Project Management for Australian Government in the 21st Century

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Abstract—**The reality of the situation is that Australian governments must communicate on projects across all levels, whether for funding and reporting purposes, stakeholder evaluation or identifying links between bodies of work. Having a consistent approach to the planning, management and communication of projects seems obvious but without this, projects can be ineffective, duplicated and a waste of resources.**

I. INTRODUCTION

A USTRALIAN government, at all tiers, has its own set of bureaucracy and peculiarities. Whilst Australia, being such a young country, has based itself on various other countries such as the United Kingdom, Europe and even the United States of America in order to find the right kind of practices and protocol, its governing system has evolved into its own separate entity. With this in mind, adopting project management methodologies that have been designed for governments in other countries does not give Australia the best approach possible to suit its needs.

A description of a project varies according to which methodology is being promoted by which defining body.

Rather than listing the multitude of definitions here, it is agreed across most methodologies that a project:
- is a group of activities that create a product (whether a tangible entity or a service),
- aims to achieve an outcome (client benefit) through delivering that created product,
- brings about change,
- has a clear start and end (finite time constraints), and
- delivers according to set resources and budget (finite cost restraints).

A similar approach taken to determining a universal definition of a project manager, leads us to the conclusion that a project manager has the authority and responsibility to manage a project on a day-to-day basis to deliver the required products.

The elements of project management are varied, again according to which project management methodology you are following. All methodologies are developed initially to cater for a purpose, such as delivering projects within a government or private industry context, or determinant on the size or complexity of the project.

For a project to be applicable to Australian government, regardless of its size or complexity, the methodology used must ensure the following peculiarities are considered:
- concentration on short term outcomes (ie. benefits reached within three years according to the common electoral cycle [Refer Footnote 1]),
- having defined resources from a public source (including personnel and budget),
- having a clear approval process which portrays a vertical (hierarchical) management structure,
- incorporating public consultation into its planning,
- allowing for projects delivered under Public-Private Partnerships,
- following strong probity principles, including procurement and reporting processes,
- scoping alike projects across the same level of government as well as across the other levels (recognising the three tiers of local, state and Federal government in Australia), and
- including consideration of change management required in order to adopt the new product or service delivered by the project (and beyond the end of the project's life).

The notion of change management is particularly worthy of further exploration in this paper, considering so many government projects are considered to be delivered successfully, yet end up futile in achieving benefits due to the lack of up take of the project's product.

Having no change management consideration can cause the best intended projects to fail by not arming people with the tools or encouraging a change in behaviour/culture to embrace the new or changed product.

This paper looks into the Australian government system across the three spheres, how projects could be delivered with a whole-of-government angle (and incorporating industry where appropriate) to enable enhanced synergy across activities, better use of public monies and increased uptake of project benefits which ultimately improves Australian society.

II. A DISHARMONISED GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

A. *Background to Australian Government*

Three Tiers of Government - *Stepping on Each Other's Toes*

The Australian Constitution provides the foundation for the country's governing system. Based on the principle that the tier of government closest to the problem or attention area should bare responsibility, the boundaries around the roles of each tier can be ascertained.

An agreement in 2006 between the Federal and state governments and the local government associations in each of the states/territories formalised the scope, relationships

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1   Some governments operate under a four or five year cycle, but three-years is the most common throughout Australia.

and understanding of local authorities. The *Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA) Establishing Principles to Guide Inter-Governmental Relations on Local Government Matters*[1] provides a framework for determining services and functions of local government and consequently feeds into a greater appreciation for boundaries around planning, reporting, management and funding. This agreement has led to a decreased confusion around areas of responsibility[2].

Borthwick (2007) highlights the principle that an authority "should only perform functions which cannot be performed at a more immediate or local level (p38)"[3]. Whilst this is clear in theory, it is not so in practice. All too often unhappy stakeholders rally the next level of government up from the one they are disgruntled with, seeking intervention.

The 2007 Federal Government's takeover of Devonport's Mersey Community Hospital exemplified a crossing over of boundaries between spheres of government. The local community, receiving no satisfactory resolution from the Tasmanian State Government to escalating problems of health service inefficiencies, took their plight to the Federal Government[4]. In turn, the Federal Government accepted short-term responsibility and funding obligations of the hospital to rectify the immediate situation, with commitment to future ownership negotiations.

Showing to be a busy year, another controversial strategy in 2007 included the Federal Government taking over aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory in an attempt to combat child sexual abuse. Paul t' Hart[5] cites this intervention as an example of a policy fiasco, where the Federal Government 'had to' intervene when state government policy 'failed'[6]. This particular interference of Federal Government in Territory Government responsibility has received much publicity in relation to allegations of racism and playing with people's lives in order to advance political agendas[7]

A prominent takeover of the state-run Murray-Darling Basin to address failed water management plans is yet another example in 2007 of Federal Government attempting to cross the state government boundaries.[8] By changing legislation due to the Victorian Government refusing to agree to the intervention, the Federal Government enforced its authority, commandeering further responsibilities away from State Government[9].

These scenarios exemplify another political agenda which outraged Federal Government opposition; the appropriation of Labour State Government responsibilities by the Liberal Federal Government of the time in order to expand its sphere of influence across Australia.

The Liberal political party is traditionally known for preserving the economic gap between the rich and the poor and for being pragmatic; with the Labor political party having a reputation of ideology, giving priority to social policy and community benefit. Whilst the Liberal Party held Federal power, the opposing Labour Party held power at all state and territory levels during the turn of the 21st Century (Jones,1978[10]).

The bringing together of this trail of thought with the need for adopting a harmonised project management methodology across all Australian government should

reduce the need for intervention, associated disharmony and distrust as just exemplified as being common occurrence.

Borthwick goes on, in his 2007 speech, to illustrate when the states have referred problems to the Federal for the greater good of Australia, in areas which required systemic national solutions such as environmental management (p39). He concludes his speech by suggesting that management of complex projects can be effective only if areas of responsibility between the tiers of government are clear.

Having an appropriate project management methodology which defines roles and responsibilities applicable at all government echelons and promotes consistent management practice is essential, as is enforcing such cultural change across the public service.

At present, all government bodies have their own set of management policies and procedures – whether they are representing 100 or several million constituents. Each entity defines what it considers to be best management practice according to its individual needs and the amount of change management required to implement the set of practices. Consideration is not given to how those management practices link in, or fail to link in, with other government bodies.

The reality of the situation is that government must communicate on projects across all levels, whether for funding and reporting purposes, stakeholder evaluation or identifying links between bodies of work. Having a consistent approach to the planning, management and communication of projects seems obvious but without this, projects can be ineffective, duplicated and a waste of resources.

Working in disharmony; communication breaks down, funding is ineffective and problems are unresolved (and often doomed for repetition) - yet standing back from this issue and implementing resolution through a whole-of-government effort would be an arduous bureaucratic journey. Is this reason enough not to however?

The money and time saved in the long term with a harmonized methodology is argument for further progression.

A brief history of the three tiers of government and their practice (if any) of effective project management is necessary to obtain a baseline.

Being a public servant with a resume showing employment from local and state government, and working on many whole-of-government projects over the years, my (generalised) observation has been that Federal officers see their state counterparts as lower on the scale of significance than themselves, with state officers repeating this view with the local layers. Unfortunately, this is where the problems of achieving synergised activities originate.

This provocative generalisation may be commonly held by community groups and public servants, with a multitude of examples available to support its legitimacy.

When a problem arises in local government and response is not according to community expectations, the next step of complaint is directed to the next level of government up – the state government. The same applies between the state

and Federal governments, and it is along this notion that the 'next level up' has more authority and presumably capability to rectify problems, that the idea of public servant importance or power is based.

Local Government

Whilst the Australian constitution does not mention local government, it is now an expected service. The state governments determine the roles and boundaries of their local councils and, dating back to 1840, they have grown in responsibility and acknowledgement as part of Australia's framework[11].

Australian local government differs from other countries in that it does not provide emergency and police services, concentrating more on the provision of community services at the local level such as town planning, recreation and sporting facilities, libraries and waste disposal.

Local councils across Australia (2007 saw 673 acknowledged local councils[12]) are represented in the commonwealth arena by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), marketing itself as the national local government voice.

A keyword search of 'project management' on the ALGA website reveals no hits. There is no set of guidelines, policies or procedures to assist local government bodies in their quest for best practice, synergized, management of the projects they are expected to deliver.

The Australian Council of Local Government (ACLG), established in 2008, aimed at strengthening the relationship between the Federal and local governments.

In each state, there is a local government association which provides representation for all of its councils, supplying the links between the Federal, state and local governments, with a consultation and coordination role. These associations develop state-wide local government policy, which some pessimists argue is an oxymoron. A positive case for their existence is the negotiation power these associations hold with suppliers and funding bodies.

State legislation determines whether membership of local councils in their state local government association is compulsory or voluntary. For example, in South Australia[13] and Queensland[14] it is only voluntary.

Interestingly, the Local Government Association of South Australia, in its Constitutional Recognition Statement (2007), states that "No sphere of government ought to have the right to dismiss another sphere of government. (p12)[15]"

Local government associations provide opportunity to promote unified management practices, but this is not concentrated on over other political matters. This then leaves each local government to research and adopt their own methodologies, regardless of what their counterparts may be doing.

The City of Greater Bendigo is placed on a pedestal when discussing best management practice. This may be because it has one of the most informative local council websites available, hence their management practices and policies are open for public display, scrutiny and even adoption by other entities.

State and Territory Government

In 1901, six sovereign states were created to form the Commonwealth of Australia as part of federation; Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia.

State governments, under the Australian Constitution (s51) are able to pass legislation on anything which is not controlled by the Commonwealth, noting that Federal laws always override State laws where there is conflict[16].

The Northern Territory (in 1978) and the Australian Capital Territory (in 1989) became self-governing territories with powers nearly equal to the states, with the Northern Territory working towards full statehood since.

The Tasmanian Government encourages the use of its specially developed project management methodology and tools with all of its state-run projects, with a full-time unit dedicated to supporting project managers sponsored by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The methodology is quite effective, and having embraced the principles and templates in a whole-of-government exotic animal disease preparedness project (2002-05), I was also involved in the associated training[17] and mentoring program. Still using the supporting website today, I am pleased it is not only available to Tasmanian public servants, which is often the case in government arenas when new systems are adopted.

With the Tasmanian Government, I found that whilst uptake of the methodology was actively encouraged, further training amongst senior level managers was required in order to perform their senior project roles with more confidence.

New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia have their own Government Chief Information Offices (CIOs) with the common objective of bringing together state-run projects with a familiar (albeit discrete in each state) project management methodology. While the intent is genuine, it is yet to be proven that these CIOs are effective in bringing together project harmony across the state sector. These CIOs are limited in their coverage to IT, infrastructure and transport projects, dependent upon which CIO is being studied. Working with the CIOs is not mandated for all public project delivery and seemingly ineffective awareness campaigns are evidenced by the lack of methodology uptake.

The Victorian Government has privatized its project management to SYPAQ, who uses the PRINCE2 methodology. SYPAQ explain "We assist organizations transform strategy into capability through the application of a variety of disciplines including … Project Management[18]".

I express concern for a public entity handing over its management of projects to a private enterprise and the amount of public funds this would entail. It would be more cost effective to enhance the skill level of its public servants and its culture by delivering the methodology internally (albeit with a consultant's help) and driving its use with future projects. This increases the capability of the Victorian public sector overall, thus increasing its delivery credibility and efficiency.

The Western Australian Government has quite a haphazard approach to project management which is led by the type of project and agency delivering it. As yet, there is no overarching project management framework for the state government, except for the Centre for Excellence and Innovation in Infrastructure Delivery standardizing a project management framework in February 2008 for all infrastructure projects.

This project framework for infrastructure work, self described as following a mixture of PMBoK and PRINCE2 methodology, follows the sequence of: 1) Establish Business Needs, 2) Evaluation, 3) Definition, 4) Delivery, 5) Transition to Operation, and 6) Project Review[19].

The Australian Capital Territory's Health department has a dedicated Project Management Office and a whole-of-territory-government project looks at integrated document management; aiming to support the government's holistic approach to customer service delivery[20]

The Northern Territory has a project management guide for referral by its public servants. This sounds great, but in reality is merely a 'platform' website which has links to various private consultants and project management public information; no specific guidance or central government source of information in a public sector context.

Federal Government

The Australian Commonwealth Government is Westminster derived, meaning that it is based on Great Britain's parliamentary system of appointment by democratic election of the people[21].

The British claimed ownership of Australia from the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in 1788 and, under the control of the United Kingdom, evolved to gain federalism in 1901. Federalism arguably gave avenue for a more social, economic and political efficient government across the country. A major disadvantage of federalism, which is relevant to the argument of a disharmonized government, was that it could lead to a duplication of government between the states and the Commonwealth.

The use of project management methodology in Federal Government is dependent upon the agency and business unit delivering the activities. Each agency has its own set of policies, principles and procedures on management, governance, reporting and communications.

An audit report on the Federal Government's main social service agency; Centrelink (ANAO, 2007[22]), evaluated its project management framework, introduced in 2000 and based on the United Kingdom Government's framework of PRINCE2 and MSP (explained and analysed further in Section B of this paper). The audit also looked at the Centrelink Projects Office which was created to support the adopted framework.

Centrelink adapted a well-known project life cycle (the Project Management Book of Knowledge's life cycle, which is explained and evaluated later on in this paper) to suit its own set of operational practices and project needs. Whilst this is a commendable exercise, the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) found that the changes made did not

assist in the uptake of a project management culture throughout the agency.

The Australian Public Service Commission (2004) gives a classic example of an attempt to synchronize government activities gone wrong[23]. Through a project known as *i*consult[24], piloted in 2001, community consultation was to take on a whole-of-government approach. The aim of *i*consult was to provide an electronic information system which government agencies could exchange information on regarding consultation and stakeholders.

*i*consult was not mandated across government and a rigorous change management strategy was not implemented to support its uptake. The project was considered unsuccessful as the benefits were not realized and, as a result, the community consultation process did not improve.

Across Federal Government, there are some project management elements which are standardized such as community consultation and risk management. This is a positive move forward, and now a concentrated effort on standardizing all of the elements across all of Australian government, and enforcing their uptake, is necessary for sum effect.

Why Project Management?

To clarify a few terms before progressing further:

Outputs are specific deliverables from a project; they are tangible and produced according to timeframes and resources. An output could be a service, event or an object.

Outcomes are the effects which happen from producing those deliverables; the benefits of having done the project.

Use of appropriate project management methodology is essential for the smooth running and delivery of a project in order to achieve predetermined outcomes. In events with clearly articulated start and finish dates, deliverables and resourcing, project management enhances success.

The methodology outlined in this paper operates under the principle that each project has a broader purpose than simply achieving independent deliverables for a particular government unit – each project is considered a building block towards a harmonised Australia, whether it be a work-based project identified through business unit planning, a project arising through a policy mandate or a whole-of-government approach to an issue of nation-wide significance.

In the longer term, adopting a unified methodology across all tiers of government allows for synergized planning, activity, reporting and evaluation. Savings in resources and expenditure will flow on to public benefit as duplication will be minimized and complementary rather than incompatible projects (and outcomes) can be delivered.

Following a structured project management methodology also enables for structured risk and issues management. By ensuring open communication with key stakeholders of what is expected from them, sharing of planning documentation and schedules allows for all people involved in project delivery to be clear of their responsibilities and approach.

With the emphasised use of Private – Public Partnerships as we develop even more as an autonomous country, having a project management methodology which is usable also in the world of private industry can only enhance the success of partnership projects and mitigate risks even further.

McPhee (2007) discusses four major influences which shape project management usage within the Australian Public sector[25]:

1. recognition of the importance of a managed process in order to achieve desired outcomes,
2. increased need to manage risks,
3. training staff in project management, and
4. increased understanding of why project management enhances success.

McPhee, whilst advocating the benefits of using project management methodology, does not make suggestion as to what an appropriate methodology to suit the Australian public sector would be.

This gap requires filling which is where this paper steps in.

The methodology in this paper ensures integrity and rigor by supplying a suite of project management principles and tools that not only depict clear milestones and activity schedules aligned to government priority, but also prompt each project manager to identify strategic risk, organizational change implications and communication opportunities.

Whether the project manager represents local, state or Federal government, the approach and practices follow the same priorities and principles. Communication between government spheres can be harmonized through consistent reporting and adopting the same techniques allows for fluency between projects and subsequently between bureaucratic layers.

Australian Standards

Standards Australia was established in 1922, under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Government, to develop standards of product and services[26] for use throughout the nation, in line with international principles, to raise Australia's competitiveness and provide safe and sustainable practices.

The Australian Standard *Quality management systems - Guidelines for quality management in Projects* was reproduced in 2003 from an international standard to provide guidance to quality management in projects[27].

Australian standards, whilst recommended, are not mandatory unless specified by policy within individual private and public entities.

The Australian standard for project management is aimed at being relevant to such a wide variety of projects; small and large, public and private, that it is so generic it is applicable to almost anything. In this context, the worth of the standard is questionable.

The Australia Standard on Risk Management provides a generic guide for managing risk and is adopted by many government entities. It provides a commonsense approach to the identification, grading and mitigation of risks and can be adaptable to everyday situations including workplace health and safety and project management. The diagram provided within this Standard is easy to follow, common sense and quite self-explanatory and for those reasons, I defend its use in most situations, including project management within a government context

Figure 8: Main elements of the Risk Management Process as described in the Australian Standard for Risk Management (AS/NZS4360: 2004)
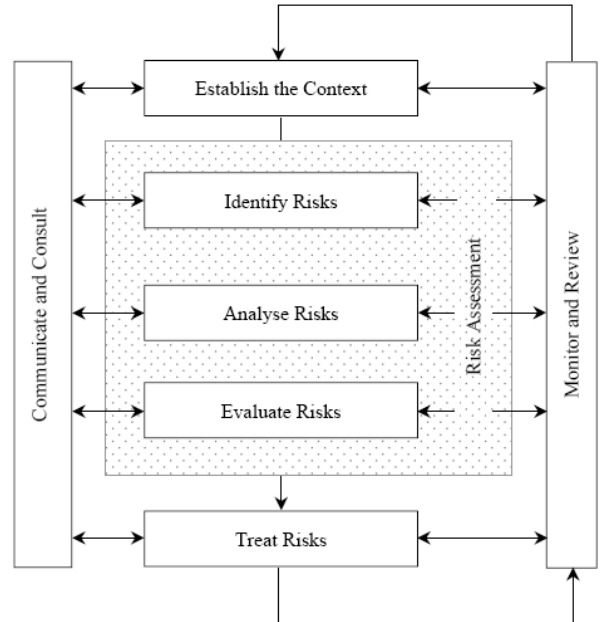
B. Review Stage

By comparing various existing program, project and change management methodologies in terms of their relevance and appropriateness in the Australian government context, one can realize their inadequacies if adopted separately.

Rather than reinvent perfectly good elements of methods or processes already existing, the proposed methodology in this paper merely brings together the most appropriate elements to suit Australian government activities. This requires a mixture of several concepts, principles and definitions in order to bring together the right recipe for Australian relevance.

THE DEMING CYCLE

The below diagram[28] is an adaptation of The Deming Cycle (named after its originator, Dr W. Edwards Deming, 1986).
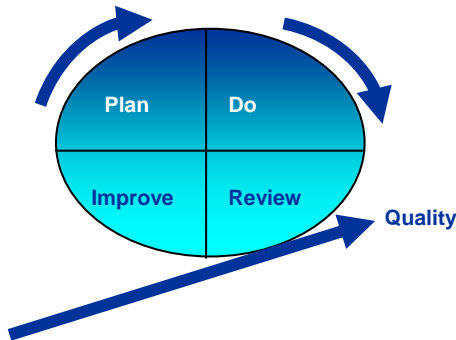

Figure 1. The Deming Cycle

The Deming Cycle is a continuous quality improvement model consisting of a logical sequence of four repetitive steps for continuous improvement and learning.

The Deming Cycle provides a solid foundation for valuing a structured management of activities, emphasizing the importance of learning from past projects and ensuring their suitability for delivering specific benefits to the community.

PMBoK

The Project Management Body of Knowledge[29] (PMBoK), concocted and advocated through the PMI (Project Management Institute) in the United States of America, comprises five major management processes; Initiation, Planning, Executing, Controlling and Closing.
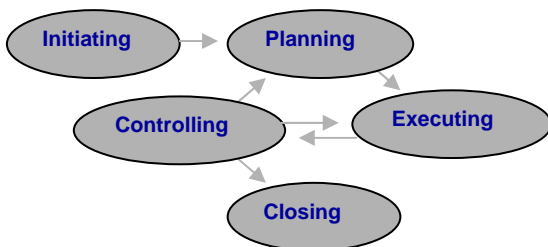

Figure 2. PMBOK diagram

The PMBoK Guide® was first published by the PMI in 1987 and is considered (according to the PMI itself) to be the de-facto global standard of project management.

The Australian Institute of Project Management has adopted PMBoK as its standard, as has Standards Australia[30].

Complementary to PMBoK, and according to the AllPM[31] glossary, a Project Charter (also known as a Project Mandate or Business Case) briefly describes the project at a high level to gain authorisation to proceed. The Initiation phase includes determining the project outcomes (also referred to as benefits), resources required and synergies with other projects.

The Planning Phase of PMBoK includes definition of the project scope[32], required deliverables, initial project roles, defining (and sequencing if appropriate) all required activities, identifying the required skills and resources (including budget) and risk/issue management. Optional to include here is initial stakeholder identification, communications management and organizational change management processes.

PMBoK, however, does not go into detail on the building of project plans, establishment of overall project objectives and client benefits and the incorporation of change management, to enable clients' uptake of the project's product/s.

Processes within PMBoK are listed as Inputs (documents, plans, designs, etc.) Tools and Techniques (mechanisms applied to inputs) and Outputs (documents, products, etc.).

PMBoK appreciation is an advantage if seeking employment in the field of project management in the United States of America, whilst if in the United Kingdom, PRINCE2 is the preferred knowledge-base.

PRINCE2

PRojects **IN C**ontrolled **E**nvironments[33] (PRINCE2) is viewed as a structured project management methodology.

If you are a PRINCE2 convert, you do not view PMBoK as a methodology in its own right due to its lack of specific accreditation required to utilize it, its lack of checklist considerations and also the argument that the two are focussed on serving different purposes.

PRINCE2 trainers teach that it is an extension of PMBoK which forms the foundations of project management thinking (ie. PMBoK forms the basis for PRINCE2).
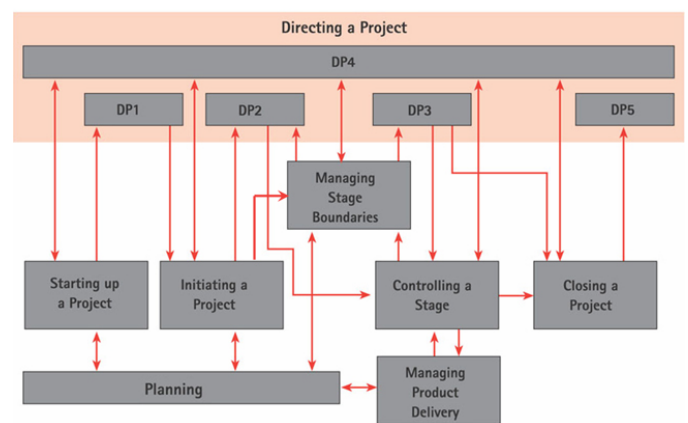

Figure 3. The PRINCE2 process model

Advocates of PRINCE2 highlight PMBoK's inadequacies in planning, reporting and change management[34]. A counter-argument for PRINCE2's uptake is its over-excessive use of documentation and its lack of templates to support its application n the 'real world'.

PRINCE2 uses the 'management by exception' concept, ie. management agree a plan, and then let the project manager get on with it unless something goes wrong.

Instead of Steering Committees, PRINCE2 refers to Project Boards, emphasizing that Boards can operate through electronic communication, without the need for regular, time-consuming meetings. I hold reservations as to how the Board achieves ownership of the project's outcomes through this impersonal process. The Board needs to be advocates for the project and its success, with face-to-face discussions being vital for the project manager to understanding of Board decisions. A 'meeting of the minds' is much more achievable when all are in the same room (or videoconference).

PRINCE2 refers to risk tolerance, i.e. the amount of risk the Project Board is prepared to take. It advises not to attempt to predict the likelihood or form any judgment of a risk when it is identified. It also advises to concentrate on strategies to address the risks which have a probability of occurring sooner rather than later.

Risk management, particularly with larger, more complex or politically sensitive projects, needs determination of risk levels, concentrating on the *severity* on the project if the risk occurred and the *likelihood* of the risk occurring, rather than on timelines as in PRINCE2.

PRINCE2 gives lists of reporting elements for a project manager to decide on, rather than templates. This encourages inconsistent reporting across an organization, as what is included in the reports is at the project manager's discretion.

PRINCE2 does not address change management to ensure a product's uptake in order to achieve desired benefits. It briefly describes a Configuration Management Plan which identifies how and by whom the project's products will be controlled and protected. An in-depth approach is necessary when planning for organizational change and it must be part of the project process, not separate to it.

PRINCE2 does not instruct on how to form a Communications Strategy. It lists briefly some aspects of a communications plan which are worth considering, but a template would be useful, as would greater detail of why and how such a plan needs to be formulated.

Whilst PRINCE2 describes stakeholders and the need for their involvement in the project, it does not go into detail on how these stakeholders need to be classified, communicated with or managed throughout and beyond the project's life. Particularly for larger projects or projects which involve a myriad of business units/key stakeholders or are politically sensitive, a Stakeholder Management Plan is essential, but not considered in PRINCE2 methodology.

PRINCE2 and Managing Successful Programs (MSP) are methodologies adopted by the United Kingdom government and are slowly being adopted throughout Australian private and public sector.

ITO (Input-Transform-Outcome) Model

John Smyrk developed the ITO model which "attempts to offer a rigorous framework for distinguishing between inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes", in 1995[35].
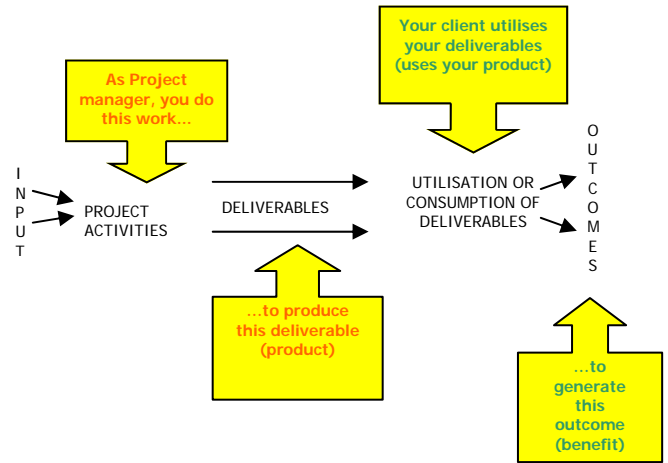

Figure 4: "Input Process Output (IPO)" model
Adapted from "Project Management with John Smyrk"
Sigma Management Science, Managing Projects for Outcomes

Whilst I have simplified Smyrk's model in the given diagram, this outline provides straightforward representation of the relationships in a project between the elements of inputs, processes, outputs, utilisation and outcomes.

I have found this simplified model a handy tool when explaining the concepts of project management to others and do not hesitate with its use. Perhaps Smyrk being Australian-based has assisted in ensuring the relevance of his model with its use in the Australian business environment.

Managing Successful Programmes (MSP)

MSP[36] is included in this analysis as it is the overarching methodology behind PRINCE2, with the two needing to be delivered in unison in order to capture all of the elements. If a manager was to implement one framework without the other, there would be shortfalls.
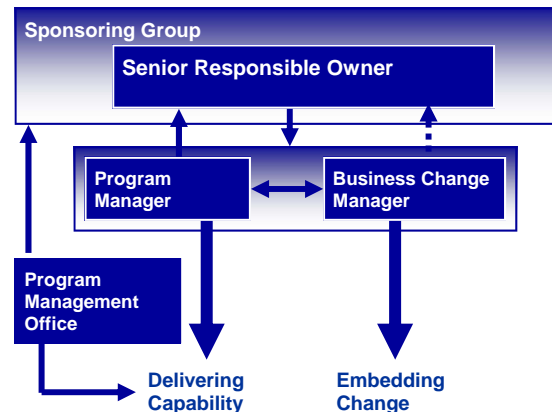

Figure 5. Basic Programme Organisation of MSP

PRINCE2 focuses on how a project delivers a product to suit a client's needs, MSP concentrates on how this project fits into an overarching program and links in with other projects.

MSP looks at cross-project risk and issue management, communications, governance and change management to enhance the program's successful achievement of its outcomes.

MSP is also very document-intensive with the promotion of the development of many separate documents dealing with each element of the methodology.

As with PRINCE2, MSP would be more easily adopted if, rather than many separate documents, the one overarching management document with sections included in it which covered each of the elements, was developed. And as with PRINCE2, implementing MSP from a project manager's perspective feels like you are forever writing up papers rather than actually delivering a project.

Change Management

The analysis of change management methodology within a project management context is vital in order for project's to be successful at all. A project produces a product, but without adequate uptake of the product, nothing will happen. People must be capable and willing to change their behavior, culture or work processes in order to adapt the new product; failure to do so results in a waste of public resources in delivering the project in the first place.

Concentration is given to the capability of government entities to adopt consistent practices which complement best project management principles. All too often projects are delivered, many on time and many within budget, but with limited success as focus was not given to ensuring public servants or the community take up the new products, processes or services.

Prosci Change Management

Prosci advocate the use of the ADKAR model when planning, implementing and evaluating change in an organization. ADKAR stands for Awareness (are the people aware of the change?), Desire (do they want to change?), Knowledge (do they know how to change?), Ability (do they have the skills and tolls necessary to adopt the changes?) and Reinforcement (what will ensure they continue adopting the change?).

The use of the ADKAR model, even if just limited to evaluating what needs to be planned for, is a highly effective project management tool and is recommended to be incorporated into all projects where a change in people's attitudes, roles, location or structure is required.

People Centered Implementation

People Centered Implementation (PCI) was developed by ChangeFirst, a private British consultancy company, around 2000[37].

PCI is a change management methodology which focuses on:
1. Shared Change Purpose Across the Organization
2. Effective, Strong Change Leadership
3. Powerful People Engagement Processes
4. Committed Local Change Managers
5. Strong Personal Commitment to Change
6. Supporting People Through Change

This methodology is not widely implemented across the world; whether this is due to lack of awareness or lack of structure in the methodology to enable quick understanding and adoption of processes, is open for debate.

It has been adopted in the United Kingdom as a complementary methodology to PRINCE2 to effect change management in the project environment.

C. Conclusion

Australia's government, having developed into its separate entities, must adopt a unified project management methodology which has been designed to suit the distinctive vertical and horizontal needs across all administration.

Having scrutinized various methodologies and worked within many Australian project management environments, the following recommendations are submitted, when developing a set of guidelines specifically for Australian use:

- Having one set of principles and supporting tools to use is recommended, as one methodology; to ensure all vital elements of project management are captured and learnt as one system.
- Ensuring that change management is incorporated as an element within the project management methodology is vital for project players to appreciate its importance, rather than treating it as a separate approach or an afterthought.
- Planning for the mitigation of risks and management of issues is necessary in effective project preparation, recognizing that within a government context, there are many influences outside of our control, but still needing to plan for them.
- Recognizing that a project cannot be effectively delivered or uptake of a product be successful unless communications management is appreciated for its powerful role.
- Planning for and resourcing the uptake of one project management methodology across the public service, and supporting a Central Project Management Office in its mentoring, reporting and project-synergizing role is obligatory.
- Understanding the importance of probity in government and implementing processes which meet accountability requirements enhance credibility internally and externally as well as faith by the community in the responsible use of public monies.

III. NEW METHODOLOGY

A. Main Principles

The elements within the project management methodology proposed in this paper are not new, they are not innovative and have stood the test of time over the years – what is new is the notion that they must be brought together and implemented, complementary specific to Australian government peculiarities and they must be adopted in their entirety in order to have positive effect.

The value of adopting one unified, structured, project management approach is the increased likelihood that projects will be completed on time, within budget, and to an acceptable level of quality, in harmony across the country.

A good project management method will guide the project through a controlled, well-managed, visible set of activities to achieve the desired results. All parties must be clear about why the project is needed, what it intends to achieve and what individuals are responsible for.

The methodology proposed in this paper requires that a Central Project Management Office (CPMO) be established and supported in order to ensure the methodology's initial and continued uptake and a synergized approach to all projects across government on a continual basis.

The suggestion of having a whole-of-government approach to activities and major projects is not new either. This has been, and is continuing to be, attempted at the project-level, but never at the across-project level, as is suggested here.

By laboring through the massive amount of web pages produced by the Australian government and reviewing the objectives of many past and present projects, the aim of reducing duplication of activities is a common theme.

The Productivity Commission in 2007 recognised this theme when preparing a review project for the report: *Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business - Primary Sector*[38] (report finally produced in 2009). It dared to ask the question:

> "Are there particular areas where Australian Government regulations or regulators duplicate other regulations or activities of other regulators, including those of other jurisdictions?"
>
> *Productivity Commission, Scope of the Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business – Primary Sector (2007)*

The findings to this question were of no surprise; that there was duplication and even conflict in many areas of government activity between public entities. Not only was there overlapping of activities across a government level, but also between government jurisdictions. The Productivity Commission recommended that consideration be given to any overlapping of activities or regulation when scoping individual projects, rather than adopting a whole-of-government approach across all projects (mandating the consideration and coordinating it through a central unit).

Most government entities in Australia operate on a three-year cycle [Refer Footnote 2], to complement the electoral system. Once a government wins power, it spends the first year either 'cleaning up' failures of the old government or revitalizing policies to make its mark as the new government. The second year is spent gearing up for the third year, which is when everything goes into 'election mode', ready to win a new three-year term.

> "I made a point then about the three-year budget cycle, commenting that in the first year a government can produce a mean, tough budget full of cuts to spending and rebuffs to sectional interests while in the second and third years a government can hand out goodies and election bribes."
>
> *John Warhurst (2009)[39]*

In support of this argument is the common three-year agreements entered into by government with other government agencies or with industry as partnerships. The Victorian State Government (2005) even has a framework: *Principles and Associated Business Practice for Three-Year Agreements*[40], promoting this concept.

The Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australian Governments all have three-year school review cycles[41], a three-year budget cycle is typical for transport, universities and educational institutes, the Australian Navy has an innovation strategy which is based on a three-year cycle[42], chief executive officers and senior management of public entities often have three-year employment contracts in line with their budget processes, and the list goes on.

This three-year cycle encourages short term project outcomes. Quick wins are preferred. To counteract this line of behavior, a permanent CPMO, comprised of public servants (not politically appointed and therefore not affiliated with any particular political party), which can look across terms of power to ensure longer-term benefits from projects and programs can be planned for and obtained.

B. Main Elements of a Unified Australian Government Project Management Methodology

The main elements of the project management methodology specific for Australian government surround ensuring capability of an organization and its individuals to be able to successfully deliver project outcomes.

These capabilities include:

1. **Adequate and mandated project management capability** – skills sets and processes to ensure uptake of the methodology, including links with an overarching government Central Project Management Office and appropriate mandates for the synergized management of public projects. This also includes ensuring that project players are suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles (and not just because they happen to be free at the time the project comes up).

2. **Solid planning processes** which allow for sufficient identification of project scope, linking in with other government projects across all levels where fitting (identifying synergies and avoiding duplication), and effective senior management signoff which encourages ownership of the project's outcomes at the higher level.

3. **Clear governance structures and processes** for project ownership and accountability – existing management structures must be effective for fiscal, staff and procedural harmony, and complement those structures and processes throughout all government entities.

4. **Embracing probity** - Possessing a culture of embracing probity, including ensuring ethical government procurement, risk management, reporting, consultation and communications practices which adhere to the highest echelon of integrity.

5. **Complementary tools, templates and procedures across government** - Procedures which complement the running of projects which are not separate to the organisation's procedures. That is, having same or complementary sets of tools and templates for the delivery of plans, activity

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2   Some governments operate under a four or five year cycle, but three-years is the most common throughout Australia

schedules and reports across the whole of government.

6. **Welcoming change** - Embracing the concept of change across an organization rather than shunning it.

These capabilities are discussed in more detail after we look at the following project diagrammatical representation.
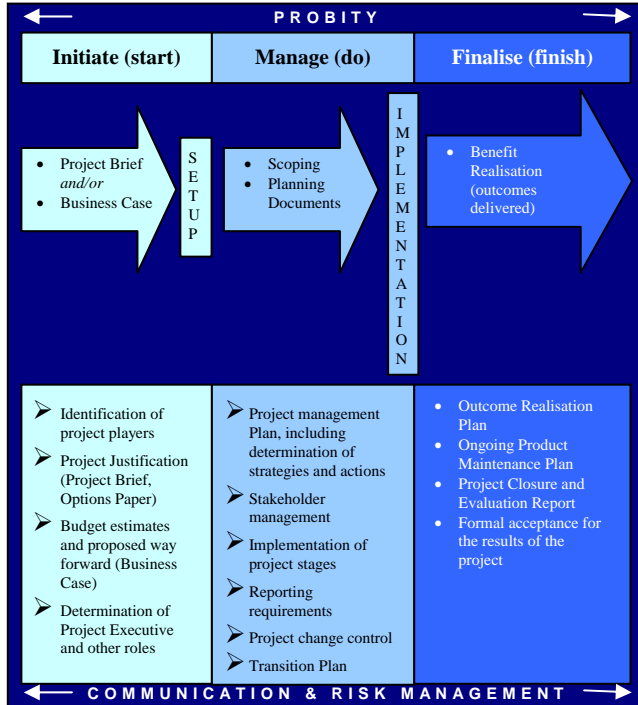

Figure 6. Representation of Project Life Cycle

1. Adequate Project Management Capability

Project Management Skills Set

Within a government project environment, project managers require the ability to perform the following:

- Project planning and scoping
- Process management, scheduling and time management
- Resource allocation and Budget management
- Written communication and research skills, including ministerial and reporting
- Documentation management
- Staff, risk, change and issues management
- Stakeholder management
- Performance evaluation

As long as project managers are comfortable with their level of skills and experience in the qualities above, their guidance and mentoring of other project players can flow through to have positive effect on project delivery

Rather than hiring consultants to perform project work, increasing the capability within a public organization to perform project work through increasing the above skills would be preferred for longer term benefits.

Central Project Management Office (CPMO)

As a government-wide service, a CPMO, based at the Federal level but still catering for state and local government projects and programs, would provide project management leadership through advice and guidance to all public servants taking on project manager responsibilities.

At all stages of the project management cycle, the CPMO would actively engage with and between project managers across all tiers of government to facilitate knowledge sharing and ensure project outcomes are captured in business improvement and change management processes, and complementary to objectives and outcomes across all levels.

In essence, the CPMO:

- provides project management tools, mentorship and guidance,
- registers projects, leading to identifying synergies, duplication and interdependencies between projects across all tiers of government,
- coordinates progress reports between government units where projects are synergised and facilitates knowledge sharing,
- maintains a risk register of all projects in order to identify risks shared by more than one project and assist in strategies for contentious issues,
- liaises with government staff in the areas of communications, change management, risk management and performance management.

The costs associated with establishing and supporting a CPMO would far underway the costs associated with the current disharmonized, conflicting method of project delivery and competition for public funds and prioritization.

To capture the key learnings from Centrelink's Audit Report (2007), it is noted that the Centrelink Project Office set up to support, promote and manage implementation of the agency's new project management framework was ineffective in the following areas:

- it was unsuccessful in reliably registering all of the agencies projects,
- it did not actively enforce or reinforce the application of the project management framework, with a lack of its uptake by project managers ensuing,
- a central electronic platform for project managers to access information and tools was not effectively implemented and maintained,
- it did not "adequately undertake a central, strategic project management function as envisaged in PMBoK (p16, ANAO report 2007)",
- there was ineffective communications and processes to support use of key project documentation by project managers,
- it did not effectively provide control and transparency around the projects at the strategic level or encourage a sequenced project planning process, which resulted in a precarious risk management process,
- it did not encourage a project scoping process or supply documentation to support the principles of adequately determining scope, and
- it did not monitor or harmonize project reporting to an effective degree, causing delays in project resourcing and conflicting priorities at the higher management level.

When establishing a CPMO to implement the methodology in this paper, the above key learnings must be incorporated.

For the CPMO to be effective, its use by project managers must be a condition of all project funding across Australian government. For this to occur, it must come as a directive from the highest authority; the Federal Government.

Whilst this mandate is a radical idea, having seen the 'softly, softly' approach fail in the past and when given the choice, seeing project managers choosing not to take up any project management methodology and therefore choosing to risk their project's success, there appears no other option.

It is time to get tough and show leadership!

A suggestion could be that a small percentage of funds be directed from each of the major national projects (say, those over $5 million in funding) to the establishment of the CPMO, as overall these projects would benefit the greatest.

The CPMO could have representation in each of the states to ensure adequate coverage of projects around the country, and each state could provide a small percentage of funds directed from their major projects (say, those over $1 million) to resource these.

A future expansion of the CPMO could cater for support and guidance with industry-led projects, to enhance a unified public/private approach across the nation, with Australia's economy, social and environmental well-being gaining overall; here lies the triple bottom line concept.

A Harmonised Approach to Triple Bottom Line

Triple bottom line takes into account the three factors of social, environmental and financial performance (ie. people, planet and profit). For Australia, this could be reflected in an improvement in living standards for its citizens, economic performance (domestically and globally), infrastructure development, environmental sustainability and political (and social) stability.

Whilst critics of the triple bottom line principle argue a lack of any value apart from the theoretical (Norman and MacDonald 2003[43], Schilizzi 2002[44]), others emphasize its importance on a global level as a legitimate planning and evaluation tool (Elkington 1998[45], Cheney 2004[46]).

Despite its critics, triple bottom line is a widely accepted principle throughout Australian public and private sectors, making it an appropriate guide for evaluating all project and policy success with the country's ever-changing needs.

2. Solid Planning Processes

An adequate planning process is vital in ensuring project success. Baring in mind that the amount of planning should parallel the amount of effort involved in the project (for example, a small project has a brief project plan with a larger or cross-agency project having a detailed management document).

Project Scope

Project scoping is important to build a business case for resources and timeframes. It clarifies what is, and is not, expected from the project with activities performed or benefits to be realised. Agreement on what is in and out of the project must be had between the key players before the project starts.

SWOT

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)[47] analysis enables adequate capturing of external and internal factors, and allows for appropriate project direction. The SWOT analysis is important not only for identifying where to apply resources and attention, it enables the organization to put issues into perspective, particularly with planning, marketing and operations.

SWOT analysis can be performed individually but it is often best done in a small group (or several small groups with information combined) in order to enhance stakeholder engagement and ownership of the emergent strategies.

Smaller projects may not require a SWOT analysis in any great depth. However, recognising its value in identifying key concentration areas is worthy.

Project Logic Model

Allowing for structured, concise information to be evaluated by management in a short time period, which is commonly the case in the 'real world' is vital, particularly in government.

A Project Logic Model allows explanation and scoping of a project 'at a glance'. If a project manager has a basic idea of the body of work they are about to undertake, but is unsure of how to piece all the puzzle together, a Project Logic Model may assist.

A basic model is shown below for clarification of this one-page concept:

Figure 7. Project Logic Model

The Project Logic Model clarifies how the project is intended to work to achieve outcomes, articulates linkages among resources, activities, outputs and short term, medium and long term outcomes, and assists in determining project scope.

It is a tool for capturing a 'project brain dump' in the first instance and allows for a project to be viewed on one-page to gain speedy stakeholder engagement. The Model can easily be transformed into a more formal Project Proposal, or a Project Management Plan which provides rigour behind the initial planning.

3. Clear Governance Structures and Processes

Project Approval Process

The following lists the steps in a common project approval process specific to government (and adaptable according to fewer or extra levels of bureaucracy), and highlights the CPMO's role within this process.

1. Project Scoping: strategic alignment and budget identification
2. Project Logic Model
3. In-principle approval to progress project planning achieved.
4. Project Manager assigned.
5. Project Brief completed.
6. Project Brief and Budget approved (funds allocated).
7. Project Management Plan completed.
8. Executive approval to deliver project gained.
9. Budget forwarded to finance department.
10. Project delivery, including communications and change management activities.
11. Status reporting.
12. CPMO role.
13. Project completion and evaluation.
14. Key learnings incorporated into future projects.

Project Board

Having a Project Board is optional, dependent upon the need for this level of business management and probity. Often in government, there are already established senior management teams which could cater for the Project Board's role as part of its business.

Elements for consideration are:
- political sensitivity of project,
- who the key stakeholders are (e.g. are industry involved?),
- complexity of the project,
- is the project cross-agency or cross government-tier?

The decision to include a Project Board in the management of the project should be between the Project Supervisor and the Project Manager.

If the project involves industry or community key stakeholders, then representing these interest groups on the Project Board can be a wise move for project advocacy, support and possible resources if needed.

Project Teams and Empowerment

Page and Czuba (1999)[48] describe empowerment as gaining control of one's own life. In the workplace this can be reflective of a manager empowering a staff member by handing over control of a particular work activity or issue resolution to that staff member.

The Project Team is responsible for completing tasks and activities required for delivering project outputs, and are answerable to the Project Manager. Project team members do not have to come from within government and again, sometimes representation from outside interest groups can assist in project buy-in from external stakeholders.

Empowerment is vital in the project management arena, to allow for appropriate allocation and delivery of outputs without having to repeatedly defer to the next level manager at every decision point.

Brower (1995) refers to the necessity for teams to have authority to make decisions in order to embrace empowerment[49].

Page and Czuba also suggest that for an organization to embrace empowerment, the levels of existing power must change, pointing out that those managers with power must be prepared to give some of it up in order to empower others.

Being a public entity, the hierarchy is often clearly defined in relation to accountability. What you will not find articulated in any government documentation, but is very clear to public service staff at all levels, is where the power sits.

Boje and Rosile (2001) argue that by giving workers a democratic employment environment, empowerment of these workers is destined to occur[50]. Realistically, one must question whether the public service is capable of providing a democratic environment.

With government units needing to adhere to regulation, legislation, policy, principles of probity and sustainable business, trying to identify where democratic management can fit in is difficult.

By incorporating Clutterbuck and Kernaghan's (1994) benefits of promoting empowerment, a project manager would openly be supporting the concepts of democracy whilst maintaining the levels of bureaucracy currently still expected of the public service. These benefits include:
- staff having increased input on their responsibilities and working environment,
- staff experiencing satisfaction that they have contributed to their organization's future, and
- an increased opportunity for staff personal growth and increased levels of self-fulfillment[51].

Budget

The Budget Process, in the government arena, looks at reviewing the past year's expenditure and how the government intends to raise and spend money for the coming financial year, obtaining approval from Parliament to spend that money.

This is where Australian government-specific bureaucracy and procedure come into play.

Going by the financial year model (ie. July one year to June the following year), government reviews its past budget and sets its next year's budget, presenting it to parliament usually by May of each year, but the process actually starts in the previous November.

From a public project manager's perspective, ensuring adequate milestone achievement and supplying status reporting should always surround government budget time-frames.

Federal and state governmenthave Budget Estimates Committees, comprised of parliamentary members, which scrutinize government's revenue and expenditure. The project reporting process must evolve around these estimates committees, and their needs.

The project manager must also consider the government budget process when determining time frames for milestone and outcome delivery, and setting up communications schedules.

4. Embracing Probity

Defining the line between legitimate, acceptable behavior and dishonest, corrupt actions is one requiring a mixture of an understanding of the law, the relevant staff code of conduct and judgment based on one's own set of values, beliefs and life experiences.

Where the line of tolerance sits in general, is reflective of the organization's culture.

Butcher and Clarke (2003) discuss how managers can use their power and political influence with a perception that their actions can be beneficial to the organization[52].

Their definition of political behavior includes the "negotiating of interests", which is, in essence, the role of any manager; highlighting that the two cannot be separated. Recognizing that they cannot avoid being politicians in this context, managers do have the power to control how they behave, and choose whether they will be guided by altruistic or egotistical motives.

Establishing a mentor program, promoting open communication and information sharing amongst staff and condemning a 'secret squirrel' culture in which power is supported by the withholding of information, provides further opportunity for positive political behavior within the organization.

Being on standby for an audit at any time (which is a reality of being in public work) helps to ensure project documentation is continually on track. Using registers or logs for recording risks, issues, communications, project changes, purchases and quotes is a practical way of keeping track of all of those little things going on simultaneously.

Achievement of Project Outcomes after Project Closure

Particularly for projects where the identified benefits will not be realised until some time after project closure, an evaluation of the project, to assess if the project outcomes were attained, should be conducted.

Baring in mind that government funding is often payable upon reaching agreed milestones, rather than on achievement of outcomes – an evaluation of outcome achievement is not commonly a requirement for funding. It can, however, be a communications and resume tool, particularly for winning political brownie points or applying for future project funding.

End of Project Evaluation

A project is considered closed upon its successful completion or its formal shut down, which can happen for many reasons such as a changed political climate making the benefits to be realized inappropriate or unreachable, or a funding cut.

For whatever reason, an evaluation report needs to be developed for submission and for capturing vital information for future use. Baring in mind, that people will be interested in the success (or shortfall) of a project as it has used public resources and its effectiveness will be scrutinized.

The following are suggested areas to cover in this report:

- Output achievement.
- Outcome achievement.
- If appropriate, a Management Plan for the ongoing uptake of project benefits (how the outputs will be managed into the future to enable benefits to be ongoing).
- Review of triumphs and letdowns, planned and unplanned, which have been achieved through the project.
- Consultation with other project key players such as project team and board members, key advisers and stakeholders, on their analysis of project activities.
- Recommendations for ongoing business improvement, such as improvement in particular processes or gaps in policies.

It is vital that this report be submitted to the CPMO also for the capturing of key learnings across similar projects across Australian government.

Other important activities surround project closure, which are often overlooked as busy people move onto their next consuming activity.

Project managers must give consideration to the following in order to close a project, as leaving people and resources in an indeterminate state is unprofessional and lazy.

- Disbandment of the Project Team and Board (People need closure in order to move on, rather than being left 'hanging'. They need to know the results of their efforts and how to improve things for future projects if needed.)
- Reallocation of physical resources and assets such as project staff, office equipment, computers, software licences, mobile phones and vehicles.
- Finances have been settled – all invoices have been paid, accounts reconciled and surplus either returned or redistributed (according to senior management advice).
- All electronic and hard project records have been filed according to archiving guidelines.

Being a realist in government, if a project was unsuccessful in achieving its objectives, it is common for senior management to want to sweep its failure under the carpet, rather than advertise it to the community. Project managers need to be responsive to the needs of both the organization and the community they represent.

Acting professionally and with integrity at all times is easier said than done, and project managers' use of the CPMO for advice in these circumstances is encouraged, as is communications with their own colleagues and superiors.

On the other hand, if a project was successful, only if in some small area, then sprucing the achievement to anyone who will listen is just as important a communications tool for future project funding and future credibility.

5. Complementary Tools, Templates and Procedures across Government

Project Outcomes

Determining project outcomes can be a daunting exercise, particularly for the inexperienced project manager. The CPMO must ensure project players are clear on how to determine project outcomes and how to measure achievement of them.

It is easy to be swept away with the notion of changing the world through your project, but coming back down to earth and being realistic when scoping project outcomes is important.

Beware of project managers and senior staff who trawl for as many outcomes as they can get in order to justify the project and the subsequent use of public resources. Any more than three or four outcomes may increase the chances of failure or compromise each other in level of achievement. If more outcomes are required than this, perhaps a second project could be considered.

All outputs delivered by the project must be able to be linked to an outcome – if an output or activity does not contribute to benefitting the project, then it should not be done, or discussions with senior management need to be held on re-scoping the project.

All outcomes must be measurable. Quantitative data is obviously preferable as it is easier to gather, report on and analyse.

There will be occasions when only qualitative data can be gathered to measure success of an outcome. Project managers are reminded that qualitative results must still meet probity principles and address the outcomes suitably. It is suggested that either the CPMO or engaging an external consultant may assist in this area.

Reporting

Each government entity has its own set of reporting processes and hierarchical pathways for reports to follow. Commonly however, the line of reporting will often go from Project Manager to Project Supervisor, then to organizational manager and so forth up to the most senior person such as the Chief Executive Officer, Mayor or Minister, dependent upon the government sphere.

In Australia, horizontal management in government is an alien concept, so following formal reporting lines only going up and down does assist with consistency across all projects and planning for governance principles which can easily be adopted.

The concept of reporting to external stakeholders is unfortunately also an unfamiliar concept to many government project managers, and this is where a lot of damage can be unwittingly done. The lack of information on a project either leads to misinformation or no information getting out amongst industry and the community, which in turn leads to a lack of support for the project's outcomes.

Project status reporting must look at *w*hat the project has or has not achieved, what is scheduled to occur and what major issues are occurring or expected.

The frequency of status reporting will vary, depending on the size of the project and the requirements of the Project senior management (and CPMO).

Project managers must ensure their Communications Strategy caters for the information and reporting needs of external stakeholders as well as for their public service commitments.

Industry consultation

In relation to Federal Government policy on industry consultation, the Australian Government Office of Best Practice Regulation (2006) has very clear guidelines[53], which all public servants are directed to.

The policy is based on the seven principles for best practice consultation of:
1. Continuity
2. Targeting
3. Appropriate timeliness
4. Accessibility
5. Transparency
6. Consistency and flexibility
7. Evaluation and review

The project management methodology in this paper embraces the Federal industry consultation policy, emphasising that although the policy is aimed at projects looking at regulation, the principles are applicable in all situations.

There are varying degrees of consultation practiced across the public sector with sometimes concerning methods followed when scrutinized. I have witnessed the following claims of consultation within government projects which have actually been made and defended…

...THE "BIG BLUNDERS" OF INDUSTRY CONSULTATION:
- A conversation down the pub with a mate from industry.
- A few phone calls which ask a couple of questions to a couple of people we went to school with.
- Consultation by someone else to an industry group not relevant to our needs (eg. different state, out-of-date, different industry).
- Assuming what industry wants based on past conversations, past experiences or what we want.

The above points are 'old school' and unacceptable in Australian government in the 21st Century.

It is relevant to mention the 'Embracing Probity' element when claiming industry consultation has occurred. All public service project managers and supervisors are accountable for consultation taking place and that it is effective and representative.

Project Synergies

Many projects need to match up their milestone achievements with other projects. Identifying synergies between projects can reduce downtime, duplication of work and increase overall performance of all projects involved.

The duplication of project activities is an important point as this has been a major criticism of Australian government.

I reiterate here that the Productivity Commission (2007) recognized this point in its report: *Annual Review of Regulatory Burdens on Business - Primary Sector*[54], recommending that consideration be given to any overlapping of activities when scoping individual projects.

The CPMO should assist project managers with identification of related projects, activities and regulation across all government spheres. It is important for the CPMO to concentrate on developing its project register and for all Australia government project managers to be mandated to register their projects on this register.

Risk and Issues Management

An **Issue** refers to a concern raised regarding the project that needs to be addressed immediately.

A **Risk** refers to a threat which may affect the successful completion of the project, threatening either resourcing, time, cost or project quality.

The purpose of risk and issues management is to ensure uncertainty is properly managed, so that the project is completed successfully.

As the Risk Management Process has been mandated by Australian Standards, deviation can not be tolerated. There is avenue, however, to identify, grade and mitigate the risks according to a proven process, as follows:

Initially, the Project Manager lists the risks to the project and expands upon this list as the Project Team meets and as the project progresses. This Risk Register is considered a living document and is under constant revision.

Step 1. 'Likelihood' of the risk occurring is noted as High, Medium or Low.

Step 2. 'Seriousness' of the impact of the risk on the project's success is noted as High, Medium or Low.

Step 3. Mitigating actions are determined in advance for those risks identified as having a High/High, High/Medium or Medium/High grading.

Marketing

Marketing and Communications should be separate from a government perspective and be treated as such rather than with other methodologies (when 'Marketing & Communications' is bunched together).

The Federal Government has guidelines and tips for marketing research and strategies to be executed within the public sector context. This information is actually privately provided and is not mandated for referral.

Having whole-of-government decreed principles which encompass the marketing principles of research, strategy, delivery and review will harmonize marketing activities.

The community all too often receives conflicting messages due to disharmonized government marketing campaigns, especially between opposing political parties.

Government marketing strategies which aim to contend with competitors in the private sector are deplorable, for the essence of government is traditionally to provide services to the communities which are not privately provided.

It is commonplace for academics to argue that government must only play a role in the provision of essential services to the public if the private sector fails to do so. This supports the line of reasoning of government playing a 'watchdog' role over the private sector in ensuring the public is adequately catered for. Following this position, any marketing activities should not be in conflict with private industry.

The SWOT analysis comes into play here also in determining what needs to be concentrated on with any marketing campaigns.

Communications Management

So much of what happens in government is centered on communications – internally with staff up and down (and across) the levels of bureaucracy, externally across other government entities and externally with the community (ie. the 'voting public').

Stakeholder Needs

Stakeholders are any person or group who has an interest in the project succeeding, i.e. either works on or benefits by the project.

Some stakeholders will periodically need to be kept informed of key project milestones, findings and decisions. Other stakeholders require very detailed and frequent communication, as their organizations or job functions may be directly affected by the project.

Key issues for the engagement of stakeholders need to be brainstormed. What the stakeholders need to be told and how they are told this information need to be considered, dependent upon what their interests in the project are.

Project managers are wise to remember the three tiers of government (Federal, State and Local) as well as industry and the community (regional and metropolitan) when brainstorming a project stakeholder list. Some projects may require this list to include interstate and international entities.

Communication Tools

> "An **intranet** is a private computer network that uses Internet protocols and network connectivity to securely share any part of an organisation's information or operational systems with its employees."
>
> *Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intranet*

It is rare for a government entity of any tier to not have an intranet for staff access, with information on procedures,

policies, templates, databases and even recent and upcoming events.

Other examples of communications tools within a government context are:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Web presence
- Branch or business unit meetings
- Brochures, posters and media articles
- Government news and internal staff newsletters
- Industry presentations and public events
- Briefings (eg. for Minister, Senior Management)
- Direct correspondence (eg. memos, letters)

Processes for the use of the listed Communication tools within the context of government are often already developed (eg. how to get information into the newsletters and on the web).

Once these considerations have been made, a simple activity table can be developed, exemplified below.

Stakeholder / Target Audience	Communication Aims	Communication Tools	Action required
eg. staff	eg. to inform staff of changes happening (what, when and who is involved)	eg. intranet, staff newsletter, broadcast emails	eg. - have a regular column in newsletter which provides updates (a 'What's new' column), broadcast emails to particular staff at appropriate times to keep them informed, intranet presence

Figure 9. Simple Communications Plan

For large and/or politically sensitive projects, particularly those with many internal and external stakeholders, a Communications Plan which includes in-depth stakeholder analysis and several aims for each stakeholder category, may be necessary. This Communications Plan would contain its own objective and performance criteria.

6. Welcoming Change

Project Change Control

All projects will have something change during their lifetime. It may be a changed member of the project team, a changed output, budget or event time-frame. Whatever the change, recognizing its impact is vital to ensure other elements of the project are not negatively affected.

All change in a project has implications; some are not worth worrying over or reacting to as they are probably a normal part of business daily life, but others may affect milestone delivery and achievement of project outcomes.

When change requests are presented, consideration must be given to the impact on:

- cost,
- time,
- risks (to the project's success),

- communications required (to notify stakeholders of the change, if necessary), and
- change management implications.

Change Management

All projects produce some kind of change – otherwise they are not by definition a project and it is questionable why they exist.

Some changes can be adopted and accepted easily as they have little impact on overall workload (ie, no new skills are needed or new business processes warranted in order to adopt the change). Other projects, however, will impact on how people do their jobs and even how services can be improved to the community. In order for these changes to be adopted and benefits subsequently achieved, a Change Management Strategy is essential.

Some smaller change management projects may incorporate activities into the communications plan for the project, whereas some projects may need the complete works with a strategy and dedicated consultation and activities.

Some questions have been developed to assist in this process; when answering these questions, it is advised to relate them to the people being affected by the change (staff? clients?)…

1. How **aware** of the changes are they?
2. What are their levels of **desire** for the change?
3. What is their current level of **knowledge** of the changes?
4. What is their **ability** to change?
5. Will they **reinforce** the change?

By going through these questions, a project manager has just implemented Prosci's ADKAR model.

Some points worthy of further consideration are:

- secure senior management support early in the project (what are their needs or concerns and what role do we want them to play?),
- repeat key messages early and often,
- involvement of staff in the change process,
- create a transition strategy with achievable timeframes, and
- ensure the most influential people deliver the messages on a face-to-face basis.

Once change management activities are determined, they can be incorporated into the Work Schedule, with responsible officers and due dates assigned to each task.

C. Adoption of Methodology

Consideration needs to be given of the costs of adopting this methodology across all of Australian government compared with the costs of not doing so; maintaining the status quo.

A CPMO would have the obvious costs of staffing and resourcing this team with office equipment, travel, tool development, communications and training.

A secondary cost would be the costs to each government entity of incorporating the new methodology into their existing policies and processes, which includes training and awareness campaigns.

But what if no change occurred? Projects would remain to be fruitless on many occasions, public monies would continue to be wasted and government would continue to be disharmonized. Consequently, public faith in the ability of government could diminish even further with conflicting or duplicating activities and subsequently, community benefits not realized and a deteriorating local and national economy.

The risks of not embracing this methodology far outweigh the costs of its implementation.

> "…two change management approaches are necessary… the employees' perspective and the managers' perspective ...
>
> … The most powerful change management strategies combine organisational change management techniques with individual change management tools to create a robust, closed-loop process."
>
> Change Management - the people side of change, by Jeff Hiatt and Tim Creasey
>
> *(Jeff Hiatt is the president of Prosci Research and founder of the Change Management Learning Centre)*

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