

IAF AND AFN RELATIONSHIP AND AFN CONFERENCE 2012

Rhonda Tranks, Ed McKinley and Glen Ochre met for dinner and a talk on 1-3-2011 to discuss the AFN/ IAF relationship and collaborative ways forward. This get together came about as a result of some concerns raised at the AFN Conference in Hobart. Here are some results and reflections from that discussion.

IAF REGIONAL CHAPTER

1 Rhonda is the elected regional IAF representative. She believes in the mission of the IAF and wanted to be part of it progressing in this region.

2 There has been a regional IAF presence for a number of years with various people moving in and out of the 'leadership group'. It has now been decided to move to a chapter model. In the future there will be chapters within each region, most probably organised (but not limited to), geographic clusters. It has been decided to have a 'super chapter' to cover the whole of our region. This chapter is still in formation.

3 It is IAF policy to have a conference in each region annually where possible or at least every two years. Rhonda feels now that a chapter has been formed (or will be very soon) in this region, a major objective in the very near future is to host an IAF Conference in this region -otherwise what are the members really getting from their newly formed chapter? Thus, 2012 comes into focus, as 2013 seems too far away.

4 Rhonda feels that this regional IAF conference should be held in March 2012, as this fits in with other international IAF events. We considered the possibility of moving the 2012 AFN conference to 2013, so we could keep the regularity of a November Facilitation conference happening in the region. However, Rhonda feels that November is not a good time for the IAF conference as overseas folk are going to be too pre-occupied by the lead up to Xmas.

5 As Rhonda lives in Melbourne she wants to host the IAF conference in Melbourne, as she will be making a big contribution to ensure it goes well. Thus, Rhonda feels it is logical to do it 'in her backyard'.

6 The decision to hold a local IAF conference in Melbourne in March 2012 has been made. This decision was made by the IAF board recently in Europe, with Rhonda in attendance. The idea to hold a local IAF Conference is supported by the IAF board and the newly formed regional IAF leadership Group. It will still need to go through the due diligence of a budget and planning documentation before it gets the final sign off.

7 We then explored the question of whether there is room in this region's 'facilitation marketplace' to hold two Facilitation conferences in one year. We ended up thinking that the facilitation field was big enough to hold both AFN and IAF conferences, and that the market could do with being 'grown'.

8 We all agreed that there were some significant differences in terms of who would be respectively attracted to an IAF and AFN Conferences. However, it was acknowledged that there is also significant overlap. We noted Dale's recent point that she/others may only want to 'spend one penny' on a local conference, or because ANZ folks may want to attend a second conference overseas.

9 We expressed concern that we are looking at two conferences in the same state in the same year. It was decided to consult the AFN about this.

AFN CONFERENCE 2012

As there is to be an IAF conference in Melbourne March 2012, (budget and other details permitting), we people of the AFN need to consider our position.

As the AFN is a Self Organising Network, historically decisions about where the next conference is to be held have been made by people 'putting their hand up' after some informal discussions. These offers have generally been simply accepted as a gift to the network and people decide whether they attend or not.

The business meeting toward the end of the AFN conferences seeks to let conference participants know about such informal discussions about future conferences, and occasionally deals with other items of AFN business.

At (and prior to) the Hobart AFN conference a number of people discussed the idea of having an AFN conference in 2012 that was somewhat cheaper to attend. This led to the idea that we could 'experiment' with having the 2012 conference in a cheaper venue.

Glen Ochre and Ed McKinley Ed are part of a rural not-for-profit organisation called Commonground, which has a very attractive rural residential conference centre 95kms north of Melbourne. Commonground was established in 1984 to help people work well together. Facilitation has always been a central part of Commonground's services. It is on 95 acres of beautiful bush land, and is easily accessible from Melbourne airport, by train from Melbourne or by bus/train from Sydney and Brisbane. This venue has a range of accommodation options: camping/campervan/huts/hotel style accommodation/ motels in town.

We canvassed the idea of having it there, as venue, catering and accommodation costs at Commonground can be significantly reduced from city based costs.

As the person who 'put my hand up' to convene the 2012 AFN conference in Victoria I need guidance from the AFN as to what to do now that there will be an IAF conference in the same state in the same year.

YOUR FEEDBACK IS NEEDED

- 1 Do we see a possible substantial (and maybe desirable) difference in AFN and IAF conferences in the future?
- 2 If so, is there room for two Facilitation conferences in 2012?
- 3 If we go ahead with the 2012 AFN conference what do people think about having it at a cheaper venue?
- 4 Should we have the 2012 AFN conference in November as usual but have it in another state?
- 5 Should we put off the 2012 AFN conference until 2013?

Whatever we do, Rhonda, Ed and I concluded our discussions with hope for generous collaboration between the IAF and AFN. We felt this may be more possible, with growing understanding of the differences and commonalties between the two entities.

Please send your feedback to the above questions to:
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