AUSTRALIAN
EVALUATION
SOCIETY

Project Team Terms of Reference

Project title: Responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in Evaluation: An AES Policy Position

Review responsibility: Policy Committee chair with CEO
Duration: six to eight months from establishment of project team
Voluntary time estimate: 1 hour per week
Outcome: AES policy position on the responsible use of generative AI in evaluation practice Approved by CEO

1. Primary strategic focus

The AES Board has requested that the Policy Committee undertake a staged, consultative process to develop a Policy Position that provides clear guidance to AES members on the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in evaluation.

The project aligns with the Leadership domain (led by the Policy Committee) as part of our strategy to position the AES as a credible, values-led authority on an emerging area of practice.

2. Purpose

The development of generative Artificial intelligence represents a significant shift in how evidence is generated, analysed and used. Advances in large language models, machine learning and data analytics are increasingly being adopted to increase speed, scale and efficiency in evaluation-related tasks. In this context, a Policy Position will provide clear guidance on the ethical, culturally responsive and effective use of AI.

At a time when guidance is limited and demand is growing, this will support responsible use of AI in evaluation, maintaining and strengthening confidence in evaluation findings, reinforcing trust in the profession, and equipping evaluators to engage constructively with commissioners; ensuring expectations for efficiency do not come at the expense of rigour or ethical standards.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the review are to:

- *Explore and scope the issue* - Develop a discussion paper that identifies key issues, risks, opportunities and identify gaps related to AI in evaluation.

- *Consult and test emerging positions* - Consult on a position paper that proposes principles, roles and expectations for evaluators working with AI, incorporating feedback from AES members, First Nations evaluators and relevant partners.

- *Establish AES's formal policy position* – Provide the board with an AES policy position that articulates the role of evaluators in relation to using AI in evaluation practice and sets expectations for ethical, transparent and culturally responsible use of AI in evaluation.

- *Support professional capability and influence* – Identify implications for evaluator capability, professional learning and professional standards related to the use of AI in evaluation and provide recommendations to the Pathways Committee for consideration.

Note: Recognising the technical and rapidly evolving nature of gen AI, the Project Team may wish to engage external AI expertise beyond AES membership, including through the establishment of an informal Technical Advisory Group to provide ad hoc advice on key AI-related risks, identify relevant policies and frameworks, and act as a sounding board for the draft policy position.

4. Support and reporting

The *Responsible use of AI* Project Team reports to and is supervised and supported by the Policy Committee; with overall oversight by the Chief Executive Officer. The Policy Committee reports on the PT's progress to the Board and plays an advisory role both inward (to the AES Board, CEO and its other committees) and outward (to other organisations and/or public audiences).

5. Responsibilities

The *Responsible use of AI* Project Team will develop and implement a project plan, guided by the AES's stated goals and priorities and the Policy Committee. The Project Team will also liaise with other AES Project Teams to identify and capitalise on cross-project intersections where possible.

6. Chair

A nominated AES member and/or AES Board member will serve as Chair of the Project Team. Co-Chair appointments are optional. The appointment of Project Team Chair or Co-Chairs must be approved by the AES Board.

7. Membership

The Project Team will comprise:
- At least six but no more than ten AES members, or staff members of organisational members
- At least one member of the AES Policy Committee
- AES members representing relevant and diverse groups including but not limited to Indigenous evaluators.

AES Chief Executive Officer and Policy Officer are available for consultation to support the project team.

All Project Team members will have a commitment to, and responsibility for, the following elements of good governance:

- *Accountability* – taking shared responsibility for the operations and impact of the Project Team
- *Transparency* – ensuring that information about the Project Team's activities is accessible to the Policy Committee and AES Board
- *Disclosure* – being open to scrutiny and dealing effectively with potential conflicts of interest
- *Independence* – maintaining a collective decision-making culture and independence from outside direction or interests.

8. Quorum

- A quorum will be the Chair or the Chair's representative and 50% of the other Project Team members.
- Decisions of the Project Team shall be made on a simple majority basis.
- The Chair has a deciding vote in the case of no clear majority.
- AES staff may not be included to constitute a quorum.

9. Meetings, reporting and minute taking

- It is recommended that the Project Team meet at least every six weeks and more frequently as required.
- Minutes will be produced for meetings, including key decisions and actions.
- Meetings may be called by the Chair or on request to the Chair by one or more members of the Project Team.

10. Tenure and commitment

- Project Team members are selected for a one-year term and extended by agreement between the member and the Project Team Chair/s.
- Project Team members are guided by the terms of reference for the Project Team.
- Project Team members must attend to the Project Team function and terms of reference with reasonable care and diligence.
- Project Team members may be called to contribute to the development of discussion papers or proposals.
- Project Team members will work together in a spirit of cooperation, collaboration and mutual respect.

From time to time, the Project Team may be asked to work with other AES project teams to ensure alignment between priorities and avoid duplication.

It is expected that the total time commitment for a Project Team member will usually be up to 4 hours and not exceed 12 hours in a given month. There may however be occasions where this may increase for a limited period.

11. Conflict of interest

All members will be required to declare any potential conflict of interest related to their involvement in the Project Team, including items on each meeting's agenda.
The Chair's role is to monitor and address any potential conflicts of interest arising in the course of work being undertaken by the Project Team.

12. Confidentiality and non-disclosure

The *Responsible use of AI* Project Team is aligned to the Policy Committee which is a Board Advisory Committee. Members of the Project Team are bound by the same confidentiality and non-disclosure principles as the Policy Committee:

- Except for disclosing information necessary to carry out the work, Project Team members must keep confidential all information pertaining to matters dealt with by the Project Team. This includes meeting minutes, agendas, reports to the committee and Board and associated documents, and information contained in those documents;

- The obligation to maintain confidentiality continues to apply even after a person has left the Project Team; and

- Any person [such as CEO, staff, or invited visitors] who is not a member of the Project Team but is present at a meeting (or part of a meeting) must maintain in confidence all information obtained as a result of their participation in the meeting.

The term 'papers' means all written and electronic communications to Project Team members including without limitation Committee papers, Board reports, submissions, minutes, letters, memoranda, other sub-committee papers and copies of other documents referred to in any of the abovementioned documents made available to members during their time on the Project Team.