



National Environmental Science Program

# Communication strategy

National Environmental Science Program  
Climate Systems Hub



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## Document control

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## Climate Systems Hub communication strategy

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Reason for change</b>
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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Climate Systems Hub recognises and acknowledges First Nations people across the length and breadth of Australia land and sea country and their ongoing connection to Country.

The Climate Systems Hub pay respect and acknowledgement to Elders past and present, as knowledge holders and keepers.

The Climate Systems Hub pay respect and acknowledgement to senior community leaders of their Country and communities.

# Background

The Climate System Hub was established in 2020-21 under phase 2 of the Australian Government's National Environmental Science Program (NESP). It is one of four research hubs under the second phase of NESP.

The Climate Systems Hub will provide research to advance the understanding of Australia's climate, its extremes and associated drivers. This research will directly inform climate adaptation solutions for Australia.

The Climate Systems Hub will build on and enhance the research and engagement activities undertaken by the Earth Systems and Climate Change Hub, which was funded under phase 1 of NESP.

The Climate Systems Hub will:

- Maintain Australia's world-class capability in multidisciplinary Earth-system science and modelling;
- advance understanding of Australia's climate variability, extremes, and associated drivers, including the fundamental drivers of bushfires, drought, and rainfall in the Australian region; and
- develop applied decision-making tools and information to inform policy and programs to prepare Australia to manage emerging risks and opportunities.

The Climate Systems Hub has a multi-pronged vision of enhancing national climate resilience, co-designing research to meet user needs, facilitating strong and lasting Indigenous partnerships, and driving cross-NESP climate adaptation research.

## Enhanced national climate resilience

The Climate Systems Hub aims to help shape national climate resilience by building a climate research program with practical on-ground results, integrated across broader risk and resilience initiatives for Australia. The hub provides an opportunity to further develop Australia's climate science capability while working directly with adaptation practitioners.

## Co-designed research to meet user needs

The Climate Systems Hub will encourage strong, continued and embedded co-design between researchers, practitioners, Indigenous Australians, data-users, and decision-makers to establish collaborative partnerships and ensure our science directly informs decisions, policies, and adaptation responses.

## Indigenous partnerships

The Climate Systems Hub values and commits to strong, lasting, and respectful partnerships with Indigenous Australians. These engagements encompass principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent and Indigenous-led and co-designed protocols. By enabling the integration of modern science and traditional culture and knowledge, the hub aims to facilitate the provision of all communities with knowledge to protect Country in the face of climate change.

## Drive cross-NESP climate adaptation research

The Climate Systems Hub will drive and undertake coordinated research across all four of the new NESP hubs through the cross-cutting Climate Adaptation Initiative. The initiative will enable integrated adaptation research across the program to support evidence-based decision-making and improve Australia's climate resilience.

## About this document

This communication strategy outlines:

- The rationale behind the hub's communication activities (why?) (Read more in Communication strategy aims)
- Key stakeholders and target audiences (who?) (Read more in Audiences)
- Objectives, key messages and products (what?) (Read more in Communication approach)
- Communications channels, activities, services and support (how?) (Read more in Key communication activities and methods).

Along with the hub's knowledge brokering and Indigenous partnership strategies, this communications strategy supports the activities outlined in the hub's Research Plan, which more broadly incorporates overarching Climate Systems Hub governance arrangements, including the data management strategy. These governance documents can be found on the hub's website at [www.nesp2climate.com.au](http://www.nesp2climate.com.au).

# Communication strategy aims

The purpose of the communications and media function is to promote the researchers, research activities, outputs and findings of the hub and build an audience of decision makers, researchers and end-users applying hub research.

The Climate Systems Hub communications strategy aims to:

- Provide the scope and key activities of the communications and media team
- Identify key audience groups
- Guide the development of a strategic, proactive communications plan and process based on research to ensure communications outputs that are accurate, of a high standard, consistent and meet the information needs of end users
- Promote growth and engagement of the hub's audience and the take-up of research and communications outputs
- Ensure communications support of the hub leadership and experts
- Facilitate development and management of productive stakeholder relationships
- Support a strong working relationship with the department
- Ensure the hub's operational risks are managed
- Ensure ongoing best practice and improvement of communications.

## Communications and media team

The communications and media team will consist of a Senior Communications Advisor seconded from CSIRO and a Communication and Media Officer based at Australian National University.

The communications and media team will lead the development and delivery of the communications strategy and content plan. Both staff will work closely with the hub leadership, knowledge brokering team, the Indigenous facilitator and researchers to deliver fit-for-purpose research and communication products. Together they will ensure knowledge generated by the hub is targeted to meet the needs of users and to ensure maximum uptake of this knowledge by Australian decision-makers.

The communications and media team will work with hub staff and stakeholders including:

- Hub project management team
- Project leads
- Knowledge brokers
- Researchers
- DCCEEW NESP communications team
- Partner agency communications teams
- Media
- Web designers
- Graphic designers
- Conference organisers



## Audiences

The Climate Systems Hub supports research, knowledge delivery and decision support relevant to a wide range of organisations where co-design is integral. Our audience includes people and organisations who:

- initiate and shape our program (government stakeholders)
- participate in research activities
- use our research
- inform, participate and/or benefit from the hub's activities
- are affected or influenced by the outcomes of decisions, policy, and practice of the hub, but are a secondary audience to our work.

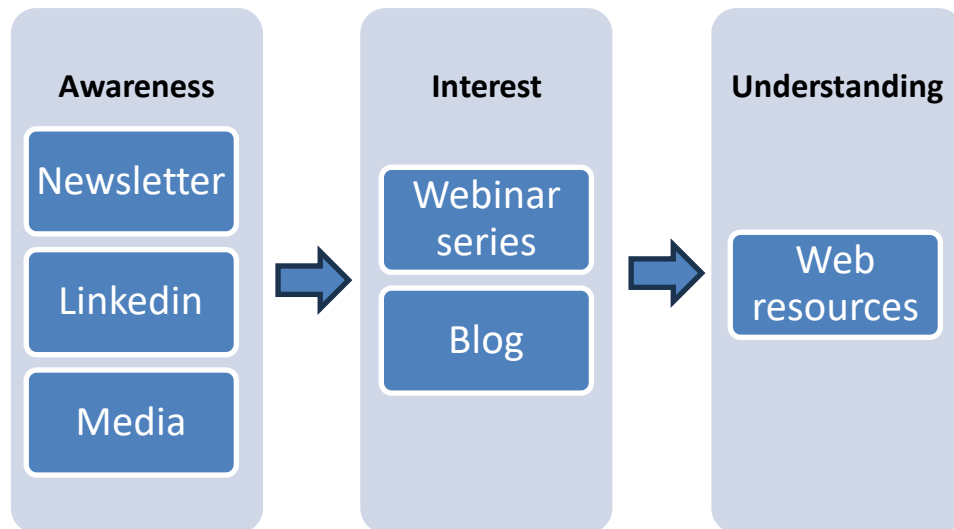
**Table 1: Hub audiences**

<b>Government stakeholders</b>	<b>Primary audience</b>	<b>Secondary audience</b>
<p><b>Ministers' offices</b>            Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.            Department of Industry, Science and Resources            Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</p> <p><b>Other portfolio agencies</b>            Bureau of Meteorology            Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority            Murray-Darling Basin Authority</p> <p><b>State and territory governments,</b>            Department of Environment and Science, Queensland            Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, New South Wales            Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Victoria            Department for Environment and Water, South Australia            Department of Water and Environmental Regulation            Environment Departments in other states and territories.</p> <p><b>Natural resource management regional manager</b>            Natural Resource Management Regional Organisations</p>	<p><b>Research organisations, scientists and researchers</b>            Other NESP Hubs            Universities            CSIRO            ARC Centre of Excellence in Climate Extremes            Australian Climate Service            Australian Antarctic Program Partnership            Indigenous land and sea managers</p> <p><b>Industry</b> including environmental, agricultural and/or financial sectors</p> <p><b>Local governments</b> and those undertaking climate adaptation planning</p> <p><b>General public</b> and media outlets</p>	<p><b>Environment non-government organisations (NGOs)</b>  <b>Other portfolio ministers</b></p>

# Communication approach

The hub's communication strategy is based on an editorial approach to regular communication activities.

High quality, engaging and timely web content will be central to the editorial approach, promoted via the hub's external newsletter, social media, webinars and media engagement.



The communications and media team will contribute to and promote regular activities and outputs to raise awareness about the hub and its priorities, research activities and findings. This will include web resources (fact sheets, explainers, reports), webinars, seminars, workshops and events support including the National First People's Gathering on Climate Change and the national Climate Adaptation conference.

The hub's communications and media team will:

- Develop processes to ensure communications outputs that are accurate, of a high standard, scientifically robust, consistent and meet the information needs of end users.
- Develop an editorial content plan and social media plan based on agreed priorities and research products/outcomes.
- Work with researchers, knowledge brokers and hub leaders to ensure timely publication of clear and accurate research products targeted to the needs of end-users and stakeholders.
- Liaise with the hub knowledge brokers, adaptation initiative lead, data wrangler and Indigenous facilitator to ensure the knowledge generated by the hub is secure, discoverable, accessible, and meets agreed standards of quality assurance and control. (See the data management plan for further details).
- Contribute to the development and delivery of a regular webinar series highlighting hub research, researchers and end-users.
- Support research activities such as seminars, workshops and conferences.
- Work with the hub knowledge brokers to develop and manage key stakeholder relationships and, where appropriate, partnerships to ensure that communication and knowledge brokering activities are strategic and facilitate the adoption and realisation of hub outcomes and impacts. (See the knowledge broker plan for further details).

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- Liaise with the department and coordinate the hub's contribution to the department's communication activities (such as *NESP News*); adhere to the submission process, ensure hub activities are communicated, and advice or feedback is adequately incorporated.
- Seek involvement of portfolio ministers, the minister's representative or a department representative in communication events.
- Ensure communication processes, policies and procedures are clearly labelled, easy to access and regularly reviewed for currency.

# Key communication activities and methods

A range of research products will be a key deliverable of the hub. The communications and media team will work with the KB team, project leads and researchers to deliver or contribute to the following:

**Table 2 Climate Systems Hub research outputs and activities**

<b>A. General communication activities</b>
Communications campaigns and publications including summary reports, explainers, brochures, fact sheets, videos, webinars, animations, media releases or infographics.
<b>B. Science/technical communication activities</b>
Technical reports and webinars.
<b>C. Meetings, briefings and events</b>
Workshops and regular meetings for and within the hub including with project leaders, project teams and other key stakeholders. Conferences, seminars, webinars and workshops to facilitate communication of research outputs to target next/end-users and for gaining critical feedback. Networking and professional development events for young professionals and early career scientists.
<b>D. Information management and sharing</b>
Support projects to make information and data available through engagement of graphic design services and/or science writers, web publishing and co-development of visualisation products.

The priority of the communications and media team will be to develop an editorial strategy and communications process to promote the above and hub expertise through the following communications activities:

**Table 3 Climate Systems Hub key communication activities**

<b>A. Website content</b>
Regular blogs highlighting research priorities, profiling researchers and responding to climate change issues, using strong imagery, infographics and quality content. Improvements to the website navigation, SEO and accessibility to ensure it serves as an easy-to-use repository of hub outputs.
<b>B. Social media content</b>
As LinkedIn is the primary social media platform of the hub's target audiences, we will develop a monthly social media plan with engaging content to drive traffic to the website, promote our researchers and partner organisations (eg other NESP hubs), research outputs, blogs, webinar series, events and more.  The LinkedIn content strategy includes a range of engagement tactics such as interactive content (eg polls, posing questions), behind the scenes (eg fieldwork, conference set up) and showcasing our researchers.
<b>C. External hub newsletter (<i>Climate Systems Hub News</i>)</b>
The editorial content strategy supports a monthly external newsletter to be distributed in the first week of the month and promoted on social media channels. The newsletter will be a key avenue to provide privileged insights from hub leaders via the editorial, promote the webinar series, drive traffic to blog content and resources on the website and share other news and events.
<b>D. Internal newsletter</b>

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<p>The monthly internal newsletter is a forum to share events and research outcomes, provide leadership to the dispersed hub team and develop a community of practice.</p>
<p><b>E. The department's <i>NESP News</i></b></p>
<p>The bi-monthly contribution to the <i>NESP News</i> is an opportunity to highlight standout hub news, activities or research outcomes with strong imagery.</p>
<p><b>F. Support events, networks and engagement activities</b></p>
<p>Provide support for researchers presenting at hub events and external events. Support ranges from assisting with presentations to promotion leading up to, during and after events.</p>
<p><b>G. Research product templates</b></p>
<p>Work with graphic designers to update design templates that are easy to use and create a suite of materials that is visually distinctive, consistent and attractive.</p>
<p><b>H. Media engagement &amp; management</b></p>
<p>Provide research briefs to environmental and science communication journalists within Australian news outlets where possible and identify and implement proactive media opportunities. The communications and media team will also provide advice to hub leadership and researchers to manage the hub brand and mitigate any reputational risk.</p>
<p><b>I. Monitor, evaluate and report</b></p>
<p>The communications and media team will monitor and evaluate communications activities and metrics to identify ways to grow the audience and develop best practice. The team will also generate regular reports for DECEEW and provide editorial and production support for major hub reports including annual reports and the Hub Synthesis Report.</p>

# Communication protocols

- Decisions about messaging will take place in close consultation with the hub leadership, initiative lead, hub knowledge brokering team and the Indigenous facilitator.
- Only identified spokespeople should speak on behalf of the hub.
- The media and communication team should be notified of any upcoming media engagement and shall inform the department liaison in a timely manner.
- All publications and communication materials must be reviewed and approved by the hub leader or delegate prior to release. Social media promotion of hub publications/materials will not require hub leader approval, but will require hub leader notification when published.
- The hub's knowledge brokering team should be consulted on all relevant research products to ensure their relevance to end users.
- A summary of all relevant publications and communication materials must be supplied to the hub program management team.
- Most publications and communication/media products, excluding website pages, blogs and social media posts, must be cleared by the department prior to release. As a result, clearance timelines should be built into the delivery of all products, with the department requiring 10 working days to review and approve products (as per the [NESP data and information guidelines](#)).
- All hub communication products must be publicly accessible. Products should be made available through the hub's website, where appropriate.
- All stakeholder engagement, knowledge brokering and communication activities and materials must adhere to the [NESP Brand Standards](#) (such as the *Climate Systems Hub Brand Guidelines*) to ensure a consistent and professional view of the hub is presented.

## Acknowledgment of NESP

Support from the Australian Government must be acknowledged in all research outputs, including data, publications, presentations, promotional and advertising material etc. The below is an excerpt from the *NESP brand standards*.

To acknowledge Australian Government funding, hubs must use one of the following funding acknowledgement statements:

- The Climate Systems Hub is funded by the Australian Government under the National Environmental Science Program.
- This project is supported with funding from the Australian Government under the National Environmental Science Program.
- This project is jointly funded by [insert organisation/program name] and the Australian Government under the National Environmental Science Program.

# Key messages and themes

The Climate Systems Hub's key messages emphasise our science, collaboration and impact. These messages serve as standalone statements about the hub's drivers and direction and can also contribute to more detailed communication products and activities.

**Table 4. Climate Systems Hub key messages**

Topic	Message
Collaboration	The Climate Systems Hub brings together researchers from Australia's world-leading science agencies and universities. We work in collaboration with other climate initiatives around Australia. This unique collaboration ensures that Australia has the best possible climate change science to inform policy and decision making.
Indigenous Knowledge	NESP research listens to and prioritises the research needs of Indigenous land and sea managers, weaves together Indigenous and western environmental knowledge systems and celebrates Indigenous-led approaches to strengthening and sharing knowledge.
Value proposition	The challenges of climate change are already upon us in Australia, and in some cases are unique to us. Our role is to arm Australia with the best available information about its emerging climate and support efforts in adaptation, mitigation and risk management.
Risk management	Climate change science provides an evidence basis for identifying and managing climate-related risk. Understanding climate change, climate variability and their impacts is essential for determining future risk exposure and the possible consequences, and exploring ways for building resilience.
Climate adaptation	Climate adaptation means adjusting what we do, how we think and even social values in response to actual or expected changes in the climate. It is an ongoing process with no 'right' answers, that requires access to best-available information and data in formats decision-makers can use.
Science informing services	Decision makers need credible, useful and accessible scientific information to deal with a changing climate. An important role for the hub is translating our world-leading science into practical, actionable information that decision makers can trust. Our co-design process ensures decision makers have confidence they have been provided with reliable and credible information suiting their requirements in climate adaptation planning, disaster risk management and associated assessments.
Climate change services	Science-based climate data, information and associated products and services are relevant over multi-decadal/climate change timescales. The hub is a key national platform for development and delivery of climate change services, and for facilitating national level coordination across relevant service providers.
Water resources and hydroclimate	In a changing climate water availability and quality are likely to be affected by changing rainfall patterns and more frequent and/or severe droughts. We are improving our understanding of climate variability and other processes that affect water availability to inform effective water resources planning, management and infrastructure investment.
Food security, ecosystems and national resource management	Primary industries and the environment are vulnerable to rising temperature, changes in rainfall and other changes in climate. We are improving our ability to provide primary producers, resource managers and ecosystem managers with information at the timescales needed for effective decision making and planning.

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Carbon	Limiting future global climate change requires substantial and sustained reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions. We are improving our understanding of past emissions and predicting future changes to inform mitigation policy responses and help us determine the best way to manage the carbon budget.
Coastal hazards	Most of Australia's population and infrastructure is in the coastal zone. In a changing climate this zone is vulnerable to rising sea levels and more frequent and extreme storms. We are improving our understanding of coastal and climate processes, so planners, developers and decision makers have the information they need to minimise risks and respond to unavoidable impacts.
Extremes and disaster risk management	Extreme events such as bushfires, floods and storms are a feature of Australia's variable climate. In a changing climate, these events are likely to become more severe and/or frequent. We are improving our understanding of how extreme events will change in the future, so disaster risk managers have better quality information for planning responses to these events.
Climate models	Australia's national climate model, ACCESS, is an important tool for helping us to understand our past, current and future climate. Ongoing development of ACCESS, underpinned by research to better understand the components of the climate and carbon system, will ensure that Australia's climate modelling capability and carbon budgeting remains world-class and that we have the best available tools for planning for Australia's unique climate and landscape conditions in the future.
Climate projections	The climate we experienced in the past is no longer a reliable indicator of the climate we will experience in the future. Climate projections narrow down the range of possible future climate conditions, so we can make management, policy and adaptation decisions accordingly.



# Risks

Number	Potential risk	Risk treatment strategies	Relevant sections of this plan
1	Failure to meet milestones and deliverables.	Monthly communications team meetings. Monthly hub management team meeting, including DCCEE representative in attendance.	Communication approach / guiding principles
2	Outputs of hub fail to meet stakeholder needs or are not fit for purpose.	Co-design process and stakeholder engagement. Work with knowledge brokers as per the hub's knowledge brokering strategy	Communication approach / guiding principles
3	Reputational risk due to inappropriate communication of research and/or related policies.	Clear guidance to hub staff on public comment policy. Clearly defined and trained spoke persons to speak on behalf of the hub. A clear understanding built amongst hub researchers and staff on appropriate commentary with regards to policy topics. Communication and media activities and products cleared through the Department Awareness of the sensitivities to climate anxiety and fear – and provide optimism where appropriate. Ensure communication with complex data is clearly articulated to minimise misrepresentation or misuse.	Communication approach / guiding principles
	Staff turnover	Important processes, policies and procedures clearly labelled, easy to access and regularly reviewed for currency.	Communications approach

# Monitoring and evaluation

The hub has invested in a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) program that engages external evaluation expertise.

Monitoring and evaluation will seek to assess the Hub's activities for the following characteristics:

- Effectiveness – does the program meet its intended outcome? Are project activities being performed as per contractual obligations (for example, meeting timelines and standards expected)?
- Efficiency – is the method and approach of the program the most efficient or cost-effective approach? Are there alternative approaches that might meet the program outcomes which are more resource effective? Is the approach achievable within the life of the program?
- Appropriateness – is the program (as designed) appropriate and needed by stakeholders, and will it meet its objectives?
- Impact – what is the impact of the program? For example, are stakeholders changing their behaviour and/or practice?
- Legacy – will the program foster long-term investment and use of the program outputs (for example, is there learning happening, by whom and how?).

The Climate Systems Hub has developed a M&E Framework that incorporates a program logic. The Framework describes what the Hub aims to achieve, by whom, how and when; define performance measures and develop methods of measurement.

Hub communication activities should be continually monitored and evaluated, as well as reporting every 12 months via the hub's annual report (see table 5).

**Table 5 Metrics used to monitor communication activities**

Measure	Metric
Reach	Media coverage -- size of audience Social media reach number of likes, shares, retweets and other visible metrics External hub newsletter subscription numbers
Advocacy	Mentions or referrals by research organisations
Satisfaction	Hub sentiment Media and social media sentiment Feedback from hub liaison staff Annual and mid-program review
Behaviour	Research citations Research partnerships Social media engagement External newsletter engagement

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<b>Measure</b>	<b>Metric</b>
Engagement and uptake	Feedback from end-users External hub newsletter click-throughs Webinar attendance rate Mid-program review survey (Have Your Say)

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## Related materials

The following related materials provide guidance for the development of your communication strategy and are available on the internet or have been provided to hubs:

[Australian Government branding – guidelines on the use of the Australian Government logo by Australian government departments and agencies](#)

[Australian Government public data policy statement](#)

[Australian Government style manual](#)

[Australia's science and research priorities](#)

[NRM monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement \(MERI\) framework](#)

*NESP brand standards* (provided to hubs)

*NESP data and information guidelines* (provided to hubs)

[NESP grant opportunity guidelines](#)

*NESP Indigenous partnerships principles* (provided to hubs)

*NESP knowledge brokering and communications strategy* (provided to hubs)

[Our knowledge, our way in caring for Country: Indigenous-led approaches to strengthening and sharing knowledge for land and sea management](#)

*Three-category approach workbook* ([further information](#)).

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the:

*National Environmental Science Program knowledge brokering and communications strategy*

*Climate Systems Hub data management strategy*

*Climate Systems Hub Indigenous partnerships strategy*

*Climate Systems Hub knowledge brokering strategy.*