

Year 1 and Year 2 Implementation Plan

2011-12 & 2012-13

for

AES Strategic Plan

1. *Evaluation Knowledge Transfer*

Objectives:

- Publish and promote ideas, experiences, information and developments in evaluation theory and practice to the evaluation profession and a broader audience of policy makers, program developers/managers and service delivery organisations.
- Exchange and develop ideas, information and experiences through gatherings and other means of communication involving the international and Australasian evaluation profession and related communities of interest.
- Strengthen the role of the AES special interest groups in knowledge development and management.

Road Map:

- Maintain and develop the AES Journal as a flagship of the Society.
- Maintain and develop the AES International Conference and other workshops and seminars as critical forums for interpersonal ideas development and exchange.
- Develop a short to medium term strategy for increasing the role and activity of special interest groups and their influence in the AES.

Evaluation Knowledge Transfer Strategies:

1.1 The Journal

- Locate a group of leaders in evaluation theory and practice with whom the AES can engage in a range of activities including:
 - Editorship and editorial team for the Journal;
 - Formation of a larger editorial board to support the Journal; and
 - Further advancement of the Journal as a key publication.
- Strengthening the focus on the Journal by asking the Publications Committee to focus entirely on the Journal (e-news and website would be handled elsewhere).

1.2 Conferences

- Create and support common processes to achieve standardisation for conference organisation and delivery from one year to the other, commencing from the current 2011 Sydney conference onwards.
- Improve professional learning outcomes through cross-representation between the Conference Committee and the Professional Learning Committee.

- The Professional Learning Committee to provide oversight for pre-conference workshops that are part of the annual conference.

1.3 Workshops and other Seminars

- The Board will identify the core themes around which professional learning will be delivered each year, based on Professional Learning Committee advice and income generation potential. The Professional Learning Committee will then develop a strategy for workshop development and delivery and an implementation plan for broader evaluation knowledge transfer.

1.4 Communication

- The Professional Learning Committee will develop a longer term strategy for other forms of member communication such as webinars, lunch time seminars, professional development networking meetings, etc.

1.5 Special Interest Groups

- The current Special Interest Group (SIG) Policy will be revised to reduce the complexity of the processes required to form a SIG.
- The AES website will be developed to accommodate SIG communication processes.
- SIGs will be asked to present or co-ordinate a session at the annual conference.
- SIGs will be monitored and reviewed by the new Membership Committee.

2. Membership Services and Governance

Objectives:

- Strengthen and support AES regional committees to:
 - encourage and enable member participation in AES decision-making;
 - grow the membership;
 - enable professional networking;
 - promote high quality evaluation practice; and
 - provide professional learning.
- Enhance membership participation in the AGM and reporting around AES decision-making.

Road Map

- Review the operation of the regional committees.
- Develop a Communication and Reporting Strategy.

Membership Services and Governance Strategies:

2.1 Engagement of Membership

- Establish a Membership Services Committee.
- Develop and implement a broad participation strategy to grow and support the AES membership.
- Develop a statement on member participation and explain how the governance structure enables member participation.
- Emphasise the growth of membership at regional and 'organic' levels with set targets.
- Recruit new and more people as active members onto Board committees.
- Hold a members forum at conferences to discuss strategy and issues that then inform the strategic plan.
- Develop a KPI for the Executive Officer (EO) regarding supporting member participation.
- Survey and record member interests in professional areas for the information of the Board, Professional Learning Committee and to inform planning undertaken by regional committees.

2.2 Regional Committees

- Regional committees are central to the workings of the AES. The AES will review how it can better support the operation and involvement of regional committees to support the

implementation of the AES Strategic Plan. The review is to be undertaken by a senior member of the AES by the end of 2011.

- The Regional Representatives Group Convenor is to be a member of the Membership Committee.
- The Regional Representatives Group will continue to meet regularly to share and exchange ideas.
- The President will ensure that the Regional Representatives Group is aware of agenda items that will be discussed at Board meetings and will report back to the Regional Representatives Group on Board meeting outcomes.

3. Professional Learning

Objectives:

- Consolidate the program and enhance the standard of professional learning activity recognising the important strategic role this service plays in supporting the membership and strengthening evaluation practice in Australasia.

Road Map

- Develop a five year Professional Learning Strategy that includes:
 - Investigating the feasibility an AES accredited core professional learning program (beginning with a small number of essential modules);
 - Looking for innovative ways to address the professional learning challenges posed by the turnover of membership;
 - Reviewing core competencies developed by the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) and the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) for evaluators around which professional learning and practice standards can be built;
 - Taking more of a participatory approach in the development of the professional learning program and schedule, involving members and other stakeholders (such as government departments, Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) and non-government peak bodies) in the identification of priority learning areas;
 - Investigating innovative and flexible professional learning delivery modes such as web based modules and distance learning;
 - Placing greater emphasis on building peer support mechanisms and networks for members as an integral aspect of professional learning, including greater use of SIGs and possibly workplace chapters of the Society;
 - Targeting a component of learning activities to public service middle managers in program areas as a priority; and
 - Investigating the value and feasibility of positioning the AES as the “evaluation professional learning provider of choice” for government, along with the AES as the government-accepted professional learning program accreditation or endorsing body.

Professional Learning Strategies:

- AES will develop a program for professional learning delivered annually that contains core modules that are delivered on a needs rather than supply basis.
- The development of a professional learning program will include liaison with ANZEA to avoid replication
- AES will implement a professional learning program in conjunction with the professional learning strategic plan.
- The Professional Learning Committee will undertake and keep current a needs assessment to underpin the professional learning program.

- The development of a professional learning program should consider the delivery of professional development to Papua New Guinea where this is possible and in response to identified needs.
- The development of a professional learning program should be targeted to Indigenous Australians where this is practical and has been identified through needs assessment.
- AES will investigate partnerships and alliances for the development and delivery of professional training.
- Develop learning outcomes for conferences and standard evaluation measures to be applied to all conferences.

4. Professional Standards

Objectives:

- Develop Australasian-specific professional practice standards in one to three years (drawing on the American Evaluation Association standards as a foundation while taking account of the context and culture of evaluation in Australasia), to encourage consistent, high quality evaluation practice.
- Initiate a process of exploring the merits and consequences of developing and implementing an Evaluator Accreditation Scheme as a part of a broader framework of professional guidance, including practice standards, professional ethics and agreed evaluation competencies.

Road Map:

- Develop a Professional Standards Work Plan and establish a Professional Standards Working Group to develop and implement Australasian-specific professional evaluation standards in the short – medium term (one to three years), taking into account work already done by the AES in areas such as the Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations.
- Establish explicit, strategic collaborations with key teaching institutions and government stakeholders, such as the ANAO and state/territory counterparts, to gain their input into the development of the practice standards. (In addition to improving the quality and broad acceptance of the standards, involving academics and government stakeholders in this activity will strengthen linkages and engagement in general between the AES and those sectors.)
- Take account of developments in public administration such as the adoption in some agencies of departmental or program quality frameworks, ensuring that standards developed by AES can appropriately align with these developments.
- Establish a process for investigating evaluator accreditation and provide an initial report to the 2012 AGM.

Professional Standards Strategies:

4.1 Professional Standards

- Re-establish an Ethics and Professional Practice Committee of the AES to oversee ethical and professional standards issues and developments.
- The Ethics and Professional Practice Committee to investigate the capacity within the AES membership to commit time and resources to the development of an AES endorsed professional standards document for the Australasian-specific context. If resources are available a professional standards document could be developed in the short-medium term. If resources are not available the development of this document would be deferred into Years 2 or 3.
- The Ethics and Professional Practice Committee of the AES will monitor ANZEA professional standards and the professional standards developed by the American Evaluation Association (AEA) and CES and other countries and report back to the Board annually.

4.2 Accreditation

- The Ethics and Professional Practice Committee of the AES to monitor the work of the CES in developing an accreditation program over the next three years and report to the Board.
- Invite CES representatives to present at the Adelaide 2012 conference on their experiences of the accreditation process.
- The AES Ethics and Professional Practice Committee to keep a watching brief over the CES website and its publications.

5. *Government Engagement*

Objectives:

- Position the AES as a key source of expertise and advice for governments¹ in Australasia and key public sector agencies in Australasia on evaluation policies and approaches that can be used to guide and inform effective, evidenced-informed policy and program development and implementation.
- Establish initiatives and arrangements for partnership and collaboration between the AES and governments to support and promote good evaluation practice and the development, implementation and monitoring of evaluation activities.
- Actively encourage and support governments to consider resourcing evaluation during the developmental phase of programs.
- Place more emphasis in the AES work plan on advocating for evaluation.

Road Map:

- Develop a 10 year Government Engagement Strategy, identifying short, medium and long term objectives and activities for the Society:
 - building on and achieving greater leverage from existing evaluation innovation and better practice activities such as the AES Evaluation Awards, conferences and Journal;
 - targeting key individual decision-makers such as the prime ministers of New Zealand and Australia and state premiers and their advisors who have a particular interest in 'evidence-informed policy' (in the same way that the AEA has approached the US President's office);
 - strengthening the positive reputation of the AES through targeted advocacy in high profile policy areas;
 - investigating the value and feasibility of generating and supporting an Evaluation Champions Program to identify commissioners in organisations and AES chapters at the local level in agencies;
 - pursuing engagement with heads of evaluation units within government departments;
 - targeting key government agencies (such as the ANAO, other government audit agencies and central agencies) to
 - open formal and informal dialogue seeking their input into the development of AES strategies, guidance, resources and professional learning programs to ensure value and relevance to the government sector;
 - build a relationship where AES is acknowledged as the key external expert advisory body to government on evaluation across Australasia; and

¹ Governments refers to Commonwealth, New Zealand, State/Territory and Local Government tiers

- tailoring key messages about evaluation to contemporary themes in public policy and administration (such as 'evidence-informed policy' and 'learning organisations').
- Assess the structural, capacity and resource requirements of maintaining a prominent advocacy and influencing role for the AES and enhance the function in a realistic fashion over the short to medium term.
- In conducting the process of engagement, ensure that the AES consults stakeholders as to their needs for evaluation and professional learning.

Government Engagement Strategies:

In order to achieve the strategies above it has been suggested that the Executive Officer position needs to be in place and that the portfolio of strategic developments needs to become part of the AES Vice President's role. The VP would thus work in conjunction with the EO to implement and achieve a range of strategies that would be identified in the AES Implementation Plan. These two key officers would be supported by an Engagement Committee, ideally with representatives knowledgeable of all the sectors with which the AES seeks to engage.

The role of the Engagement Committee would be better defined as it commences operation, but it would be expected to encompass:

- Advising the Board on priorities for engagement.
- Developing policy positions to put to key stakeholders, e.g. on how such stakeholders should manage evaluation activities (see AEA policy paper for the US Government, <http://www.eval.org/EPTF/aea10.roadmap.101910.pdf>).
- Developing, with the EO and the Board, a communication strategy to membership and regional groups to get their 'buy-in' and support.
- Working with the EO and regions to develop contact lists.
- Working with the EO and the Board to develop key consistent messages to put to potential contacts.

It is envisaged that actual formal communications would come from the Board or President, and that negotiations for face-to-face meetings would be handled by the EO and the intended attendees, probably at the President or Fellow level including appropriate local representation.

2011:

- Arrange to meet with the Australian Prime Minister. The President to request a meeting with the Prime Minister for the purposes of explaining how evaluation can assist the Government in meeting its evidence-based approach to policy development and resource allocation.

- President to write to the incoming Victorian Premier also asking for an audience with the AES. A similar approach to the incoming NSW Premier could also take place following the March 2011 elections to be held in NSW.
- Develop a policy statement on the value of evaluation to government for presentation to the prime ministers/ministers of Australia and New Zealand and the Australian state/territory premiers.
- Meet with the Australian Public Service Commission and the New Zealand Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to identify potential areas for skill development.
- Meet with senior personnel within key government agencies to advance evaluation.
- Ensure that keynote speakers for the Sydney 2011 conference are available to meet with Senior Executive Service level personnel in key government departments (such as Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Families, Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)) to advocate the benefits and use of application to government policy development.
- Additionally, see if the key note speakers for the Sydney 2011 conference could meet with senior NSW government officials or ministers.
- Meet with Andrew Leigh MHR as the previous speaker at the AES conference in Canberra regarding any ongoing role he could play in supporting the AES in its negotiations with the Commonwealth Government.
- Inform Australian/New Zealand governments as to how to better use the consultant data base to find consultants who can become part of teams that help to develop tender documentation for evaluation projects.

2012:

- Develop an AES Award for Public Sector Good Practice specifically focussing on examples of good use and application of evaluation in government policy development, programs and resource allocation.
- Redevelop the AES consultant list as a competency-based database that is searchable by key words. Aim would be for the AES to assist with supplying a network of evaluators who could provide advice to governments on what to look for, the quality of proposed evaluation frameworks and methodologies, their appropriateness for the particular study and those involved in the program, etc.
- Develop a training program for government that can be tailored to the needs and requirements of individual departments. The AES can provide access to high quality training and professional development.

2013-15:

- Further development and implementation of the above strategies. Consideration of additional strategies necessary to build a relationship where the AES is acknowledged as the key external expert advisory body to governments on evaluation across Australasia.

6. Indigenous Evaluation

Objectives:

The AES is committed to improving evaluation practice that affects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, Maori and Pacific peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and other Pacific Islands. As a body representing sound theory and practice in evaluation, the AES promotes evaluation that supports positive outcomes and is respectful and appropriate. Accordingly the objective is:

- Work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Maori and Pacific peoples to:
 - Identify and promote sound, respectful and appropriate practice of evaluation in Indigenous communities that is cognisant of and responsive to the culture, history and aspirations of these communities;
 - Support the development of culture-specific and community-specific evaluation approaches;
 - Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Maori and Pacific peoples in evaluation practice across the roles of evaluation purchaser, participant and practitioner;
 - Enhance ethical evaluation processes that are responsive to different cultural contexts; and
 - Strengthen the evaluation capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Maori and Pacific peoples through appropriate resourcing of evaluation training and professional development for these communities.

Road Map:

- Maintain a strategic focus on Indigenous evaluation in the short, medium and long-term, with a 10 year Indigenous Evaluation Strategy that continues to address the priorities of:
 - consolidating work already underway in the Indigenous evaluation field;
 - increasing Indigenous participation in AES;
 - responding to and supporting Indigenous knowledge and understandings as key drivers of evaluation involving Indigenous communities and Indigenous evaluation practitioners;
 - encouraging the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and understandings into evaluation;
 - encouraging the engagement of non-Indigenous evaluators with the evaluation of Indigenous programs and policies; and
 - communicating with ANZEA to learn from its experience in the field of Indigenous evaluation.

Indigenous Evaluation Strategies:

6.1 Indigenous Participation and Capacity Building

The development and implementation of a strategy or set of strategies for engaging and building the capacity of emerging Indigenous Australian evaluators should be undertaken by a Board level committee. In that regard, the Board proposes to expand the terms of reference of the existing Conference Support Grants Committee to form an Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Committee.

The Committee will consult with the Indigenous SIG, but the SIG would not have any policy responsibilities. The SIG may choose to operate primarily as a networking and collegial forum supporting ethical and rigorous evaluation in the Indigenous context.

The Committee will be tasked with developing and implementing a documented strategy targeted to increasing and supporting Indigenous evaluation membership.

It could operate to undertake the following tasks:

- Encourage and support research on Indigenous evaluation practice and evaluation development priorities;
- Undertake needs assessment of Australian Indigenous emerging evaluators working in and interested in this area to better understand their capacity development needs and interests and to inform how the AES can better meet these needs;
- Support Indigenous evaluator forums at AES Conferences;
- Encourage non-Indigenous evaluators to work with Indigenous evaluators to present papers at the AES conference and for publication in the EJA;
- Form partnerships with Indigenous authorities and service providers, Universities, NGOs and government departments to identify needs, resource the development and delivery of evaluation capacity development workshops, and establish mentoring and support networks for emerging Indigenous Australian evaluators;
- Develop and deliver workshops and other activities on good practices in evaluation to meet the needs of emerging Indigenous evaluators and deliver workshops on good practices in evaluation in Indigenous contexts to evaluation practitioners;
- Identify potential Australian Indigenous candidates for conference support grants;
- Encourage and support Australian Indigenous candidates to attend ANZEA conferences;
- Form partnerships with universities, NGOs and government departments to develop and provide capacity development workshops for emerging Indigenous Australian evaluators.

7. Relationship with ANZEA as an Evaluation Association

Objectives:

- Develop strong working relationship with the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association, for shared learning.

Road Map:

- Liaise with ANZEA to establish potential areas for collaboration.
- Create opportunities for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Maori and Pacific peoples to engage in shared evaluation learning.

Relationship with ANZEA Strategies:

- Develop a joint membership option between AES and ANZEA
- Develop core training modules in collaboration with ANZEA
- Encourage Australian Indigenous candidates to attend ANZEA conferences
- Work with ANZEA to develop articulated professional standards

8. International Evaluation Capacity Development in the Asia-Pacific Region

Objectives:

The AES is committed to supporting the development of evaluation capacity in the Asia-Pacific region. Accordingly, the objective is:

- Position the AES as a resource for both individual practitioners and emerging national evaluation associations in the Asia-Pacific, applying the following principles:
 - capacity development should be based on a self-help model whereby interventions are demand-led and country-owned (that is, any activities need to be in response to identified needs and informed by knowledge from people with experience in and an in-depth understanding of the particular country);
 - capacity development activities are best designed so as to have a systemic focus and an enduring impact; and
 - partnerships with relevant national and international organisations will be the foundation of the AES' approach.

Road Map

- Establish Consultation Strategy and liaise with Papua New Guinea personnel interested in monitoring and evaluation to further identify their needs and how the AES can respond and support.

- Liaise with AusAID and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and relevant UN agencies to establish potential areas for collaboration in both Papua New Guinea and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

International Capacity Development Strategies:

- The AES continues to support the newly formed Papua New Guinea Association of Professional Evaluators (PNG AoPE) in ways that they see fit and in ways that the AES can realistically respond.
- To continue to develop a relationship with AusAID and to submit for AusAID funding to support the PNG AoPE wherever appropriate.
- To adopt a similar approach to engaging Government in engaging the New Zealand MFAT with respect to evaluation and the role that the AES can play.
- To adjust the terms of reference and membership base of the International Relations Committee to incorporate the AES focus on supporting emergent evaluation societies in the Pacific and South East Asia region and engagement with donor agencies such as AusAID and New Zealand MFAT.
- To incorporate the International Relations Committee within the wider Engagement Committee.

9. Engaging the Non-Government Sector

Objectives:

- Support the development of evaluation capacity in the non-government sector, recognising the great diversity in the size and resources of organisations required to conduct evaluations as part of good practice.

Road Map:

- Develop a five year Non-Government Sector Engagement Strategy that focuses on:
 - recruitment of membership in the non-government sector;
 - identification of the short, medium and long term needs of the sector in terms of evaluation; and
 - activity that strategically targets high level evaluation needs of the sector and positions AES to provide sustainable, longer term support to this segment of membership.

Engagement with Non-Government Sector Strategies:

- Develop an address list of non-government organisations and peak body agencies operating in all sectors; specific sectors include the social, educational, Indigenous, international development and natural resource management sectors.

- Engage with peak bodies and non-government organisation (NGO) research groups in Australia and New Zealand to advance the role of the AES as an evaluation organisation that can advance their interests and build expertise in evaluation practice.
- Adopt a similar approach to engaging government in circulating an AES policy statement to identified NGO and peak body members.
- Marketing of workshops and other professional development activities to the identified NGOs and peak bodies.
- Manage engagement with the NGO sector through the new Engagement Committee, supported by the Executive Officer.

10. Engaging Academic Institutions

Objectives:

- Improve the flow of information about theoretical and practical innovations in evaluation from academic institutions to the AES membership.
- Contribute to academic research in the evaluation field.
- Promote the discipline of evaluation and good evaluation practice in the higher education teaching environment.
- Strengthen the AES' credentials as an expert organisation in the field.

Road Map:

- Develop a five year Higher Education Engagement Strategy that focuses on building stronger formal and informal linkages between the AES and academic centres for evaluation, public policy, public administration, community development, international development and other fields where the discipline of evaluation has strong relevance.

Engagement of Academic Institutions Strategies:

- Develop and post on the AES website an interim list of units or subjects in evaluation that are available in Australia, New Zealand or on-line internationally.
- Form a group of experienced and relevant AES members to inform selected deans of Australian and New Zealand university faculties on the relevance of and need for evaluation education.
- Engage academic research units and think tanks within university structures.
- Adopt a similar approach to engaging government and NGO/peak organisations in circulating an AES policy statement to identified university deans.
- Market the evaluation approaches and impact of evaluation that should take place within universities.

- Manage engagement with the university sector through the new engagement committee, supported by the Executive Officer.

