



# Newsletter

October 2006

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc  
GPO Box 1108 Sydney NSW 2001  
Internet: [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org)

## Corporate job strategy helps rural Aboriginal youths

ADDRESSING social issues faced by Aboriginal youths in rural and regional communities is the mission of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES). Since opening its first office in Moree in 1997, corporate initiatives implemented by the AES have created opportunities that have been successfully binding businesses and communities together and creating positive outcomes for Aboriginal youths.

Join Farm Writers' on 27 October to hear guest speaker AES Communications Manager Phil Lockyer explain how AES initiatives, which encourage the placement of Aboriginal youths in local corporate organisations, are making a difference in rural communities.

Moree is one of the success stories where there have been positive changes.

Due to the work of the AES, Moree has gone from a town with a racist reputation to a leader in reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Phil, who is a Nyoongar man, understands the diverse range of challenges facing indigenous communities.

He grew up in Perth and graduated from Edith Cowan University in 1988 with a Bachelor of Communications, majoring in public relations, and is currently studying a Masters in Social Inquiry at the University of Technology, Sydney.

He has extensive experience working in indigenous communications roles, including positions with Centrelink's national office in Canberra, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and the NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

AES grew out of one of the recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody (that Aboriginal employment promotion committees be established nationwide) and also out of the need for employees in regional areas.

It has gone from strength to strength and today provides traineeship programs to Aboriginal high school students in banks such as the Commonwealth and the ANZ.

Through these programs students develop workplace skills, earn an income and are encouraged to remain in school.

The AES provides the opportunity for organisations to make a difference in



*AES Communications Manager Phil Lockyer is the guest speaker at the Farm Writers' October luncheon.*

their local community. It now has several participating partners including IAG Insurance, Rio Tinto, Telstra, Toyota, ANZ Bank and the Commonwealth Bank.

Join Farm Writers' Corporate Member of the Month Cox Inall Communications on Friday 27 October to find out more about how indigenous social issues are being addressed through smart new initiatives such as those implemented by the AES.

To book go to our website: [www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org/BOOKINGS.htm)

### Register early and on-line for the luncheon on Friday, 27 October with Phil Lockyer, AES

**Corporate Member of the Month:** Cox Inall Communications

**Venue:** The MENZIES HOTEL, 14 Carrington Street, Sydney

**When:** Friday, 27 October at 12pm for 12:30pm

**Cost:** \$60 per head, or voucher, for members. \$70 per head for all non-members

**Register:** BEFORE 5:00pm on Wednesday, 25 October

on-line: [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org), email: [bookings@nswfarmwriters.org](mailto:bookings@nswfarmwriters.org), phone: Sarah Robson (02) 8204 3730

**Reminder:** If bookings are not cancelled by the deadline, the person making the booking will be invoiced. We will do our best to accommodate late bookings and cancellations – please phone Sarah Robson on (02) 8204 3730.

# Quality and free speech paramount for rural media

Contributed by Jenny Ward, NSW Department of Primary Industries

AUSTRALIA'S media law changes, while long overdue, need to focus on positioning Australia as a leader of information technology and a bastion of free speech.

This was the view of John B. Fairfax, chairman of the Rural Press group, Australia's largest rural and regional publisher, when he addressed over 110 members and guests celebrating the 40th anniversary of the NSW Farm Writers' Association in Sydney in September. His speech came before the laws were passed by Senate on 12 October.

"We need to be wary of the potential threat to freedom of speech," Mr Fairfax said.

"So far Australia has remained relatively free of interference with the press.

"In fact Australia is in a privileged position compared with other countries and we need to fight for this freedom and challenge the courts and the Government whenever we see it being eroded. A free press has the job of keeping governments accountable at all levels.

"We should continue to live in a society where people are able to choose what they read and see."

While the new federal legislation is yet to be passed by the House of Representatives, Mr Fairfax said he did not think the changes would have a huge impact on rural writers.

"Rural and regional media will survive the changes by adhering to high standards.

"We need to continue to strive for excellence in what we write, how we write it and how we present it."

Mr Fairfax also talked about the need for maintaining high journalism standards to ensure rural and regional media remained relevant in this age of rapid information technology advancement.

It was pertinent then that Mr Fairfax's Farm Writers' address was broadcast live via a Telstra CountryWide video conference to 10 Telstra CountryWide offices in country locations throughout NSW, which meant that regionally based journalists could hear the speaker and join in at question-time.

In today's information industry Mr Fairfax was adamant that the quality of writing remained paramount.

"With the advent of new technology and ever widening satellite and broadband internet access, mobile phones and ipod along with radio, television, newspapers



*Rural Press Chairman John B. Fairfax addressing the Farm Writers' 40th anniversary luncheon.*

and magazines - it is now an information industry where new technology will change the way information is presented," he said.

"Farm writers must remain diligent in the way they write for their country readers.

"It needs to be informative and educational and convey the passion for issues most readers feel."

However Mr Fairfax wondered whether people would eventually suffer a technology overload and revert back to old-fashioned communication methods such as talking face-to-face.

"I do wonder whether at some point will the pendulum start to swing back and will we want to give our fingers and eyes a break from the computer and maybe even walk to the cinema again?"

*Thanks to September Corporate Members of the Month Renard and University of Sydney Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.*



*In recognition of the standards of rural journalism being set, The Land journalist Lucy Skuthorp (left) was presented with an award for being the NSW finalist in the 2006 IFAJ/Alltech Young Leaders in Agricultural Journalism Award, by Alltech Biotechnology Marketing Manager Emily Boyd at the Farm Writers' 40th anniversary lunch.*

## Notice of AGM

The Farm Writers' Annual General Meeting is to be held at 11am Friday, 27 October, prior to this month's luncheon, with both events being held at the Menzies Hotel, Carrington Street, Sydney.

More information about the AGM and booking for the luncheon is available on [www.nswfarmwriters.org](http://www.nswfarmwriters.org).

## Farm Writers' reflects on its 40 years of change in the rural industry

IN its 40 years, the NSW Farm Writers' Association has participated in and witnessed many changes that have helped shape today's agricultural industry in NSW.

In a colourful overview of the association's history, founding member and inaugural treasurer, past president, vice-president and committee member and now life member Don Jones told members and guests at the association's 40th anniversary lunch that it began amidst turmoil in the wool industry in 1966.

Mr Jones, a former editor of *The Land* newspaper, said it was during a few drinks following a press conference in Sydney about the wool industry's future that a number of rural journalists based in Sydney, including himself, decided to form their own organisation.

"Simply, we all liked each other and wanted to meet each month to socialise and at the same time promote the interests and understanding of agriculture," he said. "The instigator was Vince Morris who was editor of the United Farmers and Woolgrowers Association newspaper and rural radio program."

While membership was originally working rural journalists and communications specialists, pastoral houses and other companies with an interest in agriculture were also actively involved. Corporate sponsors were later invited to participate, which helped finance representatives to attend International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) congresses.



*Farm Writers' life member Don Jones (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) caught up with other long-time members Don Cumming, Allan Humphries and Liz Gunnell.*

Members included journalists from the *Sydney Morning Herald's* rural edition, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *NSW Country Life*, *The Land* and the Graziers Association's newspaper *Muster*. Plus the Dairy Farmers organisation and the Primary Producers Union had three journalists, the ABC rural department journalists in Sydney, 2GB had a rural journalist, and the Australian Wool Board had two public relations people, including Mr Jones, as did the Australian Meat Board.

In 1988 and 2000, the association assisted the Australian Council of Agricultural Journalists host the IFAJ world congresses in Australia, with delegates attending the 1988 event being treated to a train tour of NSW agricultural regions.

Originally called the Jumbunna Club, or meeting place in Aboriginal, to allay concerns of the Australian Journalism Association that it was another industrial association, the group was, and continues to be, active in the

progress of rural industry in NSW.

Mr Jones said their first guest speaker was the managing director of Marrickville Margarine who was campaigning to expand sales of margarine, which was banned in NSW, Victoria and Queensland to protect dairy farmers and the butter industry.

Plus it held the first seminar in Australia on the future of an industry for oilseeds of which there were virtually none growing in Australia at that time.

The association's evolution has included a number of name changes. Its first provisional name, the Agricultural Press Club of Australia, was adopted on 12 August 1966 and later changed to Farm Writers' and Broadcasters' Society of NSW before it was incorporated in 1991 and took the name we know it as today.

Other changes witnessed included the introduction of objective measurement testing in the wool industry, ongoing technology advances and Christmas lunch at NSW Parliament.



*Celebrating 40 years of Farm Writers' were top left to right: Philip Thompson, Director of Mergers & Acquisitions Rabobank and David Boyd, CEO Clyde Agriculture; Jim Swain and Professor Les Copeland, Dean of the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources faculty at the University of Sydney; and the crowd at the event.*



### October 2006

Farm Writers' Association of NSW Inc

President:

Bev Jordan  
bevjordan@msn.com.au

Secretary:

Susan Madden  
smadden@hassall.com.au

Newsletter:

Camilla Hunter  
camilla.hunter@solutionsgroup.com.au

Sally Edgar  
sally@oneprofile.com.au

Website sponsored by Telstra Country Wide