

This was then... what is now?

Terry Makin, Inaugural President of APEN

As APEN approaches its 25th anniversary your editor Pat Hamilton has asked me to reflect on our beginnings, achievement of our goals and any insights into the future. So, some history to set the context of where the seeds were sown.

In 1986 John Kerin (B.Ag Ec0), the Labour Minister for Primary Industries revamped the Agricultural Industries Research and Development (R&D) Councils. These entities were funded by levies set by each Industry on their annual production. The Federal Government added a dollar for each dollar raised. This helped focus the R&D funding on outcomes. Extension drives the outcomes.

At this time Extension was the poor cousin in the R&D business. It was an add on whose task was **“Transfer of Technology”**. The R&D agenda had been set by researchers. New Council boards were composed of multi disciplinary people selected on merit by a government and industry panel. It was quickly recognised that to drive innovation and productivity a substantial investment in extension was needed.

In this new context it became apparent that extension was a neglected profession. There were few opportunities for academic qualifications. There was a lack of well-researched theory to support our practice in this country. Extension practitioners did not have a culture of producing peer reviewed papers or a professional body of their own to promote their needs. Many people did belong to the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science but this organisation was also mainly focused on research and researchers.

About this time there was a growing push to overcome this situation. Queensland Dept. of Primary Industries (DPI) under the leadership of Dr Beth Woods set up UQ’s Rural Extension Centre. In 1991, UWS Hawkesbury initiated a part time Masters course to upgrade extension qualifications. The environment was changing and this

led to the First Extension Conference in October 1993 with Queensland DPI as the major sponsor.

“The gang of 4”

An “Extension Network Breakfast” was held and here an interim steering committee of four was given the authority to set up what was to become APEN. Peter Van Beek QDPI, Assoc. Prof Bob Macadam UWS Hawkesbury, Ian Simpson NSW Dept. Agriculture and I were the gang of 4. We then set about designing an organisation to carry out the wishes of potential members. We aimed for 1000 members.

Some key learnings from the subsequent survey and communications led to our goals:

- Improve our practice and promote professional development
- Raise and promote the professional profile of extension and extension practitioners
- Provide a well oiled vehicle to network members with newsletters, journals, workshops, conferences and digital communications
- Be an inclusive and democratic member focused entity

And our challenges:

- We are a diverse membership spread over all regions of a diverse country, in New Zealand and parts of the Pacific
- There was no body of theory integrated to inform our practice
- Our business was change, but we also needed to change
- The extension model is applicable in Landcare, rural industries, communities and community health

How have we done?

In 2009, I, together with colleagues from WestVic dairy (including Mike Weise), attended the APEN conference at Busselton and it was a very gratifying experience to



see that APEN had grown into a vibrant and sustainable organisation. The foundation set in 1993-4 was sound and I am proud of what has been built from those beginnings. I want to pay tribute to Peter Van Beek, Ian Simpson and Bob Macadam who built the foundations for what we have today. Also to Rosemary Currie who has been a key part of the whole journey from the beginning of the secretariat to today.

The Future

APEN has benefited from the digital age which improves communication across the continent and beyond. It is important that we, as well as our clients, continue to stretch ourselves in a culture of continuous improvement. Ruth Nettle’s excellent RIRDC project (ExtensionNet Dec. 2016) is an example of where we are at and what we can achieve.

Global warming sets huge challenges for our nation, particularly regional Australia. Reconciliation with our First Peoples is another key challenge where APEN professionals have a role to play. Neoconservative economics suggests that governments don’t have a role to play in the public area that extension professionals work in. The market will do it. In my experience this is a false assumption. The principles of sound extension have not changed. We work in a complex messy environment where all the actors have a part to play if we are to build the future we want for RD&E. May APEN continue to grow from strength to strength.

Terry Makin, inaugural President of APEN, was a dairy farmer who spent 10 years (1986 -1996) as a Director on the Dairy R&D Corporation and its predecessor the Dairy Research Council. In 1993 he completed his Masters in Extension & Rural Development at UWS Hawkesbury. From 1996 until retirement in 2013 he worked as a consultant. He now works to promote reconciliation with our First Nation Peoples.

Terry Makin



Across the President's Desk

Jeanette Long, President APEN

Life is busy. Recently, I was reminded, "so many people are insanely busy that they sometimes lose sight of what is happening around them."

Everyday I try to address all the daily concerns and at the same time meet my obligations.

Fortunately, I have caring friends and family who constantly encourage me to take time to think about the important things in my life. Because my business life is so busy, escaping to our beach house on Wedge Island is my sanctuary. This is my quality thinking time- a time to re-energise- a time to just enjoy life.

During APEN's life over the last 24 years there has been very busy times, times to reflect on our journey, times to remind us where we have been and where we want to go. Terry Makin, the first APEN President, takes us back to our beginnings and reminds us that we are facilitators of change, sharing our knowledge and our learnings.

As we bring together all the discussion about changing from being an incorporated body to a company limited by guarantee APEN meets another crossroad. On Friday 24th March at a Special General Meeting APEN members discussed two resolutions. Resolution 1): The APEN Management Committee are hereby directed to register

the Australasian-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) as a Company limited by Guarantee. I appreciate the work of Immediate Past President, Austin McLennan and his team who prepared the way, Dr. Anthony Kachenko for bringing the research and responses to the discussion paper together, Chrissy Stokes's visual interpretation of the proposed Board structure and the APEN members who responded, attended the meeting, and those who sent in their proxy vote. Resolution 1) has been adopted unanimously. We now need to implement Resolution 2): The APEN Management Committee are hereby directed to update and simplify the Australasian-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) Constitution – also passed unanimously. Great work from everyone! Once again we will move positively, with passion, good governance, and build productive relationships to ensure APEN is the professional, dynamic network we value.

I thank Dr Pat Hamilton for her first issue as editor of ExtensionNet and encourage you to share your busy life with her.



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FROM THE EDITOR

I am reminded of Mahatma Gandhi's approach that rather than waiting for change to happen, we need to be the change we want to see – that is, we often need to see beyond the lens to progress our extension work. Leading by example is an important characteristic of most change agents. In 1993, the first ExtensionNet highlighted the 'future directions and challenges for extension if we want extension to be valuable and indispensable'. Terry Makin's article (Terry was the interim Chairman and inaugural APEN President) in this issue reflects on what was it like then and where he sees the network going.

Andrew Huffer asks 'what are you doing to support emerging leaders' in his thought-provoking article about rural leadership programs. Taking the initiative speaks volumes for APEN's members as we share our achievements through positive actions. Lyn Kelson, as a small-scale beef farmer from Central Victoria with a passion for soil health and regenerative land management techniques, has embraced change to improve her

farming techniques. In our "new" section, Regional Roundup, the Regional Coordinators share with us what is happening across the country and across the ditch in New Zealand. This is your chance to interconnect and build the relationship to further grow the network, and stay competitive as we focus on learning in our research, project management and business leadership roles.

I am privileged to follow a line of very impressive editors of ExtensionNet over a period of 24 years. I thank the Board of Management for giving me this opportunity to interact with so many amazing 'extension agents'. I appreciate the work of Dr Maryse Bourgault and APEN Secretariat, Dr Rosemary Currie, in enabling us to publish on line and for Maryse's continuing support from Montana. To you, the members, I am seeking lots of articles, the names of people doing things and your feedback into making the network an even more vibrant, dynamic place to be.

Warm regards,

Dr Pat Hamilton

What I learnt about Rural Leadership Programs and How You Can Apply This



Andrew Huffer

Andrew Huffer has over 20 years' experience in working with rural groups and communities, largely drawing upon his skills in facilitation, stakeholder engagement and more recently, grass roots marketing. This has given him the expertise in being able to ask the 'right' questions and the wisdom to listen to the answer! Andrew shares with us his research project with RIRDC re Rural Leadership programs.

The 'environmental scan'

When you hear the term, 'Rural Leadership Program' what comes to mind? Would it be 'suit and frock fests' with pollies in Canberra? Or would it involve being dropped several miles from the middle of nowhere with a bunch of strangers and asked to find your way 'home' (as well as find 'yourself')? I'd heard about some of these 'rural leadership myths', as they'd been encountered by colleagues before I was contracted to undertake an 'environmental scan' of rural leadership development programs. The project was initiated by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. Its aim was to obtain a clear understanding of the leadership program offerings and reach across Australia's rural, regional and remote landscape.

What's in it for you?

I'm hoping that over the next six minutes you'll consider:

- The format of any leadership or development program that you may be involved in
- Where you are seeing emerging leaders
- What you could do to support them.

Scope and methodology

The project used a definition of leadership programs, adapted from the Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP), as programs that 'aim to produce measurable and significant improvements in leadership capacity.'

Two categories of programs were analysed:

- i) Long-term programs – over ten days duration, often involving a residential component; and
- ii) Short-term courses – less than ten days duration, predominantly serving as introductory programs

To understand the landscape of rural leadership programs, four methodologies were employed:

- Background desktop research
- Survey
- Interviews
- Analysis

Outputs

Here I'll provide a micro summary of what we (my colleague, the very talented free-range duck farming, Michelle McManus was also on 'the team') found out.

1. Access

We identified 17 'long-term' rural leadership programs delivered at a national (5), state (1) and regional (11) level. A further 18 programs that act as 'short-term or introductory' leadership programs were also identified. Before my first 'big reveal', grab a map of Australia. Note the relative size of each state and territory. What was surprising to me, was that access to rural leadership programs was (and still is) strongest in Victoria, with ten regionally-based programs available across the state. Look back at that map – Victoria is neither the largest, nor the most populated state...

Why? A key reason is that the Victorian model is underpinned by the Victorian Regional Community Leadership Programs Secretariat, which has had a pivotal role in enabling stronger collaboration between the ten Victorian programs to improve sharing of experiences and resources.

Key insight: The design, coordination and delivery of any rural leadership program require an agreed, single point of contact that is appropriately resourced.

2. Delivery modes

Programs are still predominantly delivered face-to-face, facilitating vital interaction and enabling strong relationships to be forged between participants. The downside of the face-to-face model is the cost – for providers it's in presenter/facilitator costs, administration and logistical costs. For participants it's the financial cost of enrolling, as well as travel and time. Participants also weighed up the opportunity cost of their attendance against future benefits.

In 2015, 18% of long-term programs and 39% of short-term courses had a defined online component within their delivery structure. The e-Leaders program (run by the National Rural Women's Coalition) demonstrated the potential of greater incorporation of online learning into leadership programs that could be considered by other providers.

Key insight: People considering participating in future programs expressed a preference for increased online delivery as a proportion of delivery channel type to overcome the time, financial and opportunity costs associated with travel.

3. Barriers to participation

Time availability and cost were identified as the two key barriers to participating in rural leadership programs. Program duration ranged from 1 ½ days for the Murraylands Leaders Program, through to 59 days for the ARLP.

Key insight: There is a misalignment in future

participant expectations of what a leadership program requires in terms of time commitment and what is on offer through existing programs. Program providers may need to assess the option of providing a clearer learning pathway to participants by offering or identifying 'introductory', 'advanced' or 'specialty focus' rural leadership programs to their target market. The issue of time availability also highlights the need for program deliverers to continue to highlight the benefits, value and accessibility of their programs and perhaps consider changing the delivery mechanism to decrease the time needed for participation.

4. Projects enhance value of participation

Several programs used a structured and accountable project development and implementation model to ensure the work of participants is congruent with the strategic aims of their programs.

Key insight: In any professional development program, structured and accountable 'learning projects' add value to the participant experience and deliver further tangible and visible project outcomes. (Note – it's become a point of difference in the programs I offer, as clients, sponsors and employers love them!)

5. Proof of value

Sound program evaluation methodology is an important contributor to the long-term sustainability of rural leadership programs. Program deliverers felt that the issue of 'attribution' was a key challenge in their evaluation methodologies.

Key insight: *Independent and verified* assessment of the impacts of programs on participant capacity and how this in turn plays a quantifiable role within their industries, communities and regions will assist in the attraction and retention of funding and resources for rural leadership programs. Partnerships with regionally located universities were used to address this.

Your challenge

As APEN members, I think our role is to continue to keep an eye out for emerging rural leaders. I see them everywhere! Look at members of Grower Groups, young mums on P&C councils, or people joining local sporting club committees for the first time. They're all taking on a role in rural leadership. Our job is to think about how we can utilise, leverage and share our own skills, experiences and networks to help them to grow in competence and confidence.

For resources regarding facilitation, stakeholder engagement and grass roots marketing, get in touch via www.andrewhuffer.com.au or andrew@andrewhuffer.com.au





As a small- scale beef farmer from Central Victoria with a passion for soil health and regenerative land management techniques, Lyn Kelson's key goal for her lifetime is to extend educational opportunities to all sectors of community, concerning the hidden world of soil ecology and its vital importance to land function, particularly in an increasingly variable climate. In 2014, as a participant in the e-Leaders: Women Towards Sustainability program delivered by the National Rural Women's Coalition, Lyn was required to nominate an on ground project with an end goal of raising awareness and educating others about environmental sustainability and natural resource management. With her strong passion for raising awareness about soil health, Lyn chose to deliver a program that focused on soil health assessments under three different land management techniques.

Here is Lyn's story.

Based on the need to improve our soil, I designed and managed a comparison trial of three adjacent land plots under pasture production on our farm, during the period of April to November 2014:

1. Conventional farm management with 1 application of single super phosphate
2. Control plot with no additions during the trial period
3. Biological farm management with 1 application of raw compost

No grazing occurred during the trial period and seasonal rainfall was the only form of water supplied to the trial plots.

A key purpose of the exercise was to provide participants with knowledge and skills that they could take home with them, consolidate with more learning and apply in their own settings. It was a key attribute to have different land management practices to compare outcomes, and to provide contrasts in assessment outcomes. The focus was not so much to determine if a land management practice gave "superior" pasture results, but to allow participants to see and assess that what happens above ground has an impact below ground and visa-versa.



Data collected throughout the trial period

The Hidden World of Soil

Lyn Kelson

consisted of an initial basic soil assay to give a benchmark of soil biology present at the commencement of the trial. At the completion of the trial period a comparative soil assay was performed on each trial plot. Sequential photographs were recorded representing pasture growth and composition, ground cover, penetrometer readings and Brix meter readings.

Sharing my findings

In November of 2014 I held an open day on the farm, inviting people to engage in an initial educational presentation outlining the four key groups of microscopic inhabitants of soil: bacteria, protozoa, fungi and nematodes, with an overview of their functions within the soil. To provide a limited guide to visual soil health assessments, I delivered an educational presentation that described the conduct of the trial and the data collected over the trial period in three visual A3 size folders containing sequential photographs and associated numerical data for each trial plot.

The group then attended the trial site on our farm, and made visual comparisons between the three adjacent trial plots. It was a great opportunity to assess in real time, pasture growth and plant density, plus species diversity as well as ground cover, moisture retention, litter development, macroscopic community diversity, evidence of earth worm activity, and presence or absence of pests or diseases within each trial plot.

Discussion relating to assessments concerning recovery of the pasture in a grazing context was undertaken at this time, as well as the importance of diversity in plant populations (various life stage plants) and species diversity, with emphasis on perennial grass species as the preferred dominant grass species as these provide the maximum soil health outcomes. I refer to this range of assessments as a primary surface survey of soil health.

A practical experience

During the day, participants were given the opportunity to use the penetrometer to assess soil compaction within each plot and make their own comparisons between the various land management techniques represented in the trial. The participants were also able to apply the knowledge concerning visual soil assessment by assessing a dig square from each trial plot. A dig square (see photo) is a 30cm x 30cm clod of soil dug, as a block if possible, and viewed to assess soil profile, soil structure, root density and penetration, moisture penetration and retention, evidence of macroscopic and microscopic soil food web activity including worm counts and evidence of tunnelling and bioturbation, presence of grubs and larvae, visible fungal hyphae and legumes with rhizobia root nodules as examples.

People were given an option to participate in a farm walk where the same types of assessments as were undertaken in the trial

plots could be performed in a functional farm operation managed with holistic management. During the time in the paddock, the grazing strategy was outlined with explanation of stock mob size, grazing area made available, pasture assessments, stock health assessments, rumen function assessment, and the criteria/ expected outcomes of each assessment.

Participants were able to use the penetrometer in grazed areas and ungrazed area, to assess animal impact on soil compaction, as well as view hoof impact, trampling of litter and manure distribution. A dig square was then dug to allow visual soil assessment after a primary surface survey, as explained previously, had been conducted.

The open day concluded with an opportunity for ongoing discussion and clarification of any information, as well as the opportunity to review the photographic and numerical data displayed in the A3 folder presentations in the context of the trial plot and paddock walks. It was amazing to see the engagement of all the participants.

Positive and Productive Outcomes

In total 30 people attended the farm open day, with participants from a varied range of backgrounds including academics, farmers, gardeners and Landcare group members.

I have since repeated this style of information sharing format of a farm open day with an educational component at the commencement of the day, to farming interest groups and combined Landcare groups as an event in their calendar.

I have also conducted information sharing concerning soil health to primary schools, mining conference presentations with reference to site remediation, public forum presentations relating to sustainable land use methods, and have contributed to a soil health guide publication produced by local Catchment Management Authority.

Lyn Kelson



Regional Roundup

NSW/ACT

**Regional Co-ordinator
Dr Anthony Kachenko
Targeting extension
programs
purposefully...**



Anthony is the Research and Development Team Leader at Horticulture Innovation Australia. Anthony holds a PhD in Agricultural Science, a Masters in Agribusiness and a Honours Degree in Horticultural Science. Anthony believes building and maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders is imperative to delivering tenable outcomes and is passionate about implementing strategies to enhance the adoption of research that leads to meaningful on farm change.

And so, changes in the horticultural industry ... The average grower needs have drastically changed based on digital disruption and the emergence of AgTech. Growers are far more sophisticated and able to access information readily through Internet searching, social media and a myriad of applications on smart devices. Horticultural industries have heavily invested in extension programs to 'fill the void' of funding with money moving out of extension into other areas of greater perceived importance. An example of this has been Horticulture Innovation Australia's investment in VegNET (National Vegetable Extension Network). This program was developed closely with vegetable industry representatives to effectively communicate critical information to growers through 10 regionally based extension projects based on regional needs. The network of extension personnel meets annually to exchange ideas, upgrade skills and coordinate activities.

The Australian nursery industry extension program has also gone through much change in recent years with their current extension program focused on meeting key industry biosecurity needs rather than a confetti approach trying to offer all things to everyone. The investment is managed by Nursery & Garden Industry Australia based in Sydney with a strong emphasis on engaging the grower network nationally.

The future... I am optimistic to what the future holds for horticultural industries, and indeed the agriculture sector at large. Targeted extension initiatives addressing market failure are essential to support further industry growth. Extension programs that aren't targeted and purposeful should be discouraged. More importantly, they must be meaningful, measureable and developed based on grower needs to adequately support 21st century farmers now and into the futures.

I look forward to catching up with NSW & ACT members at the APEN Conference in September.

NT

**Regional Co-ordinator
Dr Warren Hunt NT
Building capacity and
resilience – a way to
go...**



Warren is an Industry and Extension Leader (Plant and Pastoral Industries) with the Northern Territory Department of Resources. Warren has a diverse career working in the states of NSW (Soil focus), Queensland (sugar focus) and Tasmania (sheep and wool focus).

In 2014, Warren completed his PhD where he explored and examined the role of extension in building capacity and resilience in Australian rural industries. Warren argued that research and extension are independent partner disciplines where each is critical for effective carriage and function of the other.

Warren is very enthusiastic about bringing people together to raise the importance of extension in Northern Territory. Once again, although distance, isolation and telecommunications often hinder connecting with APEN members, the latest member, Jodie Ward adds to the growing number of people who want to connect. During the on-coming months, I will be looking for news from all our NT members

Queensland

**Regional Co-ordinator
Graham Harris**



**Reflections from the
sunshine state...**

Well, it has been two years since we, Ann Starasts, Gerry Roberts and Graham Harris, completed the survey of Queensland APEN members. Unfortunately, like all things time gets away on us.

There was a great deal of information collected from around one-third of members via phone interview which has been useful in guiding training activities provided by APEN to our members. There have been three APEN Roadshow workshops held since then in Queensland.

However, one of the challenges we face is the geographic spread of our 76 members. The majority of our membership is in south Queensland (with 28 in south-east Queensland and 17 on the Darling Downs). There are also a significant number of north Queensland (18) and central Queensland (8) members. More importantly, there is a large cohort of colleagues working in extension who are not yet members of APEN.

So we face two significant challenges – firstly how do we meet the networking needs of our existing Queensland membership and secondly, how do we encourage new members to join APEN? These challenges are not mutually exclusive. Our survey clearly showed the interest in getting together to hear what we are all doing and learning in our extension profession. Face-to-face meetings

are preferred, but given our geographic spread perhaps some of this (but not all) will need to be via webinar or on-line meetings. Let me know what you think?

And secondly, what is the value proposition for others to join APEN? Please give this some thought. Perhaps it could be a topic for us to discuss in an on-line meeting.

Finally, the planning for the 2017 GFRAS/APEN International Conference is well underway thanks to the efforts of the Conference Committee led by Lawrence Di Bella who works for the Herbert Cane Productivity Services in Ingham. An excellent program is being developed for what will be a great conference in North Queensland in September 2017.

South Australia

**Regional Co-ordinator
Lisa Stevens**



**Catching up with like-
minded people...**

Lisa, based in Port Augusta, is the Regional Landcare Facilitator in the SA Arid Lands Region where she connects people with best practice techniques and new types of innovation. There are nearly 40 APEN members in SA who sometimes find it hard to meet due to distance and work commitments. We welcome Elke Hocking from the Southeast as our latest recruit. Recently, a group of women from 16 industry bodies (including 6 APEN members), under the facilitation of Jeanette Long, met to plan a 2-day conference hosted by the SA branch of Partners in Grain for women in agribusiness in SA, 19 – 20 February, 2018. The aim is to bring together people and ideas to increase the individual, community, educational, social and political strength of women through collaboration with various partners (government, industry, business and rural communities) and acknowledging their common threads as we strengthen networks to contribute to future global, political and economic forums. Watch this space!

Tasmania

**Regional Co-ordinator
Donna Lucas**



**Some snippets re
activities in Tasmania...**

Donna, as a Senior Consultant at RMCG, has been working in extension for the past decade in a range of industries and is currently APEN's Treasurer. Activities in Tasmania include:

- Tony Butler of the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) (and APEN Tas Cluster Coordinator) has recently returned from a Rotary Exchange, professional development trip to South India. Tony will share what he learnt and observed, at the next APEN get-together in Tasmania.
- Aysha Fleming is part of a CSIRO led Research for Profit project looking at how to increase the number of trees on farms.

Regional Roundup

It examines the benefits of trees on farms and aims to quantify some of these for the first time as well as model the best way for trees to be integrated into different farm systems to maximize benefits. The project team are talking to 50 farmers in Tasmania and 50 in Victoria. If you are interested in more information or in participating please contact Aysha.Fleming@csiro.au

- The Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group (TAPG) will be holding a Precision Agriculture EXPO on Thursday 20th April at Deloraine. For more information contact convenor Terry Brient, terry.brient@gmail.com
- A cover crop trial site has been established at Houston's Farm in southern Tasmania. You can follow progress of the trial via a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SoilWealthCambridge/> You don't need to have a Facebook account to view the page. A farm walk was held at the site in February and Petra Doust from Houston's Farm was interviewed by ABC radio: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-24/cover-crops-make-a-comeback-in-tasmanian-trial/8300752>. The farm walk highlighted the value of seeing practices first hand and also learning from others who have already tried different things - helping people to make connections and develop their ideas (see note a below about 'Where good ideas come from'). The trial is supported by Houston's Farm and project VG15010 (A multi-faceted approach to soil borne disease management) is funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the vegetable industry levy and funds from the Australian Government.

'Chance favours the connected mind' - view Steven Johnson's TED talk called 'Where good ideas come from': http://www.ted.com/talks/steven_johnson_where_good_ideas_come_from

Victoria Regional Co-ordinator Mike Weise



Mike's view from Victoria...

Mike has been the State coordinator for about six years – with much involvement in on-farm practice change – although recently, he has been facilitating a strategic plan for a regional orchestra – Mike plays the Cello. Mike's main role is General Manager of Jersey Australia, the herd society for the Jersey breed in Australia. In January, Mike attended International Dairy Week where the Jersey won the Supreme Inter breed champion but what really blew him away was that a 3-month old Holstein calf was auctioned for \$251,000; can you believe it?

Over the last few months APEN in Victoria has welcomed six new members Dr Lauren Rickards and Paula Arcari both of RMIT Universities School of Global, Urban & Social

Studies, Dr Jana Paschen of the Faculty of Vet & Ag Sciences at the University of Melbourne, Louisa Ferrier from the Birchip Cropping Group, Tom Bicknell of Coretext Pty Ltd and Penny Richards of the CFA. In early April, Mike organised a Vic branch get together.

Two important activities in Victoria

- The Victorian Government Dairy Extension team have been in a partnership with Dairy Australia (A rural development corporation, RDC) with Dairy Australia delivering the productivity type Extension while the Department concentrate on extension in four main areas:
 1. Soil, Water and Nutrient Management;
 2. Enterprise Growth;
 3. Farm Risk Management and Industry Resilience; and
 4. Industry Intelligence, Networks and Response to Emergencies.
- The Rural Innovation Research Group at the Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences led by Associate Professor Ruth Nettle are in the middle of a project entitled: - Stimulating private sector extension in Australian agriculture to increase returns from Research & Development. I encourage you to find out more about this frontier work. There's a web site to visit and a newsletter to sign up to: <http://rirg.fvas.unimelb.edu.au/ag-extension#project-overview>

Finally, I'd really like to hear what you are doing in your projects and how it's making a difference for farmers, growers and landholders in Victoria. Your colleagues across the State like to metaphorically, look over the fence, to see what a neighbour is doing so please get on the keyboard and send us a brief note on your change management program.

Best wishes, Mike

Western Australia Regional Co-ordinator Rebecca Wallis



Communication is the key...

Although not from a farming background, Rebecca has developed a passion for, and a wealth of experiences in, working in the agricultural industry across WA from roles with the Grower Group Alliance, the Department of Agriculture and Food, CSBP and now in her own consulting business (in project management, facilitation, stakeholder engagement and extension).

Rebecca graduated with 1st class honours in Animal Science at the University of Western Australia in 2010. Rebecca previously worked directly with grower groups to develop a network of information sharing and capacity building – where she was award Highly Commended in the 2015 APEN Amabel Fulton Award For Excellence in Extension. Recently, Rebecca started new roles with DAFWA and the Liebe Group, as well as small contracts

in her business which she is looking to grow. As Management Committee member of APEN, she hopes to bring together WA APEN members to connect, link and learn from each other and is keen to provide an environment by improving the development and adoption of new technologies and the capacity of members.

Rebecca is always keen to learn more about how to communicate within her network and community, and how to engage and support farmers to become sustainable and profitable. Don't hesitate to connect her.

New Zealand Regional Co-ordinator Chrissy Stokes Making contacts...



As the new Regional Coordinator for New Zealand, taking over from Denise Bewsell, I've got big shoes to fill! My day job is as an Orchard Productivity Extension Leader for Zespri, based in the beautiful Mount Maunganui, a resort town on the east coast of the North Island. I spend my time helping New Zealand kiwifruit growers grow the world's best kiwifruit, through events, technical material, videos and lots of other media. I'm part of a team of 10 (4 of us principally focused on extension), and we're all learning heaps about extension and how we can do it better.

As NZ RC, my aims for the next 12 months are as follows.

1. Get to know the existing New Zealand members! Who they are, what they're doing, and how we can connect more as a group of professionals. I'm keen to run some cluster activities this year and would love to get local people more involved in networking and learning with and from each other.
2. Develop a strategy for attracting new members from NZ. In the kiwifruit industry alone I can think of over a dozen people who are doing extension as part of their job, but don't necessarily understand that's what they're doing.
3. Get as many Kiwis as possible to the APEN conference in Townsville in September. Adelaide and Christchurch were both awesome events and it's great connecting with and learning from each other, as well as seeing different industries and beautiful parts of the world.

Over the next few months you'll be hearing more from me about the activities that are going on in New Zealand, and meeting some of our members. I look forward to getting to know lots of you, and feel privileged to be representing you.

Cheers, Chrissy Stokes

New APEN members

APEN continues to grow as we welcome recently joined members from Victoria, South Australia, Northern Territory and overseas. It is a great opportunity for other member to connect and share experiences with them.



Louisa Ferrier

Louisa Ferrier is a Project Manager at the Birchip Cropping Group (BCG). She has previously worked at Southern Farming Systems, in the Victorian Western District, where she worked in research and extension in a range of areas including Canopy Management and Fungicide trials, the Healthy Soils for Sustainable Farms program and Grain and Graze I. She also worked out of Donald for JSA Independent, a private agricultural consultancy group, gaining experience as an agronomist to farmers in the Mallee, Wimmera and Western Districts but also continuing research on the evaluation of Colwell P, PBI and DGT, in-crop herbicide response and summer weed control. After 4 years working in Local Government in project and asset management, she has returned to her hometown to work at BCG.



Jodie Ward

Hi everyone, I'm Jodie Ward and officially I am a newcomer to Extension. I am employed by the NT Department of Primary Industry and Resources and have been in this position for only a few months. However, I have worked in the Department's rangelands and beef research teams for six years prior to this which also included coordinating workshops and small field days. I am really enjoying my new role and look forward to learning more about extension theory and the applications of such by becoming a member of the APEN network. When not at work, I can generally be found training or planning for the Mongol Derby – an epic 1000km horserace across Mongolia that I will be riding in during the first few weeks of August this year. I look forward to meeting you all in the near future!



Arshad Ali Development Practitioner

Arshad possesses over seven years of progressive career in development sector with the reputable development organisations, Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) and UN-FAO. My assignment with AKRSP provided me immense opportunity to gain hands on experience regarding aspects of community social organisation and community driven development approaches. AKRSP is internationally acclaimed for its participatory development approaches - similarly with UN-FAO Arshad has worked to organise and capacitate smallholder farming communities into informal groups so they could solve their agribusiness/farm business related issues. He has diverse experience working with rural communities of northern areas and the peasant and farming communities of Sindh Pakistan. Arshad received an Australian Development Award (2013) for post grad degree in Rural Systems Management from the University of Queensland, Australia.

Arshad is keen to learn international experiences/ best practices regarding community development and various approaches and tools applied to engage with communities at grassroots level. As part of his degree requirement Arshad undertook a small research study titled " Factors affecting the participation of rural people in community organisations in rural Australia" in the Lockyer Valley.



Elke Hocking

Elke Hocking is a private agricultural consultant, based in Lucindale in the South East of SA. She provides services in group facilitation, livestock producer training, business benchmarking and agricultural communications. Elke has farming interests on Fleurieu Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and Lucindale and has skills and knowledge in Meat Science, sheep and beef research, facilitation, adoption and communication. She has an Honours and Masters Degree in Agricultural Science from the University of Adelaide, where she majored in Animal Science. Elke has worked as a meat research officer with the Beef CRC, NSW, and between 2000 and 2007, she worked for Rural Solutions SA: PIRSA and the SA Lamb Development Team as a Sheep Product Development Officer for Lamb. Elke is a member of the SA Sheep Industry Blueprint working group and also the SA Livestock Consultant's (SALC) group (a group of independent consultants who provide services to the livestock industry across South Australia and interstate). She is also the current newsletter editor for the Grassland Society of Southern Australia Inc. Elke's current objective is to provide balanced profitable outcomes for empowered Australian food producers.

Welcome to these new members who have joined since last edition. We're glad to have you all on board.

Francis Ojok	<i>Uganda</i>
M Esakkimuthu	<i>India</i>
Mandeep Pujara	<i>India</i>
Arshad Ali	<i>Pakistan</i>
Sally Murfet	<i>Tas</i>
Jodie Ward	<i>NT</i>
Tom Bicknell	<i>Vic</i>
Con Simos	<i>SA</i>
Shayne Hyman	<i>Vic</i>
Gae Plunkett	<i>NSW</i>
Michele Jolliffe	<i>Vic</i>
Elke Hocking	<i>SA</i>
Jana Paschen	<i>Vic</i>
Ali Khalil	<i>Yemen</i>
Ikramul Haq	<i>Pakistan</i>
Kate Pearce	<i>NSW</i>
Neale Cameron	<i>NZ</i>
Sophie Headley	<i>NZ</i>
Tessa Hunter	<i>NZ</i>
Cam Clayton	<i>NZ</i>
Lynelle Rood	<i>NZ</i>
Lilly Sar	<i>PNG</i>
Kobwerni Yahaya	<i>Uganda</i>
Diana Parsons	<i>NSW</i>
Lucy Kealey	<i>NSW</i>
Louisa Ferrier	<i>Vic</i>
Paula Arcari	<i>Vic</i>
Lauren Rickards	<i>Vic</i>
Kel Langfield	<i>NSW</i>

Upcoming APEN Activities

2017 GFRAS/APEN International conference

The 2017 Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) and Australian-Pacific Extension Network International Conference (APEN) is to be held in the tropical Northern Queensland, Australia in the Hinchinbrook and Townsville Regions from the 9th-15th September 2017.

The GFRAS meeting will be held in the Hinchinbrook region at the township of Ingham between the 9th - 12th September 2017. Following this the APEN International Conference will be held in Townsville at The Ville from the 12th - 15th September 2017.

The conference will consist of various events showcasing both International & Australian extension programs. There will be field trips during the event which will view first hand extension activities associated with sugarcane, grazing, horticulture, rice production systems, natural resource management and education.

The Second Call for Abstracts has gone out and Registration is now open. Be involved; come along to this exciting event in APEN's history.

See the Conference page on the APEN website.

Regards, Lawrence Di Bella, 2017 GFRAS/APEN International Conference Convenor

2017 APEN Mentoring Scheme launches in April

Registration for the 2017 Mentoring Scheme closed at the end of March with three mentees and seven mentors responding to the call. So – if you think you might like to be mentored, please contact Roe as soon as possible!

Jeanette Gellard's article in ExtensionNet (at <http://www.extensionnet.online/articles/if-only-i-knew-then-what-i-know-now>) gives information and registration is through the APEN website: <http://www.apen.org.au/mentoring>

Being a conference year, even though you may be in different APEN regions you may get a chance to meet in person if you both get to the conference. Otherwise, today's technology is great with Face time, Skype, Zoom.us as alternatives.

The scheme will go from the start of April through to mid December with Jeanette Gellard as the scheme's facilitator.

Any queries? Contact Roe info@apen.org.au or +61 2 6024 5349 or Jeanette Gellard on jeanette@innovativeinfluences.com.au

2016 Webinar Recordings 2016 webinars recording links are on the APEN website!

2017 Webinars Series

- February 20 – Gavin Beever, Project Manager RIRDC – a most interesting presentation, well attended – many thanks, Gavin
- April 10 - Tegan Kukulies will present a webinar on Insights into Australia's Banana Extension Program
- June 19 - Bianca Cairns will present a webinar on Vegetable Industry Extension Initiatives
- August - TBC
- October 16 - Jeff Coutts will present a webinar on Extension and the Great Barrier Reef

We welcome suggestions for the August 21 webinar. Any topics or speakers of particular interest you'd like to hear - let us know! Send an email to info@apen.org.au Leanne Isaacson is facilitating the webinars again this year - her assistance to APEN is greatly appreciated!

2017 APEN Awards – Call for Nominations

An important part of APEN's conference tradition is the APEN Awards for Excellence in Extension presented at the Conference Dinner. Please encourage people/projects that may be worthy recipients to nominate! See the website at <http://www.apen.org.au/awards> for details on the awards. Nominations for the 2017 Awards close on May 16, 2017. Contact Roe info@apen.org.au or +61 2 6024 5349 with any queries.

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Guidelines and Deadlines

Submissions should be made in MS Word 6.0 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.

Editing: Dr Pat Hamilton

Layout: Ross Tasker, Snap Albany Wodonga, Victoria.

Production management: Rosemary Currie, APEN Secretariat, Wodonga, Victoria.

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

Stories and photos (next edition) due to Editor 22nd May 2017