

Research Software Engineer Asia Australia Unconference Summary Report 2023



Key Partner



Australian Research Data Commons



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**Silos to Synergy - Achieving
collaboration across domains**
13th to 15th September 2023

[10.6084/m9.figshare.24309634](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.24309634)

Allied Partners



Acknowledgement of Country

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

We also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout this continent. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

- Co-chairs Rowland Mosbergen and Saranjeet Kaur

Introduction

The second online Research Software Engineer (RSE) Asia Australia Unconference was from the 13th to the 15th of September 2023. This was a joint partnership between the RSE Asia Association and the RSE Association of Australia and New Zealand.

Feedback was positive with engaging discussions as echoed in this comment from Dr Steven Manos, Associate Director of Cyberinfrastructure at BioCommons:

“We were able to have thoughtful and creative discussions with people representing different disciplines from around the Asia Pacific region. It was great to hear voices we might not come across at more traditional conferences.”

This report is a summary of the proceedings.



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Participants

It was an interactive and enthusiastic set of participants that actively contributed across the three days. During the three days we had:

- 98 participants were registered for the unconference from 13 countries,
- 25 scholarships were provided,
- 7 micro-grants were provided, and
- 9 different community-led sessions including potential actionable items after RSEAA2023.

Feedback was positive and while the number of participants was lower than last year, the engagement and level of discussions throughout the event was still high.



Partnerships

We initiated a partnership program that consisted of 2 tiers, Key Partners and Allied Partners. All the offerings for the partners were provided, including an expo each for the Key Partners. The fact we attracted such high profile partners demonstrated the value of RSEs.

While the idea of an Accessibility Partner was successful last year, we could not find one for the 2023 unconference. However, we were able to provide more accessibility than last year through having more scholarships, more micro-grants, and a live transcription for our keynotes and strategic panel.

Offerings	Key	Allied
Logo, link and info on website	●	●
Logo on welcome slide	●	●
Mention during welcome and closing speeches	●	●
Final report/event wrap-up	●	●
Number of tickets included	5	2
Access to a virtual booth	●	
5 minute introduction to participants	●	
Logo on event emails	●	

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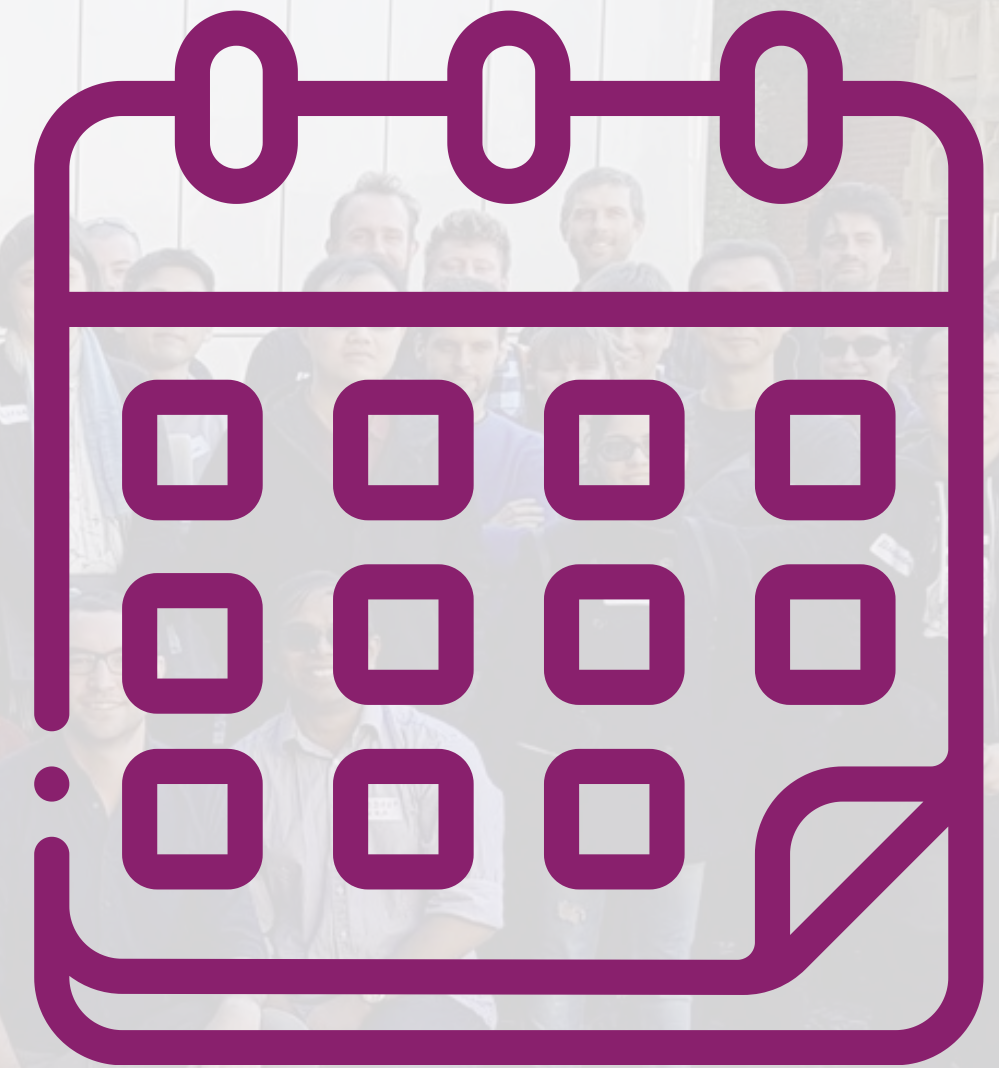
Programme

The programme was organised to accommodate keynotes from different time zones. The schedule can be found on the accessible version of this document and on [the website](#).

Interactivity was a focus across all sessions, as well as ensuring takeaways were written down from every break out session by the groups into the Github discussions themselves.

This year we also created a poster session on day 2. Due to the small number of posters, we allowed each poster submitter to also talk about their poster.

In the end we had 9 community-led sessions across the three days, including the Actionable Items sessions.



Keynote Day 1 - Kiowa Scott-Hurley

Kiowa provided a key point where she highlighted that although she fits into the RSE community she is neither a software engineer or a researcher. She also showed us her career journey as an RSE and where she has seen silos. Her ability to weave her Acknowledgement of Country into the subject of sharing information was masterful and provided a fantastic start to the unconference.

She left us with a question that spoke to the heart of the subject - Are there people that you wish you could be talking to in your organisation?

You can [see Kiowa's keynote on YouTube](#).



Kiowa Scott-Hurley
Early Career HPC and AI
eResearcher, Defence Science
and Technology Group (DSTG)

Keynote Date 2 - Professor Athula Ginige

Athula gave us a glimpse of his long and broad career from starting as a mechanical engineer, working on robots and computer vision all the way to working on Digital Agrifood Ecosystems.

He also talked about how he has developed a meta-model for Business applications called a Component Based EBusiness Application Development and Deployment Shell; CBEADS. One of the interesting things was how to use CBEADS to develop a Minimum Viable Product for rapid prototyping.

He also introduced us to his startup Widya, to help create a better life for smallholder farmers that also has a technology platform to share knowledge across multiple stakeholders.



Prof Athula Ginige
CEO of Widya & Professor of
Information Technology
Western Sydney University

You can [see Athula's keynote on YouTube](#).

Strategy & Policy Panel

On day 3 we had the Strategy & Policy Panel, chaired by Nooriyah Lohani from NeSI. The panelists were:

- Dr Manodeep Sinha RSE-AUNZ Co-Chair,
- Saranjeet Kaur RSE Asia Founder,
- Professor Wai Yie Leong Vice President INWES,
- Professor Melanie Johnston-Hollitt Director of CIDS.

Some points made included that it is fantastic that the conversation is happening around career development, that there is momentum building worldwide, and by centralising RSEs across an organisation it makes it easier to get critical mass and raise issues around career progression.

This [recording of the Strategy and Policy panel](#) is available on [YouTube](#).



Prof Leong
Vice President, INWES



Prof Johnston-Hollitt
Director CIDS



Dr Manodeep Sinha
RSE-AUNZ Co-Chair



Saranjeet Kaur
RSE Asia Founder

Actionable Items

On the final day, we had a session for Actionable Items. This was a chance for the community to voice their opinions on what they would like to see.

The top actionable item was to do the unconference again next year, with an RSE team leader workshop or event, collate a central list of training resources for RSEs, and identify practical next steps to improve visibility of software created by RSEs, also being highly ranked.

All the items were added to the [GitHub discussion item that you can read here.](#)



