

Newsletter of the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network Ltd

ExtensionNet



The conference issue

Insights from APEN 2023 Conference

Vol. 31 No. 2

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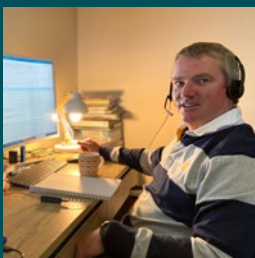
Editorial

Adrian Englefield

Eight months ago, Pat Hamilton APEN's Communications Editor, challenged me to become the Editor of ExtensionNet. I thank Pat and the APEN Board for giving me the opportunity to interact and connect with many extension 'agents' throughout our regions. Pat warned me that life would get in the way as I built relationships to share through ExtensionNet. And so, I am moving on I hope to continue supporting APEN in some capacity and I thank Pat and the Editorial team, Chrissy, Morag, Alice, and Roe for their encouragement, and I welcome Caroline Coppo, Northern Queensland Regional Coordinator who is taking on the editorial role.

I encourage each of you to share your skills, experiences, and knowledge by contributing information, brief articles, letters, upcoming events, and lots and lots of stories and photos.

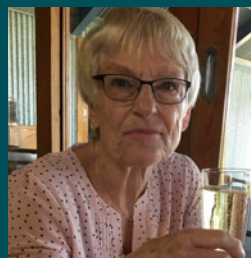
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Across the President's desk

Noel Ainsworth

Welcome to the first 2024 issue of ExtensionNet. We're back in full swing at APEN invigorated by some exciting programs and events planned that we're eager to share with you, since our very successful conference in Launceston, Tasmania.

The 2022-23 AGM was held online in November. Current Directors, Noel Ainsworth, Nicole Sallur, Roy Murray-Prior, Pat Hamilton, and Peter Long welcomed three new Directors, [Olivia Weatherburn](#), [Simon Sankey](#), and [Muhammed Sohail Mazar](#) to the Board. Visit their profiles on the website. Olivia, Simon, and Sohail have brought a wealth of skills and experiences which were immediately utilised as we re-energised the Board Committees, refining their direction and membership. This has been carefully done, keeping an eye on the succession of Directors and to bring more members into these committees that oversee the APEN services being developed.

Following the APEN AGM in November 2024, the Board came together for a special Strategic Planning session on 7 February, facilitated by Jeanette Gellard (a past Director). We appreciated sharing Jeanette's skills and knowledge as she guided the Directors to achieve some very positive outcomes as we reviewed APEN's 2020 Strategic Plan to set its agenda for 2024.

Members will be serviced by the Governance, Business Development, Member Engagement, Professional Development and Regional Activities Committees. It is a great opportunity for members to join an APEN Committee. Think about the influence you can have to make the organisation even more relevant to meet extensionists needs!

The following Directors volunteered to Chair these committees:

- Governance | Roy Murray-Prior
- Business Development | Noel Ainsworth
- Member Engagement | Nicole Sallur
- Professional Development | Peter Long
- Regional Activities | Pat Hamilton

These changes to APEN governance are designed to build the focus of APEN services for members to be able to connect with other members and continue to build their skills as extensionists.

The APEN Strategic Plan has been revised and members are being offered a couple of weeks to offer comments through info@apen.org.au



Vision: Extension professionals in Australia and New Zealand are connected, valued and competent, enabling collaborative change.

Mission: To champion excellence in extension by promoting value, best practice, and fostering partnerships for impactful engagement.

Values

- Integrity: We consistently operate in an authentic, honest, and ethical manner
- Collaboration: We work with others to achieve professional outcomes
- Diversity: We include and represent a diverse range of people, industries, and communities
- Professionalism: We demonstrate excellence, reliability, respect, and accountability
- Connectedness: We bring people together via our network to build positive and productive relationships

Hope to catch up at an APEN event in 2024
Noel Ainsworth

Introducing the new APEN board

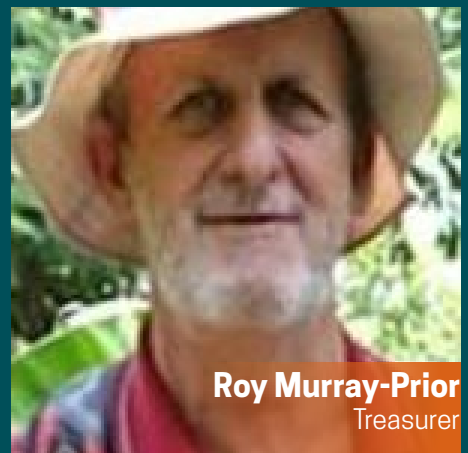
APEN is a skills-based board. Director tenure is for three years with a limit of two consecutive terms to be served by Directors.

We are excited to welcome new Board members Muhammad Sohail Mazhar, Simon Sankey and Olivia Weatherburn.

Head to the [Board page](#) of the APEN website to learn more about each individual Board member including their roles and background.

The Board is supported by the Committees who

- develop/review/refine its Terms of Reference including defining its key objectives
- set dates for meetings
- define priorities for 2024 (and beyond)
- develop an action plan



APEN Committee news

Governance and Finance | Chair | Roy Murray-Prior

The Governance committee has been reformed to take the roles of the former Governance and Strategy Committee and Audit, Risk and Financial Control Committees. The main focus of the committee for the next year include:

- continuing to focus on maintaining a healthy financial position for APEN.
- trying to overcome issues with our email hosting system.
- selecting a new auditor.
- including an option for members to leave a bequest to APEN.
- reviewing and revising key APEN policies.

Business Development | Chair | Noel Ainsworth

With support from the Committee, Simon Sankey, Mariah Maughan and Karen Smith and I have reviewed the terms of reference. This refined the roles of the Committee to include:

- developing new income streams, to ensure costs do not exceed income in a non-conference year.
- advocating to build an appreciation of the role and value of extension.

This Committee will start by reviewing the sponsorship of the 2023 APEN Conference. We are looking for longer term sponsorship relationships with those that supported the 2023 Conference as well as businesses who were not able to do so at the time.

Member Engagement | Chair | Nicole Sallur

In 2024 the Member Engagement Committee will continue to focus on APEN's communication channels to keep bringing you all the information you love to hear about APEN (and what we are doing) as well as extension in general. This includes reviewing and updating the website, and publishing the monthly eBulletin, quarterly ExtensionNet and posting on social media (Facebook and LinkedIn). If this sounds like something you are interested in or could help with then let either myself or one of the board or committee members know as we would love to have you join our committee.

Professional Development | Chair | Peter Long

The Committee first met in February following the APEN Board Strategic Planning Workshop. We are very fortunate that we have seven experienced members plus Noel our President as an ex officio member.

Two to three committee members will take leadership roles for each of APEN professional development activities such as: 2025 Conference, ExtensionChat, road shows etc.

One priority for the Committee was to commence the process of delivering the 2025 APEN Conference. At the March Board meeting, hosting a 2025 conference was endorsed and an EOI will be released in mid-April 2024 calling for groups of motivated members to stage the Conference in their region.

We defined the purpose of the Committee as initiating, leading and overseeing APEN professional development events and activities for APEN members, students, and other extension professionals.

In delivering APEN professional development we need to ensure that the activities are:

- within APEN Mission and Values.
- that APEN remains financially viable (the Biennial Conference is critical).
- within the capacity of APEN members time on a voluntary basis.
- providing value for money for members.
- where there is an event cost, non-members are welcome to participate at a premium of greater than the APEN annual membership fee.
- where the professional development event or activity is delivered or facilitated commercially, members are provided the first opportunity to express interest in delivery.

It is not expected that the Committee develop and deliver professional development activities. We will engage our members to do this via EOIs.

Regional Activities | Chair | Pat Hamilton

The Regional Coordinators have met three times this year to define their purpose, their commitments and Committee involvement.

The purpose of the Regional Activities Committee (RAC) is to:

- support APEN's Strategic Plan by ensuring the Board is kept informed of regional issues and interests.
- sustain a strong network by connecting members to each other and to the organisation through various mechanisms.
- create opportunities for members to interact online and/or face-to-face through sharing and promoting extension knowledge and skills.

Activities

- The first of six APEN Conversations was successfully delivered in March
 - Plans are being developed for a possible Road Show to reach many of our Members face-to-face
- We encourage our Members to contact their Regional Coordinator with suggestions to host an activity

The Regional Activities Committee is the only committee that is elected by regional members.

The Regional Coordinators

- support APEN's strategic directions by ensuring the Board is kept informed of regional issues and interests

- create opportunities for members to interact online and/or face-to-face through sharing and promoting extension knowledge and skills.
- as a team, we meet online at least six times a year and, providing there are resources, attend one face-to-face meeting each year
- organise one face-to-face or virtual (that maybe an APEN Conversations) event per year for members in our region
- write one ExtensionNet article per year
- promote other APEN activities using an APEN membership list, that is updated quarterly



Callen Thompson
NSW/ACT



Sue Street
NSW



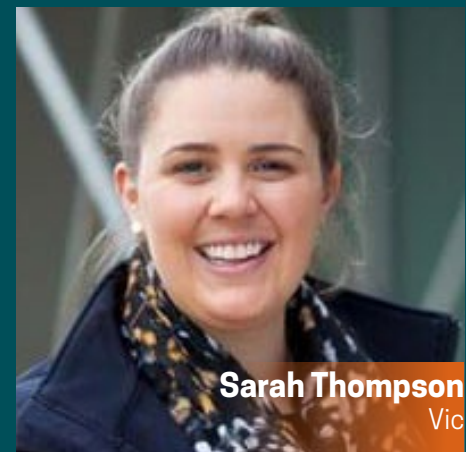
Lauren Thornton
NT



Sandy Gunter
SA



Ossie Lang
TAS



Sarah Thompson
Vic



Karen Smith
WA



Caroline Coppo
QLD (North)



Tim Bradley
QLD (South)

Head to the [Regional Activities Coordinators page](#) of the APEN website to learn more about each individual Board member including their roles and background.

Succession Planning – why not put your hand up?

Recruiting candidates is very important to sustain a strong network and create opportunities for members to interact online and/or face-to-face.

The RCs identified the following to attract Members to the position of RC

Personal and professional leadership training

- Induction pack – identifying roles and responsibilities, personal contact
- Showcasing APEN activities

- Buddy/mentoring – ‘train the trainer’, peer-to-peer learning
- Observing RAC meetings

“The best thing about being the Chair of the Regional Activities Committee is the privilege of being a part of a dynamic team who share their wealth of skills, talents and expertise in various ways to support the diversity of our Members’ needs.” [Pat Hamilton]

The challenge – contact your RC and be part of extension change influencers team!



APEN Conversations is an opportunity for APEN members to get together for an hour to discuss papers, articles or new ideas and how these may be applied to their work. Because there is always a range of experience in the virtual room, it is a great chance for members to learn from each other.

Since the last ExtensionNet, the Regional Coordinators (RCs) have facilitated three Conversations.

On October 20th, 2023, Callen Thompson, RC NSW, facilitated a very vibrant, stimulating discussion on the role of AI in agricultural extension. Callen shared with us the following introduction:

I chose this topic after a colleague introduced me to Chat GTP and I thought I would see what it could do. One of the questions I asked it was: “What role does AI have in agricultural extension?”. Chat GTP spat out a couple of pages worth of text, with one paragraph reading:

AI can offer personalized recommendations to farmers based on their specific conditions and needs. For

instance, AI systems can suggest suitable crop varieties, planting techniques, and irrigation schedules based on the farmer’s location and available resources.

Some of you will know that my background is agronomy, spending 10 years in retail agronomy and six years working for state governments in NSW and the NT. So, you will understand that I was a little concerned about the security of my job!

There are some who think that AI may lead to miss information or make our professions redundant. Others see it as an opportunity to speed up the process of developing the content that we use and give more farmers access to good advice and assistance with decision making. Join us on the 20th of October and tell us what you think.

Before the conversation, please read the [attached article](#). This was an article written by Chat GTP when asked: “Write me an article on using producer groups in agricultural extension”.

Experiences and concerns were shared. Result: we

should all “have a go, before we get left behind”.

On 12 December, Ossie Lang, TAS RC, volunteered to facilitate APEN Conversations.

With the end of the year fast approaching and the flurry of Christmas and other activities,

- how do you keep the momentum going through into the new year
- how do you keep things rolling through the festive chaos?
- with plenty of social activities and end of year commitments how do you keep the momentum going in your work?
- or do you use it as a reflection point?

Ossie is the VegNET Regional Development Officer for Tasmania and so works with a wide range of growers across the state. The festive season also coincides with the middle of the production season in Tasmania and so cutting through the noise is tough. Ossie is looking forward to sharing strategies with attendees on how to keep things going through the season.

It was a great opportunity to learn some tips and strategies from APEN members from across the network. Humour, not only in the office, highlighted our conversations. It certainly gave us lots of examples to recharge our batteries!

The first APEN Conversations for 2024 was delivered on Tuesday 19 March, with a robust discussion facilitated by Sarah Thompson, Victorian Regional Coordinator, and supported by Callen Thompson (no relation), NSW Regional Coordinator, the “tech guy”.

In this APEN Conversations session, the group explored

- what the concepts of cancel culture, social terrorism and algorithms mean
- their effects on diversity of thinking
- how they are appearing in our lives and the work we do
- how we can continue to champion and empower diversity in the work we do

The group discussed, exchanged ideas, challenged each other’s thinking, and opened new avenues relating to this topic.

Some of the key take outs from the conversations included:

- to combat cancel culture and social terrorism, in-person conversations, forums and engagement can often get greater cut through with the audience, allowing for better two-way discussion which can lead to better understanding from the target audience.
- there are positive outcomes we can take from each of these themes - groupthink, as an example can be a positive in getting a message more widespread and with the use of social media platforms, such as Instagram, it can be a powerful tool in influencing positive change on topics such as climate change and regenerative agriculture.
- we need to understand that when someone changes their thinking or practice on a topic, it changes their relationship with those around them, including their social circle, fellow farmers, their advisors, and their family. When we understand the importance that plays in decision-making, we can understand why people can be hesitant or resistant to change.
- in summary, the group acknowledge, that whilst we are seeing these buzz words more often now, the concepts have been around for many years, and whilst there are challenges that arise with them, there are many tried and tested strategies that can allow us to get positive outcomes, including diversity in thinking, whilst still getting progressive, widespread change where it’s needed.

The consensus: “*don’t be too scared to have a voice*”.



APEN Conversations provide a vibrant platform where members share, challenge, and learn from each other’s experiences in applying new ideas to their work.



Celebrating APEN's Journey from 1993- 2023

Dr. Pat Hamilton

Celebrating 30 years

Learning from the past, appreciating the present, and growing a dynamic future in a vibrant extension community network

It was 30 years ago in 1993 that Dr Jeff Coutts was responsible for organising an international extension conference at the Gold Coast for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (QDPI). Thirty years later, APEN is celebrating its growth over the past three decades.

It has been my intention to capture 30 years of people's recollections and the influence APEN has had on their journey through the fields of extension. Who have been the inspirers, the motivators, the influencers? Thirty years is a long time to find the people. Fortunately, many have ridden the distance and were willing to share their stories with us.

However, once you start a history, it is difficult to know when to stop!

I have based the history of APEN on Toni Courtney's description on an 'organisation'.

"[The APEN] organisation is a rich tapestry woven by the story of its people [who are] weaving together many strands of information, insight, knowledge, and wisdom. Over time, people will come and go; they will have roles to play; they will contribute to the current chapters of change, creating their organisation's story and legacy. Every interaction with someone internally or externally, is adding to the 'bigger picture' story."

The story began with a conversation – a story that broadened to many conversations over the years as our members continued to inspire and grow existing and emerging extension professionals.

The 2023 APEN International Conference was the obvious place to launch the gathering of data for the 'history booklet'. Here, in Tasmania, we shared conversations and stories, met new people, caught up with old friends and colleagues, listened to new ideas, and expanded our skills and knowledge.

Our network grew! "Networking is not just connecting people. It's about connecting people with people, people with ideas and people with opportunities." (Michael Jennae)

We celebrated with a cutting the cake ceremony, ably performed by Immediate Past President, Dr Anthony Kachenko and the current President, Noel Ainsworth. To cater for all tastes and dietary restrictions, there were many cakes (I know one fellow had a small piece of each, with a tick of approval!)

The full version of the booklet will be finished soon. Although I am very aware of John Lennon's advice, "Life is what happens when you are making other plans."

Celebrating
30 years
of APEN

“**The story began with a conversation – a story that broadened to many conversations over the years as our Members continued to inspire and grow existing and emerging extension professionals.**”



The APEN 2023 International Conference

The APEN 2023 Conference Committee

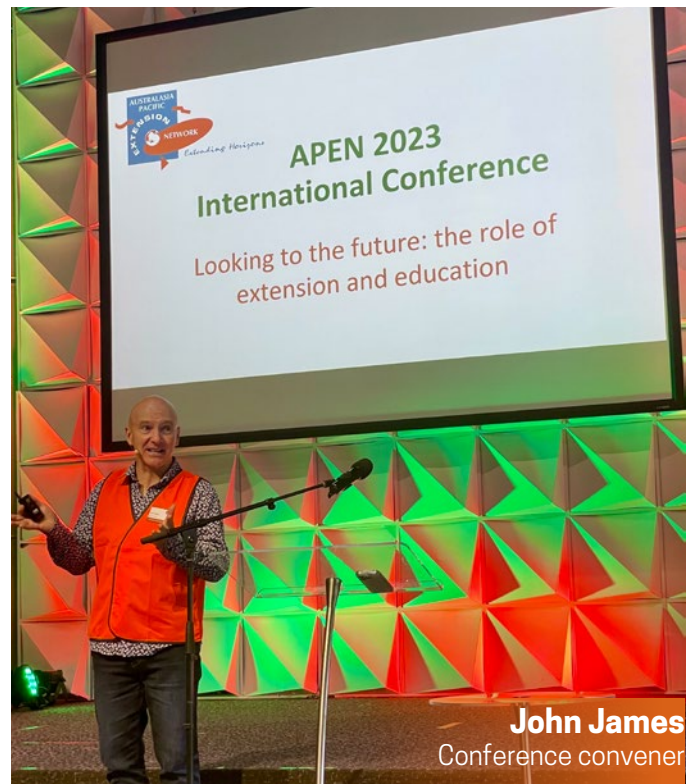
(Alex Russell, Anthony Kachenko, Denise Bewsell, Jo Jones, John James, Leanne Sherriff, Morag Anderson, Olivia Woodiwiss, Ossie Lang, Roy Murray-Prior, Sarah Thompson, Sophie Folder, and Tony Butler)

The Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) 2023 Conference in Launceston, Tasmania, was a landmark event, not just for the organising committee, but for all 280 delegates from across Australia, New Zealand, and beyond. Your participation and enthusiasm made this premier international event for extension and education a resounding success.

Across three days, the conference unfolded an extensive program including three insightful field trips, four in-depth masterclasses, three keynote presentations, six quick-fire presentations, ten engaging soapbox presentations, 68 paper presentations, five interactive 'solve my problem' sessions, nine workshops, and two panel discussions. This diversity in formats ensured a dynamic and enriching learning environment for everyone.

The conference highlights included:

- **Tim Jarvis's leadership lessons:** Tim Jarvis's keynote on Shackleton's crisis leadership was an inspiring start to our conference. His insights on purposeful leadership, emotional intelligence, and the importance of breaking down challenges into achievable actions provided a roadmap for impactful change in confronting climate change.
- **Ivar Ravn's sustainable agriculture insights:** Ivar Ravn, joining us virtually from Denmark, provided a captivating narrative on SEGES Innovation's role in sustainable farming. His presentation underscored the effectiveness of data and AI in agriculture and Denmark's ambitious goal for a climate-neutral food industry.
- **Stephanie Trethewey's moving keynote:** Stephanie's journey from adversity to innovation, culminating in the creation of Motherland, was a powerful testament to vulnerability and storytelling. Her transition from a high-pressure urban job to rural motherhood and entrepreneurship highlighted the transformative power of embracing life's changes and the importance of community support.
- **Panel discussion on Literacy challenges in primary industries:** This crucial discussion, with experts like Rosie Martin, Alison Clark, and Dick Warner, facilitated by Sophie Folder, shed light on adult illiteracy challenges in rural settings and offered practical strategies for extension professionals.
- **Panel session 'The other side of the fence—farmers experiences with extension:** Providing



insights as recipients of extension services, Julian von Bibra, Caitlin Radford, and Richard Gardner, facilitated by Leanne Sheriff, helped us understand how our activities are viewed by the clients.

We appreciated reading the feedback from the post-event, and that will guide our future events. We heard you say:

- **Networking and collaboration:** The networking opportunities were highly valued, with an impressive rating of 8.8/10. These connections and exchanges among professionals are what truly animates our community.
- **Conference effectiveness:** The conference scored an average rating of 7.8/10 for exposing delegates to new ideas and approaches and an 8.0/10 for the likelihood of applying these learnings in professional settings. This is a testament to the relevance and applicability of the content presented.
- **Overall value:** The overall conference experience was rated at 8.5/10, reflecting the hard work and dedication that went into creating an event that was not only informative but also enjoyable and conducive to growth.
- **Implementing conference learnings:** Many of you expressed intentions to implement new ideas and

approaches discussed at the conference. This commitment to adapting and evolving is what drives our community forward.

- **Looking forward:** We are already thinking about your suggestions for future topics, aiming to cover a wide range of interests within agricultural extension.

The **Whova app**, despite some clunkiness, provided us with a great way to minimise paper and make agenda updates on the fly. It also helped us connect with each other during the event, with over 2000 messages exchanged and around 150 photos shared. Please remember to **download your notes** and any presentations of interest from the Whova app, as access will cease soon.

A special thank you to all our sponsors who helped make this event possible: Tas Farm Innovation Hub, ACIAR, AgInnovate, Agribiz RD&E Services, AgriFutures, AUSVEG, Berries Australia, Business Events Tasmania, CRDC, Coutts J&R, Dairy Australia, Elders, Enablers of Change, Enviro-dynamics, GRDC, Greenlife Industry Australia, Hort Innovation, Mallee Sustainable Farming, MLA, Pasture Trials Network, Pinion, Qld DAF, RMCG, Scarlatti, and Shepherd Dairy.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you for being an integral part of APEN 2023. Your engagement, insights and the shared drive to apply what we learned back in our workplaces are what make our community strong and forward-looking.

Thank you once again for making APEN 2023 a memorable and impactful event. We look forward to continuing this journey with you and seeing you at our next event.

“**Your engagement, insights and the shared drive to apply what we learned back in our workplaces are what make our community strong and forward-looking.**”

The Immediate Past President's reflections

Dr. Anthony Kachenko

More than 280 global thought leaders, industry titans and visionaries visited Launceston where 100 presentations and interactive sessions highlighted innovations in extension.

Launceston put on a show with warm temperatures and clear skies for the event. Launceston was a perfect place for the conference, having been named a UNESCO City of Gastronomy in 2021—the kick-off event at Du Cane Brewery with a traditional welcome from local Grant “Tank” Shaw. I was honoured to receive the “smoker” as part of the welcome.

There was much reflection at the welcome ceremony for those fortunate enough to attend the field tour earlier in the day. I joined the Natural Resources Management team organised by NRM North. We visited Trevallyn Dam, Tamar Wetlands and local farmers working on management approaches to minimise cattle movements from water supplies. It was clear that the extension in natural resource management was indeed

a collective effort and that engaging the community is the most crucial extension action of all.

We were lucky to have two state Australians of the Year finalists – Tim Jarvis AM and Stephanie Trethewey – as keynote speakers. Tim Jarvis AM, an environmental scientist, spoke of the importance of effective leadership in challenging situations and shared some strategies for leading teams through adversity and uncertainty – such as clarifying in communication.

Stephanie Trethewey, national winner of the AgriFutures Rural Women's Award 2022, spoke passionately about strategies for achieving balance and harmony between work, family, and personal pursuits. She also talked about setting boundaries and managing priorities effectively.

A key highlight for me was the literacy panel where Tasmanian Richard Warner, Rosie Martin and Allison Clark explored the literacy challenges in primary

industries. Much more attention needs to be placed here with many community members who are culturally and linguistically diverse. An area that wasn't covered by the panel – but one to watch.

Another highlight for me was the presentation by PhD Scholar (and one of three APEN scholarships) Laura Grattidge, who spoke on community-based suicide prevention to coordinate and empower extensionists and wider rural communities to lead and take ownership of localised prevention efforts. I am looking at how to familiarise myself with this topic more and have registered with a local training provider, CORES. Her paper will appear in a future edition of the Rural Extension & Innovation Systems Journal. A great resource for all extensionists!

We were fortunate to have 19 sponsors, including the TAS Farm Innovation Hub as a platinum sponsor, ensuring the conference was a resounding success. With confidence, the event survey showed 81% of participants signalling the conference was > 8 out of 10. Notably, 70 % of participants indicated that they would apply findings from the conference in their work – fantastic!

I want to mention to Dr John James and the wider conference committee. Thank you for pulling together the exceptional program, friendship, and camaraderie. I look forward to staying in touch with you all as part of the “TRIBE” and, importantly, looking forward to the next conference – perhaps outside of Australia.



Noel Ainsworth and Dr. Anthony Kachenko
Current President and immediate past President

Reflecting and taking lessons from the conference

Current President, Noel Ainsworth

The interest and attendance at the 2023 Conference reinforced the importance of networking and professional development training to both old and new members. This was also a strong endorsement of the great program and location selected by the Convenor John James. Well done!

There were a number of take-home messages and actions for the APEN Board from the Conference.

The conference clearly attracted a range of new members and being a membership-based professional organisation, we are clearly keen to retain those members by providing quality services between the biennial conferences.

The conference also attracted a range of sponsors as well as the corporate supporters. This will continue to be important to the solid long term financial base for APEN, to complement the income from our low annual membership fees.

I suspect that the conference attracted a majority of our existing members plus quite a few new ones. This reinforced the same message that we get from our extension clients. That is the importance of face-to-face to develop relationships and credibility as part of learning process. We take this on board in the design of the ongoing hybrid professional development program as well as the important role that the APEN Regional Coordinators play.

There was an interesting range of emerging topics that extensionists support in a disrupted, complex and uncertain world, extending beyond the traditional agricultural production and natural resource management. We are acknowledging and designing our APEN communication channels, such as social media, to reach out to these emerging sectors.

Armed with the results of the 2023 members survey, the APEN Board endorsed at the November AGM have started the year with a firm commitment. That is to

deliver the highest priority services to our members and to deliver them well. At our February 2024 planning forum the Board reaffirmed its commitment to the APEN Values of Integrity, Collaboration, Diversity Professionalism and Connectedness. One of the key changes in 2024 has been the creation of a Professional Development committee led by experienced APEN Director Peter Long. He will oversee the training activities in 2024 that will include:

- the three ExtensionChat workshops in Apr/May plus investigate options for free webinars for members,

- review where we head with the APEN Mentoring scheme, and
- set a date and location for the 2025 conference, then call an expression of interest for someone to be the conference convenor.

Given that everyone attending the conference had a unique experience, if there were other strategic messages from the conference you think that the Board should consider, drop us a line via The Association Specialists at info@apen.org.au



APEN Conference - Participatory Action Research and Best Research Paper Award

Ramesh Raj Puri

I am an extension officer with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) based in Bowen, North Queensland. I am working on a national project, the [National fall armyworm \(FAW\) innovation system for the Australian vegetable industry](#). This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the vegetable research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government, with co-funding from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

In my role, I am responsible for establishing and facilitating the FAW Area Wide Management Group (AWM group) in the Bowen/Gumlu region based on a participatory action research (PAR) approach, reporting the group's activities and learnings to the project team, and developing extension products and communications to share and engage with the national vegetable industry.

I engage with the vegetable growers and agronomists in the region through project meetings, field visits, field days, and one-on-one communication. This engagement helps to understand the industry's existing FAW management practices and their issues and concerns, and to identify the gaps in knowledge and tools needed to sustainably manage FAW.

Recently, we had an industry meeting at Bowen, and one key research question raised was whether we could disrupt moth development at the pupal stage to reduce FAW populations in crops (a practice known as pupae busting). To explore this question, we are working with researchers to establish a [sweet corn/corn demonstration trial](#) at the Research Facility and on commercial farms in the Bowen region this season. Growers, agronomists and other stakeholders will be invited to observe and reflect on the trial as it progresses.

Winning the Best Research Paper Award for the REIS Journal on "The use of participatory approaches in the development and extension of FAW management practices for the Australian vegetable industry" is a testament to our team's dedication and collaborative spirit. The paper describes the 'Participatory Action Research' approach to facilitating the co-development of knowledge and practice for FAW management in the Bowen-Gumlu region, North Queensland, Australia.

Some of my key learnings from PAR approaches in FAW management are:



- engagement leads to understanding the FAW situation, existing management practices, and industry needs.
- pAR enabled collaboration between growers, researchers, extension officers, and other stakeholders in developing solutions to FAW challenges.
- the PAR approach improved participants' knowledge and skills in FAW biology, insecticide resistance, and beneficial insects.
- effective communication channels, such as the FAW engagement hub (FAW eHub) and newsletters, were crucial in disseminating research findings and engaging stakeholders nationally.

For new and emerging extensionists, I emphasise the importance of building strong relationships with growers and stakeholders. Listen to their concerns, understand their needs, and involve them in co-creating solutions. Collaboration and knowledge sharing are essential to successfully addressing complex challenges like FAW infestations.

For those seeking further information, please visit: [Fall armyworm engagement hub \(FAW eHub\)](#)

2023 APEN Awards

APEN Award for Excellence in Extension by an Experienced Professional

Winner- Jeanette Long

Ag Consulting Co, South Australia

For the design, planning and facilitation of a myriad of extension programmes, to broaden the theory, role and practice of extension. By using both on-line and face-to-face methods, Jeanette's programmes artfully weave practical examples with extension methods to actively engage participants in peer-to-peer learning.

Meritorious Award- Nicole Sallur

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland

Meritorious Award- Carol Rose

Total College, New South Wales

Amabel Fulton APEN Award for Excellence in Extension by a Young Professional

Winner- Olivia Weatherburn

National Extension Programme Manager, Beef + Lamb NZ

For the design and delivery of the Generation Next Programme; designed to nurture and encourage current and future sheep and beef farmers. With the next generation of young farmers in mind, Olivia skillfully led this innovative programme, from a Farmer Council idea to a regional pilot, to a national programme.

Meritorious Award- Mariah Maughan

Regional Development Officer, AUSVEG Project, Darwin

Meritorious Award- Tanisha Sheilds

Agrista, New South Wales

New opportunities to expand your horizons in 2024

Enablers of Change



Are you an agricultural extension practitioner eager to learn from industry leaders and stay ahead of the curve? Do you seek cutting-edge insights and practical advice on driving change and innovation in your field? Would you like to connect with a diverse network of professionals who share your passion and challenges? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then the new Enablers of Change online community is for you!

Enablers of Change is a vibrant online community where ideas, expertise, and camaraderie flourish. It's not just a platform; it's your portal to a wealth of knowledge shared by fellow extension practitioners, farm advisors, and consultants worldwide. While our community primarily consists of members from Australia and New Zealand, we welcome participants from all corners of the globe. All online learning sessions are recorded, allowing you to access them at your convenience. We aim to cultivate a culture of continuous learning, provide opportunities for engaging discussions, and allow space to share innovative ideas.

Anyone with an interest in agricultural extension and driving change is welcome to join for free. This gives you access to a community of like-minded extension practitioners. Over time, we may invite you to join some of our paid activities, such as an online Communities of Practice, courses, and other tailored offerings. However, there is no obligation to join these activities; they are simply opportunities for those interested.

Don't miss out—join us today at <https://enablers-of-change.mn.co/> and become part of a dynamic community dedicated to driving change and innovation in agricultural extension.

A sneak peak of what's coming... we're crafting an online induction course to equip early-career extension practitioners in Australia, New Zealand and beyond, with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive in their roles. For experienced extension practitioners, we're creating an online course called Nudging for change. This will take a pragmatic approach to applying behavioural science in agricultural settings. Using a series of practical activities and case studies, this course will teach you how to apply the principles of behavioural science to your current and future projects. To keep informed about these developments and help grow your understanding of change and innovation, subscribe to our free newsletter by visiting www.enablersofchange.com.au.



30 years & Flourishing

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Together we have the power to inspire, connect and deliver on new opportunities and rich experiences that can open doors to innovation and progress while growing global economies and increasing well-being (Tae Yoo)

Guidelines and Deadlines

Submissions should be made in MS Word with minimal formatting. A portrait photograph of the author is required.

All photographs, figures and/or tables ought to be provided as separate files (preferably TIF or JPEG; photos scanned at 300 dpi). Feature articles should be around 1000 words and minor articles 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted material to meet space restrictions. Letters to the editor or general items of news of interest to the network are welcome. Articles should be submitted at least four weeks prior to publication.

Preference is given to articles that are grounded in some form of project or event.

Editor: Adrian Englefield

Layout: Alice Long

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