



Project
Management
Institute.
Sydney, Australia

The Critical Path

June 2024



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Editor's Note

Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury

A very early morning fly out from Sydney to Brisbane involving public transport to the airport is not exactly something you'd love to do in winter. But, then, if you're lucky, all those misgivings are washed away by a glorious sunrise highlighting in crisp detail why Sydney is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Check out the photo of the month to see for yourself.



Talking about Sydney, the Vivid Festival finished earlier this month. As a project, Vivid is what you might call a stupendous success. However, the planning and execution around attendance and crowd management need more tempering, especially around the drone shows.



I was fortunate to board the Tekno Train, this year's new attraction at Vivid. I would give it a 5/10 (to be fair, the rain played spoilsport) but I believe it has the potential to become much bigger in the next years, if the route is longer and there are some more narrations about the city's origins and secrets.

The NSW State Budget of 2024 was delivered this month, with a record spending planned on social housing and measures to manage the cost-of-living pressures. Focus on public infrastructure, especially around hospitals and schools, and upgrades of roads and rails are also key items highlighted by the treasurer. This will definitely put a lot of pressure on public funds, which has shrunk quite a bit after the GST divvying up by the federal government, leading to a \$3.6 billion deficit in the state budget

The Australian contingent for the Paris Olympics 2024 has started getting finalised – with 254 sportspersons selected so far to represent the country in 25 sports, 139 debutants being among them. With less than a month remaining for the Games to start, the excitement is starting to build up, as organisers spare no efforts to make the experience as smooth as possible over the 19 days of the Games.

The T-20 Cricket World Cup ended with a heartache for the Australian contingent, what with the team failing to make it to the semi-finals. India finally won the trophy beating South Africa in the finals in a closely-contested match, after convincingly defeating defending champions England in the semi-finals. The World Cup also saw the end of David Warner's 15-year international career, with Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma of India following suit with their retirement announcements from international T-20 cricket.

This was also a month of various geo-political changes, with several announcements at the G-7 Summit impacting global policy over the long term, and the plea deal and return to Australia of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange.

Closer home, PMI Sydney hosted some very interesting events this month, starting with the first PMISC Socials evening and continuing to the Visual Communications event and the first PMI Sydney Agile Workshop. We also celebrated the 5th Anniversary of the Project Managers Movement (PMM), a community of project professionals supported by the PMISC. Our month of July has an interesting spread of events. Refer to our website or the Chapter News section for details.

In this month's The Critical Path, Ibrahim Dani takes us through the dilemma on Agile and how hybrid models are shaping the future of Agile. In her article, Christina Arcane of PM-Partners argues that it is important to have a foundational knowledge of cyber-security when you are dealing with the complex projects in today's challenging cyber environment. In the concluding part of her article, Amireh Amirmazaheri explains the role of today's PMO in digital transformation exercises. Check out the Chapter News for more news and photos from our events.

If you have any bright ideas on how to make the newsletter better, we are all ears. Please reach out to the marketing team at newsletter@pmisydney.org or marketing@pmisydney.org.

I am looking for **enthusiastic Volunteers** to run digital marketing campaigns and work on the newsletter. The work is rewarding and would be a great learning experience for a project manager or a project controller. If you think you have what we need, reach out to me at marketing@pmisydney.org or our Associate Director Malong Dong at marcom_ad@pmisydney.org.

Best,

[Himadri Sekhar Chowdhury](#)

Editor, The Critical Path

The Agile Dilemma: It Is Time to Rethink PM Approach

Ibrahim Dani

In the evolving landscape of project management, a critical question lingers in the minds of many practitioners: Is Agile, in its myriad forms, truly enhancing our ability to manage projects effectively? While Agile methodologies have dominated discussions and practices over the past decade, recent trends and observations suggest a potential shift in the paradigm.



Ibrahim Dani is an accomplished business leader with extensive experience in managing programs and leading people. Ibrahim had a colourful career journey including speaking at PMI EMEA Congress and training aspiring Project Managers. He is an advocate for excellence, a trusted adviser, and a thought leader in project delivery and related human capital management.

The Evolution of Project Management Methodologies

Project management has a rich history of evolving methodologies, each developed to address the specific needs of its time. In the 1950s, the Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT) and the Critical Path Method (CPM) were introduced, providing a structured approach to managing complex projects with a focus on scheduling and resource allocation. The 1980s saw the rise of the Waterfall model, a linear and sequential approach that became the standard in industries like construction and manufacturing.

However, the turn of the millennium brought a significant shift with the introduction of Agile methodologies. The Agile Manifesto, published in 2001, emphasised flexibility, customer collaboration, and responsiveness to change. This new approach revolutionised software development and soon expanded to other industries, promising increased adaptability and faster delivery.



The Rise of Hybrid Models: A Departure from Pure Agile?

The increasing adoption of hybrid models raises an important question: Are Agile purists beginning to distance themselves from traditional Agile frameworks? The PMI's latest Pulse of the Profession report (15th Edition, 2024) indicates a decline in Agile adoption for the first time in so many years, alongside a decrease in the decline of traditional project management methods. This trend points towards a growing preference for hybrid approaches, which blend elements of both Agile and traditional methodologies.

As clearly indicated in Figure 1 below, the adoption of Agile is declining after peaking at only 27% among project managers, while Predictive (waterfall/traditional) decline is easing, but still close to double of Agile adoption (43.9% vs 24.6%). While the adoption of Hybrid is steadily increasing, it is doing so at the account of Agile rather than Predictive.

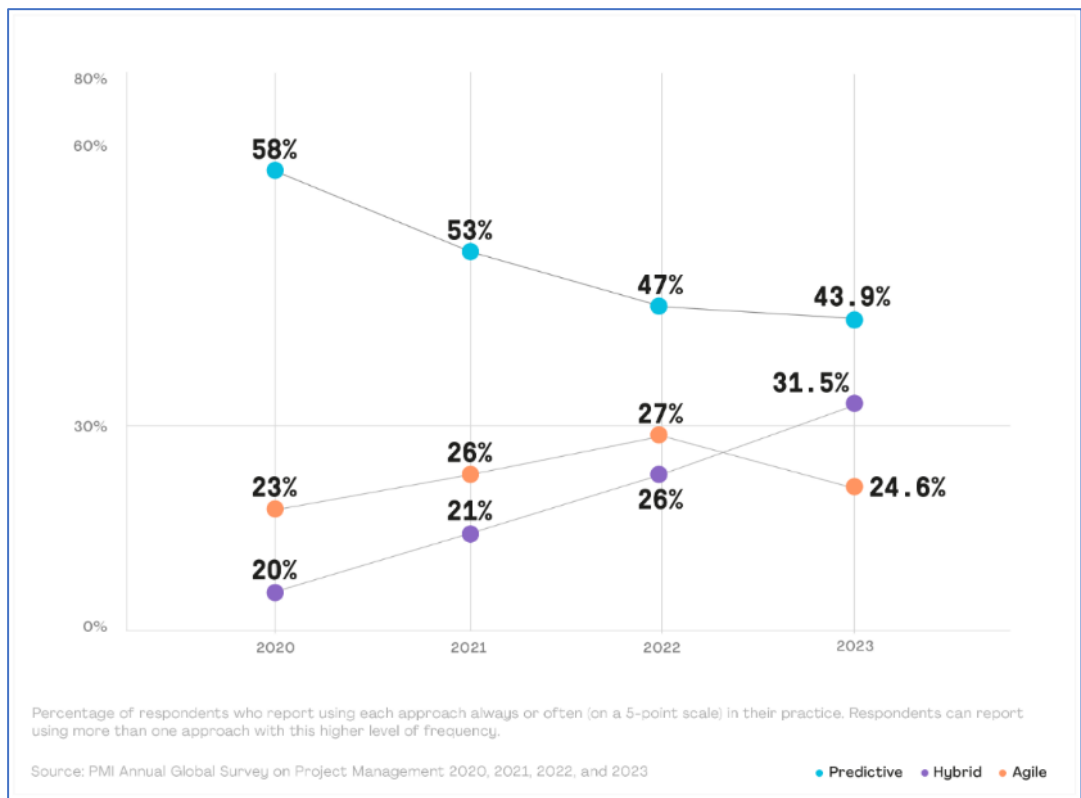


Figure 1 – Adoption of different methods by project managers between 2020 and 2023
(PMI Pulse of the Profession 15th Edition – 2024)

Hybrid models are not a novel concept. They have been employed for years, driven by the principle of fit-for-purpose. This approach tailors project management practices to the unique needs and contexts of individual projects, rather than adhering rigidly to a single methodology. The essence of hybrid models lies in their flexibility and adaptability, allowing project managers to draw from a diverse toolkit to achieve the best outcomes.

The Reality of Hybrid Project Management

But is hybrid truly hybrid? Or is it simply a rebranding of what seasoned project managers have been doing all along? The term 'hybrid' suggests a new, innovative

approach, yet in practice, it often reflects the pragmatic application of established principles. The shift towards hybrid models highlights a fundamental truth: effective project management is not about rigid adherence to one methodology but about selecting the right tools and techniques for the job at hand.

A case in point is the construction industry, where hybrid methodologies have long been in use. Projects often start with Predictive planning for initial phases like design and procurement, and then transition to Agile techniques during the construction phase to manage changes and unexpected issues more effectively.

Agile's Waning Influence?

The proliferation of new Agile variants raises questions about the methodology's core effectiveness. Are these new 'flavours' of Agile necessary, or do they signify a broader issue – that Agile, as a concept, may have lost some of its initial lustre? As organisations and project managers continually seek to justify Agile's relevance, there is a growing sense that we might need to rethink our approach to managing projects.

Reframing Project Management

At its heart, project management is a means to an end, not an end in itself. The ultimate goal is to introduce new ideas, products, and services in a well-planned and efficient manner. This objective transcends any specific methodology, be it Agile, Predictive, or hybrid. The focus should be on achieving project goals and delivering value, rather than on the labels we attach to our methods.

As the project management community navigates this evolving landscape, it is crucial to maintain an open mind and embrace a flexible approach. We must prioritise the success of our projects over strict adherence to any particular methodology. By doing so, we can ensure that we remain effective and responsive to the unique challenges and opportunities that each project presents.

Conclusion

The current discourse around Agile and hybrid methodologies invites us to reflect on the essence of project management. It is a reminder that managing projects is fundamentally about enabling innovation and delivering value. Whether through Agile, hybrid, or traditional methods, our focus should always be on finding the best way to achieve our project goals. As we move forward, we should remain committed to the principles of effective project management, irrespective of the labels we use.

By recognising that the goal of project management is to facilitate the successful introduction of new ideas, products, and services, we can better navigate the complexities of our projects. This perspective allows us to move beyond methodological debates and focus on what truly matters: delivering value and achieving project success.

Cyber for Non-Cyber Professionals

Christina Arcane

In the face of escalating cyber threats, non-cyber professionals are pivotal defenders. Here, **Christina Arcane** explores how project, change, and business roles can build cyber resilience in their organisations, while also advancing their careers.

The Rising Tide of Cyber Attacks

In an era dominated by digital transformation, cyber threats have emerged as one of the foremost challenges facing businesses around the globe. Australia, with its highly interconnected business landscape, is no exception.



Christina Arcane is a Cyber Security Educator and PM-Partners Training Facilitator at PM-Partners

pm-partners



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

According to the Australian Cyber Security Centre, there were 94,000 cybercrime reports in the 2022–23 financial year, a 23 per cent increase over the previous 12-month period. Last year, nearly half the country's 26 million population had personal information stolen in just two data breaches at companies, while other attacks brought critical infrastructure to a standstill.

Aside from the shocking statistics, what these events highlight is not just a need for greater investment in advanced cyber security monitoring technologies, but a glaring lack of awareness and capability among non-cyber professionals – who are so often the first responders in the event of a cyber attack.

Upskilling Non-Cyber Roles

A recent cyber incident at The Iconic provides a useful case in point. Customer accounts were accessed through a practice known as ‘credential stuffing’ and, as is often the case in these scenarios, it was the customer service and fraud teams, not security teams, who first became aware of the problem. But without the cyber know-how to recognise these events for what they are, or the skills to mount a best practice response, they’re ill-equipped to minimise the fallout, which, in this instance, included fraudulent transactions and angry, disgruntled customers.

Key Areas of Consideration for Non-cyber Roles

As cyber incidents escalate it’s imperative that non-cyber roles, from project managers and business analysts (BAs) to functional staff, recognise their importance in mitigating these threats. Here we look at the areas you need to consider to ensure your projects, products, tools and processes take account of and adequately address the vulnerabilities in your domain.

- 1. Risk management:** Cyber risks must be planned for at the outset of projects and integrated into your existing risk framework to minimise adverse impacts.
- 2. Regulatory compliance:** Understand the cyber governance rules relevant to your role. For BAs this includes your obligations under the Australian Privacy Act 1988 and ISO27001.
- 3. Security policies and frameworks:** Help to develop and enforce robust security policies and procedures to create a foundation for cyber resilience and inform others on how to respond.
- 4. Roles and responsibilities:** Identify what a cyber attack/vulnerability might look like in your context and ensure cyber-related accountabilities are defined, communicated, and understood.
- 5. Supply chain security:** Assess and improve how you work with your supply chain – from the data you share to the personnel involved – to prevent disruptions from external vulnerabilities.
- 6. Business continuity and disaster recovery (BCDR):** Consider potential cyber disruptions and actively contribute to the creation and testing of more robust BCDR plans.
- 7. Security awareness and culture:** Promote a cyber security-conscious culture through regular training and awareness initiatives to improve cyber knowledge and behaviours.

Challenges and Opportunities for Non-Cyber Professionals

Those in non-cyber roles often struggle with a lack of understanding around technology, poor cyber security literacy and resistance to change. But as cyber threats evolve,

organisations urgently need more people to take the lead on cyber advocacy. Overcoming these challenges also represents an opportunity to enhance your employability with cyber skills among the most in-demand skills today, especially in sectors like finance, health, and retail.

Four Steps to Build Your Cyber Security Skills and Resilience



Regardless of your role, there are some simple ways to start building your cyber capabilities and those of your team:

- A. Invest in cyber security education:** Enrol in tailored training programs like PM-Partners Cyber Security for Project Professionals to gain essential knowledge and practical skills.
- B. Bridge the communication gap:** Engage with IT and cybersecurity teams to develop a common language between tech and non-tech teams and improve collaboration.
- C. Advocate for a cyber security culture:** Promote cyber awareness and be a role model for best practice in your team, emphasising the role everyone plays in maintaining security.
- D. Stay informed:** Keep up to date with the latest threats, vulnerabilities, and best practices and commit to continuous learning to adapt to the evolving landscape.

The pervasive rise of cyber threats calls for a collective response from professionals in various roles. Non-cyber roles must enhance their knowledge of key cyber concepts and boost their cyber security literacy. By taking proactive steps and leveraging educational opportunities, you can help fortify your organisation's defences while building future skills and advancing your career.

Ready to step up to the demand for cyber security capabilities? With [PM-Partners Cyber Security for Project Professionals course](#), you'll gain essential knowledge and skills and discover new career possibilities. For more information or to enrol, contact us online or call our team on 1300 13 14 today.

This article is an abridged version of the original – read the complete text [HERE](#).

Challenges in Digital Transformation: The Power of PMO – Part II

Amireh Amirmazaheri

From Administrative Entities to Strategic Influencers

From 2018 to 2024, our experience as judging committee members for the PMO Global Awards revealed a notable shift in the role of PMOs. Once regarded as mere administrative units, PMOs have now become strategic partners influencing business decisions and ensuring initiatives align with organizational goals. This evolution highlights their transition from bureaucratic layers to organisational key drivers of project success in today's dynamic business environment.

PMO to EPMO Mindshift



The Enterprise PMO (EPMO) has recently emerged as a pivotal force in project management. It sharpens its focus on crafting and executing strategies that ensure businesses are prepared, capable, and well-equipped to meet their objectives. Recent advancements in PMO and EPMO involve the incorporation of change management and business analysis into their skill set.

This evolution enables PMOs to foster stronger collaborations with other business units, adopting a hands-on approach. For instance, PMOs and EPMOs now tailor their services to integrate with departments like marketing, sales, and customer service.



Amireh Amirmazaheri
Is the Member of Board - PMO Global Alliance, and the Founder and Director of PMO Solutions.

Strategic Partners

PMOs have become vital to organizational success by aligning project initiatives with broader business strategies. Through effective resource allocation and prioritization, they ensure that every project contributes to the organization's goals, maximizing return on investment and driving long-term success.

PMOs are now seen as strategic partners rather than just a cost centre. PMO service providers are driving innovation by creating roles and actions tailored to unique business needs. This includes establishing new communities of practice and roles like PMO ambassadors or champions, demonstrating that PMO innovation extends beyond technology to various service aspects such as innovating the new way of facilitating workshops, or demonstrating the value.

Despite numerous articles on PMO's strategic partnership, one must wonder about the starting point. Are there unknown challenges? Where do we stand, and what does excellence look like?

Take a 3-minute assessment to gauge your strategic partnership level. It provides a clear starting point for improvement.

Take the assessment from here:
[PMO Strategic Partnership Assessment](#)

Innovation – Lean and Agility

In a constantly changing environment, PMOs as strategic partners are essential for driving innovation in projects and businesses. They enable businesses to quickly adapt to market changes and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Over the past five years, PMOs have significantly advanced their innovation strategies, standing out as digital leaders through the creative and systematic use of technology. They have adopted adaptive PMO solutions for gathering stakeholder expectations, delivering training, engaging customers, and communicating with various business units.

The impact of these technologies goes beyond using Project Portfolio Management (PPM) tools or creating visually appealing dashboards. True innovation lies in adaptive strategies that enhance efficiency and effectiveness, driving organizational success. By leveraging forward-thinking approaches, PMOs can utilize technology to achieve their goals more efficiently and effectively.

Data Capabilities

The advent of data analytics has significantly enhanced the capability of PMOs to provide actionable insights. By harnessing the power of data, PMOs can aid in decision-making, risk management, and forecasting, thereby playing a crucial role in navigating the complexities of modern business environments.

Data analytics has become a cornerstone of modern project management. PMOs leverage advanced analytics tools to monitor project performance, identify trends, and predict potential issues before they arise.

By providing real-time insights into project progress, resource utilisation, and risk factors, PMOs enable informed decision-making and proactive risk management.

Nowadays, successful businesses often feature not just Portfolio, Program, and Project Management Offices but also Data Management Offices. These entities centralize and streamline the transformation of data into information and then into compelling narratives.

Lean way of working and PM methodology agnostic approach

Implementing lean principles allows organizations to shed redundant practices, streamline workflows, and enhance project execution. Lean frameworks thrive in high-performing PMOs, reflecting the advanced skills of professionals who drive innovation and surpass expectations. Excellence in PMOs isn't about adherence to a particular project management methodology; it's about defining services by their efficiency and independence from any one approach. A proficient PMO empowers projects and programs to succeed, regardless of the chosen methodology for delivery.

Internal or External PMO

As organizations grow and mature, establishing an internal Project Management Office (PMO) and partnering with proficient PMO consultants or global knowledge sources becomes imperative. This presents an excellent opportunity for the business, in-house PMO personnel, and external consultants to blend the company's growth trajectory, internal drive, and external expertise to succeed.

Successful PMO Global Awards cases have shown that connecting to the professional world is crucial. Working with consultants or global PMO professionals and joining professional networks such as PMO Global Alliance can greatly support internal PMO or EPMO practitioners. This enables them to improve the function and become a better business partner faster, more efficiently and smarter.

Enhancing alignment and teamwork

Modern PMOs prioritize empowering project teams by granting access to cutting-edge tools, technologies, and training. The era of pigeonholing PMOs as merely supportive, controlling, or directive is over. Today's successful PMOs tailor their services to meet customer needs, ensuring that each service adds value and serves a clear purpose.

Elevating the project management community and enhancing capabilities lead to heightened productivity, innovation, and job satisfaction among team members.

Moreover, PMOs are instrumental in facilitating effective communication and collaboration. They establish unambiguous communication channels, encourage cross-functional teamwork, and ensure all stakeholders are aligned with project goals. This comprehensive strategy minimizes confusion, boosts transparency, and cultivates a cooperative culture within the organization.

The Future of PMOs

The role of PMOs will continue to evolve, and future PMOs will likely consider more focus on the following areas:

- **Digital Transformation:**

As digital technologies become more pervasive, PMOs will play a critical role in driving digital transformation initiatives. They will help



organisations adopt new technologies, streamline processes, and enhance digital capabilities to stay competitive.

- **Sustainability and Social Responsibility:** PMOs will increasingly focus on sustainability and corporate social responsibility. They will ensure that projects align with the organisation's sustainability goals and contribute positively to society.
- **Continuous Learning and Development:** The future PMO will emphasise continuous learning and development. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning, PMOs will ensure that project teams are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate an ever-changing business landscape.
- **Advanced Analytics and AI:** The integration of advanced analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) will further enhance the capabilities of PMOs. These technologies will enable more accurate forecasting, better risk management, and improved decision-making processes.

Conclusion

The evolution of PMOs from support functions to strategic influencers is a testament to their growing importance in today's business landscape. PMOs have come a long way, and their contribution to decision-making, project success, and business value cannot be overlooked. With the rise of EPMOs and the adoption of lean project and portfolio management practices, organizations are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern business world. It's an exciting time for PMO Managers, Chief Project Officers, and PMO leads as they witness the transformation of their roles and the increasing recognition of their contributions.


Chapter News – June 2024

Event Alert: Stakeholders Around Us


PM Partners and PMI Sydney invite you to join us on 2nd of July 2024 for a seminar on advanced level of stakeholder engagement skill with Tony Palechek.

Tony's presentation covers the advanced level of stakeholder engagement, as the most effective risk management activity.

Tony will talk about developing the Stakeholder Map and Power/Interest Matrix, continuing with the stakeholder engagement and relationship building throughout the project cycle. Stakeholders' prioritisation using QRA, applying Monte Carlo simulation to optimise assessment. The use of probability distributions as inputs into the model will be discussed in detail to highlight the importance of addressing the risks at the root.

 Date: 02 July 2024.

 Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

 Where: PM Partners, Level 5, 45 Clarence St Sydney 2000

 Cost: Free for Members and Students, \$35 for non-members

Register [HERE](#)

Event Alert: PMISC Agile Movement Workshop 2 for PMI Sydney Chapter Members




Dr Peter Brace

PMI Sydney Agile Movement

WORKSHOP 2

Psychosocial Hazards: Five Aces for an Unbeatable Hand

 Date: 18 July 2024.

 Time: 8:30 PM – 9:30 PM

 Where: Online, via Zoom

 Cost: Free for all

Register [HERE](#)

Psychosocial Hazards: Five Aces for an Unbeatable Hand

- Legislative Requirements: Most regions in Australia mandate proactive management of psychosocial hazards.
- Variety of Hazards: Hazards range from overt issues like harassment to subtle ones like poor work design.
- Organizational Challenge: Implementing effective management strategies can be daunting.

Join Dr Peter Brace on a journey to understand these key changes and how it will affect you and your organisation.

Takeaway:

Explore a comprehensive framework for managing psychosocial hazards in the workplace. Discover how to meet your legal and moral obligations effectively—don't miss this opportunity to enhance your organisation's approach!

Chapter News – June 2024


Event Alert: Face the Friction - Dealing with Conflict Head On (Online)

Mike Roberts, director and practice lead with Millpond, a professional services organization specializing in project management and training, will explore the sources of conflict, personalities, strategies, and the importance of active listening, empathy, & effective communication in resolving conflict.

By using real-life examples and sharing practical tips, attendees will leave with a better understanding on how to effectively manage conflict to preserve and improve their team's performance.

At the conclusion of this session;

- attendees will be able to apply practical techniques to improve communication, strengthen relationships, and increase team productivity.
- recognize the early warning signs of conflict and know how to intervene before conflicts escalate

 Date: 18 July 2024.

 Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

 Where: Online, via Zoom

 Cost: Free for Members and Students, \$35 for non-members


Register [HERE](#)

Event Alert: Women in Projects Australia Meetup: A-Z of Project Management

Join Women in Projects Australia and well-known professional trainer, Marshal Alkouz, as we cover the A-Z of Project Management.


We will have an interactive session covering all topics through different phases of project management. Look forward to catching up with you!

First Session:

 Date: 17 July 2024.

 Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

 Where: The Commons, 388 George Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

 Cost: Free for Members, Students, non-members

Register [HERE](#)

Chapter News – June 2024

PMISC Social Night

The PMISC Social Night on 6 June was a standout success! As anticipated, the evening was filled with laughter, great conversations, and memorable moments - we connected, relaxed, and enjoyed a night away from the daily grind despite the heavy rains in Sydney.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us and made the evening so special. Your enthusiasm and participation are what make our community so vibrant and strong.



Chapter News – June 2024

PMISC Visual Communications Workshop

It was a privilege listening to Simon Banks, an esteemed international speaker and author, on creativity, innovation and design.

Simon's session was rich with insightful knowledge of the neuroscience behind visual communication, effective drawing techniques and creating visual metaphors for engaging stakeholders. The attendees also explored the importance of empathy in visual storytelling and innovative approaches to strategies' representation.



Chapter News – June 2024

PMM 5th Anniversary

The Project Managers Movement has completed 5 years on 17 June 2024. With an anniversary event at their ubiquitous Club York venue, the team, led by Leo Coco, celebrated the day with an excellent trivia, lovely treats and a cake. Started by Leo in 2019 and supported by PMI Sydney, this is a group of PM professionals determined to create success and be better versions of themselves.

If you haven't yet, just check them out and attend one of their [Meetup](#) events.



Photo of the Month

Himadri S. Chowdhury



About the image

A view from the sky: The Sydney CBD on a glorious day