
Brief for members of the Air 87 Project Office: The Project Manager's personal command philosophy

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Background

1. The Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) Project, Air 87, is to undertake a transition in Project Managers in line with the DOCM-A's posting cycle. The incoming Project Manager (PM) has been posted with effect 19 Jan 04. To maintain an efficient project environment and minimise the impact of the management change on the project and staff, it is essential that the Air 87 Team are aware of the personal command philosophy of the next PM.
2. **Reason for brief.** This information brief is written to familiarise the Air 87 Project Office (PO) staff with the incoming project manager's personal command philosophy to foster a positive Command environment ensuring the objectives of the project are achieved.
3. **Scope of brief.** This brief will:
 - a. discuss the ethos and values of a successful project management team;
 - b. define the Air 87 Project Team Vision; and
 - c. outline my PM's personal command philosophy.

ETHOS AND VALUES OF A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Team ethos

4. Team Ethos is an important element of a project management environment. The ethos of a successful project management team encompasses the following elements.
 - a. High morale: Team members should be personally motivated to achieve project milestones and take pride in their project tasks.
 - b. *Espirit de corps*: Team members should have a proud sense of project ownership from working with a professional team progressing a project that is highly regarded.
 - c. Standards and values: The essence of a successful project requires team members that are aware of the functional performance specifications and quality assurance standards. Individual and team values should be coherent with the specified project standards.
 - d. A sense of purpose: Project team members should be aware of how their efforts and tasks contribute to project milestones and the overall project deliverables.

Individual values

5. The core individual values of a successful project team are derived from the project team ethos. They include:
 - a. Professional competence – The success of a complex project is reliant upon the guidance of team members that are subject matter experts in their domain. Failure to provide accurate and timely input to important project decisions may result in technical non-compliance, schedule and/or budget blow out.
 - b. Courage – Individuals should have the strength to do what is right and at times make hard decisions with honesty and integrity.
 - c. Initiative – Opportunities to improve organisational efficiencies or effectiveness should

be encouraged. The Defence project management environment can only benefit from positive innovative changes and team improvisation.

- d. Teamwork – Teamwork is at the heart of a successful project environment. The ability for a project to be progressed on schedule, within budget and delivered to the required standard is reliant upon team members working collectively to achieve a common purpose.

THE AIR 87 PROJECT TEAM VISION

6. Project Air 87 has a solid reputation as one of the few Defence projects that is currently on schedule, within appropriate budget parameters and delivering a quality product. My vision as the incoming PM is to take the project to its next evolution, that is, '*Air 87 is one of the ADF's benchmark Projects*' that will:

- a. deliver the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter capability to the specified standard;
- b. achieve the Defence Capability Plan stated In-service delivery date;
- c. strive to remain within the allocated budgetary parameters; and
- d. provide an example for 'best practice' Defence project management.

AIR 87 PROJECT MANAGER'S PERSONAL COMMAND PHILOSOPHY

Project Manager's command goals

7. My project manager's command goals for the Air 87 Project Office are:
 - a. To achieve the project deliverables of introducing the ARH capability into service on schedule, within budget to the specified standard.
 - b. Movement towards our Vision: '*Air 87 is one of the ADF's benchmark Projects*'.
 - c. To foster team ethos and values that maintain high *esprit de corps* and is committed to:
 - (1) professional competence;
 - (2) team loyalty and trust; and
 - (3) professional courage.

Functional needs to achieve PM command goals

8. To achieve my command goals I envisage a team strategy focused on the needs of the project tasks, the team and the individual as follows:

9. **Project task needs.** Over the past decade the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) has transitioned through significant changes to improve governance, accountability and procedural efficiencies. I envisage task needs being met by PO staff adherence to the improved organisational methods including:

- a. **Project alignment with DMO Project Management Methodologies (PMM).** Alignment with PMM such as PRINCE II, will ensure the project is planned, organised and directed with full accountability, traceability and quality assurance.
- b. **Financial Management.** I expect PO staff to adhere to ADO best practice financial management to maintain project integrity and facilitate early identification of project financial risks for mitigation.

10. **Team needs.** To achieve the team goals and maintain a successful project working environment I intend to build a strong team culture based on ADO ethics and courage, loyalty and

trust, professional competence and initiative. I will place a high priority on team communication and training to ensure staff have situational awareness of the organisational changes, project status and critical path priorities.

11. **Individual needs.** To ensure each team member can effectively contribute to the project and develop, I will place a high priority on:

- a. **Performance reporting.** To identify realistic career goals and set objectives for individuals to achieve their goals.
- b. **Professional development.** To ensure competencies for career goals are achieved and provide increased corporate knowledge within the Air 87 PO.
- c. **Mentoring programs.** For team members that are new or have been identified for future management.

PM's leadership style

12. To achieve my stated goals it is important that PO staff are aware of my leadership styles so that a positive command climate can be established. Dependant upon scheduled critical path priorities, I intend to adopt the following leadership styles:

- a. **Participative–Motivating style.** I intend to utilise the domain subject matter experts thereby empowering staff to have input into the decision-making process to progress the project. Individuals will be given *mission command* to achieve their stated tasks and project milestones. I will provide guidance, allocate resources and support when required.
- b. **Directive style.** This style of leadership will only be adopted in situations such as a schedule constraint, a need for clarity of purpose or as directed by a higher authority such as the Director General Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters.

Air 87 project culture

13. In order to achieve the Air 87 Vision, I envisage a project culture that reflects the following:

- a. **High level of professional ethics and courage.** The Defence procurement environment is increasingly subject to ADO governance and accountability requirements especially financial liability. I expect PO staff to maintain the highest ethics that accord with the ADO environment and the professional courage to speak out if required to maintain the integrity of the project and PO staff.
- b. **Loyalty and trust.** I expect PO staff to maintain the highest levels of loyalty, trust and respect for the chain of command and team members. Any difference of opinions with regards to the project, the organisation or between individuals should remain within the PO environment and should be transparent to the external environment. The maintenance of team trust and loyalty will be one of my highest PM command priorities.
- c. **Professional competence and initiative.** Air 87 is a high profile technically complex project that is subject to a rigorous Defence procurement process. Achievement of our vision in this environment will only be achieved through a team that maintains the highest levels of professional competence and uses initiative in their area of expertise and associated project areas that may have influence on the achievement of their tasks.

Challenges and strategies of the Air 87 project environment

14. Traditionally the transition of a Defence project from the Acquisition to the In-service Phases is where areas of high risk are realised. Air 87 is approaching this high-risk transition period and as such I have identified some key PO challenges and my strategies to overcome them.

- a. **Financial and resource constraints.** Most project challenges can be overcome by allocation of additional funds or human resources. The current project-funding contingency continues to deplete approaching this transitional high-risk period. As it is highly unlikely that the project will receive additional funds or staff, I intend to overcome these challenges through the following strategy:
 - (1) Ensure PO staff actively seek out and identify areas of risk as soon as possible and communicate these issues to management for mitigation.
 - (2) Encourage staff initiative and innovation to identify solutions.
 - (3) Utilise the project processes and methodologies in place to resolve issues.
 - (4) Through teamwork and professional competence progress tasks in a manner that avoids potential problems – *prevention is the best cure*.
 - (5) Development of a positive Air 87 PO culture, where high *esprit de corps* and team morale will ensure staff work together during high work load periods to achieve the project deliverables.
- b. **Management of stakeholder perceptions and expectations.** False stakeholder perceptions and expectations of such areas as project deliverables or the ARH capabilities will lead to perceived capability deficiencies and/or project scrutinisation. I intend to implement the following strategies to address these issues:
 - (1) Maintain staff loyalty and trust to ensure that project risks or problems are not 'leaked' externally through informal means.
 - (2) Utilise the chain of command and PO reporting processes to provide timely, factual and up to date information to stakeholders.
 - (3) Work as a team to ensure domain subject matter experts provide responses to information requirements therefore *don't best guess*.

Conclusion

15. Air 87 is a high profile Defence project that has a solid reputation for being a Defence major project that is currently meeting schedule, financial and quality deliverables. As the incoming PM my Vision is to take the project to the next evolution, that is '*Air 87 is one of the ADF's benchmark Projects*'. I see this being achieved by developing a positive staff culture and empowering the staff by adopting a Participative–Motivating style of leadership.

16. As the project transitions from the Acquisition to the In-service Phases, I anticipate that the PO will face increasing financial and resource challenges due to the nature and complexity of the project. As the PM I expect to overcome these challenges by working as a team to achieve:

- a. team loyalty and trust,
- b. professional competence,
- c. team initiative and innovation, and
- d. *esprit de corps*.

‘Snapshot’ of The Air 87 Project Management Command Environment

Project background

1. Air 87 is an Australian Defence project that is currently in the acquisition stage of procuring 24 (2 Squadrons) Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters. Although the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) project has been designated ‘Air 87’, it is an Army (Land) capability and as such represents a significant capability investment of well over one billion dollars for Army. Air 87 is a high profile project for many reasons other than the ‘price tag’. The ARH represents a significant capability multiplier on the battlefield primarily due to the technologically advanced systems such as enhanced day/night pilotage, targeting systems, weapon systems, communication and sensor suites. Integration of this weapon system with existing and future land systems is a high priority for Army to achieve the desired combined arms effect and provide battlefield commanders with the competitive edge. The ARH capability is scheduled for introduction into the Australian Army Aviation Corps from 2005–2007 replacing the ageing Kiowa (Bell 206) helicopter.

2. The ARH project has progressed over the last decade in a Defence procurement environment that has been scrutinised for numerous reasons such as project budget/schedule blowouts, contractual deficiencies, poor project management methodologies, lack of project staff expertise, project deliverable of poor quality and/or not in line with the original specifications. Compared to other Defence projects, Air 87 has established a reputation for being one of the ADF’s more successful projects despite the fact that it has been progressing for over 10 years without delivering a capability into service.

3. In 2004–2005 the project is scheduled to migrate from the Acquisition Phase to the In-service Phase as Army Aviation introduces this capability into service. Historically it is during this stage in a Defence project where systemic weaknesses or project deficiencies will be identified and as such will represent some of the greatest challenges for Project Managers.

The Defence Materiel Organisational environment

4. The Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) has undergone numerous changes in name, organisational structure, leadership, processes, geographic location and culture in the last decade. This environment of change has introduced positive aspects such as increased accountability and improved Project Management Methodologies (PMM) and processes, however these changes have also introduced significant challenges for managers at the Project Director and Project Manager levels.

5. Staff training is an essential component of effective change management to ensure transitions are seamless as new processes are introduced. In areas of the DMO staff training has not maintained pace with the pace of change and as such this, coupled with the annual posting cycle, impacts on project schedules, quality of project deliverables, staff moral and contributes to a negative organisational culture.

6. The DMO is an organisation that has a high number of Australian Public Service (APS) staff specifically at the senior management level. This environment requires military personnel, specifically Project Managers, to adapt their Command and Leadership style in a manner optimised for the

environment. Military ethos and philosophies may be required to be balanced with the organisational code of conduct when Project Managers are dealing with civilian divisions within DMO such as Finance, Legal and Industry Divisions.

The Air 87 project management command environment

7. **Personnel.** The Air 87 Project Office (PO) staff is an amalgam comprising Army Aviators, RAEME Aeronautical/Mechanical/Electrical engineers, Army/RAAF Logisticians, APS, and civilian contractors. These personnel are mostly tertiary qualified with extensive experience in their particular domain. As with most organisations within Defence, staff shortages introduce specific issues that place increasing pressure on personnel; Air 87 PO has the same issues. As the project progresses towards the In-service Date (ISD) of 2005, increasing demands are placed on staff to stay 'On Schedule–Within Budget–Target Quality'.

8. **Project challenges.** As stated earlier, Air 87 faces significant challenges approaching the ISD as the project transitions to the In-service Phase. Acceptance of the capability into service is complex and as such there are numerous project risks that need to be mitigated to avoid schedule slippage or budget accedence. An example of a significant project risk that would require mitigation strategies to be put in place by the PM is the process of operational and technical airworthiness certification. The PM must have situational awareness of the civil and military requirements to meet aviation certification standards and where the build status of the aircraft and/or technical publications may be non-compliant. This requires the PM to establish a command environment where there is a high level of technical competence, good communication skills, loyalty and trust throughout the chain of command and sound ethics and values.

9. **Management of stakeholder perceptions and expectations.** As with most major Defence projects, management of stakeholder perceptions and expectations should be a high priority for the PM. As discussed earlier, Air 87 will introduce a new generation of helicopters that bring to the battlefield advanced ISR and weapons technology, new doctrine and more flexible maintenance practices. The PM will be largely responsible to ensure that PO staff and senior officers are made aware of the system performance requirements and especially the limitations. In summary the capability will meet the ADF's functional requirements as defined by ADFHQ (Capability Systems) specifications. If the aircraft has limitations beyond its intended purpose, it is not a design flaw of the aircraft or an oversight of the PO, it is simply a false perception or expectation. These must be effectively managed by the PM and staff to ensure stakeholders are appropriately educated and to avoid negative publicity, specifically the media. An example of a possible false perception is that the ARH is an attack helicopter purpose built for killing tanks. The fact is that the ADF did not require the ARH to have a fire control radar (mmw Radar similar to the Apache) and as such the aircraft has limitations in this role.

10. **Target audience.** This brief targets all Air 87 Project Office staff. The style of the brief has been structured to accommodate both senior civilian and military personnel across the three Services. A level of subject matter expertise has therefore been assumed with some of the project management terminology and project specific issues addressed.

