

Hybrid meetings after COVID?

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If you have skills in video, sound engineering, electronics, streaming, maybe even Raspberry Pi, or related areas, this is very much for you.

Nobody knows when this COVID thing will totally go away. I hope we can revert to physical attendance sooner rather than later, especially as we had been working so hard to transform the club rooms into something more attractive to young potential new members. But I fear some restrictions could be with us for quite some time, possibly well into 2021. Even after the restrictions are lifted there may be many members who through age or medical vulnerability prefer to avoid large gatherings for a long time.

One thing that has come out of this, though, is the online meetings. These have clearly made it easier for people to attend meetings, even though the social aspect is reduced. I see that as an opportunity to rethink some aspects of how the club operates.

The question in my mind right now is can we create a SIG meeting framework that provides for people to be physically present as well as online e-tendees? That would cater for members who can't go out at night, or live too far away, or simply want to enjoy SIG meetings from the comfort of their own reclining chair. It will also make it easier to market the club to prospective new members.

Can we find a way to hold hybrid meetings, where some members are in the meeting room and others are in their living rooms? Is there some technological setup that is inexpensive and simple to operate, so we can afford to equip all SIGs and it doesn't generate too much work for their volunteers?

Do we have people who are willing to help make something like that happen?

I won't propose solutions, I don't want to colour the discussion. But as far as I am concerned everything should be on the table. We have an amazing collection of skill-sets in our club; let's see if we can get together and create a solution.

If you think you can contribute ideas, skills, or just your time, please email me at president@melbpc.org.au with the subject "Hybrid meetings". (I will use that subject to filter emails into a special inbox). If I can get enough buy-in I will set up an online meeting in a few days to start knocking around ideas.