

# Meeting Notes from Melbourne Brainstorm on Future of ACSW

23rd July 2013, 9.00-10.30

**Present:** James Thom, Justin Zobel, Tony Wirth, John Grundy, Lin Padgham, Rui Zhang (part of meeting), James Harland (part of meeting).

**Apologies:** Alistair Moffat

This meeting was called in order to brainstorm and develop some thoughts to share with the community, regarding potential more radical changes to ACSW, to add to the summary of previous notes from John Roddick, arising from email discussion.

Key points that were agreed were:

- costs need to be lowered substantially
- the value will not be as a publication venue
- it must have some appeal to delegates, and be seen to be valuable to delegates by their managers approving funds. (The latter is more likely as a professional development venue than a publication venue.)
- it should support strong, vibrant sub-communities as well as bringing together of national CS.

## Concrete ideas

Ideas discussed fell into two main categories: how to reduce costs, and how to make the event have real value. There were a few ideas that cut across both these or fell into neither, covered under “Other”.

## Cost issues

1. No paid keynotes. Draw keynotes from Australia, without need to finance. (Possibly some limited financing from CORE where necessary).
2. Hold it in Melbourne/Sydney every second year as this is cheap to get to for the majority.
3. Reduce the number of rooms needed to 2 parallel sessions and some breakout spaces.
4. Use evening times to get more things in less days.
5. Facilitate billeting via conference website. (Supports networking as well as helping with costs).

## Appeal and value

Some ideas of things that we expect would be appealing and valuable include:

1. Matchmaking sessions for the purpose of identifying collaborators, for grants or other work. Identify a theme, allow everyone who wishes to have a 5 minute presentation of a research focus/idea, then self organise into discussion groups.
2. Centre of excellence initiation: have some number of proposers who pitch an idea, then have discussion from other interested parties. CORE would provide some funds to assist in further development of the most promising proposal.
3. “National landscape” type talks: things like someone from the ARC panel, someone involved in other national level policy or funding issues that affect us.
4. “Excellent Australian Researcher” talks: Invited talks from ARC Fellows, award winners, best papers at top conferences, etc.
5. Talks from “Best PhD thesis” nominations.
6. Talks from industry people in R&D.
7. Provocative, fun talks from good presenters.
8. PhD “marketplace”. Researchers present PhD ideas (via posters or 3 minute presentations) to local honours/masters/undergraduate students. Possibly CORE funds some \$300 scholarships for travel from other states.
9. PhD/ECR Colloquium. (Happening 2014).

## Other ideas

1. Have sub-community day(s) immediately before/after, with a separate registration fee. ACSW committee would arrange rooms and catering, but budget would be separate. This means those that want only to come for that event can, for a low price. If ACSW cost is kept down, then combined cost should be viable.
2. Perhaps ACSW event is 2 (very full, including evening) days, with Profs and HoDs one side and subcommunity events the other side.
3. No formal publications. Poster sessions for students (and others) to share ideas. Lightweight refereeing. All talks are invited. (This then avoids the negative impact of mediocre value publications, which managers do not want from staff or students, but still provides initial opportunity for presentation of ideas and networking by students). Provide informal copy of papers (no ISBN).
4. Days to start at 9am and go through to 10pm. (One comment that this may only work for tightly knit communities - may be too exhausting. Others felt use of evenings is a good trade off for less days away, but same content value.)

## Possible vision

Towards the end of the discussion, those present seemed to be coalescing towards a shared idea of a new style ACSW. This would have the following characteristics:

1. No formal publication. Distribution of papers associated with posters at the event.
2. Substantial poster sessions, to allow many poster presenters.
3. 6-12 invited Australian talks, with a mix of types from above.
4. 1-2 discussion and networking sessions of some form.
5. 2 day core event, utilising evenings, with sub-community events and HoDs and Profs before/after.
6. Possibly PhD/ECR colloquium before/after.

## Next steps

### 2014

John Grundy to speak with Tony Clear regarding what opportunities might exist to introduce some of these ideas for 2014. Depending on response, talk with Chairs of the various conferences to suggest that if submissions are low, perhaps accept very few (or no?) papers for oral presentation, and focus on poster sessions as the main presentation approach. Offer to assist with arranging some of the suggested type of sessions, if Tony wishes to do this.

### 2015

1. Circulate these and any other ideas from John Roddick's document, to the larger community for comment and discussion on the wiki.
2. CORE exec to appoint a management committee to work with 2015 organisers to realise a major change for 2015.
3. Management committee to develop a document regarding the new style ACSW, including suggested cap on registration fees, general structure of the new-style event, etc.