Invitation to Tender: Professional Conference Organiser

For the Australian Hydrogen Research Conference (AHRC)
to be held in Melbourne week of 9 February 2026

The Australian Hydrogen Research Network (AHRN) is seeking a professional conference organising company (PCO) to organise and manage its upcoming conference, the Australian Hydrogen Research Conference (AHRC) 2026. A conference organising committee comprising research leaders from CSIRO and Monash University has already been assembled. The conference will take place within the week of 9 February 2026 (date yet to be confirmed) in Melbourne at a CBD location (such as the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)) and is expected to attract around 350 delegates.

1. **Objective of the Conference:**

   - To bring together scientists and engineers working in hydrogen energy science and technology to discuss and disseminate information on hydrogen production, distribution and storage, utilisation, and cross-cutting themes (such as policy and regulation, safety, economics, environmental and social science).
   - The conference is to include inbound visits to Australia from eminent international research leaders as keynote and plenary speakers.
   - The conference will provide high level plenary overviews of research in the field, along with specialised keynote presentations, parallel invited speaker sessions, discussion panels and poster sessions.
   - Description of associations/international groups that are expected to be involved include CSIRO, Australian Universities, industry, Federal and State government departments.
   - Numbers of papers expected: 100 – 200.
   - Number of invited speakers: up to 25, including international speakers.
   - A small trade exhibition: up to 10 booths.
   - Obtain conference sponsorship from industry, government and research institutions.

2. **Time Frame for Tender Process**

   - Invitations to tender issued   31 Jan 25
   - Closing date/time for tender submission   9am 17 Feb 25
   - Consideration of tenders by organising committee and AHRN   19-21 Feb 25
   - Announcement of decision (subject to contract negotiation)   28 Feb 25

3. **Lodgement of Tender**

Electronic submissions should be forwarded by the closing date (9am 17th Feb 2025) to:

Ms Wendy Bloom
CSIRO Hydrogen Industry Mission
Tel: 0472 822 529
Email: Hydrogen_Mission@csiro.au

4. Enquiries

Requests for further information or clarification of requirements may also be directed to the Hydrogen Industry Mission email address (above).

5. Conference Name, Venue and Date

The conference is to be known as the Australian Hydrogen Research Conference 2026 (AHRC 2026). It is to be held in Melbourne the week of 9 February 2026 (TBC).

6. Contracting Organisation

The contracting organisation is the Australian Hydrogen Research Network, and the organising committee will be led by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Monash University.

7. Brief History of the Conference

This is the third conference to be held focused mainly on hydrogen research conducted in Australia.

It has been preceded by the following AHRN conferences:

- Australian Hydrogen Research Conference 2023 (held in Canberra at ANU)
- Australian Hydrogen Research Conference 2024 (held in Perth at the Ritz-Carlton)

8. Expected Attendance

The Conference expects to attract approximately 350 delegates and 5-10 exhibiting companies.

9. Conference Format

Although the format at this stage should be regarded as flexible, the following may be used as an indicative guideline for tender purposes:

- Number of days of conference: 3 full days.
- Number of days of exhibition: 2 or 3 full days.
- Usual social functions: Welcome Reception, Opening Ceremony, Poster session, Conference Gala Dinner.
- Program: 3 panel sessions and up to 100 papers in 3-4 concurrent sessions.
- Size and number of posters: up to 100 (1.8 x 1.2 m).
- A research tour / site visit will also be attached to the conference.

Suggested conference overview program:

> **Day Zero**
> Registration
> Research tour / site visit
> Evening welcome reception
> Exhibition

Day One
Registration
Opening Ceremony followed by Morning Plenary & Keynote speakers (single combined session)
Morning Tea
Split into 3 Parallel speaker / panel sessions (1 before lunch, 2 in afternoon sessions)
Evening poster session with drinks and finger food
Exhibition

Day Two
Morning Plenary & Keynote speakers (single combined session)
Morning Tea
Split into 3 Parallel speaker / panel sessions (1 before lunch, 2 in afternoon sessions)
Gala Dinner

Day Three
Registration
Plenary / Keynote speakers
2 x3 Parallel sessions, conference close before afternoon tea

10. Organising Committee

A conference organizing committee has been established, led by CSIRO and Monash University as follows:

Chair Dr Patrick Hartley, CSIRO
Conference co-chair: TBC Monash University
Treasurer & Sponsorship Dr. Karen Kozielski, CSIRO
Convener, Ms. Wendy Bloom, CSIRO
Program Committee Lead, Dr. Daniel Lane, CSIRO
Communications Manager, Mrs. Claire Jordan-Peters, CSIRO
Prof. Paul Webley, Monash University
Assoc.Prof. Stuart Walsh, Monash University
Dr. Tom Hughes, Monash University
Dr. Chang Wang, Monash University
Dr. Andrew Dicks, AHRN.

In addition, other local committee members (exhibition, sponsorship, site tours etc.) will be appointed.

11. Services of the PCO

PCO's are invited to provide a tender proposal for the provision of the following services. This list is not necessarily exhaustive, and tenderers are welcome to incorporate additional services as they believe would be required for the successful organisation of this conference.

Where the tenderer would subcontract service(s) this MUST be clearly stated.

Event Planning and Project Management

      a. <u>Venue</u>

- Oversee and negotiate venue pricing.
- Work with the chosen venue to prepare a detailed proposal, which includes all venue costs such as room hire, food and beverage prices, menus and any other relevant costs for the organising committee including details such as:
    - Main event room set up
    - Break out rooms set up
    - Program and timing
    - Speaker's requirements
    - All food and beverage requirements
    - Stage sets and audiovisual requirements
    - Preparation of a detailed run sheet

      b. <u>Promotion</u>

- All activities set out below must be approved by the communications manager and/or chair of the organising committee.
- Select a graphic designer, printer and web designer.
- Co-ordinate the design and production of conference signage.
- In consultation with the organising committee, arrange all conference stationery, VIP speakers' gifts, satchels, notebooks, pens, etc.
- Arrange all printing and supply of promotional material at best market prices.
- Make use of databases from past AHRC's for promotion of AHRC 2026.
- Develop a public relations and media liaison strategy.

      c. <u>Event Insurance</u>

- Arrange event insurance that provides cover for liabilities and damages that may arise from this event. It should include public liability, personal injury, property damage and business interruption insurance.

      d. <u>Conference Website and Payment System</u>

- Establish delegate registration and payment system with associated database via a conference website.
- Facilitate a call for papers via conference website.
- Establish communication system to track and inform delegates of conference progress and specific details of registration (e.g. tours, accommodation etc).
- Establish and maintain an event mailing address list, including telephone numbers, that is available to AHRN during and after conclusion of the conference.
- Provide for on-site registration of late delegates.
- Provide information and requests for assistance with visas for overseas delegates.
- Facilitate invited and plenary speaker attendance at the conference including travel and accommodation.
- Supply of delegate name badges.

e. Budgeting and Financial Management

- Produce, manage and maintain an event budget (via appropriate software), which incorporates all costs and revenues associated with the conference and provide updates at all conference organising committee meetings.
- Arrange conference account to manage conference funds, including supplier payments and collection of registration fees and sponsorship/exhibition revenues.

f. Project Management in Collaboration with Conference Organising Committee

- The primary responsibilities of the organising committee are program development and decision making based on recommendations of the PCO.
- PCO to establish a dedicated conference management team (consisting typically of a conference task manager and conference assistant to carry out day-to-day tasks).
- Construct and maintain a project plan, detailing major activities, timelines, milestones etc. for discussion at regular meetings with the organising committee.
- Arrange regular meetings with the organising committee to prepare agendas, keep and distribute meeting minutes and prepare all necessary correspondence.
- Keep a complete set of records.

g. Program Development and Paper Submission System

- Liaise closely with the organising committee on the development of the program outline, invited speakers, tours and social program.
- Ensure that the venue operators and audio-visual contractors are aware of the details of the program and that they can provide all rooms and AV facilities required for the successful execution of this program.
- Arrange transport between the symposium accommodation options, symposium venue(s) and any social functions, as required.
- Set up an online abstract submission site and monitor the submission of abstracts for invited paper, workshop and poster presentations.
- Allocate abstracts to reviewers to grade abstracts online and provide the necessary reports required for the final program compilation.
- Send correspondence to all submitters advising of acceptance of oral presentation or poster (or decline).
- Keep presenters up to date with regular correspondence regarding key dates.
- Confirmation to all confirmed invited presenters with timelines for return of abstracts, biographies, travel plans, etc and liaise with all confirmed presenters regarding audio-visual requirements.

h. Exhibition / Sponsorship

- Work closely with conference organising committee to attract and approve sponsors, avoid sensitivities, issue invoices etc.
- In consultation with the organising committee, prepare a prospectus for exhibitor and sponsor invitations and a marketing plan showing how exhibition / sponsorship income can be achieved.
- Coordination of all sponsorship agreements.
- Provide a full range of exhibition management services including sourcing of booths etc. from an exhibition hire company and liaison with the venue.

i. Accommodation

- Negotiate favourable group accommodation rates with hotels in proximity of the venue that provide delegates with a range of prices.
- Arrange travel and accommodation bookings for invited speakers and VIPs.

Conference Onsite Management

j. Onsite Event Support During Conference

- Provide registration and welcome services support, onsite registration, badge collection, welcome and information desk management, distribution of conference materials.
- Provide logistical support, venue management and coordination, audio visual and technical support, room set up and layout management, catering and hospitality management.
- Provide exhibition and sponsorship support including exhibition set up and management.
- Provide onsite signage and conference evaluation and feedback mechanisms.
- Ensure catering and room set up requirements are checked and running on time.

Post Event

- Financial reconciliation.
- Delivery of surplus funds to AHRN.
- Provide a final financial outcome report after the AHRC 2026.
- Collation of the conference proceedings (multipage papers) for hosting on the conference website for a period some months after the conference concludes.

Additional Information to Include in Tender Proposal

- PCO fees and fee structure. Any PCO commissions must be disclosed to the organising committee.
- Additional PCO expenses not captured above.
- Up to 3 references from recent conference organisers.
- While the dates remain flexible, confirmation that the PCO can meet the indicative timelines set out by the conference organising committee:

Milestone	Anticipated Date	Comments
Engagement of PCO	28th Feb 25	ASAP
Contracting with PCO	14th Mar 25	ASAP
Venue selected	28th Mar 25	ASAP
Budget endorsed by AHRN	11th Apr 25	ASAP
Sponsorship schedule available	11th Apr 25	ASAP
Website operating	11th Apr 25	Allow a week for offline testing
Call for abstracts open	5th May 25	Drive interest before EOFY
Registration open	12th May 25	Allows use of FY25 funds
Abstracts close	4th Aug 25	Allow 6 weeks to finalise sci prog
Presenters informed	15th Sept 25	Need to finalise travel pre-Xmas
Sponsorship invoices issued	15th Sept 25	Need to finalise funds pre-Xmas
Earlybird registration closes	TBC	Suggest end of July or Aug
Conference registration closes	TBC	
Conference event	WC 9th Feb TBC	Avoid other significant calendar events