

ESCC Hub Annual Workshop

June 2019

The 2019 ESCC Hub Annual Workshop was convened on 26–27 June at Lancefield, Victoria. The workshop followed the 2019 Science Symposium, which highlighted the Hub's science achievements in 2018. The workshop aimed to bring together the Hub science leaders and management team to:

- review past activities under RPV4 (2018)
- discuss implementation of RPV5 projects and 2019–20 case studies
- plan and implement closure processes for projects and the Hub over the next 18 months
- enhance communication, facilitate networking and raise awareness of what is being done in each of the research projects and within Hub Central
- discuss stakeholder engagement, communication, knowledge brokering, and monitoring and evaluation activities, both now and going forward.

DAY 1 – LOOKING BACK

The first day of the workshop reflected on the Hub's operation and activities over 2018, highlighting achievements and noting lessons learned. These reflections informed completion of RPV2 close-out reports (in a session at the end of Day 1) and discussions on Day 2 looking out to the end of the Hub in December 2020.

Highlights from the Science Symposium

Christine Chung, from the Science Symposium organising committee, provided a summary of the science highlights presented at the Symposium for the benefit of workshop participants who had not attended the science meeting. The science highlights – covering efforts in model development, coastal climate, understanding climate variability and change, projections of climate change and extremes, and Australia's water and carbon – will be reported in detail in a separate publication.

Hub leader reflections

Hub leader David Karoly noted that the focus of the past six months had been on closing out RPV2 projects, synthesising science and transitioning to RPV5. He added that in the future, financial reporting would move from six-monthly to three-monthly to ensure effective and efficient monitoring of project spending and to avoid underspend. David also noted the success of the 2017 highlights summary publication and announced that a 2018 publication was in preparation.

Hub Steering Committee reflections

Hub Steering Committee chair Greg Ayers noted he could only draw on his experience on the HSC since February 2019 but was very impressed with what the Hub has achieved. As he only had a few months to reflect on, Greg spoke about what he would bring to the HSC chair role, identifying his intention to facilitate the inclusion of climate and environmental change into policy and decision making. He is also focused on ensuring the

value proposition of the Hub is clear internally and to external stakeholders, encouraging participants to keep asking 'What are we doing?' and 'Why are we here?'. Greg flagged the importance of 'nailing the process': planning, governance, engaging stakeholders, managing risk, monitoring and evaluation, resource management and management strategy. He concluded by recapping key points from Lesley Hughes' invited presentation – that effective communication and engagement needs a well-framed narrative, a simple and relevant message, repetition of the message, and advocacy.

Hub Stakeholder Advisory Group reflections

Nick Wood, HSAG member and former HSAG chair, focused his reflections on 'de-risking Australia' and the role of the Hub in providing climate change science, particularly to the finance and business sectors. 'If climate change is a crisis,' he said, 'then climate change science is a national strategic capability'.

DoEE reflections

Beth Brunoro, First Assistant Secretary of the Knowledge and Technology Division of the Department of the Environment and Energy was unable to participate in the workshop but had left some reflections with David Karoly. Beth strongly supports the Hub and was very positive about Hub engagement, particularly with other hubs, other federal government departments and with state governments. The Department is reviewing the current NESP program, with comment invited until 30 June. The Department is unable to provide information about bidding for funding after 2020 to ensure that existing hubs have no advantage over other potential bidders. Details of the next round of funding are still to be determined.

Indigenous engagement

Mandy Hopkins, who has been leading the Hub's Indigenous engagement activities, spoke of the importance of building meaningful relationships with Indigenous stakeholders to establish the trust for two-way knowledge sharing. The Hub's major Indigenous engagement activity in 2018 was the National Indigenous Dialogue, where traditional owners from across the country were invited to discuss climate change and identify the role of western science in providing information to supplement traditional knowledge. Mandy invited six participants in the dialogue – Josh Gilbert, Simon Marsland, Marian Sheppard, Aurel Moise, David Karoly and Rowena Bullio

– to briefly share their reflections on the experience. These reflections all echoed themes of trust, mutual respect and ideas of 'ownership' of knowledge, as well as the importance of being aware of different cultural lenses in this engagement.

DAY 2 – PLANNING AHEAD

RPV5 research activities

David Karoly noted that the old RPV2 projects officially conclude on 30 June, with nine new projects beginning on 1 July. These projects, together with associated case studies, will continue until the conclusion of the Hub in December 2020 – although research in these projects should be wrapped up by September 2020 to allow for synthesis and close out. Planning and implementation of these projects means that project milestones for RPV6 have been largely determined.

Communication and knowledge brokering

Hub Knowledge Broker Sonia Bluhm reported that the Hub's communication activities over the past year have been very successful, particularly the science webinars. These activities attract a wide audience, including policy and decision makers, and have driven traffic to other Hub communication channels, including the website, social media and Teleconnections. Sonia emphasised the importance of collecting information and reporting 'on the go' and not waiting until the end of a project for planning and preparing

synthesis and other communication projects.

This was echoed by Hub Knowledge Broker Mandy Hopkins, who spoke about the success of the Hub's case studies. A number of brief two-page summaries of case study activities have been published on the Hub website and have resulted in 75 enquiries to Mandy.

Monitoring and evaluation

Hub Program Manager Geoff Gooley outlined the Hub's approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and the importance of this approach in demonstrating the impact of the Hub's science. The M&E action plan has two phases: Phase 1 is retrospective, looking at projects 2.1–2.11, with a focus on governance and next-user outcomes. Phase 2 focuses on projects 5.1–5.9 with a focus on governance and end-user impacts. Geoff encouraged researchers to report on impact by considering outputs (what did the project produce), target user groups (who used it), outcomes (how it was used), reactions (what happened next) and impact (what was the greater good that resulted).

Next steps

The Hub Program Management Team and Hub Leadership Team will meet and discuss issues raised at the workshop and will report back through internal communication channels. The findings and outcomes from the workshop will inform development of the Hub's RPV6 and close out arrangements for the Hub.

For more information about the workshop, contact Hub Central hubcentral@nespclimate.com.au