

# IOCE EvalPartners profile survey of Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs)

## I. Basic profile information

<b>1. Name and acronym of organization (VOPE)</b>	<b>Australasian Evaluation Society Inc. (AES)</b>
<b>2. Geographic scope of organization</b>	Regional (multi-national): Australia and New Zealand and affiliated with PNG
<b>3. Contact Details</b>	Name of main contact person: Maria Eliadis, Executive Officer E-address: <a href="mailto:maria.eliadis@aes.asn.au">maria.eliadis@aes.asn.au</a> Postal address: P.O. Box 476 Carlton South VIC 3053 Australia Telephone: +61 3 83449648 VOPE website URL: <a href="http://www.aes.asn.au">www.aes.asn.au</a>
<b>4. Current membership – numbers of individuals, by their affiliation (if known; please at least give total)</b>	Government: 38% NGOs/CSOs: 12% Academics: 12% Private sector (consultants): 36% Other: 2% <b>Total membership:</b> Approx: 1034
<b>5. Year VOPE was founded</b>	AES started in 1987; Incorporated in 1994
<b>6. Current status (identify which)</b>	Legally recognized by government
<b>7. Information about growth: evolution of the number of members or financial resources in the last 5 years.</b>	Membership of the AES has been growing steadily over the past 5 years by 2-4%
<b>8. Purpose and mission of VOPE</b>	The AES aims to improve the theory, practice and use of evaluation across Australasia
<b>9. Current strategy and emphasis</b>	To see rigorous evaluation as central to policy development, program design and service delivery.
<b>10. Organizational capacity:</b> Please describe your governance structure, leadership, services provided, finances, human resources, linkages with other organizations, etc.	The Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) is the primary Australasian professional organisation for people involved in evaluation including evaluation practitioners, managers, teachers and students of evaluation, and other interested individuals. Professional development workshops are conducted throughout Australasia on a regular basis. A board of management provides overall governance and is elected annually from the membership. The Society is supported by a central office based in Melbourne. The central office is staffed by two part-time staff, an Executive Officer and a Membership and Administration Manager.
<b>11. Means of communication with members, e.g. newsletter, listserv, publication, website</b>	The AES has a website and distributes a quarterly newsletter and a biannual Journal. Members communicate with each other regularly through Regional Groups, SIG's, committees and working groups.
<b>12. Past events (e.g. during past year)</b>	2011 workshops intensive and international conference Sydney  Workshops: Designing Improved Performance Measurement Systems, with Graham Smith; Introducing Developmental Evaluation, with Kate McKegg and Nan Wehipeihana; Actionable Evaluation for Real World Decision Makers with Dr Jane Davidson; Linking Evaluation and Social Justice with Dr Donna M Mertens; Using purposeful program theory and logic models for evidence-based policy and practice with Professor Patricia Rogers; Outcomes Mapping with Terry Smutylo; Getting to Outcomes with Prof Abe Wandersman; Using Case Study in Evaluation of Programs and Policies with Prof Helen Simons
<b>13. Forthcoming key events/conferences – dates, location</b>	2012 AES Workshops Intensive Adelaide 27 and 28 August 2012 AES International Conference 29 – 31 August Evaluation Skills Workshops program (see website) Regional seminar programs (see website)
<b>14. Name and e-address of person submitting this information</b>	Maria Eliadis, Executive Officer <a href="mailto:maria.eliadis@aes.asn.au">maria.eliadis@aes.asn.au</a>
<b>15. Date of this update</b>	27 March 2012

## II. Experience with Evaluation Capacity Building

<p><b>1. Background:</b> Please provide a brief history of the formation of this organization (VOPE).</p> <p>1.1 Who were/are the key players?</p> <p>1.2 How many members do you have on your governing board/ committee?</p> <p>1.3 What are the main existing strengths that your VOPE is trying to capitalize on?</p> <p>1.4 What are the main challenges that your VOPE is trying to address?</p>	<p>A variety of people involved in or interested in evaluation work</p> <p>8</p> <p>High level of professionalism of members, high level of expertise and diversity of areas of expertise.</p> <p>Become more reflective of and responsive to the needs of the evaluation sector to maintain high standards of ethical practice and to position evaluation as central to effective and rigorous policy development, program design and service delivery.</p>
<p><b>2. Organizational motivation:</b> What were/are the driving forces of the VOPE and its historical development?</p>	<p>To improve the theory, practice and use of evaluation across Australasia</p>
<p><b>3. Evaluation Capacity Building:</b> What has your VOPE done to promote evaluation (M&amp;E) capacity?</p>	<p>We organise and annual workshops intensive and conference.</p> <p>We produce and distribute a peer reviewed biannual journal</p> <p>We have 7 categories of Awards for Excellence in Evaluation which recognize best practice and/or achievement in evaluation work</p> <p>We support the capacity building of indigenous evaluators through a grants program to assist them to attend the conference.</p> <p>The AES has supported the establishment of the PNG AoPE by providing advice, training and ongoing mentoring.</p> <p>The AES offers skill development workshops on evaluation skills</p> <p>AES regions offer free seminars in all regional centers for members and non-members</p>
<p><b>4. Context / target entities:</b> More specifically, who are the persons or institutions your organization seeks to influence (to strengthen evaluation capacity)? For example:</p> <p>4.1 Technical capacities to <i>supply</i> quality evaluations, partnering with experts, local universities or others to provide training for members, etc.;</p> <p>4.2 Strengthening VOPE organizational capacity itself;</p> <p>4.3 Enhancing the enabling environment for evaluation, including strengthening the <i>demand</i> for and use of evaluations by policy makers;</p> <p>4.4 Influencing governmental policies related to evaluation, evaluation designs and implementation of M&amp;E systems, etc.</p>	<p>We are targeting all the categories and entities listed as examples.</p>
<p><b>5. Public accountability:</b> Is your VOPE helping to strengthen oversight and transparency of government programs? If so, in what ways? Can you share any success stories of evaluators or others promoting public accountability?</p>	<p>Yes we are. Our main strategy to date has been advocacy and we have prioritized this strategic objective for the next 3 years.</p>

<p><b>6. More specifically, what are some of the key themes for which you advocate?</b> For example, are you promoting issues related to cultural sensitivity, equity, social justice, empowerment, transformation, gender, environment, poverty? If so, please describe or attach relevant documents.</p>	<p>Over all the AES advocates for and encourages understanding about the use and application of evaluation. The main guide for this is the AES Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluation (available on the website).</p> <p>The AES specifically advocates for and financially supports evaluators from indigenous communities and evaluations that are sensitive to indigenous cultures and issues.</p>
<p><b>7. Methods:</b> Experiences in strengthening skills of individual members, by (for example):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organizing workshops led by local experts;</li> <li>• organizing webinars with international speakers;</li> <li>• designing and delivering e-learning programmes;</li> <li>• administering mentoring programmes; etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Key methods are outlined in the answer to question 3.</p>
<p><b>8. Standards:</b> Has your VOPE developed professional standards/ ethical codes/ competencies (or adheres to those developed by others)? If so, please provide documentation.</p>	<p>We do have ethical codes. Available on the website</p>
<p><b>9. Job opportunities:</b> Do you share employment/ consultancy opportunities with evaluators on your database?</p>	<p>Yes we do</p>
<p><b>10. Progress and results:</b> What progress has been achieved so far in any of the above or other domains? What are expected and unexpected results achieved?</p>	<p>The AES is pleased with the progress it has made in all these areas. Highlights include the support of the establishment of the PNG AoPE and the Conference Support Grants to Indigenous evaluators.</p>
<p><b>11. Lessons learned:</b> Recommendations/ tips to others for good practices on how to organize and sustain VOPEs like yours.</p>	<p>The AES is benefiting from 3-4 years of reflecting and reviewing the governance structures and constitution and from investing time in developing a strategic plan.</p>
<p><b>12. Next steps:</b> What does your organization plan to do next?</p>	<p>Finalise our governance re-structure, implement our strategic plan, and fully establish a central office.</p>
<p><b>13. Willing to share with other VOPEs?</b> For example, would you be interested in forming peer-to-peer partnerships with one or more other VOPEs to share lessons learned, advise each other? If so, describe what you would be willing to share / advice you would seek.</p>	<p>Yes. Any of the areas in which we are active and have mentioned above.</p>
<p><b>14. Suggestions:</b> What ideas do you have for what should be included in activities of the EvalPartners Initiative?</p>	<p>Not at this stage</p>
<p><b>15. Want to be actively involved?</b> Does your VOPE want to be actively involved in EvalPartners? If so, in what ways?</p>	<p>At this stage the AES supports the initiative in principle</p>