



**Institute of  
Commissioning &  
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# **COMMISSIONING-LED GOVERNANCE: A REFORMIST RESPONSE TO METHODOLOGICAL FATIGUE**

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# Commissioning-Led Governance: A Reformist Response to Methodological Fatigue

## 1. Rethinking Governance in the AECO Sector

Across the Architecture, Engineering, Construction, and Operations (AECO) sector, legacy methodologies - once designed to manage complexity - are increasingly viewed as ritualised, compliance-driven artefacts. As Robertson Davies once quipped, *“Planning is what people do instead of thinking.”* That sentiment echoes across critiques of PMBOK, Six Sigma, JIT, and PERT, where toolsets have drifted from their original intent. What began as innovative and exploratory, now risk becoming executive devices for evading accountability - especially when certification becomes the goal rather than capability.

## 2. From Innovation to Ossification: The Legacy Trap

Acronym	Full Form	Original Purpose	Current Challenge
PMBOK	Project Management Body of Knowledge	Standardised delivery guidance	Overly prescriptive; certification-centric
JIT	Just-In-Time	Lean inventory and production	Fragile under systemic shocks
Six Sigma	Statistical quality control	Defect reduction and process improvement	Siloed; rigid application
PERT	Program Evaluation Review Technique	Cold War-era scheduling (DoD) - US Department of Defense	Used to deflect accountability
GSD	Getting Stuff Done	Informal productivity ethos	Co-opted by performative planning

These frameworks, while historically valuable, now struggle to accommodate the dynamic, interdependent realities of modern infrastructure delivery. The result? Methodological fatigue and diminishing returns.

### 3. Deming's Enduring Relevance

W. Edwards Deming's *Out of the Crisis* remains a cornerstone of systems thinking. His principles - investing in people, decentralising decision-making, and using data to explore reality - offer a timeless counterpoint to rigid process adherence.

ICxA's commissioning-led governance model draws directly from this ethos:

- Empower professionals through transparent, interoperable standards
- Push evidence-based decision-making closer to value creation
- Use data to assure outcomes - not just track inputs

### 4. ICxA's Reformist Framework for Digitally Enabled Governance

ICxA's model is not another methodology - it's a reformist framework designed to challenge legacy assumptions and restore clarity, connectivity, and outcome assurance across the infrastructure lifecycle.

Where traditional toolsets often devolve into compliance rituals, ICxA's approach is designed to **think, not just plan**. It embraces complexity by embedding adaptive thinking and aligning professional services around public value.

Our three formally released **Outcome Assurance Standards** anchor this transformation, offering:

- Relational intelligence-driven decision support - enabling timely, purpose-aware action across complex stakeholder environments
- Iterative, context-aware governance structures - responsive to change, not bound by static process
- Interoperability across disciplines and institutions - fostering seamless collaboration and shared accountability
- Outcome-focused assurance mechanisms - shifting emphasis from process fidelity to measurable impact

Here's why this is a reformist movement:

- It transcends legacy methodologies - not by dismissing them, but by exposing their limits and offering a more adaptive, forward-looking alternative
- It introduces a commissioning-led governance model - powered by relational intelligence and evidence-based decisions focused on purpose
- It builds coalitions not just to adopt change, but to co-create it - bringing institutions and academia together to shape policy, credential frameworks, and leadership models
- It embeds reform into structure - not just messaging - through credential integrity, ISO alignment, and leadership development that reflects real-world challenges

These aren't just ideas - they're actions. Every step strengthens our coalitions, builds trust, and accelerates the shift toward commissioning-led governance.

**ICxA isn't just calling for change - it's building the architecture to deliver it.**