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# PROJECT MANAGER MAGAZINE

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PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT  
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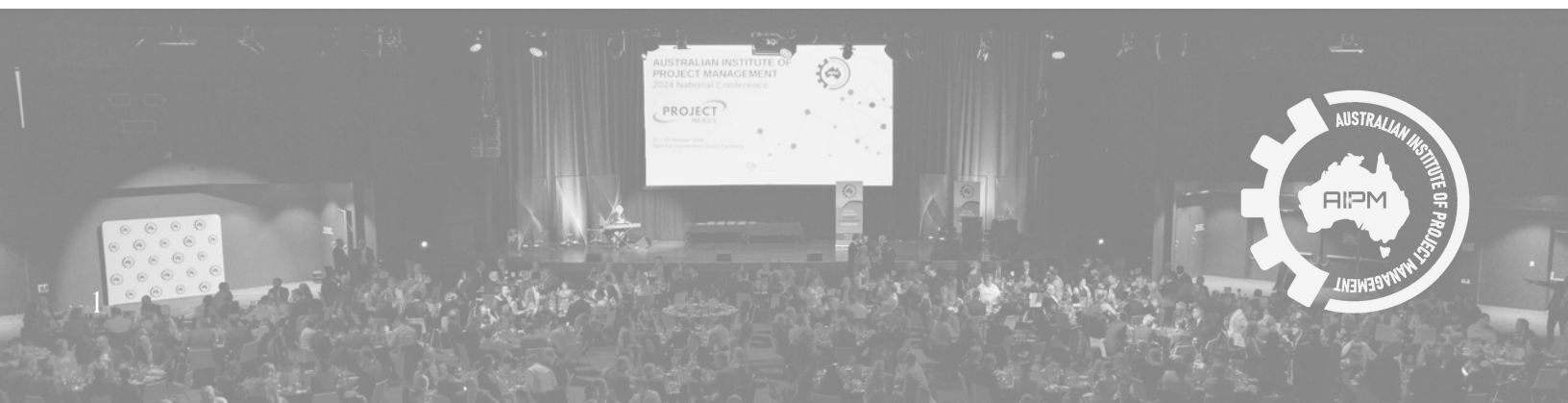
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**Highlights from the  
AIPM 2024  
NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

# Welcome to Country

Auntie Serena Williams

It was an honour to have the Welcome to Country delivered by Auntie Serena Williams who also gave project management some cultural context of the oldest living culture of the world.

***“Here in Australia we have over 300 and something nations with over 500 and something dialects. And we had law and protocol in every country. This is like a project management to me sitting around in yarning circles, everyone having their roles and responsibilities with a project timeline and deliverable outcomes. And this has been working for thousands and thousands of years with our people and still today.”***

Thank you so much for this warm welcome, Auntie Serena!



# Chair's Address

**MS. CONNIE BECK**  
Chair of the Board

“Our conference is always marked as a reunion of our Members. It's bringing our unique communities together to invest in personal growth, connect with each other and celebrate outstanding achievements in project management across various industries.”

“As we stride confidently into the future, we will continue to lead the way. You are all an essential part of our future. Our focus remains delivering value to each of you, bringing you relevant topics that help your career and nurturing your own professional development.”



# CEO's Address

**DR. DARIUS DANESH**  
Chief Executive Officer

“The success of our projects often hinges on our ability to anticipate the future, enhance our leadership and communication skills and ensure we are continuously evolving alongside the world around us.”



The AIPM's leadership in fostering a culture of excellence has helped ensure that our project managers are equipped not only with technical skills but with the broader leadership and strategic thinking needed to drive complex projects forward over many years.

**David Smith MP**

# Excellence

**David Smith MP**

The Australian House of Representatives  
Parliament of Australia



David Smith MP  
The Australian House of Representatives - Parliament of Australia

“It’s a real honor to join you today as we open this national Project management conference. It’s an honour for me for two particular reasons as, as a Canberran, it’s this great to have such an important professional conference here in Canberra, our nation’s capital. But also, I guess, before I came to Parliament, I spent the best part of my career working closely with scientists, engineers and project managers with professionals Australia. Your work means a lot to me and I understand how critical it is in terms of meeting so many of the challenges we have as a nation.

And in today’s fast-paced and complex world, the importance of project management cannot be overstated. **Project management drives our progress in ensuring that our ideas are not just visions. They’re not just theories, but they become tangible outcomes that benefit society as a whole.**

From the development of our infrastructure to healthcare services to our responses to global challenges such as climate change, national security project management provides the structure, leadership and foresight required to bring these plans to life.

**No longer seen as merely a technical skill set, project management has evolved into a strategic tool that enhances productivity and unlocks value across all sectors of society. It is the bridge between vision and reality, innovation and implementation, and the AIPM stands at the centre of the professionalisation of this critical set of skills and occupational groupings.**

The importance of project management to a nation’s success is especially apparent in the delivery of critical government programs, whether in building affordable housing, expanding public transport networks, or enhancing community services, or delivering on our national security priorities. Effective project management ensures that these undertakings are delivered on time, on budget and to the highest standards of quality. This in turn builds public trust in our institutions. One of the most critical objectives we have and demonstrates our commitment to delivering the best outcomes for all citizens across the country.

As the speakers have already said, Australia has had a pivotal moment. **We’re working towards an ambitious future, a future made in Australia**, one that encompasses sustainable infrastructure, innovation in technology and better standards of living for all Australians. Our ability to achieve these goals is closely tied to the proficiency of our project managers. I understand the value of investing in this field knowing that it’s central to managing our nation’s priorities and resources effectively.

Look around you today. This room is filled with the experts, innovators and leaders who will build Australia’s future from energy projects that will deliver on our net zero targets to critical Community services that that support our most vulnerable in our communities. **Project management will play a defining role in shaping the next chapter of our national story. In this regard, the work of the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) is absolutely vital.**



The work of the AIPM is something that I was aware of right throughout my tenure with professionals Australia. Understanding the critical work they're doing across both the Australian and ACT government, particularly here in Canberra.

**The AIPM has been an invaluable partner in building the capacity of professionals in this space. Their commitment to elevating the standards of project management across Australia by offering certification, education and a network for the exchange of ideas has had a profound impact on our nation's capability to deliver world class projects.**

**In particular, the AIPM's leadership in fostering a culture of excellence has helped ensure that our project managers are equipped not only with technical skills but with the broader leadership and strategic thinking needed to drive complex projects forward over many years.**

In this regard, the AIPM's project Nexus theme for this year is an app one because it reflects the reality that **project management sits at the centre of everything we are trying to accomplish as a nation.** From policy implementation to on the ground project delivery, the role of project managers is a unifying force, one that connects ideas, people and resources to achieve shared goals.

Moreover, **the AIPM's dedication to continuous professional development ensures that Australian project managers are future ready as technology evolves and the global landscape changes, so too must our project management practices. The institute's work in staying ahead of these trends is vital to our competitiveness on the global stage.**

Project management is a profession that evolves with the times. You would have all seen that in your careers, responding to both opportunities and challenges. Today we are witnessing the rise of digital project management, where data analytics and AI are enhancing the way we plan and execute projects. The integration of sustainable practices into project delivery is also a top priority, ensuring that we meet our environmental obligations.

The future of project management is not just about delivering individual projects, but about being agents of transformation for entire sectors, whether it's contributing to the future of smart cities, advancing healthcare or enabling rapid infrastructure development, **project managers will play a critical role in shaping how we adapt to and thrive in the future.**

And as we move forward, the role of project managers will continue to expand. This means that more than ever,

We need professionals who understand not just the technical details but the strategic context of projects, the broader economic, environmental and social factors that influence success.

**The government is proud to be working with organisations like the AIPM to ensure that we have a pipeline of skilled professionals ready to take on the challenges of the future.** We understand that without the right skills, even the most well-intentioned policies cannot be successfully implemented. Through the federal government, strategic investment in education and professional development, we can continue to support the growth of project management in Australia.

**Initiatives such as the AIPM certification programs and networking opportunities are essential in building and maintaining a high standard across the profession, and I'm proud to see the dedication of so many professionals in this room today.**

In closing, **I want to acknowledge and thank the Australian Institute of Project Management for its ongoing contributions to Australia's development. You know you are not just managing projects; you're building the future of our nation.**

To the project managers here today, thank you for your hard work and dedication. What you've actually delivered across the last few decades, your efforts may sometimes go unseen, but the results of your work are all around us. The communities we serve, the infrastructure we rely on and the opportunities that we create for future generations.

**As we embark together on the next stage of Australia's growth Journey, project management will be the key to unlocking our full potential as a nation.** I have no doubt that with your leadership, professionalism and vision, we will succeed in building a stronger, more resilient and more prosperous future for all Australians. I look forward to taking that journey with you.

Thank you.

**David Smith MP**

The Australian House of Representatives  
Parliament of Australia

*Opening Address at the Australian Institute of Project Management  
2024 National Conference  
October 2024 - Canberra, Australia*

# Keynote Speaker



The first keynote address was delivered by Rear Admiral David Mann, Head Joint Capabilities at the Department of Defence.

In this powerful speech, Rear Admiral Mann highlighted the importance of embracing adaptive leadership, through which leaders and managers can better align their resources, maintain team morale, and keep projects on track even in uncertain conditions, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes.

The speech provided insights into why establishing and maintaining effective teams is fundamental to success, and emphasised the fact that cross functional or integrated project teams can help breakdown the silos that naturally form in organisations as they facilitate knowledge sharing and foster innovation.

**“When the ocean is rough, when plans change or when things go wrong, that it takes specialists, dedicated leaders and professionals to take positive control, provide confidence and calm the oceans.”**

*Greek Philosopher Publilius Syrus*

## **REAR ADMIRAL DAVID MANN**

Head of Joint Capabilities  
Department of Defence

For Rear Admiral Mann, **“calming the oceans and turning those dreams and good ideas into reality is the realm of the project manager”**.

“I believe the key to our success and your ability to find that balance and calm the oceans for everyone is our willingness to focus on the **people** and the **process**.” said Rear Admiral Mann.



*Panel Members: Laura Fluck, Jennifer Gillett, Jo Farrell, Christina Langwill, and Lauren MacDougall*

# Panel

## WOMEN IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Facilitated by the AIPM Project Controls Community of Practice Lead, the panel discussed challenges and advocacy for the presence of women in the project management industry.

At the opening of the session, the Chair of the AIPM Board pointed out that, over the past few decades, significant strides have been made and hoped to see continued progress for women in project management, along with the strengthening of their voice, not just in project management but for women in general.

The topics discussed by the panel included cultural issues, unconscious bias, stigma and stereotype as some of the barriers that women face in their project management career; and offered some practical solutions to address some of these issues using examples and by sharing personal stories.

# Panel

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Facilitated by the NSW Chapter Committee Lead, the Panel discussed infrastructure and its use is embedded in our daily lives, and how project management is front and centre in the delivery of vital infrastructure.

From discussing various project management methodologies and practices to the unique challenges of the infrastructure sector, the panel discussion provided invaluable insights and perspectives on what is needed to deliver good outcomes for communities and the environment.



*Left to right: Caroline Tomiczek, Dr Ben van Deventer, Gillian Geraghty, Sophie Gray, and Leo Cooper*

# Keynote Speaker

**John Owens**  
CEO, EVOLVE FM

In an inspiring keynote address, John Owens highlighted his views on 'leadership qualities' including the fact that leadership is more about what you do and not who you are.

John emphasised the fact that all leadership transactions, even the difficult ones, should be aimed to be positive and that can be difficult. They should build people up, reinforce their role, give them confidence that things are going OK and that you, as their leader, have their interests at heart.

The insights including 'Leadership Rules' that John shared with the audience included:

- Never miss an opportunity to lead.
- You're always on, so you've got to manage yourself as a leader.

- Make the most of your team. You can't always be the expert.
- Be visible and be involved.
- Be authentic as authenticity is really key to leadership.

The speech highlighted that projects are more than just cost, scope, time and resources; projects don't get delivered without people. Therefore, there needs to be more focus on 'project leadership' rather than just 'project management'.

The full version of John's speech is available on page 76.



# Keynote Speaker

## Adrian Piani

MARKET LEADER, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GHD

Takeaways from the keynote speech delivered by Adrian Piani included:

- **Leadership and Change:** True leadership involves guiding others toward change, which includes having a clear objective, challenging the status quo, and encouraging others to act. Leaders should embody authenticity and inspire a shared vision.
- **Problem Solving in Engineering and Project Management:** Effective problem-solving requires setting clear outcomes first, then identifying the current state and taking necessary steps to bridge the gap. This practical model helps avoid jumping into details without knowing the goal.
- **Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Decision-Making:** Sustainability isn't just about minimising harm but creating positive impacts. Projects should aim for "nature positive" results, contributing to environmental benefits rather than merely reducing negatives.
- **Triple Bottom Line and Evolving Priorities:** While the traditional sustainability model balances economic, social, and environmental factors, there's a growing emphasis on prioritising environmental considerations to safeguard the future.
- **Resilience as a Key Concept:** Resilience involves preparing for both chronic and acute stresses, whether environmental or community-based. This capability to adapt and bounce back is crucial in today's rapidly changing world.
- **Frameworks and Tools for Sustainable Projects:** Many tools and government frameworks now support sustainable practices, with some mandates requiring environmental rating tools for large-scale infrastructure, demonstrating a shift in professional standards.



# Keynote Speaker

**Jo Cooper**

**FOUNDER & CEO, THE GOOD WARRIOR**

After delivering a passionate musical performance at the Closing Address, Jo Cooper shared some personal stories about tenacity, resilience and leadership. She also encouraged the audience to refuse to be a bystander in the face of injustice and bias.

As the CEO of The Good Warrior, Jo has been leading its mission to transform bystander culture into one of active engagement and positive impact. In her own words, Jo is "living proof that **one voice can spark change on a grand scale**".





# PROJECT MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

*The premier project management awards in Australia, recognising project professionals, organisations, and outstanding projects across industries.*





# CHAPTERS

2024 Project Management Achievement Chapter Awards

# AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Celebrating leadership in  
project excellence



# PROJECT AWARDS

ACT

Australian Capital Territory Winner  
**Construction/Engineering projects**



**RPS** MAKING  
COMPLEX  
EASY  
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

## RPS National Gallery Capital Works Program - Phase 1+2

Phase 1 and 2 of the Capital works program at the National Gallery were highly complex, base building infrastructure upgrade projects that took place within a world class cultural institution that houses extremely sensitive and valuable works of art. Phase 1 comprised of a series of building upgrades such as dehumidifiers, boilers and building management systems while Phase 2 was a complete upgrade of the public Gallery lighting to LED while incorporating state of the art technology to ensure all assets are used as efficiently as possible and contribute to the purpose of displaying the National Collection

# PROJECT AWARDS

Australian Capital Territory Winner  
Government projects

ACT



Australian Government



Services  
Australia

## Section 3 – Outline of the Enhanced myGov Program



Australian Government



Services  
Australia

## Enhanced myGov Program

The Enhanced myGov Program (the Program) was established to deliver an enhanced myGov experience for users, improving how people engage with government services. Run using project management methodology over two years, it successfully delivered an updated myGov platform with new capabilities and user enhancements. Extensive change and risk management was required to transition over 20 million myGov accounts, and 15 services across 9 government agencies. With no disruptions to services throughout transition, it set a new standard for managing government digital initiatives, collaborating with government agencies and delivering value to the public with more efficient, user-friendly, and reliable online services.

# PROJECT AWARDS

ACT

Australian Capital Territory Winner  
**Small projects**



**RPS** MAKING  
COMPLEX  
EASY  
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

## High security intertenancy office accommodation retrofit for a Federal Government Agency

Implementation of a high security intertenancy office accommodation retrofit for a Federal Government Agency (Agency) Security, ICT, and Service Delivery Team. The project amalgamated the Agency's 3 disperse office leases across Canberra and was essential in supporting the Agency in delivering a scheme which supports a better life for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable Australians. Works consisted of the design, procurement, and delivery management of a purpose-built fit out which incorporated the highest quality disability planning principles, improved security, reduced the Agency's carbon footprint, improved operational costs, and achieved additional efficiencies enabling further improvement on the Agency already high performance.

# PROJECT AWARDS

ACT

Australian Capital Territory Winner  
**Professional Services projects**



**aurecon**

## **Guided Weapons & Explosive Ordnance - Storage and Distribution**

The Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) Group is central to building the Australian Defence Force's capacity to deter, shape and respond by providing the ability to hold an adversary at risk in Australia's northern approaches. Within the GWEO, a taskforce is transforming the current storage and distribution network into a resilient, optimised, and operationally integrated system which supports Defence's Integrated Force. As Enterprise Partner, Aurecon provides distribution modelling, infrastructure studies, site and scope feasibility reviews and accelerated design package delivery to facilitate a complex, highly technical program of works to support one of the Government's highest Defence priorities.



# CHAPTERS

2024 Project Management Achievement Chapter Awards

# NEW SOUTH WALES



Celebrating leadership in  
project excellence



# PROJECT AWARDS

NSW

New South Wales Winner  
Construction/Engineering projects



## Parramatta Light Rail

Stage 1 of Parramatta Light Rail (PLR) connects Westmead to Carlingford via the Parramatta CBD and Camellia, with a 12km track featuring 16 accessible stops and 12 new or refurbished bridges. PLR is a NSW Government state critical infrastructure project, delivered to serve a growing Sydney. This transport megaproject supports urban growth by delivering high-frequency, 'turn-up-and-go' services, attracting people and jobs to the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula priority growth area. By 2026, the PLR project anticipates a patronage of approximately 10 million trips per year. PLR is a city-shaping catalyst and has the potential to leave a lasting legacy.

# PROJECT AWARDS

NSW

Before



New South Wales Winner  
**Government projects**

pmlog:c®

## Regional and Local Roads Repair Program - NSW Metropolitan Area

The RLRRP, funded by the NSW Government, successfully addressed urgent road repairs caused by severe flooding, storm damage, and persistent wet weather events in 2022. Its objectives included: Enhancing safety for motorists; Strengthening community resilience; Boosting regional and metropolitan connectivity; and Implementing sustainable practices. The program achieved an 83% reduction in car damage claims, resolved 8,347 community complaints, and streamlined workforce operations. By prioritising cost-effective strategies and environmental sustainability, the RLRRP left a legacy for future project management practices. Overall, it significantly improved road conditions, benefiting both residents and businesses.



# PROJECT AWARDS

NSW

New South Wales Winner  
Transformation projects



Sensei

## NSW Department of Customer Service delivers wide-scale uplift for all projects and teams

Made up of more than 30 agencies, entities, and business units, with 12000 people, the Department of Customer Service (DCS) saw their organisation incorporating different ways of working across each division. Using different legacy systems such as Clarity and Clarizen, causing the Department to lack transparency across their portfolio of work, DCS recognised that they needed to introduce a new system that would allow their people to consistently meet the same standards and increase overall connectivity across the organisation. By replacing these systems with Altus, the Department now has transformed their visibility across all projects, reinforcing governance and enhancing productivity

# PROJECT AWARDS

NSW

New South Wales Winner  
Small projects



## M12 High Pressure Pipeline Relocation

The M12 forms part of the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan by Transport for New South Wales to provide direct access to the new Western Sydney International Airport. Integrating the M7 and Elizabeth Drive upgrades, the M12 east package required Zinfra to manage the relocation of approximately 2km of high-pressure gas pipelines. Despite the challenges of navigating heritage underground watermains, critical interstate gas pipelines servicing NSW and VIC, crossing multiple major roads, and maintaining surrounding customer supply with a “live” gas environment, Zinfra successfully delivered the high-pressure pipeline relocation safely and on schedule, allowing M12 construction phases to proceed without disruption.

# PROJECT AWARDS

NSW

New South Wales Winner  
**Regional projects**



## The Arch

The project consisted of the project management and superintendent role in the design, and construction of a 122-place childcare centre on a greenfield site located in rural Victoria (1732 Sturt St, Ballarat VIC). This project was delivered on time and within budget, having a high-level of complexity with its completion during covid shutdown periods. Exceeded client's expectations with a quality build providing social and economic value to the regional area of Ballarat by:

- Supporting working families- providing access to childcare services enabling parents to pursue work.
- Stimulating local economy with the centre creating jobs and supporting local business

# PROJECT AWARDS

NSW

New South Wales Winner  
**Sustainable projects**



## **Addison Road Community Centre - Asset Management Plan & Technical Memo**

GHD is working with Addison Road Community Organisation (“Addison Road”) to provide an Asset Management Plan, providing them with comprehensive understanding of the state of their assets and the ability to make informed decisions on how to manage, maintain and upgrade these assets for the future of their 3.5-acre heritage listed site. GHD is providing these services on a pro-bono basis, however, is managing internal costs within an approved budget. The project outcomes align to GHD’s Sustainability and Social Responsibility Policy, ensuring we deliver innovative and responsible business solutions and support sustainable and socially responsible practices, whilst supporting local communities.

# PROJECT AWARDS

NSW

New South Wales Winner  
**Professional Services projects**



## Werribee Kids ELC

The project consisted of both the project management and superintendent role in the design, and construction of a 127-place childcare centre located in Victoria (2-4 Russell St, Werribee VIC 3030) for an established childcare operator with multiple centres in operation. This project was delivered on time and within budget, having a high-level of complexity with its completion during covid shutdown periods and being located interstate with our office located in Sydney. Their services improved efficiency, taking control from start to finish allowing them to focus on the day-to-day operations, overall business objectives and future portfolio.

# PROJECT AWARDS

NSW

New South Wales Winner  
Project Management Office (PMO)

hosted by Equifax  
iCIRT



## Creative Vision PMO

Creative Vision is a pioneering construction consultancy in Australia, specializing in innovative Project Management and Superintendent services. Guided by the PMBOK framework, our methodology ensures adherence to best practices across project lifecycles. Our comprehensive company governance covers initiation, time, quality, cost, procurement, resources, integration, risk, and contract management. With a dedicated PMO, we uphold superior standards, prioritizing stakeholder satisfaction and excellence. Committed to transforming Australia's construction landscape, we also prioritise public upskilling on building reforms.



# CHAPTERS

2024 Project Management Achievement Chapter Awards

## NORTHERN TERRITORY



Celebrating leadership in  
project excellence



# PROJECT AWARDS

NT

Northern Territory Winner  
**Regional projects**



## Wadeye Community Pool Redevelopment

The Wadeye Community Pool has been a central part of the Wadeye community for 20 years, providing essential social and health benefits to its users. Two years ago, operations came to a halt as the facility reached its end-of-life cycle, compromising the safety of the community. Recognising the importance of the pool, the West Daly Regional Council took a proactive approach to refurbish and revitalise the facility to provide a safe and healthy environment for the Wadeye community to swim, play and exercise. The refurbishment will ensure the pool remains an asset to the community for decades to come.



# PROJECT AWARDS

NT

Northern Territory Winner  
**Sustainable projects**



**aurecon**

## **Solar Farms at RAAF Darwin and Robertson Barracks**

Renewable energy is important for combating the effects of climate change by reducing reliance on fossil fuels. In a Defence first, two solar farms, consisting of 36,456 panels, have been developed at two Defence bases. Constructed and operated by Assure Energy, on land leased by Defence, it's the first large-scale renewable energy project that Defence has embarked on. It's also the first large-scale renewable assets to be connected to the Darwin-Katherine electricity system. Aurecon was the project manager and contract administrator, helping Defence bring the power purchase agreements, design, and construction of this project to fruition.



# CHAPTERS

2024 Project Management Achievement Chapter Awards

## QUEENSLAND



Celebrating leadership in  
project excellence



# PROJECT AWARDS

QLD

Queensland Winner

Construction/Engineering projects



## Breakfast Creek / Yowoggera Bridge

Brisbane City Council delivered the Breakfast Creek / Yowoggera Bridge (BCYB) and Lores Bonney Riverwalk extension, providing an enhanced active transport link between Brisbane's inner city and northern suburbs. The project team overcame a series of engineering and construction challenges to achieve project completion under budget, including simultaneously undertaking construction activities on land and over water via barge, within the context of the area's unique heritage constraints and landscape setting. The project delivered around 700 metres of dedicated pathways for pedestrians and cyclists that has already been embraced by the public and become an integral part of the active transport network.

# PROJECT AWARDS

QLD

Queensland Winner  
**Government projects**



**aurecon**

## Land 4502 Additional CH-47 Chinook Facilities for 5th Aviation Regiment

Aurecon provided four new aircraft shelters and supporting infrastructure across three main stages of work for Department of Defence's 5th Aviation Regiment at the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base in Townsville, North Queensland. The purpose of the project was to provide protection for Defence's newly acquired CH-47 Chinook helicopters from humidity and corrosion and increase their operational life. The project was also integral in adding value to the regional economy by sourcing over 90% of design and construction goods and services from local businesses, resulting in over AUD 4 million in project savings.

# PROJECT AWARDS

QLD

Queensland Winner  
Small projects



**aurecon**

## RAAF Townsville Commercial Centre

The RAAF Townsville Commercial Centre is a complex refurbishment of an important, and historically significant building used by RAAF personnel and visiting soldiers. The refurbishment has breathed new life into the building, creating new social and commercial spaces against a backdrop of significant budget constraints and challenges which had the potential to impact schedule and the ability for tenants to be fully operational upon project completion. Aurecon's responsive, proactive, and communication-led project management approach overcame these competing challenges, ensuring the building was operational and functional to serve personnel and visitors well into the future.

# PROJECT AWARDS

QLD

Queensland Winner  
Regional projects



## BlueCare Sunrise Beach Aged Care

UnitingCare's Property Team and Ranbury delivered the innovative \$50 million Sunrise Beach Residential Age Care home well ahead of schedule despite major challenges, providing much needed senior accommodation for Noosa's rapidly ageing population. Their collaborative relationship enabled an immediate response to Royal Commission findings including a new, cutting-edge design expertly delivered through a \$1.3 million acceleration initiative.

# PROJECT AWARDS

QLD

Queensland Winner  
**Sustainable projects**



## The Wamuran Irrigation Scheme

The Wamuran Irrigation Scheme exemplifies triple bottom line success in a high complexity project environment. This Scheme will provide year-round water security for the Wamuran Agricultural District while sustainably managing wastewater from the Caboolture South Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Scheme enables farmers to increase crop yield and in turn, employment in the region by delivering recycled water at pressure, directly into on-farm irrigation infrastructure with the turn of a valve. The economic, social and environmental benefits are significant by cost-effectively supporting residential development in Moreton Bay and improving the health of the Caboolture River by diverting nutrients for beneficial reuse.

# PROJECT AWARDS

QLD

Queensland Winner  
**Professional Services projects**



## Seqwater Capital Delivery Transformation Program - PPM System Deployment

Seqwater (the client) delivers safe, secure and cost-effective bulk water supply for over three million South East Queenslanders. Responding to an increasing capital delivery program, Seqwater established an enterprise level portfolio office as part of its Capital Delivery Transformation Program to improve project and program delivery and portfolio management. Seqwater appointed Turner & Townsend to manage the implementation of a fit-for-purpose Project and Portfolio Management system, Planisware Enterprise, to transform end-to-end project management, process governance and program-level reporting. This is the first-of-its-kind in Australia's infrastructure sector that improved operational outcomes and set a new standard in water infrastructure management.





# CHAPTERS

2024 Project Management Achievement Chapter Awards

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Celebrating leadership in project excellence



# PROJECT AWARDS

SA

South Australian Winner  
Construction/Engineering projects



**RCP**   
Leadership in Project Management

## 60 King William Street Adelaide

60 King William Street is a 14-storey premium-grade tower comprising 40,000sqm of ultra-modern office space, 1700sqm of retail and is Adelaide's first 100% electric, net-zero emissions-enabled building. Setting new benchmarks for sustainability, 60KW is targeting a 6-star Green Star rating, a 5-star NABERS Energy Rating and WELL Platinum certification. The complex project, designed and tendered in COVID-19 lockdowns also seamlessly incorporates the heritage listed Sands & McDougall building façade.

# PROJECT AWARDS

SA

South Australian Winner  
ICT/Telecommunications projects



Power  
Networks

Empowering South Australia



## Australian Energy Sector Cyber Security Framework Uplift

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has a cyber security framework for the Australian energy sector – the Australian Energy Sector Cyber Security Framework (AESCSF). To comply with this framework, our AESCSF Uplift Project aimed to raise our cyber security from Maturity Indicator Level (MIL)-1 to MIL-2 across 11 domains. Aiming to exceed this, with a stretch goal of achieving 20–80% MIL-3. The project navigated complex IT and OT environments, an evolving cyber threat landscape, and varied organisational culture, while managing resource constraints and meeting regulatory compliance. We attained 100% compliance for MIL-2 across all domains and achieved our stretch goal.

# PROJECT AWARDS

SA

## FIELD SATELLITE CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

South Australian Winner  
Small projects



## Field Satellite Connectivity Pilot

SA Power Networks is at the forefront of embracing Starlink technology and realising its game-changing potential. Satellite provides critical backup communication for Field Services Crews (FSC) operating across our vast 180,000 square kilometre network, where cellular or radio coverage is unavailable. A pilot project was created to prove whether Starlink could be a viable replacement for our legacy satellite solution. Subsequently, SA Power Networks is accelerating the rollout of Australia's leading Starlink solution for FSC to access anywhere in South Australia.

# PROJECT AWARDS

SA

South Australian Winner  
Regional projects



**aurecon**

## Cultana Training Area Road Remediation

At 2,093 km<sup>2</sup>, the Cultana Training Area (CUTA) is one of the Australian Defence Force's largest training facilities, supporting significant training activities. Safe and reliable vehicular access through CUTA's challenging terrain is essential for its operations. Between August 2020 and July 2023, Aurecon oversaw the successful redesign and remediation of 6km of unsealed road at the entrance to the facility, providing improved access for heavy wheeled and tracked vehicles, and mitigating the risk of flooding and erosion. This high complex, multi-dimensional project was delivered on time and on budget, forming a vital link in major, ongoing roadworks on site.

# PROJECT AWARDS

SA

South Australian Winner  
**Sustainable projects**



 **ElectraNet**

## **EPLink (Eyre Peninsula Link)**

The Eyre Peninsula Link project constructed 270kms of high-voltage electricity transmission line from Cultana to Port Lincoln. This complex project traversed remote and diverse landscapes, including pastoral stations, conservation parks, broadacre farming and rural living. Each landscape posed unique challenges with varied stakeholder concerns. The project demonstrated significant achievements in sustainability, including minimising environmental and cultural impacts, renewing and strengthening familial bonds and facilitating a transfer of key cultural knowledge leaving a legacy of cultural stewardship. Key achievements include reducing native vegetation clearance by 76%, minimising impacts on species protected by the EPBC Act and award-winning preservation of cultural heritage.



# CHAPTERS

2024 Project Management Achievement Chapter Awards

# TASMANIA



Celebrating leadership in  
project excellence



# PROJECT AWARDS

TAS

Tasmanian Winner  
Government projects



## North West Maternity Services Transition Project

The North West Maternity Services Transition Project, initiated by the Tasmanian Department of Health, implemented key recommendations from an independent review. This included transitioning from a privately contracted service to a one-governance, new public service under the Tasmanian Health Service. Initially divided into two streams, the project was later redefined becoming a program of seven interdependent projects. The interdependent projects included the passage of new legislation, creating a new Service Delivery Model, staff contract management and a standalone Culture Strategy. Due to high profile community pressure and associated risk, the project end date was brought forward by 12 months.



# PROJECT AWARDS

Tasmanian Winner  
ICT/Telecommunications projects



## Digital Dentures

The Tasmanian Government's Public Dental Provider, Oral Health Services Tasmania (OHST), procured digital denture technology, as well as the construction of two digital laboratories, to implement a complete digital workflow for the construction of dental prostheses for the Tasmanian community. The primary objective of this \$970,000 project was to use digital denture technology to reduce the number of appointments and laboratory time required to construct and fit a denture for a patient, as well as providing a denture that is more precise and durable. The digital denture project was delivered on time and in scope despite significant challenges.

# PROJECT AWARDS

TAS

Tasmanian Winner  
**Regional projects**



ROBERT  
LUXMOORE  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

## Northern Midlands Solar Farm

The Northern Midlands Solar Farm is a 288 MW AC solar and battery energy facility, proposed to be built on two sections of farmland on the Connorville Station, Cressy (TAS) property, off Macquarie Road. The site is currently used for agricultural activities (mostly grazing) which are proposed to continue once the solar farm is operational. The proposal includes photo-voltaic panels that pivot to track the sun, two substations and firming battery storage. As a part of the project, a new 220kV transmission line will be constructed to connect the project to the energy grid via Palmerston Substation near Poatina.

# PROJECT AWARDS

TAS

Tasmanian Winner  
Professional Services projects



## Conscious Sedation Pilot Program

Oral Health Services Tasmania (OHST) implemented the Conscious Sedation Pilot (CSP) in Southern Tasmania in December 2022. The purpose of the CSP was to identify a successful service model to deliver dental treatments using Conscious Sedation (CS) to patients in a community dental setting. An Australian community public dental first, the CSP was initiated due to the frequent cancellation of OHST's dental theatre sessions to prioritise other surgery at the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH). Between December 2022 and June 2023 (CSP – Phase 1) OHST successfully delivered 10 CS Days within budget, achieving excellent dental outcomes and patient satisfaction.



# CHAPTERS

2024 Project Management Achievement Chapter Awards

## VICTORIA



Celebrating leadership in  
project excellence



# PROJECT AWARDS

VIC

Victorian Winner

Construction/Engineering projects



 **Beca**

## EastLink Resurfacing Project

Described as “Melbourne’s Motorway Masterpiece”, the 39km EastLink is one of Australia’s longest and safest toll roads, carrying 1 billion+ vehicle trips since opening in 2008. Every 12-15 years the motorway’s Open Graded Asphalt (OGA) surface needs replacing, and that’s exactly what Beca, working with operator ConnectEast and construction contractor Downer EDI, have made a reality. A \$50 million construction project of significant length and complexity, through careful project management and engineering smarts, EastLink’s resurfacing works were successfully completed on March 7 2024, ensuring a smoother drive and “time better spent” for motorists in Melbourne’s east for many years ahead.

# PROJECT AWARDS

VIC

Victorian Winner  
Government projects



**TSA**

## TSA - AirServices OneSKY

As part of the most complex transformation of air traffic management in Australian aviation history, the OneSKY Australia™ Program requires purpose-built facilities to house and support Australia's next generation Civil Military Air Traffic Management System (CMATS) and its supporting technologies. As the existing air traffic management system must be maintained until CMATS is operational, new facilities with independent systems have been built to ensure Airservices can provide a seamless transition for airspace users, maintaining business resilience with uninterrupted service to keep Australia's air traffic network moving.

# PROJECT AWARDS

VIC

Victorian Winner  
Small projects



## Melbourne Airport Gate B25 Redevelopment

Melbourne Airport connects Victoria to the world, and as Australia's busiest airport, the need to continue to grow and innovate is essential to maintain capacity and enhance the traveller experience. The redevelopment of Terminal 1's Gate B25 entailed working around and supporting a live airport environment whilst undertaking an extension of the existing structure, services and airfield facilities to deliver a brand new IATA Compliant Code C Gate Lounge and Airbridge. The project was delivered on time and within the project budget, with minimal operational disruptions and, will continue to improve airport operations and the passenger experience in Terminal 1.

# PROJECT AWARDS

VIC

Victorian Winner  
Regional projects



aurecon

## Puckapunyal Living In Accommodation

The purpose of the project was to provide new living in accommodation that makes Defence life similar to life outside Defence. The project delivered 111 sole occupancy rooms, together with communal indoor and outdoor spaces, to provide comfort for new cadets at the Puckapunyal Military Area. The impact of the new accommodation on positive training and development for personnel, has been facilitated through Defence and Aurecon. This regional Victorian project demonstrates social value with contemporary services that meet the needs of personnel. The appointment of a local contractor, with local sub-contractors, was prioritised to provide economic stimulation for regional Victoria.





# CHAPTERS

2024 Project Management Achievement Chapter Awards

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Celebrating leadership in project excellence



# PROJECT AWARDS

WA

Western Australian Winner  
Construction/Engineering projects



## Mindarie Breakwater Upgrade

The Mindarie Breakwater is managed by the City of Wanneroo and it provides protection to public infrastructure, private properties and marina infrastructure. Prior to the upgrade works, the structure was in poor condition resulting in several ongoing structural issues and public safety risks associated with wave overtopping and rock stability. Detailed coastal engineering assessment and construction risks associated with the poor breakwater condition added a level of complexity to both design and construction phases. The project in treacherous coastal environment was managed by the City with financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government via the Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Program.

# PROJECT AWARDS

WA

Western Australian Winner  
**Government projects**



## **Stock Road extension project, Bullsbrook**

The primary objective of the project was to upgrade Stock Road, Bullsbrook from being a no through road to a two lane, single carriage way connection between Great Northern Highway and Tonkin Highway with capacity to accommodate RAV7 and Over Size Over Mass vehicles. The road construction scope included for the installation of 5 intersection stubs so as to provide connectivity for future Structure Plan Development for the South Bullsbrook Industrial Precinct. Level of complexity: Very high for Local Government – This project is the largest (financial) project undertaking by the City of Swan to date.

# PROJECT AWARDS

WA

Western Australian Winner  
Small projects



**ACORPP**  
AUSTRALIAN CORPORATE PROPERTY AND PROJECTS

## Liontown Resources Workplace Fitout

Liontown Resources, initially occupying a 500m<sup>2</sup> office in West Perth, required a larger office space due to operational expansion and the increasing demand for lithium. ACORPP was engaged as Project Managers and fulfilled a Superintendency role throughout the project from site selection to operations. The complexity of the project came from its location within a brand-new Green Star building, which was the first commercial building in Perth to have a wholly underfloor mechanical system. The project was delivered to meet the Client's requirements, on time and budget.

# PROJECT AWARDS

WA

Western Australian Winner  
Regional projects



**Fitzroy Bridge Alliance**  
In partnership with Main Roads WA

## Fitzroy Bridge Alliance

The New Fitzroy River Bridge project was a major infrastructure undertaking in Western Australia's Kimberley region to replace the existing bridge that was irreparably damaged following Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie. Completed in an unprecedented 288 days, the Fitzroy River Bridge opened to traffic on 10 December 2023. Starting in February 2023 with minimal design or geotechnical data, the team pressed forward, driven by the urgency to reopen before the next wet season. The project's success was due to the application of sound project management practices such as agile planning, unprecedented collaboration with government and industry, and integral involvement of Traditional Owners.

# PROJECT AWARDS

Western Australian Winner  
**Professional Services projects**



## Perth Zoological Authority - New Playground

The project sought to demolish and replace Perth Zoo's playground, creating an inclusive, nature-inspired space with animal mimicry opportunities to enhance visitor experience and accommodate children of all ages. The objective included seamless integration with the site's natural attributes and adjacent facilities, including the Café and Function Centre, main lawn and caves/main lawn roads, while ensuring zero disruption to zoo operations and nearby animal enclosures. Completion before the School Term Three holiday break in September 2023 was crucial for an official opening coinciding with the Zoo's 125-year anniversary celebrations, which our time planning services proved fundamental.



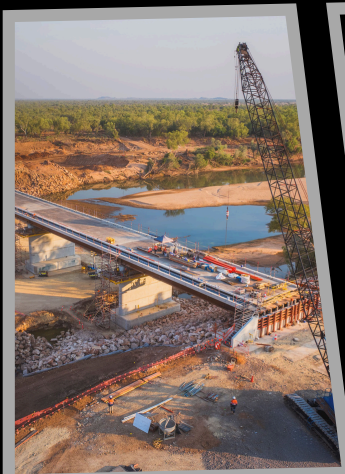
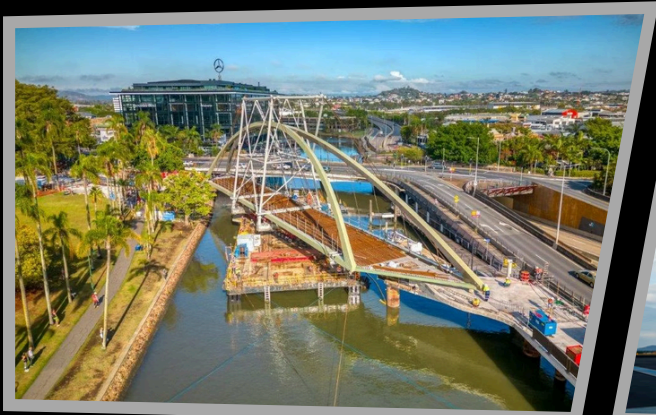
# NATIONAL

2024 Project Management Achievement National Awards

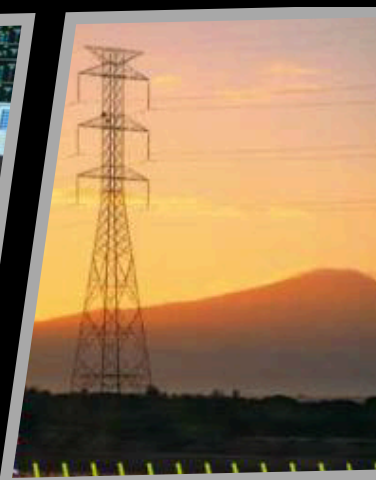


Celebrating leadership in project excellence





**Technical Services Forum**  
 hosted by Equifax  
 iCIRT







# NATIONAL WINNER

Construction/Engineering projects

Breakfast Creek / Yowoggera Bridge





# NATIONAL WINNER



Government projects

Land 4502 Additional CH-47 Chinook Facilities for 5th Aviation Regiment





PROTECTIVE  
EYE PROTECTION  
MUST BE WORN  
IN THIS AREA WHEN  
MACHINES ARE IN USE



# NATIONAL WINNER

ICT/Telecommunications projects

Digital Dentures





# NATIONAL WINNER

Transformation projects

NSW Department of Customer Service delivers wide-scale uplift for all projects and teams





# NATIONAL WINNER

Small projects

Melbourne Airport Gate B25  
Redevelopment



Turner & Townsend





# NATIONAL WINNER

Regional projects

Fitzroy Bridge Alliance

Fitzroy Bridge Alliance  
In partnership with Main Roads WA





# NATIONAL WINNER

Sustainable projects

EPLink (Eyre Peninsula Link)





# NATIONAL WINNER

Professional Services projects

Guided Weapons & Explosive Ordnance  
- Storage and Distribution







# Technical Services Forum

hosted by Equifax



# NATIONAL WINNER



Project Management Office (PMO)

Creative Vision PMO





# 2024 PROJECT OF THE YEAR

**Breakfast Creek /  
Yowoggera Bridge**  
Brisbane City Council





# ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP A PERSONAL VIEW

By **John Owens**  
CEO, Evolve FM

(Presented at the AIPM conference on 23 October 2024)

## Introduction

It is with a degree of trepidation that one agrees to speak on the subject of leadership, especially at a conference like this with so many accomplished leaders and managers also presenting. I feel very flattered even to be asked to present today, as I certainly would not consider myself to be an expert on leadership by any means. Nevertheless, I have been fortunate enough to have found myself placed in positions of leadership in widely varying situations, and have also had the good fortune to observe very fine leaders in action, and maybe not so fine ones, so I hope I will be able to make some contribution to the subject today.

My topic today is “Adaptive Leadership”, which has become quite a “thing”, if the results of a Google search is how we judge “things” these days. Adaptive Leadership seems to be one of the latest manifestations of Leadership, and I will look at how it differs from common or garden leadership a bit later on.

Leadership is, of course, a very crowded topic. To judge by the number of books and articles and internet pages devoted to it, we should be overwhelmed by the quality of leadership that we experience in our everyday lives. And yet, there seems to be no shortage of articles and commentary decrying poor leadership in so many areas of life. For example, on 21 September 2024, Time magazine ran an article on “Why Exceptional Leadership is So Rare”, [1] which noted that “Let’s frame our answer by making one thing clear: Exceptional leadership is rare. Mediocre and poor leadership is the norm”. It also cited a 2014 article that noted “companies miss the mark on high managerial talent in 82% of their hiring decisions”[2]. Given that I am standing in a room full of managers and leaders, and we in here are clearly great at managing and leading, there are clearly a lot of duds outside this room.

[1] Barry Conchie and Sarah Dalton, “Why Exceptional Leadership is So Rare”, at *Why Exceptional Leadership is So Rare* (msn.com) accessed 3/10/24

[2] Randall Beck and Jim Harter, “Why Good Managers Are So Rare”, at *Why Good Managers Are So Rare* (hbr.org) accessed 3/10/24



## What is leadership?

I guess it is compulsory in presentations like this to start, as Julie Andrews might say, at the very beginning, allegedly a very good place to start. So what is “leadership”? Does it matter? Is it the same as “management”?

As it turns out, despite the excess of attention placed on the topic, leadership remains a somewhat slippery concept. As you might imagine, there are 17.1 million definitions of leadership – at least that’s how many returns the search “leadership definition” gets on Google.

In my view, leadership is about interacting with people in such a way as to obtain their willing support and participation in the achievement of some worthwhile goal, as outlined by the leader. In essence, leadership is about actions conducted to or with **people** – most commonly those who are in some formal sense subordinates, but also in informal situations with peers, family, friends, or even nominal superiors. I think it can be usefully contrasted with management, which is about **resources** (including, as it happens, human resources): the planning, allocation, and administration of resources. When it comes to human resources, HR management is about the mechanics of finding, recruiting, administering, and termination of staff in a mechanistic sense, whereas leadership is about appealing to their hearts and spirit to get them willingly on board to achieve the goal. And, by the way, to get the best out of people you need both: people enthused by an inspiring leader quickly get unenthused if they are not paid on time or their leave is not managed.

One issue that my definition throws up is the idea of “worthwhile goals”. I think that ethical goals are important for leaders, at least judged by the honest standards of the group at the time, noting that different people will have different views on this: for the English, Henry the Fifth was embarked on a noble quest to recover lost lands and press his rightful claim to the French throne, whereas for the French, not so much. And call me Pollyanna, but I do feel that those embarked on unethical projects ultimately suffer from corruption which impacts on their “technical” leadership skill. To expand on this a little bit, I think a leader needs to be selfless and considerate of others, but people who are like that are unlikely to be embarked on ignoble causes. So I think my conclusion is that corrupt enterprises ultimately corrupt leaders and leadership, even if such people may have a degree of technical leadership ability, if only at the start.

And I also think that not only are ethical goals important, but ethical behaviour in pursuit of those goals is also vital. It may be tempting, when running organisations (perhaps especially those in pursuit of noble goals) to cut ethical corners, perhaps arguing even unconsciously that the end

justifies the means. But this logic is a slippery slope, that can (and indeed often does) end in disaster – reputation damage, criminal or other sanctions, and perhaps ultimately dissolution of the organisation and failure to achieve the noble goals one has set oneself. Even if those disasters are avoided, your people will find you out, and your standing with them will ultimately likely suffer.

## Leadership as transactions

To get back to leadership more technically, I am of the strong view that leadership is more about what you do, not who you are, and it can be taught and learned. Leadership is about the interactions that you have with people, and how those interactions shape their view about you as a leader, and whether they will trust you with their support and obedience. It follows from this that a leader has to be comfortable interacting with people, and should seek out opportunities for such interactions.

Not just personal interactions – email, zoom calls, meetings, and social events all count. Leadership may have become more difficult since the advent of COVID 19, but that just means that as leaders we need to work harder. And remember, the small things matter – how you address someone in an email; how you sign it off; whether you smile at someone in the lift; or whether you ask about a staff member’s new baby.

In my view, daily interactions like these are the crucial transactions of leaders, especially in large organisations, and simply cannot be avoided if you want to be a successful leader. Now some people may be less comfortable in these interactions than others. But I don’t think that means they don’t have to do them, as I think such transactions are fundamental to good leadership. It just means they come easier to some than others, and the latter group might have to work harder to achieve them.

So what are the “leadership transactions” that I refer to here?

Leadership transactions vary from job to job, and industry to industry. In a project situation, leadership interactions may well be with staff or contractors working on specific elements of the project. They might take place in a formal briefing session on progress so far, or when issues arise that require a decision. They might be a very informal visit made by the project manager or executive to the project, when the PM meets some of the staff for the first time.

For a public servant, a lot of the leadership transactions occur over the production of written work – briefing papers, ministerial submissions, and so on. How the leader manages these transactions can be the difference between a motivated public servant and one that is urgently scanning

“APS Jobs” as he or she takes a break from the 22nd re-write of their brief.

It is important to note that leadership transactions vary according to level. If you are the CEO of a large organisation, most of your interactions will be with your C-suite direct reports, and you will only occasionally get to meet the minions whose work pays your salary. Perhaps obviously, the nature of the transactions between the C-suite and the minions will be different, but both are vital, in my view, and a good leader needs to know how to do both successfully.

But all leadership transactions – even difficult ones – should be aimed to be positive. They should build people up, reinforce their role, give them confidence that things are going ok and that you as leader have their interests at heart. They should be done with respect and care for the people involved – remember, it is not compulsory to work for you, and the job market is pretty hot at the moment.

Whatever the nature of the leadership transactions in your industry or organisation, it is important as a leader that you understand their nature, and your role in them, and how you should act in them to get the end result of willingness to follow you and achieve your program.

### Some Leadership Rules

So what are my leadership “rules”? What follows is my list, though I am conscious there is some overlap between them. I am also extremely conscious that I have fallen short of some of these ideals myself, sometimes on numerous occasions!

- **Never miss an opportunity to lead.** My first rule gets to the nature of the transactions I described earlier. In my view, good leaders never miss an opportunity to lead – to interact positively with their people. They see every chance to talk to their people as a way of shaping them and convincing them that the organization is in good hands, and they should be supportive of it.
  - I saw this first hand when I worked at the Sydney Olympics as a consultant for Raytheon in the leadup to the 2000 Games. The CEO of SOCOG – Sandy Hollway – always came across as genuinely interested in you and what you were doing, and was widely respected as a result.
- **You’re always on – so manage yourself.** As a leader, you are always being watched, so you need to manage yourself: you need to make sure that stuff that is happening in your life does not impact on your people. As a leader, one needs to be conscious that when you meet someone on the day you are having a bad day, it might be the only interaction you have with one of your staff for months, and their view of you will be shaped by that interaction.

- This was brought home to me by someone who had been my first year cadet at ADFA in 1987, when I met up with him two years later. He said to me that the week I broke up with a girlfriend in 1987 was the “worst week of my [his] life”. When I asked him why, he just said that I was impossible to please that week, no matter what he did.
- This conversation made me realise that you had to leave your stuff at the door – it’s not your staff’s fault that your girlfriend dropped you, or your kids are being difficult, or anything else.
- This is another aspect of never missing an opportunity to lead – you need to make sure everyone has a positive experience with you, even when you are feeling not so super.
  - In difficult times I used to recite a line from my favourite poem [3]: “There will be time to prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet”
- This isn’t false or inauthentic – it’s about managing yourself and being considerate of those who look to you for guidance and inspiration.
- **Make the most of your team – you can’t always be the expert.** Leaders, especially in senior roles in complex organisations, can’t always be expert in all aspects of the work they manage. They need to know how to use the experts around them and get the best out of them, and need to be open to new ideas and different ways of seeing and doing things.
  - I have encountered this situation several times, and I think it is part of Adaptive Leadership: being appointed to leadership roles which are outside of your comfort zone, and adapting quickly to them.
  - The trick is to learn quickly, and, especially, learn the language of the new role quickly. No-one expects you to learn all the details, but I think you need to master the narratives and the broad issues.
  - In these situations, often the challenge is to be a translator of technical or specialist knowledge to the outside world.
  - And of course these situations force you to do your job, not do the job of your staff.
    - No-one wanted me as Head Infrastructure (HI) at Defence to comment on the load bearing capacity of a concrete pylon – they wanted me to set direction, build the culture, and win and protect the resources we needed.
- **Be visible, and be involved.** In my view a key part of the role of the leader is being seen and being seen to be involved.
  - One of the things that I have tried to do in senior roles was to go to see my staff, rather than have them come to see me. For instance, as HI, if I had revised or amended some paperwork that started

[3] “The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock”, by T.S. Eliot

with say a junior staffer, when I had made the revisions I liked to go to their desk and explain the revisions, so they did not just get back a document covered in ink from some remote red-pen wielder. That way I could give them credit for the work, and they could learn why I had made the changes I did, so fewer changes would be required next time. On the way to their desk, I could greet other staff and take the pulse of the organisation.

- Related to this is the need to find some connection with your staff so you can interact personally with them. Learn their football team (even if you hate football), or something about their family. Try to find some 'hook' you can use to chat to your staff.
  - Again, this can be more easily said than done, especially in large organisations.
- You also need to be involved in the activities, such as social or sporting events, that occur at work.
- **Be authentic, warts and all.** Authenticity is key to successful leadership – it speaks to leading by example, having your actions match your rhetoric, being ethical. It also gets to owning your mistakes and failings. We all make mistakes, but leaders who don't own their errors – or, worse still, blame their people – lose credibility pretty quickly.
  - I think it is a good practice to use “we” when talking about successes, and “I” when talking about stuff-ups.
  - Don't talk down to your staff, or not trust them with the truth (within reason). There may be some times when the full picture can't be shared, but wherever possible keep your people informed and don't treat them like idiots!
  - Be good at apologies – some people find that saying sorry is beyond them. But we all stuff up, and sometimes the way you respond to a stuff up is more important than the stuff up itself.
- **Don't be a d\*\*\*head (c.f. Kasey Chambers).** This might be the hardest – and maybe the most important – one of my rules. After all, we've all had d\*\*\*head bosses. Egomaniacs, bullies, unreasonable timeframe-setters, laughers at their own jokes, interminable story-tellers (but only about themselves), people who play favourites, etc. And here's the thing – some (not all) of them were not d\*\*\*heads when they were lower down the food chain, but as they got higher, they drank in the Kool-Aid about how wonderful they were, and became more and more surrounded by sycophants who told them how wonderful they were, and hey presto, here's a d\*\*\*head.
  - But the key point is, not one of those d\*\*\*heads thought they were a d\*\*\*head. They thought they were decisive, or “hard but fair”, or the only one who knew what was going on, or anything else. But everyone around them knew – they were d\*\*\*heads.
  - Now, clearly, there are no d\*\*\*heads in this room. But given that dickheads don't know they are d\*\*\*heads, how can we know?

- This is really tough. When I was HI I was able to have an SEA/Chief of Staff, and my first instruction to them always was that their key job – above all – was to tell me if I was being a d\*\*\*head (and some of them did, bless 'em). Ideally, you need to give someone the licence to speak truth to power without fear of repercussions – but it has to be someone you trust, and who is loyal to you. And they can be hard to find.
- Saving that, this is hard. Try to think about others rather than yourself. Try to be alert for the signs. Think about what you say before you say it. Have the slogan “Don't be a D\*\*\*head” front of mind. Listen more than you speak. Be alert for repetitiveness in your stories.
- And of course, you can't please 'em all. Some people who think you are a d\*\*\*head may be a d\*\*\*head themselves, or maybe they were on the wrong side of a tough decision. And sometimes being thought as a d\*\*\*head might be the result of your standing up for something, so you might just have to wear it.

### Some Leadership Dilemmas and Observations

Before looking at Adaptive Leadership, I just wanted to spend a little time on some common leadership dilemmas and make an observation or two.

- **Avoiding Micro-management vs being in control.** We have all had bosses who managed us within an inch of our lives, demanding constant updates or being inconsistent with decision-making so that everything was referred up to them. It is a recipe for disaster. But, on the other hand, as leaders we need to know what is going on, especially when we are held accountable for things.
  - It can be a fine balance. Micro management can kill morale and self-esteem, and it also inhibits the development of more junior managers. On the other hand, knowing what is going on is vital for a leader – especially in projects – and breaking the habit of being in control can be challenging. As a general rule, I try to take a lighter rather heavier touch, and give more responsibility than less, but I am conscious that this can sometime be more easily said than done.
- **Knowing what is really going on in your organisation.** Again, a tough one, which is related to the previous one. As a leader, it can be really difficult to know what is really happening in your organisation, and how you are viewed, and how your subordinate managers are viewed. People tend to tell you good news, and not the issues. In my view, you have to seek out opportunities to get the pulse of what is going on. You have to speak to people, and you have to have trusted confidants who will really let you know what is

happening.

- And don't ever, ever, shoot a messenger. The day you criticise someone for telling you what is happening – or even what they think is happening – is the last day you get told anything other than what people think you want to hear. And even though they might be wrong, their perception is important, because perception is, at least in some senses, reality.
- **“Followership”**. Although a lot of attention is focused on leadership, far less is placed on what is to be a good follower. But of course, following is the flip side of leading, and indeed (almost by definition), one can't be a leader unless you've got at least one follower (without followers you are just wandering about). And good leaders also know how to be good followers, because being part of the team is vital, and you can hardly request the support and willing consent of your team unless you are prepared to give it to your leader. Some elements of followership include:
  - **Knowing the difference between giving advice and taking orders.** This is a quote from another favourite – Prince Caspian, by C.S. Lewis. In the novel, Trumpkin, an adviser to the eponymous Prince Caspian, argues against a course of action, then volunteers to implement it when the decision goes against his advice. When quizzed on his apparent volte-face, Trumpkin replies with lines that should be engraved on every leader's forehead:

“You are my King. I know the difference between giving advice and taking orders. You've had my advice, and now it's the time for orders.”
  - **Supporting the leader.** As I am sure many of us know, leadership can be lonely and demanding. If you sense your leader is under stress, be supportive. I don't mean being a sycophant, but remember they are people too, with difficult kids, a demanding board, or a lot of things to juggle. They could do with a smile or some willing obedience!
  - **Keeping disagreements private.** There might be times when you have a disagreement with your leader, but any such disagreements should be discussed in private. And once you've been heard, and a decision is made, be Trumpkin.
  - **Not contributing to undermining or gossip.** This is hard, especially when your boss can be described as one of those things I've said not to be. But don't give in to the temptation to join in running them down.

## Adaptive Leadership.

Turning to “Adaptive Leadership” per se, it seems to be a concept first floated in the early 1990s, by Ronald Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow, from Harvard.

Having reviewed a number of articles on it, it seems to me that a lot of what is packaged under the rubric of “Adaptive Leadership” could be said of leadership in general. That said, what the concept of Adaptive Leadership foregrounds is that change is a constant – perhaps especially in the last 20 years or so – so leadership has to adapt to these changes, at least to some extent.

In my view, I think the concept of Adaptive Leadership emphasises two dimensions of leadership in general.

### *The Adaptive Leader.*

The first of these two dimensions refers to the leader him-or-herself. That is, the concept of “adaptive leadership” emphasises that good leaders adapt themselves and their leadership approaches to changes that they encounter. If they fail to do this, they can be left behind.

As a military example, one could look at the approach the French Army took in the beginning of World War Two. At the risk of oversimplification, in the leadup to the war and at its outbreak, the French Army acted as though it would be a re-run of the First World War – dominated by fixed defensive lines and relatively slow moving. By and large, the French high command simply could not cope with the German use of combined arms teams, dominated by tanks and with close support aircraft, and their speed of manoeuvre. The French were too rigid in their thinking, their communications were too slow, and their organisations lacked the flexibility and responsiveness of the Germans. As leaders, the French had not recognised and adapted to the changes in warfare, despite the evidence being fairly clear, and the result of course, was the defeat and occupation of France.

As a commercial example, the commonly cited case of Kodak not adapting digital technology – despite being early leaders in the field – is another example of leaders not adapting to changes, among other issues.

Another element of being an Adaptive Leader is being comfortable in new environments, especially if it is not an area of prior expertise. When I was appointed Acting Director General of Scientific and Technical Analysis Branch in Defence Intelligence Organisation in early 2003, I was conscious that my undergraduate degree in English literature might be of somewhat limited applicability. That said, I embraced the change, and learned fast.

I also think adaptive leaders change their approaches when the organisations they lead are faced with change. What works well when all is smooth sailing might not work so well when there are difficulties: when things are tough you may need to focus on task needs, whereas you can be more focused on people needs when things are going better. That said, there may be tough times when the cause of the difficulty is lack of attention to people needs, and what is



needed is focus on the people. In any event, the important point is that good leaders need to understand what is going on and where the challenges are, and adapt themselves and their leadership to those challenges.

So what are the key skills adaptive leaders need to emphasise?

- **Cognitive skills.** Adaptive leaders need the ability to see change, and understand its implications for their organisations. This can be difficult, as careers are built and organisations designed for the status quo, and if that changes, then the skill and attributes once highly prized become obsolete.
- **Openness to change.** Of course, being able to recognise change is not enough: Adaptive Leaders need to embrace it as well. They need to see what needs to be done and have the skills and the personality to bring their organisations to do it.
- **Communication.** In addition to identifying what changes are needed, Adaptive Leaders need to be able to make the case for change in a powerful and compelling way to their people.
- **Supportiveness.** Change is challenging for people, so Adaptive Leaders need to provide support to their people as the changes are underway.

### *Leading Adaptive Organisations*

The second, but of course closely related, dimension of adaptive leadership is the art of leading organisations which by their nature are changing and adapting, and in so doing they change others. Organisations such as technology companies or some service companies not only embrace change, but look for ways to make change. To lead such organisations, in my view, requires developed competencies in some key areas:

- **Fostering new ideas.** All leaders need to be open to suggestions and inputs from their staff, but leaders in Adaptive Organisations need to be fostering new ideas and ways of doing things differently. The leader and the management team do not have a monopoly of good ideas, so leaders in such organisations need to be comfortable in encouraging the ideas of other, not only initiating them themselves.
- **Optimism and Dynamism.** Leaders in Adaptive Organisations need to show optimism and dynamism, and a sense that the future is bright because the organisation is making it so. Again, optimism and dynamism are important to all leaders, but perhaps even more so in innovative, pioneering organisations.

### *Understanding what doesn't change!*

Of course, Adaptive Leaders also need to understand that, when change is all about – either caused by the organisation

or affecting it – some things don't change.

- One of the things that don't change is the essential subject of leadership, people. Human nature changes slowly at best, which is why Shakespeare's rendering of Henry V at Agincourt is still so stirring to us 425 years later, and why we can still read Plato or Marcus Aurelius today. Leaders in adaptive situations need to remain focused on their people as people, despite the changes happening.
- Similarly, ethics and "doing the right thing" also change slowly, so leaders need to remain ethically focussed even – perhaps especially – when leading through change. In times of change, one needs more than ever to distinguish between babies and bathwater, as often the most important thing to remember is to preserve what is worth preserving even as things change.

### **What about Projects?**

I am conscious that this is the annual conference of the Australian Institute of Project Management, and so far I have not said much about projects per se.

Of some interest, we tend to talk about "project management" as distinct from 'project leadership', which perhaps emphasises that successful project delivery depends on the assembly of resources to achieve an outcome. But leadership is also vital to project success, as projects are ultimately delivered by people (AI advances notwithstanding) and people need to be led as well as managed.

In terms of the application of leadership in general, and adaptive leadership in particular, to projects, I think many of the observations I've made would be relevant, but I think there are some aspects of project leadership that are worth emphasising.

- **Complex Stakeholder groups.** I think one of the key aspects of project leadership is dealing with a diverse group of stakeholders.
  - In contrast to line management jobs, where one's staff and subordinates tend to be employees of the same company, in projects a Project Manager may have to lead a diverse group of "subordinates" from different organisations and firms. This situation requires higher levels of persuasion and communications ability, as you might well lack the regulatory or disciplinary apparatus that can help leaders in line organisations to obtain consent or support.
  - Similarly, Project leaders have to deal with clients or customers (who might be different) and 'lead' them to the extent that they have confidence that the Project Manager understand their needs and can deliver the right outcomes.

- **Balance of control.** As I noted earlier, I think the balance between control and empowerment is even more important – and perhaps more difficult – in projects as opposed to line management. On the one hand, project managers need to empower their subordinates and consultants to do their jobs – which often involve specialist skills – and not get in their way with constant checking and requests for information. On the other hand, PMs need to be able to track progress carefully, and react quickly when things are going awry, especially if a subordinate fears repercussion if things are found out. The Sunk Cost fallacy is especially important here.
- **Focus on the outcome.** A good project leader needs to ensure that the project team stays focused on the outcome of the project, and achieving it. This can be especially challenging where a project is technical, and project staff become more interested in the technical wizardry than the customer requirement, or a beautiful design becomes more important than buildability or customer requirements. The Project Manager needs to focus – and keep the team focused – on the forest, not so much the trees.

## Conclusion

As I noted at the outset, it is daunting to talk about leadership. As I wrote this, I was very conscious of the occasions when I as leader have failed to live up to the things I have described today.

Leadership is hard. It requires composure, optimism, toughness, compassion, humility, decisiveness, commitment, communications, and confidence, among many other traits. It requires us to have enough ego to think we can do the job – and the job as we describe it is worth doing – but not so much ego that it blinds you to your own errors, or the contributions of others. It requires you to be kind to people, but also to fire them if they are not up to the job, with all the impacts that has on them and their families. It requires you to be loyal and supportive to those above you, but also to call them out for bullying or misconduct when need be. It requires you to identify with the group, but also to be separate from it. It can be lonely, even when surrounded by people.

But I think it is worth it. Leaders have always been part of human society, dating back to when bands of wandering people trusted their leaders to find them food and keep them safe, and to be first in the charge. And, from what I can see, all the advances in technology and culture since that time have not diminished its importance; if anything, they have only enhanced it.

So I wish you all well on your leadership journey: with its triumphs and disappointments, its pitfalls and satisfactions, it is still a great journey.

Be good to your people, and thank you for having me here today.



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Deputy Secretary of Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG)  
Department of Defence



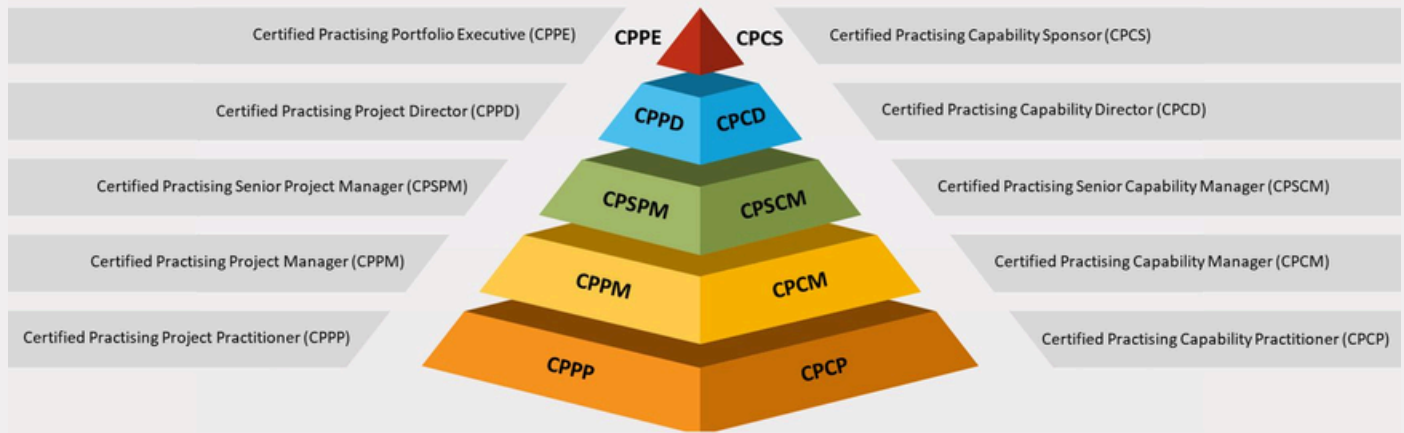
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We have broadened the reach of our mentoring programs to foster professional growth and development. Both mentors and mentees benefit from this unique relationship, sharing their goals and values in a supportive and respectful environment. Here are the key reasons why individuals choose to join the AIPM's Mentoring Program:

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- Learn, develop, and enhance your leadership and interpersonal skills.
- Be intellectually challenged by addressing issues beyond your daily experiences.
- Become more comfortable interacting with people of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and authority levels.

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## HOW IT WORKS

We match mentees with mentors based on location, experience level, speciality and professional development needs.

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# Women in Project Leadership Summit

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**CLOSE BY 14 FEBRUARY 2025**

The Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) is thrilled to announce the launch of the **Women in Project Leadership Summit 2025**.

The Women in Project Leadership Summit will take place on **Friday 7 March 2025 at Old Parliament House in Canberra**.

The Summit will be held as part of the International Women's Day 2025 celebrations, and presentations on the day will focus on the theme **BREAKING BARRIERS - Redefining Leadership, Empowering Change**.

Celebrating the power and potential of women in project management while actively advancing their role in shaping their future, this Summit is designed to lead with confidence and authenticity. Together, we will dismantle outdated paradigms, build bridges of opportunity and empower lasting change across industries.

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