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INTRODUCTION TO DECISION ASSURANCE SERIES

HOW CONFIDENCE SHOULD BE GOVERNED

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About the Author

Genéne Kleppe is an executive advisor, author and enterprise strategist whose work focuses on helping organisations make more confident decisions in increasingly complex operating environments.

Over more than three decades she has advised Boards, Chief Executive Officers and executive leadership teams across critical infrastructure, mining, energy, transport and government. Her work has consistently centred on one question:

How can organisations make better decisions before uncertainty becomes operational, financial or reputational consequence?

That question has shaped a career spanning enterprise governance, strategic asset management, major project delivery, operational technology, artificial intelligence, Digital Twins, enterprise information management and organisational transformation. Rather than treating these disciplines as independent capabilities, Genéne has sought to integrate them into a coherent executive approach that strengthens enterprise resilience, improves productivity and enables more confident decision-making.

Her work has contributed to major infrastructure and resource organisations in Australia and internationally, helping executives translate complex technical, operational and commercial information into practical governance decisions. Throughout this work, a consistent philosophy has emerged: governance should not be measured by the volume of information available, but by

the confidence leaders have in the decisions they make and the outcomes those decisions produce.

This philosophy underpins the **Enterprise Resilience** publication series, the **Decision Assurance™** framework and the concept of **Digital Trust Stewardship**. Together, these works present an integrated executive operating model that positions governance, accountability and evidence as strategic capabilities for protecting enterprise value.

Genéne's work extends beyond organisational resilience. She is particularly interested in initiatives that improve productivity, strengthen national capability, build sustainable economic value and demonstrate that commercial success and ethical leadership are mutually reinforcing. She believes that enduring economic performance is achieved when innovation is grounded in transparent governance, accountable leadership and commercially robust ethics.

She lives near the beach in Adelaide, South Australia, where the rhythm of the coastline provides a welcome contrast to the complexity of the executive environments in which she works. From there she continues to advise organisations, develop new thinking and write for leaders seeking practical approaches to governing increasingly interconnected enterprises.

Her publications are intended not simply to explain new ideas, but to challenge established assumptions and provide executives with practical frameworks that improve decision confidence, enterprise resilience and long-term organisational stewardship.

Decision Assurance™ Series Introduction

A Framework for Digital Trust Stewardship and Enterprise Resilience

Executive Summary

Every organisation governs through decisions. Every strategic objective, operational commitment, financial investment and regulatory obligation ultimately depends upon thousands of interconnected decisions made across the enterprise.

For decades organisations have invested heavily in improving information. Enterprise Resource Planning, Enterprise Asset Management, cyber security platforms, data lakes, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Twins and analytics have all sought to improve organisational performance. Yet major failures continue to occur.

The problem is not that organisations lack information. The problem is that they lack a systematic discipline for governing confidence in decisions.

This paper proposes Decision Assurance is an executive operating model within a broader management discipline of Digital Trust Stewardship.

Decision Assurance introduces Digital Trust Stewardship as the organisational capability that transforms fragmented information into trusted evidence, enabling executives to govern uncertainty rather than merely respond to disruption.

Evolving management discipline?

Management disciplines evolve when organisational complexity exceeds existing governance capability. Financial Accounting emerged because industrial organisations required trusted financial reporting. Project Management emerged because increasingly complex programmes required structured delivery.

Enterprise Risk Management emerged because isolated risk registers no longer reflected enterprise exposure. Today organisations face another transition.

Information has become abundant. Confidence has become scarce. This transition demands a new discipline - *Decision Assurance*.

Enterprise Governance Evolution

Era	Primary Executive Question	Dominant Discipline
Industrial Age	What do we own?	Financial Control
Information Age	What do we know?	Information Management
Digital & AI Age	What is / will be happening?	Data Computation / Analytics / AI
Resilience Age	Can we trust this decision?	Decision Assurance

The final question [from ~2020s] represents the next evolution of executive governance.

Four Executive Concepts

The framework introduces four complementary concepts. These become the vocabulary of Enterprise Resilience.

1. Decision Assurance

Decision Assurance evaluates the quality of evidence supporting significant decisions before commitments are made. Unlike traditional assurance, which validates compliance after actions occur, Decision Assurance seeks to improve decisions before irreversible consequences arise.

2. Decision Confidence

Decision Confidence represents the measurable degree of trust executives possess in a proposed course of action. Confidence is influenced by:

- evidence completeness
- evidence quality
- traceability
- uncertainty
- assumptions
- organisational alignment
- scenario analysis
- consequence modelling.

Decision Confidence therefore becomes both an enterprise strategic capability and a measurable performance indicator.

3. Digital Trust Stewardship

Digital Trust Stewardship governs organisational confidence rather than simply governing information. Its responsibilities include:

- evidence integrity
- traceability
- transparency
- accountability
- explainability
- continuous assurance
- organisational learning.

Stewardship extends beyond data governance. It governs trust.

4. Enterprise Line of Sight

Enterprise Line of Sight describes the continuous visibility connecting and closing the loop from Purpose → Strategy → Investment → Projects → Assets → Operations → Risk → Performance → Stakeholder outcomes.

Where decisions are dynamically impacted.

Every significant decision should maintain this closed loop line of sight.



Figure 1. Executive Concepts



Figure 2. Line-of-Sight



Figure 3. Dynamically Impacted Decision Relationships.

The Decision Assurance Framework

The framework operates as six interacting capabilities rather than six sequential activities.

- Layer 1** Purpose: Why does this organisation exist?
- Layer 2** Intent: What strategic outcomes are sought?
- Layer 3:** Evidence: What evidence exists? & What evidence is missing?
- Layer 4:** Confidence: How trustworthy is the evidence? & How certain are assumptions?
- Layer 5:** Decision: What action should be taken? & What alternatives exist?
- Layer 6:** Learning: What *actually* occurred? & How should future confidence improve?

This creates a continuously improving governance system.

Measuring Decision Quality

Traditional organisations measure:	Decision Assurance Introduces
▪ EBITDA ▪ ROI ▪ TSR ▪ ROCE ▪ Asset Availability ▪ MTBF ▪ Lost Time Injuries	Additional Executive Indicators, e.g., • Decision Confidence Index: Percentage confidence supporting major executive decisions. • Evidence Completeness: Percentage of required evidence available. • Decision Traceability: Ability to reproduce why decisions were made. • Confidence Decay: Rate at which assumptions become invalid. • Decision Latency: Time required to obtain trusted evidence. These become resilience indicators rather than technology metrics.

Why Traditional Digital Transformation Falls Short

Many transformation programmes focus upon implementing platforms.

Platforms rarely improve governance by themselves. Instead, across finance, operations, assets, security and analytics from ERP to AI, organisations accumulate platforms.

Each improves one capability. Few improve executive confidence across all capabilities simultaneously.



Figure 4. Accumulated Platforms

Technology integration is not equivalent to decision integration.

Decision Assurance focuses on the latter.

The Role of Advanced Cyber-Physical Systems

Modern cyber-physical systems represent a significant evolution beyond traditional information and engineering systems because they continuously couple the physical and digital enterprise.

Rather than simply recording events after they occur, they maintain an active representation of assets, operations, infrastructure, environmental conditions and organisational performance. This continuous synchronisation allows executives to evaluate changing conditions while decisions remain actionable.

Within the Decision Assurance framework, cyber-physical systems are not viewed as operational technologies alone. They become evidence engines that strengthen Decision Confidence by connecting operational reality with strategic, financial, regulatory and risk contexts.

Their contribution is therefore measured by the quality of evidence they provide, not by the sophistication of the technology itself.

For example, by dynamically integrating engineering, information, data, registers from within the enterprise and its ecosystem, organisations move from fragmented reporting to coherent decision support. The principal sources of accelerated value include:

- **Reducing the effort** required to assemble evidence for major decisions
- **Maintaining traceability** from strategic objectives through to operational execution
- **Exposing dependencies** and second-order consequences that are often hidden within functional silos
- **Providing continuous** rather than periodic assurance as conditions change
- **Enabling rapid** evaluation of alternative scenarios before commitments are made
- **Shortening time needed** to move from issue identification to executive action
- **Strengthening organisational learning** by preserving the evidence, assumptions and outcomes associated with each significant decision.

Importantly, technology does not replace executive judgement. It increases the quality, timeliness and transparency of the evidence available to that judgement.

The Executive Opportunity

Enterprise Resilience should no longer be viewed as a collection of independent capabilities. It should become an integrated governance discipline, where:

1. **Decision Assurance** provides *the operating framework*.
2. **Digital Trust Stewardship** provides *organisational accountability*.
3. **Enterprise Line-of-Sight** provides *continuous coherence*.
4. **Decision Confidence** provides *measurable performance*.

Advanced cyber-physical systems technologies are proven and available. They represent a shift from managing information to governing confidence, enabling Boards and executive leadership to make better decisions more quickly, with greater transparency and clearer accountability.