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Every time a Major Capital project is established, there are a team of people working to develop a new virtual entity which is capable of delivering upon the outcomes of the project. This involves the establishment of a new team. Tuckman's (1965) five phase team developmental model defines this establishment phase from a psycho-social perspective to be the 'forming' stage. This phase is characterised by high dependence on leader for guidance and direction. There is little agreement on team aims other than that received from the leader. Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear. The leader must be prepared to answer lots of questions about the team's purpose, objectives and external relationships. Members test will test the tolerance of the system, processes and leaders.

So we are faced with a situation where we are not only trying to establish and mobilise the project architecture, but we need to confront the unrest and the communication expectations from the team. Because of this pressure, all too often we are guided by our past experiences in determining the structure of the team that we will create. This often creates later tension, restructuring and unrest.

Many Australian and New Zealand project teams can be likened to an archetypal hierarchy model, which seems only to be tested when a program of projects is to be delivered. Oftentimes, this model does not suit the outcomes required by the project. Now it should be said that collaborative contracting models such as Alliances, JVs, and Special Project Teams have done a lot to change the standard thinking in approaching an organisational design. During the organisational design phase there is greater focus on equality of disciplines. This is often represented by key Design, Environment and Community Relations roles sitting side-by-side with the Construction Team. But does this really change how we look at an organisational design or merely give it some balance?

One interesting perspective actually derives its inspiration from genetics. Lim, Griffiths, and Sambrook (2010) developed the Hierarch-Community Phenotype model or Organisational Structures. In this model, each employee is viewed not by just their formal, hierarchal participation, but their informal, community participation within the Organisation. It sees an organisational structure as a living, breathing, organism where communication lines cross normal structural lines. Furthermore, it takes into account that outside influences affect the actions and behaviours of those within the Organisation. An example of this could be that during workshops, multi-disciplinary teams will communicate across a number of levels of management to brainstorm innovations. However, during a crisis situation or safety incident, strong formal hierarchy provides a more effective way of quick resolution.

