



AUSTRALIAN PROJECT &  
CONSULTING SERVICES



## Projections

making concept reality...

### ISSUE 12

## Welcome to Projections!

22 February 2006

WELCOME TO  
PROJECTIONS

22 DAYS TO GO

STEERING COMMITTEES

INTRODUCING  
KANE WILLE

PROJECT ESTIMATING

TEENAGE GAMES  
REPORTERS

5 MINUTES WITH JEFF  
CARLIN

.....

Dear Reader

THERE'S A ELECTRONIC COUNTDOWN TIMER in the front window of our office. This morning, Tuesday 21 February, it reads an ominous "22" in big, bold and red figures. That means that there are only **22 days to go** before the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony. Our Games Data Network Project Director, Jeff Carlin, brings us up to date on our progress on this complex and fascinating project.

What is the role of the **Steering Committee**? Should they be restricted to maintaining a governance function or should they actively participate in the resolution of problems? Should they be passive or participative? Paul Eldridge discusses the issues and pitfalls – and gives us a hint that he has been managing projects for a long time!

**Kane Wille** is a young athlete who will be proudly representing Australia at the World Cross Country Championships later this year. I look forward to reporting on Kane's progress over the coming months and years.

**Estimating** is an important aspect of project budgeting – but how do you do it well, especially if you are breaking new ground? Ian Norman talks us through some of the strategies that he has successfully employed and reinforces the importance of avoiding scope creep.

APCS is pleased to be a supporter of Plan Australia's **Youth Media Program** which is enabling nine 13-20 year old reporters from Ghana, India and Pakistan to bring their unique perspective to the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

And finally, we get to spend a long overdue **5 minutes with Jeff Carlin** our indefatigable Project Director. Is he eccentric? Intense? Or simply "out there"? I'll let you be the judge!

Let the Games begin!

Until next time

Craig Dennis

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If it's Tuesday - There's only 22 Days To Go!

By [Jeff Carlin](#)  
Project Director

All Core services to the Commonwealth Games venues were installed by mid January. Altogether almost 40 venues have been commissioned which represents a major milestone in the planning and execution of the interconnection of venues into the Games Data Network. I'm pleased to report that APCS' scorecard achieved a 100% result in our delivering upon the tight schedule commitments.

The MCG, Uniforms and Accreditation Centre, Games Warehouse and the large Athletes Village commenced operations in December. As further stages of the MCG and Athletes Village completed building and fitout works, the APCS team followed closely behind (in some cases too close!) bumping-in workstations, printers and network switch equipment.

January saw some large-scale technology deployment at the Athletes Village. This site is essentially a very large campus and resembles a neighbourhood or suburb in its dimensions and diversity. Around 40+ separate buildings (permanent and semi-permanent) required technology deployment and the site includes a large Internet Café and a significant fibre-optic backbone network.

The team has also been involved behind the scenes in setting up and supporting temporary technology to shadow some recent high profile sporting events, these include: -

- World Lawn Bowls Championships at the State Lawn Bowls Centre in Northcote,
- World Artistic Gymnastics at Rod Laver Arena,
- Swimming Trials at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatics Centre.
- The Victorian Athletics Championships at the new MCG arena last weekend. This particular event required a significant effort to implement high technology into the field of play at the MCG and a broad range of technology support services at the sporting venues (MCG and Olympic Park) and the primary Technology Operations Centre.

Whilst deployments at venues occur in phases right up to the commencement of Games, the workforce ramp-up has commenced under high pressure timelines as volunteers and technical support teams are built, trained and put into active duty for support of the Games Data Network. Building and organising a crack team of almost 160 people to support a general workforce of 52,000 with just 22 days before the Opening Ceremony is nothing short of an amazing challenge.

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## Steering Committees

By [Paul Eldridge](#)  
Senior Project Manager

AS A YOUNG PROJECT MANAGER I didn't always look forward to the next Steering Committee meeting. I was never sure what to expect and never certain I'd get the help I needed. As a gained more experience I found that good steering committees were not only integral but in some cases essential to the success of projects. Steering Committees should have two types of people on them and, importantly, both types should be senior in the organisation. Steering Committee members should either have a vested interest in the result of the project and/or have strong influence within the organisation.

What are some the dangers?

**Solution Mode:** I often see the type of Steering Committee that is little more than an extension of project team. It meets to work through project problems – usually there and then – the “Solution Mode” Steering Committee. This is a tremendous waste of resources. Ideally, problem solving (especially technical) should be taken offline and dealt with by just those who can come up with a solution – the Steering Committee should be left to evaluate either the solution or to agree on a recommended option.

**Poor Governance:** If Steering Committees don't understand either their role or the role of the project managers they will have difficulty governing projects. There are fundamental governance aspects that cannot be ignored. Just two of these aspects are described below.

1. Progress against schedule (milestones, deliverables etc) is dependent on an achievable schedule. The Steering Committee is also “signing up” to that schedule (i.e. it actually belongs to them as well and the project manager) and has to monitor progress meticulously.
2. The Steering Committee must also monitor the management of the budget (i.e. resources, money etc) and ensure that deviations are dealt with. Reports must be prepared, distributed and analysed before the Steering Committee meets. Direct action should always be taken when needed – don't wait.

#### Poor Running

I've mentioned one running pitfall above. Many Steering Committees are only ever “presented to” by the project manager. This is sometimes the first time members find out about project problems that may have existed for a while. Time is wasted on explaining the situation and not enough on determining the actions that should be taken by the project manager and/or the Steering Committee.

It's very convenient to have the Steering Committee meet on a regular timetable for the same duration each time (e.g. 1 hour every month). Actually some meetings may need more time than others (plenty finish early but few get extended). One of the biggest mistakes Steering Committees make is waiting until the next scheduled meeting to see the “what happened” to their well intentioned directions (steering). Steering Committees (or a sub set) should be prepared to meet at other times to monitor specific aspects.

#### One more chance

A similar problem for Steering Committees is the giving second chances or “let's wait until next month to see how it turned out”. Steering Committee members should use their experience and should rely on their gut feel when assessing projects. If action is indicated – take it immediately and don't wait to see if things improve – they seldom do. And, as mentioned earlier, meet again before the next scheduled meeting to allow assessment.

#### Conclusion

There's a wealth of information around about the role and the responsibilities of the Steering Committee and its members. Some larger organisations even train people on how to organise and run Steering Committees. However, make sure the right people are on the Steering Committee and that they are prepared to support the project manager and the business by acting promptly and decisively.

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## Introducing Kane Wille

By [Craig Dennis](#)  
Director Consulting Services

SIXTEEN YEAR OLD KANE WILLE is a name to remember. Kane has recently qualified to represent Australia at the World Cross Country Championships which will be held in Italy during April. A long distance runner, Kane gained a Silver medal for the Under 20 years, 5000 metres at the Victorian School Championships and qualified for the 3000 metres de Castella at the Zatopec Classic where he competed against an international field. We are pleased to be able to help Kane pursue his dreams and look forward to reporting on his progress over the coming months and years.



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## Project Estimating: Art, Science or Fluke

By [Ian Norman](#)  
Senior Project Manager

IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE ACCURATE in your project estimations, especially for fixed price contracts. Fortunately, there are a number of common strategies that can be used to ensure a good outcome for all parties.

Primarily, the use of a good template will ensure all areas like scope, risk, assumptions and deliverables are all documented and agreed. You may also be able to compare outcomes from similar previous projects - especially issues, changes and closeout and review their budget against actual expenditure to understand any differences. Ensure that "Subject Matter Experts" have input into, and have reviewed the project collateral. If possible bring in a fresh resource for a peer review. (People who have been through a number of versions of the document do not make the best reviewers as they are generally too close to the document.) Ensure a reasonableness check is done and understand where there are departures from what appears reasonable. Not examining them now and gain an understanding will guarantee the stakeholder does, so be prepared. Ensure there is enough detail in the documentation stating how many, how much and exactly what is being delivered and, just as importantly, what isn't.

If everything is clearly documented and understood up front, scope creep and over-enthusiastic expectations will be averted. Without this initial clarity, it will be impossible to provide realistic estimates.

## Overseas Teenagers Ready to Report on the Games

ARMED WITH CAMERAS and notepads, nine talented young people from Plan-assisted youth media groups in Ghana, India and Pakistan will be Plan's roving reporters during the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

Plan national executive director Ian Wishart says Plan's Goodwill youth reporters will bring a whole new dimension to Plan's Goodwill catch phrase "Children are our Common Wealth". Plan - one of the world's largest non-religious and non-political child centred development organisations - is the Goodwill Partner (the first ever to be appointed) to the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

The young reporters aged 13 to 20 arrive in Melbourne on 8th and 9th March and during the Games will produce TV and print stories on sporting and cultural events focusing on the Goodwill themes of Humanity, Equality, Destiny.

The stories by the roving reporters will appear on NineMSN and further afield.

Victorian teenagers are also involved in the excitement of the Goodwill Youth Media Program with youth groups in Strathbogie, Melbourne City, Ballarat and Monash being partnered under the Adopt-A-Second-Team scheme with Plan-assisted youth media clubs in Ghana, India and Pakistan. These groups have been busy preparing media pieces that will be screened during the Games at the Plan space Interact at Birrarung Marr near Federation Square. The media pieces follow the theme of the United Nations Convention on the 'Rights of the Child' – Article 31, which states the right of the child to rest, play, cultural life and the arts.

Before the Games, the Goodwill youth reporters will also meet youth from regional Victoria during a three-day excursion (12 to 14 March). And during the Games, six lucky Victorian teenagers will act as Cultural Goodwill Youth Ambassadors as part of a promotion run in partnership between Plan, Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games organisers and endorsed by The Age newspaper. Plan has been supporting youth media programs in developing communities around the world since the 1990s.

"Youth media whether it be short films or news reports on issues such as child labour, early marriage, education or HIV/AIDS, gives children the opportunity to speak up and let adults and the authorities know about issues that affect them," Mr Wishart says.

Mr Wishart says that Plan is proud to provide the nine young people from Ghana, India and Pakistan with an opportunity that will resonate for them, their peers and their communities long after the Games are over.

"As well as gaining advanced media skills that can be shared with their peers back home, their voices will also be louder, bolder and stronger as they advocate on child rights issues.

"There is no doubt that hearing the voice of these nine talented young people will not go unheard," Mr Wishart says.

By **Craig Dennis**  
Director, Consulting Services

What do you do at APCS?

At the moment, I work as a Project Director on the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games. Beyond that, if I'm really lucky and do a good job on this project I may get to clean the toilets at our Bruce Street Office after May!

Who are you?

That baldy guy who has a permanently upset look on his face from getting cranky way too often. It's really just a front to scare people away.

What do you bring to APCS?

Not much really, except an ability to get Matty, our technical architect, upset all the time and then try to make friends with him again.

Pick three people who you would invite to dinner.

Glen, Matty and Helen from the M2006 Project Team because I owe them so much and I really miss them when I go home each nite..... (sorry Dufie, but I had to respond with a politically correct answer) Otherwise, I would like to have Dianne, George Negus and Deidre Macken.

How would you spend your last \$50?

Donate it to the Cancer Council.



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