CHAIRPERSON BRIEFING NOTES

These briefing notes are designed to assist you in understanding your role as a Chairperson within the AES 2024 International Evaluation Conference Program.

This role is very important to the professional and timely delivery of the conference program, and in ensuring the quality and relevance of information provided to delegates. Good chairing is a vital component of a successful conference and we truly value your contribution.

As Session Chair, you are responsible for the presenters in your session. Seize the opportunity to build a learning community. Part of your role is to know who is presenting in your session and the focus of their work. You also play an important role in engaging with the audience and ensuring that everyone observes the ground rules. Here are some tips for being a great session chair.

- **Arrive early**, at the correct room (up to date room allocations are always available in the online program: https://aes24.sched.com/) and at least 15 minutes before the session is due to start. Identify the speakers and help them to feel at ease.
- **Brief the speakers on the session format.** Each session runs to either 60, 90, or 120 minutes and contains between 1 and 4 presentations (or 1 and 2 presentations, along with up to 7 Ignite style presentations). Negotiate and confirm the time that each speaker will have to present and the time available for questions.
- **Talk tech.** Give all the speakers an opportunity to check their presentation is available and, where necessary, show them how to control the presentation. Ask for assistance from the roving conference technical support staff if necessary. The list of speakers for the session should be visible on the slide when you arrive. You can access the presentation by clicking on the name of the speaker. At the end of the first presentation, click on the name of the next speaker to open their presentation. Contact the onsite technician for any AV assistance that you may require.
- **Where am I sitting?** If the room set up allows, have the presenters all sit together (usually the front row of chairs). As session chair, sit closest to the lectern as you will be getting up to introduce each speaker and open and close the session.
- **Familiarise yourself** with the Presentation Briefing Notes, available at http://conference2024.aes.asn.au/index.php/the-conference/presenter-and-chair-information

Once the speakers and audience have arrived, here's how you can keep the session on track:

- **Start and finish on time.** Maximise the time you have available by getting the audience settled quickly and starting on time (not early). Encourage the audience to take their seats and, where possible, suggest that audience members move to the front of the room and to the centre of the rows of seats so that people who come in late can quickly find somewhere to sit without disrupting the speaker.
- **Set the stage**. Ackowldege Country, welcome the audience and introduce yourself (name and affiliation). Let the audience know what the focus of the session is. Ask them to turn their phones to silent. Remind them what the session format is; how long each presenter will have to speak and how long the audience will have for questions.

    Example:

Acknowledge Country first (see appendix 2)

Welcome to this session, which focuses on using surveys as a data collection tool. My name is Seuss I am, and I work at the Research Centre for Green Eggs and Ham. I'll be the chair for this session. We have 60 minutes for today's sessions, and two, 15 to 20-minute presentations. There will be 5 to 10 minutes at the end of each presentation for you to ask questions. I'll be keeping presenters informed about how long they have left, and stopping them when they need to finish.

Today, the presenters will cover a range of topics relating to using surveys, including useful ways to access hard-to-reach populations, and how online surveys can help boost response rates.

It's now my pleasure to introduce our first speaker …

Introduce each presentation

(See below for Ignite segments.) Use the presenter profiles to introduce each speaker, noting their name and affiliation and the general topic. Transition between presentations by thanking the previous speaker and introducing the next. Presenter bios are available online at https://aes24.sched.com/directory/speakers/.

NOTE: Only the listed presenters should be involved in a presentation. No other presenters should be involved unless the original presenter has agreed.

Ignite presentations

Introduce the speakers for the Ignite segment of presentations in the sequence they will present. Ensure that each speaker has no more than 5 minutes.
Facilitate a *very* short Q&A at the end of the whole Ignite segment (and not after each Ignite presentation).

Watch the clock!

Use a pre-agreed signal to warn the speaker as their time elapses. Dinging on something with a pen works!

How do I make it stop?

Be polite, but forceful if a presenter does not stop when required to. You can do this by standing, moving toward the lectern, thanking the presenter and stating the need to move on. Encourage the presenter to move to a slide that displays their contact information.

Facilitate discussion

Keep a note of who has raised their hands and call on people in turn.
Set an expectation for professional, courteous discussion. Ask that questions be short and targeted, and encourage people to follow up with the speaker after the session. If lots of people have questions, try to avoid any one person taking over the discussion.

Ensure everyone hears the question

People in the audience are typically facing forwards, and people sitting behind them may not hear the question. Use the lectern microphone to repeat the questions that audience members ask. This also gives the speaker a chance to think about their response. Be careful not to let the question time go longer than allowed.

Tie up the loose ends

Help to finish up the session by thanking the presenters and the audience.
If there is a session following, ask that the audience leave the room quickly.

NOTE: It is extremely important to keep the program to time. Please be aware of the time periods within which speakers have been designated to present.

If one of the papers in your session is cancelled or the speaker is not present, please keep to the program running order. **We request that the order of the presentations remain the same,** and any gaps should be filled only by informal discussions. The same policy applies if a speaker should finish their presentation earlier than expected. This will allow participants to move between sessions to attend presentations at their scheduled times.

NOTE: Only the listed presenters should be involved in a presentation. No other presenters should be involved unless the original presenter has agreed.

KEEP UP TO DATE: THE aes24 ONLINE CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND APP

Please check the online conference program for up-to-date information about your presentation time and room allocation. The online program can be found at:

- On your device search for the **'aes24 app'** on the iOS App Store (iPhone and iPad) or the Google Play Store (Android)

- Desktop browser: https://aes24.sched.com/

TIP: **Log in to the aes24 app**, *or on your browser, to receive conference announcements, display your personalised conference schedule, and message presenters and delegates.*

Conference WIFI access: User: *aes_2024* Password: *Melb_2024*

PRESENTATION TIMES AND TYPES

PRESENTATION FORMATS

Short Paper
Session time: 30 minutes
Duration: 25 minutes (15 minutes presentation)
Format: Formal presentation with audience Q&A

Long Paper
Session time: 60 minutes
Duration: 50 minutes (30 minutes presentation)

Panel
Session time: 60 minutes
Duration: 50 minutes (35 minutes panel discussion)

Hands-on Session
Session time: 60 minutes
Duration: 50 minutes (Interactive)

Ignite Session
Session time: 60 minutes (multiple presentations in one session)
Duration: 6 minutes (5 minutes presentation) Format: 20 slides auto-advancing every 15 seconds

Big Room Session
Session time: 90 minutes or 60 minutes
Duration: Flexible, interactive and generate wide discussion

Please see the Appendix 1 for more details on the procedures for each presentation type (or modality).

HOUSE KEEPING ANNOUNCEMENTS

At times it will be necessary for housekeeping announcements to be made at the beginning or end of the session. These announcements will be provided by the AES conference staff, either in person or will be left at the front of the session room on the lectern prior to the start of the session. We request that these announcements are made to ensure that all delegates are aware of the necessary information.

AUDIO VISUAL

Presentation room equipment

Every presentation room is equipped with:
- screen/s
- an audio system
- a smart presentation lectern attached to a computer
- lectern, and
- Q&A microphones if needed (if used, ask people sanitise their hands after using)

Microphones will remain on (if there are microphones). It is unnecessary to turn them off. In the unlikely event that any of the equipment fails, speakers are requested to continue with their presentations whilst the technician rectifies the problem. It may be necessary for you to prompt the speaker to continue, if this should occur. A technician will be available in order to assist with any audio-visual requirements.

CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

The AES Cultural Capacity and Diversity Committee has prepared the attached cultural protocol document. The Conference will commence with Welcome to Country. Presenters are encouraged to carefully read the following protocols and make appropriate acknowledgement to the people of the land they are visiting.

Melbourne is located on the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri people.

See Appendix 2.

Thank you for your help in making the AES 2024 International Evaluation Conference a success!
For further details or assistance, please email conference@aes.asn.au

APPENDIX 1

PRESENTATION FORMATS FOR CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

1. Short Paper

Total session duration: 25 minutes (presentation: maximum 15 minutes)

Format: A formal presentation with time for two or three questions from the audience at the end of the session.

Objective: To generate the audience's interest in your work, without covering all details or explaining in full.

Content: A short paper typically covers: i) one innovative or interesting project with learnings for theory or practice; or ii) an idea / approach of interest to others working in evaluation. Short papers are concise and targeted, designed to present findings efficiently within a limited space of time. Presenters must skilfully select content, emphasising core findings, methodology, and significance while ensuring clarity is not compromised.

2. Long Paper

Total session duration: 50 minutes (presentation: maximum 30 minutes)

Format: A formal presentation (lecture) usually given by one person, with up to 10 minutes for questions from the audience at the end.

Objective: To provide the audience with engaging and more in-depth information and insights, using targeted and skilfully selected content, on the topic presented. More in-depth information may cover core findings, methodology and significance.

Content: The session may focus on:

- an issue facing the field of evaluation, or
- an emerging methodology, or
- a critique of an evaluation methodology, or
- approaches to working with specific stakeholder groups or in specific

3. Panel

Total session duration: 50 minutes (panel maximum 35 minutes)

Format: The panel may involve: i) up to three panellists (plus a moderator) who come from different perspectives (e.g. commissioners, community members, evaluators, others) exploring a topic or theme; or ii) two experts, ideally with different perspectives and experiences, 'in conversation' with one another around a particular topic or theme. The remaining 15 minutes is for questions from the audience.

Objective: To provide multiple perspectives from panellists who share their knowledge, insights and trends guided by a moderator.

Content: The format may cover:

- weaving together innovative ideas; or
- debating a topic; or
- exploring concepts or critically reflecting from multiple perspectives, or
- evaluators, program managers and service users reflecting on learnings from practice.
- Panel abstracts can include names and organisations of presenters

4. Hands-on Session

Total session duration: 50 minutes

Format: Learning sessions are all about the facilitator creating space for attendees' participation and have an 'interactive' and/or 'skill-building' focus. World café, campfire sessions, micro-workshops are examples

of learning session formats. As a guide, presenters should aim to speak for no more than 15 minutes in total across the session, with the rest devoted to the attendees' active learning.

Objective: To rapidly build knowledge and/or skills through fostering attendees' engagement in rich discussions with each other or trialling a specific skill, concept or tool. Please consider that about half of the attendees are likely to be emerging evaluators, and this is a key target group for 'foundational' learning/practice sessions.

Content: Guided by a clearly described learning objective or outcome, these sessions have an explicit focus on attendees engaging with targeted content or each other, with minimal reliance on lecture-style presentation. The focus may be on:

- Demonstrating a targeted concept and tool and providing attendees a chance to practice them
- Introducing a topic and facilitating small group discussions and feedback.

Presenters must be mindful of the short amount of time to provide an introduction and set-up the interactive or learning processes and the need to be targeted and clear.

5. Ignite Session

Total session duration: 6 minutes (presentation maximum time: 5 minutes)

Format: Ignite presentations use 20 slides that auto-advance every 15 seconds. The result is a short and informative presentation, with no Q&A. For examples of the format see http://www.ignitetalks.io/.

Objective: To provide audience with rapid-fire sharp insights into work, that garners their attention and interest in learning more.

Content: Ignite presentations cover up to three points strongly related to a central idea that every slide and every sentence supports. Ignite sessions may focus on:

- telling the story of an evaluation or
- introducing a tool or technique

6. Big Room Session (new in 2024)

Total session duration: 45, 60 or 90 minutes (with maximum presentation time depending on session type proposed)

Format: Big Room Sessions are a new offering in 2024. These will take place in the large theatre which is used for plenary keynote sessions. We are open to suggestions for different structures or formats, noting that as it is a theatre with a stage there is no scope for workshop-style activities that require open space or movement of seats. Attendees will be seated lecture style. We welcome ideas for different ways to make the use of this space and the options for different lengths of time for sessions.

Objective: To utilise the space, attract a large audience and generate discussion on topics or themes that are of wide appeal to the conference audience.

APPENDIX 2

CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

Indigenous communities in Australia have experienced significant imposed upheaval in our Country. Unlike some of our Indigenous brothers and sisters, Australia has no treaty with its Indigenous people, but despite this, we remain strongly connected to the Country of our ancestors. We are the traditional custodians of this land.

In Australia there are diverse Aboriginal language groups of different countries. An Aboriginal language group and connection to Country forms part of Aboriginal people's cultural identity. Aboriginal's peoples' connection to Country and to their cultural identity is maintained through a number of key institutions of culture. We have our own unique ways of keeping, preserving and practising our knowledge systems. Hence, for us as Aboriginal peoples it is important that we respect and affirm:
- own language and/or dialect;
- the Country where our families are from eg Wergaia, Gunditjmara;
- our own laws and lore, customs, cultural practices and protocols; and
- our own beliefs, stories, keepers of stories, ceremonies and totems.

In situations where we are visiting another person's Country, i.e. not our own, it is appropriate to give acknowledgement to the people of that land. In a Conference setting, such as that run by AES every year, it is appropriate that the Conference organisers recognise the Traditional Owners in two ways, first by understanding the process of the Welcome to Country and then by understanding the Acknowledgement of Country.

The AES encourages its members to become familiar with the distinctions between these two events and to use them appropriately when acting as a representative or member of the AES.

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is where an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner, Custodian or Elder welcomes people to their land. Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years.

Therefore, a Welcome to Country can only be offered by a Traditional Owner.

Welcome to Country always occurs at the opening of a large or significant event and has to be the first item on the program. The local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Custodian or Traditional owner conducts the ceremony and this may be done through a speech, song, ceremony or a combination of these things. It is important for the Traditional Owners to be comfortable with the arrangements and is held as a sign of respect.

Prior to the event, organisers are advised to seek advice on who should perform the Welcome to Country. Local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people may be able to assist identify the Traditional Owners of that country. Organisers may also seek advice from Regional Aboriginal Land and Sea Councils or from the appropriate government department responsible for Indigenous Affairs, or major Indigenous peak bodies (e.g. an Aboriginal Medical Service).

Once having identified the correct people to undertake the Welcome to Country the organisers should then spend time, preferably face to face, explaining the type of public event which is being organised and how best to prepare for this.

It is important to consider that the performing of a Welcome to Country ceremony is a right of the local Aboriginal Traditional Owners and not a privilege.

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country does not replace a Welcome to Country. Usually an Acknowledgement of Country is done at smaller gatherings. It is carried out to show respect to the Traditional Owners. It is strongly encouraged that an Acknowledgement of Country is conducted at the start of AES Board meetings, the Regional Meetings, and may also be given at any other meeting already opened with a Welcome to Country.

An Acknowledgement of Country is a way of showing respect and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owners of the land on which a meeting or event is being held, and of recognising the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their Country. It is a demonstration of respect dedicated to the traditional custodians of the land or sea where the gathering of participants is being conducted.

In order to offer an Acknowledgement of Country it may be helpful for people to know that:
- There are no set protocols or wording.
- It need not be an elaborate ceremony, and may consist simply of a few words.
- It is offered at the beginning of a meeting, speech or formal occasion.
- It is the **minimum** standard protocol for any meeting or gathering.

To make an Acknowledgement of Country really meaningful and not a token gesture, it is important people find out that name of the Aboriginal group and nation who are the Traditional Owners of the area and learn how to properly pronounce their names.

Below we provide some examples of how you might structure an Acknowledgement to Country. Remember there is no one correct way – the important thing is to be genuinely respectful of what Traditional Owners have given up as a consequence of sharing their lands with non-Aboriginal people, and their ongoing and profound connection to that land.

Examples of Acknowledgement of Country:
I would like to acknowledge the ……………… people who are the traditional custodians of this land.

I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present of the …………….. nation, and I extend that respect to other Indigenous people who are present.

I would like to acknowledge that we meet on Aboriginal land, the land of the …………… people of the …………………..nation. I like to pay respect to their Elders past and present.

NB: If you don't know, are uncertain or can't find out who the Traditional Owners are, it is better NOT to name any specific peoples and instead use the acknowledgement below:

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to the Elders past and present.

More information can be found at the following website:

https://www.reconciliation.org.au/

https://www.reconciliation.org.au/acknowledgement-of-country-and-welcome-to-country/