

Professor Ashish Sharma, University of New South Wales, Sydney, AUSTRALIA
<https://www.unsw.edu.au/staff/ashish-sharma>

Mission Statement

As President-Elect and President of the Hydrological Sciences (HS) section of the Asia-Oceania Geosciences Society (AOGS), my goal is to nurture and empower the next generation of researchers, building on my experience of mentoring 43 PhD graduates, many of whom now hold senior academic and research positions globally. I aim to foster a vibrant and supportive research community, focusing on Early-Career Researchers (ECRs) across the AOGS network through the following initiatives:

1. **Pre-Meeting Symposium:** I plan to introduce a pre-meeting symposium at every AOGS meeting in Singapore. This symposium will bring together select research leaders and ECRs in an intimate, interactive format, allowing for in-depth discussions and learning opportunities. Modelled after successful symposia at EGU and AGU, this event will provide a platform for both presenting and mentoring in a more focused environment. Following the successful trial at the AOGS meeting in Pyeongchang, I am confident this can become a signature feature of our section.
2. **ECR Buddy System:** A key initiative will be the creation of a year-round buddy system, pairing PhD students with experienced researchers from different AOGS member countries. This program will foster long-term mentorship and cross-cultural collaboration, helping ECRs build confidence and expand their professional networks beyond the annual meetings.
3. **ECR Presentation Competitions:** Many ECRs excel in research but lack confidence in public speaking and presentation. To address this, I propose an ECR competition focused on communication skills. Participants will submit a video and an illustrative presentation as part of their meeting registration, allowing them to showcase their ability to convey complex ideas in an engaging manner. This initiative will spotlight an often-overlooked yet critical aspect of academic success—effective communication.

In addition to these initiatives, I am committed to supporting ECRs from regions with limited research opportunities. By offering lectures at key institutions in these countries and establishing recognition awards, I hope to motivate and inspire the next generation of scientists who will help change the research profile for the countries they represent.

While these efforts will initially focus on the HS section, my vision is to expand successful programs to other AOGS sections. Ultimately, I aspire to cultivate a community of confident, articulate ECRs who will lead the future of geosciences research not just for Asia-Oceania, but the entire world.