

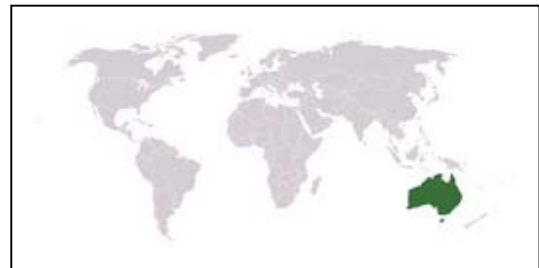
## Project Management in Australia Today

By: Rob Posener

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Australia has had a booming economy for the past 10 years, particularly when compared with other developed economies. Some would say that this has been because of good luck rather than good management. Whatever the reason, a stable political system, low inflation, massive mineral wealth and a well educated, multi-cultural population have made Australia a very fertile ground for projects. While there was a short pause in IT projects just after Y2K, this has now picked up and there are now many very large construction, public-private-partnership (PPP) and IT projects underway.

The cost of oil, a lack of rain, a drop off in housing construction, new industrial relations laws that make it easier to lay off workers, and the drop off in wheat sales may have a negative affect on the economy over the next few years. By how much, only time will tell.



Project management is represented in Australian by two bodies: the Project Management Institute (PMI®) with its main membership base made up of IT professionals and the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) with its main membership base of engineering and construction professionals. Both bodies have roughly the same membership numbers. Both bodies base their belief system on PMI's Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). These bodies will probably never merge, even for the greater good of project management. This is a pity, because there is no single body that can represent project management to governments in Australia.

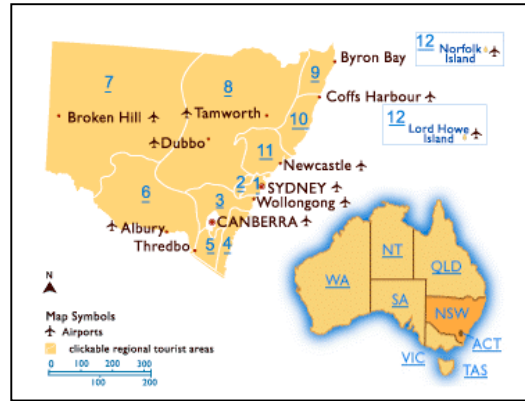
Some of the very large IT projects underway in Australia now include:

- A new smartcard for access to all commonwealth government services
- New border protection and security systems for immigration, defence and customs
- NSW Whole of Government (WoG) IT consolidations
- Commonwealth Bank IT infrastructure refresh

Many large outsourcing contracts are now nearing their natural end and these are almost all being re-negotiated with them being broken up into components as well as substantial amounts of in-sourcing taking place.

There has been a large amount of offshoring of call centres and to a lesser extent software development. India has been the principal recipient of these jobs closely followed by The Philippines.

The state of NSW remains in the doldrums. There has been a lack of investment in maintaining infrastructure. Roads, hospitals, trains and schools all seem to need improvements, principally because of the re-direction of funds to the Sydney 2000 Olympics which is still soaking up funds. There have been a number of PPP debacles of late and billions of dollars spent, so PPP investors are now concerned about PM on public sector programmes.



Country-wide communications infrastructure is good, but lags behind some other developed countries. Carriers seem to be playing a wait-and-see game with 3G. The full capabilities of this technology have not seen the light of day even though spectrum licences were bought over 3 years ago. The promise of fast Internet is uncertain, with the commonwealth government retaining a shareholding. The dominant carrier appears to be over-regulated, leading to a loss of desire to invest the significant funds required to deploy the necessary new technology.

The demand for project and programme managers is high, with approximately 5 contract and 5 permanent jobs in these categories being advertised every day in Sydney. Australia remains "the lucky country" for project managers.



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Mr. Posener is also founder and Managing Director of PMComplete Pty Ltd, a project management professional services company in Australia. A Project Manager for over 30 years, Robert has managed information technology and business projects and programmes for computer hardware, software and consulting companies in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Hong Kong and USA. He is an active member of PMI's Sydney Chapter and College of Scheduling, and is a Fellow of the International Council for Project Management Advancement (ICPMA).