



They Meant Well: Government Project Disasters

D. R. Myddelton

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How is it that so many major, government-sponsored projects can lose so much money? As the title of this book makes clear, the answer to this question does not lie with malign intentions on behalf of their promoters in government. In a highly readable but detailed account of the history of six major government project failures, D R Myddelton shows that failure results from mismanagement, lack of clear lines of responsibility and lack of accountability. These problems have their roots in the wider economic problems of undertaking quasi-commercial ventures in the public, rather than in the private, sector. This results in well-meaning politicians and government officials wasting huge sums of taxpayers' money. The projects examined in this book cover a period of 80 years. Their analysis leads to important lessons for a wider range of economic activity in which governments become involved, including major government IT projects and the hosting of the Olympic Games in 2012. The case study approach ensures that the book is very readable; it also provides an excellent basis for discussion on university courses, including MBAs that cover public policy and management issues.

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