

ExtensionNet

Vol. 2 NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALASIA-PACIFIC EXTENSION NETWORK (INC) No. 2

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APEN is Born

The gestation of APEN is over and slowly our extension baby is being born. There is activity around the country as regional chapters are forming to make our dream a reality. It gives the interim core group great heart to see this happening. I am getting positive feedback about the need for APEN and there seems to be a strong energy flow that augurs well for APEN's future. We must build on this.

We have meetings being held in the Northern Territory, South Australia, and south east Queensland in October. Groups are planning meetings in north central Victoria, north east Victoria and south east New South Wales and northern New South Wales. Tasmanians have formed an interim management committee that is meeting monthly and

they are planning to formalise this in the near future. We have received two formal applications, one from Tasmania and south east Queensland, to form regional chapters.

The Secretariat has received over 100 subscriptions and there is a continual steady flow. Please keep them coming and remember to sign up your colleagues.

APEN has two corporate sponsors at \$2000 each. We are very grateful to the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Agriculture Victoria for agreeing to sponsor us at this stage.

We have sent out some material to the interim contact people to provide information that may assist you to set up regional chapters. I want to reiterate that the acting management committee is not deciding where the regional chapter boundaries will be. That is something that you will have to decide collaboratively, depending on what is going to work for you and fit your needs. Please contact members of the acting management committee of APEN if you think we can be of assistance.

One of the areas that many of us are struggling with is how to evaluate what we do and the programs we are involved in. Evaluation will be one of the key topics that the ComEx Forum, jointly sponsored by APEN and the AIAS, will focus on. The ComEx Forum is being held in Melbourne on November 22 and 23. APEN will receive a percentage of the profit from this Forum and we would like to see many of you there. APEN will be holding a meeting of the steering committee and the new regional management committees on the evening of November 21, prior to the ComEx Forum, to allow people to share their ideas and progress and to decide on future actions.



*By Terry Makin
Chairman Interim Steering
Committee, APEN*

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the Newsletter has been arranged by John Bourne from South Australia. We wish to thank John for his effort and for showing us the variety of extension activities in his State. What struck me was the emphasis on listening and on participatory approaches.

The November/December issue will concentrate on Landcare. I'd like to see that one followed by an issue dedicated to research activities in extension. Short and sharp articles about research topics and development of methods will be welcome, but complete reports will be returned until we get an Extension Journal going. Extension in Tasmania will feature in March/April, perhaps followed by an issue highlighting extension outside conservation and agriculture. There is a lot of that around!

We'd also like to start a Coming Events section, provided Chapter convenors fax me details of their planned activities.

This is the Newsletter of the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (INC) incorporated in Victoria.

The Network appreciates the sponsorship from:

**THE QUEENSLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
AGRICULTURE VICTORIA**

For further information, please contact the acting chairpersons of the APEN chapters in your area.

For administrative matters, please contact the Secretariat (see back page).

Right Rotations: The Farmers' Extension Program



Trevor Dooley:
Land Management Co-ordinator,
Right Rotations Program, Nuriootpa.

Right Rotations is a self-help crop extension program. In South Australia it is well on the way to achieving its aim - helping farmers lift productivity through crop rotations. The program is owned by the South Australian Advisory Board of Agriculture (ABA), an independent farmer committee established to advise the Minister of Agriculture and govern the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia.

Getting Started

There are 110 branches of the Agricultural Bureau in broadacre cropping districts of SA. Initially, all branches participated in regional workshops to help formulate the direction that the Right Rotations program should take. The ABA, through its Right Rotations Committee, conducted a detailed written survey of Bureau members. This established baseline data concerning farmer practices at that time and the issues that farmers wanted addressed. The fundamental aim of the program was to increase the productivity and profitability of farmer operations in the cereal districts of SA, while ensuring the long-term sustainability of these operations. Feedback from the survey and the regional meetings confirmed the 'four basic building blocks' of the Right Rotations program - time of sowing, root disease control, weed and stubble management, and crop nutrition. The

'branch workshop' was targeted as the major vehicle for extension, featuring local farmer referees and hands-on activities supported by high quality visual aids. ABA regional representatives and Right Rotations branch representatives took the responsibility for local organisation of these branch workshops. A communications consultant was employed from the start to help tailor the program to the farmers' needs and to co-ordinate and manage activities.

The Branch Workshops

More than 2000 farmers attended the inaugural branch workshops on root disease. These were followed up with successful branch workshops on leaf disease, sustainability of cropping, and, in 1994, crop nutrition. Most workshops included a paddock segment, or were incorporated into traditional spring field days where Bureau branches assess crops and pastures in their area. Hands-on activities ranged from inspecting and identifying cereal roots and leaves for disease, to monitoring crop nutrition using soil and tissue testing. Feedback on the workshops came from exit surveys, and twice-yearly regional meetings of branch representatives. In addition, a survey to evaluate progress of the whole Right Rotations program was conducted in 1994. Results from this survey are still being compiled.

Program Support

Financial support from the Grains R&D Corporation (GRDC) to Right Rotations has been on-going since the start of the program. In late 1993, a Land Management Co-ordinator was appointed to the program funded by the National Landcare Program (NLP). As the program has progressed, financial support in the form of sponsorship from

agribusiness has steadily increased, and is now a significant component of the annual budget. Technical and facilitation support comes from a variety of sources. The South Australian Department of Primary Industries (PISA) has fully supported the program since its inception, by helping to formulate and deliver workshop material. Significant support has also come from research organisations (SARDI, CSIRO, CRC) and commercial agribusiness (fertiliser companies, chemical re-sellers, private consultants).

The Future

A typical 'Right Rotations' year for many Agricultural Bureau branches may include some or all of the following:

Autumn: Right Rotations Planning Workshop (held each year at the branch or regional level).

Winter: Major Workshop (e.g. nutrition, root disease or sustainability).

Spring: Include a Right Rotations component in the branch field walk.

Plus: Harvest Round Up activity, seminars, surveys, Agricultural Bureau Conferences.

The autumn workshop includes a summary presentation of data collected from the Harvest Round Up sheets, a planning session where farmers plan the two paddocks they have monitored using these sheets, and an evaluation and planning session of their past and future Right Rotations activities. Future winter workshops being planned include 'The Role of Pastures in a Cropping Rotation' and 'Weed Control'. The Right Rotations Committee believes that their Agricultural Bureau network has worked very successfully as a vehicle for extension, and hopes in the future to expand the network to include more and more non-Bureau members. Right Rotations as the farmers' extension program offers exciting possibilities for future technology adoption.

GRAIN GAIN: MORE THAN JUST GAINING GRAIN

Jay Cummins,
Senior District Agronomist,
Primary Industries SA, Lameroo

What is GRAIN GAIN?

GRAIN GAIN is a crop monitoring and comparative analysis service launched by Primary Industries (SA) in 1994. In its first year of operation, 500 farmers are monitoring some 550 crops across the State. GRAIN GAIN offers farmers the opportunity for improved management. This is achieved by collecting crop data as part of the crop monitoring processes, which in turn allows the factors limiting yield and quality in a paddock to be identified following analysis of data. Individual crop performance can be compared on a local, regional and national basis as part of the comparative analysis process.

Part of the Nationwide TOP CROP Management Program

GRAIN GAIN builds upon the experiences of numerous crop monitoring and management programs offered interstate. The most recognisable of these are 'MEY Check' (Vic), 'TOP CROP' (NSW and Qld.), 'Crop Check' (WA) and 'Crop Gain' (Tas). These programs, along with GRAIN GAIN, are now co-ordinated under a national Grains R&D Corporation (GRDC) sponsored umbrella known as 'TOP CROP'. The TOP CROP program is responsible for co-ordinating activities between States, management and development of data storage and processing systems, in addition to developing and exchanging technical issues between programs and States. The net result is a consistent approach to crop monitoring.

The contact between State Departments of Agriculture or Primary Industries has provided a tremendous opportunity for exchanging different ideas on the management of monitoring programs, in addition to introducing specific



A field inspection by a local Grain Gain group at Lameroo in the Southern Mallee.

extension programs (or aspects of them) across State boundaries. GRAIN GAIN groups are facilitated by PI(SA) District Agronomists, Soils and Land Management staff, and Agribusiness resellers and Agronomists.

Fitting into Existing Extension Activities in SA

GRAIN GAIN complements a number of existing programs currently running in SA, including the Right Rotations program, Property Management

Planning groups, Landcare groups and existing crop monitoring groups.

The challenge in the management of GRAIN GAIN in the future is to satisfy demand. As a result, it will be necessary to have greater involvement in the facilitation of group-based activities from agribusiness. It will also be necessary to encourage groups to be 'self-sustaining', and to continually improve on 'monitoring packages', in particular packages for new crops.

POSTGRADUATE COURSES IN SCIENCES COMMUNICATION

Realise your potential by becoming a skilled and articulate communicator. Study at home to complete a Postgraduate Diploma or Master of Sciences Communication.

To provide the best possible service to clients extension workers must be able to utilise the latest technology and information systems. The Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Sciences Communication have been initiated by Central Queensland University specifically to allow science communicators to develop this expertise.

The Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Sciences Communication provides skills in:

- utilising information and communication networks
- evaluating the needs and interests of potential audiences
- communicating effectively through both the written and spoken word
- effective use of the mass media
- establishing personal contacts in the media.

To allow greater flexibility both courses are offered by distance education and in part-time mode. This enables students to study at home and still meet employment commitments.

Any further enquiries in regard to postgraduate courses should be directed to:

A/Prof Lesley Warner
Central Queensland University
ROCKHAMPTON Qld 4702
Tel 079 30 9641 Fax 079 30 9209



Central Queensland
UNIVERSITY

Market Research: A key player in delivering the CRC message



Vena Weiss
Marketing Services
Officer with the
Co-operative
Research Centre for
Soil and Land
Management -
Waite Institute,
Urrbrae

How do we ensure that scientific research is being effectively used by those who need it? How do we know that those who need it are even aware of it? I'm sure these are two questions pondered by communicators and extension workers throughout the agricultural industry. A big concern with scientific research centres is that often (not always) researchers are far distanced from the potential end-users of their research. Now I'm not blaming anyone here, after all, a researcher's number one priority is research. What I'm advocating is a better understanding of the potential market for agricultural research and technology: the use of market research.

What is Market Research?

'Market research is the systematic and objective process of gathering, recording, and analysing data for aid in making marketing decisions.'

However, market research can also be qualitative in nature. One to one interviews or group discussions (commonly called focus groups) with people who fit the target market's profile are common forms of this more unstructured approach. Whether qualitative or quantitative, market research allows us to:

- better understand our client needs
- tailor and target information to the right people
- learn how your information, product or service should be delivered
- feed information back to researchers.

The last point is important in a research environment. Market research is not

only a valuable tool for the external market, it enables us to complete the communication loop and thus satisfy the internal customer, the researcher.

About the CRC

The Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Soil and Land Management is a joint venture between the CSIRO (Division of Soils), the University of Adelaide, and the South Australian Government. It has three research programs: Soil Structure

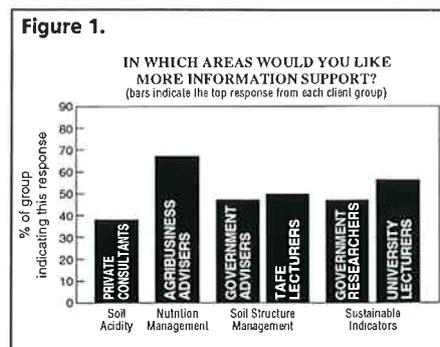


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the top response amongst each adviser group, when they were asked which soil and land management issues they need more information support on. Soil acidity was the top response with private consultants, while government researchers and university lecturers preferred more information on sustainability indicators.

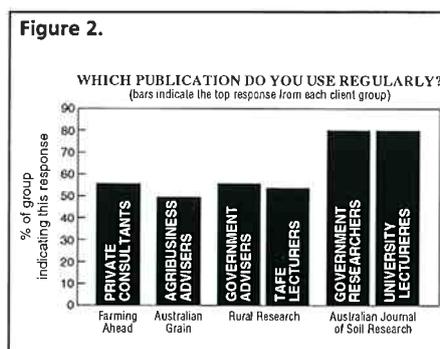


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the top response amongst each adviser group, when they were asked which publication they relied on most regularly for obtaining information on soil and land management. Government researchers and university lecturers again had the same top response with the Australian Journal of Soil Research being the most popular with these two groups.

and Fertility, Soil Biotechnology, and Soil Pollution and Rehabilitation; and a Communications and Education program. The centre is located at the Waite Campus in Adelaide.

CRC Market Research Role

The CRC communications group recognised the importance of knowing their market and created a market research role within the group - a role filled by yours truly. Put simply, my role in the CRC is to provide information support to the Centre on the issues affecting our clients or potential clients. My first year at the CRC has focused on researching the information needs of the agricultural extension and education market, including State government advisers and researchers, agribusiness advisers, private consultants and university and TAFE lecturers.

The Information Needs of Agricultural Advisers

The CRC communications group has built a strong relationship with a well known South Australian market research company, McGregor Marketing, and recently implemented a major survey of advisers throughout Australia. The purpose of the survey was to determine the research information needs of these people so that the CRC can properly service the specific needs of the adviser market.

The CRC's Market is Wider than Agriculture

Considering the diversity of the three research programs - Soil Structure and Fertility, Soil Biotechnology, and Soil Pollution and Rehabilitation, the CRC's technology has potential value to a range of markets outside agriculture.

The rehabilitation of contaminated urban development sites is one example where the CRC's technology, packaged in the right way, could prove to be very valuable.

To order a copy of the adviser survey findings please send a cheque for \$10 to:

Maryanne Grope
CRC for Soil and Land Management
PMB 2 Glen Osmond 5064
South Australia

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PLANNING MOVES FORWARD IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**Property Management Planning
Team Primary Industries, SA.**

Property Management Planning is primarily about striking a balance in the farm business. It involves formulating plans that achieve the objectives of the farming family, manage risk and increase profitability whilst managing the land sustainably. Planning in farming is not a new concept. Almost every activity carried out on a farm involves planning. Property Management Planning workshops provide an opportunity for farm managers to get together and discuss issues and ideas in relation to the development of their plans.

What is Property Management Planning?

Many people believe that property management planning is a fencing or layout plan for a property. In reality it is much more than this. Property management planning is a farm management process. It considers all aspects of the farm from the soil, to the individual enterprises, the farm's financial capacity, the external marketing environment, the people managing the farm and their aspirations.

- Firstly, the business and personal objectives of the farming team are identified to provide direction for the development of plans.
- Secondly, it involves assessing the farm's natural resources, improvements, enterprise performance and financial position.
- Then, based on these assessments, possible changes in management or marketing, or alternative enterprises, are identified.
- Lastly, we look at how to evaluate the potential of the management plans to achieve the objectives identified by the farming team and the associated risks and rewards.

What do the Workshops Involve?

Property management planning workshops involve individuals and farming teams from between eight and fifteen properties within a district. Father and son, husband and wife teams are encouraged to attend. Over a series of about eight workshops, participants



A stocktake of property natural resources is an initial step in the planning process.

develop their plans for their own property with assistance from Primary Industries (SA) staff, CARE officers in the Murray-Darling Basin, and other specialists within the district.

The workshops are relatively flexible, and are tailored to the needs of the group. Timing of the workshops is also flexible, so that busy periods on the farm are not disrupted. Workshops vary from field activities, to day or night sessions, depending on what fits in with the group. The atmosphere within workshops is informal and provides ample opportunity for group discussion of issues related to the development of a participant's plans. The approach is 'hands-on' rather than a lecture-type format. Currently in South Australia, 53 groups representing over 500 properties are involved in Property Management Planning workshops. To date, 70 properties have completed the workshop program.

What Are the Benefits ?

Participants in workshops around South Australia have stated the following benefits of Property Management Planning:-

- It improves confidence in decision making.
- It gives direction for a farm business.
- It increases understanding of the natural resources associated with the farm and how to manage them sustainably.

- It improves communication between family members.
- It helps in communicating plans for the property to banks, consultants etc.
- It provides an opportunity to discuss issues and ideas with other farmers and specialists.

What Does it Cost?

The costs involved in Property Management Planning workshops are currently \$70 per property for materials used within the workshops, plus the cost of aerial photograph enlargement of farmer's own property.



Workshop participants preparing a property layout.

SURVEY QUANTIFIES OUTCOMES OF EXTENSION PROGRAM IN SHEEP MANAGEMENT

By Brian Ashton, Livestock Adviser, Primary Industries SA, Port Lincoln.

Farmers in SA are making a number of major changes to their sheep management, including moving to later lambing. In some districts half the farmers now have some ewes that start lambing in June or later. Almost all of these farmers believe that later lambing helps their farm management or profitability. This information was collected by surveying a random sample of 349 farms in eight districts in the cereal and sheep areas of SA. It included an estimate of the date of adoption of later lambing by individual farmers surveyed. The attached graph shows that the swing to later lambing increased sharply after 1989, which corresponded to an intensive extension program by livestock people in Primary Industries SA. Since 1989, each year an average of 3.4 per cent of farmers have changed to lambing at least some of their ewes after 30 May. The most popular month chosen to lamb later is August with 11 per cent of all Merino ewes now lambing in that month.

Later Lambing

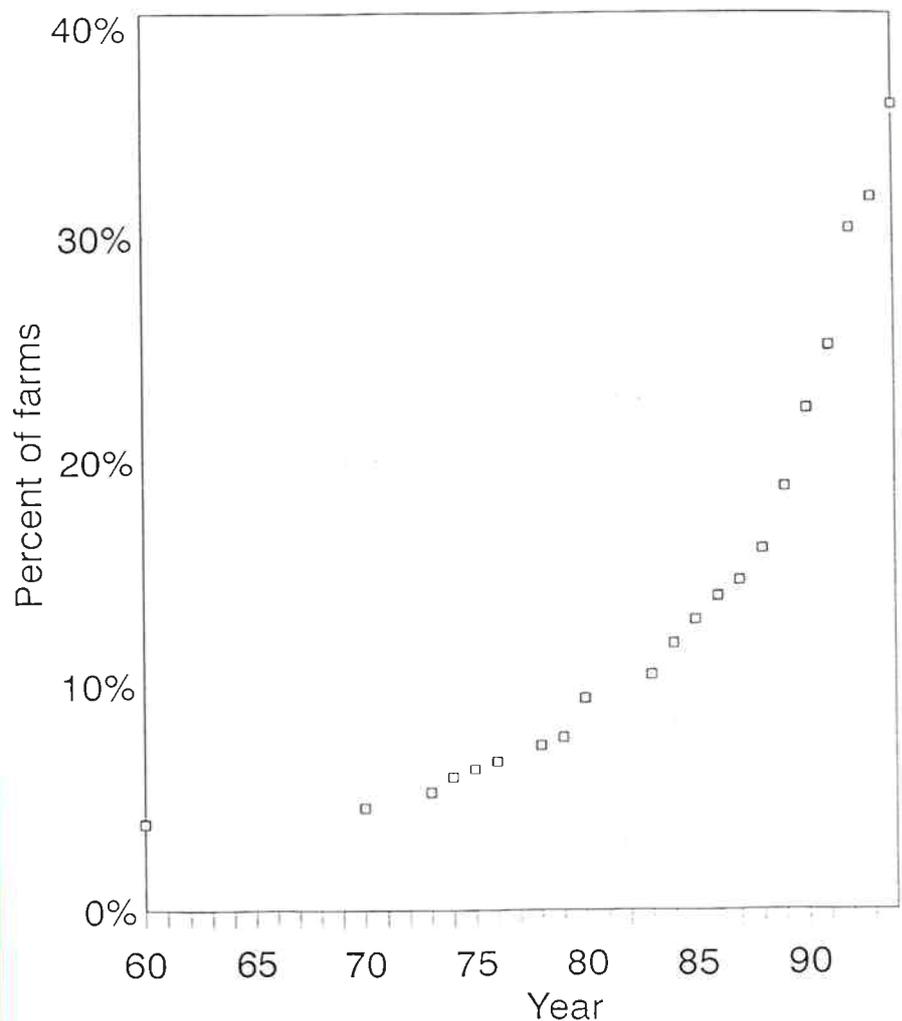
In the districts surveyed, an average of 37 per cent of farmers now lamb some ewes later. In Jamestown and Pt Lincoln districts about 50 per cent lamb later while the lowest is 25 per cent at Eudunda. Farmers were asked whether lambing later helped their farm management or profitability. In spite of the fact that so many have only changed in the last couple of years and may be undecided, 58 per cent said it 'definitely' does and 32 per cent said it 'probably' does. Some farmers, 3 per cent, are having problems and said later lambing is not of benefit on their farm. Seven per cent are undecided. When to shear has always been an issue when farmers consider later lambing because ewes cannot be shorn too close before, or after, lambing. The survey found farmers who lamb later have more of a spread in their shearing time than early lambers. They tend to shear more sheep in Summer, in October and November or, before lambing, in July. They also

have slightly more split shearing, with wethers or lambs shorn at a different time to the ewes. Farmers who lamb early tend to shear most sheep in August or September. There are many benefits from spreading the shearing time away from August and September. This year has highlighted the advantages of later lambing - as did last year. Many farmers with the traditional April and May lambing had to heavily handfeed their ewes for two months. This was time-consuming and expensive, and still

the ewes and lambs were in poor condition. A change in time of lambing is not an easy change. It requires careful planning to fit in all the complex operations of the farm calendar. Primary Industries SA have prepared a package of information which helps farmers plan the change. It gives the experiences of 105 farmers who lamb later and also research reports. This package can be obtained by sending a cheque for \$8 to Brian Ashton, Primary Industries SA, Box 1783, Pt Lincoln, SA 5606.

FARMS WITH SOME EWES LAMBING

Eight Cereal Sheep Areas of South Australia, 1994.



LAMBING LATER IS AFTER 30TH OF MAY

1994 'ComEx' Forum

Keeping yourself and your organisation up-to-date with the rapidly changing extension and communication scene in agri-industry is essential to effective planning and management. It is also important to inform others in the industry of your ideas and actions so alliances and co-operative ventures can be developed for mutual advantage.

The ComEx Forum being convened by the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Australasia-Pacific Extension Network on 22 and 23 November 1994 will provide you with an unique opportunity. An opportunity to learn about the latest trends, set up strategic alliances and networks and inform others of your innovative contribution to the industry.

The Forum also provides one of those rare opportunities where you can interact, professionally and socially, with those with similar interests from all over Australia.

We look forward to your joining us for this important Forum.

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 22 November 1994

- 9.00 - 10.00 am Registration
- 10.00 - 10.15 am Welcome and Introduction
Terry Makin, Member, AIAS Promotion of Learning in Agriculture Committee and Interim President, Australasia-Pacific Extension Network
- 10.15 - 10.45 am Self-introduction of Participants
- 10.45 - 11.45 am Syndicate Session
Identifying the major issues in achieving best practice in Communication and Extension
- 11.45 - 12.45 pm Plenary Session
Prioritising the major issues for achieving best practice in Communication and Extension
- 12.45 - 2.00 pm Lunch
20 minute presentations from invited speakers with 10 minutes of questions
- 2.00 - 2.30 pm Evaluating Extension Programmes
Ms Patricia Rogers, Lecturer, Programme for Public Sector Evaluation, Faculty of Applied Science, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology - Bundoora Campus.
- 2.30 - 3.00 pm Innovative Extension Programmes
Nigel McGuckian CPAg, Rendell McGuckian and Director, Farm Management 500
- 3.00 - 3.30 pm Adult Education and Extension
Shaun Coffey CPAg, Director, Research and Extension, Queensland Department of Primary Industries
- 3.30 - 4.00 pm Afternoon Tea
- 4.00 - 4.30 pm The Media and Information
Lindsay Bevege, General Manager Public Affairs, CSIRO
- 4.30 - 5.00 pm The Client Perspective of Extension During Droughts
Frank McClelland, Director, Department of Rural Affairs, Agriculture Victoria
- 5.00 - 5.45 pm Allocation of Syndicate Tasks
Workable Solutions to the Priority Issues for Communication and Extension in Agri-industry
- 7.00 pm Forum Dinner
La Spaghetтата Restaurant, 238 Lygon Street, Carlton

Wednesday, 23 November 1994

- 8.00 - 9.00 am Syndicate Work
- 9.00 - 9.45 am Report Back on Workable Solutions for Priority Issues for Communication and Extension
- 9.45 - 10.15 am Plenary on Workable Solutions
- 10.15 - 11.30 am Syndicate Sessions
Implementing the Workable Solutions (includes morning tea)
Report Back on Implementing the Workable Solutions
- 11.30 - 12.15 pm Lunch
Evaluating Existing Programmes which are Working
An opportunity for selected participants to present an outline of their programmes and evaluate them in terms of the Forum's conclusions on Priorities and Solutions
- 12.15 - 1.30 pm Afternoon Tea
- 1.30 - 3.00 pm Plenary Session on Solutions and Actions
Allocation of Tasks and Responsibilities for Action
- 3.00 - 3.20 pm Forum Close

I wish to participate in ComEx 1994

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title _____ Given Name _____

Surname _____

Preferred Name for I.D. _____

Organisation Represented _____

Position Held _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel: BH _____ AH _____

Fax _____

Special Food Requirements _____

FORUM REGISTRATION: (INCLUDES TEAS, LUNCHESES, FORUM DINNER, FORUM REPORT AND CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE FACILITIES FOR THE RELEVANT FORUM). PLEASE NOTE THAT REGISTRATION DOES NOT INCLUDE ACCOMMODATION OR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS.

PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOX(ES)

	AIAS MEMBER	APEN MEMBER	OTHER	LATE REGISTRATION*
Full Forum	250 <input type="checkbox"/>	250 <input type="checkbox"/>	300 <input type="checkbox"/>	350 <input type="checkbox"/>
22 Nov. Only	150 <input type="checkbox"/>	150 <input type="checkbox"/>	175 <input type="checkbox"/>	200 <input type="checkbox"/>
23 Nov. Only	150 <input type="checkbox"/>	150 <input type="checkbox"/>	175 <input type="checkbox"/>	200 <input type="checkbox"/>
Dinner	40 <input type="checkbox"/>	40 <input type="checkbox"/>	50 <input type="checkbox"/>	50 <input type="checkbox"/>

Payment Details:

I wish to pay by: Cheque Bankcard Mastercard Visa

Card No.

Amount _____ Expiry Date _____

Cardholder's Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Please return the registration form and payment, made payable to the AIAS, to:

AIAS, 1st Floor, 91 Rathdowne Street, Carlton VIC 3053
For all enquiries please contact Amanda Davis on
Tel (03) 662 1077 or by fax on (03) 662 2727

Please indicate if child care facilities are required
(Child care charges will be a on a fee for service basis)

* Registrations received after 31 October are subject to the late registration charge. A cancellation fee of \$50 will apply for registrations cancelled.

