FestEVAL 2020

EVALUATION REPORT

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Commissioned by:
Australian Evaluation Society

About this document

The purpose of this document is to:

- Introduce the theoretical framework and methodology used in conducting the evaluation of FestEVAL 2020;
- Highlight key evaluation findings; and
- Set out recommendations for consideration by the Australian Evaluation Society.

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Executive Summary

This report presents the planning, methodology, key findings and recommendations of the evaluation of FestEVAL 2020. Designed and delivered by the Australian Evaluation Society (AES), FestEVAL was held from 21 to 25 September 2020 and offered a series of free, online evaluation-themed activities, centred around the theme of *"Celebrating Evaluation"*.

The evaluation was led by a volunteer Master of Evaluation student, Ms Tara Collins. Ms Collins benefited from the support and guidance of the AES, as well as that of an experienced evaluation fellow, Dr Dorothy Lucks.

The evaluation's principal purpose was to examine perceptions of FestEVAL's overall value, as well as its effectiveness in achieving the AES Board's two main ambitions for the event: (1) provide opportunities for AES member engagement; and (2) support AES core business, including the Annual General Meeting. The evaluation findings are intended to offer insights and inform future online AES offerings.

Two key evaluation questions, supplemented by a range of sub-questions, were developed in consultation with stakeholders. These were:

> 1. Overall, did participants perceive there was value in attending the online FestEVAL activities?
> 2. Was the AES satisfied with FestEVAL as a platform for conducting its core business?

Drawing on the principles of utilisation-focused evaluation, a mixed methods convergent design was conceptualised. Data was collected through a post-event online survey, as well as a series of qualitative focus group discussions and interviews. Feedback was sought from AES Board members, general AES members, the FestEVAL Working Group, and FestEVAL participants.

KEY FINDINGS

The report findings demonstrated that, in general, participants found positive value in their FestEVAL experiences, and FestEVAL was considered a suitable platform for conducting AES core business.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of survey respondents (89%) identified as general FestEVAL participants, and reported an involvement in: designing or conducting evaluations, commissioning evaluation projects, or learning about evaluation. Respondents commonly: identified as female (77% of respondents); were associated with a government entity (43%); had over 6 years' experience in the field of evaluation (50%); and were an AES individual or organisational member (68%). Notably, a further 29% of respondents who were not already AES members expressed an interest in joining.

While most survey respondents reported residing in Australia (with 35% from Victoria, and a further 22% from New South Wales), FestEVAL also attracted some international participants (12%), including from Aotearoa New Zealand, United States, Indonesia, Canada, and Nepal.

KEQ 1: PERCEPTIONS OF VALUE

Survey respondents and focus group interviewees shared a wide range of insights into the strengths and weaknesses of FestEVAL 2020, reflecting on both its content and structure.

FestEVAL's online modality meant it could reach a wider range of participants than an in-person conference, which was particularly beneficial for those in remote and international locations. While FestEVAL was not designed to replace the (deferred) AES 2020 Conference, it was useful to note that 31% of respondents had planned to attend the conference, while 43% had not. This suggests that the convenience of an online, and free-of-charge, event meant the AES could reach a subset of people who were not otherwise planning to attend its flagship conference.

Most survey respondents were initially motivated to attend FestEVAL by the opportunity to develop practical skills and knowledge, to engage in thought-provoking discussions, and to acquire new theory. Career-related imperatives were less important in this context.

On average, survey respondents rated their FestEVAL experience as 4.1 of 5. Most (70%) attended between two to five sessions, and the 'FestEVAL Opening' and 'Evaluating Fast and Slow' sessions were clear favourites. Almost one-third of survey respondents (32%) rated FestEVAL as 'excellent' for engaging in thought-provoking discussions. Only 7% of respondents, however, rated FestEVAL as 'excellent' for developing practical skills and knowledge. These contrasting results indicate alignment between initial participant expectations and value obtained in some, but not all, areas.

Some criticisms of the event structure and content were put forth, including references to varying presentation quality, and poor alignment between session descriptions and content delivered. In terms of sessions or functionality that would have added value, participants expressed a desire for inclusion of more practical evaluation content, including economic evaluations, 'lessons from the field', and case studies. Requests for additional high-profile international speakers or other 'new voices' were also made.

The Zoom online platform was widely viewed as suitable for this event, although there were some issues identified with the registration process, and caps on sessions precluding attendance. Planning for participant attrition was a key learning identified by the FestEVAL Working Group. Breakout rooms were a contentious topic, with prolonged remote working and 'Zoom fatigue' among the factors contributing to some participants' dislike of this approach; while others saw breakout rooms as an opportunity for networking.

That FestEVAL was offered entirely free-of-charge was widely appreciated. Some AES Board members observed the potential of a free FestEVAL as a marketing and recruitment tool for new members. Noting the value offered by FestEVAL 2020, 42% of respondents indicated a general willingness to pay some type of fee for future online AES offerings. This report sets out several considerations for assessing a possible fee structure in relation to the value offered.

Finally, over half of survey respondents (54%) described their likelihood of attending future online AES events as 'very likely', with 38% reporting it as 'likely'. Focus group participants also expressed a strong interest in some form of hybrid AES event model, with in-person events returning where possible.

KEQ 2: DELIVERY OF CORE AES BUSINESS

Despite having limited time to organise FestEVAL, AES Board members and FestEVAL Working Group members were largely pleased with its overall success. Board members saw that FestEVAL had prompted the AES to accelerate its digital engagement strategy, and to fully embrace Zoom technology.

In terms of core AES business, the online Annual General Meeting attracted strong attendance and fully met AES Board expectations.

In relation to AES member engagement and networking, approximately one-third of survey respondents reported making new professional connections through FestEVAL, including in breakout sessions and Special Interest Group meetings. The nightly FestEVAL Club was attended by only a small number of participants, and participant feedback indicated it would have benefited from a less frequent, and more structured approach.

Key FestEVAL success factors, as identified by AES Board interviewees, included: the composition and skillsets of FestEVAL Working Group members; avoidance of 'scope creep'; and the administrative simplicity of organising an online event relative to an in-person event.

Looking forward, AES Board and Working Group members also conveyed their enthusiasm to see FestEVAL held again in some (potentially hybrid) form and, more broadly, to support continued momentum of online modalities for AES member engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on these findings, four key recommendations were put forth for AES consideration:

1. **Enhance the Zoom experience** through a streamlined registration process, strategic use of breakout rooms, training for facilitators, alignment between session descriptions and content, and removal of attendance caps (where possible).

2. **Design networking opportunities that target specific participant groups**. This approach could also be adopted for 'FestEVAL Club' sessions, with a more structured model catering for specific interests.

3. **Consider adding practical sessions**: such as 'lessons from the field', case studies, economic evaluations, and storytelling with data (among others).

4. **Adopt a hybrid event model**, alternating between online and in-person events (where possible) – and charge accordingly.

Introduction

This report sets out the approach, findings and recommendations of the evaluation of FestEVAL 2020, an online event designed and delivered by the Australian Evaluation Society (AES).

The evaluand

The evaluand was 'FestEVAL'; a series of free evaluation-themed activities held over five half-day sessions from 21 to 25 September 2020. Delivered entirely online via the Zoom platform, FestEVAL presented a new model for engaging AES members in the COVID-19 era. Non-AES members were also welcome to attend, depending on individual session limits.

FestEVAL was conceived following the postponement of the in-person AES 2020 Conference, due to be held in Brisbane, but it was not intended to replace the paid conference (which has been deferred until 2021). The events were designed on a voluntary basis by an AES FestEVAL Working Group. With a theme of *"Celebrating Evaluation",* FestEVAL's main ambitions were to:

   a) Provide opportunities for AES members to engage with others in the profession; and
   b) Support AES to conduct its core business, including an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

FestEVAL attracted 780 registrations; 2,000 attendances across 26 sessions; and participants from at least 14 countries. The program included opening and closing plenary sessions, Special Interest Group meetings, the AES AGM, various thematic presentations, and five nightly 'FestEVAL Club' sessions offering informal networking. The full schedule is available at: https://www.ivvy.com.au/event/FestEVAL/home.html

Evaluation purpose and type

This evaluation examined FestEVAL's effectiveness in achieving its two main ambitions, with findings intended to offer insights and inform design of future online AES offerings. This is important, as the effects of COVID-19 may see a longer-term shift towards online delivery of events; necessitating different, digitally-driven approaches to AES core business and engagement.

While the AES has been delivering high-quality conferences for many years, the design and scope of FestEVAL was distinct given its use of online modalities. Accordingly, this evaluation was 'absolute' in nature; with FestEVAL examined mostly in isolation. It was informed by the views of FestEVAL participants, the AES Board, and the FestEVAL Working Group.

Project stakeholders

The AES commissioned this evaluation, and was its primary intended user. The AES is a member-based organisation which exists to improve the theory, practice and use of evaluation for people involved in evaluation, including evaluation practitioners, managers, teachers and students of evaluation, and other interested individuals. The AES has more than 1,000 members, and is governed by a Board of Directors and managed by a Chief Executive Officer and staff (AES, 2020).

Evaluation team

The evaluation was led by a volunteer Master of Evaluation student, Ms Tara Collins. Ms Collins benefited from the support and guidance of an experienced evaluation fellow, Dr Dorothy Lucks (Executive Director, SDF Global), and feedback from the AES Chief Executive Officer, Mr Bill Wallace.

Key responsibilities and deliverables

Agreed evaluation responsibilities and deliverables included:

- Coordination with stakeholders to prepare an initial evaluation plan (Annex A), including logic model (Annex B) and data collection plan (Annex C);
- Design, testing and administration of an online mixed-methods survey tool (Annex D);
- Design and facilitation of semi-structured Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews with a sample of key informants;
- Data analysis and synthesis of findings in a final report; and
- Preparation of materials for presenting findings to the AES Board.

Key evaluation questions (KEQ)

In consultation with the AES, two KEQ were developed. These were framed around FestEVAL's main ambitions, and supplemented by several sub-questions.

KEQ 1: Overall, did participants perceive there was value in attending the online FestEVAL activities?

KEQ 2: Was the AES satisfied with FestEVAL as a platform for conducting its core business?

FestEVAL 2020 was conducted online via Zoom, with participants dialling in from at least 14 countries | *Source: Unsplash*

Theoretical framework; Methodology

Theoretical framework

This evaluation drew on the principles of utilisation-focused evaluation, aimed at building mutual respect between the evaluator and client through two-way interactions during the project to enhance utilisation (Patton, 2012). Under this approach, the AES Board was invited to engage closely in shaping the initial evaluation plan and survey instruments, and to participate in a dedicated follow-up FGD.

Methodology

The evaluation plan set out the KEQ and sub-questions, developed through discussions between the evaluator and AES. In addition to examining whether FestEVAL had met its two main ambitions, specific areas of interest from the AES perspective included:

- Motivating factors for attendance (or reasons for non-attendance);
- Views on the value of FestEVAL sessions and structure;
- Appropriateness of the Zoom online platform, including use of breakout rooms;
- Willingness to pay for future online AES offerings; and
- Possible areas of improvement for future online AES events.

Broadly, the evaluation design conceptualised a mixed-methods convergent design (see Figure 1), drawing on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, including for triangulation and validation purposes.

Figure 1. Mixed method convergent design (adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017)
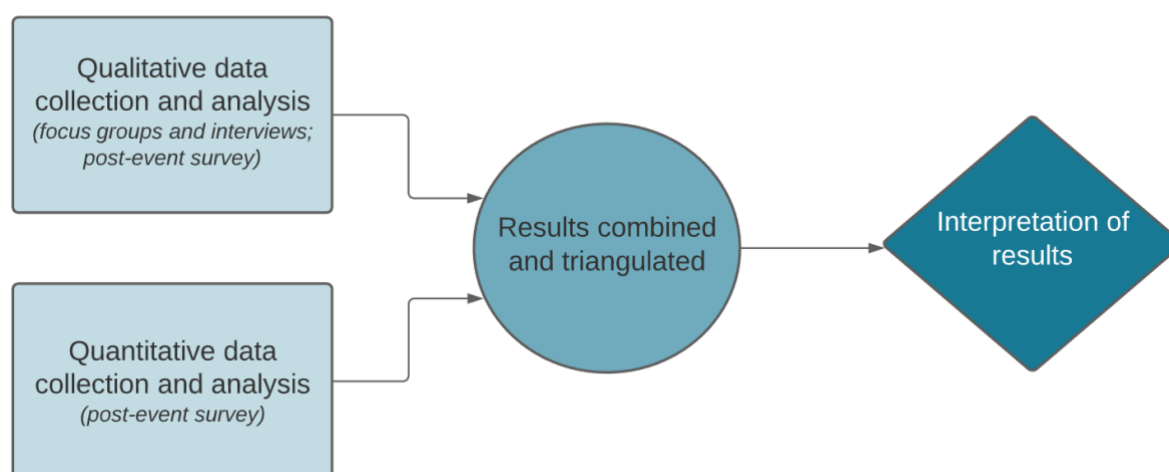
Project timeline

The FestEVAL evaluation timeline encompassed three main phases (as per Table 1), with planning commencing in mid-September 2020 and a final report delivered in December 2020.

Table 1: Evaluation timeline phases

Phase 1 | Pre-FestEVAL *(mid to end Sep 2020)*	Phase 2 | Post-FestEVAL *(end Sep to mid Nov 2020)*	Phase 3 | Synthesis & reporting *(mid Nov to Dec 2020)*
▪ Review of past AES conference evaluations ▪ Stakeholder engagement ▪ Evaluation plan, data collection plan, logic model ▪ Instrument development	▪ FestEVAL survey ▪ Facilitate interviews ▪ Transcription process	▪ Data analysis and synthesis ▪ Delivery of presentation to AES Board ▪ Delivery of final report to AES

Target stakeholders and consumer groups

The evaluation collected data from three groups of upstream stakeholders (AES Board members, general AES members, and FestEVAL Working Group members) and one group of downstream consumers (FestEVAL participants, including both AES members and non-members), as denoted in Figure 2. Other downstream consumers were considered out-of-scope for this evaluation.

Figure 2: FestEVAL stakeholders and consumers
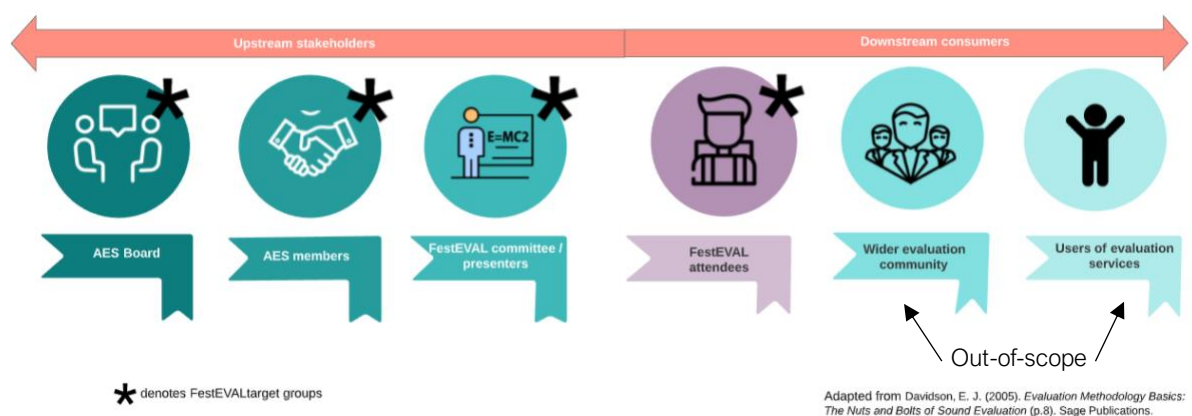
Data collection methods

Data was collected through two key instruments: (1) a mixed-methods post-event survey; and (2) a series of qualitative, semi-structured FGDs and interviews. Analysis of Zoom data, including qualitative chat transcripts, was out-of-scope for the purpose of this evaluation.

Mixed-methods survey design

The post-event survey was non-experimental in design and contained 23 questions, both quantitative and qualitative. It was administered online via the AES SurveyMonkey account; a 'tried and tested' survey tool used successfully for past AES conference evaluations.

Sampling was done by way of census, or 'full coverage sample frame', with responses sought from all 780 registered FestEVAL attendees (whether they ultimately attended the event or not). The survey was sent within two weeks' of FestEVAL's conclusion and was open for a period of three weeks, with one follow-up reminder sent to non-respondents.

Based on previous AES conference surveys, a response rate of between 35% to 45% was expected. The FestEVAL survey ultimately attracted 181 respondents (including seven who had registered but not attended), translating to a response rate of 23%. While lower than hoped given the overall population size, the survey results were complemented by other qualitative data sources; bolstering the overall quality of data collected. Still, survey findings cannot be considered generalisable to the whole FestEVAL delegate cohort.

Ethical considerations: survey

Respondents were provided with information outlining the survey purpose, intended use of data, and approach to confidentiality. In designing the survey, the 'anonymous responses' option was selected, to ensure all personal information (names, email addresses, IP addresses and any custom data) was excluded from survey results (unless provided voluntarily for the purpose of a follow-up interview). All data remains securely stored in the AES-owned SurveyMonkey account.

Qualitative interviews and FGDs

The follow-up qualitative interviews and FGDs were conducted online via Zoom, and facilitated by Ms Collins. They were semi-structured in nature, with an interview guide developed to broadly structure the conversations. Given the labour-intensive nature of the interview process, only a small number of sessions (five) were conducted, ranging in length between 45 to 60 minutes. Usually, five overarching questions were covered in this time, along with unstructured sub-questions as appropriate.

Sessions were conducted with a sample of FestEVAL participants (x 6), FestEVAL Working Group members (x 1) and presenters (x1) *(to support answering of KEQ 1)*, and AES board members (x 3)[1] *(to support answering of KEQ 2)*.

Non-probability sampling techniques, including purposive sampling (whereby participants are chosen through the evaluator's judgement) and convenience sampling (whereby participants are chosen based on ease of contact, their availability, and/or the evaluator's resources) were

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[1] Note that some participants had several roles (for example, AES Board member, presenter and FestEVAL Working Group).

employed to identify interviewees (Lavrakas, 2008). FestEVAL participants and presenters, for instance, were identified through their voluntary submission of contact details in the survey form. All AES Board members were invited to participate by way of invitation from the AES Chief Executive Officer. A range of interview times and days (with options during work hours, after hours, and on weekends) were offered to accommodate interviewee preferences. The interviews took place within six weeks' of FestEVAL conclusion.

While qualitative FGD responses cannot be generalised to the whole FestEVAL population given the small sample size (x 10), this approach facilitated a deeper exploration and triangulation of themes identified in the initial survey.

Ethical considerations: interviews and FGDs

All FGDs and interviews began with an overview of the interview purpose and data use, and a request for participants' verbal consent to record the sessions for later transcription. These transcripts, which were fully de-identified to maintain anonymity, have been provided to the AES for secure storage. The original Zoom recordings of the sessions have been deleted.

Analysis plan

SurveyMonkey and Tableau were used for analysing the quantitative survey data, while the open-text survey fields were manually interrogated using thematic labelling to extract issues for exploration in the follow-up interviews.

Interview recordings and transcripts were also manually interrogated to classify key themes and issues. Pertinent quotes were selected, and de-identified, for inclusion in the final report.

Threats to quality

With reference to the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Yarbrough et al, 2010), Table 2 outlines possible threats to quality, consequences, and mitigation measures that were considered in the FestEVAL evaluation context.

Table 2: Threats to quality, consequences and mitigation measures

Threat to Quality	Consequence	Relevant standard	Mitigation measures
Compressed timeframe may result in development of poor-quality evaluation tools.	Poorly designed evaluation negatively impacts data quality, and client perceptions of overall evaluation quality.	Accuracy Standard 1 (Reliable Information)	Evaluator to work closely with the client and evaluation fellow to develop fit-for-purpose survey tools within the agreed timeframe; and ensure expectations are set and managed accordingly.
Low response rate to survey due to lack of interest, poorly designed request for participation email, and survey fatigue.	Low response rate impacts representativeness of survey sample.	Utility Standard 2 (Attention to Stakeholders); Utility Standard 6 (Meaningful Processes and Products)	Ensure survey is kept short and concise, and is accompanied by an engaging request for participation email. Send a follow-up email reminder one week after the initial survey email is distributed.

Evaluation findings

KEQ 1 – Perceptions of value

The data presented in this section is targeted at answering KEQ 1, drawing on information from both the initial survey and follow-up qualitative interviews.

> **KEQ 1:** Overall, did participants perceive there was value in attending the online FestEVAL activities?

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of survey respondents identified as FestEVAL participants (89%), with the balance comprising presenters and FestEVAL Working Group members. As the graphs in this section depict, survey respondents commonly: identified as female (77% of respondents); resided in Victoria (35%); were an AES individual or organisational member (68%); were associated with a government entity (43%); and had up to 5 years' experience in the field of evaluation (50%).

The fact that FestEVAL was held entirely online meant distance was no barrier to attendance. One FGD participant described FestEVAL's ability to reach further than an in-person conference ever could, both domestically and internationally, as one of its greatest attributes.
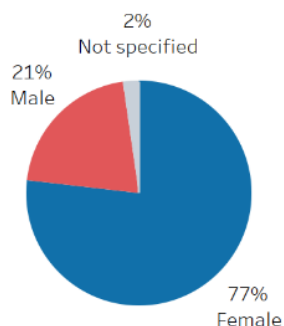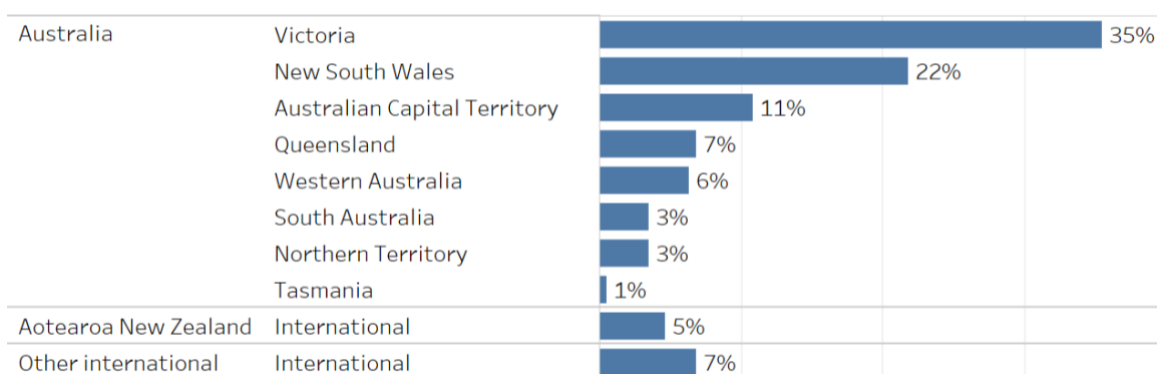
Figure 3. Gender (n=179)

Figure 4. Usual place of residence[2] (n=179)

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[2] 'Other international' (n=12) included: Nepal, Mozambique, Myanmar, Uganda, Dominican Republic, Canada, Singapore, Indonesia, United States.
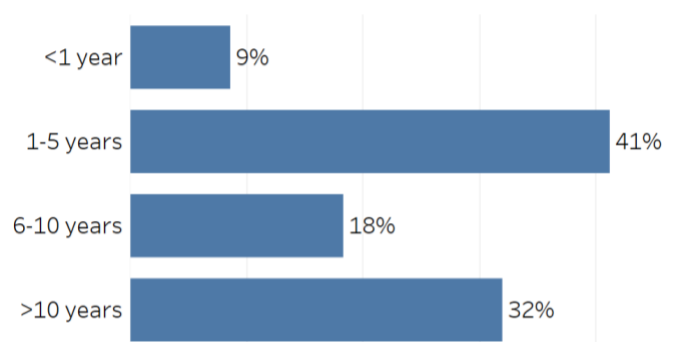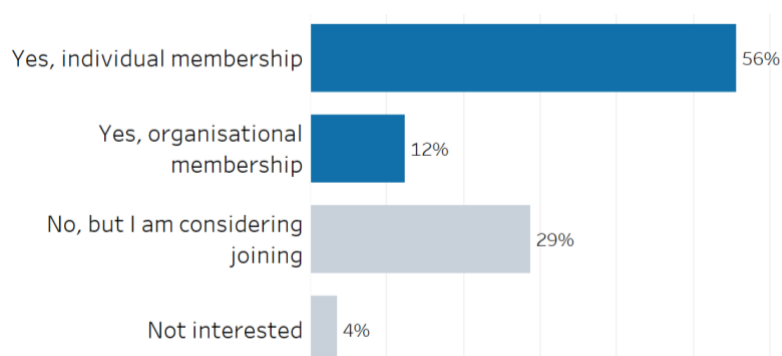
Figure 5. Years' experience in evaluation (n=179)

Experience	Percentage
<1 year	9%
1-5 years	41%
6-10 years	18%
>10 years	32%

Figure 6. Main involvement in evaluation[3] (n=178)

Designing or conducting evaluations	58%
Commissioning or contracting out evaluation projects	11%
Studying or learning about evaluation	10%
Running programs or projects that get evaluated by others	4%
Reading / using evaluation reports and findings	4%
Contributing data or information to evaluations	3%
Teaching evaluation	2%
Other (please specify)	6%
None, no current involvement with evaluation	1%

Figure 7. AES membership status (n=175)

Yes, individual membership	56%
Yes, organisational membership	12%
No, but I am considering joining	29%
Not interested	4%

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[3] 'Other' answers included: *Implementing a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system across an organisation; evaluation capacity building; performance and quality adviser; evaluation research; overseeing an evaluation unit; managing and collating MEL data from funded projects; evaluation policy and capacity building in government.*

Figure 8. Sector or organisation type[4] (n=179)
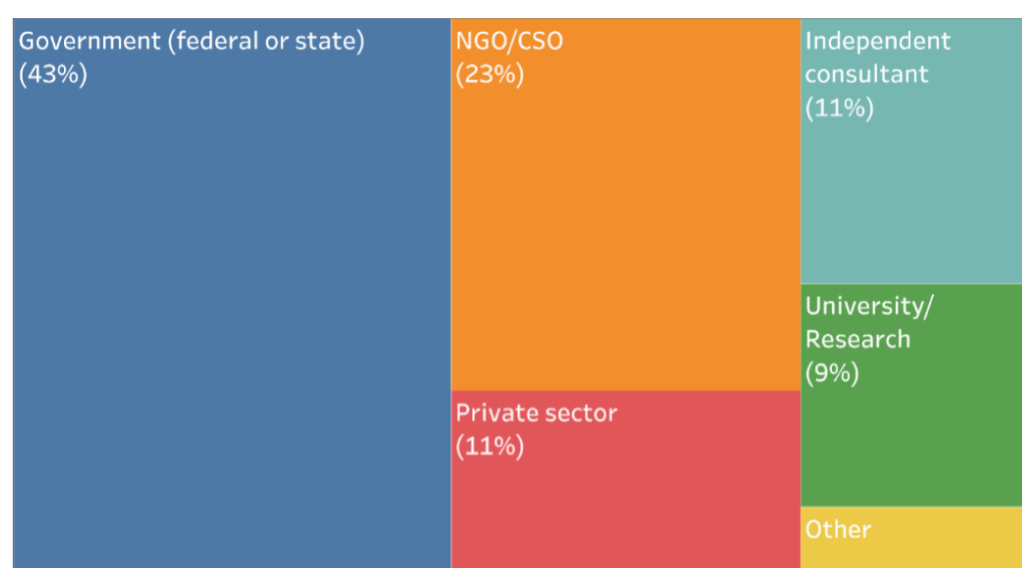
While FestEVAL was not designed to replace the AES 2020 Conference in Brisbane, it was useful to explore whether FestEVAL registrants had also intended to attend the in-person event. Figure 9 shows that 31% of respondents had indeed planned to attend the conference, while 43% responded 'no' and 26% were 'unsure'. This suggests that the convenience of holding FestEVAL online meant the AES could reach a subset of people who were not otherwise planning to attend; whether due to cost, travel time, work commitments, or other factors.

Figure 9. Plans to attend the (deferred) AES 2020 conference (n=180)
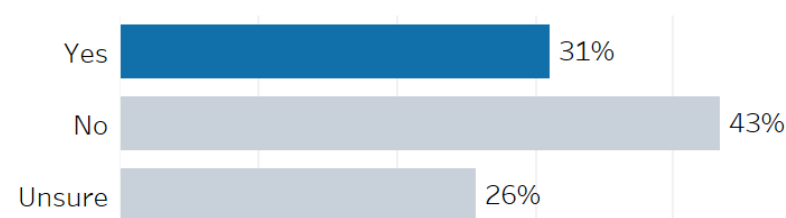
FESTEVAL ATTENDANCE

The majority of survey respondents attended between two to five sessions (70%) (Figure 10). For survey respondents who had registered but not attended (n=7), the causes were largely work-related. Others pointed to unsuitable timing for some sessions, or said they had forgotten because the AES had not sent calendar invitations.

One FestEVAL registrant who ultimately could not attend commented, *"My unpredictable work program meant that work had to take precedence over FestEval attendance. This was disappointing as I really, really wanted to listen to Michael Quinn Patton."*

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[4] 'Other' answers included: *Not for profit; 'between roles'; social enterprise; local government; training and research organisation.*

Technical issues and other distractions also dissuaded some participants, with one writing, *"I could not join in some discussions online – my microphone wasn't working, or I was doing other work at the time so could listen in to others but not focus on participating...".*

Figure 10. Number of individual FestEVAL sessions attended (n=179)
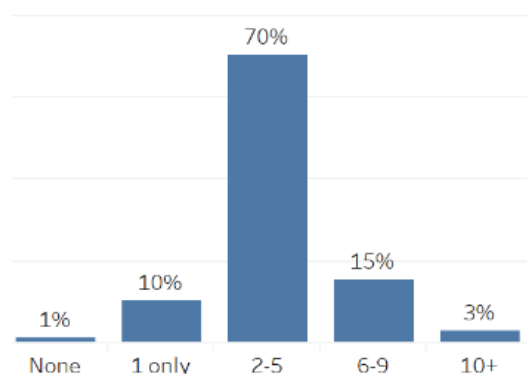
INITIAL MOTIVATIONS and EXPECTATIONS

Initial participant expectations for FestEVAL varied. As one FGD participant described, *"Everything has been so different this year that I didn't quite know what to expect! I thought there'd be lots of different sessions, panels, special interest groups – and there were."*

Figure 11, which permitted selection of multiple choices, highlights that many respondents (63%) were motivated by the opportunity to develop practical skills and knowledge, and to engage in thought-provoking discussions (57%). Career-related imperatives were less important, with only 10% of respondents selecting this as a primary motivation for attendance.

Figure 11. Primary motivation/s for attending FestEVAL[5] (n=179)

[5] Other motivations included: curiosity about the online platform; provision of support to the AES; professional learning; interest in hearing from thought leaders in the field; and a desire to keep updated with current and emerging evaluation issues and trends.

OVERALL RATING and SATISFACTION WITH FESTEVAL

Survey respondents, on average, rated their overall FestEVAL experience as 4.1 out of 5. The overwhelming majority rated their satisfaction as either 'excellent' or 'good' across the five indicators set out in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Satisfaction with the following aspects of FestEVAL… (n=176)
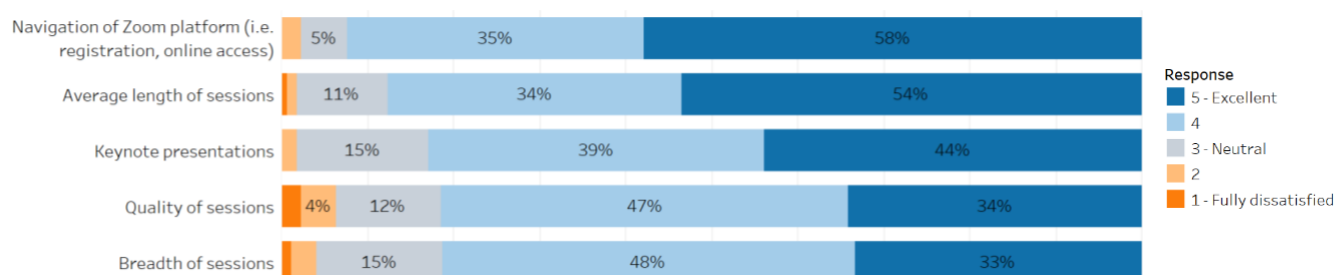
However, the qualitative field of this topic yielded mixed feedback, ranging from positive to critical. Of note, several respondents in both the survey and FGDs commented on the lack of alignment between some session descriptions and actual content. Other responses included:

*"I thought there was a great energy at the launch and with the opening keynotes and I enjoyed all 4 of those speakers... Overall it was better than I expected and that's a testament to the organisers and the **mix of great presentation topics and presenters**."*
– Participant

*"I was really impressed with the organisation of the online sessions, and the wide range of topics covered. In my view, **50 minutes was the perfect length** for an online session. Kudos to the FestEVAL working group for including a wide range of interesting speakers and facilitators."* – Participant

*"…an excellent program but the **sessions could have been longer** to really gain their full value."* – Participant

*"The multicultural session I sat in on was good, but it would have been better if it provided **specific strategies** on how to undertake evaluation with multicultural communities."*
– Participant

*"I found the presentations of very varying quality; I **didn't feel I learnt much that was new**; it felt like some presenters had put little effort into preparing an informative session. Others clearly had put in a lot of effort..."* – Participant

*"**Some session titles did not represent the topics or information** shared, some topics read very interesting but at the event, the topic was completely different..."* – Participant

*"I was a bit disappointed that many sessions weren't so much informative as feedback-gathering sessions of attendees. I found my **expectations of what would be delivered** in a session based on the abstract/blurbs were **not met**. In this, sense I did not learn as much as I'd hoped, particularly around cutting-edge or applied evaluation, or the translation of theory to practice."* – Participant

*"It would be much better if we had **more action-oriented presentations**."* – Participant

FAVOURITE FEATURES

A wide range of highlights were shared, with the 'FestEVAL Opening' and 'Evaluating Fast and Slow' sessions clear favourites among participants.

*"I thought the '**Evaluating Fast and Slow' session was particularly pertinent for these COVID-19 times**, and I liked the way it was structured as a debate with 'for' and 'against' arguments. I also enjoyed the 'provocations' posed in the FestEVAL opening event – they really got me thinking!"* – Participant

Figure 13. Summary of favourite FestEVAL features, moments and takeaways (n=99)
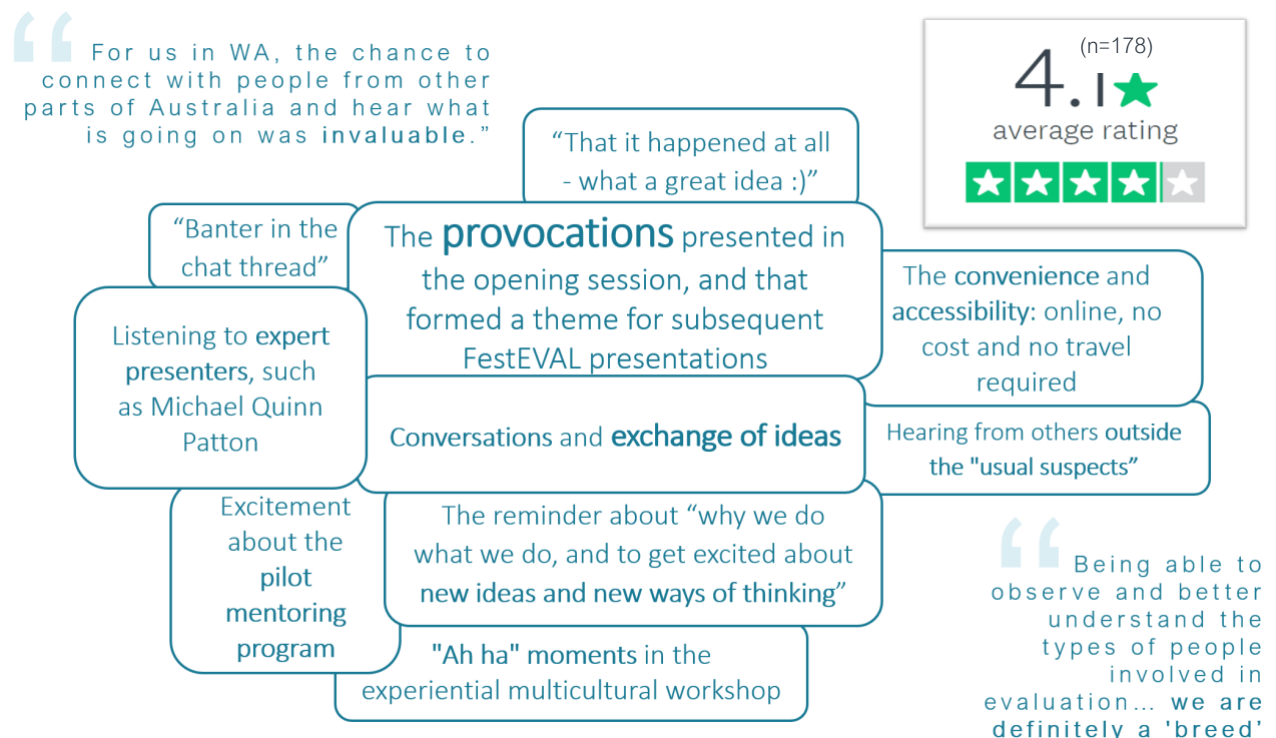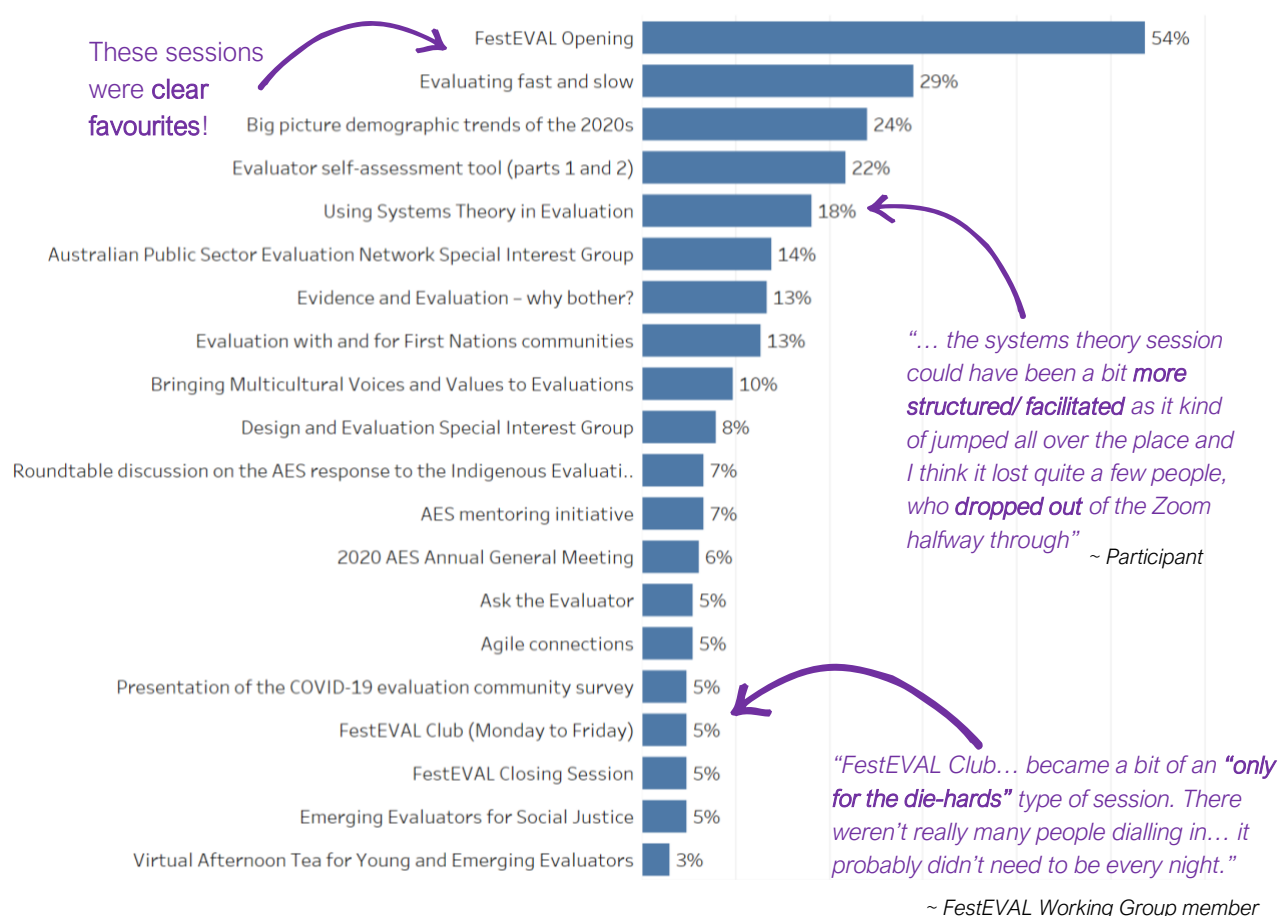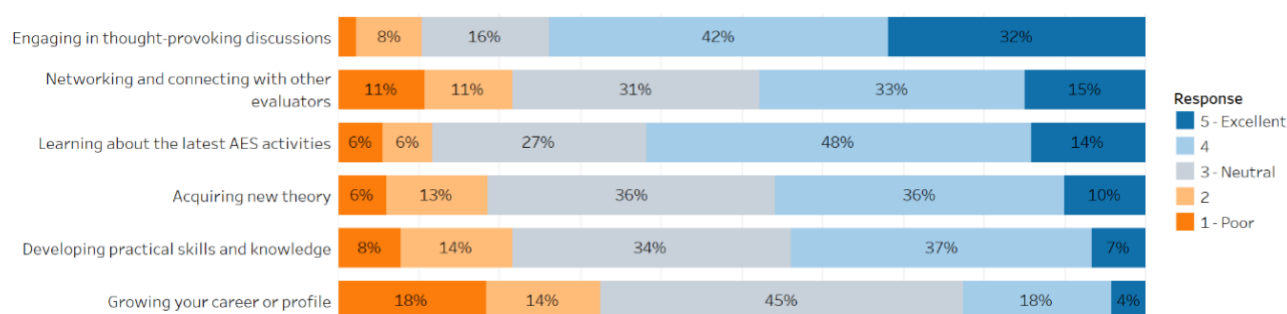
Figure 14. Most valuable FestEVAL sessions (n=166)

These sessions were **clear favourites**!

Session	%
FestEVAL Opening	54%
Evaluating fast and slow	29%
Big picture demographic trends of the 2020s	24%
Evaluator self-assessment tool (parts 1 and 2)	22%
Using Systems Theory in Evaluation	18%
Australian Public Sector Evaluation Network Special Interest Group	14%
Evidence and Evaluation – why bother?	13%
Evaluation with and for First Nations communities	13%
Bringing Multicultural Voices and Values to Evaluations	10%
Design and Evaluation Special Interest Group	8%
Roundtable discussion on the AES response to the Indigenous Evaluati..	7%
AES mentoring initiative	7%
2020 AES Annual General Meeting	6%
Ask the Evaluator	5%
Agile connections	5%
Presentation of the COVID-19 evaluation community survey	5%
FestEVAL Club (Monday to Friday)	5%
FestEVAL Closing Session	5%
Emerging Evaluators for Social Justice	5%
Virtual Afternoon Tea for Young and Emerging Evaluators	3%

*"… the systems theory session could have been a bit **more structured/ facilitated** as it kind of jumped all over the place and I think it lost quite a few people, who **dropped out** of the Zoom halfway through"*
~ *Participant*

*"FestEVAL Club… became a bit of an **"only for the die-hards"** type of session. There weren't really many people dialling in… it probably didn't need to be every night."*
~ *FestEVAL Working Group member*

USEFULNESS OF FESTEVAL

Almost one-third of survey respondents (32%) rated FestEVAL as 'excellent' for engaging in thought-provoking discussions. By contrast, only 7% of respondents rated FestEVAL as 'excellent' for developing practical skills and knowledge – which had been one of the top motivations for attendance, as identified by 63% of respondents. These contrasting results indicate alignment between initial participant expectations and value obtained in some, but not all, areas.

Figure 15. Usefulness of FestEVAL 2020 for the following… (n=176)

	1 - Poor	2	3 - Neutral	4	5 - Excellent
Engaging in thought-provoking discussions		8%	16%	42%	32%
Networking and connecting with other evaluators	11%	11%	31%	33%	15%
Learning about the latest AES activities	6%	6%	27%	48%	14%
Acquiring new theory	6%	13%	36%	36%	10%
Developing practical skills and knowledge	8%	14%	34%	37%	7%
Growing your career or profile	18%	14%	45%	18%	4%

Response
- 5 - Excellent
- 4
- 3 - Neutral
- 2
- 1 - Poor

Further qualitative responses in this section included:

> *"I only attended a few sessions, so this feedback probably reflects my participation – **you get back what you put in**." – Participant*

> *"I would value further opportunities to **network with other Indigenous people** with an interest in evaluation." – Participant*

> *"Overall, I felt it was **well organised at quite short notice**. In the sessions I attended there were people from all over Australia, NZ and the world which was pleasing to see. The diversity of speakers, topics and interest areas was also pleasing to see..." – Participant*

> *"A **fantastic learning experience** – it's these sorts of events that keep me motivated, stimulated and loving my job." – Participant*

TOPICS OR SESSIONS NOT COVERED

Information from both the survey responses and FGDs conveyed a particular desire for inclusion of more practical sessions, including 'lessons from the field', case studies, economic evaluations (including Value for Money), and storytelling with data. A range of other unique topic ideas were suggested, as summarised in Figure 16.

Figure 16. Feedback on topics or sessions not covered (n=40)

THE ZOOM PLATFORM EXPERIENCE

Many respondents, both in the survey and follow-up FGDs, shared positive feedback about their experience using the Zoom online platform for FestEVAL. This likely reflects the widespread shift to remote work throughout 2020, which has enhanced familiarity with the platform.

Some respondents appreciated the timing of sessions, which were held over five half-days, and those in regional locations valued the opportunity to easily dial in from afar. Respondents were overall forgiving about any technical glitches, noting they were likely to happen in any context. Positive feedback on the Zoom platform included:

> *"It was great to be **immersed in evaluative thinking** and connecting with others for a week from the comfort of my house!"* – Participant
>
> *"Being able to participate online was excellent given I live in a regional location. Also given everyone else was online **I didn't feel disadvantaged**."* – Participant
>
> *"**Loved this being available online** and would like to see that continue for future in-person events too."* – Participant
>
> *"The **chat was amazing**; some were really interactive – wouldn't be able to do the same in face-to-face setting."* – Participant

However, not all participants found the registration process smooth. Participants identified problems with the requirement to register in advance, and some flagged their disappointment with being unable to attend a range of booked-out sessions due to caps. An FGD participant noted that workplace restrictions on Zoom use meant they could not attend sessions while in the office. Qualitative feedback on these issues included:

> *"Having to complete registration in advance meant you **couldn't drop in/drop out as easily** as if you were at an in-person conference (not a complaint, I understand it was challenging for the organisers to set things up on a new platform – but it changes the dynamic of how you interact with session)."* – Participant
>
> *"I felt the **only downside was that registration closed so early** before the conference. I understand that numbers for some sessions needed to be fixed but for other sessions I'm sure they could easily have accommodated a few latecomers."* – Participant
>
> *"I was told we could register for more sessions that were still not full after registration has closed but it was **unclear how to do this**."* – Participant
>
> An AES Working Group member also acknowledged this issue*: "Sometimes we capped registrations, thinking we couldn't fit more than 200 in this one, but then only 90 people dialled in – a waste for others who wanted to attend. **Planning for attrition is a key lesson**."*

A summary of respondents' ideas for possible Zoom facilitation improvements included:

- Streamlined registration process, including issuance of calendar invitations;

- Removal of individual session caps (where possible);

- Strategic use of breakout rooms *(see next section)*;

- Provision of clear instructions to participants in advance;

- Training for presenters on the use of online tools (i.e. how to run polls, manage chats, and effectively facilitate breakout rooms);

- Information on where/if session recordings will be available;

- Greater facilitation of the chat to ensure all questions are answered, and an overall FestEVAL chat function (i.e. outside specific sessions).

BREAKOUT ROOMS

Breakout rooms, a Zoom feature which facilitates small group discussions and networking, were a contentious topic among respondents.

The quantitative data in Figure 17 indicates that, overall, respondents were broadly pleased with the size, composition, comfort, length and purpose of breakout rooms; with the majority of responses either 'good' or 'excellent'.

Figure 17. **Views on various aspects of breakout rooms (Overall)** (n=149)
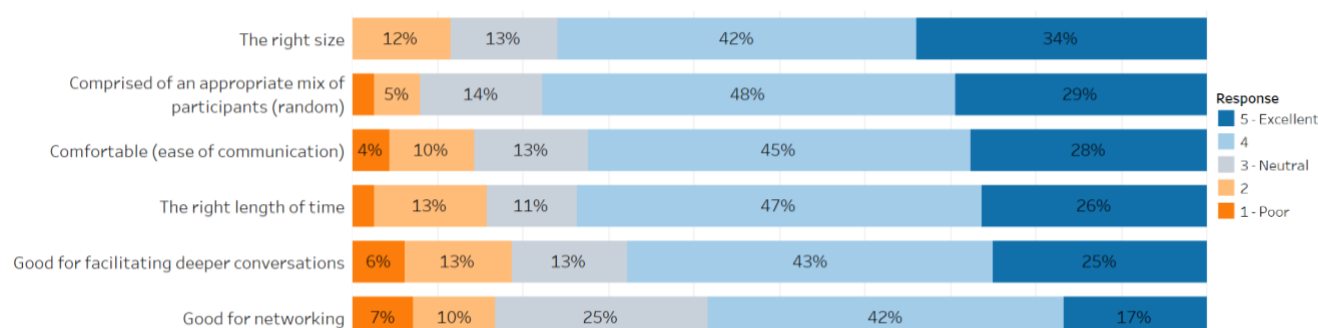
However, the conflicting views on breakout rooms – both positive and negative – emerged more clearly in the qualitative feedback. Some respondents were pleased with the approach:

*"Had a fantastic breakout room that was just myself and another person in the social justice SIG session – was **lovely to have one-on-one discussion and workshop ideas together.**" – Participant*

*"I liked the **short 5-15 min break outs**. Good way to meet some other colleagues. Seemed **ideal size about 5.**" – Participant*

*"…a great opportunity to **connect on a deeper level** with a random mix of people though – I doubt I would have connected with them otherwise!" – Participant*

Other responses, however, suggested a strong aversion to the use of breakout rooms. Common themes included: a lack of guidance, structure or facilitation; difficulty sustaining conversation in small groups; discomfort in engaging with strangers; a lack of understanding of the technology among participants; instances of some individuals meeting repeatedly; and a preference to hear from the 'experts' rather than each other. For example:

*"Most of the time, when the host announced that we were splitting into breakout rooms, I left. **I came to hear and learn about new and interesting evaluation techniques or perspectives, not discuss with other strangers**. I was not the only one: in one session, there were about 150 people. By the time the breakout rooms began, there were less than 90. The one time I stayed for a breakout room, the other three people all left their mics and cameras off the whole time. Very illuminating conversation."* – Participant

*"Breakout rooms were **awkward, no ability to read or interpret the body language of strangers**, people dominated and the **value** for me was **very low**."* – Participant

*"I didn't like it when we more or less went straight into **break out rooms without any initial content**, as happened in the 'Bringing Multicultural Voices' session. At that point I left… I wasn't sure of what would be happening once the breakouts were finished. If this had been outlined, I might have stayed."* – Participant

*"Too small – maybe those selected did not join. On one occasion, the **break-out task was not well defined**, leading to **futile conversation**."* – Participant

*"…I **felt short-changed** from not having more time to hear from the really great presenters. I think when we have to rely on digital methods, it is necessary to sacrifice some group activity because it was **just so tedious**."* – Participant

*"My breakout room seemed smaller than others for whatever reason and since **we were all quite inexperienced** it was a shame **not to have a lot of knowledge to share**."* – Participant

*"**People vote with their feet**: if they're feeling it's not really engaging or not into the topic, then they'll drop out."* – FestEVAL Working Group member

It seemed, in some cases, that prolonged remote working and 'Zoom fatigue' had contributed to some participants' lack of enjoyment of breakout rooms. For example:

*"I really **didn't have a desire or energy to participate** in breakout rooms. Might be just me, but in Melbourne after 6 months of lockdown I was struggling to have any extra energy to participate. I also **spend all day at the moment in online meetings and workshops**, and I didn't have spare energy to be super involved in these sessions. While I'd usually be thrilled to participate at the AES conference, this time I… would have been happier listening."* – Participant

*"The only ones I enjoyed were the Amy Gullickson ones which challenge your thinking. I got 'workshopped out' really quick – there were just **too many breakout rooms**."* – Participant

Recommendations offered by respondents to improve the utility of breakout rooms included:

- Providing clear instructions about what is expected to happen in the breakout room, and how to make the most of them;

- The use of an informed participant in each room to facilitate or guide discussion; and

- Formulating breakout groups based on common backgrounds or experiences.

LIKELIHOOD OF ATTENDING FUTURE ONLINE AES EVENTS

Over half of survey respondents (54%) described their likelihood of attending future online AES events as 'very likely', with a further 38% reporting it as 'likely'. In follow-up FGDs, participants agreed they were likely to attend future online AES events – but also expressed strong interest in some type of hybrid model, with in-person events returning where possible.

Figure 18. Likelihood of attending future online AES events (n=177)
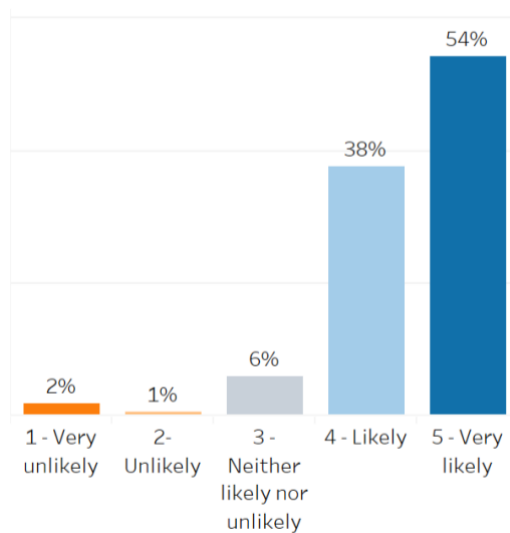
*"It can be hard to concentrate for long periods of time online and can be a barrier to theory acquisition and learning. However, the ease of access to workshops in the virtual world is a benefit. I would like to **engage in a balance of face-to-face AES workshops and online AES presentations in the future**." – Participant*

ACTIVITIES OR FUNCTIONALITY THAT WOULD HAVE ADDED VALUE

Answers to this open-ended question (n=59) were wide-ranging. While some respondents noted that FestEVAL *"was obviously exceptional value for money given it was free",* ideas for added value included:

- Additional high profile international speakers, and other 'new voices';

- Real-world examples of evaluation;

- Provision of key readings for the relevant sessions ahead of each day;

- An easier way to contact people following the sessions;

- A central information portal storing all presentations and readings for later reference;

- Pop out videos, or gamification of activities; and

- Workshops targeting new and emerging evaluators (to complement the Day 1 event).

"More emphasis on practical tools, case studies of how they were applied, 'cheat sheets' or summary resources showing how to implement that approach, examples of good eval / bad eval and WHY." – Participant

WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR ADDED VALUE

While 42% of respondents indicated a willingness to pay some sort of fee to access FestEVAL or similar sessions in future (Figure 19), the survey tool was not well-structured to capture the proposed fee and corresponding expected value. Accordingly, the follow-up FGDs and interviews were employed to elicit further views on this topic.

Figure 19. Willingness to pay a fee to access FestEVAL or other sessions in future (n=144)
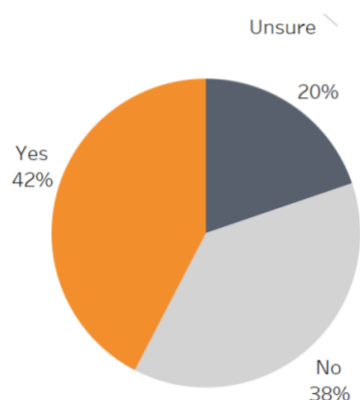
Key themes from the qualitative feedback are summarised as follows:

- Offering FestEVAL **free-of-charge has flow-on benefits for AES**: a larger database of new contacts, and greater awareness of future (charged) AES events.

- It is **reasonable for the AES to charge**, but the pricing must reflect the fact that online events are far cheaper than in-person events.

- Recommend against **charging a flat fee** for whole event – most will not be able to attend all sessions on offer.

- **Self-employed evaluators have a different capacity to pay**, compared to evaluators who are sponsored by their organisations to attend events – this means they are more likely to look for free or cheaper events online.

- If charging, participants need to know **exactly what to expect.**

- Recommend **consideration of a hybrid model** (i.e. opening/closing and other presentations offered free-of-charge, interspersed with charged workshops run by expert facilitators).

- People would be willing to pay to **acquire a technical skill** – not general discussions.

- AES could consider charging for the package of **FestEVAL recordings** for later use.

- A wealth of **online content is already available** – so AES needs to have **niche offering**.

From an AES Board perspective, one member commented on the *"administrative hassle of paying even $10 to [register] for a single session"*, and predicted that AES members would likely view any cost – regardless of the magnitude – as an impost.

Another member noted the sizeable increase in registrations for online AES workshops (separate to FestEVAL activities) during 2020, observing that AES revenue opportunities would be better driven through these programs.

The information presented in this section is targeted at answering KEQ 2, drawing on survey data and insights from interviews with the AES Board and FestEVAL Working Group members.

KEQ 2: Was the AES satisfied with FestEVAL as a platform for conducting its core business?

BOARD PERSPECTIVES ON FESTEVAL LOGISTICS & SUCCESS

From the AES Board perspective, initial expectations for FestEVAL included: a way to offer connection for AES members who might be feeling isolated; a platform to conduct AES business while in-person contact was precluded; and a simpler approach to member engagement in comparison to the full conference.

One Board member described FestEVAL as an opportunity for the AES to share its expertise and branding globally, noting that, *"the AES is not the poor cousin of [its counterparts in] the US or Canada. Here in Australia, we do good work, and we have our own content to share"*.

Despite only having a few months to organise FestEVAL (once deciding to defer the in-person conference to 2021), AES Board members and FestEVAL Working Group members were largely pleased with its success; with *"no major hiccups reported!"*.

> *"FestEVAL exceeded my expectations as it got really good numbers registered from all over the world… including from beyond the membership base – so it might have even played a role as a recruitment tool for new members."* – AES Board member

Key factors in FestEVAL's success included careful planning (*"we didn't let the scope get too big – that was another success criterion"*, noted an AES Board member), and the right team with the necessary skills to pull the event together. One member explained that it was *"pretty administratively light-on relative to organising a conference"*, which is costly and involves travel for AES members regardless of the location chosen.

> *"We decided to do FestEVAL a couple of months out – very unconference-like! That meant we could leave things a bit later, no need for venue hire etc. And it just clicked, because of the group of people behind the scene. Very good operators, very skilled, very committed."* – AES Board member
>
> *"FestEVAL was run on a lot of volunteer power. We must consider how to make things sustainable for both the AES office and volunteers; a good interface between the two."* – AES Board member

Overall, AES Board members saw that FestEVAL had encouraged AES to accelerate its digital engagement strategy, and to fully embrace Zoom technology. Not delivering the in-person

conference meant AES staff had the time and space necessary to concentrate on designing an innovative FestEVAL experience, while also ensuring the effective delivery of AES business.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AES Board members advised that the AGM had been well attended by approximately 60-70 people, and had coincided with the launch of a new AES website.

Qualitative feedback conveyed satisfaction with the online AGM proceedings:

"Loved doing the AGM online." – AES member and participant

"I think members were particularly interested to hear how the AES had gone throughout the COVID-19 period." – AES Board member

"The AES business got done – the online AGM was really clear and simple, run really well, and benefited from a trial run the day before." – AES Board member

"The AGM had a good turnout, with strong member engagement (and hopefully non-members too)." – AES Board member

"I was pleasantly surprised to see how many people tuned into a virtual AGM. It's generally not a really exciting event, but has to happen." – AES Board member

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT and NETWORKING

This section directly addresses one of the priority AES ambitions for FestEVAL: to provide opportunities for AES members to engage with others in the profession.

Approximately one-third of respondents reported that they had made new professional connections (Figure 20). Respondents identified breakout rooms, Special Interest Group meetings, and the Zoom group chat as key networking modalities. Others made new connections in working together to develop a presentation, or facilitating a session.

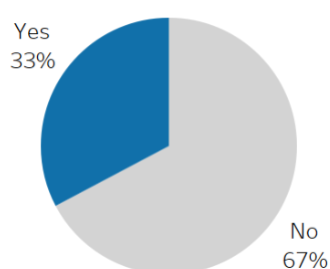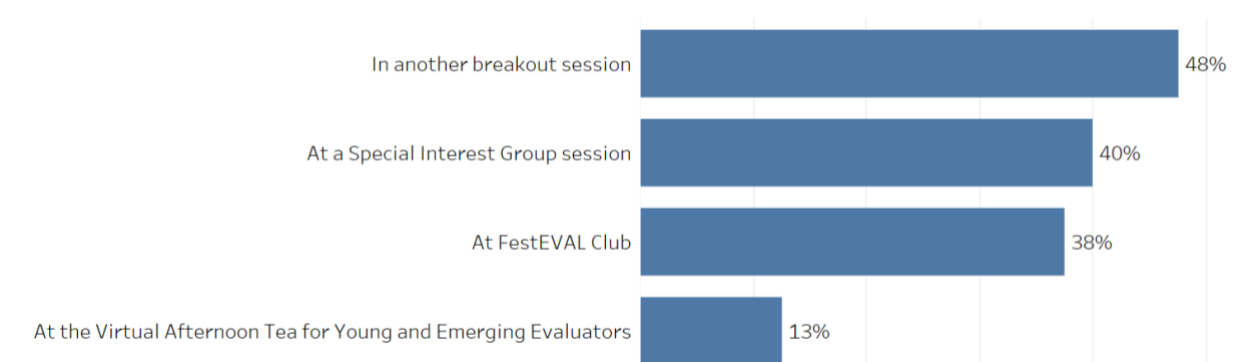**Figure 20. New professional connections** (n=169)

Figure 21. Places where networking occurred (n=55)

Further reflections on the topic of networking included:

> *"…maybe [introduce] some sort of **'speed dating' round** to have people randomly paired up for 5 min breakout rooms to meet and discuss their work and interests. That may facilitate more of the casual networking that occurs during breaks in the face-to-face conferences but it may also be very awkward... presumably like actual speed dating."* – Participant
>
> *"Networking opportunities could be designed differently to feel accessible/not exclusive for people new to the community (I'm not new to evaluation, but new to Australia)."* – Participant

FestEVAL Club was designed by the AES as a key networking modality. However, FestEVAL Club was only attended by a small number of registrants, and views on its utility were mixed. While there was a general appreciation that AES had experimented with this new networking model, feedback indicated the sessions could have been less frequent, and more structured.

One FGD participant, for example, suggested structuring the FestEVAL Club sessions around specific interests (i.e. evaluators working in international development, evaluators new to the Australian evaluation community, or those with an interest in evaluation and data storytelling).

Further feedback on FestEVAL Club included:

> *"I mustered up my courage to go to one of the FestEVAL Clubs. It was actually awesome, we had fantastic conversations – it was really brave of the AES to give that a go, because online networking can be pretty scary!"* – Participant
>
> *"…FestEVAL Club was a good forum for deeper, longer conversations."* – Participant
>
> *"FestEVAL Cub… became a bit of an "only for the die-hards" type of session. There weren't really many people dialling in – I was a bit disappointed with that. It probably didn't need to be every night."* – FestEVAL Working Group member

LOOKING AHEAD

While appreciating the many benefits of face-to-face engagement, both FestEVAL participants and AES Board members recognised the need to continue pursuing online modalities for AES member engagement. AES Board members interviewed were also broadly supportive of FestEVAL's continuation in future; while noting there would need to be further discussion on the exact form it might take.

Some mulled over the possibility of a hybrid model. This could involve, for instance, an online FestEVAL-style event in the first half of the year, followed by an in-person conference (when possible) in the second half of the year. This would be desirable unless, as one AES Board member commented, it meant "*doubling the effort and halving the benefit*".

Another hybrid model floated was to hold face-to-face events locally; supplemented with an online national conference. Or, potentially, to invite a particular state or territory to host (as a 'showcase region') a future FestEVAL. The possibility of conducting semi-regular FestEVAL Club sessions was also flagged.

Whatever form FestEVAL might take in 2021 and beyond, there was a strong sense that AES had benefited immensely from exploring its online event management capability. As one AES Board member noted *"we now have a tried-and-tested model we can fall back on if needed – and that's reassuring to know!"*.

Recommendations

Based on the evidence set out in the previous sections, with an emphasis on the most frequently discussed issues and requests, four key recommendations are put forth for AES consideration in planning future online events.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Enhance the Zoom experience through a streamlined registration process, strategic use of breakout rooms, training for facilitators, alignment between session descriptions and actual content, and removal of attendance caps (where possible).

RECOMMENDATION #2

Design networking opportunities that target specific participant groups. This approach could also be adopted for future 'FestEVAL Club' sessions, with a more structured model catering for specific interests.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Consider adding a suite of practical sessions including, for example, 'lessons from the field', case studies, economic evaluations, and storytelling with data *(among others)*.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Adopt a hybrid event model, alternating between online and in-person events *(where possible)* – and charge accordingly.

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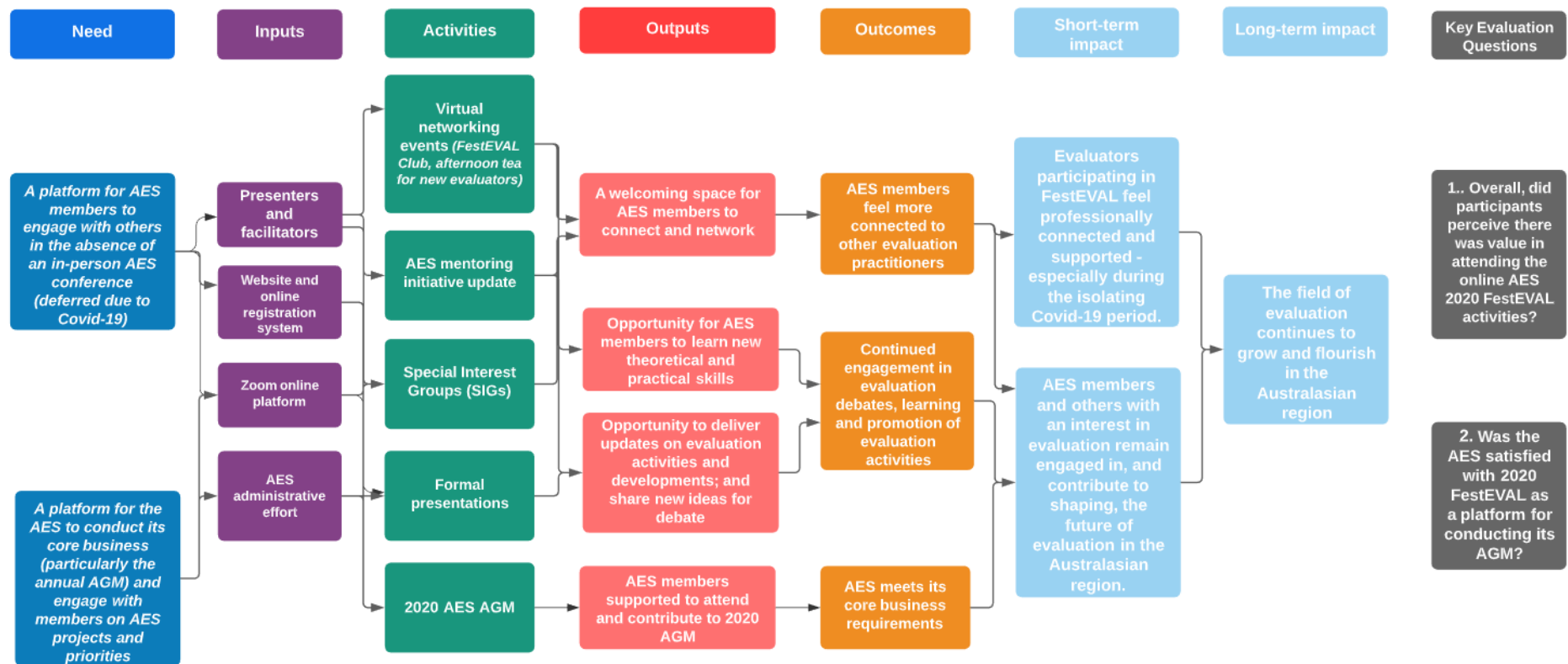Practice of Evaluation course materials. Accessed July-October 2020. University of Melbourne.

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Annex A: FestEVAL evaluation plan

Key Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Purpose	Data collection method
KEQ1. Overall, did participants perceive there was value in attending the online AES 2020 FestEVAL activities?	Why did participants decide to attend FestEVAL?	To identify participants' motivating factors	Post-event survey; Semi-structured interviews with a convenience/ purposive sample of FestEVAL registrants, AES Board members, and FestEVAL Working Group members.
	Were participants also planning to attend the (deferred) AES 2020 conference in Brisbane?		
	Did the online format allow participants to engage effectively in FestEVAL activities?	To assess appropriateness of Zoom as a platform for AES member engagement	
	Did the online format of FestEVAL support effective delivery of updates?		
	Did the online format of FestEVAL support engagement between AES members?		
	Did 'FestEVAL Club' provide a useful opportunity for informal networking or building new professional partnerships?		
	Which elements of FestEVAL were most valued?	To support design of future online AES events	
	Are there any ways in which future online AES events could be improved?		
KEQ2. Was the AES satisfied with 2020 FestEVAL as a platform for the prosecution of its core business?	Was the AES Board satisfied with the design of FestEVAL as a way to engage with its members?	To assess appropriateness of FestEVAL as a platform for AES member engagement and delivery of core business	Semi-structured interviews with purposive sample of AES Board members.
	Was the AES Board satisfied with the design of FestEVAL in terms of a platform for core business, namely the AGM?		

Annex B: FestEVAL logic model

Need	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Short-term impact	Long-term impact	Key Evaluation Questions

Need:

A platform for AES members to engage with others in the absence of an in-person AES conference (deferred due to Covid-19)

A platform for the AES to conduct its core business (particularly the annual AGM) and engage with members on AES projects and priorities

Inputs:

Presenters and facilitators

Website and online registration system

Zoom online platform

AES administrative effort

Activities:

Virtual networking events *(FestEVAL Club, afternoon tea for new evaluators)*

AES mentoring initiative update

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Formal presentations

2020 AES AGM

Outputs:

A welcoming space for AES members to connect and network

Opportunity for AES members to learn new theoretical and practical skills

Opportunity to deliver updates on evaluation activities and developments; and share new ideas for debate

AES members supported to attend and contribute to 2020 AGM

Outcomes:

AES members feel more connected to other evaluation practitioners

Continued engagement in evaluation debates, learning and promotion of evaluation activities

AES meets its core business requirements

Short-term impact:

Evaluators participating in FestEVAL feel professionally connected and supported - especially during the isolating Covid-19 period.

AES members and others with an interest in evaluation remain engaged in, and contribute to shaping, the future of evaluation in the Australasian region.

Long-term impact:

The field of evaluation continues to grow and flourish in the Australasian region

Key Evaluation Questions:

1.. Overall, did participants perceive there was value in attending the online AES 2020 FestEVAL activities?

2. Was the AES satisfied with 2020 FestEVAL as a platform for conducting its AGM?

Annex C: FestEVAL data collection plan

Type	Data collection tool	Timing	Sampling	Ethical issues	Logistics
Post-FestEVAL online survey (mixed methods), targeting all FestEVAL registrants	SurveyMonkey online survey platform	To be sent within two weeks post-FestEVAL, and open for responses for 21 days	Census: all registered FestEVAL registrants	Participant confidentiality and use/storage of information.	Liaise with AES to clear interview questions; determine timing of survey distribution; confirm how survey will be sent (and by whom); monitor responses and respond to any feedback.
Semi-structured qualitative FGDs and interviews with FestEVAL participants, FestEVAL Working Group members and AES Board members	Interview guide / FGD template	Within three weeks post-FestEVAL	Convenience or purposive sampling – targeting <10 interviews (depending on evaluator resources and participant availability)	Brief participants on the interview purpose, intended data use, approach to confidentiality, post-interview data storage. Seek verbal consent to record sessions. FGDs and interviews to be kept to 45 minutes.	Liaise with AES on identifying a purposive or convenience sample of interviewees; select additional participants from those who self-nominated for follow-up discussion in the post-event survey; arrange online sessions; transcribe interview recordings.

Annex D: FestEVAL survey

FestEVAL 2020 Feedback Survey

Thank you for having registered to attend the recent **FestEVAL 2020!**

With 780 registrations; 2,000 attendances across 26 sessions; and participants dialling in from at least 14 countries, the Australian Evaluation Society (AES) was proud to deliver this week of free online events to celebrate the world of evaluation.

Whether you're an emerging evaluator or a seasoned professional; located in Australia or further afield; you attended one session or all 26 sessions - we would love to hear about your FestEVAL experience. Your feedback, which will be de-identified to maintain confidentiality, will help us to design future online AES offerings.

If you have any concerns or queries about this survey, please do not hesitate to email us at evaluation@aes.asn.au.

With thanks in advance for your participation,
AES FestEVAL 2020 evaluation team.

Section 1: Demographic questions

1. In what capacity did you attend FestEVAL? (tick all that apply)

☐ Participant

☐ Presenter or facilitator

☐ FestEVAL working group member

☐ Registered but did not attend (please specify why so, and **skip** Section 2)

☐

2. To which gender do you identify?

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Prefer not to answer
- ◯ Other (specify if you wish)

[   ]

3. Where is your usual place of residence? *(Note: if you have had to temporarily relocate due to COVID-19, please list your pre-COVID-19 residence)*

- ◯ Australia (Australian Capital Territory)
- ◯ Australia (New South Wales)
- ◯ Australia (Northern Territory)
- ◯ Australia (Queensland)
- ◯ Australia (South Australia)
- ◯ Other international (please specify)

- ◯ Australia (Tasmania)
- ◯ Australia (Victoria)
- ◯ Australia (Western Australia)
- ◯ Aotearoa New Zealand

[   ]

4. How many years of experience do you have in the field of evaluation?

◯ <1 year   ◯ 1-5 years   ◯ 6-10 years   ◯ >10 years   ◯ N/A

5. At present, what is your **main** involvement in evaluation?

- ◯ Commissioning or contracting out evaluation projects
- ◯ Reading / using evaluation reports and findings
- ◯ Running programs or projects that get evaluated by others
- ◯ Studying or learning about evaluation
- ◯ Other (please specify)

- ◯ Teaching evaluation
- ◯ Designing or conducting evaluations
- ◯ Contributing data or information to evaluations
- ◯ None, no current involvement with evaluation

[   ]

6. Which sector or organisation type are you **most** associated with?

- ◯ Non-Government Organisation or Civil Society Organisation (international or national)
- ◯ Government (federal or state)
- ◯ Private sector (including management consultancies)
- ◯ Other (please specify)

- ◯ University / other education or research institution
- ◯ I'm an independent consultant

[   ]

7. Are you a current member of the Australian Evaluation Society (AES)?

◯ Yes, individual membership

◯ Yes, organisational membership

◯ No, but I am considering joining

◯ Not interested

8. Had you also planned to attend the (deferred) AES 2020 conference in Brisbane?

◯ Yes   ◯ No   ◯ Unsure

Section 2: Your FestEVAL experience

9. Overall, how would you rate your FestEVAL experience?

1 - Poor	2	3 - Neutral	4	5 - Excellent
★	★	★	★	★

10. How many individual FestEVAL sessions did you attend over the week?

◯ 10+   ◯ 6-9   ◯ 2-5   ◯ 1 only   ◯ None

11. Please select your primary motivation/s for attending FestEVAL:

☐ To engage in thought-provoking discussions

☐ To acquire new theory

☐ To develop practical skills and knowledge

☐ To network and connect with other evaluators

☐ To grow your career and profile

☐ To learn about the latest AES activities

☐ To deliver a presentation or facilitate a session

☐ To participate in the AES Annual General Meeting

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

12. How useful did you find FestEVAL 2020 for the following:

	1 - Not useful	2	3 - Neutral	4	5 - Very useful
Engaging in thought-provoking discussions	○	○	○	○	○
Acquiring new theory	○	○	○	○	○
Developing practical skills and knowledge	○	○	○	○	○
Networking and connecting with other evaluators	○	○	○	○	○
Growing your career or profile	○	○	○	○	○
Learning about the latest AES activities	○	○	○	○	○

Optional further feedback:

13. How do you rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of FestEVAL?

	1 - Fully dissatisfied	2 - Somewhat dissatisfied	3 - Neutral	4 - Somewhat satisfied	5 - Fully satisfied
Keynote presentations	○	○	○	○	○
Breadth of sessions	○	○	○	○	○
Quality of sessions	○	○	○	○	○
Average length of sessions	○	○	○	○	○
Navigation of Zoom platform *(i.e. registration, access to online tools)*	○	○	○	○	○

Optional further feedback:

14. Which specific FestEVAL sessions did you find most valuable? *(select up to three)*

- [ ] Virtual Afternoon Tea for Young and Emerging Evaluators
- [ ] FestEVAL Opening
- [ ] Ask the Evaluator
- [ ] Evaluator self-assessment tool (parts 1 and 2)
- [ ] Big picture demographic trends of the 2020s
- [ ] Evidence and Evaluation – why bother?
- [ ] Evaluation with and for First Nations communities
- [ ] Agile connections
- [ ] Australian Public Sector Evaluation Network Special Interest Group
- [ ] Design and Evaluation Special Interest Group

- [ ] Presentation of the COVID-19 evaluation community survey
- [ ] 2020 AES Annual General Meeting
- [ ] Emerging Evaluators for Social Justice
- [ ] Evaluating fast and slow
- [ ] AES mentoring initiative
- [ ] Using Systems Theory in Evaluation
- [ ] Bringing Multicultural Voices and Values to Evaluations
- [ ] Roundtable discussion on the AES response to the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy
- [ ] FestEVAL Closing Session
- [ ] FestEVAL Club (Monday to Friday)

Optional further feedback:

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15. Which topics or sessions NOT covered in FestEVAL 2020 would you be interested to see in future AES online events?

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16. If you participated in breakout rooms, to what extent do you agree or disagree that they were:

	N/A	1 - Fully disagree	2 - Somewhat disagree	3 - Neither agree nor disagree	4 - Somewhat agree	5 - Fully agree
The right size	○	○	○	○	○	○
The right length of time	○	○	○	○	○	○
Comprised of an appropriate mix of participants (random)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Comfortable (ease of communication)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Good for networking	○	○	○	○	○	○
Good for facilitating deeper conversations	○	○	○	○	○	○

Optional further feedback:

17. Did you make any new professional connections?

○ Yes

○ No

18. If so, where did they occur?

☐ At a Special Interest Group session

☐ At FestEVAL Club

☐ At the Virtual Afternoon Tea for Young and Emerging Evaluators

☐ In another breakout session

☐ N/A

Other (please specify)

[   ]

19. Based on your experience with this online format, how likely are you to attend **future online AES events**?

1 - Very unlikely	2- Unlikely	3 - Neither likely nor unlikely	4 - Likely	5 - Very likely
○	○	○	○	○

20. Overall, what were your favourite features, moments or takeaways of FestEVAL 2020?

[   ]

21. Are there activities or functionality that would have added value to your FestEVAL experience?

[   ]

22. Participation in FestEVAL 2020 was free. Would you be willing to pay a fee to access the added value you identified in Q.21?

○ No

○ Yes (please specify the maximum amount you would be willing to pay)

[   ]

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23. If you are interested in partaking in a brief follow-up interview about your FestEVAL experience, please share your contact details below :-)

Name	
Email Address	
Phone Number	