

aes26

International Evaluation Conference
14–18 September Darwin | Garramilla

‘Making space, valuing place’

aes26 Session Chair Briefing Notes

Thank you for volunteering to chair a session at the **aes26 International Evaluation Conference**.

Your role is simple: **welcome the audience, introduce the presenters, keep the session running to time, facilitate Q&A where required, and close the session on time.**

These notes cover everything you need to know.

Before the conference

- **Download and familiarise yourself with the aes26 app.** Make sure you can log in and have notifications enabled.
- **Find your session in the app.** Check the room, start and finish times, presentations, presenters and presentation formats.
- **Read the abstracts** for the presentations in your session.
- **Check the room location** on the Darwin Convention Centre map.
- Remember: **the aes26 app is the source of truth for the program and any last-minute changes.**

15 minutes before your session

Please arrive at the room **at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.**

Meet your presenters

Introduce yourself and:

- confirm everyone is present
- confirm the presentation order shown in the app
- confirm presentation times and how Q&A will be managed
- make sure presenters know you will give them a warning when their time is nearly up.

Where possible, ask presenters to sit together in the front row. Sit close to the lectern so you can easily open and close the session.

Check the AV

Each room has a lectern, presentation computer, screen and microphones, with AV support available.

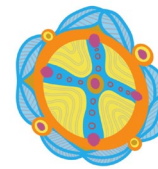
Presentation slides will already be loaded onto the presentation computer. Select the presenter's name from the session screen to open their presentation.

If there is an AV problem, locate the roaming AV technician. **Do not stop the session unnecessarily** — where possible, encourage the presenter to continue while the issue is resolved.

Opening the session

Start **at the scheduled time.**

1. **Acknowledge Country** using the aes26 cultural protocols below.



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2. **Welcome the audience** and introduce yourself and your affiliation.
3. **Introduce the session** and briefly explain its focus.
4. **Explain the format** — including the number of presentations and when Q&A will occur.
5. Ask attendees to **silence their phones**.

Example

“Welcome to this session on using surveys as data collection tools. My name is Seuss I Am from the Research Centre for Green Eggs and Ham. We have two short paper presentations, with time for questions after each presentation. I’ll be keeping us to time so that we finish as scheduled. Please make sure your phones are on silent.”

During the session

Introduce each presenter

Introduce each presenter by **name and affiliation**. Presenter details are listed in the aes26 app.

You do not need to read their full biography.

Keep presentations to time

Keeping the session on schedule is one of your most important responsibilities.

- Agree on a visible signal to let presenters know when their time is nearly up.
- Give a clear warning as they approach their allocated time.
- If a presenter runs over, politely but firmly ask them to finish.
- **Never allow the session to run beyond its scheduled finish time.**

If a presenter is absent

Keep presentations in their scheduled time slots. Do not move later presentations forward.

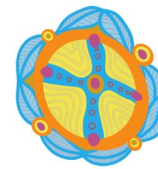
This is important because delegates may be moving between rooms specifically to attend individual presentations.

If there is a gap, use the time for discussion or questions where appropriate, but begin the next presentation at its advertised time.

Facilitate Q&A

Where Q&A is part of the format:

- invite questions from the audience
- keep questions and responses brief and courteous
- ensure speakers use microphones
- repeat questions into the microphone if necessary so everyone can hear
- if time runs out, encourage the conversation to continue after the session.



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Some panels and facilitated sessions have their own moderator or facilitator who will manage discussion. Confirm this with the presenters before the session.

Ignite presentations

For an Ignite block:

- introduce all Ignite presenters before the block begins
- presentations run for **5 minutes using 20 slides that automatically advance every 15 seconds**
- keep presentations running in their scheduled order
- there is **no individual Q&A between Ignite presentations**.

Closing the session

Finish **at the advertised session end time**.

- Thank the presenters.
- Thank the audience.
- Remind attendees to **complete the session survey in the aes26 app**.
- If another session follows, ask attendees to leave promptly and quietly so the room can be reset.

Cultural Protocols

The conference begins with a **Welcome to Country**. Session Chairs should open each session with an **Acknowledgement of Country**.

The aes26 International Evaluation Conference is being held in Garramilla (Darwin), on the Country of the Larrakia people, the Traditional Custodians of the Darwin region.

We acknowledge their enduring connection to Country, culture, community and knowledge systems, and pay our respects to Larrakia Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples attending the conference.

Presentation Formats

Your session may contain one or more of the following formats. Check the aes26 app for the presentations and running order in your session.

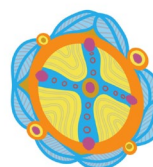
Short Paper

Session time: 30 minutes

Presentation length: maximum 15 minutes | **Total duration:** 25 minutes

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

Long Paper



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Session time: 60 minutes

Presentation length: maximum 25 minutes | **Total duration:** 50 minutes

Format: A presentation usually given by one person, with up to 25 minutes for interaction with the audience at the end..

Panel

Session time: 60 minutes

Presentation length: maximum 35 minutes | **Total duration:** 50 minutes

Format: The panel may feature: up to three panelists (plus a moderator) The final 15 minutes are allocated for audience questions.

Skill Building Session

Session time: 60 minutes

Total duration: 50 minutes

Format: In a skill building session, the presenter delivers a demonstration or mini-workshop to rapidly build skills through teaching and applying a specific skill, concept or tool.

Round table

Session time: 60 minutes

Presentation length: 50 minutes

Format: Facilitators should think of themselves as the guide for the discussion to rapidly build knowledge through fostering attendees’ engagement in rich discussions with each other. Facilitators should briefly introduce the topic, why it matters and set the parameters for discussion. The presentation should then be highly interactive, provoking discussion between attendees and building connections.

Ignite Session

Session time: 60 minutes

Multiple Ignite presentations may appear within one session. There is no Q&A between individual Ignite presentations.

Presentation length: maximum 5 minutes | **Total session duration:** 6 minutes

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

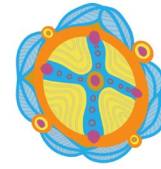
Big Room Session

Session time: 60 minutes

Duration: Flexible, interactive and generate wide discussion

Format: Big Room Sessions are held in the conference’s largest venue - a theatre-style space set in cabaret format to encourage delegate interaction. These sessions are designed for big ideas and bold delivery, offering presenters the opportunity to engage a large audience through dynamic formats such as keynote-style presentations, interactive workshops, facilitated discussions, or creative

hybrids. Presenters are encouraged to think beyond traditional formats and make full use of the stage, space and time available to inspire, challenge, and captivate attendees.



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Need help?

If you have any questions before the conference, contact aes26@aes.asn.au.

During the conference, speak to an aes26 staff at the information desk. For AV issues, locate the roaming AV technician.

Thank you for volunteering your time and helping make aes26 a welcoming, engaging and well-run conference.