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Stars of extension shine at industry awards

Thursday 10 February 2022: Last night was a night for celebration as the Australasia-Pacific Extension Network (APEN) Awards for Excellence in Extension were announced as part of the biennial APEN International Conference, held online from Melbourne.

The conference is an international meeting for rural advisory practitioners, researchers and academics who combine the best extension research and practice from developing and developed countries.

APEN President and Hort Innovation General Manager of Stakeholder Experience, Dr Anthony Kachenko, said extension – or arming growers with new knowledge and scientific research to use on-farm – is so important to help agricultural communities thrive.

“Effective extension that is well designed and implemented is crucial for Australian agricultural producers to achieve the \$100 million target by 2030,” he said.

Dr Kachenko said the event attracted 260 of the greatest and most innovative minds in the extension space, and those that took awards this year did not disappoint.

The awards were open to all extension professionals, both individuals and groups, around across Australasia who have demonstrated excellence in extension through a work program completed within the last five years.

Winners this year included:

- **APEN Open Award for Excellence in Extension** (sponsored by Hort Innovation and presented by Jane Wightman)
 - Joint Winner – Denise Bewsell (Scarlatti, New Zealand)
 - Joint Winner – Warwick Waters (Cotton Research & Development Corporation, Australia)
 - Highly Commended – Melissa Sowden (Silver Fern Farms, New Zealand)
- **APEN Amabel Fulton Award for Excellence in Extension by a Young Professional** (sponsored by Coutts J&R and presented by Dr Jeff Coutts)
 - Joint Winner – Jodie Ward (Future Beef, Queensland Australia)
 - Joint Winner – Sarah Thompson (Dairy Australia, Victoria Australia)

Dr Anthony Kachenko also presented Life Memberships to Dr Patricia Hamilton, Dr Roy Murray-Prior and Dr Terry Parminter at the awards. An Honorary Life Membership was also provided to Dr Rosemary Currie who has been the APEN Secretariat for 27 years.

Judges' comments on specific individuals are available.

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