

## Appendix 2: Steering Not Rowing: A Charter for Project Steering Committees and Their Members

The purpose of a Steering Committee is to take responsibility for the business issues associated with a project. A Steering Committee's role is crucial to a project's success. It is responsible for approving budgetary strategy, defining and realising benefits, and monitoring risks, quality and timeliness. Those people directly responsible for running a project and managing its stakeholders rely on Steering Committee members for guidance and support in their endeavours.

### The role of a Steering Committee

Without an effective Steering Committee, a project is unlikely to succeed. Collectively, a Steering Committee's role is to:

- Take on responsibility for the project's feasibility, business plan and realisation of outcomes/benefits
- Ensure the project's scope aligns with the requirements of the stakeholder groups
- Provide those people directly involved in the project with guidance on project business issues
- Ensure effort and expenditure are appropriate to stakeholder expectations
- Address any issue that has major implications for the project
- Keep the project scope under control as emergent issues force changes to be considered
- Reconcile differences in opinion and approach, and resolve disputes arising from them
- Report on project progress to those people responsible at a high level, such as Cabinet
- Take on responsibility for any whole-of-government issues associated with the project

Once developed, a *Project Business Plan* defines the project scope and the Steering Committee, as a whole, must own the document.

### The role of individual Steering Committee members

At a minimum, the Steering Committee includes representatives of the Corporate Client(s), the Project Sponsor(s), the Business Owner(s), with the Project Manager attending meetings but not a member. Individual Steering Committee members are not directly responsible for managing project activities, but provide support and guidance for those people who do manage them.

Thus, individually, Steering Committee members must:

- Understand the strategic implications and outcomes of initiatives being pursued through project outputs
- Appreciate the significance of the project for some or all major stakeholders and represent their interests
- Be genuinely interested in the initiative and the outcomes being pursued in the project
- Be an advocate for the project's outcomes/benefits
- Have a broad understanding of project management issues and the approach being adopted
- Be committed to, and actively involved in, pursuing the project's outcomes/benefits

In practice, it means they:

- Ensure the requirements of stakeholders are met by the project's outputs
- Help balance conflicting priorities and resources
- Provide guidance to the Project Manager and Team and users of the project's outputs
- Consider ideas and issues raised
- Review the progress of the project
- Check adherence of project activities to standards of best practice, both within the organisation and in a wider context

The generic governance models described in *Section 3.4* of the *Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines* illustrate the place of the Steering Committee in the structure of a project.

(Refer to the *Steering Committee Resource Kit* for additional Steering Committee information)