

# EXTENSIONNET

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALASIA-PACIFIC  
EXTENSION NETWORK (INC)

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## APEN's 2nd Australasia Pacific Extension Conference is close ... very close!

### "Managing Change - Building Knowledge and Skills"

is the theme of the conference to be held at the Albury Convention Centre from the 18-21st November, 1997. It is emerging from being a 'national' conference to an 'international' one! It is great to have some members from New Zealand coming. We look forward to stronger and more numerous ties with our Kiwi colleagues. We especially welcome international Pacific neighbour members, including at least two from **Papua New Guinea and another five from other South Pacific islands!** We are grateful to AusAID and ACIAR for their financial support of these latter delegates. We all have much to gain from regional interaction amongst extensionists.

There are currently over 180 delegates registered for the Conference. There is still time and for many more new participants to register. Please consider! There is an impressive



group of keynote speakers, a tremendous array of worthwhile papers being presented and some thoughtful training sessions and fieldtrips organised. We know there have been important national landcare-related conferences in both South Australia and Tasmania recently ... so we can appreciate the current low numbers of delegates for Albury from those two states. However, we would love to see more folk from those states - both for their important inputs and also so they can share Conference benefits afterwards with colleagues.

This edition of **ExtensionNet** features articles from keynote speakers of the upcoming Conference. We wanted to introduce them all prior to the Conference, by way of different yet complementary thoughts to those we will be hearing in a few weeks time. Diana Day and Jeff Coutts have been able to provide papers and Bob Macadam responded to a similar request.

The papers are quite different. Jeff Coutts gives us a taste of what might follow in some of his Conference contributions, around evaluating extension. Diana Day provides an important perspective inclusive of (yet also beyond) extension, with regards community-wide participation in environmental management. Her context is the Hunter River Catchment. The article highlights points taken from an address to a NSW Department of School Education conference. Bob Macadam was one of the Steering Committee members instrumental in APEN coming into being. His short paper raises several highly relevant issues of extension.

The **next** (and final) edition of **ExtensionNet** for 1997 will highlight some themes and outcomes from the Conference and from the Annual General Meeting of APEN. You should receive it sometime in December.

### **NOTIFYING ALL APEN MEMBERS**

**The APEN Annual General Meeting  
Is being held at the Albury Convention Centre  
At 5.30pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 1997**

See pages 7 and 10 for details

***Hope to see you there!***

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*APEN is pleased to acknowledge the support of:*



Natural Resources and Environment

- AGRICULTURE
- RESOURCES
- CONSERVATION
- LAND MANAGEMENT



LAND & WATER CONSERVATION



**From the Chair**

**John Bourne**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Australasia Pacific Extension Conference is coming up rapidly and I look forward to meeting as many of you there as possible. Note the information about the AGM later in this issue and if you are interested in coming onto the Committee of Management, use the nomination form and return it to Rosemary at the Secretariat (address on back page) by 5.30pm on November 12<sup>th</sup> 1997.

Please use the registration form below and fax it to Conference Design if you find you can make it to the Conference after all!

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**2nd Australasia Pacific Extension Conference**

18 TO 21 NOVEMBER 1997  
ALBURY CONVENTION CENTRE

**TRAINING SESSIONS (for delegates only) Please note preference 1, 2, 3, 4**

1. Participation extension  2. Group skills  3. Presentation skills  4. Interpersonal skills  5. Evaluating extension

*If you are bonding your own travel and accommodation, do NOT complete the following section. You need to complete the payment summary only.*

**ACCOMMODATION (only complete this section if you wish Conference Design to make your booking. Indicate your preference and attend choice)**

Commodore Motel  The Carlton Albury  3 nights  
 Greentree Inn  Hampton Court Motor Inn  3 nights  
 Seaton Arms  Lakeside Motel  3 nights  
 Durr service  Metrome Motor Inn  3 nights

Room: Single  Twin  Double  Number of Nights: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sharing with: \_\_\_\_\_ Non smoking room if available

**TRAVEL (only complete this section if you wish Conference Design to arrange your travel)**

To ALBURY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Departure from: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Departure date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preferred departure time: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM ALBURY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Departure to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Departure date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preferred departure time: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you require the same bookings to make for accompanying persons: Yes  No   
 Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
 If children are travelling with you please supply names and ages: \_\_\_\_\_

**TRAVEL INSURANCE**  
 Travel insurance is available at policy cost of \$18.00 per person. Yes  No

**PAYMENT SUMMARY**

\* If you wish to make full payment for accommodation please include in summary. If only paying a deposit you are required to finalise your account with the venue prior to check out. This includes incidentals such as telephone, mini bar etc.

Registration \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Extra tickets to Social functions \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Field Trips - Partners Day Registration \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Optional Workshop \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Accommodation Deposit \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Travel Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please include your cheque made payable to:  
 APEN 2nd National Conference - or NSW, Murrumbidgee, Bankstown, Amey, Thurst  
 Cash/cheque \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Return to the Conference Secretariat, Conference Design Pty Ltd  
 PO Box 412  
 North Bay NSW 2466  
 Ph: 08 6224 5774 Fax: 08 6224 5774  
 Email: confdesign@bluewintrg.apc.au

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**REGISTRATION FORM**

**2nd Australasia Pacific Extension Conference**

18 TO 21 NOVEMBER 1997  
ALBURY CONVENTION CENTRE

**DELEGATE REGISTRATION FEE (see details page 12)**

Early Bird paid prior to 18/9/97 \$550.00  
 Full Member Registration \$400.00  
 Full Non Member Registration \$200.00  
 Student \_\_\_\_\_

Fee paid after 18/9/97:  
 Full Member Registration \$400.00  
 Full Non Member Registration \$250.00  
 Student \$150.00  
 Day Registration - (1 day only) \$120.00  
 Wednesday  Thursday  Friday

Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SOCIAL FUNCTIONS (see details page 10)**

Welcome - \$25.00  
 Dinner - \$40.00  
 BBQ - \$15.00  
 Fun Run (see event) \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes  No

**FIELD TRIPS (included in Registration fee) (Please note preference 1, 2, 3, 4)**

1. Regional Business Development  2. Group Skills  3. Alternative Industries in the Events  4. Rural Women making a difference   
 Field Trip (Accompanying Persons) \$15.00  
 1. Regional Business Development  2. The Changing Face of Landcare  3. Alternative Industries in the Events  4. Rural Women making a difference

Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**OPTIONAL WORKSHOP**  
 A whole team approach - Kerns Case Study \$65.00

Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## From the Editor

### Dale Williams

I will be stepping aside from the Committee of Management at the next AGM and from the role of ExtensionNet Editor after the December issue. I would like to thank members for the opportunity of my involvement in these capacities in recent years. I warmly encourage different APEN members to share in management opportunities and responsibilities. Ours is a 'network'. It is more than a professional 'association'. It will work if we all equally own its purpose, processes and benefits ... if we each play our roles in its shared life. Recent years have been

busy and somewhat stressful, in general, for me. One small way of making a little more time for my wife's and my Doctrates is for me to put aside my APEN work (and looking for other 'outs' too). It is also healthy for APEN to keep circulating new insights, abilities and experiences of diverse members through regular change of committee members.

I encourage widespread support by membership in contributing individual articles to **ExtensionNet**. I also urge Chapters, groups and individuals to take more responsibility for ensuring provision of content for whole issues. **ExtensionNet** needs YOU. Most

members have basically not responded to public requests for input and groups have similarly balked at specific requests to take responsibility for issues three, six or nine months ahead. Difficulties obtaining sufficient copy for some issues and late submissions of articles creates delays getting **ExtensionNet** to you. We potentially have a great tool in **ExtensionNet** for professional development, mutual encouragement and collaboration. I know it can become something 'much more' than what it already is. Each of us has MUCH to offer. Please share it. All the best!



## Preparing another pounce on extension evaluation

### Jeff Coutts, Rural Extension Centre, Gatton

The evaluation of extension has been an on-going area of difficulty. Either it has been undertaken too simplistically (measuring the total level of adoption of specific technologies or practices - despite extension being only one of the influences operating), or it has been measured with complex formulae that provide doubtful results. Following a major review of extension evaluation Scrimgeour et al (1991) concluded that ... given the fragility of estimates... it would be possible to carefully choose a model estimated over the data set and 'prove' that extension has been or has not been, a very productive investment.

A number of factors are demanding that extension evaluation is better addressed. Government departments in Australia are increasingly viewing extension as an arm of rural policy rather than as an ad-hoc provider of services. Programs and projects are being 'contracted' out to extension through the funder-purchaser-provider approach. This brings with it an expectation of demonstrable policy outcomes. Likewise, Research and Development Corporations are increasingly funding extension either through government agencies, or directly through private providers. These funding bodies are also accountable and require evidence that

the Commonwealth and industry dollar is being used effectively.

Evaluation of extension can be likened to making a case to present to a jury. Evidence is collected and analysed in a rigorous and transparent way. A combination of quantitative measurements, qualitative analysis and an appreciation of the context surrounding the case is woven into an argument to inform, and if necessary, convince a third party.

Whether the third party is a funding body, a project team or an industry or community group, the same principle applies.

Unlike the jury example, however, extension evaluation has the potential to involve all parties in the evaluation process at some level. Not only is this often more effective, it means that evaluation becomes a learning exercise for those most intimately involved in the program or project. The results of the evaluation then become part of the project memory with the potential for considerable impact, rather than remaining in a published report written by a disembodied external evaluator.

Extension evaluation is not only needed for accountability and funding

purposes, but also to provide a rapid learning loop for those of us involved in the operation, management and training of extension. It is time to take the tiger by the tail, and design and implement effective evaluation processes to allow extension to develop and continuously improve its value to those who benefit from it.

I will be presenting a paper at the Second Australasia Extension Conference entitled 'Exposing the tiger- a fresh look at the evaluation of extension'. I propose a framework for thinking about, and planning, the evaluation of extension programs and projects. It will also seek to provide examples of the application of this framework in practice. Importantly, it will attempt to demonstrate that extension can be evaluated on the basis of the specific knowledge process which it is contributing towards change, and to remove the angst of having to prove direct 'cause-effect' impact of projects and programs.

### Reference:

Scrimgeour F, Gibson J & O'Neil P (1991) *Agricultural Extension: An Economic Assessment*, University of Waikato, New Zealand.



*The following paper by Diana Day appeared in the Newcastle Herald (13/9/94). It was taken from Diana's keynote paper presented to a NSW Dept. of School Education conference on environmental issues in the Hunter region. An obvious strength of the paper for extensionists is its holistic outlook. One shortcoming of some extension activity to date has been its impoverished understanding of the wider context in which we live, work and study. Another shortcoming has been the inability to integrate vision and networks beyond immediate extension relationships. This paper provides a broad account of 'what is there' and some pointers to attitudes and actions that provide opportunity in which everyone can participate in some way in environmental restoration and management. Ed.*

## An environmental role that everyone can play

**Diana Day**  
*Consultant, researcher and  
 commentator*

*As the environment continues to attract attention, Diana Day outlines how individuals and communities can play their part in environmental management and protection.*

**PROGRESS** in environmental management is achieved only through people and we can all have a role. Communication, community involvement, information and vision are key ingredients to learning and positive change. Personal experience of an issue and personal action can be very powerful in changing a situation to something that is better in our environment.

People in the Hunter Region live in one of the most exciting regions of Australia — a frontline region of rich traditions in agriculture and industrial development. Nowhere else have I seen a closer sense of community among a regional population. Nowhere else is there such a complexity of landuse and landuse conflicts. Richness in natural resources of forests, rivers, beaches and wildlife remains, but continues to be challenged by population growth. As a result, environmental awareness is high across the community and environmental education one of our most important achievements and ongoing tasks.

Environmental management is all about people. It is clearly not inside a government agency, nor a policy either. A most important outcome for environmental management is to achieve outcomes that give us a biologically highly productive or sustainable

environment where water and air is good for our health, and where there is enjoyment of a rewarding quality of life and the natural environments we need for our spiritual vitality. This is a tall order. It seems society wants it all: quality environments, economic growth, jobs, environmental protection and water for a diversity of social and environmental benefits.

We all have a role in managing the environment and environmental education is critical to how we handle the task. No longer can governments decide what is good for people when managing catchments is concerned. Many agencies would like more resources to support community groups such as RiverCare, Streamwatch and total catchment management groups.

The Hunter Region has shown rapid growth in community groups participating with State and local government in education and action on the environment. A good example is the creation of the draft total catchment management strategy for the Williams River valley. The task groups involved here have prepared recommendations on key environmental problems and how to address them.

Natural resources degradation is closely linked with social and economic change. The changing water quality pattern of the Hunter River and tributaries is influenced by runoff variability, all landuse and its changes, groundwater, geology and soils, agriculture, town runoff, mining,

drought, and a host of other catchment influences.

The status of the water resource constantly changes, and indeed community attitudes and priorities change. Our aim should be to contain any deteriorating water quality and to strive for enhancement when this is seen as desirable and if we can afford or affect the outcome. One challenge is how best to use stored water for the multiple water use and demands.

Management priorities include river bank protection and fostering riparian vegetation along the Hunter River channel, its many tributaries and their corridors. Riparian vegetation protects stream banks from erosion and filters excess nutrients and sediment from cleared land and stops it entering the stream. It is also an important wildlife habitat and provides a corridor for wildlife to travel between remnants of native vegetation. Riverside vegetation is also important for stream ecology by providing shaded areas and snags for fish protection.

Rivers are important for recreation. Any white water canoeist would know of both the threat and life-saving potential of riverside trees and shrubs.

Salt is a major water quality issue in the Hunter. It arises through many causes such as naturally high saline rocks and groundwater, agricultural activities and mining. Bacteriological contamination of river water is also caused by a range of



*Dungog - community concern led to the longterm postponement of damming the Williams River. Photo Courtesy: James Muddle*

factors such as runoff from diverse agricultural and urban landuses. Both these water quality problems, with blue green algae in the Williams River, are issues the whole community will need to manage.

So we will need to be ever vigilant where environmental quality is concerned. Water quality is an excellent indicator of environmental quality and a vital factor in the Hunter Region's future. Degradation of water quality imposes limits to life. Therefore there is no way we can afford to trifle with the quality of water. This makes the total catchment management approach to managing the environment a veritable holy grail for the future. We need to know what is in our water and what this means for us and for the environment.

**COMMUNICATION** is a vital aspect to managing future environments, for things get done only through people.

The importance of information and being familiar with the relevant people cannot be underestimated. Increasing one's awareness can be helped by extending personal networks.

There is a surge of community involvement in environmental planning and education. MineWatch is an interesting development on behalf of some landowners and those affected by development, mainly mining. Achievements of this organisation are significant in that they are testimony to the significance of

individual action, networking and keeping the channels of communication open. Examples include assisting landowners and the community in understanding how they might be affected by mining and bringing all interests together to talk about mining industry impacts and their solution.

Streamwatch is another example of strong and successful community participation in environmental management, through monitoring of streams by schools. Streamwatch is set to prosper, resourced and supported from a diversity of government and community resources.

In caring for the environment we need to be wary of the data trap. People and organisations can collect vast amounts of information. There is a tendency to store it, to love it, to protect it from any harm or even not to use it. In terms of data collection or quantification of our environment, we must consider what questions we are asking and what sort of data we really want to answer those questions. Qualitative information concerning people's experiences, attitudes and perceptions is important to environmental planning. So is communication between agencies and communities.

Understanding the roles of prediction, risk and uncertainty are major areas where skills are needed. No situation is static. The ability to project to the future is vital. We have to manage what is coming. This includes prevention of some problems occurring. So we need to be

flexible and creative and plan even further into the future in water planning and environmental protection. The Department of Water Resources is looking into the next 30 years.

And if you can imagine the increase in population, industrialisation, water consumption, waste production, transport infrastructure and land clearance for urbanisation, you can see the need to plan well ahead to try to cope with the change.

In planning the future some questions to ask would be: What is happening now in the environment in a particular catchment? What are current practices creating this situation? What is the future with these practices? Is this what we want? If not, what is the new vision and the new behaviours needed? Can we create these new practices in time, and to any extent?

These are significant questions to planning sustainable futures. We do have choices. Whatever the concern in environmental management, it involves people. Individuals count in change. Good examples are Rachael Carson and her book, *Silent Spring*, which galvanised the Western world to reconsider widespread use of chemical insecticides. Closer to home is Wendy Bowman, who has worked to increase awareness of mining and its effect on the Hunter Valley landscape.

The future of community involvement depends on networking and information sharing. **To get information we need**, it is important to:

- Know your issue
- Know what information will help
- Create the confidence to approach people.
- Ask the right people.
- Approach more than one person or organisation if necessary.
- Do not believe everyone.
- Do not be frightened to approach the leaders.

*(Continued next page)*

- Have a good case ready to back up why you need the information and support.
- Becoming involved with Landcare, Streamwatch and other environment associations.

Be wary of 'rational' science in measuring environmental values and note the importance of the intangibles such as emotion, morality, aesthetics, spirituality and the realities of people lives.

**Action that one can take** to help the environment includes:

- Becoming a specialist in one issue of importance to your area.
- Participating directly to see how systems work, such as attending workshops.
- Contributing to policy formation by commenting on public discussion papers such as those put out by the Hunter Catchment Management Trust.
- Commenting on environmental impact statements on display at the Department of Planning.
- Contributing to any commissions of inquiry.
- Writing about your concerns and getting them published.

**DO NOT BE FOOLED** that research on an issue is for brainy specialists. Anyone can do research. One thing we must do is to make sure we know what is already known. Often there is sufficient experience, information and fieldwork to make good conclusions about an issue.

Our catchment management activities show us that the ecological principles of sustainability that leads to healthy rivers, must be central to environmental management programs for the future. As our personal health is probably priority for us in our lives, so too is the health of the environment. The degradation or erosion of environmental complexity has negative import for many species, including us.

Never has there been better and more opportunities for **careers in managing the environment**. All subject areas have a contribution, from geology to psychology to engineering to philosophy.

Those who get the best jobs in the end must compete with many course graduates, so four things are vital:

- Good communication skills.
- An ability to work in teams.
- Work experience.
- Understanding of the complexity of influences on the environment.

As Gandhi has said, "**You must be the change you wish to see in the world**".



**Ed.**

\* Please note that Diana is not now employed by NSW Land and Water Resources. She can be contacted at: Diana Day and Associates P.O. Box48 Oyster Bay. NSW 2225. Diana's full paper, 'Creating our Environmental Future', is available for \$20. I have suggested that she brings a copy to the November Conference for perusal and ordering by participants.

## Some extension issues for discussion

### Bob Macadam

Centre for Systemic Development, UWS-Hawkesbury

I submitted three papers for this November's APEN Conference. One paper is a 'personal history' of extension in Australia. Another is an explanation of the concept of systemic development and a case study of its use to design and conduct a 'leadership and training program' in the oil palm industry in PNG. The third is an account of a project sponsored by the DRDC to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the regional development program it initiated in Australia's dairying regions. The issues raised in this article are drawn from these three papers.

Rural development is often presented as a choice between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches. Top-down development can be construed as the product of interaction between the institutional and political frameworks, and the technologies common to them; and bottom-up as that arising from

community life and the (largely indigenous) technology used.

An alternative view of development is from the 'centre out', where the 'centre' is the pattern of relationships that draws the too-often separated parties in the rural development environment, i.e. integration of the "rational system" and the "lifespace".

Governments in Australia tend to respond to issues as either economic, social or environmental and to initiate programs accordingly. Their stated need to account for expenditure of public funds prompts them to set program goals which specify outputs that coincide with government policy but may or may not be compatible with the diverse and inter-related goals and aspirations of industry and community groups with an interest in the situation. This reflects the 'rational system' and the 'lifespace'.



Cahill (1995) highlights the significance of the 'lifespace' in his analysis of eight rural community groups in south eastern Australia that had been able to demonstrate tangible achievements in reversing, or at least slowing down, the downward trend in population, employment and community services.

One common feature of these eight groups was that each made the crucial initial decision that their destiny lay in their hands. Other than this each group had a unique approach although a number of key components were identified that should be addressed. These included the need for dynamic local leadership, a common vision and goals, skills training of leaders, regular monitoring of performance and involvement of local government and media in the activities of the group.

McKinlay's (1995) evaluation of Farm Advance demonstrated its effectiveness in achieving both government and farmer goals. However, it also highlighted a dilemma relative to its future funding. Government agencies are prepared to fund their input as information providers, in line with their 'transfer of technology' model, but not fund the maintenance of the network of groups. At the same time, farmers, who were accustomed to free extension services in the past, are resistant to paying significantly increased subscriptions to cover the cost of the network.

Rural Research and Development Corporations and government agencies are placing an increasing emphasis on 'group' and 'participatory' extension methods in their programs. They do so on the grounds that this is the most effective way to achieve their goals of more technologically advanced and competitive industries. Arnstein's framework (in Smith, 1981) of degrees of participation is a useful evaluative device for tracing the development of these programs. The degrees range through 'manipulation - therapy - informing - consultation - placation - partnership-delegated power - citizen control'. The Regional Development Program sponsored by DRDC is bringing the differences in perspective about the scope and purpose of the Program among institutional, industry and community stakeholders to the surface.

**Reference:**  
McKinlay, J. (1995) A Review of Farm Advance, Farm Advance, Bendigo.



**APEN News**

**APEN Annual General Meeting**

The next Annual General Meeting (AGM) will occur during the upcoming Conference, at the Albury Convention Centre in Albury. It will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 1997.

years, though committee members can be re-elected for one additional term. At this stage there are three positions vacant or coming up for re-election.

At this stage,

- Dale Williams' position on the Committee of Management needs replacing.
- Warren Straw is finishing his first two-year term and is available to be re-elected for an additional term at the AGM.
- The interim Treasurer, Bob Edgar (taking over from departed Horrie Poussard), will need to be elected into that position for him to continue.
- Peter Davies position of Vice-president requires re-election.

John Bourne, Sue Hinton, Ian Maling and Jane Wightman have another year remaining of their first term.

Any members who have **AGM items of General Business** are encouraged to submit them to the Secretariat at least seven (7) days prior to the AGM.

**Nominations for Committee of Management**

positions must be with the Secretariat seven (7) days before the AGM. The nomination must be written and be signed by two members of APEN. Written consent is required from the nominee. This endorsement can be on the nomination letter (or use the form below). Terms are normally for two

**Nomination Form for Office positions in APEN**

We, the undersigned, being financial members of APEN, nominate .....for the position of .....on the APEN Committee of Management or.....Regional Chapter.[Strike out non applicable situation]

Name.....Signature.....

Name.....Signature.....

**Consent of Nominee**

I, .....am a financial member of APEN and I accept the nomination for the position of .....

Signature .....DATE .....