

INSIGHT PAPER

The Gap Between an Idea and an Approved Project

Why the hidden work between project intent and project readiness often determines whether regional projects move forward at all.



BENCHMARK

Built for the Pilbara and Kimberley

Ambition Is Rarely The Problem

Most projects begin with a clear objective.

- Additional capacity.
- Improved operational capability.
- New infrastructure.
- Commercial expansion.
- A new facility.

The ambition is usually not the challenge.

The challenge is turning that ambition into a project that can actually move forward.

Many organisations assume the path from concept to construction is relatively straightforward.

- A project is identified.
- Designs are prepared.
- Construction begins.

In reality, an important stage sits between project intent and project delivery.

It is a stage often characterised by approvals, compliance obligations, stakeholder engagement, planning requirements and delivery considerations.

The hidden work required during this stage is often underestimated until projects begin encountering delays, additional requirements or unexpected constraints.

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The gap between project intent and project readiness is where many projects begin to slow, change direction or encounter uncertainty.



What Creates The Gap?

The Hidden Work Most People Never See

When people think about construction projects, they think about buildings.

They rarely think about the work required before construction can begin.

Yet most project risk emerges long before physical work is visible.

A project may begin with a clear objective, but intent alone does not create an approved project.

Approvals, compliance requirements, stakeholder engagement, planning and delivery considerations must first be addressed.

Much of this work remains invisible until it begins affecting approvals, programme certainty or stakeholder confidence.

What appears to be a delay is often the discovery of work that was always required.

The gap exists because Project Intent is frequently mistaken for Project Readiness.

The two are not the same thing.



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Project intent creates direction.
Project readiness creates momentum.

Hidden Work Pathway



INTENT



DISCOVERY



PLANNING



DESIGN & COMPLIANCE



APPROVALS



PROCUREMENT



STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT



PROJECT READINESS



PROJECT APPROVED

What Happens When The Gap Is Ignored?

When project readiness is not properly tested, challenges often emerge before construction begins.

Many project issues do not originate during delivery. They stem from assumptions, constraints and requirements that were not identified early enough.

As uncertainty increases, flexibility decreases. Decisions become harder and more costly to change.

Some projects proceed under unnecessary pressure.

Others are delayed, deferred or abandoned entirely.

The objective is not to eliminate complexity.

The objective is to identify it early enough to make informed decisions while meaningful options still exist.



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Many project challenges begin before construction. Some projects never reach construction at all.

Common Outcomes

-  Project no longer commercially viable
-  Approval delays
-  Design rework
-  Procurement inefficiencies
-  Programme disruption
-  Project no longer commercially viable
-  Reduced stakeholder confidence
-  **Project deferred or abandoned**

A Perspective from Experience

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**Our role is not simply to
build projects.**

**It is to help clients make
informed decisions
before significant time,
money and momentum
are committed.**

**That is where
experience creates the
greatest value.**

John Williams
Managing Director
Benchmark



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