

CoESB Conference Attendance Support Proposal

Purpose:

The purpose of this proposal is to clearly outline the financial/ budget arrangements for nodes and central (MQ admin) support for attendance at the CoESB Annual Conference 2026 in the Hunter Valley, NSW.

Introduction:

The CoESB Executive consider attendance at the CoESB annual conferences to be extremely important (as close to mandatory as we feel we can be) for all Chief Investigators, Centre postdocs, centre-affiliated PhD and Masters/Honours students, and centre professional staff (MQ and nodes).

CoESB Executive is aware that different nodes have different sized teams, different internal travel and funding policies, and different staffing configurations. Therefore, the burden of compulsory attendance paid only by nodes would be prohibitive and inequitable if there was no central support. However, CoESB Executive is also unable to support all attendees, as the costs to the central budget would be prohibitive – especially since this was not fully costed and budgeted in the original Centre proposal.

This proposal is therefore an attempt to achieve 100% attendance, without breaking the budgets of nodes or central admin funding.

Funding principles – Centre establishment:

In November 2020, Chief Investigators attended a Centre Planning Day, at which the following principles were agreed:

- a. Lab-based CIs would receive ARC funding to cover research staff, consumables, and Centre-related travel, and other direct research costs.
- b. Non-lab CIs would receive ARC funding to cover research staff, and Centre-related travel, and direct research costs.
- c. Central (MQ Admin) would receive ARC funding for operations, governance, travel related to operations and governance, to support career development and equity-related programs, and contingency funding. Budgeting for major events was to cover venue and operations, not travel for participants, in this original discussion.

Central (MQ Admin) will support all conference venue bookings, all programmed activities, and all transfers, for all attendees.

'EMCR' is defined as students and early- or mid-career researchers who are not CIs or AIs.

The following packages for flights and accommodation (including breakfast) support for different types of CoESB members are proposed:

1. All CIs (or named CoESB researchers), must support their own attendance costs (flights and accommodation). *ARC or node cash or other mechanisms can be used for this purpose.*
2. All AIs must support their own attendance costs and that of their research group members (flights and accommodation)
3. All nodes will support the attendance costs of 2 EMCRs per CI (or named CoESB researcher). *ARC or node cash or other mechanisms can be used for this purpose.*

4. Where students or postdocs have access to travel funding within the node organisation are expected to access this if possible.
5. Central operations funding will support the attendance of **up to an additional 4** people per CI in addition to the mandatory 2 EMCRs per CI supported by the node (clause 3.).
6. Central operations funding will support attendance of central and node administrative staff
7. Central operations funding will support attendance of EMCR members of the EMC, Conference organising committee, Outreach working group, EMCR committee, and EDI committee, if, and only if, these members are not already captured under principles 3., 4., or 5., above.
8. Central operations funding will support keynote speakers, VIPs, CAC and ISAC members, airport transfers, and all programmed conference activities such as scheduled dinners, group activities, morning and afternoon teas and lunches.
 - 8.i) CAC members will be limited to \$600 of flight support which must be booked through MQ travel (economy class only)
 - 8.ii) ISAC members will be limited to \$6000 in flights, incidentals, and accommodation each side of flights (economy class only), which must be booked through MQ travel.

In addition to the above arrangements, Centre members are advised that CoESB operations funding has an Equity and Inclusion Fund to support centre members who require extra travel/accommodation support. This fund is made available to all members to ensure members who need physical or mental health accommodations, child or partner carers, or other assistance to attend CoESB events without having to draw on additional personal resources or research funding. Please contact the CoESB COO (jl.heylen@mq.edu.au or ph: 0414 242 082). All discussions are confidential.

Implementation

- After registration closes, the Central Administration team will contact each Node / CI with the names and details of people to be supported by central funding. These people **MUST BOOK FLIGHTS VIA MQ Travel**. Flights booked outside of this arrangement **CANNOT** be reimbursed due to MQ Finance policies. Accommodation costs for these personnel at the conference hotel will be borne by central operations funding.
- The Central Administration team will provide each Node / CI the names and details of the other people who are to be supported by their Node funding. These personnel will need to make flight bookings via node organisations. Accommodation and incidental costs for these personnel at the conference hotel will be invoiced back to nodes after the event.
- EMCRs must share accommodation unless specifically provided with permission not to by CoESB COO.
- All attendees must be aware that use of mini-bars, damage to rooms requiring excessive laundering or replacement of items, or any other damage to rooms notified to EWM (Conference Management providers) or CoESB event organisers, will not be supported, and those responsible will need to pay for these costs themselves.

Cancellation and No-show Policy

All cancellation requests must be submitted in writing to coesbconference@ewm.com.au. If you need to discuss circumstances before cancellation, please contact CoESB COO, J-L Heylen at jl.heylen@mq.edu.au.

- You, or your node, will not be charged for any cancellation or withdrawal from the conference before Friday 23 October 2026.

- Between Saturday 24 October - Friday 13 November 2026 you, or your node, will be required to pay 50% of any costs incurred by CoESB for accommodation and/or flights.

Any cancellations made from Saturday 14 November 2026 onwards or a failure to show up at the conference without cancelling your registration will need to be 100% supported by you, or your node – as CoESB will be charged for all accommodation and/or flights after this point. Please contact Jenny Morcom (jenny.morcom@mq.edu.au) or J-L Heylen (jl.heylen@mq.edu.au) if clarification on any aspect of this policy is required.