

Research Software Engineer Australia New Zealand Strategy 2023-2025

[10.6084/m9.figshare.21385392](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.21385392)

28/03/2023

Valuing Research Software Engineers

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Māori as tangata whenua and Treaty of Waitangi partners in Aotearoa New Zealand. We pay our respects to the mana whenua of the land on which we live today.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people, on whose unceded lands some of us live and work here in Naarm (Melbourne). We respectfully acknowledge their Elders, past and present.

We also acknowledge all the Traditional Owners of Country throughout the continents of Australia and Aotearoa. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Co-chairs Nooriyah Poonawala Lohani and Manodeep Sinha

Executive Summary

In early 2022 it was decided by the Steering Committee to look into reviewing the strategy and the goals of the RSE-AUNZ community. This was due to the recognition that the ability to volunteer time by the steering committee members is limited and that any commitments need to be carefully considered.

It was suggested a strategy that included strategic selection criteria could focus the community on core projects that would tie in multiple strategic aims that could develop it further.

The current selection criteria chosen includes:

1. Does this make RSEs value themselves?
2. Does this make decision makers value RSEs?
3. Does this grow or sustain the RSE community?
4. Does this or can this support DEI?
5. Does this raise awareness of RSE or contributes to advocacy of RSEs?

These selection criteria were used to choose four key goals for the RSE-AUNZ community in 2023. These goals are:

1. Bring the community together,
2. Raise the profile of RSEs,
3. Become a diverse and sustainable community, and
4. Provide a roadmap to a mature structure.

These goals have been designed to fulfil multiple strategic aims of the community and have been ratified by the steering committee and the community as of April 2023.

Process

This strategy review was established and led by Rowland Mosbergen in February 2022. On the 8th of March 2022 a strategy kickstarter session was attended by all but two members of the steering committee.

This kickstarter session allowed the members to brainstorm goals as a group and individually, using the previous goals from the steering committee from 2019. A discourse analysis was then done to come up with a draft list of strategic selection criteria that could be applied to all new opportunities.

This was written up and the details stored in the Mural online whiteboard, and a summary sent via email to the steering committee and further feedback was provided by email and through the subsequent monthly steering committee meetings.

This process was paused while the focus shifted to the 2022 Research Software Engineer Asia Australia Unconference.

In September the steering committee agreed on a first draft set of selection criteria to be shared with the community.

This included a spreadsheet that had the selection criteria but also a list of potential goals that were prioritised based on the strategic selection criteria. This spreadsheet was added to the goals page on the RSE-AUNZ website.

This update to the website was introduced to the community at the unconference in September in the Actionable Items session (RSEAA043) along with an explanation of how they could be used to prioritise goals now and in the future.

The informal feedback from the community attendees of that session was generally positive, enough to consider writing an initial draft of this strategy. The informal feedback from the community attendees of that session was generally positive. This strategy was then reviewed by the steering committee and then by the RSE-AUNZ community on the 20th of April.

Strategic Selection Criteria

Based on the multiple meetings and discussions by the steering committee over 2022, an initial set of five selection criteria were agreed to.

The initial set of selection criteria are:

1. Does this make RSEs value themselves?
2. Does this make decision makers value RSEs?
3. Does this grow or sustain the RSE community?
4. Does this or can this support DEI?
5. Does this raise awareness of RSE or contributes to advocacy of RSEs in a non-extractive way?

It should be noted that the RSE Asia Australia Unconference vision was crafted to ensure that these criteria were met.

We need people in the RSE community to recognise that they themselves are valuable so they can be more confident in advocating for themselves and for other RSEs.

Decision Makers valuing RSEs was added to highlight that we would like them to be more willing to sustainably fund RSEs.

Growing or sustaining the community was added as there is still a need at an institutional and research domain level.

DEI was added because we have a steering committee committed to extend best practice to the best of our ability.

Raising awareness and advocacy for RSEs is also important to ensure we continue to improve the working conditions of RSEs.

As a complement to the DEI criteria, we are committed to pursuing activities that benefit the entire community and avoiding extractive practices that benefit only a select few.

Goal 1 - Bring the community together

The NZRSE conference has been successful and the first online Research Software Engineer Asia Australia Unconference in 2022 was considered a success. It would be ideal to continue this success in bringing the community together.

Selection criteria responses for this goal:

1. This would make RSEs value themselves by attracting sponsorship, highlighting RSEs that are being valued elsewhere, and showing how we uniquely help researchers.
2. This would make decision makers value RSEs by inviting them to speak and by attracting sponsorship.
3. This would be a focal point to grow the community and to raise awareness of RSEs to Senior Managers.
4. The RSEAA22 unconference has demonstrated that it can extend best practice in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) such as the Accessibility partnership option in 2022.
5. The conferences inherently raise awareness of RSEs and could provide honoraria to contributors.

Key results

1. Organise at least 2 RSE conferences in New Zealand and Australia.
2. Raise awareness about the RSE community and its activities at least 1 other major event (like eResearch).
3. Organise monthly tech talks that incorporate Face-to-face meetings.
4. Build a network of co-ordinators, especially in smaller states and regional areas to increase engagement.



Goal 2 - Raise the profile of RSEs

Profiles and personal stories have been used in other RSE associations to help RSEs identify themselves and raise awareness for those who are unaware of the term.

Selection criteria responses for this goal:

1. This would make RSEs value themselves by showing how we uniquely help researchers.
2. This would make decision makers value RSEs by raising awareness and educating how we uniquely help researchers.
3. This could grow the community as it would be targeting an audience that could self-identify themselves as RSEs.
4. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) can be used to identify RSEs from one or more marginalised groups to centre their unique challenges.
5. This inherently raises awareness of RSEs by raising the profile of RSEs in a human-centred way.

Key results

1. Define at least 5 Personas, Profiles, or Personal Stories of the people that form the RSE community.
2. Highlight the work of at least 4 RSE's via tech talks.
3. Market personas and tech talks to raise awareness.



Goal 3 - A diverse & sustainable community

The RSE community needs to be active, diverse, and sustainable. Diversity and inclusion is what the RSE community strives for within research, and we should strive to do the same within our community. There is also a need to ensure we do not burnout members of our community.

Selection criteria responses for this goal:

1. This would make RSEs value themselves by showing the breadth and depth of the community.
2. This would make decision makers value RSEs by raising awareness on how many RSEs self-identify within states and institutions.
3. Focusing on diversity would grow the community as it would ensure focus on places and institutions that are underrepresented.
4. This goal is essentially Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) itself, but with a focus on centring RSEs who are not in big institutions, big states, or in metropolitan areas.
5. This can raise awareness of RSEs by providing reporting that could be used to contact decision makers.

Key results

1. Clarify the demographic of the RSE mailing list (Organisation, location, career stage of individuals).
2. Review and report on and to the community.
3. Create specific roles for each goal to attract new volunteers and avoid burnout for existing volunteers.
4. Encourage and support community members to build their own projects.



Goal 4 - Roadmap to a mature structure

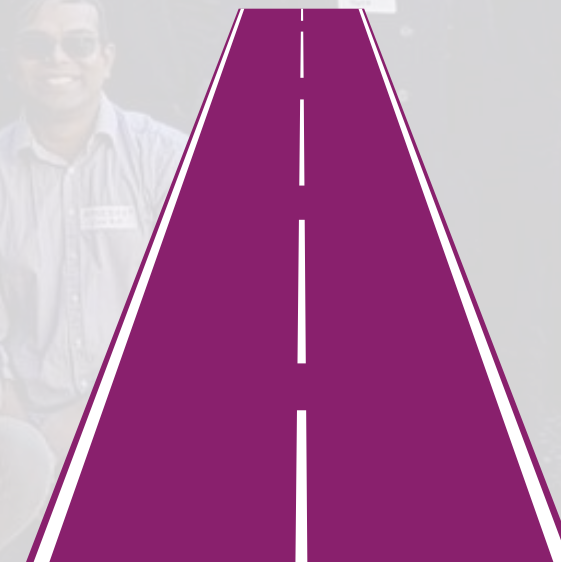
There is a need to mature the RSE community structure in a similar way to other RSE associations around the world. Many have created legal entities that have been able to create a more sustainable community structure.

Selection criteria responses for this goal:

1. This would make RSEs value themselves by providing a more structured and sustainable community structure.
2. This would make decision makers value RSEs by formalising the association and the advocacy it promotes.
3. This could grow the community as we could formalise the benefits of joining the community.
4. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) would could be prioritised by ensuring those from one or more marginalised groups are considered at every step of the review.
5. This can help advocate for RSEs as we could have a more formalised and authoritative voice for the community.

Key results

1. Discover and report on what is needed to establish the association as a legal entity and the pros and cons for the community and for the steering committee.
2. Look into a senior advisory board to provide mentorship and guidance to the steering committee.
3. Look for funding opportunities.



Appendix - List of goals not prioritised

A list of goals that were prioritised but did not make the list are in the spreadsheet "RSE goals compared to the strategic selection criteria" (RSEAA051). A list of all the goals discussed are provided on the image to the right, although not all of them have been prioritised.

This list should be reprioritised by the steering committee before being reviewed by the community. Once this has been reviewed to the community's satisfaction the list of goals can be finalised.

It should be pointed out that individuals could still work on RSE activities that are in the list but have not been prioritised, but the steering committee will not be able to provide oversight.

#RSE	Statement, vision or goal and Key result	RSEs value themselves	Increases recognition of RSEs to decision makers	Grow or sustain community	Support DEI	Raise awareness and Advocacy	Total
RSE001	Create opportunities for the community to come together and raise awareness. Key results: 1. Organise at least 2 RSE conferences in New Zealand and Australia 2. Raise awareness about the RSE community and its activities at least 1 other major event 3. Organise monthly tech talks and incorporate Face-to-face meetings and grow contacts in states and regional areas not yet engaged in AU and NZ	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	10
RSE002	Raise the profile to RSE's within the community . Key Results: 1. Define at least 5 Personas, Profiles, or Personal Stories of the people that form the RSE community 2. Highlight the work of at least 4 RSE's via tech talks	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	▾	8
RSE003	Reporting on and maintaing an active, diverse, sustainable RSE Community. Key results: 1. Clarify the demographic of the RSE mailing list (Organisation, location, career stage of individuals) 2. Review and report of the community	2 - Yes ▾	▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	8
RSE004	Discover and create a roadmap to discuss opportunities for RSE's RSE AUNZ as an association to move towards financial independence to increase opportunities. Key results: 1. Discover and document what the committee would need to establish itself as a legal entity and open a bank account 2. Look into an advisory board of senior positions	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	1 - Kind ▾	0 - No ▾	7
RSE005	Increase awareness of RSE's and continue to grow the community. Key results: 1. Create an Info Pack for local RSE Groups. 2. International RSE survey [Now part of RSE001?]	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	▾	▾	6
RSE006	Be inclusive and Create oportunites for the community to come together. Key results: 1.Run at least 2 Face-to-face Meetings and grow contacts in states and regional areas not yet engaged in AU and NZ [This is now in RSE001]	2 - Yes ▾	▾	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	▾	6
RSE007	Pursue funders to create a (tiered) RSE-AUNZ prize / award	2 - Yes ▾	2 - Yes ▾	1 - Kind of ▾	▾	0 - No ▾	5
RSE008	Write up white paper for Research Software Engineers in Australia	1 - Kind ▾	2 - Yes ▾	0 - No ▾	▾	1 - Kinc ▾	4
RSE009	Publish a Manifesto or Mission Statement.	2 - Yes ▾	▾	2 - Yes ▾	▾	▾	4
RSE010	Write up Capability Maturity Model for developing RSE communities	▾	▾	2 - Yes ▾	▾	2 - Yes ▾	4
RSE011	Define the role of RSEs within the eResearch, Academic, and Professional context.	2 - Yes ▾	▾	▾	▾	▾	2
RSE012	Form a connection between communities: people and organisations.	▾	▾	2 - Yes ▾	▾	▾	2
RSE013	Obtain recognition for RSE-AUNZ (community) and its role.	▾	2 - Yes ▾	▾	▾	▾	2
RSE014	Create a sustainable community. Key results: Establish a permanent Web Presence to be launched at eResearch Australasia 2019.	▾	▾	0 - No ▾	▾	▾	0
RSE015	RSE Fellowships for 5 years	▾	▾	▾	▾	▾	0
RSE016	RSE AUNZ as an authoritative organisation	▾	▾	▾	▾	▾	0
RSE017	RSE Survey	▾	▾	▾	▾	▾	0
RSE018	Advisory board of senior positions [Now part of RSE004]	▾	▾	▾	▾	▾	0

