



Project Management Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum requirements to ensure WA Country Health Service (WACHS) projects are managed using a formalised methodology and completed on time, within scope and budget.

The following projects are out of scope of this policy:

- Capital projects - refer to WACHS [Asset Investment Program Governance Policy](#).

2. Policy

WACHS undertakes a number of time limited projects that aim to address strategic or operational needs, and subsequently deliver organisational change. To succeed, projects must have sound governance, clearly defined scope, deliverables, start and end dates, funding and cost profiles, and quality control mechanisms. A structured project management and governance approach supports project teams to achieve outcomes and associated change for WACHS.

Project management is pivotal in providing governance and assurance during the project life cycle to ensure achievable and measurable project outcomes. This is achieved through the application of a structured Project Management Methodology (PPM), which:

- provides a framework and processes that are easy to understand and apply
- ensures complex projects are scalable, measurable, and customisable to WA Health's processes such as budget cycles, risk and quality frameworks
- enables project teams to identify and mitigate issues and risks early
- enables continuous improvement by capturing lessons learnt from other projects.

2.1 Project Requirements

Project Classification

Projects undertaken by WACHS should be classified into high, routine, or low risk projects. High risk projects will have a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), a member of the Executive, who is accountable for the overall success.

Routine or low risk projects, such as patient safety initiatives, are monitored by the SRO and reported within WACHS directorates/regions.

The Project Management Office (PMO) should be advised of priority projects that require additional oversight, monitoring and reporting support via the WACHS Project Assurance Committee (PAC).

Project Phases

Projects are designed and implemented through a phased approach which includes:

- strategic assessment (startup)

- undertaking a preliminary assessment of expected benefits realised by the organisation
- completing a business case to secure or consolidate funding
- submitting a Concept Approval Request (CAR) including directorate intent to undertake the project
- project initiation (registering)
- governance and planning (directing a project)
- project execution (implement, manage and control)
- close and review (project report, lessons learned and/or handover to business as usual).

Complex projects may be further divided into smaller, more manageable components during the implement, manage and control phase.

Project Management Methodology

PPM should be tailored to align with the project's complexity and delivery requirements whilst providing a governance mechanism.

A suite of WACHS Project Management Tools is available to assist with the all stages of a WACHS project and can be accessed via the WACHS [Project Management Office SharePoint page](#).

Project Governance

It is vital to ensure effective management, decision-making, and monitoring during the project life cycle. Project governance should be documented in a Terms of Reference (ToR) and/or relevant project documents and endorsed by the SRO prior to the commencement of the project.

There is no one size fits all approach to defining project governance. It needs to be tailored to each project and organisational need. All projects are to have a governance mechanism that provides overarching responsibility and accountability.

WACHS projects should provide accurate and timely reporting to the Project Sponsor and/or the SRO (directorate/region) depending upon the complexity and size of the project.

Key matters reported to the governance group/s should include:

- progress within scope/schedule/within budget
- adherence to agreed scope (in scope)
- change request/s and impact assessments on time, cost, and scope
- stakeholder engagement and management
- quality management (change control)
- risks and issues management
- dependencies affecting the critical path
- communication plan with any media opportunities.

Project Assurance

A Gateway review/health check is a short, independent review of a project undertaken at key decision points in the project's lifecycle. The review is conducted in the spirit of

cooperation and collaboration between the review team and the project team to identify opportunities to ensure the best possible outcome/s. WACHS participates in Gateway Reviews in line with [Department of Finance: General Procurement Direction 2024/03 – Improving the Outcomes of Major Projects Through Gateway Reviews](#).

Project Reporting

Red, Amber or Green (RAG) status reporting (refer [Table 1](#)) is used at the project level by the project officers and by the PMO for monitoring purposes. The RAG status reflects how well a project is progressing using the traffic light series, considering project tolerances (if any):

- **red** indicates issues requiring immediate intervention and mitigation
- **amber** signals emerging problems
- **green** signals that the project is tracking as planned.

Table 1. RAG Status Reporting

Category	RAG Status	Guidelines
Schedule (Time)	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On target or delivery before due.
	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor delays up to 30 days but recoverable with agreed actions. • Emerging doubt that final delivery will be met.
	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant delay of critical milestones of greater than 30 days or likely that the stage will finish after that due date.
Scope	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope in line with endorsed Business Case / Paper.
	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to be minor changes.
	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant changes to scope (creep) or governance issues.
Cost	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On target.
	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely cost over-run but will be managed within tolerances. • Flag financial year underspend for tied funded projects.
	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-run or under-run of greater than 5% (complex) 10% (small) or agreed tolerances.
Risks	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified risks have an acceptable mitigation.
	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks are causing concern and require mitigation/some intervention from governing bodies.
	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High or extreme impact risks which are likely to be realised and cause disruptions to the project.
Dependencies	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No issues.
	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be resolved by the project sponsor.
	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependency issues which are not resolvable.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Senior Responsible Officer/Project Sponsor** is responsible for:

- providing high level strategic leadership, direction, and governance for the delivery of project
- ensuring overall project success and achieving the intended business benefits

- reviewing project scope, timelines, and deliverables to maintain alignment with the WACHS Strategy, project principles and objectives and endorsing project deliverables and objectives as per their Delegations
- advising the Chief Executive and Executive on mitigations and remediation strategies for the emerging issues or risks
- reviewing and endorsing recommendations presented by the Project Management, the Project Board, and/or Project Control Group.

The **Project Board/Project Control Group** is responsible for:

- providing strategic direction and assurance throughout the project delivery and close-out phases
- ensuring decisions impacting project scope, time cost or quality, are made with the relevant Financial or Procurement Delegated Authority.

The **Project Steering Committee** is responsible for:

- providing governance and oversight across all phases of the project including project initiation, planning, implementation, management and control, and project closure and review.

The **Project Governance Group** is responsible for:

- ensuring overall assurance for the delivery of the project including alignment to WACHS strategic directions
- monitoring the project deliverables, addressing escalated issues or risks to the project, authorising commencement of project phases, changes to project phase or plan and accepting close-out for the project
- reviewing, and endorsing the Program Status Reports (PSR) and the Project Assurance Review reports while monitoring follow-up actions to support project success
- monitoring risk and issues including progression of mitigation strategies.

The **Project Manager/Lead** is responsible for:

- developing the project plan (including a work breakdown structure)
- achieving the projects objectives by managing all activities necessary to deliver the project
- reporting on project performance to the governance bodies depending upon the size of the project that may cover the day-to-day planning and delivery of the project, process, and people responsibilities for part or all of the works.

The **Project Officers** are responsible for:

- overseeing the day-to-day planning and implementation of the project
- managing associated project processes and personnel
- providing updates on project performance to governance bodies.

The **Project Management Office (PMO)** is responsible for:

- providing the assurance function to the Senior Executive on project delivery (as directed). The PMO role excludes direct project delivery and the evaluation of the project team performance.
- providing ongoing training and support in the methodology and tools for project teams and sponsors, including stage assessments or formal gateway reviews
- providing a conduit for the independent assessment of certain stages either by self-assessment/health check or via a more formal external gateway review

- managing lessons learnt and ensuring they are applied to new projects to continuously improve the methodology and tools.

All staff are required to comply with the directions in WACHS policies and procedures as per their roles and responsibilities. Guidelines are the recommended course of action for WACHS and staff are expected to use this information to guide practice. If staff are unsure which policies procedures and guidelines apply to their role or scope of practice, and/or are unsure of the application of directions they should consult their manager in the first instance.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation of this policy is to be carried out by the PMO. This policy will be evaluated to determine effectiveness, relevance and currency. At a minimum it will be reviewed every five (5) years.

5. References

Australian Public Service Commission. *Effective project management*. 2024. <https://www.apsc.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aps-mobility-framework/taskforce-toolkit/project-management/effective-project-management> [Accessed 17 June 2025].

Axelos Ltd. *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2®*. London, 2017.

Victorian Government Chief Information Office. *Project Management – Selecting a Project Management Methodology*. 2019.

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Assumptions	Statement/s taken as being true for the purpose of planning a project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumptions may be made where some facts are not yet known. Assumptions need to be clearly articulated and documented at the start of the project and endorsed by the governance group.
Benefit	The measurable improvement resulting from an outcome perceived as an advantage by one or more stakeholders.
Business Case	The justification for an organisational activity (project) which typically contains costs, benefits, risks and timescales, and against which continuing viability is tested.
Change Control	The procedure that ensures that all changes that may affect a projects’ agreed objectives (baseline) are identified, assessed and either approved, rejected, or deferred.
Communication Plan	Created as part of the project planning and is a record of all interested project parties, such as stakeholders, quality assurance etc. It details the means and

	frequency of communication agreed between stakeholders and the Project Team.
Critical Path	Shortest possible path from the first activity to the last. If an activity on the critical path is late in delivery, it impacts the whole sequence and may cause the project to run over schedule.
Deliverable	Product, service, processes or plans produced by the project.
Dependencies	<p>The relationship between products or activities e.g. Product C cannot commence development until Products A and B have been completed. Dependencies may be internal or external to the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal dependencies are those under the control of the Project Manager, including resources. • External dependencies are those outside the control of the Project Manager - e.g. the delivery of a product required by this project from another project.
Governance	Effective governance of project management ensures that an organisation's project portfolio is aligned to the organisation's Strategic Priorities, is delivered efficiently and is sustainable.
High risk projects	Are projects where delivery within time, cost, scope tolerances may impact on WACHS ability to achieve its strategic objectives.
Issue	An event that unless resolved, will result in a change to a base-lined product, plan or objective (time, cost, quality, scope, risk and benefits).
Milestone	A marker in a project that signifies a change or stage in development, e.g. a project's start or end date, date for external review or submission of a major deliverable. Milestones have a fixed date but no duration.
Outcomes	The result of change, normally affecting real-world behaviour and / or circumstances. Outcomes are desired when a change is conceived. They are achieved as a result of the activities undertaken to effect the change.
Project	Time limited activity that produces a change within the organisation.
Project Management Methodology	Is utilised to achieve efficiency and effectiveness through the use of consistent, repeatable and standardised processes.
Project Stakeholders	All individuals, groups or organisations that may be interested in the project's work and result and influence it – such as: participants, management, stakeholders, vendors, consumers, and in some cases, the wider community.
Risk	An uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, has a negative effect on a project's objectives. High risks require mitigation and should be reported to the Project Sponsor.

	Projects should be considered for risk and mitigations developed and documented in line with policy.
Scope	The scope is the defined features and functions of the product(s). It provides the limitations of the work to be undertaken and is agreed and documented in the project plan and has associated deliverables to be produced. Deviation in deliverables may be described as 'in' or 'out' of scope.
Tolerance	Allowable deviation above or below a project plan time / cost targets; after which a change request is escalated up to the next level of management via the project's governance group. Tolerances are set and agreed by the governance group prior to the commencement of a project.

7. Document Summary

Coverage	WACHS-wide
Audience	All projects
Records Management	Non Clinical: Corporate Recordkeeping Compliance Policy
Related Legislation	Nil
Related Mandatory Policies / Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP 0161/21 Procurement and Contract Management Policy • MP 0001/16 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Governance Policy • Procurement Framework • Risk, Compliance and Audit Framework
Related WACHS Policy Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Investment Program Governance Policy
Other Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DoF General Procurement Direction 2024/03: Improving the Outcomes of Major Projects Through Gateway Reviews
Related Forms	Nil
Related Training	Nil
Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Declaration (ISD)	4153
National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards	1.1, 6.4
Aged Care Quality Standards	Nil
Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care	Nil
Other Standards (please specify and include link)	Nil

8. Document Control

Version	Published date	Current from	Summary of changes
4.00	10 July 2025	10 July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthened assurance and review function removal of any mandated project methodology.

9. Approval

Policy Owner	Executive Director Strategy, Service Development & Innovation
Co-approver	Nil
Contact	Director Project Management Office
Business Unit	Strategy and Change
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