

The CRITICAL PATH



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President's Report

Benjamin Howell



Welcome to the latest edition of *The Critical Path* of 2016.

For those that attended the July event '*Project Management Employment Market Update and Trends in 2016*' you would have noticed I've started talking about membership benefits and membership value. I would like to address this in this edition, and also flag that this is a continuing narrative through the term of my Presidency, not just to you our members, but to other stakeholders such as sponsors, partners, REP's, businesses (private & public) and academia.

Our Chapter membership is climbing again (fantastic news), but in order to keep this up we need to focus on benefits and value not only to our Chapter members as a whole, but to also slice and dice these for the various member segments that we have identified.

For example PMO Managers and Project Directors and Portfolio Managers have different concepts of value than junior PM's. Last year PMI conducted a survey nationally ('*PMI in Australia: Market Research Report PMI Chapter Development Department September 2015*') asking various stakeholders (not just PMI and Chapter members) their reasons for joining, what they find valuable, and if they have not renewed their membership to a Chapter or to PMI the reason/s why. The most common reason behind practitioners joining PMI at both the global and chapter level is for professional recognition and for networking.

PMI Members that are NOT Chapter members joined for:

- Professional Recognition 59%
- Networking 40%
- Advancing the Profession 48%
- Access to member-exclusive Profession services and information 40%

PMI Members that ARE Chapter members joined for:

- Networking 60%
- Professional Recognition 58%
- Advancing the Profession 48%

The most common reason behind practitioners not joining or not renewing PMI or chapter membership tended to be due to lack of time to participate in activities.

Non-renewal of PMI Membership was due to:

- No time to take part 33%
- My employer no longer pays for my membership 28%

Non-renewal of Chapter Membership was due to:

- No time to take part 48%
- I did not benefit from the chapter's programs 35%

The main reasons for not joining PMI in the first place were:

- My employer does not pay for my membership 38%
- Fees are not affordable at this time 26%

The main reasons for not joining a Chapter in the first place were:

- No time to take part 49%
- PMI global membership is sufficient for me 35%

Another PMI global service that was not identified in the survey was www.projectmanagement.com and with your PMI credentials has a plethora of material available to you not available to non PMI members. The above are quite important from the macro perspective as membership is about retention as much as it is about attraction. The member experience is much more valuable if PMI members join a Chapter as well to enhance their experience, but in order to encourage them we need to know what services and benefits they value and to be sure that we as a Chapter deliver them.

The most popular PMI membership benefits amongst members is the free copy of the PMBOK® Guide (64%) and PM tools and template (62%), while for Chapter membership benefits, it is local networking opportunities (75%) and Training Programs (38%). Other Chapter benefits identified in the survey were Mentoring programs, Chapter volunteer opportunities, and Toastmasters programs.

From the work the Board has done on our Services Catalogue this year, the following are some of the identified services at Chapter level for our members:

- Free Monthly Chapter Meetings for Chapter Members
- Conference Discounts
- Mentoring Program
- Networking with other PM Professionals
- Volunteering and Leadership Opportunities
- Deliver community projects
- Gain PDUs through Chapter Involvement
- Certification Support through Prep Courses and Study Groups
- Career Building Workshop
- Job search support
- Discounts on Registered Education Providers (REP) Courses
- Membership Recognition Program
- Student Prizes to Sydney Education Institutions
- Critical Path Newsletter
- Social Media Engagement

Also, don't forget that PMI and Chapter membership is tax deductible!

This year we have been regularly enjoying an audience of 100 plus persons due to the outstanding work of our Events Director Emma Stewart and her team of volunteers. Whilst this is fantastic, what about engaging the other 1,400 plus members who are unable to attend our events? We need to see what we can do to engage and keep them involved. An example of what we are exploring in this regard is the recording of our Chapter events so that we can have them available our members who cannot make it to have the event to view on demand at a later time. We did this at our last event as a proof-of-concept and are currently looking at how we can deliver this from a cost-benefit perspective. This is an example of how we can better engage our membership in its entirety and indeed open up our Chapter activities to a wider audience.

The Board would like to know your thoughts on what membership benefits YOU find of most value to you. Over the next month a Survey Monkey survey will be sent to all of our Chapter members identifying what Chapter services & benefits you find of most value to you so that we can concentrate on investing in those so as to provide more value to you. Conversely, we would like to know those are not as much benefit to you so that our resources are directed elsewhere. We would also like to identify what services and benefits at Chapter level we are not providing that you may find of benefit and value to you. I would love if you could invest the time in responding to this as what we do as a Board is on behalf of you and we'd like to ensure that we continue to stay in touch with our members.

Happy cat herding!

Benjamin Howell PMP, President - PMI Sydney Chapter
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Top 5 Communication Skills for Program and Project Managers

Mohammed Mansoor - Communications Director



Communication is a critical skill for program & project success, both for keeping team members up-to-date and for winning the support of key stakeholders. But which skills are important that make all the difference? Here are the top five communication skills:

1. Active Listening

This is the ability as program / project manager to listen and understand other stakeholders. Listening to the words and the meaning behind their words, not interrupting or letting our minds wander, ask questions to paraphrase and re-confirm, observe non-verbal signals and clues.

2. Building Relationships based on Trust and Respect

Trust and respect are the foundations of personal relationships. They are earned by experience, honesty, integrity and expertise. Among the other characteristics people used to determine our credibility are truthfulness, openness, willingness to share ideas and information freely, consistency, reliability, loyalty, capabilities and competence. Trust encourages people to propose ideas, suggest ways to enhance work speak of their concerns and give honest advice.

3. Setting Clear Priorities and Objectives

In third spot are a program / project manager's ability to convey the strategy for their team - by setting goals, planning and prioritizing. This is what, who, when, where, why and how of the program and project. Team members should understand both the big picture and the lower level technical priorities. Essentially this is what a program / project manager does. If you can't do it you won't get everybody working on the same platform.

4. Enabling Collaboration

In a collaborative environment team members support and encourage each other rather than focusing solely on their own tasks and responsibilities. They are willing to co-operate and share information, ideas and assets to help each other. The result can be greater than the sum of its parts.

"When we collaborate we get the 1x1=3 effect. Things happen that might not have if people had remained focused on their own work"

5. Conveying the Organisation's Vision

Explaining the bigger picture helps team members understand where the program and project fits within the overall aims of your business unit and organisation. Senior executives are focused on the triple bottom line - finances, environment, reputation - this is where they expect your program/ project to make a difference. As program / project managers if we can't convey the link between our project and the organisation how can we show we are delivering value, outcomes and benefits?

Remember that 90% of program / project managers' time is spent on communication at all levels...

From the Events Director

Emma Stewart



Hello everyone! Our 2016 PMI Sydney Chapter Events calendar has continued to provide an excellent range of varied Events. The Events are themed around subjects that you told us you wanted to know more about in the PMI Sydney Chapter Members Survey, and they are proving popular with many Events having more than 100 attendees!

In **April** Catherine Smithson, Managing Director and founder of Being Human, led the outstanding session “Good, Better, Best: Update on Global Best Practices in Change Management in Projects”. This interactive and thought-provoking session included real-time voting by attendees to see the change-related issues facing our projects at that very time. As an added bonus, Catherine generously gave every attendee a copy of the ADKAR book!

May brought another brilliant Event, this time bright and early at a Breakfast Event. “How to Manage Benefits in a Lean and Agile Environment” is a key question many of our members are facing, and we were fortunate to benefit from the experience and knowledge of Natalie Pritchard, who has been managing benefits for Insurance Australia Group (IAG) for more than 5 years, and gave us key metrics to consider implementing ourselves.



June was busy with our regular PMI Sydney Chapter Event, but also a Special Event with Jim Snyder, one of the founders of PMI. It was illuminating to hear the story of how the PMI came into being, how it currently operates, and Jim’s thoughts for the future of PMI and the project profession. Jim was also generous with his time after his presentation, ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to network with him and ask their questions. It was a truly enjoyable Special Event.

Just a couple of weeks later we held our June PMI Sydney Chapter Event. PM-Partner’s Mike Boutel and Glenn Brule “6 Top Strategies for Ensuring Successful Project Delivery” took us through a fully interactive Event, with team work and strategies that we could take away and implement to improve delivery success. PM-Partners also donated a generous Lucky Door Prize, with one of our attendees winning a free pass to a PM-Partners training course!



Our **July** Event was a different style, with a panel of speakers sharing incredibly valuable advice, tips and trends in “Project Management Employment Market Update and Trends in 2016”. Steve Tompkins was joined by Michael Campbell, Alastair Bor and Danny Moudling. Their insights from the perspectives of recruitment agents and hiring managers illuminated hidden parts of the recruitment process, and what anyone looking for their next project role should really focus on. One of our attendees also won a fantastic Lucky Door Prize from Horizon Consulting of a touch screen laptop!



In addition to the Event itself, we were joined by some University students who are studying Project Management. Attendees were invited to review the student's posters and vote for a winner. Attendees enjoyed exploring the new ideas on the posters, and the students commented how much they appreciated the opportunity to share their work with experienced project professionals, and receive feedback.

All of these Events are only possible thanks to the amazing presenters that agree to take part, but also prepare to make these Events meaningful. Also, we are lucky to have a dedicated team of Volunteers who work tirelessly between Events and at the Event to ensure they run smoothly. Thank you to everyone involved.

In addition to the PMI Sydney Chapter Event success, the Sydney MeetUp community that PMI Sydney Chapter are proud to support has been going from strength to strength!

- PMI Sydney MeetUp, expertly run by Stella Akratos and a fantastic team, hold monthly sessions aimed at a broader cross-section of the project profession, and have been very well attended. The proof of the success of these sessions is in the regularly high number of attendees! <http://www.meetup.com/PMISydneyMeetup>
- PMO Sydney MeetUp, led by Sandra Arps, specifically targets sessions related to PMO (Project/Program Management Office), and has been gaining an increasing community. <http://www.meetup.com/PMO-Sydney>

Again, these MeetUps are run by dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers, who are passionate about our profession and the MeetUp success is purely due to them. Thank you to these committed volunteers.

All of the teams are now looking ahead to 2017, and seeing you at an Event!

PMI Sydney Chapter Events Team

Emma, Tim, Maurya, Awais, Deepa, Saheel, Tammy, Aurora, Stella, Sandra

PMI Sydney Chapter Events coming up in 2016 and 2017!

<i>Event Day</i>	<i>Event Date</i>	<i>Event Type</i>
Tues	23-Aug-16	Evening Chapter Event
Wed	21-Sep-16	Breakfast Chapter Event
Thurs	27-Oct-16	Evening Chapter Event
Tues	22-Nov-16	Evening Chapter Event
Thurs	08-Dec-16	AGM Evening Chapter Event

<i>Event Day</i>	<i>Event Date</i>	<i>Event Type</i>
Wed	22-Feb-17	Evening Chapter Event
Thurs	23-Mar-17	Evening Chapter Event
Tues	25-Apr-17	Breakfast Chapter Event
	28/29/30-May-17	PMI Australia Conference in Sydney!
Wed	21-Jun-17	Evening Chapter Event
Tues	25-Jul-17	Evening Chapter Event
Wed	23-Aug-17	Evening Chapter Event
Thurs	21-Sep-17	Breakfast Chapter Event
Tues	24-Oct-17	Evening Chapter Event
Wed	22-Nov-17	Evening Chapter Event
Thurs	07-Dec-17	AGM Evening Chapter Event

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New Blood for July Chapter Event

Louis Taborda - Academic Outreach Director



Those who attended our July chapter event not only heard about trends in the PM job market, they also had a chance to interact with PM Masters students from the University of Sydney who presented posters about their Capstone Projects during the networking time. The seven students attending were the guests of the Academic Outreach team and represented four of the top five student projects. Posters were displayed during the break with students describing their projects to our members who voted for the project that most impressed them by sticking a “red bullet” on the poster.

The aim was to create some interaction between the graduating students and give them an opportunity to communicate with our members. It also provided an ice-breaker for attendees and the consensus at the end of the evening was that everyone enjoyed the event. There were also PMI prizes awarded to the top teams with the three winners on the night (what we are calling the members-choice awards) being:

1. Social Outcomes Measurements in NSW, where the students conducted a survey of Social Enterprises for the NSW Council of Social Services to understand how somewhat intangible benefits might be assessed and compared (18 votes)
2. Big Picture Film Festival Handbook, developed for the Bill Crew’s Charity Trust which aims to connect with High Schools and help them arrange for their students to view and discuss Social Justice films (12 votes)
3. Valhalla Redux, created a Kickstarter project to fund the creation of a social club where movie buffs could show and discuss Art House films and recreate the experience of viewing cult classics as in the original Valhalla Cinema in Glebe (11 votes)

Two remaining student projects to receive special commendation were a comparative study of the Collaborative Execution method, and the redevelopment of PMI Sydney’s Mentoring Handbook.

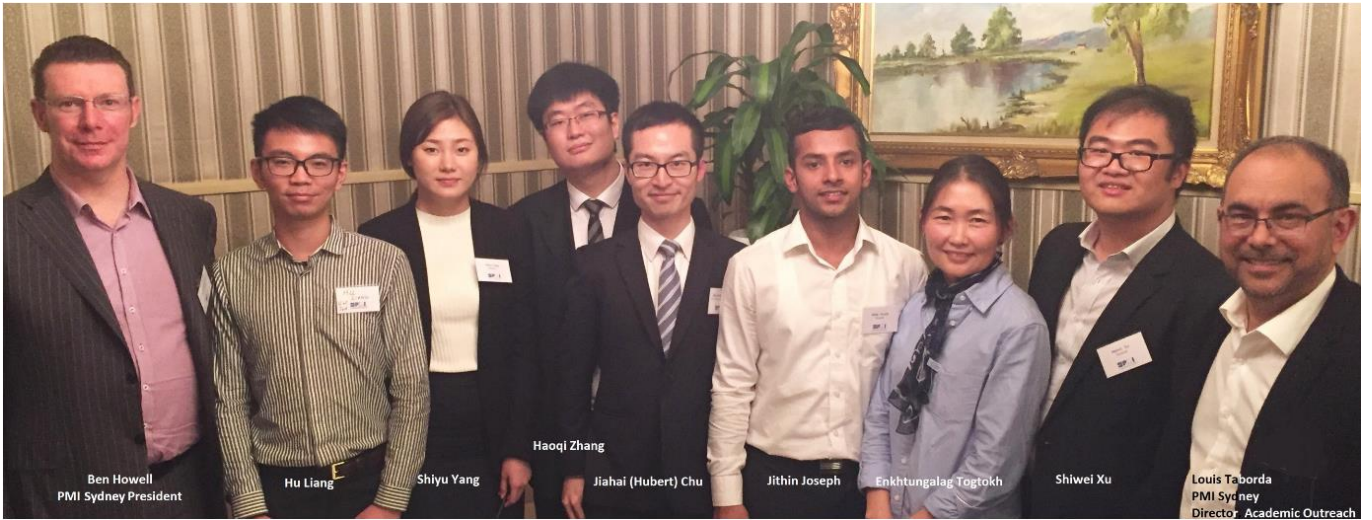
As always, Academic Outreach is looking to connect the dots between PM practitioners and educators/ academics. So I'd appreciate hearing from those of you who can see the value and professional stimulation to be found in engaging with our young and upcoming PMs.

This event should be considered a pilot involving only the University of Sydney's PM Masters students at this stage but we want to extend the program to other universities in 2017. To do that, the AO program needs to be expanded and **we require more volunteers keen to play an active part of the education of young PMs** to assist student teams in future projects.

Please let me know if you are interested – PM professionals could be involved either by:

1. Suggesting real-world projects (such as those described above) where students can apply their PM skills and team resources to deliver value to your business or community group.
2. Acting as a sponsor for a student team involving approximately 5 x 2 hour sessions over the course of a semester – needed for 2017 academic year.
3. Participating in PM workshops or focus groups which students conduct for data gathering and involves a commitment of just 1 x 3 hours for an evening session – which is required this year.

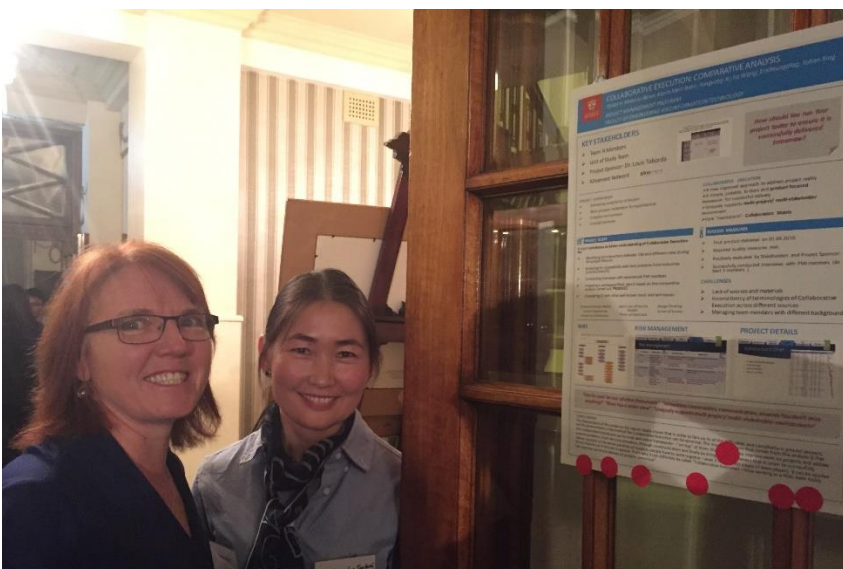
Finally, thanks to the members who chatted with the students and voted on the night - it was much appreciated by the PM students who are now more likely to become PMI members!



Student presenters are flanked by Sydney Chapter President Ben Howell (L) and Academic Outreach Director, Louis Taborda



David Wang engages with Jithin Joseph from USYD's PM Masters Program



Andrea Bright talking with PM Masters student Tungaa Togtokh about her Capstone poster

Mentoring Program 2nd Kick-Off Session

Hazel Apura

Where and who were there?

The Mentoring Program Kick-Off session was held last 2nd of August 2016 from 6:00 pm to 8:30pm at 99 York St Conference and Function Centre. It was organised and facilitated by the volunteers of the Mentoring Program Team (Mark, Lucas, Bilal, Hazel and Marcel) with 13 mentors and 33 mentees attending. The team was pleased to see a rise in the number of senior female mentors volunteering but we would like to encourage more female mentors to join and share their knowledge, experience and insight with the growing numbers of mentees registering.

The Kick-Off session, why is it important?

There are two intakes hosted each year by the program and they last from 4-5 months. The success of each intake starts with a successful Kick-Off session to ensure all participants understand the program and can verify their expectations. It is where both parties (mentee and mentor) first encounter each other and receive their information in common. These kick-offs would not happen without the dedication and preparation made by the Mentoring Volunteers for two months beforehand. The Mentoring Team is always looking to improve on their kick-offs and so the team encourages all participants to share their honest feedback during the kick-off and throughout the duration of the intake.



What happened during the Kick-Off session?

During the Kick-Off session, the team explain; what role the Mentoring Program performs on behalf of the Chapter and its members, the roles and responsibilities of the mentees and mentors, how the partnership works, how the matching process was undertaken, what should happen during the 'interview' session, what will happen during the intake period, and the immediate tangible benefits of being part of the Mentoring Program beyond the claiming of PDUs.

From recommendations made in past sessions, we introduced a mentee and mentor oral testimonial, we made the introductions of participants clearer, and improved the registration process. We invited Benjamin Howell our Chapter President to explain what the program delivers to our Chapter and how it strengthens the PMI brand. We also had Amany Nuseibeh share with us how the program upholds the PMISC Code of Ethics; Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Fairness.

The crucial interview session is where we announced mentor and mentee pairs. We asked participants to meet with their paired partners and make introductions. Furthermore, pairs were asked to make a contract (Mentor-Mentee Agreement), discussing mentee objectives, and identify when and how they wanted to meet. Participants were told these points were necessary to discuss to start drafting the Mentoring Plan.

After a successful Kick-Off session what's next?

Paired mentees and mentors are expected to have agreed upon their next meeting within the subsequent 2 weeks, after which a regular meeting will take place between the pairs throughout the next 18 weeks of the intake cycle. In their next meeting they will finalise the Mentoring Plan.

To ensure the partnership proceeds on this regular pattern, the Mentoring Team will run a series of 'Health Checks' within the cycle to monitor progress and ensure any arising issues or concerns between pairs are addressed and

supported to uphold cooperation and openness to all involved. However, to support pairs successfully, the Mentoring Team will rely upon receiving timely feedback from participants in order to assess the partnership in real time. To that end, the 'Health Checks' have been developed to be as convenient as possible to complete.

And the Future?

While mentees and mentors are busy with their partnerships, the Mentoring Team are not only working behind the scenes to perform health checks, but they are also working on further improvements to the program for future intakes. This is, not only in the way we deliver the Kick-Off event and manage the health checks, but also in initiatives like developing a Mentor Course. In future issues we hope to profile and share our work in these areas so members can appreciate how this freely offered program is improving for them.

After reading this article, have you asked yourself, if this is for you? Like, "Could things I have learned be helpful to others?", "Could I benefit from confidentially asking a third party their insights to some of my challenges?". If you find yourself asking questions like these, then the Mentoring Program is definitely a valued service available to you as a member of the PMI Sydney Chapter to explore. No enquiry for our next intake is too early to ask.

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RISK DOCTOR BRIEFING

DEFINING AND USING RISK APPETITE

© August 2016, Dr Ruth Murray-Webster

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There is a growing recognition that a proper understanding of risk appetite is a vital influence on organisational performance. This is supported by regulators who expect boards to understand and express their risk appetite, and some senior executives in a range of public and private sector organisations are already taking a lead in this area.

This is a good start, but there is still confusion about how to define risk appetite and then use it to ensure that the organisation doesn't take on too much risk (or too little). Our book **"A Short Guide to Risk Appetite"** * (Hillson & Murray-Webster, 2012) attempts to dispel that confusion and provide clear advice on the topic.

There are four important factors to consider when defining risk appetite:

1. **Conversation.** This must be two-way, listening as well as talking, building respect for alternative perspectives. Different views on risk appetite are inevitable, driven by people's inherent propensities for taking risk, and by their previous experiences of risk-taking that influence their perceptions of risk. This diversity is valuable, and open and honest conversation will enable differing perspectives to be aired and discussed.
2. **Challenge.** Diversity of views on risk appetite is normal, unless group dynamics such as groupthink are affecting the way people perceive risk, or if the group has worked together for so long that they have unconsciously adopted a cohesive approach. Challenge from a neutral facilitator will help decision-makers to consider alternative scenarios, and support open discussion of how much risk would be too much in the situation.
3. **Cascade.** Once senior decision-makers have a shared understanding of risk appetite for the whole organisation, this can be translated into measurable risk thresholds at the level of strategic objectives, as well as for operations, programmes and projects. Some advisors think that risk thresholds at lower levels in an organisation can be derived automatically using a formula, but this is rarely the right approach. Open conversation and neutral challenge will still be needed during the cascade process.
4. **Controls.** Finally, leading indicators are needed, not just lagging ones, to enable managers to know when current levels of risk exposure might breach risk thresholds. This might occur if risk exposure reaches a level where the outcome could not be tolerated, or risk exposure might get to a point where investing additional resources is no longer warranted. Where upper or lower risk thresholds are in danger of being breached, senior decision-makers will need to adopt a different risk attitude to ensure that risk exposure remains within acceptable limits. This will require the same level of conversation, challenge and cascade as the initial definition of risk appetite.

Implementing this approach is not easy because it requires behavioural change, led from the top and embraced at all levels. Risk is inherently subjective, but many leaders talk as if it were objective. This leads to a tension which can only be addressed through strong influencing skills, coupled with a deep understanding of the factors affecting risk perception and risk-taking behaviour. Risk practitioners must be committed to engaging leaders and encouraging improved self-awareness, supporting them as they explore various influences on risk perception and decision quality before deciding on a course of action. Only then will organisations be able to understand and express their risk appetite in a way that supports appropriate risk-taking at all levels.

* See Hillson D. A. & Murray-Webster R. 2012. "A short guide to risk appetite". Aldershot, UK: Gower. Details at <https://www.routledge.com/products/9781409440949>

To provide feedback on this Briefing Note, or for more details on how to develop effective risk management, contact the Risk Doctor (info@risk-doctor.com), or visit the Risk Doctor website (www.risk-doctor.com).

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PMI commenced in Australia in 1997 and held its first Chapter Meeting on 15 April 1997. Today the Chapter has over 1,700+ members from a mixture of industries including, but not limited to: construction, engineering, banking, insurance, finance, IT, telecommunications, consulting and pharmaceutical. Approximately 50% of Australian PMI's members are PMPs. PMI is strongly supported by a majority of companies in Australia and internationally. The Sydney Chapter conducts regular chapter meetings, education and certification courses and runs an annual conference in an effort to promote the profession of Project Management within NSW and Australia.

The Critical Path is published bi-monthly by the PMI Sydney Chapter and is distributed to approx. 3,000 people. A limited number of advertising pages are accepted in each issue. For all advertising queries please contact the Communications Director at communications@pmisydney.org.

Visit [our website](#) for further information on *The Critical Path - Publication & Content Dates for 2016*.

Chapter Membership Stats

Total Members	1588
PMP Members	832
CAPM Members	29
PgMP Members	11
PMI-SP	9
PMI-RMP	11
PMI-ACP	37
PfMP	1
PMI-PBA	1



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This Newsletter is published by the Editorial Team of the Communications Portfolio on behalf of the Project Management Institute Sydney Australia Chapter.

We welcome articles, interviews excerpts; general information and other contributions to enhance project management knowledge and understanding of our chapter members. Please send these to the Communications Director (communications@pmisydney.org).

“A project without a critical path is like a ship without a rudder.”
(D. Meyer, Illinois Construction Law)



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