a set of criteria that included an understanding of extension methods, people networks, facilities to carry out the work and a tender price.

I am very happy to confirm that **Rosemary Currie of Creative Management Services** was successful. Her tender most closely met all of the criteria, particularly an understanding of extension methods and extension people. The competition for the position was very strong and the decision reflects Roe's dedication to the secretariat and efficient and effective mode of operation.

A new initiative for 1999 has been **the inaugural award for Excellence in Extension**, suggested by Amabel Fulton early in the year. Many professional societies recognise excellence in their fields, and extension should be no different. The response to this award was quite astounding and confirmed an urgent need for such an award being available.

The Committee of Management selected a winner from a set of criteria that included, the development of extension principles in the work, evidence of efficiency and effectiveness, and the applicability of the work in the broader practice of extension. Applications were invited from either individuals or groups.

In working through this process it was very obvious that we were looking at top class examples of extension. Because this was the

inaugural award, I suspect that this first year could well have been the most difficult to judge. There is virtually no other similar mechanism of recognition, and the committee felt that we were looking at the cream of Australian extension in recent years all at once. I should add that this was quite a humbling experience.

Despite this the award was unanimously given to Ian Simpson, Extension Facilitator for Meat and Livestock Australia's Sustainable Grazing Systems Program, well done Ian.

Some other highlights for the year included some overseas visitors, in particular

- ♦Neils Roling and Janice Jiggins from Wageningen, and
- ♦Professor Gary Jackson from the University of Wisconsin USA. Garry held a seminar organised by Jane Fisher of the Melbourne Chapter.

There were a few things we started on during the year but didn't finish.

We still urgently need a strategic plan for APEN. The Committee of Management began a process, led by Chris Sounness, early in the year. Unfortunately Chris has been on extended leave overseas most of 1999 and so we hope that this can be finalised when he returns early next year.

Despite efforts by Horrie Poussard linking with the Pacific component of APEN has proved to be difficult. I am sure that we can continue to work on this but perhaps more importantly APEN needs now to begin to make links with relevant organisations overseas. even beyond the Pacific. APEN members visit overseas countries in a range of roles from time to time, and the opportunity is there to promote our strengths,

build links and eventually develop programs in partnership, with appropriate back-up funding.

On several occasions we have discussed an upgrade of our Website. The over-riding factor holding us back has been lack of financial resources.

APEN runs on a tight budget each year and relies on sponsorship or profits from events to top up membership subscriptions. However while sponsorship is relatively easy to justify for a particular event such as a Forum (and much appreciated), it is difficult although no less important when we come to the general running of the organisation. We need to continually approach agencies and private sector extension to support this side of APEN.

The Committee of Management cuts costs where-ever possible and has had to propose an increase in subscriptions this year.

This is my last year in the Chair as my term is up, and I would like to take this opportunity to say that I have greatly enjoyed the time, and believe we can all share in a sense of pride in developing an organisation that supports the discipline of extension.

I would like to thank our major sponsors:

Queensland Department of Primary Industries and the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and Agriculture WA for their very generous support for this Forum.

Seasons greetings, and all the best for the new millenium.

*John Bourne, Chair, APEN Committee of Management
31/10/99.*



Treasurer's Report – See Page 7

**APEN
welcomes all its new
members.....**

**Old members –
Thank you to those who
have paid their
1999/2000 Subscriptions,
Others, please pay as
soon as possible.**

**Current Annual
Subscriptions:
\$50 - Ordinary member
\$250 – Corporate
membership
\$15 – Overseas
(newsletter only)**

**Rosemary is happy to
answer any queries
about membership –
Phone 02 6024 5349
Fax 02 6056 1967
Email
rcurrie@albury.net.au**

Way Out West

“Evolving Systems – Challenged Minds”

Thirty nine travelled “*Way Out West*” and joined the 102 Western Australians at a most challenging and enjoyable APEN Forum. The hospitality was great, venue very pleasant and effective, entertainment was fun (I liked the living statue at the dinner and the merry-go-round)! Lots of networking was done and our minds were challenged and systems evolved as we were exposed to different aspects of Interdisciplinarity.

Keynote Speakers were:

- ♦Richard Price, Program Manager for Land Resources, Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation, who spoke on “The Principles and Processes of Interdisciplinarity”
- ♦Dr Penny Flett, Executive Director of the Brightwater Care Group, who spoke on “Interdisciplinarity as the Key to Flexibility” using her experiences with the health care system
- ♦Dr Stephen Dovers from the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the Australian National University, who spoke on “Interdisciplinarity in Environmental Law”
- ♦Wendy Poussard, International Development Consultant, who spoke about “Working with Rural Communities Internationally” and outlined her experiences working with rural communities in a developing country in a health care program.

Concurrent sessions were presented by Ian Maling from CSBP Wesfarmers, Peter Cooke, AgKnowledge, James Butterworth, Agriculture Western Australia, Fionnuala Frost, AgInsight, and Michael O’Dea, Fisheries Western Australia.

A system of 3 x 3 workshops were run for the afternoon of the second day looking at Theoretical Perspectives, Process Perspectives and People Perspectives. Scribes stayed with each group as they attended each workshop and the discussion and outcomes are to be available in the Proceedings.



Participants at the 1999 APEN National Forum at Perth, 11th and 12th November, 1999. Amanda Miller, APEN WA Chapter Chairman is in the middle ground at the left wearing one of the distinctive mustard, with green collar polo shirts worn by the conference organisers.

**The Proceedings of the 1999 Forum,
“Evolving Systems – Challenged Minds” will be available from the
APEN Secretariat early in 2000.**

Environmental Management Systems For Agriculture, Examples, Needs And Opportunities

Jane Fisher, AgVictoria

Professor Gary Jackson of the University of Wisconsin spoke to 22 people at an APEN seminar held at the Centra Hotel in Melbourne on Thursday 26th of August. He gave an overview of his environmental management system "Farm*A*Syst".

The Farm*A*Syst program is a voluntary pollution prevention program that was developed to assist farmers and ranchers in identifying pollution risks on their property and in developing an action plan to reduce or prevent pollution. Data collected through the program is used to prioritize research, education, technical and financial assistance to aid producers in taking actions that reduce or prevent pollution.

The program began when Gary's farm was given an energy audit. He thought that the audit concept that would be a useful tool for farmers to monitor their ground water. The prairie lands of Wisconsin are intensively farmed (250 acre farms) and the homesteads rely on groundwater for drinking. The wells have become polluted with chemicals through poor storage, handling and application procedures. The audit was developed as a tool to enable farmers to identify which of their operating procedures were causing problems and how to remedy them.

Partnerships between the private sector and agencies result in increased understanding of the technical and financial challenges facing agriculture and the environmental concerns of society. This increased understanding assists in setting realistic goals and in developing functional support systems to reach them.

Development and delivery of this program focuses on the needs of, and benefits for producers including:

- ♦protecting family and livestock health;
- ♦reducing exposure to liability and regulatory actions;

- ♦maintaining or increasing net income;
- ♦maintenance of credit; reduced insurance cost;
- ♦maintaining or improving product quality; and
- ♦improved public confidence and trust.

Beginning with groundwater, the concept has been used both resource management on a catchment basis, and also for specific crops – potatoes, wine grapes corn in different states across the USA. The Farm*A*Syst office supports development of audits for different states and production systems throughout the USA. All but three have some form of audit program. The program was used as the model for developing the Ontario Environmental Farm Plan, and also for the Cotton Industries Best Management Practices Manual.

Keys to Success

Gary emphasised the need for cooperation with local farmers – the more closely to home that the audit was developed, the more likely it would be to be used by the farmers. Conversely, the closer to home the process gets, the more in denial the farmers become!

Confidentiality of the system is essential – so that farmers can identify the areas in which they breach legislation and remedy the problem without being penalised by the regulators.

Paid person to assume responsibility for the work, relies on the commitment of the individual for the process to succeed.

The importance of the agricultural community taking leadership in developing environmental management system was reviewed. These management systems provide a constructive response to increasing public concerns about agriculture's impacts on the environment and concerns about food safety. Several

private sector initiatives illustrated approaches being used. The presentation explored the benefits and drawbacks of developing industry or producer-led agricultural environmental management programs.

Reception

85,000 farmers have completed some part of the audit. Gary emphasised that some will only do the section directly relevant to a particular issue, while others will complete the whole thing.

Threats

Despite have received numerous national awards for his work, Gary spends much of his time writing funding submissions, and lobbying for funding with the appropriate politicians.

Where to from here?

Environmental management systems are being explored by a variety of industries across Australia. Genevieve Carruthers (NSW Agriculture) organised a national workshop in May that brought together commodity groups, funding agencies, farmers and public servants from across Australia. The new CRCV for Viticulture has committed to developing an EMS appropriate for use by the wine grape industry. The grains industry are exploring options. And there are many others.

More details on Farm*A*Syst: Gary Jackson, Director, National Farm*A*Syst/Home*A*Syst Program

Farm*A*Syst/Home*A*Syst, B142 Steenbock Library, 550 Babcock Drive, Madison, WI 53706-1293 Tel (608) 262-002

<http://www.wisc.edu/farmasyst/index.html>,

email:farmasyst@mace.wisc.edu ☺

Treasurers Report, 1998-99 Financial Year

The overall financial statement for APEN for 1998-99 shows a slight loss of \$2 124 for APEN as a whole on a total income of \$71 579*. This loss was borne by the Secretariat of APEN rather than the Chapters as a group. The levies distributed to the seven formal chapters remained the same (\$2 910) as in the previous year and were based on financial membership in January 1999.

The Profit and Loss results (below) indicate that in years when there is not a major conference, reserve funds have to be drawn upon to balance the accounts. These reserves are also often needed early in the financial year, before membership subscriptions are received, to fund cash requirements in the Secretariat. For this reason, encouragement of early payment of subscriptions in July-September would allow APEN to run at a lower level of reserve, especially when a major event has to be financed.

Membership subscriptions declined by \$2000 from the previous year and sponsorship dropped from \$6 000 to \$3 000.

The seven chapters that receive levies generated a net profit of \$1 168, primarily derived from those levies. Three chapters were financially active during the year. The chapters now have accumulated funds at the end of 1998-99 of \$14 536.

Outlook for 1999-2000

A conservative budget has been developed for 1999-2000 with income lower than last year, assuming a slight loss on events, a slight increase in membership and similar level of sponsorship.

Costs are expected to increase with a new administration contract, and an allocation of additional chapter levies. 1998-9 was the last year of our fixed level administration contract with Creative Management and APEN has now awarded a further 2 year contract to Creative Management following an advertised tender process that saw 10 expressions of interest and 3 applicants. The contract is for specified tasks in "administration" and "production of ExtensionNet".

Administration tasks outside those areas (eg. assistance with Forum) are Not In Tender and charged at an agreed rate. There is an ongoing process to allocate these costs as accurately as possible to the particular cost components.

The budgeted shortfall can be accommodated by use of Secretariat reserves this year. However it will put those reserves in a difficult position to maintain cash flow for the following year (2000-2001) unless additional income can be gained from sponsorship and events.

Horrie Poussard

Hon. Treasurer, 1 November 1999

** Note: The income and expenses totals for 1998-99 do not completely align with those of the Auditors report because internal transfers of levies have been added to illustrate chapter finances.*

1998-9 Finances

	<i>Total \$</i>	<i>Chapters \$</i>	<i>Secretariat \$</i>
<i>Income</i>			
Chapter Levies	2 910	2 910	
Chapter Activities	26 950	26 950	
Forum/AGM	13 802		13 802
Sponsors	3 000		3 000
Membership Fees	20 915		20 915
Other	4 002	1 025	2 977
TOTAL	71 579	30 885	40 694
<i>Expenses</i>			
Administration	18 710	547	18 163
Forum/AGM	11 475		11 475
ExtensionNet	9 900		9 900
Activities	25 814	25 814	
Chapter levies	2 910		2 910
Other	4 849	3 356	1 538
TOTAL	73 703	29 717	43 986
<i>Net Profit</i>	(2124)	1 168	(3 292)
Accumulated Funds (@ 30/6/99)	35 674	14 536	21 137

Active Chapters means Active APEN

Over the 1998-99 year, the seven official chapters* of APEN received levies from APEN Central but only three chapters carried out activities requiring expenses during the year. Funds accumulated in these chapters' bank accounts totaled \$14 336 at June 30, 1999. Treasurer, Horrie Poussard said that the aim of the levies was to support activities for members at the local (Chapter) level. At the AGM, he urged members to press for more local activities to strengthen the network.

* Official chapters have a bank account and have their finances audited each year.

Chapter	Income \$	Expenses \$	Profit \$	Accum. Funds \$ (at 30/6/99)
South Aust.	290	11	279	1 730
SE Queensland	411	0	411	1 925
Tasmania	6 692	5 190	1 502	3 014
Melbourne	21 906	23 882	(1 976)	2 782
Western Vic.	671	554	117	2 192
Murray Riverina	351	0	351	1 103
Western Aust.	564	0	564	1 790

No Increase in APEN Annual Membership Subscriptions

The basic membership subscription of currently \$50/yr will remain for 2000-2001 when a motion proposed at the recent AGM in Perth to increase annual membership subscriptions was defeated. The need for APEN to charge an extra 10% in 2000-2001 for GST was seen as sufficient increase for members to cope with. Members considered that APEN should aim to maintain a minimum membership fee if it is going to operate as a *network*.

The cost structure for APEN is continually being reviewed and income-generating activities (events, sponsorships, and retention of members) are being explored.

APEN Contributions in the Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension

The most recent issue of the Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension (Vol 6, No 2, 1999, published in The Netherlands) was given over to articles from Australian and New Zealand authors, most of whom are APEN members.

Past President, John Bourne provided a *Field Note* outlining the development of APEN, its aims and progress since 1993.

Other articles discussed extension organisation, processes and practices in Australia, Vietnam, New Zealand and Indonesia.

Given the few opportunities for extension-oriented refereed journal articles, it is good to see that this journal emanating from Wageningen is interested in

worldwide coverage. Hopefully more APEN members will contribute and become subscribers to the Journal. Further details can be obtained from Peter Van Beek at [sytrek@gil.com.au](mailto:sytrec@gil.com.au) or Dr. Jeff Coutts at the Rural Extension Centre, University of Queensland, Gatton, Qld 4345 CouttsJ@dpi.qld.gov.au

Members Need Keeping

Each year APEN seems to have a turn over of 20 to 25% of its membership.

Help APEN to keep these members and add to our overall support for extension. The personal touch, and your extension skills should be good tools to use to keep members in APEN.

Contact your local Chapter for a list of your current local APEN members.

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND EXTENSION FORUM SETS FOCUS ON A VISION FOR 2020

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CENTRAL Queensland's highly successful second Extension Forum aptly entitled "2020 Vision – Extension into the New Millennium" has strengthened the professional working relationships of practitioners across a range of regional organisations.

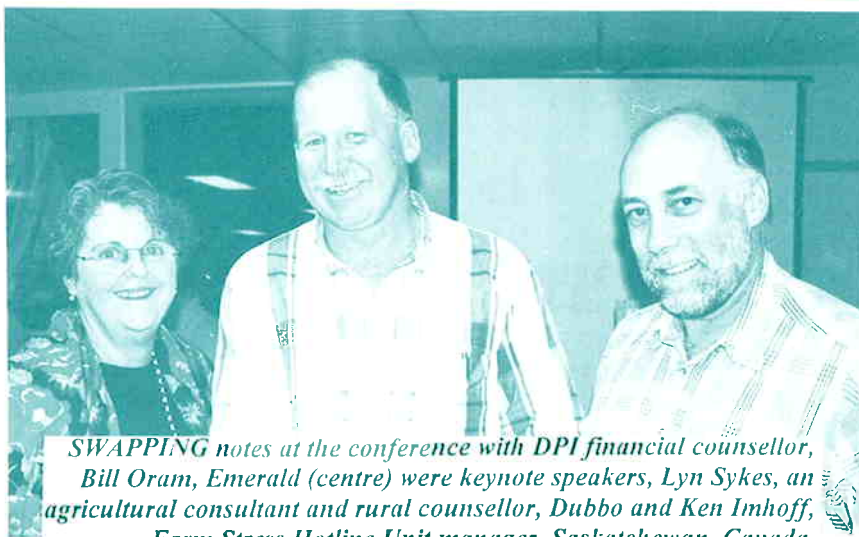
Forum convenor, DPI Fisheries extension officer, Peter Long, Rockhampton, assisted by his Organising Committee, said the May 18-20 Forum held at the Education Department's Coocoo Bay Recreational Centre on the Capricorn Coast had drawn 80 motivated participants.

The organising team had been gratified by the fantastic response. A total of 32 papers were submitted and published in a 274 page proceedings edited by Peter Long, John Grimes and Peter Donaghy.

The forum papers and presentations focused papers around one of the suggested six themes:

- Evaluation of extension processes and projects
- The development and maintenance of quality information for extension projects
- The application of modern communication technologies in contemporary extension processes
- Integrating extension across the organisation and through the region
- Community development through extension processes
- The changing nature and scope of our clients

The Forum was a followup to the inaugural 1995 Yeppoon forum of



SWAPPING notes at the conference with DPI financial counsellor, Bill Oram, Emerald (centre) were keynote speakers, Lyn Sykes, an agricultural consultant and rural counsellor, Dubbo and Ken Imhoff, Farm Stress Hotline Unit manager, Saskatchewan, Canada.

50 DPI extension officers which targeted their professional development. Major departmental restructuring in 1996 and the introduction of new agricultural extension players through local government and community groups backed by Federal Government Natural Heritage Trust funding has greatly expanded the role and scope of extension practitioners.

In addition to contributions from DPI and Department of Natural Resources, papers submitted by the Central Queensland University, Central Highlands Regional Resource Use Planning Project and the Fitzroy Basin Association.

As well as the presentation and discussion of forum papers four keynote speakers provided thought provoking contribution on a range of extension subjects:

- Dr. Jeff Coutts, Director, Rural Extension Centre, Gatton College, Extension Practice in Australia – Facing 2000
- Mr Ken Imhoff, Manager, Farm Stress Unit, Extension Services Branch, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Canada, Farm Stress Hotline in Saskatchewan
- Mr. Mark Casey, Corporate Affairs Manager, Kondinin

- Group, Toowoomba, The Kondinin Group in Australia including recent developments in Queensland
- Dr Jim Cavaye, Principal Rural Development Officer, DPI, Rockhampton, Rural Community Development – The Emerging Role of Extension

Significant effort has been made to take a forward look at extension services and determine ways that will lead to enhanced outcomes for our clients. The forum also enabled participants to reflect on past and current extension services and evaluate their effectiveness. Our organising team has initiated a formal post-forum evaluation based on immediate feedback. The longer term objective is to reinterview participants some months down the track to gauge the influence and adoption of extension methodology and knowledge gained from others.

The forum was not just a talk-fest. It provided an opportunity for people across a number of agencies and community bodies to meet formally and informally to discuss regional needs and establish collaborative arrangements. Another feature of the 1999 forum was the contribution made by the invited industry observers each of whom delivered an honest, often hard-hitting review of proceedings at the completion of each day.

Sally Murray Responds to Questions on Extension

Elwin Turnbull recently caught up with *Sally Murray*, Industry Development Officer with the Victorian Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) and quizzed her on her thoughts and feelings about extension.

WHAT ARE THE BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN EXTENSION?

Working with people from a range of backgrounds/life experiences which makes it challenging. You are a change agent. You can get results.

WHAT ARE THE HIGHS OF EXTENSION?

When participants get an Ah Ha! Seeing the change take place in front of you. When the group takes control of their own destiny.

WHAT ARE THE WORST FEATURES?

Getting the 'hook' right. Sending the wrong message - they don't sign up!

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR EXTENSION?

"Territorially based, on-going groups who become inter-dependant self managed learning circles with a focus on personal development" -so they are better able to make effective decisions about the whole farm system and thus be better at their agriculture. (The personal development aspect includes learning to learn, thinking preferences, ways of thinking, communication skills, core value exploration and planning). These groups become self-funded (membership) and self managed, hiring a group manager and experts such as facilitators, technologists etc. as the group directs. Extension officers will need to be skilled in the facilitation of adult learning, irrespective of their expert role.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TRENDS YOU HAVE SEEN OVER YOUR WORKING LIFE?

Move from; a linear approach to extension where research results are converted to a 'recipe' for farmers; to a situation where the extension officers juggle research findings and farmers needs. Research has become more farm based, but there is less of it. Move from one-to-one extension to group extension. The change in focus of extension officers from a 'provider of information' (covering many fields) to a focus of group management for a specific outcome.

IF YOU WERE 25 WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO GIVE YOURSELF A GREAT START AS AN EXTENSION WORKER?

Get full time on-farm experience in several industries (work as a station hand etc.) so that you have a grasp of the farmers perspective and the conflicts they deal with. Study myself - how I learn, make decisions, what influences the way I think. Take formal study in facilitation, adult learning, systems thinking and communication. Find and use a mentor who will encourage me to develop my ideas. Have a go! Do some doing. There is nothing like experiential learning.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF EXTENSION?

Historically, extension has been about providing research information to farmers. Presently,

extension is about using particular processes with specific information to achieve pre-determined outcomes. Futuristically, I hope extension will be about the facilitation of processes to enable all land managers to be better custodians. There are significant differences in these definitions.

WHAT IS REALLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT BEING AN EFFECTIVE EXTENSION WORKER?

Having empathy with the people you work with and putting your own opinion aside.

WHO IS YOUR HERO?

It sounds very egotistical. I don't really have a hero. I have found the work of many people inspiring and very thought provoking. Some examples are Peter Senge, Ned Herrmann, Jules Perry, Richard Bawden.

WHAT WOULDN'T YOU DO AGAIN?

Nil.

HAVE YOU GOT A FAVOURITE SAYING ABOUT EXTENSION OR EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS

"You are what you think you are".

"A facilitator is someone who went to the gates of heaven and got in, but decided to come back for everyone else" (Author unknown).

WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE EXTENSION COMMUNITY?

- ♦Embrace change.
- ♦Explore the way you learn personally, to help you help others to learn.
- ♦Maintain balance in your own life.
- ♦Believe in what you are doing.
- ♦Saying one thing and doing another is not a good sell.
- ♦Personal stories of your own failures and successes are wonderful icebreakers.

WHO IS SALLY MURRAY?

Sally Murray is an Industry Development Officer with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE). Sally

works across the key industries of Victoria and also with staff of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Her fields of work include strategic planning, business improvement, personal development and facilitation.

Sally has completed the following formal education: Diploma of Applied Science (Agriculture), Dookie College (1979), Diploma in Education, Hawthorn Institute of Education (1987) & a Master of Applied Science (Agriculture and Rural Development), University of Western Sydney (1998).

Her work experience includes: six years as a Jillaroo, Farmhand & Rousebout, eight years as a Teacher (Secondary & TAFE)

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Other Life achievements include finishing 4 Ironman Triathlons including the Hawaiian Ironman Triathlon (1991) and an Australia Day Award (sport).

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Web-Browsing

Horrie Poussard

The arrival of the Internet has brought with it a sack (or more likely a small truckload) of new terms which to the old and feeble like myself provides quite a test to my all too human memory. While I think of *surfing the net* as a somewhat vigorous activity by young eager lads wearing reversed baseball caps, the notion of *browsing* brings with it a more genteel approach to information gathering. I am happy to say I am pretty comfortable with browsing the net and have been doing a bit of it for the last year or so. In the process I have come across some web sites with quite useful elements of extension in one form or another.

A sojourn in Vietnam for the last two years, and a bit of interaction with international groups interested in their version of extension, opened up to me a bigger world of agricultural, forestry and environmental extension / community development / community partnerships, etc. For those surfing or browsing the net, it is a great opportunity to expand our thinking horizons (or at least see where we are compared to others). I would like to start the ball rolling with a few web addresses.

Maybe others can contribute further (to Rosemary at the APEN Secretariat) for follow up issues of *ExtensionNet*.

www.oneworld.org/odi
Agricultural Extension and Research Network
www.worldbank.org
World Bank
www.idrc.ca
International Research and Development Centre, Canada.
www.ibsram.org
International Board of Soil Research and Management
www.ag.auburn.edu/irsa
International Rural Sociology Association
www.webmedia.com.au/lawn
Land and Water News
www.law.ecel.uwa.edu.au/intlaw
International Law - Environment, Univ. of W.A.
www.dpie.gov.au/agfor/landcare/
DPIE National Landcare Program
www.ruralextnet.qld.edu.au
Rural Extension Centre, Gatton, Qld.
www.ec.gc.ca
Environment Canada

AUSTRALASIA PACIFIC EXTENSION NETWORK (Inc)

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

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