Rural Servicing in Transition
A Tasmanian Workshop
Hobart, November 26, 2003

Workshop outcomes report
CONTENTS

Overview ........................................................................................................................................... 1
Vote allocations ............................................................................................................................... 3
Have agriculture as an enthusiastic and positive feel industry ................................................. 4
Professional development in extension ....................................................................................... 6
Working with the private sector on industry projects ............................................................... 9
Brokers – putting farmers first ..................................................................................................... 11
Commercialising existing products/services/information ....................................................... 13
Empowering growers to embrace positive change ................................................................. 15
Timeframes: short term resources vs long term issues .............................................................. 16
Future of extension in government – state and local ............................................................... 18
Postscript ...................................................................................................................................... 19
How to contact APEN Tasmania ............................................................................................... 19
Overview

Rural Servicing in Transition workshop: November 26, 2003

Introduction and purpose
A workshop was held in Hobart to bring together all public and private rural service providers within Tasmania and the users of those services. The aim of the workshop was to face the realities of where those services are now, where they are liable to be in the future and, to make those decisions that are going to be of the greatest benefit for the provision of services which would maximize the wealth creating opportunities of the State.

The opportunity represented by bringing public and private rural service providers and the users of those services together was to improve service provider’s capacity to anticipate and meet emerging needs in the rural sector and thus enhance the sector’s development and its contribution to Tasmania. There was also the opportunity to improve service delivery to growers and agribusiness through identification of current or emerging gaps in service provision and development of plans/partnerships to address them.

This brief report includes an overview of the workshop and its outcomes. It also includes transcribed notes from all the interest groups that developed in the concluding session of the workshop. These groups formed to progress initiatives that were identified in the course of the workshop as being key priority areas for rural service delivery in Tasmania.

The report is intended to provide feedback on the workshop to all participants and other interested parties who were not present on the day. It is also intended to stimulate the progression of the initiatives discussed on the day.

How it was done
Managers and practitioners from industry associations, agribusiness, private consultancies, and DPIWE, as well as the farmers for whom services are provided, were invited. Over 75 stakeholders attended. A professional facilitator, Tony Richardson, was employed to direct and manage dialogue, activities and ensure the objectives of the workshop were achieved. An open-space technology approach was employed to establish the key issues facing extension in Tasmania and to prioritise and further develop concepts into actions for the future.

The event was underwritten by the Tasmanian Chapter of the Australasia Pacific Extension Network. Additional support was achieved through sponsorship from the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, and endorsement was provided from the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group, the Tasmanian Farmer and Graziers Association, and Greening Australia (Tasmania).
What was achieved

The key priority areas that were identified as being necessary for progression were:

- to have agriculture as an enthusiastic and positive industry in Tasmania
- to generate professional development in extension in Tasmania
- to have the State government working with the private sector on projects
- to use a model of 'brokers' for extension and putting farmers first
- to commercialise existing extension products, services and information
- empower growers to embrace positive change in Tasmania
- addressing short and long term time frame issues for extension
- determine the future of extension in government

The workshop was a great success in terms of confirming that extension was a vital activity for public, semi-public (NGO) and private sector organisations alike; enthusing everybody that extension is a viable concept that can adapt to new circumstances; revealing that the future of extension is likely to be about public-private partnerships and validating that APEN has a crucial role to play, especially at the state level.
Vote allocations

During the workshop a number of initiatives/issues were identified by the participants. These were placed on a wall and the participants were asked to vote on which ones they perceived as being the highest priority for progressing rural service delivery in Tasmania. Participants were given coloured dots depending on which sector they worked within – consultants, government, farmers, agribusiness or NGO (Non Government Organisation). This provided information on which initiatives/issues were seen as important by each sector. Each participant was able to allocate six votes.

Table 1: Vote allocations for initiatives/issue by industry sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>% of all votes</th>
<th>% of consultant votes</th>
<th>% of govt votes</th>
<th>% of farmer votes</th>
<th>% of agribusiness votes</th>
<th>% of NGO votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture as an enthusiastic and positive feel industry</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development in extension</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our culture our future</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovating extension</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting extension practitioners talking</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with private sector on industry projects</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokers – putting farmers first</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercialising existing products</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering growers to embrace positive change</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term resources vs long term issues</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of extension government and local</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of votes per category</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>163.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total votes per category</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have agriculture as an enthusiastic and positive feel industry

(initially strengthening rural communities)
73 votes

**Issue/opportunity**
Strengthening rural communities

**Convenor**
Peter Tyson, DPIWE.
[Ph: 6421 7692  Email: Peter.Tyson@dpiwe.tas.gov.au ]

**Key discussions**
Skill people
Create rural wealth
  - lifestyle/experiences
  - money
Give agriculture a value
  - economical
  - mother industry
  - effect on wider community
Lifting the profile
  - most important industry
  - change wider attitudes
Change the image of agriculture in the community

**Possible first steps**
Capture exactly what is agriculture and put it in perspective
  - audit/survey
Tell everyone
Identify the ‘champions’ who will promote the positive aspects of the industry
Sell the message to the masses
Change farmer attitudes to be more positive towards their industry

**Why is it important?**
Affects the well being of the whole state
We are a big rural community
  - farms are our support base
What’s happening now?
Social fragmentation
Image of agriculture is currently not good
No, not many people entering
Not attracting the best talent due to the way people are treated
Lack of enthusiasm and excitement

Ideal for 3-5 years
Have agriculture as a job of choice
Have Tasmania as a nursery for agricultural professionals
- industry and government to deliver this
Have agricultural industry acknowledge as to what the value use – social, financial

First steps
Marketing campaign
- within and outside industry
Comparative analysis between other industries
- agriculture vs tourism
- SARS or terrorist attack
Show politicians/community leaders what agriculture really is
Link in with other important large community issues
- health!!$

Cooperation, coalitions needed
Partnerships with high profile leverage
- Heart Foundation
- Health
- Sports
- Tourism
Industry other than agriculture – complementary
Government support

Role of APEN?
Framework?
Identify community ‘champions’

Who’s responsible?
Tas Together
Food Industry Council
Bryan Green
TFGA
Industry Associations
All who have a stake in primary industry
Professional development in extension
22 votes

(Amalgamating three sub-groups)

Sub Group 1 - Our culture our future
11 votes

Convenor
Penny Bastock, DPIWE.
[Ph 63365263 Email: Penny.Bastock@dpiwe.tas.gov.au]

Key discussions
Culture is important
Understanding culture helps to deliver extension
Extension can change culture
Extension culture is conservative farming culture
Culture’s are diverse – regions, organisations, extension systems, need to change the culture of extension

Possible first steps
More mixed activities with farmers
Set up working group – this is a role for APEN, to work on changing extension cultures
(State govt, agribusiness, NGOs, …)

Sub group 2 Moving extension to encompass innovative technology, process and services

Convenor
Nicole Middleton, NRM Facilitator
[Ph: 0439 404994 Email: Nicole.Middleton@nht.tas.gov.au]

Key issues/discussions
Use of ‘models’ – individual, catchment
Issue must be an issue or appeal to them
Show direct benefit ($)
Sharing of knowledge
Intellectual property of developing solutions to issues and sharing this information

Possible first steps
Education across users of extension services
Extension services have access to R&D
Communicate to ‘front-line’ extension people (e.g., field days, workshops) and remove the red tape between extension officers

**Sub group 3 - Getting extension practitioners talking in Tasmania**
27 votes

**Convenor**
Jane Weatherley, Rural Development Services  
[ Ph: 6231 9033 Email: Jane.Weatherley@utas.edu.au]

**Issues and opportunities**
Getting extension practitioners talking/learning/networking in Tasmania

**Key discussion points**
Lots of extension programs/officers working in isolation  
Information/resource sharing not occurring – don’t continually re-invent the wheel (learn from Tasmania – Australia – world)

**First steps**
Profesional development (knowledge/skills)  
Networking incorporated into extension practices/projects  
Build on existing professional services e.g., APEN chapter

**Amalgamated group - Professional development in extension**

**Issue/opportunity**
Professional development, networking, promoting extension, to get cultural change

**Why is this important**
Increase return on R&D, sustainability, NRM  
Developing ‘our’ capacity to effect change  
Further development of the extension profession  
Foster the extension culture and best practice

**What happening now?**
Lack of communication between extension providers  
    Competitive issue  
    Isolation
Ideals in 3-5 years
6-12 forums on extension
   - providing quality training
   - knowledge sharing
   - client input
Understanding of extension
Support to attend conferences/forums etc
Extension valued enough to be included as core business not short term projects
Strong network of extension in Tasmania

First steps
Development of an internet extension chat group
Obtain all of today’s participants contacts, prefer email
Start state/regional extension groups (possibly APEN chapters)

Cooperation and coalitions needed
Management support
Ministerial support of our value and role

Role of APEN
Possibly facilitate some of the above actions e.g., chapters

What’s taking responsibility for this to happen
Jane Weatherley Rural Development Services [Ph: 6231 9033  Email: Jane.Weatherley@utas.edu.au] collecting details.

You!
Working with the private sector on industry projects

66 votes

Convenor
Basil Doonan, DPIWE
[Ph: 6421 7611  Email: Basil.Doonan@dpiwe.tas.gov.au]

Issues/opportunity
At operational level need groups to help DPIWE prioritise activities
Need to develop plans to achieve growth
Driven bottom up
Include networking well together but not linked strategically to State of Growth
- expand to higher level
  o include?

First steps
Frontline relationships good
Higher up?
Environment changed with State of Growth
Govt not in business of competing
Identify priority projects
Govt doesn’t drop low priorities
Industry strategic project development group is to plan operational part to strategic plan for agriculture
If something doesn’t happen then lots of people will be shitty

Who tells them?
Ray Hart (State of Growth)
Document thoughts to say to the Minister how we think – conservationists, farmers, service providers – can work with us to achieve State of Growth
Skills audit – yes/no
Defining projects hard
Team to deliver easy
Not necessarily industry specific

Who does planning?
Wave flag
$ into planning (DPIWE)
DPIWE must change view
**Why important?**

How can government and private sector work in partnership to achieve mutual goals (operational)
Better focus
Better outcomes
Synergy
Maximise resources
Achieve goals faster
Professional development
Consistent messages
Ownership

**What’s happening now?**

Isolated examples do work but potential for lot more
Ad hoc at the moment
Some perception of competition – that govt competes with agribusiness
Lack of guidelines for partnership arrangements and no formal sign off

**Ideal for 3-5 years**

Runs on the board that the government/agribusiness partnership has resulted in adoption and increased productivity (sustainable)
Accepted practice to work in partnership govt/private sector

**First steps**

Industry strategic project
Development group
Role
  - document the ideas from today’s group
  - seek support for industry partnership from DPIWE management
  - identify industry projects that government/agribusiness can work together to promote agricultural sustainable growth e.g., water use efficiency in agriculture
  - identify key people from industry

**Cooperation/coalitions needed**

Not dealt with

**Role of APEN?**

Not dealt with?

**Who’s taking responsibility?**

Basil Doonan, DPIWE
[Ph: 6421 7611 Email: Basil.Doonan@dpiwe.tas.gov.au]
Brokers – putting farmers first

40 votes

Convenor:
David Fulton, Rural Development Services
[Ph 6231 9033 Email: david.rds@bigpond.com]

Key issues
Regional officer
Work with individual businesses to help them achieve their vision
  - social
  - environmental
  - financial
Broker knows who can be used when/where to help the business when it needs it
Develops long term relationship
Matches needs and resources
Focuses on specific information
How get 50 growers?
Independent
  Can’t consultants provide that now?
  Does this create an ‘independent’ business =- can be done according to the needs of clients?
Similar to old system
Focuses on farmer problems
Competitors and costs?
Companion dairy farms similar to this (developing business plan)
Incorporate groups
Who funds it?
Farmers – need to see you as part of their business
Person very important
Business planning v. confronting
Very good
  - goes to need
  - let me help
Like having an accountant/lawyer on the farm management team
Like potato FarmBiS which has worked well
Brokers need good resources to call on
Must be independent of ‘funding’ to ensure longevity

First steps
Get funding/people
  - how access expertise when committed elsewhere?
Make a start
Is this what farmers want?
Why important?
Farmers needs addressed on an individual basis – long-term
Extension now generic and not specific to farmers’ situation

What’s happening now?
Trust long-term specific
Farmers not accessing best practice information and integrating it into their situation

Ideal in 3-5 years
8-10 brokers in Tasmania servicing 50% of farmers

First steps
Succeed with meat
Sell to farmers
Secure new rounds of funding

Cooperation and coalitions
People who want to work with you
Funding sources

Role of APEN
Could be useful as expert group
Selling idea broadly

Responsibility
David Fulton, Rural Development Services
[Ph 6231 9033 Email: david.rds@bigpond.com]
**Commercialising existing products/services/information**

(– e.g., Wormplan, Farm Management Planning, IPM courses, grazing plans)

34 votes

**Convenor**

Amabel Fulton, Rural Development Services  
[Ph 6231 9033 Email: amabel@bigpond.com]

**Issue/opportunity**
Assisting farmers to put case to banks  
How fits with putting farmers first? – work out what farmers needs are?  
Lots of good products but not enough time to extend them effectively  
Need baseline to continue delivery and on-going development of product  
Think through long-term right from the beginning  
Need to share products across industries  
Keeping the technology up-to-date  
How much will it cost? Has to be cost effective for the client  
Ownership of intellectual property?  
Need links between programs to ensure follow-on is possible  
Why seem to keep re-doing same research – this would provide continuity  
Packages need to be very user friendly – how make it appeal?  
Consider ways the government can maximise return on investment in developing products  
Commercialising existing research – how maintain independence?

**First steps**
Market research – will they pay?  
What’s there, what’s worked?

**Why important?**
Stuff not getting out  
If all extension officers were lost tomorrow agriculture would still continue – so need to justify the job  
No full-stop on projects  
Client-driven demand  
Prevents re-invention and more readily available to many  
Better uptake and use because sold better  
Work with people who want to use it
What's happening now?
Programs stop when funding stops – slash and burn
Intellectual property not well defined (packaging important)
No commercialisation of RD&E with exception of RCS products and other training products
Serve-Ag? Edge?
Currently not valued or updated e.g., PasturePak, FertiliserPak, Womrplan, Grazfeed
Not being used

3-5 year ideal
Active partnering for mutual benefit
High level delivery of services across Tasmania
Review of commercialisation activities and content across industry, and on-going review
Infrastructure for delivering products
Links/feedback to research programs to keep updated
Identified what’s in the cupboard
How overlap with client’s needs?
Percentage of farmers involved increasing each year
Use farmers to help develop products

First steps
Develop plan
Scan what is in the cupboard (lit review)
Talk to DPIWE mature staff, MLA across all parts of ag
Create a list of products
Assess customer response to products
Develop a business plan to commercialist
Attract investors
Deliver

Cooperation/coalitions needed
Depends on opportunities
- State and federal work with producers and private for services to be delivered to producers by private sectors
Identify who is in each coalition
Role of Ag Research and Advisory Committee
Role of producer groups?

What is the role of APEN?
QA for deliverers/courses
Provide opportunities to network to identify products/services
ABeattie, RT, PZund, AF, JW, AMcShane and Wormplan committee (contact Emma Gill, CSIRO or her replacement)
Empowering growers to embrace positive change

33 votes

Convenor
Penny Domeney, DPIWE [Ph 6266 4305 Email: Penny.Domeney@dpiwe.tas.gov.au]

Issue
Human trait – resistance to change
Farmers change slowly – can’t change quickly
Average farmers’ age is getting older
Change is market focused (otherwise why change?) Everything farmers do is for markets
Rich farmers get richer, average income decreasing, leading to innovation and risk
Poor farmers getting poorer, reluctance to learn/train and reluctance to adopt learning/changing culture
Growers that do training of any sort do better (better profit)
   - attitude – open to change
   o to seek information
Are resources better spent on ge [??]
Marketing in extension to improve changes
Our responsibility to help change
Growers responsibility to actively take it up
We don’t always do this well – ag sector on whole less educated
Service industry targets well-educated innovators
Should target the rest of the growers
80% need empowering; 20% already empowered
Adult learning – a first step
Groups mostly work well – require a leader or driver from within the group
Adults work better in groups
People won’t change until discontentment
What’s over the fence if more effective example
Competitive groups – benchmarking with each other is confronting
Trust is imperative
Encouraging travel to see other countries/industries
Commonality to bring group together (not bungey jumping)
Recognition of groups’ growing and evolving

First steps
Adult learning – better in groups
Energy and drive diminishes or used differently (retirement in view)
Apply NRM strategy incentives
Common goals
Presenting information APPROPRIATELY
Timeframes: short term resources vs long term issues

30 votes

Convenor
Liz Bonde, DPIWE
[Ph: 6336 5285 Email: Liz.Bonde@dpiwe.tas.gov.au]
Sebastian Burgess, Greening Australia
[Ph: 6223 6377 Email: sebastianb@tas.greeningaustralia.org.au]

Key discussions
Short term political timeframes
A reality we are working in
Good strategies – be optimistic
  Bi-partisan – politician < community
  Work out how to work with the system
  Work out how to change the system
High staff turnover
  Lack of continuity of knowledge
  Problem in managing knowledge
  Inconsistency in messages
  Continual re-invention and resulting inefficiencies
Are government production growth goals consistent with long-term sustainability? How does extension support this? Production increases needs to be focussed on most sustainable sectors in primary production – needs to be strategic

First steps
Extension and rural community to examine “State of Growth” initiative to understand it and respond and participate (Ray Hart)
Departmental approach to extension – strategy? DPIWE
Consistencies between government departments and across levels of government
Monitoring and evaluating past programs and learning from these

Why important issues?
System problem
Losing skilled/knowledged people
Long term waste of resources
Farmer not receiving long term, professional services, therefore no trust, continuity
Changes due to political changes
Understanding how farmer thinks
Not planning for long-term sustainability
Inconsistency of message
Ideas for 3-5 years
Commitment to significant long term/core $ by government and industry
Recognition of extension as a profession
Development to professional development program
Extension supporting State of Growth initiative
Long term/sustainable industries recognise and reflected in core funding
LIFTING THE PROFILE

First steps
Extension and rural community to examine State of Growth initiative to understand it, respond, participate (lobby Ray Hart)
Monitoring and evaluation of past programs and learn from them
Consistencies across government departments and levels of government
Investigate professional development for extension staff
DPIWE having a long term extension strategy

Cooperation/coalitions needed
Between all levels of government, industry, individuals

Role of APEN
Provide professional development
Take leadership (the glue to keep the coalition together)
Future of extension in government – state and local

22 votes

Convenor
Marcus Hardie, DPIWE [Ph: 6233 6251  Email: Marcus.Hardie@dpiwe.tas.gov.au]

Issues
Responsibility for NRM shift to councils from DPIWE
State government doesn’t recognise its role in extension
Identify commonality between agribusiness and DPIWE
State and Commonwealth relations

Discussion
Role of government to facilitate change but not necessarily to deliver it
Government role – issue building and technical specialists
Government client is increasingly agribusiness and other consultants not directly to farmers
Regulation and extension shouldn’t be mutually exclusive
Regulation is easier than extension but often more detrimental
Need networks to allow communication to reach regulators
Shifts in ownership of issues and responsibilities
Does DPIWE have a role in agricultural extension?
Postscript

Tasmanian ‘Rural Service Partnerships’ workshop, March 2

On March 2, 2004, the Tasmania Chapter of APEN held a statewide workshop to discuss the opportunities for developing public-private partnerships in agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) in Tasmania. The workshop, titled ‘Rural Service Partnerships’, was a follow-up activity to the ‘Rural Servicing in Transition’ workshop. The February workshop was held in conjunction with the Chapter’s AGM.

Invited guest speakers (producers, NRM managers, agribusiness, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association and local government representatives) were asked to discuss partnerships they are involved with, their pros and cons, and opportunities they see for new partnerships.

The day was very successful. 25 people attended what was a positive and stimulating day. Outcomes included:

- The extension deliverers present saw great potential for increasing their effectiveness by working together.
- Engagement of NRM people into the extension network. Extension was being used as the term for facilitating change in both agriculture and NRM – previously NRM people did not see themselves as involved in ‘extension’.
- The State Government said it now has an increased emphasis on achieving implementation, as distinct from focusing mainly on research and development. The Government sees that its extension objectives will be delivered through partnerships, rather than doing it themselves.
- The Tasmanian Chapter of APEN was revitalised with new members and a new executive elected.

How to contact APEN Tasmania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Ursula Taylor</th>
<th>NRM Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarence City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PO Box 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rosny Park 7018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ph 6245 8714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fax 6245 8700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:pittwater@ccc.tas.gov.au">pittwater@ccc.tas.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Jane Weatherley</th>
<th>Rural Development Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2/111 Warwick St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Hobart 7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ph 6231 9033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fax 6231 1419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jane.Weatherley@utas.edu.au">Jane.Weatherley@utas.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>