



AES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE EVALUATION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Adelaide 27–31 August



Conference evaluation

Report by David Turner

Executive summary

The 2012 Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) conference took place in Adelaide, South Australia. The conference was attended by over 400 people, with a wide range of participants that included delegates from Papua New Guinea, Thailand, the USA, the UK, and other countries. Pre-conference workshops were held to provide professional development, and are included in this report. The primary source of feedback from participants, for this evaluation, was provided by an online survey, with a 57% response rate.

Evaluation results show generally positive responses to the conference. Most respondents said the conference provided them with value in a range of areas, such as knowledge of new evaluation approaches or methods, awareness of research being done elsewhere, and opportunities to develop new evaluation skills. Some concerns remain about presentation quality, opportunities to interact effectively with peers, and the adequacy of the time allowed for presentations.

This conference was the first to embrace new social media technologies, but with a low take-up rate.

Suggestions are provided for building on the 2012 experience in future.

This report provides the results of the 2012 AES international conference. It covers both the pre-conference workshops and the three-day conference.

Pre-conference workshops

Participant evaluations were analysed for thirteen pre-conference professional workshops. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with these workshops in eight areas, were asked to identify the best things about the workshops and to give suggestions for how they could be improved, and were asked whether they would recommend the workshops to other people. Finally, they were asked what other topics they would like AES to run workshops on in future. Workshop presenters received individual reports summarising their feedback.

Assessments were given on a scale of 1 to 4, with descriptive labels varying by question. Overall quality was rated on a scale of poor, satisfactory, good, or excellent. The degree to which the presenter communicated was assessed as poorly, satisfactorily, well, or very well. The extent to which (1) participants gained new ideas and knowledge, (2) the presenter facilitated useful discussion, (3) participants made new connections at the workshop, and (4) the workshop would help improve the participant's professional practice were rated on a scale of "not at all", "to a small extent", "to some extent", or "to a large extent". Finally, participants were asked to rate the workshop organisation and facilities.

Pre-conference workshops generally fell within three broad areas:

1. quantitative data-based approaches
2. evaluation designs and methods
3. evaluation uses.

There was some notable divergence of views expressed on the quality of pre-conference workshops. In one example, 35% of participants rated the workshop as satisfactory, 35% as good, and 30% as excellent. For the most part, workshops were rated positively. In 10 out of 13 workshops, participants gave an overall rating of good or excellent in more than 70% of responses. Workshops on evaluation approaches, tools, and methods generally received high ratings.

When asked what they liked about the workshops, respondents frequently cited the experience, skills, and credibility of the presenter. Other factors included exposure to new ideas, good workshop handouts or other materials, opportunities for interaction during the workshops, use of practical examples, and the use of a good structure for the session.

When asked what they would improve, participants in four workshops said the sessions had been more basic and targeted to less-experienced people than they had expected or needed. Numerous comments were received about wanting handouts and other course materials where they were not provided, about having longer sessions (especially with half-day sessions), about having more interaction during the workshop, and about getting more examples from practice.

Comparing higher- and lower-rated workshops, participants cited several factors that affected their assessments.

- Characteristics of the presenter(s): level of expertise, credibility, ability to draw on their experience and knowledge
- How clearly the workshop was structured
- Inclusion of chances to apply the ideas or theories presented in practical exercises
- Availability of good course material, either in advance or during the session
- Targeting of the workshop to the right level of participant experience
- A high level of interaction between the presenter and participants, and between participants
- Session length: long enough for interaction and exercises, but without too much time allocated to basic ideas

Topics suggested for future workshops

A wide variety of suggestions were made for future workshops. One point made repeatedly was that workshop presenters should be clearer about the level of skill and experience expected of participants. Specific suggestions for future workshops included the following, grouped into broad categories.

<p>Basics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mechanical nuts and bolts of evaluation = an excellent basis • The difference between research and evaluation • The difference between monitoring and evaluation • Evaluation capacity building strategies, especially in government • Program logic, logic modelling • Participatory, ethical approaches to evaluation • Basic understanding/introduction to evaluation for beginners/starters in the evaluation profession
<p>Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring • Monitoring to be also incorporated into the training • Indicators—establishing baseline indicators for various groups, what to look for in substance abuse, homelessness, immigration etc. • Core concepts in developing M&E frameworks • Developing baseline indicators for various groups and situations
<p>Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for creating a quantitative survey from goal design of questions, method of presentation and types of conclusions it could generate • Construction of surveys/questionnaires for evaluation • More detail on evaluation questions
<p>Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional sections on data evaluation and graphing (using Excel 2013) • Tips for understanding & justifying data conclusions (i.e. stats for dummies/stats for qualitatively-minded people) • Practical activity of interpretation and analysis • Clarification of theory, methodology, and method in quantitative analysis • Attribution and contribution

<p>Methods or approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realist evaluation approaches, with a practical framework for using the approach • Practical approaches to impact assessment • Quantitative methodologies • Reflective practice—applications in evaluation • Developmental evaluation (more advanced) • Complexity theory • How to combine or choose between evaluation approaches • Economic impacts of programs • Indigenous evaluation methodologies • Performance management systems in complex programs • Most Significant Change • Different Monitoring & Evaluation approaches • Results-based management: what it is, how to implement it, the role of evaluation in results-based management • Question technique in group methods • More issues-focused discussions on different approaches and why they work or why they don't work • Practical and ethical participatory approaches to evaluation
<p>Reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-cut tips for presenting statistics credibly • Report writing for evaluation • Evaluation use and influence
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing successful program evaluation funding applications • Reflective practice/organisational learning • Systems theory and evaluation (Bob Williams) • Change theory and organisational learning and evaluation (Senge) • More on formal evaluation projects good in PNG and other Pacific Island countries and indigenous community • World Café • Ethics of evaluation and preparation of staff around sensitive topics • Dealing with senior managers and/or commissioners and bringing them around to an acceptance of/agreement to use PRA and evaluation

Conference evaluation

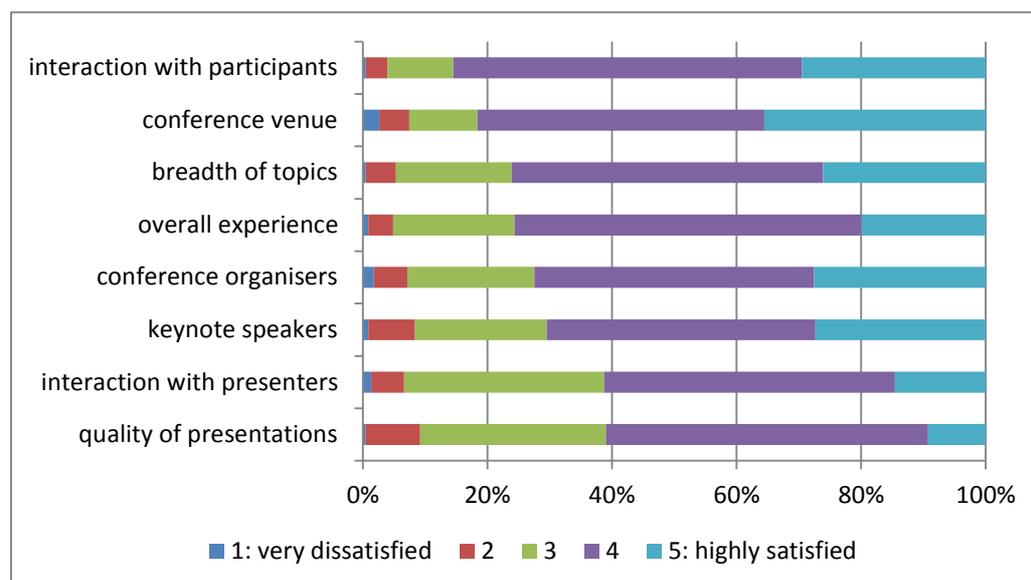
Evaluation approach and sources

Discussions were held with conference organisers, including the conference managers. A post-conference survey was conducted online, using SurveyMonkey, of all pre-conference workshop and conference participants. Invitations were sent to 405 people, with two follow-up invitations to those who had not responded. Surveys were completed by 230 people, for a response rate of 57%. This was lower than the 65% response rate to the 2011 post-conference survey.

Overall reaction to the conference

The first area considered was about reactions to the conference itself. Respondents were asked to address eight areas concerning the quality of the conference, including an overall assessment of the conference experience. For each, they were asked to respond on a five-point scale ranging from “very dissatisfied” to “highly satisfied”. As shown below, survey responses reflected a high level of satisfaction with the opportunities to interact with other participants, the conference venue, the breadth of topics, and the overall experience. Respondents were less satisfied in some areas, such as the quality of presentations and the opportunity to interact with presenters, both of which had about 40% of responses at 3 or below on the 5-point scale. Keynote speakers also attracted criticism, with 30% rating satisfaction at 3 or below.

FIGURE 1: OVERALL SATISFACTION LEVELS



Respondents were asked to identify up to three things they valued most about their conference experience. The most common positive comments referred to networking opportunities, learning opportunities (including both conference presentations and pre-conference workshops), keynote speakers, and the conference organisation.

Respondents were also asked to identify up to three things AES could improve in future conferences. Issues raised included:

- length of sessions, with shorter sessions described as too short for exploring issues and getting useful interaction, and questions raised about the mix of sessions of different lengths,
- quality and mix of presentations,
- keynote speakers, with comments made about some speakers that questioned their relevance to the Australasian setting,
- technologies used, especially for distance presentations,
- the venue, both with regard to the cost and the suitability of rooms used for different presentations, and
- conference food.

Evaluations of pre-conference workshops also included an open-ended question about how workshops could be improved.

Respondents were asked whether AES conferences have become more valuable over time, remained about the same, or become less valuable. 122 people responded to this question. Of these, 40% said conferences have become more valuable to them, 45% about the same, and 15% worse. Comments on why conferences have become more valuable included:

- new social media opportunities
- greater opportunity to make use of the conference due to own professional development
- greater diversity of topics and presentations
- greater networking opportunities

Those who said the conferences are becoming less valuable made comments such as the following:

- variable quality of presentations, including keynote speakers
- fewer opportunities for new material as people grow more experienced and attend more conferences—people learn less that is new and have fewer “wow” moments
- topics seen as narrow.

Value for presenters

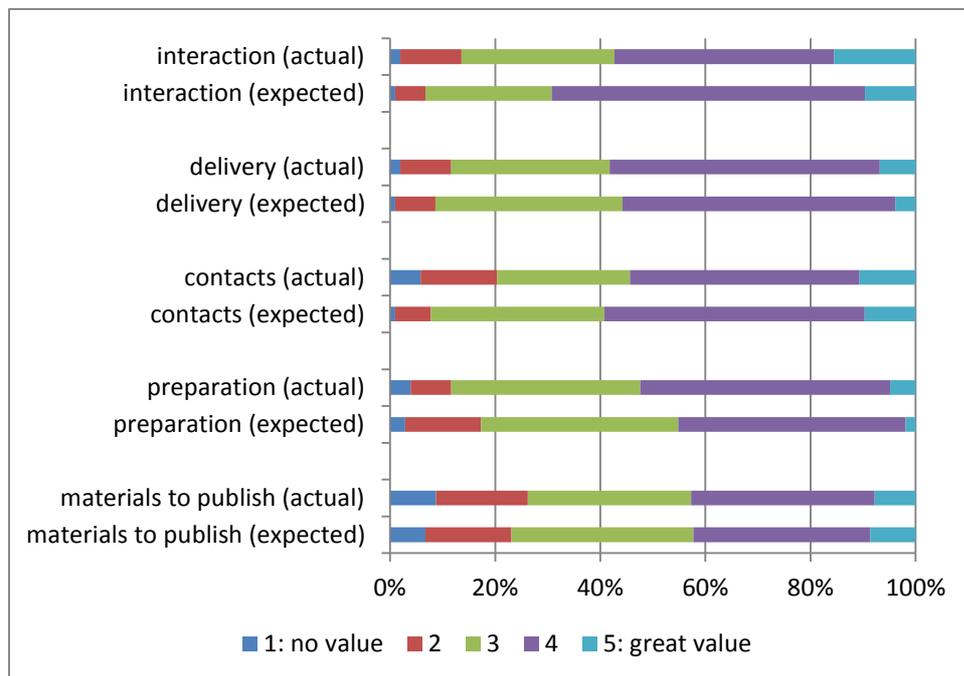
106 respondents said they presented or helped present at the conference. It was thought that giving a presentation could be a valuable experience in different ways, ranging from the effort required to prepare for presenting to the possibility of using presentation materials in future publications. Presenters were asked to rate each of the following elements in terms of what value they expected and what value they received.

- Preparing for the presentation
- Delivering the presentation
- Interacting with and receiving feedback from the audience
- Making contacts at the presentation
- Developing materials for future publication

Respondents were asked to rate each item on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (no value) to 5 (great value: life- or career-changing). Responses were generally positive and in the range of 3 to 4, with the lowest values expected or received from preparing materials for later publication. Expectations were somewhat higher than experience, as judged by the larger number who had expected high value from making contacts at their presentations, interacting with their audiences, delivering their presentations, and developing materials for future publication. At issue here is the quality of interaction with other people at the conference, an issue that received numerous comments in the survey. On the other hand, slightly more people said they received high levels of value from preparing their presentations than they had expected.

Figure 2 compares the value expected and received by those making presentations in the five areas. In some, presenters had expected more of their conference experience than they received. 69% expected a high degree of value from interaction with participants (4 or 5 on the 5-point scale), but 57% said they had found the interaction highly valuable. In some areas, presenters had expected to gain less value.

FIGURE 2: VALUES EXPECTED AND RECEIVED FROM PRESENTATION ACTIVITIES

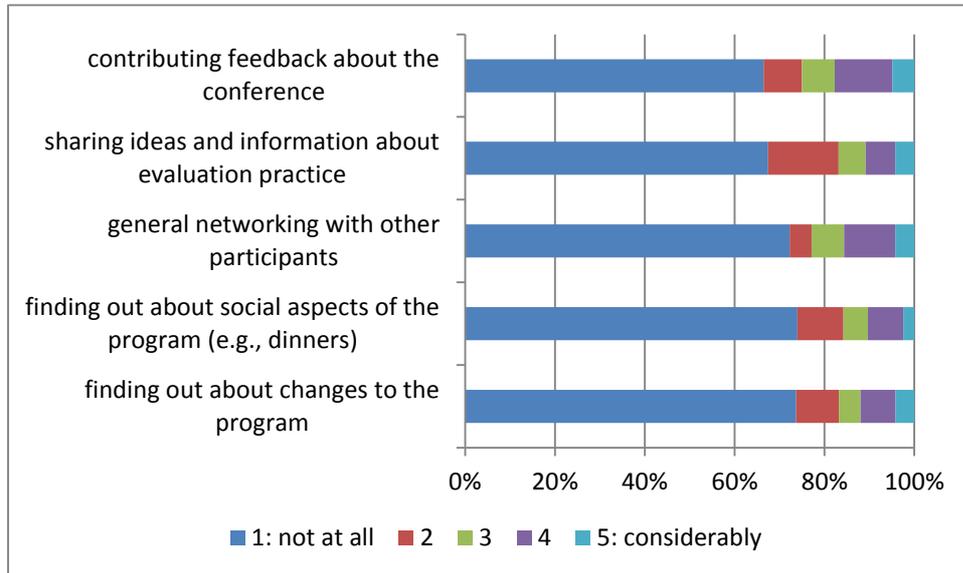


Use of social media

The 2012 conference broke new ground for AES by using social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Respondents were asked about their use of these media, and about their usefulness. Most respondents reported no use of social media. 36 people said they followed other people's tweets, and 12 said they followed the conference's Facebook page. 19 said they posted about the conference on Twitter, and 5 posted about the conference on Facebook. 9 people followed other people's blogs, 5 wrote their own blogs, and 5 used Lanyard to download the conference program.

The low use of social media is reflected in the assessments of what social media contributed, as shown in the following chart.

FIGURE 3: PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA



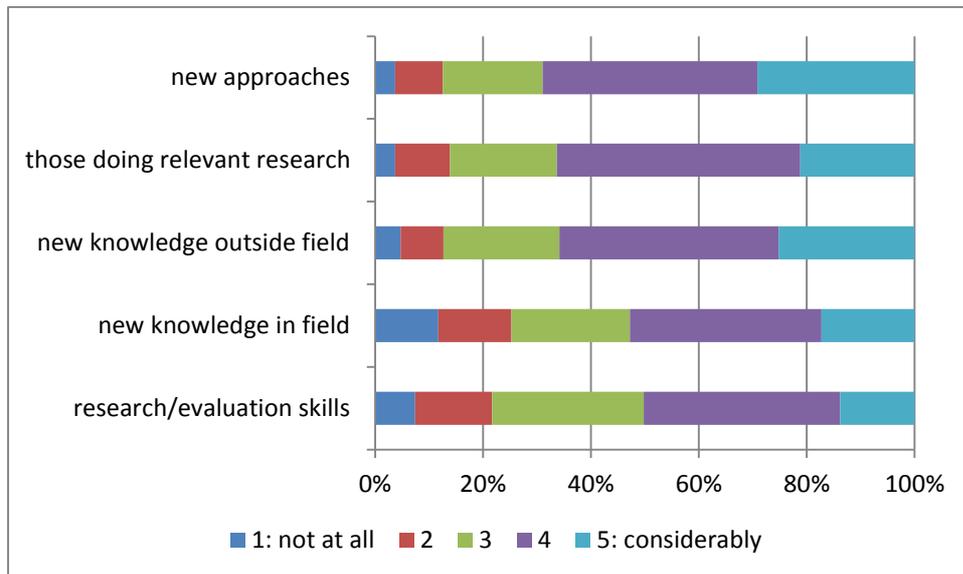
Impacts of conference participation

Conference attendees were asked about the extent to which the conference provided knowledge, information, or skills in the following areas:

- new knowledge in their fields of practice
- new knowledge from outside their fields of practice
- awareness of new research or evaluation approaches
- people doing research relevant to their work
- research or evaluation skills

As shown in Figure 4, below, most respondents said that the conference provided them with new knowledge, contacts, or skills. Getting exposure to new approaches and to people doing relevant research rated more highly than other potential impacts. 22% gave low rankings (1 or 2) when asked about gaining new research or evaluation skills.

FIGURE 4: EXTENT OF NEW KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION, OR SKILLS



Respondents cited the following as examples of skills gained from participation in the conference.

<p>New technologies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of video, cell phone applications, video over Internet (such as Skype) • Visual documentation (photos, maps, or other) • Visual outcome mapping • Mapping climate change • Evaluation of websites and applications
<p>Evaluation methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realist approaches • participatory evaluation methods • causal modelling • Most Significant Change • developing logic models • developmental evaluation • performance measurement • evaluation planning • qualitative evaluation methods • rubrics
<p>Research approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group facilitation methods • focus group techniques • social network analysis

<p>Advice on professional practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentation skills • tips on procurement • cultural competency • report writing
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluation capacity building • managing the political context of evaluation • community development approaches

Respondents were asked for examples of information about policy or program areas they had learned about through the conference. Examples included the following:

- Evaluation of industry and economic development approaches
- Health policies, including UK health policies and mental health policies
- Evaluation taking place with indigenous communities, and indigenous evaluation more broadly (numerous comments)
- Youth programs
- Community development
- Education policy
- Aid programs
- Social services

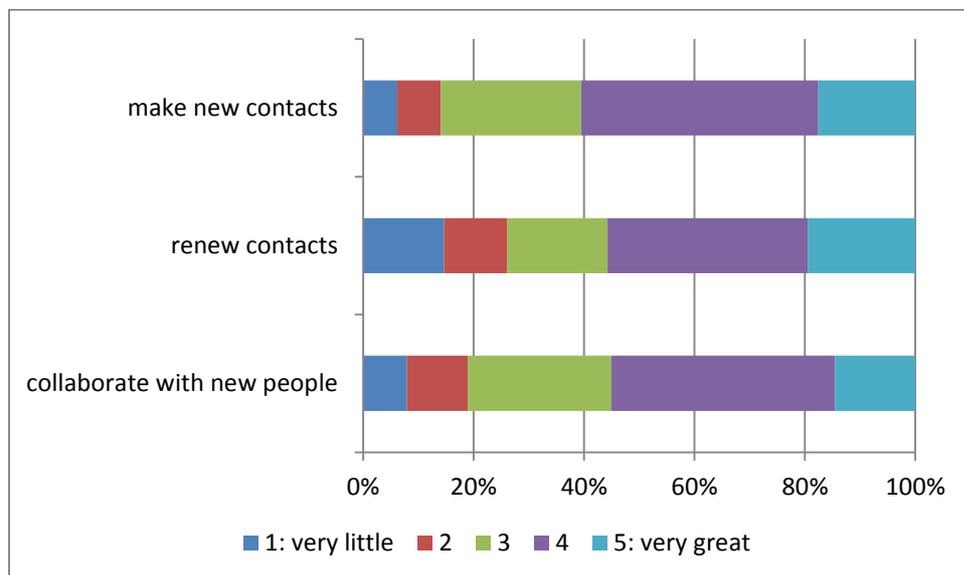
When asked what they had learned with regard to research or evaluation being done elsewhere, respondents provided the following examples.

- How other organisations were developing and promoting a culture of evaluation
- Insight into indigenous research and evaluation agendas
- Lessons from indigenous evaluation, including work being done in New Guinea
- Realist, developmental evaluation, and other methodologies being used
- Information about international cooperation in evaluation
- Making contact with people who may provide access to evaluation tools in future
- Use of monitoring techniques
- Use of cost-benefit analysis
- Evaluation capacity building
- Use of online technology in data collection and reporting
- Use of complexity or systems theory in evaluation

Conference attendees were asked a range of questions about the professional impacts of taking part in the conference. They were asked to assess the extent to which taking part allowed them to:

- renew contact with people they already knew
- make new professional contacts
- collaborate with people outside their usual groups of colleagues

FIGURE 5: EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN CONFERENCE



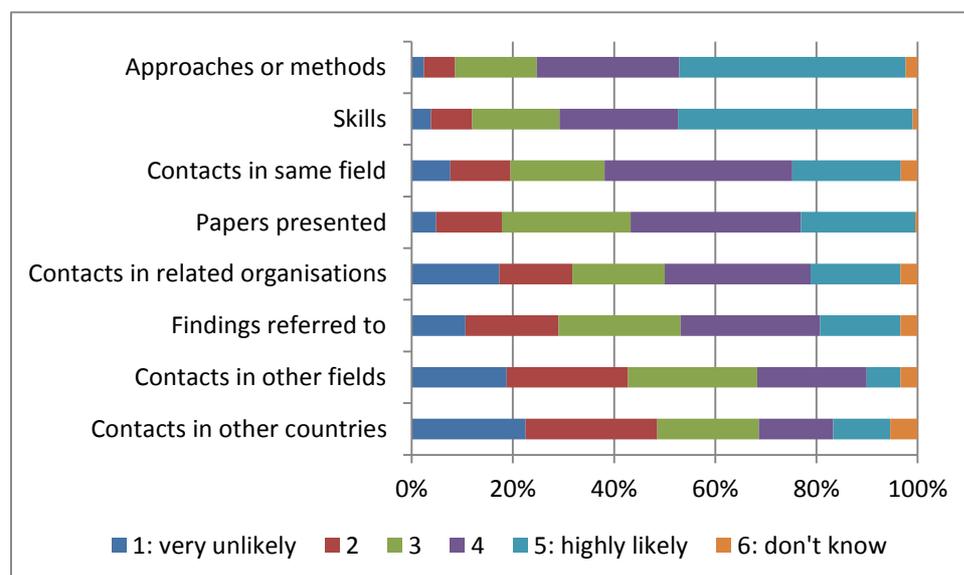
While 60% of respondents gave high ratings (4 or 5) to making new contacts, 14% gave only a rating of 1 or 2. 26% did not renew contacts (rating it as 1 or 2).

When asked how they expected to use new contacts in future, people gave the following responses (multiple responses were allowed):

Not applicable: did not make new contacts	5%
To seek information on relevant work done elsewhere	58%
To collaborate on new work	37%
To get peer review or comment on work	25%
Don't know	19%

Respondents were asked how likely they were to make use of evaluation approaches or skills, evaluation findings, or contacts in their current or future work. Respondents were the most optimistic about applying research/evaluation approaches or methods in their work, with 73% rating the likelihood at 4 or 5 out of 5. They were nearly as optimistic about applying new skills, with 70% rating it at 4 or 5 out of 5. They were least optimistic about applying contacts made with people in other countries, with 49% rating the probability at the lowest two levels.

FIGURE 6: LIKELIHOOD OF APPLICATION IN CURRENT OR FUTURE WORK



People who attended the 2011 Sydney conference were asked to reflect on their experience since that time. 77 people said they attended the Sydney conference. Of these, 56 (73%) made contacts that expanded their professional networks, 43 (56%) identified useful research, 47 (61%) learned about useful evaluation approaches or methods that they expect to use in their future work, and 43 (56%) learned about evaluation approaches or methods that they had already used in their work.

Information about participants and their conference attendance

Survey respondents were asked to assess their levels of evaluation knowledge and skills. 37 people (17%) described themselves as inexperienced (with no background in evaluation, or novices), 98 (45%) rated their skills at the middle of the range, and 84 people (38%) described their skills as “advanced” or “expert.” This reflects a slightly lower level of self-assessed expertise than in 2011. While 38% of the 2012 respondents rated their expertise at 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, 42% of respondents rated themselves at the same levels in 2011.

When asked how they describe themselves professionally, the responses were as follows:

- evaluator: 88 (39%)
- researcher: 57 (25%)
- policy analyst: 10 (4%)
- project officer or project manager: 27 (12%)
- auditor: 1
- manager: 21 (9%)

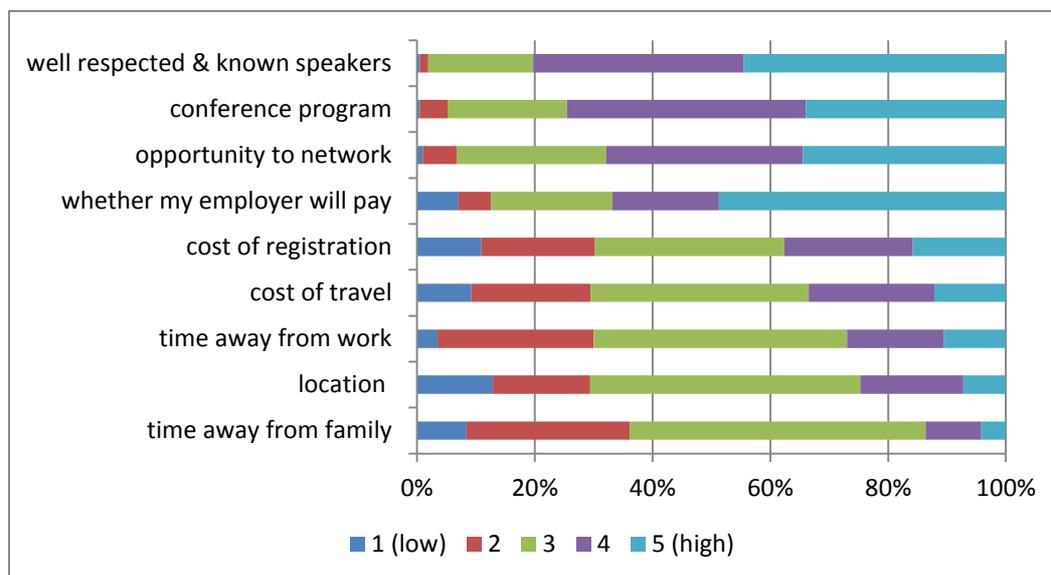
- other: 22 (11%)
 - a community development specialist from design to evaluation; monitoring systems, participatory methodologies
 - facilitator and HR consultant including training
 - policy/research and evaluation
 - health care professional
 - a project lead working in a team that provides planning and evaluation leadership and support to the organisation
 - evaluation trainer
 - M&E Advisor
 - project officer / manager with evaluation component
 - program designer and evaluator in international development context
 - sociologist
 - researcher, evaluator, policy analyst, and project manager
 - Human Resources officer
 - statistical analyst
 - consultant
 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Officer

When asked why they attended the 2012 conference, respondents gave the following answers:

- 59 to attend a workshop
- 82 to hear the keynote speakers
- 159 for training and professional development
- 82 to give a paper
- 114 for networking.

When asked about what factors affect the decision on whether or not to attend a conference, positively or negatively, 70% or more cited internationally recognised speakers, networking opportunities, and the conference program as incentives to attend. Over 60% said that having their employer pay was an incentive. Disincentives included travel or registration costs (22% and 24%), time away from work or family (29% or 33%), and location (only 22% cited the conference location and its opportunities as an incentive for attending).

FIGURE 7: FACTORS AFFECTING DECISION TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE



Respondents were asked where they do most of their evaluation work, and where they are based.

Sector	Number who do most of their work in this sector	Number based in this sector
Australian commonwealth government	60	35
Australian state government	54	38
Australian local government	1	1
New Zealand central government	19	12
New Zealand local government	0	0
Private for-profit	4	46
Academic	14	37
Community or not-for-profit	46	36

97 people said they anticipate attending the 2013 conference in Brisbane, Queensland. 34 said they do not anticipate attending, and 87 said they don't know whether they will attend or not.

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141 respondents (65%) reported that they are AES members and 70 (32%) that they are non-members. Six (3%) said they didn't know whether they were members or not. A slightly higher proportion of respondents were members in 2011: 70% were members, and 28% non-members.

Other issues

International delegations

The 2012 conference was attended by delegates from a range of countries other than Australia and New Zealand, including Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Cook Islands. One survey respondent suggested that people from other Asian and Pacific countries, such as Papua New Guinea, be included in the conference welcoming ceremony in the same way as the New Zealand delegation. Apart from the survey, a comment was received to the effect that delegates of one country would have appreciated greater recognition of their participation. The opening ceremony provides one opportunity for acknowledging their participation. The conference dinner and closing ceremony provide other opportunities.

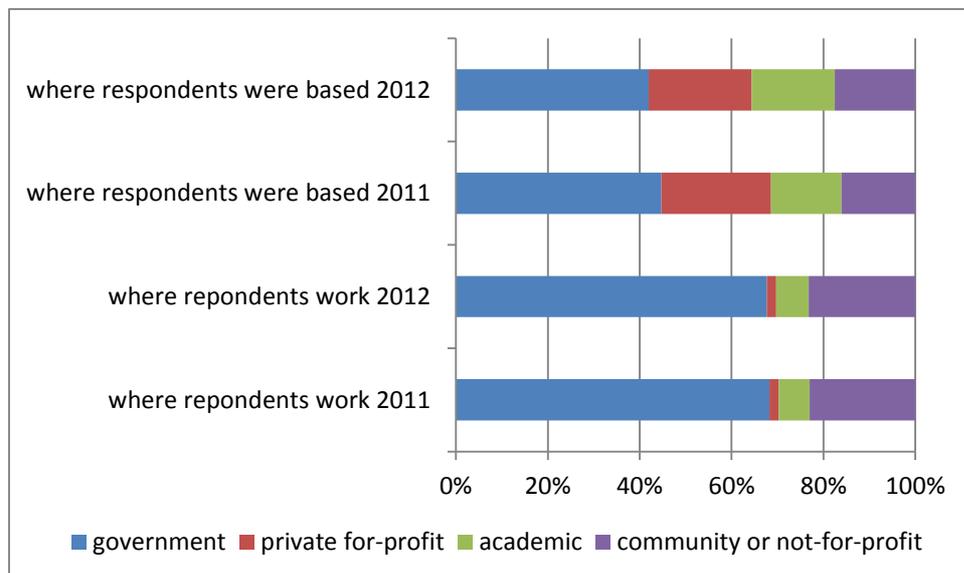
Presentation length and quality

The 2012 conference featured a mix of session lengths, with longer sessions than in the 2011 conference. Fewer negative comments were recorded about insufficient time to have material presented and to interact with the audience, which suggests that the longer sessions were well received. Some negative comments remained, however, about the shorter sessions. Some people said more time was needed, and that presentations were rushed or allowed too little time for discussion in the shorter sessions. It was suggested that parallel sessions should have the same length, so that people could move between them more easily. Some negative comments were also made about the quality of presentations, and about the mix of topics.

Comparison to 2011 conference evaluation

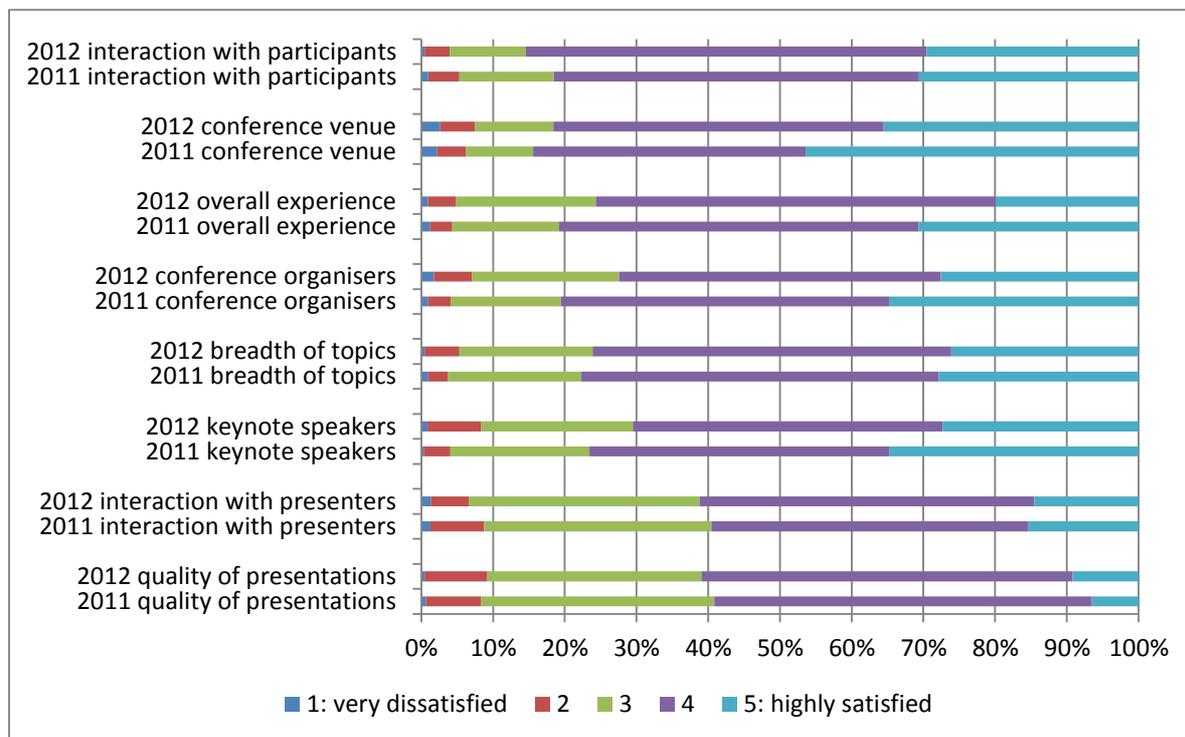
The 2012 conference evaluation attracted a very similar range of participants. To compare results across the two years, 2012 results were re-analysed using the categories from 2011, which did not differentiate between different levels of government in Australia or New Zealand. A substantial majority in both years said they worked largely in government or the community sector. In both years, about 40% of respondents were based in either the private or academic sectors.

FIGURE 8: RESPONDENT POPULATIONS IN 2011 AND 2012



Reactions to the conference were largely similar to those in 2011. In 2012, 20% of respondents gave the overall experience a rating of 5 (highly satisfied), down from 31% in 2011. This was partly compensated for by a larger proportion giving the overall experience a rating of 4 than in 2011 (56%, up from 50%).

FIGURE 9: OVERALL ASSESSMENTS IN 2011 AND 2012



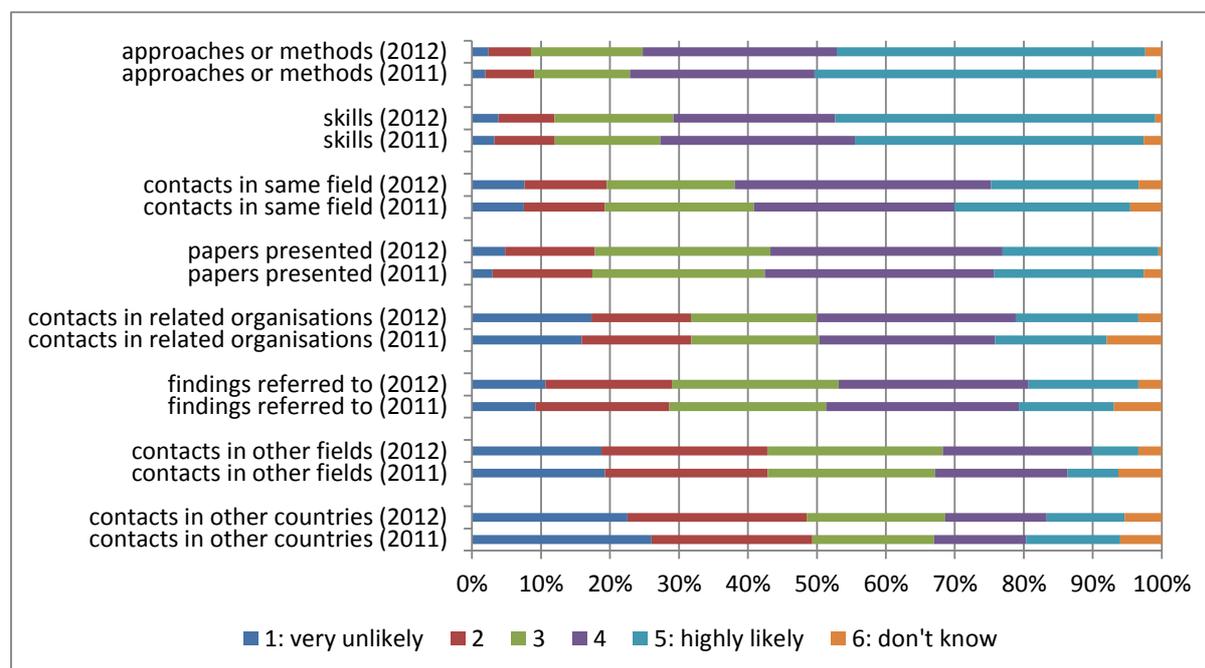
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2012 conference respondents assessed the impacts of their participation in similar ways to the 2011 conference. When asked about the extent to which taking part had helped people make or renew contacts or gain new information, a majority of people in both years responded positively (4 or 5 on the 5-point scale), as below:

	2011 response	2012 response
Renewed contacts at conference	53%	55%
Made new contacts at conference	53%	60%
Gained knowledge of new approaches	71%	70%
Gained knowledge outside own field	68%	66%

When asked about the likelihood of applying what they had learned to their work, responses in the two years were similar.

FIGURE 10: LIKELIHOOD OF APPLICATION IN FUTURE



Respondents who had attended AES conferences in the previous years were asked what impacts had resulted from their attendance. The percentages of respondents who agreed with the following statements in the two years were as follows.

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	2011 (for the 2010 conference)	2012 (for the 2011 conference)
Made contacts that expanded my professional network	73%	71%
Identified useful research	56%	52%
Learned about research/evaluation methods or approaches that I plan to use in future work	61%	52%
Learned about research/evaluation methods or approaches that I have already used in my work	56%	51%

Conclusion

The conference feedback reflects generally high levels of satisfaction with the conference and its applicability to professional practice, like the feedback given in 2011. It demonstrates continuing concern over issues of quality in terms of topics, presentations, and opportunities to interact with and learn from other participants. Comments were made on the tendency of some presenters to focus too much on the results of their projects and too little on methodological challenges and how they addressed those challenges. There was strong interest shown in new areas of thinking and development, and in the demonstration of practical approaches to evaluation.

The conference evaluation showed a high level of interest in topics related to indigenous evaluation and a positive response to including indigenous work prominently in the conference. It also showed, however, that AES can go further in welcoming a wide range of participants, particularly from outside its core areas of Australia and New Zealand.

Recommendation

I offer recommendations for consideration by the AES Board and by the 2013 conference organising committee. I suggest that the 2013 conference committee consider how it might accomplish the following objectives.

1. Identify the current leading edge of evaluation practice development (using a variety of methods, perhaps including social media as a tool for attracting wider input), and signal to practitioners that workshops or presentations on those topics would be welcome.
2. Select presentation topics that provide participants with new evaluation approaches and methods, or promote evaluation skill development, since these were cited as the most likely areas for people to apply what they gained from the conference in their evaluation practice.
3. Schedule sessions to maximise opportunities for interaction between speakers and audience members, or between audience members.
4. Clarify their objectives for using social media, before or during the conference. The committee should distinguish between social media use to promote interest and participation in the conference and its use during the conference to identify potential problems or to generate interest in themes or issues being explored.
5. Build on the use of social media, starting earlier with Society members and specifically with people who register for the conference. Make it easier to access social media by providing free internet access on site, either through wireless access for mobile devices or through a few computers made available for conference participants.
6. Recognise the wide interest in indigenous evaluation in the conference program, which may need more than one stream.
7. Offer participants from countries other than Australia or New Zealand an opportunity to take part in the opening ceremony, so that their presence is officially recognised.

I offer the following suggestions for the AES Board.

1. Consider how mentoring opportunities could be created for less experienced members, with an eye toward helping them improve the quality of their conference presentations. The Board may want to work with the Ethics and Professional Practice committee on this issue.
2. Work through international networks to encourage wider participation from countries outside Australia and New Zealand in future conferences.
3. Review, as and when appropriate, the relationship between its objectives for the annual conference and the regional seminars or workshops. It may be that regional workshops focus more on issues of interest to members in that area, or perhaps that people are encouraged to present locally as a kind of trial run for presenting before a wider audience.

Attachment: 2012 post-conference questionnaire

Introduction

The Australasian Evaluation Society is seeking your help to evaluate its 2012 conference. We would like to know what you thought of the conference, and what value you have gained from taking part. Your input will help the Society build on its experience to date, and make future conferences more worthwhile. All survey responses will, of course, remain confidential.

1. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the quality of the conference in each of these areas?

	1: very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5: highly satisfied
breadth of topics covered in the conference program					
quality of presentations					
keynote speakers					
conference venue					
opportunity to interact with presenters					
opportunity to interact with other participants					
support from conference organisers					
the overall conference experience					

2. Please identify up to three things you valued most about your 2012 AES conference experience.

3. Please identify up to three things AES could improve in its future conferences.

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4. What did you do at the conference?

- Present or help present
- Attend the conference without presenting (skip to question #8)

5. What type(s) of presentation were you involved in?

- Paper
- Roundtable
- Mini-workshop
- Other (please specify)

6. What value did you expect from each of the following?

	1: no value	2	3	4	5: great value (life- or career-changing)
preparing for your presentation (such as background research, writing a paper, preparing presentation slides, or doing a trial run of the presentation)					
delivering your talk or presentation at the conference					
interacting with and receiving feedback from your audience					
making contacts at your presentation					
developing materials for future publications					

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7. What value did you receive from each of the following?

	1: no value	2	3	4	5: great value (life- or career-changing)
preparing for your presentation (such as background research, writing a paper, preparing presentation slides, or doing a trial run of the presentation)					
delivering your talk or presentation at the conference					
interacting with and receiving feedback from your audience					
making contacts at your presentation					
developing materials for future publications					

8. To what extent did your participation in the conference allow you to:

	1: very little	2	3	4	5: very great
renew contact with people you already knew?					
make new professional contacts?					
collaborate with people outside your usual group of colleagues?					
Other (please specify)					

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9. How do you expect to use new contacts in future?

- not applicable; did not make new contacts
- to seek information on relevant work done elsewhere
- to collaborate on new work
- to get peer review or comment on your work
- don't know
- Other (please specify)

10. To what extent did the conference provide you with the following?

	1: not at all	2	3	4	5: considerably	N/A
new knowledge in your own field of practice (such as education, health, or social services)						
new knowledge from outside your own field of practice						
awareness of new research/evaluation approaches						
identification of people or organisations doing research relevant to your work						
research/evaluation skills						

11. Please describe specific examples of any of the following gained through participation in the conference.

- skills
- information about a policy or program area
- information about research/evaluation completed or being done elsewhere

12. How likely are you to apply any of the following in your current or future work?

	1: not at all likely	2	3	4	5: almost certainly	don't know
research/evaluation approaches or methods						
research/evaluation skills						
research/evaluation papers or findings presented at the conference						
research/evaluation papers or findings not presented but referred to at the conference						
contacts made at the conference with people in the same field as you						
contacts made at the conference with people in organisations you work with						
contacts made at the conference with people in unrelated fields						
contacts made at the conference with people in other countries						
specific methods or skills:						

13. What results do you expect in your future work from knowledge or contacts made at the AES 2012 conference?

AES 2012 conference evaluation

14. Did you use any of the following social media or IT options in relation to the 2012 conference?

- Twitter: followed others' tweets
- Twitter: tweeted about the conference myself
- Facebook: followed the conference page
- Facebook: posted about the conference myself
- Blogs: followed others'
- Blogs: wrote a blog myself
- Lanyard: downloaded conference program to mobile device
- Other (please specify)

15. How useful were social media and IT options for you, for the following purposes?

	1: not at all	2	3	4	5: considerably
finding out about changes to the program					
sharing ideas and information about evaluation practice					
finding out about social aspects of the program (e.g., dinners)					
general networking with other participants					
contributing feedback about the conference					
any other comments about social media:					

16. Are there any other social media or IT options that you would like to see available at future conferences, and if so which?

17. Did you attend the 2011 AES International Conference in Sydney?

- Yes
- No (skip to #19)

AES 2012 conference evaluation

18. What impact did your participation in the 2011 AES conference have on your work in the following areas? (select all that apply)

- made contacts that expanded my professional network
- identified useful research
- learned about research/evaluation methods or approaches that I plan to use in future work
- learned about research/evaluation methods or approaches that I have already used in my work
- examples of research/evaluation methods:

19. What were your main reasons for attending the 2012 conference? (select all that apply)

- to attend a workshop
- to hear the keynote speakers
- for training and professional development
- to give a paper
- for networking
- Other (please specify)

20. Which of the following significantly affect your decision on whether to attend a conference? (select all that apply)

	1: significant discincentive	2	3	4	5: significant incentive
Well respected, interesting and internationally renowned speakers					
opportunity to network					
conference program					
cost of travel (flights and accommodation)					
cost of the conference registration					
time away from work					
time away from family					
what the location offers, such as holiday opportunities					
whether my employer will pay					
Other (please specify):					

21. How would you describe your evaluation knowledge and skills?

- no background
- novice
- intermediate
- advanced
- expert

22. How would you describe yourself professionally?

- evaluator
- researcher
- policy analyst
- project officer or project manager
- auditor
- manager
- Other (please specify)

23. In what sector do you do most of your evaluation work?

- Australian Commonwealth government
- Australian state government
- Australian local government
- New Zealand central government
- New Zealand local government
- private forprofit
- academic
- community or notforprofit
- Other (please specify)

24. In what sector are you based?

- Australian Commonwealth government
- Australian state government
- Australian local government
- New Zealand central government
- New Zealand local government
- private forprofit
- academic
- community or notforprofit
- Other (please specify)

25. Which of the following conferences did you attend? (select all that apply)

- this is my first AES conference
- Sydney, NSW 2011
- Wellington, New Zealand 2010
- Canberra, ACT 2009
- Perth, WA 2008
- Melbourne, VIC 2007
- at least one AES conference before 2007

26. Thinking over earlier AES conferences you have attended, would you say that they have:

- become more valuable to you?
- remained about the same (no better or worse)?
- become less valuable to you?

27. If you think AES conferences have become better or worse over time, why?

28. Do you anticipate attending next year's AES conference in Brisbane, Queensland?

- yes
- no
- don't know

29. Are you a member of the Australasian Evaluation Society?

- yes
- no
- don't know

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input will help the Australasian Evaluation Society to better serve the evaluation community and wider public in future.