

Report on the ESIP July 2025 Hub meeting, Canberra 23-25 July 2025

Executive Summary

The Canberra Hub successfully hosted a low-cost, small-group hybrid workshop aligned with the ESIP July 2025 meeting. The event fostered local discussions and networking, supported by a simple technical setup and diverse expertise.

Participants appreciated the social interaction and collaborative environment. The format proved effective and enjoyable.

The Canberra Hub demonstrated the viability of the Hub Hybrid model. With minor improvements, this format can be scaled and refined for future events.

- Low-cost activity
- A small group of people
- Local discussions and networking
- It worked well!
- Suggested success factors:
 - Expertise on different topics available locally to provide additional input into discussions
 - Shared interest, but also differing perspectives
 - Simple, but efficient technical set-up
 - Group small enough to be manageable at low cost, but big enough and diverse enough for discussion and networking
- Suggested improvements:
 - Small organising committee to share the load
 - Additional local content (speakers, lightning talks, posters, networking activities), some of which could be shared with other hubs
 - Increased interaction (synchronous and asynchronous) with other hubs
 - Screen-free break times/activities

E2SIP-led session

The Australian E2SIP cluster led one session on the future of international geoscience conferences.

📄 The Future of Earth and Environmental Science Meetings - ESIP July 2025

Aims of the Hub experiment

- Participate in the US ESIP meeting while connecting with others locally.
- Explore what a Hub Hybrid model could look like.
- Capture lessons learned to inform future hybrid events (e.g. AGU, RD-A, future International Data Weeks).

- Feed back our experience and recommendations to ESIP.
- Network with colleagues across organisations and locations.

Set up and logistics

- All attendees had to register as virtual attendees on the main ESIP registration site.
- There were no additional costs because:
 - ARDC provided the venue, morning and afternoon teas
 - AWS sponsored the lunches
- Canberra room (at ARDC, Liversidge Street, Acton)
 - 8 Participants in Canberra, 1 online participant in Melbourne
 - 2 of the 8 participants had travelled to the Canberra Hub
- ESIP staff provided the recordings of the overnight sessions (2:00 AM and 4:00 AM AEST) by the start of our next day:
 - In the interests of time, these were deliberately not edited, which meant we had some ‘dead time’ at the start of each recording.
 - Although it is possible to encourage session organisers to ‘pause’ their recordings, there was also a high chance that they will forget to hit ‘record’ again.
 - Participants in the Canberra Hub felt that the dead time was no problem, as it was just as easy to jump ahead.
 - ESIP staff indicated that providing these recordings was not a major effort on their part.
- Participating in live sessions (7 am AEST: individually, 9 am AEST: as a group), watching recorded sessions together / in small groups
- Daily schedule/activities
 - Individual participation in live sessions at 7 am AEST at hotel/home (this was difficult for those with family commitments)
 - Join the Canberra room before 9 am AEST
 - Select session(s) to join / recordings to watch
 - Main room/ breakout rooms
 - Reporting back and discussions
 - Discussing the Hub itself - what worked, what could be improved, what are ideas for another Hub meeting?
- Interaction with the main meeting in Seattle
 - Live (in sessions)
 - Awareness of the Hub
 - Renamed Zoom connection “Canberra Hub” and used the Hub photo as avatar
 - Asynchronously
 - Session notes
 - Slack posts to raise awareness and “show” the Hub



What worked well

- Participants appreciated the (social) interaction with others.
 - The virtual participant also liked the opportunity to interact with the Canberra Hub, even via Zoom.
 - Networking was useful even for a relatively small group
- Discussions and report backs were very interesting, fruitful, and led to new insights and connections.
- The Hub was small enough to avoid additional costs but big enough to make networking and the exchange of ideas worthwhile.
- Our planned schedule was “conference-like”, though we extended break times to continue discussions.
- Participants were able to drop in / drop out as needed.
- It was tiring, but fun!

What could be improved

- Interaction with participants in Seattle and online
 - Awareness of the hub, especially when joining live sessions
 - Asynchronous interaction with the main audience in Seattle (how many people actually used the ESIP Slack?)
 - Questions in Slack and the Session notes
 - “Conversations” (threads)
 - Interactions with other remote participants
 - Virtual/hybrid meet-ups?

- Share more photos and other artefacts
- Breaks and non-screen / non-meeting time (including outdoors)
- Building access (ARDC Canberra office issue, as ARDC was not officially open on Thursday and Friday of the meeting).
- Small organising committee
- Consistent communication pre-event
- It was also suggested that session hosts be made aware of 'Hub' participation early, before the session starts, particularly for synchronous participation.
- Where participation is asynchronous and new material is added to the existing session notes, the session leads should also be made aware of this.
- We could not replay every session and had to make choices, guided by what was on Sched. Some session descriptions were minimal, and it was difficult to understand what they were about. The description of the content of the plenary sessions for the July 2025 meetings was also minimal.
- Official session notes were highly variable. Some had the agenda in them and gave links to all presentations, and notes could be added to them by the Australian Hub. Other session notes had virtually nothing in them. It was difficult to follow what had been discussed and who had attended.

Suggestions and considerations for future meetings

- One local Hub vs multiple local Hubs
- Hub size
 - Balance between large (good for networking, discussions) and small (reducing cost, administrative overheads, effort, risk)
 - We think ~10 people would be a good starting size—too big, and the Hub becomes its own mini conference.
 - Having participants from different organisations increased the usefulness (networking, more diversity of perspectives)
- If we make it for a bigger group, then it would be much better if all participants chose which sessions they wish to attend the day before, so that meeting rooms could be allocated (but respecting that some attendees like to jump across multiple sessions)
- Local content
 - Suggestions included Lightning talks, Poster session, Local speaker(s), Social / networking activities, Site visits
 - Some of the local content could also be shared or organised jointly with other hubs / main hub (e.g. 2-minute talks from people about their interests in the meeting; posters)
 - Speakers/sessions run from a local Hub
 - Local networking activities
- Using an integrated conference app (e.g., Whova) might make organising meetups and connecting with other participants easier
- Time zones

- The number of sessions that a hub can join live varies with the locations of the hubs and the main event.
 - More focus on live interactions at the Hubs within adjacent time zones, and more asynchronous interactions between Hubs?
 - How to make the most of the time zone differences (asynchronous / 24-hour-conference - see e.g. book sprints)
 - Creating a joint output
- Evaluation of the Hub (locally / across the whole event)
 - Survey
 - Dedicated channel for feedback and suggestions (Feedback “wall”, Slack channel, Google doc, etc.)

Conclusions

- A small Hub (Canberra) and Spoke (Melbourne) meeting successfully trialled a low-cost, small-group hybrid workshop aligned with the main ESIP July 2025 meeting in Seattle.
- The event fostered local discussions and networking, supported by a simple technical setup and diverse expertise.
- Participants appreciated the social interaction and collaborative environment.
- The format proved effective and enjoyable.
- With minor improvements, this format can be scaled and refined for future events.

References

- The Future of Meetings Group site: fom.org
- Parncutt, R., 2025. The global multi-hub conference: Inclusion, sustainability, and academic politics. *Sustainable Futures*, vol. 10, p.100915, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sfr.2025.100915>.
- <https://helloendless.com/multi-hub-meetings/>
- <https://www.twebcast.com/post/what-are-hub-meetings-and-why-do-i-need-to-care>
- <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IEI3h57pWDwOj9wmhT89TegJcuS-HUfH>
- ESIP July 2025 Meeting Folder: [The Future of Earth and Environmental Science Meetings - can we make the Hub and Spoke Hybrid Model work?](#) (Contains Session Notes and Session Slides).