INTEGRATED PUBLIC SERVICES: 
THE ROLE OF NETWORKED 
ARRANGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Networked arrangements have moved from the periphery to the centre of public policy making and now occupy a position alongside of government as key mechanisms for social and organisational integration. Despite the current prominence of networked arrangements, little is known about how networks are actually formed and what explains their structure, operation and management strategies. Moreover, despite the pivotal position as the architects, administrators and facilitators of the network reform process, the role of central agencies of government in networked environments has yet to be fully determined.

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the variation in networked arrangements and its effect on design and management and, in doing so, uncover the emergent role of central agencies of government. Using a mixed research design of case study and network analysis, this thesis ‘unpacked’ three exemplars of cross-sector networked arrangements within the Queensland human services arena.

The research produced a number of findings. First, it provided empirical evidence to support the previously largely descriptive proposition that networked arrangements are differentiated. Second, through the synthesis of two parallel integration literatures, a framework to guide the design of networked arrangements was produced. Third, it identified a set of network management strategies and demonstrated that these horizontally oriented strategies were different to those currently utilised within government. Finally, the research developed a set of general and specific roles to guide central agencies’ operation within the current networked environment.
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Finally, to my primary network, my husband Bryan Wharton and daughter Millie, thank you for giving me the time and space to achieve this personal goal.
STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained within this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis does not contain material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made.

Signature

Date
# CONTENTS

Abstract ii

Acknowledgments iii

Statement of Original Authorship iv

Tables and Figures vi

Abbreviations vii

Introduction: Forces for Change 1

Chapter One: Horizontal Integration, Networked Arrangements and Central Agencies 7

Chapter Two: Shifting Governance Modes, Theories and the Role of Central Agencies 27

Chapter Three: Political and Historical Context for the Case Studies 51

Chapter Four: Research Methodology 67

Chapter Five: Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee 95

Chapter Six: Service Integration Project (Goodna) 124

Chapter Seven: Reconnect Early Intervention Network 155

Chapter Eight: Network Differentiation, and the Emerging Role of Central Agencies 186

Chapter Nine: Conclusions 234

Bibliography 246

Appendix One: Research Protocols 275

Appendix Two: Questionnaire 279
TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Table 1: Chief Executive Officers Committee - Demographics 96
Table 2: Chief Executive Officers Committee - Network Drivers 103
Table 3: Chief Executive Officers Committee - Linkage Mechanisms 109
Table 4: Service Integration Project - Demographics 125
Table 5: Service Integration Project - Network Drivers 128
Table 6: Service Integration Project - Linkage mechanisms 139
Table 7: Reconnect Network - Demographics 156
Table 8: Reconnect - Network Drivers 159
Table 9: Reconnect - Linkage Mechanisms 164
Table 10: Summary Comparison of Three Network Case Studies 201
Table 11: Comparison of Network Drivers 202
Table 12: Comparison of Network Operation/Governance 206
Table 13: Comparison Integration/Linkage Mechanisms 207
Table 14: Summary of Network Drivers and Inhibitors 233
Table 15: Unpacking Networked Arrangements 237

Figures

Figure 1: Integration Continuum 20
Figure 2: Synthesised Integration Continuum 24
Figure 3: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Shared Information 115
Figure 4: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Joint Funding 116
Figure 5: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Service Contracts 117
Figure 6: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Joint Program Planning 118
Figure 7: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Contact Referral 119
Figure 8: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Reference Group 120
Figure 9: Service Integration Project - Shared Information 145
Figure 10: Service Integration Project - Joint Funding 146
Figure 11: Service Integration Project - Service Contracts 147
Figure 12: Service Integration Project - Joint Program Planning 148
Figure 13: Service Integration Project - Contact Referral 149
Figure 14: Service Integration Project - Reference Group 150
Figure 15: Reconnect Network - Shared Information 170
Figure 16: Reconnect Network - Joint Funding 171
Figure 17: Reconnect Network - Service Contracts 172
Figure 18: Reconnect Network - Joint Program Planning 173
Figure 19: Reconnect Network - Contact Referral 174
Figure 20: Reconnect Network - Reference Group 175
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CED</td>
<td>Community Engagement Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEOs</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPC</td>
<td>Department of Premier and Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACS</td>
<td>Family and Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCFC</td>
<td>Gold Coast Family Connections Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPSME</td>
<td>Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconnect</td>
<td>Reconnect Early Intervention Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>Service Integration Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMRMF</td>
<td>West-Moreton Regional Managers’ Forum</td>
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INTRODUCTION

FORCES FOR CHANGE

Worldwide, over the past three decades, a series of changes have transpired that have challenged the role of government as the primary form of governance and undermined its conventional mechanisms of social integration. In responding to these challenges governments have embarked on a process of reform that while not a wholesale abandonment of the traditional bureaucratic mode of government, represents a move away from traditional vertical modes of integration toward modes of policy development and service delivery that are characterised by alternative forms of social organisation based on horizontal networked governance arrangements.

While globalisation, that is the intensification of economic, political, social and cultural relations across borders (Holm and Sorensen, 1995), has been often been presented as the overriding factor to this change in governance, it is its combination with other, more localised factors, that has been the main impetus for changes in the governance and integration mechanisms (Keating, 2000, 2001; Keast, 2001). These factors include changed economic conditions, advances in information and communication technology, societal changes, and declining public confidence in government in its present formation.

**Changed Economic Conditions**

Since the 1970s accelerating global economies and their associated liberal trade practices have permeated the relative independence of governments in determining domestic economic policies. In order to better participate in this increasingly competitive international environment governments have moved to set conditions that are more favourable for competition such as low inflation and low taxation and a reduction of spending on public services (Beresford, 2000). In such an environment the traditional governance modes and service delivery systems based on centralised authority and standardised services were seen to be costly and ineffectual and were supplemented or replaced by market based strategies such as privatisation, contracting-out and purchaser-provider splits aimed at increasing efficiency through the specification of outcomes and freeing
managers from the restraints of bureaucracy and associated ‘red tape’ (Brown, Ryan and Parker, 2000; Alford, 2002).

A further key strategy introduced to increase efficiency centred on the targeting of service provision to reduce the level of welfare spending and enhance value for money. In many areas of government endeavour the increased emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency brought about by the shift to a market and competition based governance mode was undoubtedly timely and has brought increased wealth and advantages to many, especially those already well-off (Commonwealth Foundation, 1999; Beresford, 2000). However, there remain large sectors of society for whom competition policy has failed to deliver better outcomes and whose quality of life has deteriorated as a result (Rodrik, 1996; Grieder, 1997; Commonwealth Foundation, 1999; Beresford, 2000). As Wanna and Keating (2000: 243) highlight there is a danger these advances may have come at: “too much cost to the collective interests or [have] favoured the strong over the weak”. Paradoxically, even those who are better off are feeling isolated and disconnected from the systems and processes of government. As Funnell (2001: 73) asserts: “Modern society has developed a tendency to fracture, to isolate and to alienate its citizens from each other and from their government, creating a crisis in the legitimacy of governments”.

**Advances in Information and Communication Technology**

Just as information technology, through its capacity to translate vast amounts of data instantaneously and at a low cost (Davis, 2000), provided the integrating mechanism for the global economy, it also presents as a multi-faceted tool for improved social integration. It has created a range of new, cost efficient ways of targeting citizens needs and delivering public services (Bellamy and Taylor, 1998; Bekker and Zouridis, 1999; Vincent, 1999) as well as meeting the increasing demands of citizens, businesses and from within the public sector itself for services that are better integrated, seamless and more customer specific (Peters, 1998a & b; Head, 1999). As Aucoin (1995: 245) stated:

As the government responds to domestic pressures for quality public services, it will need to improve the integration of its service delivery systems. Individual citizens, client groups and businesses increasingly are demanding services that do not subject them to the inconveniences and costs of fragmented government.
In this way, through the introduction of information kiosks, single window information centres and information networks, technology has vastly improved governments’ ability to integrate services around citizens rather than requiring that citizens work their way around the labyrinth of government (Head, 1999). Additionally, process such as e-democracy with its emphasis on computer based technologies allow for e-petitions, internet broadcast of parliament and on-line citizen provides new ways for governments to be more in touch with the community, including many that were previously disconnected from the processes and institutions of government.

On the other hand, developments in information technology such as satellite communications and the Internet also have the capacity to fragment public opinion and society. These mechanisms have enabled greater and more instantaneous access to information that was previously not available in the public domain. For example, public interest groups now have a growing capacity to access, use and disseminate information. As a result citizens and interest groups are now much better informed about services that are available elsewhere and therefore expect more of their own governments and representatives (Hames, 1999; Stewart-Weeks, 2000). Homeshaw (1998) explains this phenomenon:

Knowing what services are available in other jurisdictions makes people less tolerant of services supplied locally at high cost. The growth of citizen on-line democracy networks is also changing votes’ tolerance of incompetent and self-serving politicians (1998: 104).

Thus information technology allows for increased scrutiny of government work by the public. Information technology also assists public action and social movements to organise and challenge government policy and services (Stanbury and Vertinsky, 1994). Further, as Gyngell and Wesley (2000) note, technology places increasing pressure on politicians and public administrators for speedy analysis, creating public expectations for instant responses to ‘intractable’ or complex problems. This is often at the expense of well thought through policy responses.
**Societal Changes**

The move to a market model of service delivery has located citizens as customers rather than clients (Ryan, 2001). In doing so, it has established a more individualised approach to service delivery than was previously available under the ‘one size fits all’ approach of the bureaucratic model. However, as a number of commentators including, for example, Fukuyama (1999) and Ryan (2001) have observed related to this is a discernable shift in values toward a greater emphasis on self-interest and personal opportunities. The effect of this is an emphasis on individual benefits and opportunity seeking over collective responsibility and the provision of universal public outcomes (Ryan, 2001).

Coinciding with this customer-centric and individualistic ethos of the market model of governance are a number of other major changes to the structure and composition of society that have impacted on the ability of government to provide a coherent course of action and have necessitated a change in the way that public policy is developed and services delivered. This change, while clearly not homogeneous, is nevertheless often characterised by a citizenry that is generally better educated and more sophisticated. Citizens no longer automatically accept that government ‘knows best’ and should guide their behaviour or make all the decisions that affect their lives. As a consequence citizens are less likely to be deferential to authority and more willing to question government decisions (Davis, 2000; Keating, 2000, 2001a; Marsh, 2002). Associated with this has been a growing demand for a greater participation and voice in the processes of government decision-making. The desire of so many citizens and groups to be consulted and to participate in the decision-making processes of the public sector has created a need that can only be met through a greater engagement between those who govern and those who are governed.

Societies are also becoming more aged, more culturally diversified and blended and single parent families are replacing the nuclear family as the main form of social organisation. There has also been a continuing migration away from small country and inland regional towns to the cities located on the coast. It is argued that this mobility coupled with a loss of familial contact has resulted in a breakdown of community strength and values (Mackay, 1993; New South Wales Government, 1998; Edgar, 2001). The increased diversity and disaggregation within society has made the development of an integrated social policy increasing
difficult to achieve. Alongside of this there has been a growing realisation that the solutions to many of the important issues confronting societies no longer reside within the single agency and require more inclusive and horizontal approaches.

Taken together these factors have, over time, resulted in a decline in the public confidence in the capacity of governments to design and deliver effective public policies (Davis and Rhodes, 2000; Ryan, 2001; Kettl, 2000a &b; Keast and Callaghan, 2002). Davis (1999: 2) has commented in relation to this phenomenon:

Indeed, public trust has fallen despite improvements in economic outcomes, more consistent standards for government delivery of services, and international stability.

There are a number of reasons for the declining confidence in government and its institutions including the perceived inefficiencies and waste associated with the fragmentation of services between departments and increasingly between other bodies outside of the public sector (Ryan, 2001). Citizens are also less tolerant of the inability of government to adequately address ongoing social problems (6, 1997) and by the growing perceptions of alienation and isolation from the processes of government (Funnell, 2001).

**Connecting Through Networks**

The collective impact of the growing desire of citizens to participate in decision-making, the rise of special interest groups, the new and fast changing types of problems that societies face, the heightened expectations of citizens for quality public services and their exasperation with government and its fragmented institutional programs is that the social fabric of many countries is becoming frayed at the edges (Castells, 1996). Aware that market competition and hierarchical coercion have run their course and, on their own, are no longer adequate or appropriate as the mode of social connection, governments are experimenting with new ways of working and governing (Ansell, 2000; Edwards, 2001; 2002 Langford, 2002). Reflecting this change in focus an array of new integration regimes focused on a more holistic and horizontal approach to governance and public sector service delivery have emerged under titles such as collaborative governance (Huxham, 2000), network governance (Provan and Milward, 1995; Milward and Provan, 2001), partnership governance (Geddes, 2000) and integrated governance (Szirom, Lasater, Hyde and Moore, 2002).
Interpersonal relations built on trust and common mission underpin these networked arrangements rather than exchange or authority and bring into play a range of horizontal linkage options such as cooperation, coordination and collaboration.

The task of designing, developing and managing many of these emergent networked arrangements has fallen, at least initially, to the central agencies of government. However, despite this reliance on networked arrangements to supplement traditional public sector governance and service delivery modes little is known about the role of central agencies in these cross-departmental and cross-sector arrangements. This thesis contributes to the current knowledge and practice deficit on networked arrangements by undertaking a detailed examination of three current public sector exemplars. It therefore uncovers the emerging role of central agencies of government in the networked environment, which is the central focus of this thesis.

**Thesis Plan**

Chapter One provides the background to the research problem, identifies the research questions, develops the analytical framework, justifies the research project and points to the methodology to be utilised. Chapter Two traces the shifting application of governance modes within government, overviews the key theories and highlights the role of central agencies of government within each. Chapter Three locates the move to networked arrangements within the Queensland context demonstrating the range of possible options and the key, but largely experimental role of central agencies within this process. Chapter Four shifts from theory and history to methodology and sets out the research design and associated methods for examining the role central agencies human service networked arrangements in Queensland.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven provide a profile of the three case studies while Chapter Eight synthesises the findings and undertakes a cross-case comparison, to draw out the differences between networked arrangements, the changing relationships and management strategies and the emerging role for central agencies. Finally, Chapter Nine draws together the results from the empirical suite of chapters and presents the analytical conclusions.
CHAPTER ONE

HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION, NETWORKED ARRANGEMENTS AND CENTRAL AGENCIES

Introduction

The preface identified that the integrative capacity of contemporary governments has been strained. Converging social, political and economic forces have challenged conventional governance arrangements, institutions and processes that governments have established to integrate community services and policies to achieve social cohesion (Keating, 2000, 2001a; Keating and Wanna, 2000). The central agencies of government are one such conventional integration mechanism. Located at the hub of decision-making and resource allocation, these agencies of government have maintained a pivotal role in integrating policy initiatives with service delivery options and ensuring a coherent government standpoint is achieved across all government agencies (Painter, 1987; O’Faircheallean, Wanna and Weller, 1999). The role of central agencies has traditionally been performed through mandate and control of resources (Keast and Callaghan, 2002). In such a new and changing environment the traditional role of central agencies and its tools and mechanisms for integration are no longer adequate or appropriate. This thesis explores the new integrated context within which central agencies now exist and their emerging role.

Modes of social integration based around control and competition have been found to be both inappropriate and inadequate in bringing the threads of the social fabric together in the contemporary context. The hierarchical model operating through authoritative control and based on a top down approach to decision-making and allocation was argued to be exclusionary and inflexible in dealing with complex social problems (Hughes, 1998; Adams and Hess, 2001; Considine, 2001). Market mechanisms based on contractual exchanges were perceived to be an efficient coordination mechanism to bring together the different stakeholders in the sector. However, competition introduced to alleviate the problems of centralised control added fragmentation to the already growing problems of policy incoherence and ineffectual service delivery (de Carvalho, 1998; Davis and Rhodes, 2000; Kettl, 2000b; Di Francesco, 2001). Changing environmental and social conditions have therefore necessitated an adjustment from a reliance on vertical mechanisms of integration such as rules and
procedures to the adoption of horizontal arrangements that focus more on relational and trust-building approaches to achieve government priorities.

Arising from this focus on horizontal operation is a plethora of terms that describe these new arrangements including integrated governance (Szirom et al, 2002), joined up working (Leat, Seltzer and Stoker, 2000, 2002) and horizontal government (Peters, 1998 a & b; Lindquist, 2002) all of which indicate that there has been a broad shift away from traditional forms of governance based on rules and vertical authority (Considine, 2001). Consequently, the terms integration, cooperation, coordination and collaboration and networks have emerged as key themes in public sector discourse. However, these various terms tend to be subsumed under the rubric of integration and simply part of the new paradigm of ‘working together’ (Huxam, 2000; Szirom et al, 2002). This thesis argues that these terms should be treated as having a defined specificity and meaning in particular contexts.

To date, the literature has noted the emergence of networks as innovative mechanisms to integrate policy and services and has sought to map the conditions of emergence, characteristics of networked arrangements and the interactions between parties. These bodies of research have demonstrated that networks are being used as a supplement to more traditional integration mechanisms (Börzel, 1998; Peters, 1998b; Hazelhurst, 2000; Klinj and Koopenjan, 2000). The concern of this chapter is to establish that ‘integration’ and its companion constructs including networks have differing characteristics and thus offer a variety of options for integration. The contribution of this chapter is to establish that these notions are differentiated and therefore need to be considered as providing different ways of operating and different purposes, and consequently will result in quite different outcomes. It is postulated that an undifferentiated and mismatched use of the integration terminology and associated mechanisms will limit the ability of governments to meet the goal of policy coherence and integrated service delivery. This problematises the role of central agencies of state, often tasked with the role of developing and managing these new modes of policy development and service delivery.

**Research Focus and Questions**

This thesis will demonstrate that networks are a prominent feature of contemporary public services through an extensive review of the literature. It will
also show that there are different forms and purposes in relation to networked arrangements. In most jurisdictions the responsibility for establishing, facilitating and managing these networked arrangements has fallen to the central agencies of government as a natural extension of their traditional coordination role (Keast and Callaghan, 2002). While there is a considerable body of literature relating the coordination of government by central agencies (Spann, 1979; Painter, 1981; 1987; Campbell and Halligan, 1992; Davis, 1995; 1998), only limited research exists on the ways in which central agencies of government might facilitate and manage networked arrangements or in how they differentiate between networked forms. To date the key informants on the application and practice of networked mode governance and central agencies have been the experimentations undertaken by the Canadian government on ‘horizontal government’ (Peters, 1998a; Canadian Government, 1996; Canadian Institute on Governance, 1996; Canadian Centre Management Development, 2001; Bakvis, 2002) and the United Kingdom on ‘joined-up government’ (Cabinet Office, 1999a & b; 2000) and later ‘holistic government’ (6, 1997; 6 et al, 2002). However, despite their broad relevance in providing a context for the role of central agencies, the form and function of central agencies in both these jurisdictions differ from that of the Queensland and Australian government situation in that they have more central agencies and these agencies deliver services. Thus the role of the state and, in particular the central agencies of state, in establishing, shaping, governing and managing these networks is yet to be fully examined and established. It is this unspecified or emerging role of central agencies in facilitating networked arrangements that forms the basis of this research project and leads to the following research questions:

(1) What explains variation in networks? Why are these variations important to the operation of networks?

(2) How do people in networks understand and use the terms and develop strategies in the management of their networks? and

(3) What is the role of central agencies of government in network environments?

The chapter will proceed by highlighting the pressures that emerging social problems place on traditional vertical modes of integration and further delineate the limitations of traditional modes of integration. It will also demonstrate why new forms of integration based around horizontal forms of ‘working together’ are
This chapter will further examine the range of conventional integration mechanisms and explore the expanded role of the central agencies of government in the current experiment with new ‘networked’ ways of resolving these integration problems. This new role of central agencies has largely been unexplored in the context of networks as the focus has been on describing the operation of networks without significant reference to the way in which central agencies of the state might interact with or facilitate networked arrangements. The existing literature surrounding the role of central agencies emphasises a control and regulatory role (Kettl, 2000) rather than identifying the responsibility of central agencies in network management.

The following section locates the changing role for central agencies within the complex and disaggregated conditions of the twenty-first century. Fragmentation and the lack of appropriately coordinated government services are widely considered to be costly problems impeding effective and efficient government service provision (Walfogel, 1997; Keast, 2001; Keating 2001b) and this section examines the various ways that governments have attempted to resolve those issues that cut across traditional functional boundaries. The extant literature has identified the need for government to become better at integrating its activities particularly in terms of providing services at the community level (6 et al, 2002). However, this literature while discussing mechanisms of integration does not unpack these forms of connection nor does it link to the parallel literature of networking. This chapter shifts the debate to argue for the need to synthesise the constructs of integration and networks and establishes a cogent case for identifying a set of sub groups within each of these constructs to better understand and utilise notions of working together to achieve social and policy cohesion as the goal of government’s efforts.

FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATION

Many of the biggest challenges confronting contemporary governments involve attempting to solve highly complex and intractable community problems (Agranoff, 1990; Huxham, 2000; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001a & b). While there are a number of multiplex issues that threaten the long-term sustainability of society including environmental and economic concerns, it is the social problems such as poverty, unemployment, illicit drug use and abuse and social dislocation that present as immediate concerns to citizens and continue to plague many
communities despite concerted efforts by governments to address them (Agranoff, 1990; 6 et al, 1999; 2002).

These wide ranging, entrenched and complex social concerns have been variously referred to as ‘messes’ (Ackhoff, 1975), ‘indivisible’ (Aldrich, 1977), ‘unstructured’ (De Bruijn and Ten Heuvelhof, 2000) and, increasingly, as ‘wicked issues’ (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Harman and Meyer, 1986; Clarke and Stewart, 1997). All of these terms denote a situation in which issues are imperfectly understood, defy precise definition, do not have clear solutions and, when unravelled, their various components are found to be tightly interdependent (Rittel and Webber, 1973, OECD, 1996 a & b; Clarke and Stewart, 1997). Therefore these ‘wicked issues’ defy traditional linear based problem solving processes (Clarke and Stewart, 1997). It is argued that in these conditions:

Realities constantly confound, wicked problems linger, others metamorphose, and well-tied solutions suddenly provide unanticipated or perverse consequences (Ryan, 2003: 11).

A compounding feature of ‘complex social problems’ (CSP) is that they tend to be crosscutting, that is, they do not fit into the neat functional boundaries of government departments as they have evolved (OECD, 1996 a & b; Clarke and Stewart, 1997; Peters, 1998). Instead they require a cross-departmental and even cross-sector emphasis (Trist, 1983; Gray, 1989; Huxham, 2000). In this way, the solution to these complex social problems necessarily sits within the inter-organizational domain and cannot be tackled by any one organisation working alone.

Governments have long been aware of the problems inherent in functionally fragmented services for the development of coherent policies and their impact on both service delivery and future electoral success (Peters, 1998a; O’Faircheallaigh et al, 1999). The metaphors of stovepipes and silos have frequently been evoked to describe the situation of differentiation and specialisation (Aucoin, 1995). The conventional response to the need for coherent policy and service delivery outcomes has been to formulate comprehensive and integrated policy directives that are implemented through vertical axes of central control (Hanfs, 1978; Spann, 1979; Savoie, 1999; Bakvis, 2002). Bureaucratic structures relying on the advanced division of labour, issue
specific departments and hierarchical lines of authority reinforce the ‘turfism’ and have made the integration of these crosscutting issues difficult (Beale, 1995).

These vertical integration structures and processes have been supplemented with horizontal management mechanisms based on mutual adjustment and planned action (Hanfs, 1978; Spann, 1979; O’Faircheallaigh et al, 1999; Matheson, 2000; Bakvis, 2002). Stewart (2002) provides a comment on both forms:

Coordination between agencies has a long history in public sector management. The dominant forms involve centralised structures and processes, although there has always been some ‘bottom up’ and some ‘sideways’ coordination. Inter-departmental task forces and committees are frequently employed where cross-agency issues arise, and the traditional approaches of cabinet coordination and budgetary management ensure that a rough overall control prevails (Stewart, 2002: 21).

Such mechanisms have been largely sufficient, ‘annoying but manageable’ (Kettl, 2001:5) for most of the tasks and issues that governments have to deal with, but have failed to provide the level of policy cohesion or comprehensive conceptualisation necessary for resolving complex social problems (OECD, 1996b; Clarke and Stewart, 1997; Stewart, 2002).

These long standing problems of achieving cross-agency coordination and cohesive policy and service delivery have been exacerbated by the reform trends of the 1980s and 1990s that disaggregated large government organisations into smaller agencies as well as the introduction of competition policy that splintered services between an even broader array of public and private providers (Aram and Stratton, 1992; 6, 1997; 6 et al, 2000; 2002; Funnel, 2001; Peters, 1998; Kettl, 2001). Collectively these developments have resulted in an apparent loss of policy capacity and undermined the ability of central government to pull it all together (Rhodes, 1997; 2000; Di Francesco, 2001). This, coupled with growing demands for seamless services (Aucoin, 1995; Head, 1999) and an increasing awareness of and frustration at the failure of governments to adequately deal with complex social problems (6 et al; 1997, 2000, 2002; Dollery and Wallis, 2001), particularly those located in regional and place issues (Gellatly, 1994; Radin, Agranoff, Bowman, Buntz, Romzek and Wilson, 1996; Pearson, 1999; Walsh, 2001; Stewart, 2002) has meant that for a growing number of policy problems
there is a need to move beyond the specialised siloed approach to develop processes and relationships that allow closer interaction and integration between departments and increasingly across other sectors (Trist, 1983; Gray, 1989; Melaville and Blank, 1991; Huxham, 2000; Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Mitchell and Shortell, 2000; Lindquist, 2002; Fosler and Scott, 2002). On the change needed to address these complex social problems that spill out over the boundaries of agencies, the OECD (1996b: 29) noted: “they increase the need to integrate rather than merely co-ordinate”.

The challenge of working better across the traditional boundaries of government to deliver public services has seized the attention of political and administrative leaders across the world. As a result there has been a proliferation of initiatives aimed at integration or joined-up working including cross sector and departmental coalitions, interagency agreements, networked arrangements, partnerships and collaborations (Mandell and Steelman, forthcoming). While seen as fresh and innovative concepts, these initiatives reflect an age-old preoccupation with what Peters (1998b) has referred to as the search for the “administrative Holy Grail of coordination and horizontality” (1998b: 295). These horizontal initiatives sit alongside the more conventional vertical and horizontal integration initiatives such as interdepartmental working committees, task forces and together they provide governments with a range of strategies for facilitating policy coherence and integrated service delivery.

The task of selecting, developing and implementing integration structures, mechanisms and processes within government and increasingly across sectors has largely fallen to the central agencies of government (Head, 1999; Kettl, 2001; Linquist, 2002). However, this ability to select optimal designs can be hampered by a lack of clarity around the method and by treating these as undifferentiated (Mandell and Steelman, forthcoming; Lawson, 2002; Keast, Mandell, Brown and Woolcock, forthcoming). Moreover, the institutional and political parameters impacting on central agencies shape their role and have led to a propensity for governments and central agencies to rely principally on vertical modes of operating (Campbell and Halligan, 1992; Linquist, 2002).

For government, while all agencies necessarily have a role in building relationships within and external to government, the task of coordinating cross-sector policies and programs into a coherent whole-of-government position has generally fallen to the central agencies. This is predominantly because of their
position at the hub of decision-making around key areas such as policy, finance and administration and legislation (Painter, 1981; 1987; Head, 1996; Bridgman and Davis, 1998). These agencies respectively have control over policy processes, funding and the management of people and organisational structures giving them substantial capacity to influence by exercise of direct authority as well as indirect influence (Savoie, 1995; Bridgman and Davis, 1998; Keast and Callaghan, 2002).

Central Agencies of Government as Public Sector Integrators

The agencies or departments located most proximate to the decision-making core of government are termed ‘central agencies’. These agencies act as an administrative arm or ‘buckle’ linking the core executive of government (Cabinet) to the public service, ensuring that Cabinet decision making is adequately informed and that Cabinet decisions and directives are implemented by departments in a fashion consistent with government priorities (OECD, 1996a).

Central agencies are therefore charged with the responsibility for crafting a ‘whole-of-government’ perspective from the various departments and agencies that operate within government (Painter, 1981; 1987; Davis, 1995; Bridgman and Davis, 1998; O’Faircheallaigh et al, 1999). Central agencies have been assigned principal responsibility for policy coordination and central management of issues (Campbell and Szablowski, 1979; Spann, 1979; Head, 1996; Bridgman and Davis, 1998). These mechanisms provide a conduit for the role of central agencies of government to both facilitate and manage the vertical authority and horizontal relational aspects of government decision-making and action.

The composition and role of central agencies varies between jurisdictions and changes over time and according to shifting circumstances. Generally, however, central agencies refer to the policy, budgetary, and personnel departments that respectively have been assigned central management over the areas of policy processes, funding and the management of people and organisational structures within the public sector. Typically, these agencies are referred to as Treasury, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (or Premier and Cabinet in the case of state jurisdictions) and Public Service Management agencies (Spann, 1979; Campbell, 1988; Campbell and Halligan, 1992; Bridgman and Davis, 1998). This high level integration and standard setting role affords central agencies a
powerful and often dominant position within government (Alford, 1993; Davis, 1995).

Since the emergence of central agencies from the eighteenth century to the present time, the role and relative influence of this central ‘trilogy’ of agencies has shifted according to changing conditions and circumstances. Generally, however, as a result of the growing complexity of the policy making environment, ongoing fiscal restraints and the introduction of managerial flexibility, since the 1980s it has been the central policy agencies and treasuries that have grown in prominence while personnel management agencies have oscillated in terms of their influence and currently exert limited influence in many jurisdictions (Spann, 1979; Campbell and Halligan, 1992; Alford, 1993; Hart, 1998). Treasuries have maintained their power in terms of economic policy and funding (Bridgman and Davis, 1998) and are recognised as a significant and powerful player in public sector operation (Keast and Brown, 2002). Traditionally however Treasuries have not focused their attention on dealing with complex social problems. Indeed, as Scott (2003: 12) suggests, Treasury is left with the role of providing “a secondary opinion on social policy”. While all three sets of agencies remain crucial to the effective coordination of government functions, the emphasis on policy solutions to resolve complex social problems places the role of central policy agencies at the centre of this research.

In fulfilling their whole-of-government function, central agencies have at hand a range of integration options, ranging from mutual adjustment, direct control, mandate and the control of resources, from which to select integration mechanisms (Spann, 1979; Painter, 1987). As Head (1993: 165) noted: “In undertaking these strategic and co-ordinating roles, a central agency may proceed with a heavy hand or a light touch”. However, despite these options, as a number of commentators have shown, central agencies have consistently tended to use coordination by control and direction as their preferred mode (Graycar, 1970; Painter, 1987; Peters and Savoie, 1996; Di Francesco, 2001; Stewart, 2002). On this, Campbell and Halligan (1992:12-13) argue that, despite the benefits of other modes, governments in Australia tend to rely on central coordination departments rather than delegation and mutual adjustment.

Confining integration modes to vertical coordination at the expense of alternative horizontal options has a number of negative consequences for governments.
First, it can limit the range of options available and, if applied to the wrong problem, can have detrimental effects (Metcalfe, 1994). Further, since it is argued that coordination involves a significant investment of time and effort (Handy, 1979; Bridgman and Davis, 1998), and can be a costly expensive strategy to pursue if incorrectly applied (Chisholm, 1989; Metcalfe, 1994) it is critical that central agencies understand the full range of integration options available to them. These options are now discussed.

**Horizontal Integration: A Continuum of Connectedness**

The term integration is often used to indicate an ideal or end state, but it may be more accurately defined as a continuum or scale that extends from the complete autonomy of separate parts (fragmentation) at one end, through a series of graduated steps involving more intensive forms of linkage, to full integration at the other (Kondrad, 1996; Leutz, 1999; Cigler, 2001; Fine, 2001). Different authors have used different terms or categories to denote the types of relationships that can occur between organisations. For example, Hogue (1994), Cigler (2001) and Szirom et al (2002) have set out five categories or levels of integration – informal, cooperative, coordinative, collaborative and integrative, while Lawson (2002) identified five companion ‘c words’ for integration – co-location, communication, coordination, collaboration, and convergence. Following a number of other theorists (Winer and Ray, 1994; Konrad, 1996; Stokes and Tyler, 1997; Fine, 2001), the present work has distilled the three most common horizontal relationship categories from this broad array of literature – cooperation, coordination and collaboration, for further examination.

In much of the early integration literature the terms cooperation, coordination and collaboration have been used interchangeably to broadly denote ‘ways of working together’ (Hallett and Birchall, 1992; Mandel and Steelman, forthcoming; Fine, 2001). For example, coordination is often contained within cooperation with the view that few organisations would engage in joint action without some level of agreement (Litwack, 1970; Alter and Hage, 1993; Konrad, 1996). Coordination is also presented as synonymous with or defined in terms of cooperation (Warren, Rose and Bergunder, 1974; Aitken, Dewar, Di Tomaso, Hage and Zeitz, 1975), while Alter and Hage (1993) located collaboration as a subset of cooperation. For some of these theorists (see for example, Huxham, 2000; Szirom et al, 2002) the undifferentiated use of these terms is considered unproblematic since their emphasis is on identifying broad ‘ways of working together’ rather than
attempting to isolate and optimise linkage modes or alternatively are used to articulate a movement toward networked forms of working. However, there is an emerging body of research that considers these concepts, while related, to be analytically distinct (Winer and Ray, 1994; Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey, 2001) and therefore to be located at different points on an integration continuum (Konrad, 1996; Lawson, 2002; Keast et al, forthcoming).

Differentiating the ‘3Cs’

This section presents a conceptual framework developed from an examination of the previous usage of integration mechanisms and defining and describing the key linkage relationships, the ‘3Cs’ of cooperation, coordination and collaboration and locates them on the integration continuum. Understanding the characteristic operating modes of each of the ‘3cs’ affords greater insights into their optimal application.

Cooperation

The key element of the term cooperation is the establishment of short term, often informal and largely voluntary relations between organisational entities (Hogue, 1994; Cigler, 2001; Lawson, 2002). In cooperative relationships participants may agree to share information, space or referrals, however no effort is made to establish common goals and each agency remains separate, retaining their own autonomy and resources (Winer and Ray, 1994; Cigler, 2001; Mulford and Rogers, 1987; Melaville and Blank, 1991). In this way, cooperative behaviours relate to the relationships established with others to achieve individual advancement (Mandell, 1999). As Schermerhorn (in Mulford and Rogers, 1982:13) notes, cooperation entails the “deliberate relations between otherwise autonomous organizations for the joint accomplishment of individual operating goals”.

Thus, as a process it is essentially about taking others into consideration, compromising and being accommodating without necessarily adjusting individual goals. Given that cooperation entails the use of very few resources, mainly information sharing, cooperation is further characterised by low levels of intensity and risk and tends to be a less strategic operation likely to be undertaken by personnel at lower levels in the organisational structure (Ray and Winer, 1994; Cigler, 2001). With an emphasis on more intensive and formalised relationships, coordination presents as the next integration term on the continuum.
Coordination

The term coordination implies the use of mechanisms that more tightly and formally link together different components of a system (Mulford and Rogers, 1982; Painter, 1987; Alter and Hage, 1993; Metcalfe, 1994; Alexander, 1995; Peters, 1998a & b). Coordination is argued to involve strategies that require information sharing as well as joint planning, decision-making and action between organisations (Mulford and Rogers, 1982; Daka-Mulwanda, 1995; Lawson, 2002). Therefore, coordination essentially occurs when there is a need to align or ‘orchestrate’ people, tasks and specialised interventions in order to achieve a predetermined goal or mission (Litterer, 1973; Lawson, 2002). In this way, as Ovretveit (1993: 40) and others (Litterer, 1973; Dunshire, 1978 and Lawson, 2002) suggest the exercise of coordination places emphasis on bringing together interdependent parts into an ordered relationship to produce a whole. In this context, organisations remain separate from each other, but jointly contribute to a specific program.

According to this view, coordination is not dependent on the good will of the different actors or the willing endorsement of the arrangements, but has some of the force of an objective, a mandate, leading to a more enduring system of relationships between different components of a larger system. Coordination means getting what you do not have through influencing or compelling participants to act in the way desired (Dunshire, 1978: 16-17). This may involve adherence to a prearranged plan or formal rules, direction by an independent manager ‘coordinator’, or some other element of external control. This potential for an external mandate to drive network operation locates it at the fulcrum between horizontal and vertical integration.

Since coordination moves beyond information sharing to the pooled use of resources and joint planning and operation, it requires a higher level of commitment as well as the agreed loss of some autonomy. Because there is an increase in shared risks as well as shared benefits, coordination will often involve higher-level personnel. In view of this, coordination membership is generally more stable and there is more formality involved in the structure and operations (Cigler, 2001). This formality and tangibility of processes and structures, generally makes coordination a much more visible and enduring relationship than the cooperative mode.
At the furthest end of the integration continuum are the collaborative arrangements that are characterised by a strength of relationship that moves it beyond autonomous operation to more synergistic and interconnected initiatives.

**Collaboration**

Collaboration is usually the most stable and long-term type of integration arrangement and it requires the strongest linkages and tightest relationships among members (Gray, 1989; Mandell, 1999; Cigler, 2001). Such relationships require comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating at many levels. The requirement for high-level trust among members means that collaboration can be a very time consuming process. Because collaboration is often used to address complex social problems, especially when other integration modes have failed, it can be a highly risky behaviour and its success will depend on members being committed to a common mission and to seeing themselves as part of a larger picture not as autonomous agencies (Gray, 1989; Mandell, 1999; 2000, 2001; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001a; Cigler, 2001). More intense relationships and different processes for working together are required because traditional methods including cooperation and coordination have not been successful or even sufficient (Keast et al, forthcoming 2004). According to Daka-Mulwanda (1995: 219), “... interorganizational relationships become more sophisticated, complex, and effective for problem solving through progression from cooperation to coordination to collaboration”. Through the constructive harnessing of the collective synergies of these various elements “collaborative advantage” (Huxham, 1996) is engendered that enables members to achieve solutions to formerly intractable problems. Gray (1989:5) defines collaboration as a “process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their limited vision of what is possible”.

This analysis demonstrates that the terms cooperation, coordination and collaboration all refer to efforts to reduce or eliminate divisions or boundaries between departments, agencies and sectors (Hassett and Austin, 1997). However, although the terms can be presented as various ways of ‘working together’ this review has determined that each has a distinctive meaning and a set of defining characteristics that differentiates them from the others.
Locating the ‘3Cs’ on the Integration Continuum

The terms cooperation, coordination and collaboration are often used in an undifferentiated manner (Fine, Thompson and Graham, 1998; Szirom et al, 2002), however, it is argued these concepts in fact differ in terms of the intensity of their linkages. The literature has suggested the nature of their relationships, degree of formalisation involved, the degree of risk and commitment, and the type of outcomes sought and the level of organisational autonomy retained differ (Konrad, 1996; Hogue, 1994; Mandell and Steelman, forthcoming). Based on these findings outlined in the previous section it is contended that each of the ‘3Cs’ can be located along an integration continuum that ranges from a highly fragmented to a fully integrated system. Figure 1 locates each of the ‘3Cs’ at specific points along the integration continuum such that at one end of the integration continuum is cooperation, at the other extreme is collaboration and in the middle is coordination.

![Figure 1: Integration Continuum](image)

The contribution of the continuum is that in ordering the relationships in terms of their intensity of effort and the level of connection between entities, it enables a more considered selection of integration mechanisms. However, the ability to select optional integration relationships to achieve optimal outcomes is often confounded by the existence of a separate but related set of literature focused on networks. Whereas these two bodies of literature have been generally conflated into the one continuum, or kept at a distance, a further contribution of this thesis is that it locates the network literature as running parallel to the ‘3Cs. It is further argued that whereas the ‘3Cs’ have been demonstrated to relate to relationships, networks centre on the actual structures and processes that evolve to deliver integrated services (Hay, 1998).

Networked Arrangements

Networked arrangements refer to the structure that emerges from the links that are established through personal relationships and information between

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members and form the direct and indirect linkages of social entities (Mitchell, 1960; Scott, 1991; Lauhman, Marsden and Prensky, 1992). Over the past two decades, similar to the integration terms, networks have become widely used concepts in the social and organisational sciences. The similarity of the terms has meant that researchers and practitioners have frequently used network terms interchangeably with integration terms. However, this thesis argues that integration is focused on the relationships between people and organisations, and networked arrangements are concerned with the structural elements and process of linkage. Similar to integration most theorists have tended to treat networks as undifferentiated. However, Considine (2002: 4) states: “the network concept conceals an enormously diffuse set of relationships, meanings and engagements”. Some of the literature is moving toward differentiating between network terms but this has not happened in a consolidated way. Noted exceptions include Rhodes (1986) and Rhodes and Marsh (1992) who identified five types of policy networks and Van Waaren (1992) who classified policy networks along seven dimensions. With respect to service delivery networks Alexander (1995) and Mandell (2000; 2001), Mandell and Steelman (forthcoming) and Keast et al (forthcoming) have identified and even provided typologies of the various forms that networks might take. However, while there has been some crossover application of the terms these works have stopped short of identifying a parallel literature and therefore the need to integrate existing knowledge about the phenomena of ‘working together’.

Given the few attempts to consolidate these two prominent themes or to differentiate between network types, this thesis extends and integrates the current state of knowledge about networks and synthesises this with the other integration literature. Based on Mandell’s (1994, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001) influential work on differentiating networked arrangements, this thesis has identified the following three network arrangements of networking, networks and network structures. These network typologies will be extended through the introduction of additional literature identifying structural aspects, processes and expectations. The next section will set out these three, networked forms and explain and analyse their operation, structural characteristics and integration location.
Networking, Networks and Network Structures

Networking

Networking arrangements refer to loose connections or linkages between actors or organisations. Networking is the way that we make connections with each other in both formal and informal ways. It deals with building relationships among individuals for mutually beneficial purposes (Mandell, 2000, 2001). That is, in networking arrangements members remain firmly oriented to their own organisation and what brings people together under these arrangements is to access the resources others have. Networking is essentially based on cooperative relations that mostly rely on resource exchanges, especially information exchange (Alter and Hage, 1993; Cigler, 2001). The weakness of the linkage relationship means that members can join or leave the networking arrangement without threatening the continuity or pattern of the linkages between other members. In view of the relative weakness and fluidity of the connections, the individualistic emphasis of members and the relative simplicity of the exchanges, networking arrangements generally often require only minimal driving to remain sustainable. In this way, low-level communication based integration tools often provide the basis for networking arrangements to continue overtime (Gans and Horton, 1975; Alter and Hage, 1993; Hogue, 1994; Mandell, 2000).

Networks

The more formal and closer connections/linkages between people or organisations are referred to as a network. This process involves 'networking' but is seen as a more formalised means of maintaining linkages with others with whom there is a mutual interest (Mandell, 2000). In networks the coordination mechanisms centre on the agreed, often centrally imposed goals, facilitated by joint planning and/or joint programming. In this way networks are often associated with coordination (Börzel, 1998; Hazelhurst, 2001). Similar to coordination, networks may involve simultaneous action by a number of different actors, but each of these actions represents actions of independently operating organisations (Hanfs and Scharpf, 1978; Chisholm, 1989; Provan and Milward, 1989; 1991; Cigler, 2001). Nevertheless, because network membership is generally more stable and more formality surrounds the processes, the pattern of relationship is expected to exhibit a medium level of density and interconnection.
Network Structures

Finally, network structures are characterised by a tightly interconnected and dense set of relations as well as a high level of interdependence. Unlike these previous forms where people have limited and controlled links with each other, in a network structure people must actively work together to accomplish mutual problems or issues of concern (Agranoff, 1997; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001a & b; Mandell, 1988, 2001). That is, network structures may require separate actions on the part of the individual members, but the participants are transformed into a new whole, taking on broad tasks that reach beyond the simultaneous actions of independently operating organisations (Keast et al, forthcoming). Through a structure of tight and dense connections, participants are able to move outside of traditional functional specialities and break through organisational boundaries to create new ways of working (Cigler, 2001; Mandell, 2001; Keast et al, forthcoming). Further, network structures are distinguished from traditional organisational structures because there is no one 'in charge'. Instead it means that typical forms of power and authority do not work in network structures, although some actors may have more formal power in terms of the resources or political influence than others.

The findings indicate that similar to the ‘3Cs” there are aspects of networked forms that can be distilled to give them their distinctive character and purpose. Central to this is the differing strength of ties established between network members to achieve outcomes. In this way, each of the network types brings certain benefits and limitations and “present administrators with important choices among trade-offs “ (Rainey and Busson, 2001: 67). While the literature has brought to light these new networked arrangements and their contribution to changing the way that governments operate there is a gap in that even though there are a number of commonalities including intensity of linkages and relations, purpose, time and resource commitments, and risk levels they have not been brought together in any coherent frame. It is argued that since these modes inform each other it is timely and pertinent that they be synthesised.

Synthesising ‘3Cs’ and the ‘3Ns’

Within the context of the integration and network literature there has been an attempt to define some of the characteristics that distinguish among the continuum of approaches to cross-sector work. However, with the exception of
Hogue (1994) Mandell and Steelman (forthcoming) there have been few attempts to systematically consolidate this information and harness its collective contribution to understanding the different horizontal arrangements, the functions they serve and their possible outcomes. It is argued that the ‘3Cs’ and the ‘3Ns’ are located along the continuum from a fully fragmented to a fully integrated system. However, while some theorists locate them all on the same continuum (Hogue, 1994; Cigler, 2001; Szirom et al, 2002), this thesis proposes that they are two distinct, but interrelated concepts and therefore should occupy different sides of the integration continuum. Accordingly, networking, networks and network structures represent structural aspects and cooperation, coordination and collaboration are the relationships between members of these arrangements. In this way networking corresponds with cooperative endeavours, networks reflect coordinated action and network structures are aligned with collaboration. Figure 2 locates these two forms on the Integration Continuum and shows the different tiers of integration relationships and structures.

**Figure 2: Synthesising the Integration and Network Literatures**

This blending of the two constructs and their key characteristics forms the basis of a more in-depth understanding of the characteristics and potential of integrated approaches. Further, the synthesis of the two integration literatures demonstrates that networked arrangements are a complex mix of relationships and structures.

The contribution of the Integration Continuum is twofold. First, by synthesising the two, previously separate literatures around integration and networks and their key characteristics it adds to the body of theoretical literature and implementation tools available to practitioners and public policy administrators. A second, more immediate contribution of the schema is its provision of a heuristic device to
guide the exploration of the case studies and subsequently to act as a model against which the actual operation of the networks can be compared and tested.

Justification and Significance of Research

The prevalence of networked arrangements as alternatives or as supplements to traditional forms of social organisation is now clear (O’Toole, 1997; Rhodes, 1998; Davis and Rhodes, 2000; Agranoff and McGuire; 2001a; Mandell and Steelman, forthcoming, 2003). However, despite the realisation that networked arrangements are a distinctive model of operating, limited focused research to improve the operation and management of this core public sector activity has been undertaken. The majority of the research that has occurred has been of a theoretical nature focused on the development of typologies rather than the experiences of the network members in forming and managing networks (McGuire, 2002). The aim of this thesis is to explore how government, particularly the central agencies of government, might best be able to facilitate networked arrangements.

Although governments all around the world are confronting these issues, the call for better understanding and conceptualising these new forms of public administration resonates well in Queensland. There, the government, particularly through its central agencies, has pursued a strong whole-of-government agenda aimed at coordinating a range of services spread across various departments and community based-agencies (Government Service Delivery Project (GSD), Draft Framework 2000a; Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Draft Strategic Social Policy Framework 2001c; DPC Annual Report, 2000/1, 2001/2). More recently however, it has sought more collaborative approaches to solving the more ‘wicked social’ issues that impact on communities (DPC Annual Report 2001/2; Fitzgerald Report, 2001) and to re-engage with increasingly disconnected citizens (Community Engagement Division (CED), Directions Statement, 2001). This has expanded the focus from predominantly cross-government to cross-sector areas of consideration.

Human services account for a significant component of public sector budgets. They also provide services to the most vulnerable population groups in society. Therefore, there is both an economic and moral obligation on society to ensure that the reforms are effective and efficient. This project will provide a timely body of evidence on which to base the reform agenda and inform central agencies’
role. The integration diagrams are showing different types of relationships reflecting different networked arrangements being used. The question is if central agencies realise they have established policies that will lead to these different relationships and if they have therefore chosen the most effective type of arrangement. Further, this reflects the need for central agencies to better understand what their revised role should be and the importance of this revised role.

**Research Methodology**

In elaborating these questions, the research utilises a mixed research mode that draws on both case study and network analysis methodologies. The combination of the rich qualitative insights afforded by case study research and the structural mapping and measuring of network analysis enables us to describe each network and then to compare and contrast them.

The research project will use three Queensland exemplars of networked arrangements. To tap the subtle nuances of these networked arrangements they are located at each of three different levels of public sector operation, policy, management and technical.

**Conclusion**

Chapter One provided a background to the research issue and context, clarified integration definitions and basic concepts. Further, it synthesised the two parallel literatures of integration and networked arrangements, and in doing so, provided a framework to guide the subsequent analysis. Having presented the context within which the research issue is located, and identified research gaps, the research questions were then outlined. Finally, the research was justified, its context and scope delimited and the methodology was briefly described. Building on this introduction the following chapter traces the move to networked arrangements by government, discusses the underpinning theories informing this change and identifies the changing role of central agencies.
CHAPTER TWO
SHIFTING GOVERNANCE MODES, THEORIES AND THE ROLE OF CENTRAL AGENCIES

Introduction
Chapter one has highlighted that as a result of a range of social and environmental forces horizontal integration mechanisms such as networks are increasingly being used to augment traditional vertical integration processes. This section tracks this shift in governance over the past thirty years, discusses the underpinning theories informing these changes and examines the role of central agencies within each.

HIERARCHICAL GOVERNANCE
Commencing in the nineteenth century in many western democratic countries a model of government organisation emerged that was predominantly bureaucratic and hierarchical (Hasenfeld, 1983; Bogason, 2000; Considine, 2001). That is, government functions were compartmentalised into bureaus or departments that could be overseen by an individual Minister. This basic model of government organisation was based on developments within the industrial sector that introduced standardised tasks, processes and work arrangements (Hughes, 1998: 33-34; Bogason, 2000; Considine, 2001) and was reinforced by the emerging need after the introduction of a ‘welfare state’ for unity, uniformity and standardisation of services (Hasenfeld, 1983; Sturgess, 2001).

Dividing the various responsibilities of government into functional departments allowed for specialisation and focus. However, because departments are oriented toward protecting their own resources, budgets and domain, there is a risk that they will form into contradictory and even competitive programs, resulting in inconsistent policies and poor outcomes (Bridgman and Davis, 1998; O’Faircheallaigh et al, 1999). Since government as a unit is held responsible for the collective performance of its departments there is a need to bring these ‘semi autonomous fiefdoms’ (O’Faircheallaigh et al, 1999: 178) into a single, coherent whole of government perspective (Bridgman and Davis, 1998; Peters, 1998 a &b). Under such circumstances, as Painter (1981: 266) has argued, there is a need to:
… reactivate some sense of government as a whole. Coordination is a problem arising as a secondary matter out of the prior need to subdivide and specialise.

Within the ‘Weberian’ bureaucratic mode the rational-legal authority embedded in the hierarchical structure provides the optimal method of vertical integration of the parts (Weber, 1947). In this way component parts of the departments are organised into a pyramid formation where each subordinate unit is responsible to a superior at the next level. This is referred to as a ‘chain of formal authority’ or ‘line of command’ running from top to bottom. It is these vertical authority relations running from top to bottom that provide the principle integration mechanism. Thus under the bureaucratic mode of governance the impetus and direction for coordination/integration comes from the top down, with central administrative and or political figures taking the lead in generating the necessary cooperation among organisations (Peters, 1998; Smith, 1998; Stewart, 2002).

Westminster Government and the Role of Central Policy Agencies

The Westminster system of government is an example of a hierarchically arranged, bureaucratic organisation (Polidano, 1998; Smith, 1998). The Westminster model is built on the assumption of parliamentary sovereignty (Aitken and Jinks, 1980; Gamble, 1990) where decisions about the direction of the government are made by selected Ministers who meet in Cabinet with the head of state (Prime Minister or Premier) to act as the Executive of government (Spann, 1979). As the highest political body Cabinet provides the direction and authority for action further down the organisational line of the public service (Spann, 1979; Halligan and Wettenhall, 1990; Smith, 1998). On the powerful vertical integrative capacity of the Westminster system Polidano (1998: 35) states:

… it establishes a chain of command running unbroken from Parliament to the Prime Minister and Cabinet, to individual ministers, and on to permanent secretary and lower-level officials. This chain, straight and unmistakable, is a defining feature – and, it is said, key advantage - of the Westminster model by comparison to other systems of government.

Situated along this vertical chain of command are the central agencies of state such as treasuries, public management agencies and the central policy agencies (Campbell and Halligan, 1992; Bridgman and Davis, 1998). Central policy agencies are staffed by public servants who act as the conduit between the
Cabinet and the line departments of government. These agencies are responsible for ensuring that government departments and agencies implement the directions of government in a manner that is consistent with overall government priorities (Spann, 1979). These also play a strategic role in the development of policy across departmental boundaries, monitoring implementation of government policies, and assisting in the management of conflict between agencies.

In fulfilling this role, central agencies have developed rules and procedures that together comprise an operating framework with which line departments are obliged to comply (Spann, 1979; Davis, 1995). As well as this direction setting and monitoring function, central agencies also have a role in ensuring that policy is coordinated across government departments and that the information that is generated from these line departments is presented to Cabinet in a coherent and comprehensive manner and that Cabinet is not overloaded with information coming from many different departments. Keating, writing for the Office of Economic Cooperative Development (1998) emphasised the duality of this role:

> The essential responsibility of central agencies is to ensure that Cabinet decisions are properly informed. A key adage is that there should be no surprises, either at the time of Cabinet consideration or later. Beyond this, the responsibility of central agencies for coordinating policy issues includes looking ahead and drawing attention to possible future problems and policy inconsistencies (OECD 1998:16).

O’Grady (1985: 65-66) argued that central policy units are in a position to take a broader view of the needs of government as a whole because they are free of line responsibilities and their location closer to the political core of government enables access to more comprehensive information. Their position close to Cabinet means that central agencies can influence policy directions outside of their organisational boundaries (Bridgman and Davis, 1998; Keast and Callaghan, 2002). On this influence Matheson (2000: 48) has observed:

> The functions performed by central agencies permit them to act as the ‘agents’ of cabinet and thereby to impose discipline upon line agencies.

The theoretical underpinnings of this model are delineated in the next section.
Theories: Impact of Changing Environment

The above Westminster model assumed that government and its departments operated within a stable environment with each agency able to operate within its own boundaries. This approach suggests that organisations were rational systems that could be organised to operate as efficiently as possible and that external forces did not influence these operations. From the 1950s there was a growing realisation that the external environment was no longer stable and certain and that other organisations within that environment impacted on the operation of the focus organisation, including government departments (Emery and Trist, 1965). Organisations adapted to these changing environmental characteristics by adjusting their internal organisation and operations to best fit the emergent situation. In this way it was considered that there was ‘no one best way to organise’. Instead organisational form and function was contingent on the environmental situation. From within this broad inter-organisational perspective, resource dependency theory emerged to focus on the exchanges between organisations.

Resource Dependency

Resource dependency theory starts from the position that organisations cannot internally produce all the essential resources necessary for organisational survival or growth. These resources are held by other organisations operating within the same domain (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Since no organisation is able to generate internally all the resources necessary for operation, organisations have to enter into exchange relations with each other (Benson, 1975). In this way the reduction of organisation uncertainty by way of resource exchanges becomes the primary force in establishing inter-organisational relations (Benson, 1975; Jacobs, 1974; Thompson, 1967).

Since not all organisations have equal access to resources, those with limited access or without alternative suppliers (including those reliant on government funds) will become dependent on those that do have access (Thompson, 1967). As a result of this dependency a power relationship is forged, which among other things, allows the dominant organisation to control the nature of the relationship. Thus within the resource dependency perspective there is substantial attention on the nature of the links or exchanges between organisations and the strategies that organisations develop to try to manipulate their exchange environment to overcome this dependency relation and retain their operating autonomy (Levine
and White, 1961; Aldrich, 1979; Aldrich and Whetten, 1981; Benson, 1982). This strong emphasis on resources meant that inter-organisational theories generally overlooked the normative aspect of exchanges.

**Failure of the “Welfare State”: Forecast for Reform**

In addition to this direction by vertical influence and associated rules and procedures central agencies have also employed more horizontal integrating mechanisms including, in particular, cross-departmental committees, advisory bodies and task forces as well as other arrangements including informal dialogue, networking and inter-office exchanges (Painter, 1987; Matheson, 2000). However, as the scale and scope of government has expanded and with it the number and range of government departments and the volume of interest groups, it has become increasingly difficult to bring together the errant threads of government operation using either vertical or horizontal strategies. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that government departments frequently disagree with each other, interpret policy objectives differently from their own perspective and obstruct the implementation of decisions that they do not find acceptable (Davis, Wanna, Warhurst and Weller, 1988: 107). As a consequence, governments have experimented with an array of integrating mechanisms including mega departments, new structural combinations and enhanced central agencies (Crasswell and Davis, 1993). Nevertheless, the limitations of these ‘centralised’ coordination mechanisms became apparent through the increasing inability to pull together such dispersed and divergent components (Painter, 1987). Scharpf (1994: 37) noted:

> ... the advantages of hierarchical coordination are lost in a world that is characterized by increasingly dense, extended and rapidly changing patterns of reciprocal interdependence, and by increasingly frequent, but ephemeral, interconnections across all types of pre-established boundaries.

In such a complex policy environment there was a growing awareness that in order to integrate these emerging policy actors there was a need to move beyond the traditional modes of governance based on rigid procedures and rules to adopt more inclusive and flexible processes. This dissatisfaction with the traditional mode of government operation was bolstered by the emerging view that conventional public service coordination and advisory capacities were “either unresponsive to political direction or inherently inadequate when compared to the
private sector” (Di Francesco (2001: 106). Although gaining in momentum, as
the next section reveals, these concerns were not the only pressures for change.

The traditional model of policy development and service delivery had been
successful and efficient in providing standardised, universal services that have
helped to improve the life situation and opportunities of many citizens (Adams
and Hess, 2001; Considine, 2001). As Quiggin (1999: 40) notes;” Initially the
welfare state led to a reduction in the inequality of incomes and an even greater
reduction in inequality of living standards”. However, by the 1970s there was a
crisis of legitimacy of the ‘welfare state’ and the bureaucratic model as it had
developed (Crawford, 1996; Kickert, Klinj and Koopenjan, 1997, Chapter One;
Doyle, 1999; Meutzelfeldt, 2001). In this way, a convergence of factors have
contributed to this sense of crisis including a growing perception that services
provided under the traditional model were not performing, creating dependencies,
resulting in a loss of community responsiveness.

First, despite the significant investment in public funds a high degree of effort and
support directed to the eradication of longstanding social ill such as poverty (as
well as the emerging ‘wicked issues’), it was argued there have been few tangible
improvements in some crucial areas. For example, in 1960s poverty was again
identified as an issue and proven in the 1970s with the Henderson Report. As a
result there was a growing consensus that many of the programs of the ‘welfare
state’ had failed (Crawford, 1996; Latham, 1998; Cloward and Pliven, 2000). In
general critics argued that these interventions had not achieved their goal of
poverty reduction, personal independence and social cohesion (Crawford, 1996).
To the contrary, an increasing number of observers asserted that these programs
had the unintended effect of actually worsening poverty and thus engendering
social exclusion by encouraging more people to rely on welfare and creating a
class of people permanently dependent on government (Latham, 1998; Doyle,
1999; Pearson, 1999; Keating and Mitchell, 2000). It was also held that an over-
reliance on government intervention was a barrier to social wellbeing as it would
squeeze out community and personal initiative and create dependencies

Further, in the contemporary context in which citizens demand more integrated,
flexible, personalised or community specific services as well as greater
efficiencies and more voice, the traditional characteristics of the bureaucratic
model and its hierarchical approach and its predisposition to rigidity, institutional and service fragmentation and top-down exclusive decision making were found to be an increasingly inappropriate and inadequate mechanism for delivering public services (Aucoin, 1995; Doyle, 1999; Commonwealth Foundation, 1999; Beresford, 2000). For a growing body of theorists and public administrators, the bureaucratic mode of service provision, in which programs and services were produced ‘in house’, was seen to result in gross efficiencies and waste because those services were supplied at higher than market cost (Dowling, 1995b). Also, there was a strong reluctance by many citizens to continue to pay the taxes necessary to support the continuation of the welfare state, despite many having been well serviced by it (Foster and Plowden, 1996). Collectively these concerns provided additional evidence that the bureaucratic mode of governance was essentially an ineffective way of providing services and needed to be reformed (Keating, 2000; Muetzelfedt, 2001: 3).

Underpinning Theories for the Change to the Market Mode

Many of these criticisms of the bureaucratic government and the ‘welfare state’ were informed by aspects of the public choice theoretical perspective based on the seminal work of Buchanan (1978) that became prominent in both academic and administrative arenas during the 1970s. This approach depicts agencies and individuals as essentially self-interested at the expense of efficiency and effective public administration (Davis, 1996; Smith 1998). That is, they were presumed to have a vested interest in ‘sustaining the status-quo’ and therefore would use the resources and opportunities available to them to pursue these objectives rather than the ‘common good’ (Niskanen, 1971). As a result it was argued the public sector became larger and more expansive than was necessary to provide basic goods (Boston, 1996). With the bureaucratic mode of governance and public administration having been proclaimed largely ‘obsolete’ (Hughes, 1994: 256), the way was made clear for the introduction of private sector managerial and market-based principles to the public sector environment; an idea that had been gaining ground amongst influential thinkers and decision-makers in a number of countries including many of the Westminster government jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada and Australia as well as the United States (Yergin and Stanislaw, 1999; Ketll, 2000). Davis and Wood (1998: 86) provide the background to the shift:
Contracting out moved from the margins to the centre because an influential body of innovative concepts caught the imagination of decision-makers, offering them not only an apparently simple and quick method for cost reduction, but also a new vision for government.

The end result was a move away from traditional hierarchical modes of service delivery and coordination to the application of a variety of reform strategies aimed initially at introducing business like principles to government and progressing through to the inclusion of elements of the market mode of governance (Smith, 1998; Considine and Lewis, 1999). In response to the perceived and real limitations of the traditional bureaucratic state and its conventional hierarchical ‘top-down’ model of problem solving, policy development and service delivery, the new ‘market’ approach emerged.

**MARKET GOVERNANCE**

Commencing in the 1970s and continuing to the present, a number of broad ranging reforms designed to enhance, reduce, supplement and, in some instances, replace bureaucracy have been introduced (Barry, 1987; Hood, 1991; Orchard, 1998; Considine, 2001). Emphasising the attainment of greater efficiency, effectiveness and economy (Argy, 2001; Di Francesco, 2001), this reform process has proceeded in a number of phases broadly located under the label of New Public Management (NPM) (Orchard, 1998; Di Francesco, 2001). While there are now a number of theorists who assert that the range of reforms taken under the NPM banner are too inconsistent and differentiated to be described under one label (see for example, Hood 1995; Rhodes, 1998; Davis and Rhodes, 2000), it nevertheless represents a continuing phase of reform, characterised by a progressive shift away from a reliance on bureaucracy as the dominant mode of social organisation, policy development and service delivery to more pluralistic and flexible modes such as those encapsulated by the market model (Bogason, 2000; Considine, 2001). Each of these phases will now be described.

**Corporatist Approach**

The first phase of the reform process, often referred to as ‘corporatist’ (Considine, 1988; Considine and Lewis, 1999; Di Francesco, 2001; Wanna *et al* 1992) centred on the use of business-like principles and practices such as improved budget processes and mechanisms, quality management and performance measures as well as a greater accent on outputs as opposed to inputs and
processes to improve the efficiency of government operations (McCallum, 1984; Keating, 1989; Corbett, 1992; Orchard, 1998; Considine and Lewis, 1999). The idea was to promote a better-integrated public sector by subordinating agency goals to those of central government (Considine, 1988). That is, the public sector was to be treated as a ‘corporate whole’ in which overall aims and objectives were to be achieved through the development of appropriate strategies coupled with stringent monitoring and evaluation processes (Wanna et al, 1992: 77, 78). The argument was that by specifying government directions and priorities and setting clear performance indicators, the executive branch of government and its senior officers could more actively and accurately direct and control their scarce resources (Considine, 1988; Considine and Lewis, 1999; Weller and Lewis, 1989; Wanna et al, 1992). Coupled with these strategic management aspects, was an enhanced commitment to the improvement of budgetary planning processes. As a result, across the globe various forms of budgetary planning systems were introduced into the government reform armoury including Management by Objectives (MBO) and Zero Base Budgeting (ZBB) in the United States, the Financial Management Initiative (FMI) and Financial Management Unit (FMU) within the Thatcher government, and the Financial Management Improvement Program (FMIP) initiated by the Australian Labor government (Weller, Forster and Davis, 1993; Considine and Lewis, 1999). Although the lead for many of these reforms was taken at the federal or central government level, there was a filtering down of these concepts to most jurisdictional sub-levels.

While the corporatist model produced some advantages over the prior hierarchical model, it was argued that it failed to make the required impact on economy, efficiency and effectiveness of public sector operation (Considine, 1988; Considine and Lewis, 1999). A contributing factor to this failure was that the sheer number of services operating within the public sector environment, their varying and often competing goals, and differing ideologies and histories made planning for the development, and particularly the implementation of a comprehensive policy a very difficult task (Corbett, 1992). Furthermore, as Considine and Lewis (1999: 470) point out, despite the existence of strategic plans and mission statements, within many departments there was no operational link between decision-making, resource allocation and these formal planning processes.
Consequently layered over the top of these largely internally focused and hierarchically driven reforms of the corporatist phase (Sibeon, 2000) were reforms of a more entrepreneurial ethos designed to free up management processes, reduce the costs of planning, break through red-tape and ‘allow managers to manage’ (Aucoin, 1990; 1995; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Around the same time the notion of customer service, that is, improving government’s services to citizens, was also introduced to the reform strategy (Kettl, 2000; Argy, 2001). Its purpose was essentially to improve the declining levels of citizen trust in and therefore support of, government through the introduction of customer oriented service strategies and later the use of information and computer technologies to provide more seamless, joined up and customer centric service delivery systems (Aucoin, 1993; Bellamy and Taylor, 1998; Bekker and Zourdiris, 1999; Vincent, 2000). Through this process of ‘reinvention’ it was argued governments would be able to secure better services for less cost (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Röber, 2000), but still generally operate within a system of public ownership and direct control. However, as the financial restraints on governments grew and citizen demands for more and better quality services increased, governments were forced to examine their continuing role as the principle provider of public services and consider some of the radically different modes of service delivery available under the market mode (Earles and Moon, 2000; Keating, 2000). The result, for many governments, was the adoption of a model of service delivery based on the market principles of competition and contracting.

**Markets and Contracts**

The market model essentially separates service delivery entities into buyers and sellers or purchasers and providers of public services (Scott, 1981). These entities relate to each other principally through the terms and conditions of their contracts rather than through hierarchical authority arrangements. It is reasoned that through a process of competition integrated by the price mechanisms of contractual agreements, a more cost efficient and effective process of service delivery would be possible (Brown *et al*, 2000). That is, with the ‘invisible hand’ of self-interest coordinating supply and demand the amount and cost of planning and control required by government would be reduced (Williamson, 1975; Scott, 1981). Further, by locating decision-making and control in the purchaser of services, or principal, and delegating the implementation and responsibility to the provider, strategic control is centralised while decentralising tactical responsibility and the influence of self-interested public servants would be controlled.
Muetzelfeldt, 2001). Deakin and Walsh (1996: 33) captured the key aspect of this shift in the role of the state, noting that the expectation was that this process would “transform the state locally and centrally, into an enabling organization, responsible for ensuring that public services are delivered, rather than producing them directly itself”. This is the ‘steering not rowing’ model of public service provision as expressed by Osborne and Gaebler (1992).

Operating under this broad framework, public sector reform was to be accomplished through the separation of policy and the implementation of decisions and actions, splitting large departments so that they are focused on core business activities and increasingly used tendering and contracting processes to assign previously held government tasks and responsibilities to the not-for-profit and private sectors, creating quasi corporate entities and privatising some public services (Brown et al, 2000; Curtin, 2000; Kettl, 2000b; Di Francesco, 2001; Muetzelfeldt, 2001). Further, where pure markets did not exist, quasi markets were established (Travers, 1995; Brown et al, 2001) as well as various mixed or hybrid arrangements of these aspects (Considine, 2001; Grimshaw, Vincent, and Willmott, 2002).

In this new context governments specify the outcomes and then, based on the tender responses, select which organisation – public or private – will provide the service under contract. In this way as Klijn (2002: 150) notes, “… the classic image of the state that organises service delivery and policy making within its own bureaucracy is being replaced by a state which only specifies the contracts”. As a result the service delivery system was transformed into a highly competitive environment in which agencies are competing against each other and in which self-interested or opportunistic behaviour abounds. The result of this competition has been a growing division between agencies as well as the potential for tendering agencies to become more tied to government funds and lose their ability to provide an alternative perspective and become captives of the state mode (Ryan, 1995). Milward and Provan (2000) argue that the tendering process exacerbates the competition and opportunistic behaviour exhibited by organisations in the contract state. Moreover, the increased level of competition and the mistrust that it engendered undermined the goodwill and collegiate relations embedded in the informal organisational and professional networks that previously existed within government and on which many public service providers continued to rely in order to provide comprehensive services (Rhodes, 2000;
Kewell, Hawkins and Ferlie, 2002). On the Australian experience of public sector contracting, Muetzelfeldt (2001:4) identified a deliberative policy to erase or isolate any prior relational aspects to ensure that public servants did not influence the market process. Similarly, Hirchman (1982) stated that social contact between contracting entities was not only limited but also actively discouraged.

**Human Services Go to Market**

While, as Butlin, Barnard and Pincus (1982) and Quiggin (1999) noted, contracting has historical precedence in the Australian government, including the delivery of early human services. Initially the drive to outsourcing and contracting was restricted to those services with clear commercial application (Chalmers and Davis, 2001), or those that allowed a defined specification of outcomes (Davis and Rhodes, 2000; Röber, 2000; Klijn, 2002). Human services were largely exempt from this process, since, at first there were few alternative suppliers in the market and not all services lend themselves to easy contract specification (Davis and Rhodes, 2000) and because, in some instances, there was a moral reluctance to submit welfare issues to commercialisation (Argy, 2001; Chalmers and Davis, 2001). A prominent Queensland example of this latter issue is the refusal by Liz Cunningham, an Independent Member of Parliament who held balance of power in the Borbidge Government (1996-1998), to submit youth detention centres to market forces when the overall corrections system was corporatised.

Nevertheless, in many jurisdictions the use of various aspects and combinations of competitive methods has become an accepted feature of public service delivery (Rhodes, 1997; Brown *et al*, 2000; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000), including in the human services arena (Earles and Moon, 2000; Keating, 2001 a & b; Chalmers and Davis, 2001; Considine, 2001). Based on the different backgrounds, contexts and the nature of the relationships that existed between entities variations of the market theme have transpired (Earles and Moon, 2000). As a consequence, public services are typically now delivered through a complex combination of service arrangements that include traditional single agency and department provision, new purchaser provider splits and quasi market arrangements in which services are spread between different levels of government, the non-government and business sectors. The end result is a highly “differentiated polity” (Rhodes, 1997: 7), that is disaggregated between a
number of sectors and different levels of government and is held together by a thread of lean and sporadic contractual transactions (Cooke and Morgan, 1992).

The establishment of these disaggregated market based contractual arrangements and the spread of service delivery beyond the government have created new roles, responsibilities and integration problems for central agencies.

**Role of Central Policy Agencies in Market Governance Arrangements**

Under the market model the highly centralised planning and vertical structures of the bureaucratic mode of government have been replaced or augmented by a service development and delivery environment characterised by an operational environment in which decisions on resource allocations and service delivery are made closer to the point of delivery. In such a flexible, decentralised operating environment it would be expected that the dominant role of central agencies in centralised planning and coordination would be reduced. However, a number of commentators have argued that rather than relinquishing their position at the fulcrum of decision-making and influence, central agencies, and in particular central policy agencies, have merely taken on new functions, or a different mix of functions, under market reforms. For central policy agencies one such shift in function arising from devolution and decentralisation is a greater emphasis on the setting of overall strategic policy directions to which the government as a whole will comply. In addition, this process affords the time and space to concentrate on forward planning. The OECD highlights the freedom that devolution and decentralisation reforms present to central agencies to focus much more on strategic policy initiatives:

> Reforms can also help strengthen the centre’s capacity to provide a long-term perspective and satisfy the need for government to be pro-active as well as reactive. Strategic policy development does not imply “state planning”. It reflects recognition that solving the problems confronting government requires coherent policies within a strategic framework. (OECD, 1995: 74).

In addition to the establishment of overall government strategic directions, the role of central policy agencies has expanded in terms of setting standards for service ‘specifications’, for exercising financial audit, and through performance contracts and incentives to regulate the activities of public managers. While this ‘arms length’ contractual model of service delivery shifted the role of government
to principally that of regulator and monitor, central agencies, because of their pivotal role, nevertheless continued to exert influence over line agencies particularly with respect to policy coordination (Hart, 1998; Rhodes, 1998).

The new elements of managerialism such as accountability and performance appraisal have necessitated that central agencies have also taken on a new oversight responsibility, which by and large required centrally established and administered standards and central monitoring. Further since the central agencies have usually been the initiators of the reform process part of their revised role was to monitor and evaluate as well as facilitate the process and train managers to implement the revised model. Thus, the nature of NPM reforms requires significant input from central agencies to maintain the integrity of the reform.

In this way, under market and managerial reforms, central policy agencies as well as treasuries, because of their continued control of budgets, have generally secured reformed roles and enhanced authority. However, as a number of commentators point out, the decentralisation of the personnel management process has undermined the influence of many central personnel management agencies (Alford, 1993; Hart, 1998; Power, 1990; Power and Halligan, 1992). In Australia, the Public Service Board was abolished in 1987 and replaced by a much smaller Public Service Commission with reduced status, resources and responsibilities (Campbell and Halligan, 1992: 187; Alford, 1993). Similarly, in Queensland, the Public Service Commission and subsequent other iterations have been downgraded as a result of a changing emphasis (Shiel, 1999).

Thus, while the roles of central agencies have changed as a result of the introduction of the market mode of government, their influence has not dissipated and they remain at the core of government’s decision-making. Indeed, as Peters and Savoie (1995:4) and others including Di Francesco (2001) have identified, many of the managerialist and market based ideas introduced in the public sector have resulted in a greater level of policy incoherence which requires the re-establishment of central agency coordination in new and perhaps expanded forms.
Limitations of the Market Model: Making Way for Relationships and Networks

The market mode of governance paved the way for more decentralised and entrepreneurial styles of management and service delivery. In conjunction with earlier managerial practices these have produced a number of timely, positive and necessary changes to the operation of the public service and the delivery of public services (6 et al, 1999; Adams and Hess, 2001). Importantly, they also produced a greater customer focus that moved public service delivery beyond the ‘one size fits all’ doctrine of the bureaucratic mode to provide more alternative options for service delivery. Further, they secured real improvements in the quality of public sector management, important changes in the measurement of costs and outcomes, and some efficiency savings (6 et al, 1999; Kettl, 2000; Adams and Hess, 2001).

Despite the apparent salience of these outcomes, the efficiency claims of the market model have been questioned by a number of commentators (Davis and Rhodes, 2000; Kettl, 2000a; Pollitt, 1995; 2000; Röber, 2000). Pollitt (1995) argued that at best its impact has been negligible. While Röber’s (2000) review indicated some benefits of competition such as making service providers more cost conscious, it also highlighted the negative effects on the organisational climate that led to fragmentation and an undermining of working relationships. Further, Walsh’s (1995) review of contracting out in the public service showed that although private operators typically yielded between twenty (20) and thirty (30) percent in direct cost savings, the long term sustainability of these savings was unclear as was its equivalent application to more complex areas of public service delivery such as policy development. From an Australian perspective, Quiggin (1999: 49) argues that contracting out may reduce the budget costs of an agency without an equivalent net gain. In a similar vein, Grimshaw et al (2002) suggested that any reduction in cost from the introduction of market processes was probably offset by a decrease in the quality of service provision, or by an erosion of the public sector ethos among workers. Adopting a strongly negative stance, Williams (2000) contends that, far from being beneficial the market model has caused many of the problems that governments are currently facing including duplication and a growing lack of cohesion.

Along with the service quality issues identified above, fragmentation and the loss of ability to direct or steer the public sector and the assignment of accountability
have presented as major concerns for governments (Rhodes, 1997; 1998; 2000; Davis and Rhodes, 2000). It is widely argued that the market model, by splitting previously integrated services into various service delivery forms and introducing new players into the service environment, has disaggregated the public sector into too many agencies operating at too many layers of distance to be able to integrate the various components, produce coherent policies or prescribe accountability responsibility (Rhodes, 1997, 1998; Kettl, 2001; Di Francesco, 2001). This ‘hollowing-out’ (Rhodes, 1994; Milward and Provan, 2000) of the public sector has been exacerbated by the practice of outsourcing and privatising previous government functions to a myriad of community and business sector agencies. In this situation as Rhodes (2000: 157) aptly states: “The centre has rubber levers; pulling the central policy lever does not necessarily mean something happens at the bottom”. This loss of steering has been compounded by an associated loss of organisational memory and expertise arising from the transfer of many services and personnel to other arenas. On this Kettl (1993: 206-207) has argued that as a result of contracting out, governments found themselves ‘sitting on top of complex public-private relationships whose dimensions they may only vaguely understand’.

These concerns for quality and efficiency notwithstanding, for most social commentators and citizens, and in particular those citizens most vulnerable to market influences, it has been the social impact of the competitive market model that has been most problematic (6 et al, 1997; 1999; 2002; Williams, 2000). As Adams and Hess (2001: 13) have commented:

While these policies succeeded in introducing efficiency instruments to public sector management they failed in areas which have political rather than economic judgments and where qualitative rather than quantitative instruments are necessary.

Others for example Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) and Bozeman (2002) argue that the limitations of the market model relate to the ‘service’ rather than ‘market’ orientation of the public sector and the inability of market mechanisms to solve community problems and social issues. 6 et al (1999) contend:

People get shunted between agencies that are trying to manage budgets rather than tackle evils; lack of coordination creates waste and incoherence at every level, but the reforms of the ‘reinvention’ era exacerbated the scale of poor coordination and dumping of costs and problems (1999: 15).
As well as having created institutional fragmentation it was asserted that the strong competitive and individualist ethos of the market model also contributed to an undermining of social cohesion or the growth of social exclusion (Petrella, 1996 in Beresford, 2000), with citizens having to compete against each other for services (Funnel, 2001: 74). The market emphasis on competition, coupled with the ‘supply and demand’ and ‘user pays’ principles, was also considered to have resulted in the disappearance of the concept of ‘public interest’ as an important rationale and aspect of public policy making and delivery (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000; Haque, 2001; Bozeman, 2002). Not only ‘does excessive self-interest corrupt a nation’, warned Handy (1998:136, cited in Funnel, 2001: 74), but ‘…it also has no regard for duty or responsibility’.

Thus as early as the mid 1980s but increasing in emphasis during the 1990s governments began to respond to the need to correct some of the fragmenting effects of their own reform agendas. In this way, as Newman (2000) and Ryan (2001) have argued New Public Management gave way, almost seamlessly, to a new, softer reform regime built around the ideals of ‘joined-up’ government.

The political goal of ‘joined-up’ government is matched by the managerial techniques of building partnerships and strategic alliances. The concepts of stakeholding, relational contracts, trust, risk sharing and collaborative advantage offer an image of leading edge business practice which appears radically different from the ‘cut and thrust’, ‘lean and mean’ discourses of business turnaround and downsizing which pervaded public management in the 1980s (2000: 47).

The convergence of a range of social and technological conditions in the broader environment made networked arrangements and network governance the ‘new preferred integration mode’. Davis and Rhodes (2000: 95) explain the rationale for the shift to a network mode:

Marketisation may have introduced the private sector and quality competition to delivering public services, but it also fragmented the institutional structure of the public sector. Networks put it back together again.

In this way the failures of state intervention and the negative impacts of market-based rationalities are argued to have created the need for the introduction of network governance principals and processes to bring the tattered threads of society together (Jessop, 1999, 2000; Adams and Hess, 2001; Keast and Brown,
However, as Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) and Kewell, Hawkins and Ferlie (2002) have pointed out many of these new networked forms nevertheless still contain hierarchical and market aspects.

**NETWORK GOVERNANCE**

Networks rest on a horizontal rather than a hierarchical organising principle. That is, within the network mode one organisation does not have a superior-subordinate relationship with another (O'Toole, 1997). Further, networks allow actors from a range of sectors to form and reform into action networks to respond to existing and emergent issues. Kooiman (1993: 4) highlights the underpinning basis of such shifting formations:

> These interactions are ... based on the recognition of (inter) dependencies. No single actor, public or private, has all knowledge and information required to solve complex, dynamic and diversified problems; no actor has sufficient overview to make the application of needed instruments effective; no single actor has sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally in a particular governing model.

It is the unique interaction of people, including those located at differing levels of government and from other sectors, and their resources, that gives networks their collaborative advantage (Huxham, 1996; Lasker, Weiss and Miller, 2001). The trust, norms and webs of relationships that are established as a result of working together for mutual gain is referred to as social capital (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993). Fountain (1998: 104) refers to social capital as ‘the stock of trust and relationships and the related tools that emerge out of this collected action’. Keast and Brown (2003) have used the expanded concept of network capital to capture the collection of social and organizational infrastructure, skills and attributes that remain in a community after an intervention has passed through and which can be drawn upon to deal with future issues. In this way the connections developed between network members have the potential for both immediate and longer-term impact.

Further, while providing immediate benefits of enhanced service provision, networks, by tapping into diversity and pushing through previously contentious issues, can also move in new and perhaps originally unintended innovative directions. This 'organic' ability to adjust to others and re-organize themselves
into adaptive patterns and structures are further strengths of networks in that they contribute to growth, resilience and sustainability (Eisenhardt and Galunic, 2000).

Governments drew on these unique aspects of networks in order to address the situation of social and institutional fragmentation that had evolved as a result of previous reform initiatives. Aware of its own growing fiscal restraints and problem solving capabilities, governments also realised that networks, by bringing together all the relevant players and alternative resources, would be better able to address the persistent ‘wicked issues’. In view of this, network approaches were introduced to strategically augment the traditional processes of government.

**Theoretical Basis for the Network Approach**

The use of a network approach to public policy can be traced to the late 1960s and early 1970s (Börzel, 1998; Marsh, 1998). Pluralist and Elitist theories were originally used to explain this new phenomenon of policy networks. The difficulty was that these theories were centred on the belief that policy making was the domain of a small select group of actors. Because of this these theories could not adequately explain the intricate and complicated actions that were now taking place. The literature on intergovernmental relations (Gage and Mandell, 1990) and inter-organisational theories (Levine and White, 1961; Litwak and Hylton, 1962) were therefore introduced to accommodate these intricacies and the expansion of the number of actors involved in public policy making. The policy network approach assumes that public policy is made in a complex process of interaction that takes places between a set of actors has expanded beyond the previous limited input of public actors and dominant interest groups. These actors are presented as being mutually interdependent, relying on each other and the specialist knowledge, skills and resources to develop appropriate policy and service responses. In this way as Klinj and Koopenjan (2000: 139) note, “Interaction patterns emerge around policy problems and resource clusters”.

The importance of policy networks is that they make a connection between public policies on the one hand, and the broader institutionalised context on the other (Kickert et al, 1997). The focus of this context is on the diverse membership of networked arrangements from the public, not-for-profit, private and community sectors. As such it expands political science and organisational theory perspectives of power relationships, interdependencies and inter-organisational
relations. Thus, policy networks provide a framework for unique public problem solving and set the stage for a move away from the idea of hierarchical government to the notions inherent in the theories of governance.

**Theories of Governance**

Up until the advent of networks in the 1960s, the hierarchy and the market were the dominant modes of social organisation. Theories to explain these modes were well accepted. When networks were recognised as a ‘new’ mode of social organisation, these theories had to be expanded. Governance theory was introduced to explain the shift from hierarchical direction-setting to processes that had a ‘bottom-up’ perspective. In this way, governance theory shifts from theories of government in which political entities are in a central, authoritative position of control. Instead, governance theory is based on the notion of power sharing in which authority and control is no longer held by government alone. Governance theory therefore discusses issues of accountability, participative democracy and fragmentation (Rhodes, 1996; 1997; Kickert et al, 1997). Or as Rhodes (1996) noted “Governance is now about governing without government”.

**Network Failure and Network Management**

Despite their positive attributes, networks also have adverse aspects that can present problems. First, networks are comprised of diverse, independent units, with their own values and core objectives. This autonomy of network members presents a threat to the stability of the network, as it is argued (Borys and Jemison, 1989) there is no common hierarchy to hold the organisation together (see also, Radin et al, 1996). Instead, networks rely on each partner to direct their efforts toward a common purpose. When this purpose is ill defined or ambiguous, or when differing views cannot be accommodated, the network can become ineffective or disintegrate (Taylor and Hoggett, 1994; Huxham, 2000). As Borys and Jemison (1989: 237) argue ‘collaboration among sovereign organizations means that different purposes must be reconciled and molded into a common purpose’. Further, because the members themselves set the network direction, networks may move tangentially away from original intentions and therefore cannot be assured of achieving their original purposes (Rhodes, 1996; 1997). In this way, network fluidity may work against achieving specified objectives and resist managing according to tightly defined operational requirements.
The swiftness with which networks can act and their ability to engender creativity and improvisation coupled with their location, often on the periphery of traditional structures and processes, mean that networks can be predisposed to secretive or at least 'unaccountable' or unauthorized actions (Machado and Burns, 1998; Rhodes, 1996). Taylor and Hoggett (1994: 137) highlight the dangers inherent in a lack of transparency or accountability:

Networks are essentially private or opaque rather than public and transparent. They are largely invisible and not open to public scrutiny, secret and unaccountable. Depending upon the values and norms, which govern the operation of such networks, their lack of public visibility has often provided the basis for corruption.

That is, since networks take on the characteristics of self-governing entities they can determine their own rules and conditions of membership and frequently consider themselves to be accountable only to their peers and their clients. Further, the emphasis on tight relationships and shared values, experiences and even language in networks means that they can be highly exclusive and often omit relevant others from the process (Benz, 1995; Bowles and Gintis, 2000). Uncontested by outside groups and traditional accountability measures and therefore not subject to public sanctions, networks can become a ‘law unto themselves’. And while much of the activities of networks are limited to the ‘means justifying the end’ rather than outright corruption, some network process can cross the boundaries to illegal or at least unethical behavior. Such a situation is evidenced, for example, in the allocation of contracts to members of the network ‘inner circle’ or their associates. In this way Rhodes (1997) argues that networks are far from being democratically governed and accountable. Finally, the diversity, density, and complexity of network relationships while useful in ensuring multiple linkages can also result in bottlenecks and information overload presenting problems for communication. As the Blair Government noted: “Cross-cutting work involves complex relationships and lines of communication which means they can be risky, or at least, difficult to manage” (Performance and Innovation Unit, 2000).

Network organisations thus are not a panacea for the problems of modern society or its governments (Taylor and Hoggett, 1994; Rhodes, 1998; Huxham, 2000; Witte, Reinicke, and Benner, 2000). They present a host of ‘inherent
complications’ (Powell, 1990: 305) that require careful design and management to realise their many and various benefits.

**Network Management**

Conceptual and empirical work on the network management aspect of governance has been largely restricted to what has been referred to as the ‘Dutch School’ (Kickert, et al, 1997; Börzel, 1998; Peters, 1998). Despite some differences on the role and influence of public/government actors within policy networks, there remains a number of common themes that characterise the Dutch literature on network management. It is argued that network management contains the following: interventions in existing patterns of network relationships, or the modification of network form and the pattern of relations; consensus building; and collective problem solving (Klinj and Koopenjan, 2000).

Work by Kickert *et al* (1997) and Agranoff and McGuire (1999; 2001) delineate a number of strategies involved in network management. Mandell and Steelman (forthcoming) provide a synthesis of these strategies and identify these as the ability to “influence members to participate… secure commitment from members … create a favourable environment for productive interaction”.

**Influencing Members to Participate**

The ability to influence members refers to two behaviours. One has to do with providing the support and legitimacy needed to sustain networked arrangements. The other relates to providing the energy and work needed to carry out the operations of the networked arrangements. These are referred to as sponsors and champions (Bryson, 1995). The concept of activation (Agranoff and McGuire; 2001) centres on this ability to tap into the collective capacities of network members. De-activation is used to refer to the need to impact or change participant dynamics when appropriate (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Klijn, 1996; Klijn and Teisman, 1997; O’Toole, 1988; Termeer and Koopenjan, 1997).

The second behaviour has to do with influencing rules, procedures, values and norms (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Klijn and Teisman, 1997; Mandell, 2000). The idea is to influence perceptions to achieve goal congruence, a shared purpose, and to develop an overarching collective vision.
Securing Commitment from Members

This refers to the ability to get participants to take joint action. Agranoff and McGuire (2001) characterise this as "power to" achieve cooperation rather than "power over" the participants. It requires the ability to mobilise behaviour, build coalitions and develop a view of the whole (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Mandell, 1988; 2000).

Creating a favourable environment for productive interaction

This has also been referred to as synthesising (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001); or arranging (Klijn and Teisman, 1997). It involves the need to secure a consensus, and facilitate interaction among the diverse membership of a networked arrangement while at the same time allowing participants to contribute based on their own reasons. It involves the development of a new role for managers. This role has been referred to as the 'multi-lateral broker role' (Mandell, 1988; 1990), the facilitator (Gray, 1989); or 'network-administrative organisation' (Provan and Milward, 2001).

Network management is therefore about stimulating interaction among network members, removing blockages to this interaction and, where necessary, assuming the role of neutral mediator or arbitrator. Where the government is the network manager, the government actor should remain detached in respect of specific policies, instead of being partisan or taking on the lead role in the development of policy. The government as network manager should create conditions for interaction and collective policy problem solving.

Networks and Government

However, while governments are often presented as merely ‘one actor among many’ in networked arrangements, there are a number of network commentators such as Johnsson and Borell (1996) and Klinj and Koopenjan (2000) who have identified a particular role for government in this context. These theorists contend that because public sector networks are conducted within a largely legal/political environment with strong needs for transparency, accountability and effectiveness in their outcomes, there is still a requirement for some degree of control over networked arrangements, their structures and activities (Agranoff and Lindsay, 1983; Agranoff, 1990; Klijn and Koopenjan, 2000). That is, considering government as merely ‘an actor among actors’, can lead to problems of
democratic legitimacy or loss of accountability (Hirst, 1994; Rhodes, 1997). As Dunshire (in Rhodes, 1996: 660) notes: “Although the state does not occupy a privileged, sovereign position, it can indirectly and imperfectly steer networks”. While, there has been an understanding and an agreement of the ‘special’ role of government in networked arrangements, it was the “Dutch School”, which has provided a framework articulating the three main approaches governments can adopt in order to exert some control or influence over networked arrangements. In these situations they can either: decide not to join in the network process but instead try to impose their ideas and goals on other social actors; work within the network to achieve their goals or finally they can become the facilitators of network interaction (Kickert et al, 1997: 178-179; Klijn and Koopenjan, 2000).

While there is an understanding of the role of government within networked arrangements, the specific role(s) for central agencies of government within this networked context has not been specifically identified. Because these agencies are often the architects, administrators and facilitators of public sector networked arrangements; this presents a major problem that is addressed in this thesis.

The next chapter locates networked arrangements within the Queensland context, and in doing so, highlights the key role of central agencies in establishing many of these networked arrangements. It also demonstrates that in many cases these networked arrangements have been initiated without a clear understanding of the required level of integration necessary, the type of relationship sought or an understanding of the need for changed management practices.
CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT
FOR THE CASE STUDIES

Introduction

The implication of the previous chapter is that networks have become the ‘new paradigm for the architecture of institutional complexity’ (Kenis and Schneider 1991:25). Yet, as Thompson, Levacic, Frances and Mitchell (1991) and Anderson (1979) point out networks have a long history as a mode of governance and, in fact, predate the other, more dominant modes of social organisation such as the hierarchy and market. Governments have periodically drawn on the relational aspects of networks to supplement traditional integrating mechanisms. However, the current operational context of the public sector has meant that networks as a form of integration have moved from the periphery of public policy and practice to assume a more prominent position.

This chapter outlines and examines some of the more recent public sector integration initiatives adopted by the Queensland Government, with a particular emphasis on those with a more networked orientation. In doing so, it highlights the impact of lingering traditional expectations and processes on the adoption of these often experimental and fragile mechanisms. The shift to managerialism and markets in the 1980s has been attributed to the renewed calls for integration (6 et al., 2000; 2002) and the introduction of networks to the public sector (Rhodes, 1998; Rhodes, 2000; Davis and Rhodes, 2000). The 1980s period therefore presents as a pertinent point to commence this review. While the move toward more networked or cross-sector arrangements is prominent across jurisdictions this review is focused specifically on the Queensland context.

MANAGERIALISM IN THE QUEENSLAND CONTEXT

Similar to most western countries the 1980s in Queensland was characterised by increasing fiscal restraints brought on by the growing influence of globalisation on the world economies. At the same time the government was subject to a decreasing budget, there was a growth in interest groups and therefore increasing and divergent expectations of government. These factors brought into stark relief the inadequacies of the ad hoc policy practices, traditional hierarchical coordination processes and the lack of responsiveness and accountability that had come to characterise successive previous governments (Coaldra...
Wanna, 1988). The limitations of the traditional hierarchical mode were also highlighted in a number of reports commissioned by government during this period. These reports, including the Savage Report (1987) and the State Strategy Study later published as *Quality Queensland: Building on Strength* (1988), advocated a managerial approach to public sector management in Queensland based on market ideals of entrepreneurship and privatisation to engender greater flexibility in government decision-making and action (Evatt Foundation, 1989).

Aware of these issues and the limitations of the coordination mechanisms instigated by his predecessors, on coming to power in December 1987, Premier Mike Ahern sought to establish better coordination systems, particularly within the Cabinet with the expansion of Cabinet committees (Head, 1993; Davis, 1995). Ahern perceived that the achievement of quality government decisions and policy implementation was dependent on shifting the overall authority from the person of the Premier to regular and routine Cabinet and budgetary processes and the setting of overall goals and objectives. In this way, through the use of program budgets and strategic planning mechanisms, the relatively independent line agencies would be brought into alignment. However, the implementation of these arrangements was flawed by a lack of coherence in economic policy and a lack of coordination in the subsequent restructuring of the public sector (Evatt Foundation, 1989). While Ahern was able to implement some of his initiatives such as an enhanced Cabinet committee system, others including the Cabinet Handbook were not finished because, in September 1989, he was deposed from power. His replacement, Russell Cooper (National Party), was unable to progress on any of these developments because his brief administration became caught in the fallout of *The Report of a Commission of Inquiry into Possible Illegal Activities and Police Misconduct* (*The Fitzgerald Report*, 1989) and was subsequently defeated in the election on 2 December 1989 by the Goss Labor Party. The Ahern era therefore provided the basis for a shift from traditional hierarchical, top-down integration mechanisms to the inclusion of more flexible, horizontal processes drawn from the market model but was unable to fully operationalise these initiatives within government.

**Institutional Integration: Building on the Vertical Axis**

Coming into power after 32 years of conservative government the incoming Premier Wayne Goss inherited a public sector compromised by evidence of official misconduct and public disquiet concerning the integrity of government
actors, public institutions in disrepair and massively under-funded and marginalised welfare services and Cabinet processes that were underdeveloped and little coordination of policy advice (Rudd, 1993; Stevens and Wanna, 1993; Davis, 1995; 1998). Sheil (1997: 232) outlined the situation that confronted Goss:

Prior to 1989, the Queensland public sector had fallen into a bizarre combination of traditionalism and new managerialism. Most backwardly, Queensland had no effective, nor articulated method of Cabinet government. All departments except Treasury were excluded from access to Cabinet matters, ministers received unsystematically prepared papers too large and too late for proper comprehension and scrutiny, decisions were poorly recorded, machinery issues were neglected, business proceeded according to no particular order and outcomes were dominated by powerful Premiers who made policy choices according to their personal and often erratic interest in people and issues (Shiel, 1997: 232).

In view of these issues the emphasis of the Goss Government was strongly focused on achieving enhanced internal coordination (Davis, 1995; Head, 1996). As Rudd (1993) noted, the increased complexity and cost of government, and calls for greater accountability, have meant that governments must systematically devote themselves to a more “disciplined, informed and coordinated approach to policy development” (Rudd, 1993: 26). However, given the recent history of strong state political control and mismanagement, a key component of the electoral agenda of the new government was reform of the state’s political, policy and bureaucratic institutions based on the values of openness, accountability and responsiveness (Head, 1993; Stevens and Wanna, 1993: Davis, 1998). This shift to modernise the public sector and introduce new approaches in economic, social and environmental policy was foreshadowed in the election campaign document *Making Government Work* (Goss, 1989) which specified more than 20 reform commitments covering the structure of government and the role of Cabinet as well as the operation of the public services and public sector organisations.

These reforms resulted in a strengthening of the Cabinet system, and the formation of a Cabinet Office (Davis, 1995; Davis, 1998), more authoritative central agencies and in particular a strengthening of the role of the central policy agency over line departments (Halligan and Power, 1992), departmental realignment and amalgamation, the introduction of a senior executive service (Coaldrake, Davis and Shand, 1992; Hede, 1993) and controls brought about through the introduction of corporate management elements (Davis, 1995; 1998). As well as the establishment of the Criminal Justice Commission, the Electoral and
Administrative Review Commission, a main vehicle for public sector reform under the Goss package was the creation of the Public Service Management Commission (PSMC) to review government structural and management performances and initiate revised systems (Hede, 1993). Following a 1992 review of policy systems in Queensland the PSMC identified that the existing division of responsibilities did not encourage and essentially discouraged cooperation and coordination among agencies. Coaldrake (1990:4, in Honeywill, 1994) described Queensland departments in the 1980s as “independent principalities”, in which policy making development and service delivery were inconsistent, uncoordinated and not integrated. To counteract this situation of institutional fragmentation, poor policy coordination and inter-departmental disputes the ‘lead agency’ concept was introduced into the Queensland sector in 1992. The designation of departments as a ‘lead agency’ gave them responsibility and authority to coordinate and assist the integration of policies and legislation that span more than one department (PSMC, 1994; Honeywill, 1994). The problem was that the lead agency option became overused and eventually there was tension between departments as to which had ‘lead agency’ status over shared issues (Personal Communication, 26 November 2001).

The focus of the early Goss reforms was on the establishment of strong vertical coordination processes, although there was a realisation of the need to establish augmenting horizontal processes and structures.

**Building Institutional Integration: Networked Arrangements**

After more than 30 years in opposition the Goss Government had few institutional linkages or relationships it could draw upon in order to facilitate flows of information within the public service as well as to provide integrating mechanisms. Accordingly, there was a need to build new networks of relationships. In doing so, the government initially relied heavily on the use of interdepartmental committees and task forces as ways to bring together the various departments and agencies involved in the different interests (Davis, 1995; Personal Communication, 26 November 2001; Personal Communication 21 February, 2002). However, as a number of commentators have noted inter-departmental committees have not always proved efficient or effective in coordinating cross agency issues and so other means were sought to augment this process (Honeywill, 1994; Davis, 1995). One example of this was the Cabinet Office’s attempt to enhance its connections between agencies through the
creation of a Cabinet Legislation Liaison Officer Network. This involved establishing a Cabinet Officer in each department to facilitate information flows within and between the department and other departments as well as to Cabinet. The role has become downgraded over time and problematised by the dual reporting role and the accompanying internal politics (Personal Communication, 26 November 2001).

In addition to these largely formal or structural horizontal linkages, other, more informal, interpersonal arrangements were also developed to establish information exchanges in order to better to link together the various components and levels of government. Commenting on these informal networks of relationships, Davis (1995: 33) observed they took the form of “… endless dialogue across offices, trading tips, news and gossip”. However, despite the inherent benefits of such informal networks and linkages attempts to formalise them were relatively unsuccessful because of the government’s strong emphasis on centralised coordination mechanisms (Davis, 1995). Nevertheless, some of these networks remained in place and continue today as strong vehicles for informal information exchange. But, although recognising the inherent benefits of these horizontally oriented and often less formal processes emerging to link processes and people within the public sector, without a deliberative policy framework to provide legitimacy and funding they have largely not been sustainable beyond this informal status.

**External Networks**

At the same time that the Government was putting into place its internal institutional reforms a number of external programs focused on delivering improved agency coordination, service integration, regional coordination and community consultation were also being implemented (Walsh, 2000; Reddel, 2002). Some of these initiatives included the Human Service Integration Project (which operated in the Caboolture, Pine Rivers and Redcliffe local government areas of South East Queensland), the Mackay Regional Council for Social Development pilot project; as well as various regional planning initiatives (Walsh, 1993, 2000; Walsh and Butler, 2001; Community Engagement Division (CED), 2002d). To promote and facilitate the development of these regional service delivery initiatives in 1992 the Office of Rural Communities was established. In 1989, Regional Manager’ Forums were also introduced as a key strategy to achieve the coordination of the regionally based initiatives (Office of Rural
Communities (ORC, 1994; CED, 2002c). Regional Managers’ Forums are comprised of regional managers of Queensland Government departments and agencies, and in some cases representatives from other tiers of government and non-government organisations. The guiding document for the operation of Regional Managers’ Forum titled *A Policy Commitment to Regional Coordination and Cooperation – Resource Document for Regional Managers’ Forum* (ORC, 1994) highlighted the government’s new emphasis on cooperative and coordinative relationships between these regional bodies. However, as subsequent reports have shown, despite the perceived advantages of Regional Managers’ Forums as instruments of regional cooperation and coordination through inter-departmental and inter-agency networking, there was no dedicated funding attached to their operation (CED, 2002c). Consequently, the operation and achievements of the Forums have varied according to the salience of issues for the region and the individual capacities and commitment of participating members. Nevertheless, these and the other regional initiatives represented a cautious exploration of more inclusive, horizontal mechanisms for planning, governing and delivering human services (Smyth and Reddel, 1997; Walsh and Butler, 2001). However, without a policy framework to guide and legitimise the emergent approaches to more integrated local service delivery, many of these programs failed to deliver on their promise of a more responsive approach to community issues.

Indeed, some commentators have attributed the demise of the Goss government in early 1996, at least in part, to its failure to adequately respond to community demands for a greater involvement in government decision-making processes (Stevens and Wanna, 1993; Waterhouse, Brown and Flynn, 2001). This resulted in the formation of a minority National and Liberal Party Coalition government under the Premiership of Rob Borbidge. The Borbidge/Sheldon Government immediately abolished many of the institutional initiatives established during Goss administration including the Office of Cabinet since this initiative was described as “bureaucracy gone mad” (Sheil, 1997: 233). Further, in preparation for the replacement of traditional service provision mechanisms competitive arrangements such as the commercialisation of corrective services, in 1996, it passed legislation that abolished the PSMC and replaced it with an Office of Public Service that had responsibility for public sector employment, the Senior Executive Service, and policy advice in matters pertinent to the Queensland Public Service. Shiel (1997: 233) described the reversal as follows:
Within a year of being sworn into office, the Borbidge-Sheldon Coalition had removed all but three of the department heads appointed during the Labor period and made large forays into middle bureaucratic management. The Coordinator General was frozen out of central decisions and the Office of the Cabinet was quickly destroyed, as was the Public Sector Management Commission.

Although dismantling some of the former coordination arrangements, the Borbidge/Sheldon Government nevertheless saw a need for integration, particularly at the service or community level and instituted some limited strategies around the improvement of service and regional coordination. These initiatives included the establishment of regional offices for the Premier’s Department (Smyth and Reddel, 1997; Davis, 2001; Scott, Laurie, Stevens and Weller, 2001). Also reflecting the emerging New Public Management ideal of a customer centric focus, there was an emphasis on increased consultation opportunities between citizens and government resulting in the revival of Regional Cabinet Meetings (Bishop and Chalmers, 2001; Davis, 1999; Davis, 2001). Without a strong central policy framework these regional development and service coordination initiatives struggled under the advancing impact of competition policy and economic rationalism which severely disadvantaged regional communities. The emerging One Nation political movement capitalised on the growing disconnect between citizens and government policies (Badcock, 1998; Leach, Stokes and Ward, 2000). This situation provided the momentum for the election of the Beattie Labor government in 1998, albeit by a slim majority, and the development of a policy agenda focused more specifically on place and community issues (Walsh, 2001; CED, 2002d). Thus, in addition to the hierarchical and managerial aspects of government with their emphasis on the electorate as either a ‘client’ and ‘customer’, there now also came a more citizen oriented, inclusive approach to government and a greater prominence placed on ‘whole-of-government’ operation and seamless service provision.

**JOINED-UP AND RESPONSIVE: TOWARD NETWORKED MODES OF GOVERNANCE**

When the Beattie Labor Government came into power there was a strong understanding of the community’s desire and, in many cases, demand for more cohesive and responsive policy development and coordinated service provision (DPC, Annual Report, 1999; Marston, MacDonald and Zetlin, 2000; Musumeci,
Indeed, a consistent theme emerging from government consultations and reports at the time centred on the problems of fragmentation and duplication of services and the need for government to become better coordinated, particularly in terms of providing services at the community level (Government Service Delivery (GSD) Project, 2000a; Walsh, 2000; 2001). This point was made most graphically by a delegation to a government/community forum that identified problems relating to “Multiple agencies, both government and non-government, that are poorly coordinated, disparate and not in synchronisation”. Government representatives also echoed these kinds of sentiments, for example, it was noted:

There is a significant overlap in service provision [in this area]. But there are gaps in services provided. There is no mechanism to coordinate the services to a particular client. Services tend to be in clinic mode rather than addressing the needs of individuals as a whole. There are barriers to the sharing of information about clients being serviced by different agencies. Members of the community find great difficulty in determining where to access the various services available to them (cited in Walsh, 2000:5).

In acknowledging these concerns the government established a policy agenda with a cross agency focus and began to explore a number of alternative modes for delivery of more ‘joined-up’ or seamless service delivery at all levels of government (Head, 1999; GSD, 2000a & b). The issue of service integration was also firmly on the agenda of other national and international jurisdictions by the late-1990s and developments in these locations provided a basis for the formulation of the Queensland Government’s policy program in this area. Indeed, the Blair administration’s emphasis on ‘joined-up government’ in the United Kingdom (6, et al, 1997; Cabinet Office, 1999; 2000a & b) and the Canadian Government’s research agenda on ‘horizontal management’ (Government of Canada, 1996 a & b; Peters, 1998a; Bakvis, 2002) were already having a significant impact on state government administration in Australia. For example, in New South Wales, the Premier’s Department (1999) produced a comprehensive set of guidelines for integration and collaboration, Working Together in the New South Wales Public Sector. There was also a strong emphasis on the development of place management initiatives (Vincent, 1998; Walsh, 2001). Around the same time similar initiatives based around more responsive and inclusive forms of citizen participation were evolving in most other states: Tasmania Together, South Australia – Working Together, and Growing Victoria Together (Szirom et al, 2002).
Based on these international and national developments, the Queensland Government initiated the Government Service Delivery (GSD) project, the major objective of which was to “develop a whole-of-government framework to support more effective, and more integrated service delivery to the community by Government” (GSD, 2000a & b). The GSD project acknowledged that there already existed an array of integration initiatives within the Queensland public sector and instead looked to augment and build on the existing networks established around these initiatives by creating an overlay of horizontal and vertical networks (GSD, 2000b; Keast, 2001). A participant of the project provided the network rationale:

It was considered that the network model, by focusing on the public service as a ‘whole’ rather than a collection of independent parts or ‘silos’, would lead to greater ‘synergies’ between departments and as a consequence better outcomes for the public (cited in Keast and Brown, 2002: 450).

Despite some early successes in progressing the goal of ‘joined-up government’ through more cooperative and coordinated relationships across the public sector, the GSD Project was effectively dismantled in mid-2000 after less than two years of operation, and just prior to its Framework going to Cabinet for endorsement primarily because it had begun to push public sector decision-making outside the traditional domain (Keast and Brown, 2002). Some technical aspects of the GSD’s operation were later amalgamated into the Access Queensland program, a sibling project of the GSD (Keast and Brown, 2002) based on the integration of government computer networks into a single point of access to achieve more seamless transactions, information and referrals (Access Queensland, 2000). Although the GSD ceased operation before it could meet its objectives, it nevertheless signalled an important strategic direction for the state government that in turn enhanced the prominence of service integration efforts in regional areas. To this end an array of program initiatives were commenced introducing more community responsive approaches and networked governance aspects to policy development and service delivery. Some of these programs included the Crime Prevention Strategy (Premiers’ Department), the Community Renewal Program (Housing Department), the Local Area Coordination Initiatives (Disability Queensland) and the Brisbane Place Projects (CED, 2002d). Discussing the Community Renewal Project initiatives, but equally relevant to the set of projects, Walsh and Butler (2001) noted that these arrangements are underpinned by
complex sets of inter-organisational and multi-level network governance relationships.

However, the Beattie Government was also aware that citizens did not just want better cooperation between agencies or more coordinated and efficient services, they wanted to be more involved in the decision-making processes and deliberations of government (CED, 2001). That is, citizens wanted to move beyond the limited, and often tokenistic, consultation processes previously offered by government to be more engaged in policy development and service delivery considerations, particularly those impacting on their community.

**Reconnecting Citizens and Government**

In responding to the demands for a more participatory style of government, including those of Independent Member of Parliament Peter Wellington, who held the balance of power in Parliament, in 1999 the government commenced a regular and onerous schedule of Community Cabinet meetings (Davis, 2001). The Community Cabinet scheme builds on an earlier initiative of former National and later Coalition governments (Scott et al, 2001). This involved the Queensland Cabinet Ministers accompanied by their respective Chief Executive Officers, visiting regional cities and towns throughout the state to talk directly to citizens (Bishop and Chalmers, 2001; CED, 2001; Keast and Callaghan, 2002; see also [www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/community/html](http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/community/html)). An important aspect of the Community Cabinet procedure is the augmentation of formal deputations between citizens and Ministers with structured opportunities for more informal interaction ([http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/communitycabinet/index.htm](http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/communitycabinet/index.htm)). Bishop and Chalmers (2001) provide a more detailed view of the mix of processes involved in Community Cabinet meetings:

A typical Community Cabinet meeting includes: an informal function, in which the Premier addresses the gathering; one or two sessions in which the individuals, citizens or community groups can make formal deputations to Ministers; a media conference; and an unofficial luncheon (2001:42).

Building on the positive results engendered through the Community Cabinet meetings, a Regional Communities Program was instituted aimed at “giving people who live in regional Queensland … input into State Government policy development and decision-making” ([http://www.regionalcommunities.qld.gov](http://www.regionalcommunities.qld.gov)). The central tenet of Regional Communities is a quarterly program of Ministerial
Regional Community Forums that operate within eight regional centres across the state’s eastern seaboard. These forums enable communities to identify and discuss priority local issues and raise these issues directly with governmental representatives. The process involves two Cabinet Ministers meeting with regional representatives, who represent a cross-section of that community, to discuss ideas and issues of regional significance (SectorWide, December, 2002b). To provide assistance to those individuals and organisations wanting to raise an issue or propose an initiative to the Forum, a Regional Community’s office is located in each of the eight regions (Department of Premier and Cabinet, Regional Communities Brochure, www.regionalcommunities.qld.gov.au). The ongoing interactions between communities and Regional Communities’ staff enhanced coordinated action around issues of both a social and economic nature and brokered partnerships between the forums and state departments to develop more responsive and integrated policy development and service delivery. The Mackay Alcohol and Other Drugs Community Partnership provided an example of such ‘collaborative’ networked arrangements:

It required a process, which recognised the value of, and actively fostered better linkages between a number of government and non-government service providers (CED, 2002e).

An independent evaluation of the Regional Forums undertaken in 2001 indicated that the process has resulted in improved regional integration and a more community responsive approach to government decision-making (Queensland Government, 1999; SectorWide 2001b: 6).

Soon after the 2001 State Election, the re-elected Beattie Labor Government approved the creation of a Community Engagement Division (CED) within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. In announcing this new division the Premier stated:

During this term the Queensland public sector will focus far more on building productive and trusting relationships with business, communities and industry (CED, 2001:3).

At its broadest, community engagement refers to arrangements for citizens and communities to participate in the processes used to make good policy and to deliver on programs and services (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997; Cavaye, 2001). In establishing the Community Engagement Division the
government amalgamated some of the previously largely isolated integrative processes such as the Regional Communities program as well as others with a specific community-government interface such as the Office of Women, Multicultural Affairs Queensland, and Crime Prevention Queensland, into a newly established Division within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (CED, 2001). The purpose of this division is to ‘foster effective community contribution to the development of policies and programs and will offer opportunities to strengthen partnerships with a diverse range of community stakeholders’ (SectorWide, 2001b: 3). The Division’s rationale and process for integration is summarised below:

These initiatives form an integrated, multi-layered approach to listening to and involving citizens and communities in the deliberations of the Government (CED, 2002a).

In addition to the traditional modes of citizen-government interaction, the Community Engagement Division, through its E-Democracy Unit, also utilises a range of inter-net based technologies and activities to link citizens directly to policy makers and decision-making processes (Queensland Government, E-democracy Policy Framework, 2001; www.qld.gov.au/edemocracy). Specific initiatives of the unit will include access to Parliament over the Internet, the opportunity to petition Parliament using e-technologies and an e-democracy website to encourage input into significant policy issues raised by government and citizens (CED, 2001). It is envisaged that these e-technologies will also being employed to link to regional forums and other citizen networks. To build on existing examples of community and government working together, another unit called the Innovation Unit (now Innovation and Development Branch) is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and disseminating information on local, national and international engagement innovations. Further, through a range of networked information sharing processes such as a web-based journal, cross-department learning networks, and the more informal ‘Pooling of Wisdom’ lunch sessions the Unit acts as an integration point within the Division and across the public service. A key integrative task of the Unit has been the development of the Community Engagement Improvement Strategy to guide the development and implementation of community engagement initiatives within the public sector (CED, 2002b: 14).
Although presented as the government ‘flagship’ for enhanced citizen-government engagement, the achievements of the Community Engagement Division were initially hampered by a lack of dedicated funding and an inability to develop a framework for collective action other than the initial Directions Statement (2001). However, the emergence of the Community Engagement Improvement Strategy in 2003, as a key integration tool to guide the development and implementation of community engagement initiatives within the public sector strengthened the whole-of-government policy concepts around community engagement indicate a moving away from ‘one way directive’ community consultation. Thus, in creating a Community Engagement Division, the Queensland government has provided the policy and practice space within which more participatory community centred models of policy development and service delivery may transpire.

**Ramping Up to Collaboration**

This shift beyond basic consultation, cooperation and coordination relationships to more inclusive, collaborative modes of operating has also been initiated in other areas of the public service as the government has become more aware of their inability to solve intractable social problems on their own. Key examples of recent efforts to collaborate with community agencies, businesses and citizens are provided in the Cape York Partnership program that commenced as a ‘whole-of-government’ initiative and the Future Directions program within the Department of Families.

The Cape York Partnership program arose from the Cape York Justice Study of 2001 (The Fitzgerald Report) that highlighted and reinforced previous claims about the multidimensional and interconnected nature of the issues confronting Indigenous communities in the Cape York Peninsula of Queensland (Pearson, 1999). The depth and persistence of these intractable problems highlighted the need to develop and implement a completely new, more community-centric way of working. The government’s response *Meeting the Challenges, Making Choices* (Queensland Government, 2002) responded with a new form of governance that bridged the new community-centric modes such as the Cape York Partnership Unit based on citizen engagement and negotiation tables with the planning and budgeting process associated with traditional bureaucratic systems.
Another exemplar of the shift to more collaborative modes of government community engagement is the *Future Directions* project undertaken by the Department of Families. This project acknowledged that effective service provision was based on ‘Networks of individuals, businesses, communities … tackling problems together’ (2002: 8) and has attempted to adjust its operation from a previously ‘crisis driven’ insular organisation based on top-down decision-making processes to one that recognised the knowledge held in other parts of society and was focused on connecting with families, communities and sectors to achieve mutual goals of community well-being and enhanced service delivery.

Together, this emergent policy program represents a shift in government focus from the traditional functions of planning and coordination of services to more collaborative arrangements that are characterised by shared problem solving, joint missions and the achievement of collective goals.

**Institutional Integration Mechanisms**

To complement and enhance the operation of these more innovative, participatory approaches to ‘whole-of-government’ policy development and service delivery the Beattie Government also employed a range of more conventional integration mechanisms. This program of reform commenced through structural options with the creation, in 1998, of a Policy Division within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Located within this Division the Strategic Policy Office was given the role to “develop, co-ordinate and review Government processes and policies that relate to the delivery of the Government’s agenda in a strategic, coherent, and consistent manner” (Menzies, 2002: 6). Further, the government instituted a more holistic and strategic approach to its policy objectives and financial imperatives through the establishment of a new set of ‘whole of government’ policy priorities cutting across core areas of government and which required cooperative action across departments (O’Farrell, 2002). In order to achieve the five Government Priorities, in 2001, Cabinet approved the establishment of five Chief Executive Officer Committees as a key policy coordination mechanism and as a step toward creating a more sophisticated collaborative model of strategic policy development and service delivery (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2001; SectorWide, 2001; Musumeci, 2002).

An operating principle of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees was the development of vertical and horizontal linkages to ‘join-up’ the public sector to
better focus its resources on meeting government priorities (O’Farrell, 2002; Musumeci, 2002). The emphasis on the use of informal and formal networks as integration mechanisms within the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees and their lower level Senior Officer Working Groups was clearly articulated in a Law and Justice Working Group document stating the process would rely on:

Developing a process of formal networks across the system and supporting a network of informal networks amongst officers within the system (DPC, 2001d: 1; see also Musumeci, 2002).

The formation of Chief Executive Officer ‘cluster groups’ for the resolution of cross cutting issues is not just particular to Queensland. Kruk and Bastaja (2002) identified a similar operating mechanism being used in New South Wales to work beyond traditional boundaries and “step back from turf wars” (2002: 65).

Also helping to draw the various parts of the public service together was the introduction of ‘the smart state’ as an overall strategic vision to guide action. The achievement of this unifying vision has been further aided by the replacement of individual departmental logos with the introduction of a single government logo, which, as Menzies (2002) states, “now brands Government activity under the one image”. This whole-of-government or integrated goal of government is also contained in its financial management frameworks which, although agency specific budget allocations remain, allows for and indeed encourages, government departments to submit combined budgets for cross-cutting issues (Musumeci, 2002). In 2001, Treasury introduced the Aligning Services and Performance (ASAP) Project. Stage one of the project required departments to identify core services and how they contributed to government priorities. It also required departments to identify points of service duplication and overlap, as well as areas where services could be delivered more efficiently and effectively under a whole-of-government format.

The use of these institutional arrangements to join-up government processes and mechanisms, including identifying this policy within several of the whole-of-government priorities, indicates that the government is serious about embedding a whole-of-government approach within the Queensland public sector.

**Conclusion**

Over the past two decades Queensland governments responded to increasing demands for more integrated and responsive policy development and service
delivery with a suite of integration initiatives, many of which featured horizontal or networked governance aspects. Some key examples of these ‘networked’ experiments include Community Cabinet, Community Engagement Division, Regional Communities, Community Renewal Program, the Cape York Partnership Program and the Future Directions Program. However, despite their formation and implementation, often within a central policy agency, at times many of these initiatives have been hindered by a lack of a coherent implementation strategy, including a framework to guide direction and provide legitimacy. Without a comprehensive implementation strategy and framework the capacity of these engagement strategies to develop, manage and maintain relationships and networks beyond traditional processes becomes limited. Therefore, it is argued that there is a tendency for initiatives to become ‘unhooked' from the institutional structures, fail to deliver improvements and be abandoned by government (Keast and Brown, 2002).

In this environment of network experimentation there remains limited understanding about how networks actually operate and can be best managed to maximise outcomes and ensure sustainability. Moreover, the role of government and, in particular, the central agencies of government in these networked arrangements remain unclear (Milward and Provan, 2000; Kettl, 2001; Keast and Callaghan, 2002). It is argued that an exploration of actual examples of these networked arrangements will provide the necessary insight into form, function and roles. In order to progress the research, three current exemplars of network operation in Queensland have been identified. The following chapter sets out and justifies the methodology adopted to examine network forms and functions as well as the emerging role of central agencies in this context.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Previous chapters have highlighted that networks have emerged as key mechanisms for the integration and coordination of public services (Kickert et al, 1997; Börzel, 1998) and have had a particular resonance for the human services arena (Provan and Milward, 1995; Milward and Provan, 1998; Mandell, 1999; 2000; 2001; Earles and Moon, 2000, Considine, 2001). As a result there is now a wide range of networked forms operating within the broader public sector. However, despite the general advocacy for and hope attached to networked forms as modes of integration, little is known about how networks are actually formed and explains their structure, governance and operation and management strategies (Hay, 1998; Milward and Provan, 1998; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001a & b; McGuire, 2002). Further, despite their pivotal role in the network reform process the literature has also been largely silent on the role of central agencies of government in networked arrangements.

This thesis goes beyond the existing, largely theoretical, work on network formation and management by examining human service networks at work. To gain an understanding of the ‘lived experience’ (Yin, 1994) of networked arrangements including their formation, operation, management and to uncover potential roles for central agencies, a multiple case study research design, based primarily on qualitative data gathering mechanisms has been employed. Augmenting the impressions of network operation and structure gained from the case study method, network analysis provided a visual representation of network linkages to confirm network structure (Cross, Borgatii and Parker, 2002) and presented as a stable mechanism for cross-case comparison (John and Cole, 1998).

Having identified the broad research design, the remainder of the chapter is focused on specifying the selected methodologies, their administration, and data analysis processes. Finally a justification for the selection of the methods and processes will be provided as well as a discussion of the potential limitations of the research.
THE CASE STUDY METHOD

A multiple case study approach has been selected as the principal research method for this examination of network operation. The case study has been defined as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, 1989: 23). The intent of this study is to determine if human service networks exhibit different characteristics and whether these differences require a resultant shift in management strategies and a change in the role of central agencies. Given the unfolding and 'chaotic' context in which human service networks in Queensland currently operate (Lang, 2002), the flexible but nonetheless guided approach of the case study provides a mechanism to capture and analyse the intricacies, processes, roles and changes in the networks as they evolved (Marshall and Rossman, 1990).

Multiple cases have been used in order to determine if the networks present as differentiated and if so, to uncover what factors might explain this variation. The multiple cases will be used to discover if there are any differences in management strategies and roles, particularly those of central agencies of state emerging in these networked arrangements. Since the focus of the thesis is on uncovering the network members' conceptualisation of network experiences and network operation, personal interviews and focus groups have been used as the primary source of data generation. These qualitative methods will be supplemented by additional insights provided from a quantitative questionnaire and documentary sources (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994).

Identifying Network Case Studies

Three human service networks, the Chief Executive Officers' Human Services Committee, the Services Integration Project (Goodna) and the Reconnect (now Connect Family and Youth) Network, each with a stated role and emphasis on integrated policy development and service delivery, have been selected as the units of analysis for the research. This 'purposeful sample' of essentially homogeneous cases (Patton, 1987) was coupled with a modified version of the most-similar/ most different case approach (Przeworski and Teune, 1970) in which networks were located at different operational levels depicted by Parsons (1960) and Waddock (1991). Following this line, the Chief Executive Officers are located at the policy development level; the Services Integration Project at the
managerial or regional operational level, while the Reconnect Network is situated at the practitioner level. Selecting networks located at different operational levels has enabled the nuances or subtleties of the networks in terms of their formation, operation and structure to be exemplified.

Having identified the set of network cases for the study the next section sets out the process that was employed to gain and maintain access.

**Accessing Case Study Networks**

After each network site was identified and initial interest and cooperation was confirmed at each site, network leaders were contacted and, in the case of the Service Integration Project (SIP) and the Reconnect Network, there was a subsequent meeting with network members. At these meetings the research project and the proposed methodologies and implementation procedures were explained and discussed, and ongoing cooperation was sought and confirmed. At these initial sessions a full list of all members of each network was also obtained.

With respect to the Chief Executive Officers an initial letter seeking permission to include this group as a case study was forwarded to the Chair of the Committee and was subsequently endorsed by the committee on 4 December 2000. However, in the interim between receiving approval and commencing the research, the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee underwent change. Consequently a second letter of endorsement was forwarded to the new Chairperson on 2001 and was subsequently approved in November 2001. Although the Committee itself agreed to be used as a case study, the involvement of individual Chief Executive Officers remained voluntary. To this end a letter was forwarded to all Chief Executive Officers on the Human Services Committee formally requesting their participation in the research, including the completion of a questionnaire and an interview.

Maintaining access to the networks, particularly in a time of flux and change as was evidenced in the operating environment, was a continuing consideration. Consistent with the recommendations of Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman (1988), continued access was mostly achieved through a regular process of reporting back as well as ongoing discussions and contact with the principal network contacts. This strategy worked well for both the Service Integration Project (SIP) and the Reconnect Network. However, for the Chief Executive Officers ongoing contact proved to be more difficult due to their higher positional
level, the restricted nature of their meeting times and the changes in Chairperson as well as the Secretariat over the study period. Nevertheless, a level of contact with the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee was maintained through periodic reporting and informal, opportunistic discussion with members. Halligan and Power (1992) identified similar strategies in their research with similar level respondents.

**Ethical Considerations and Requirements**

Given the sensitivities of conducting research into the relatively close-knit public and voluntary sectors in Queensland and the particular issues associated with qualitative research in general (Patton, 1987) ethical considerations were paramount. The ethical requirements such as informed consent, voluntarism and confidentiality were achieved by the utilisation of key components of the ethics framework developed by Miles and Huberman (1994).

First, in addressing the need for ‘informed consent’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994) all network members and other key respondents were fully informed, prior to participation, about the purpose and nature of the research project, what their contribution to the study would involve as well as what they could expect of the research team. This was achieved initially through informal deputations to key network members and organisations followed by more formal presentations and correspondence outlining the purpose of the research project, the researcher’s responsibilities and the expectations of networks (e.g. access to information, attendance at meetings and participation of network members in data gathering processes such as questionnaires, interviews and focus groups). This correspondence also detailed the expected benefits to the organisation, restated the voluntary nature of the research, and outlined how respondent confidentiality would be protected.

Other mechanisms for securing informed consent included seeking formal permission from all participant government departments for staff representatives to participate in the case study as well as seeking permission from each of the networks and their membership. Also, prior to each interview a signed statement of consent was secured and a standardised script detailing research processes and expectations and a withdrawal clause for use prior to questionnaires and focus group involvement.
Consistent with required research practices, participation in the study was voluntary and the confidentiality of responses was assured. An array of protocols was developed to ensure that these ethical considerations were embedded within the administration of the research. Examples of these include a script at the beginning of each focus group and interview and the signing of consent forms before each interview. The full array of ethical protocols is provided in Appendix 1.

**NETWORK ANALYSIS**

Network Analysis is an empirical tool to measure, describe and analyse social structure on the basis of the multiplex relationships between people, groups and organisations (Wellman, 1983; Kenis and Schneider, 1991). The virtue of network analysis is that unlike conventional analytical approaches it does not focus on the attributes or characteristics of particular individuals or cases, but on the relationships between individuals and/or organisations (Knoke and Kukinski, 1982; Wellman, 1983; Scott, 1991). Its strong mathematical underpinnings and strict coding rules enables network analysis to produce data that accurately measures the characteristics of network transactions and structures such as density, strength and centrality and structural equivalence to aid comparison (Griffin and van der Linden, 1998: 8, cited in Milward and Raab, 2002: 5). As a result different types of relational contexts can be mapped out, providing a more comprehensive picture of intensity and extent of the social relations. In doing so, it uncovers the hidden pattern of relationships and enables the underlying structure of relationships or their topology to become more apparent (Scott, 1991; Cross et al, 2002).

This thesis draws on the visualisation aspect of network analysis as a tool to first describe (Milward and Provan, 1998; Cross et al, 2002) the patterns of relationships and structural characteristics of the three human service networks in relation to key identified linkage variables. Also, it will be used as a mechanism by which the differences and similarities in structure and function of the three case studies can be compared and contrasted (John and Cole, 1998). The additional data and alternative perspectives of network analysis therefore complements the traditional case study data (John and Cole, 1998; Zack, 2000). In this way as Rogers (1987: 285) states, network analysis can be used to ‘turbo charge’ case studies.
Securing Network Data

Because it performs different analyses and visualises results in different ways, network analysis gathers different data to other types of social science research. There are a number of options available for the gathering of network linkage data, including primarily observation, archival records, and diary recording (Wellman, 1983; Tichy, Tushman and Fombrun, 1987; Wasserman and Faust, 1994; John and Cole, 1998). This thesis has utilised a linkage survey primarily because it is easier and faster for respondents to complete and because most people are able to conceptualise and estimate their interactions. To limit the problems of recall and increase the accuracy of contact estimates the linkage survey has been designed using questions that are specific in terms of time lines and content, and the use of a structured linkage instrument to guide the responses (Knoke and Kuklinski, 1982; John and Cole, 1998). The Linkage Survey questions are contained within questions 14-16 of the Questionnaire located in Appendix 2.

Thus in preparation for the implementation of the research a methodology was selected that met the requirements of a complex, changing and unfolding environment. This was a mixed model utilising primarily a multiple case study approach augmented by network analysis. In order to build the case studies and construct the networks the study utilised a range of data gathering mechanisms including semi-structured interviews, focus groups and a questionnaire that incorporates a network linkage instrument. Three network exemplars were selected and permission secured for their participation. All participants were informed of the purpose of the research, their role and contribution as well as the role and responsibilities of the researcher. Approaching the project in a way that enabled network members to be involved in early discussions and to participate at the level relevant to their needs made the implementation process easier and will enhance the validity of responses.

ADMINISTERING THE RESEARCH DESIGN

In view of the combination of case study and network analysis research modes a mix of qualitative and quantitative data gathering instruments were employed. These include semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and a questionnaire and linkage analysis survey. In addition, documentation made available by the three case study networks and the project sponsor, the Department of Premier and
Cabinet, were also accessed. This documentation included procedural processes and records, minutes of meetings and correspondence, as well as internal departmental documentation and reports. This collection of documentary information will be used to provide a historical aspect to the research, to corroborate emerging information and as an aid to the further explanation of findings (Patton, 1987; Yin, 1989). The use of multiple methods of data collection, or ‘triangulation’ (Denzin, 1984; Patton, 1987) allows the researcher to crosscheck results thus ensuring that the data generated are not simply artefacts of one specific method or data source (Jick, 1979).

Credible case study research requires the articulation and documentation of the methodologies and administration techniques in order to demonstrate the twin requirements of validity and robustness (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1989; Patton, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The following section outlines the administration procedures for each of the three data gathering instruments of questionnaire, network linkage survey, focus group and semi-structured interviews identified above.

**Questionnaire**

In order to gain comparative details on key network characteristics including the demographics of network membership, operation, governance and effectiveness, as well as impact of central agencies on network operation a structured questionnaire was administered to members of all three networks. A secondary, but essential aspect, of the questionnaire, was the identification and measurement of the linkages between network members. This data will subsequently be used to construct the network maps. The structured nature of the questionnaire including its standardised questions and administration procedure provides a similar grounding from which cross-case comparison can occur (Hughes, 1976; Ferlie and Marks, 2002).

The questionnaire was based on a network measurement instrument for the American mental health arena developed by Provan and Milward (1995) and Milward and Provan (1998), which was centred on obtaining data around four key themes: (a) general organisational information including number of employees, agency budget and service focus; (b) network management and governance characteristics; (c) reasons for network participation; (d) perceived agency and network benefits of participation, and finally; (e) network linkage. This initial
instrument was modified for use in the Queensland human services arena. The modifications, endorsed by H.B. Milliard\(^1\), reflected both the Queensland case study context and the shifted emphasis of the research from mental health to broad human service provision. Specifically, the modifications included more socio-demographic and organisational information, and in particular, based on the calls by Mitchell and Shortell (2000) and Agranoff and McGuire (2001b) and more information on network management and governance arrangements was sought in order to ‘unpack the black box’ of network operation (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001b: 297). Further specific modifications to reflect the particular emphasis of this research included the addition of two questions focused on the impact of central agencies of state on the operation of the networks. Finally, again in order to locate the questionnaire in the Queensland human services context, the questionnaire differed significantly with respect to both the agencies involved and the network linkages under observation. In this way, although the questionnaire was based broadly on the instrument developed by Provan and Milward (1995), by situating the questionnaire in the Queensland context and by addressing identified research gaps and therefore including additional variables, the instrument presents as a significant departure from the original instrument.

**Questionnaire content**

Based on the information outlined above the questionnaire incorporated the following key aspects: (1) general socio-democratic and organisational characteristics (2) network drivers (3) network operation: governance and management and finally (4) the impact of central agencies on network operation. Also embedded within the questionnaire was a network linkage survey designed to elicit the network linkage characteristics for each of the three networks. These measures have been selected to inform the research questions centred on the explanation of variation in network forms, the operation of networked arrangements and the emerging role of central agencies. A number of additional questions were included in the questionnaire but are not reported in this thesis.

*General Network Membership Information: Socio-organisational Characteristics*

The questionnaire commenced with a range of questions designed to gather basic demographic information about network members, such as the age and sex of the respondents, their educational level and background, and their position

\(^1\) Personal communication, June 2001.
within the organisation they represent. In addition to these initial demographical questions, several other introductory questions were posed to tap into the size and core business of the organisation represented as well as the length of time involved in the network. For the questions relating to characteristics such as sex, age, educational background and size of organization, a set of pre-determined responses was provided for selection.

In order to capture the time commitment of network membership, respondents were asked to indicate the amount of time per month they spent on the network. The following set of responses was provided for respondents to check: Less than one day, 1-2 days, 2-3 days, 4-5 days and more than five days. The final question within the introductory set, focused on determining the perceived importance of coordination of services to the overall mission of respondents’ agency. A five-point scale (where 1 = no importance, 2 = very little importance, 3 = some importance, 4 = fairly important and 5 = very important) was provided and respondents were asked to select the most appropriate response.

**Network Operation: Drivers, Governance and Management**

Networks have become an accepted way of providing human services. Yet, the operation, governance and management of networks remains a ‘black box’ (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001b: 297) that requires focused research in order that it can be better implemented (O'Toole, 1997). In view of these limitations, this section looks to ‘unpack’ the box by examining reasons for the move to networked arrangements, the governance modes adopted and how networks are managed.

**Network Drivers**

To identify the reasons behind network participation respondents were provided with 16 possible reasons for involvement. Of these, the first 10 (personal friendship/social interaction, reputation of the agency, similar beliefs and methods of operation and service delivery, habit or tradition, location/proximity, service needs of clients, required by mandate, contract requirement, outside pressure) were drawn from the original Provan and Milward (1995) instrument. The remaining variables, to improve efficiency, resource scarcity, funding/financial pressures, critical situation requiring joint effort, to gain legitimacy with other agencies, valuing joint effort, and to learn from others, were derived from the key respondent interviews as well as from the network literature. An additional
category of other was also provided. Using a five-point scale (where 1 = almost never the reason for involvement, 2 = seldom the reason for involvement, 3 = sometimes the reason for involvement, 4 = often the reason for involvement, 5 = almost always the reasons for involvement), respondents were asked to rate each response.

**Network Operation and Management**

Two questions were developed to gain a better understanding of the operation and management of the networks. The first centred on the governance or relational aspects of the network and asked ‘which of the following aspects, in your opinion, keeps this network together and functioning’? Nineteen possible response options, derived from a review of the network literature as well as the key informant interviews were provided from which respondents were requested to indicate, by ticking the most relevant. These responses were as follows: shared values, confronted with similar concerns/issues, reciprocation between network members, long-term relationships between network members, network members have compatible cultures, network has set rules and norms for working together, mutual understanding and empathy, high degree of mutual trust, social relations monitor network actions, network actions influenced by legal requirements/sanctions, formal exchanges between network members, informal exchanges between network members, contractual obligations between network members, actions monitored by external bodies, network actions monitored by managerial authority, cooperation between network members, network members participate in joint problem solving, divergent opinions expressed and listened to. It was possible for more than one mechanism to be nominated.

The second question, focused on the identification of specific linkage mechanisms or management strategies used by the networks. Thirteen possible linkage mechanisms were provided: well developed rules and procedures, ongoing liaison between member agencies, coordination committees, involvement in reference groups, strong lateral communication, communication mostly directed downwards, conferences to discuss issues and set joint direction, workshops to develop mutual implementation strategies, informal meetings between members, participation in joint ventures/programming between agencies, involvement in joint case management, regular telephone contact between members, regular meetings of the network. Respondents were requested to indicate those mechanisms that best reflected their opinion. It was
possible that more than one response was indicated. This set of questions was followed by an open-ended question asking respondents to indicate or describe any other mechanisms or approaches used to manage or coordinate the activities of their network.

*Impact of Central Agencies on Network Operation*

Central agencies have occupied a pivotal role in previous modes of governance. However, with the shift to networked modes of governance which, in theory at least, implies that government will be an equal actor in the process (Rhodes, 1988), the impact of central agencies and their emergent role have for the most part been as yet to be determined, other than to suggest that there will be a largely enabling or facilitating function (Davis and Rhodes, 2000), or that it is ‘experimental’ (Keast and Callaghan, 2002). In order to obtain information on the extent to which the central agencies of state, that is the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Queensland Treasury and the Office of Public Sector, Merit and Equity, impact on the operation of each network, respondents were provided with a five-point scale (where 1 = no impact, 2 = very limited impact, 3 = some impact, 4 = significant impact, and 5 = very high impact) and from which they were asked to circle the number that best reflected their experience for each agency. A further category of *other* was also provided for the identification of other agencies considered to fit the category of a ‘central agency’. Following that, respondents who indicated that a central agency had either a ‘significant impact’ (i.e. 4) or ‘very high impact’ (i.e. 5) were asked to signify what form this might take. A single prompt (example) was provided followed by a space for the response.

*Network Linkage Survey*

The basic building block of networks is the linkage among the organisations that make up the network. To develop a measure of network structure every agency in each network was first listed alphabetically on a survey form that was unique to that network. Key informants from each agency were asked to indicate whether their organisation was involved over the previous six to twelve months with every other agency listed, through six different types of service links: shared information, joint funding, service contracts, joint programming/planning, contact referrals and reference group membership. These service links were similar to those used by Milward and Provan (1998). The instructions specifically limited responses to only those interagency linkages related to human service integration.
The quality of the relationship for each of the linkage variables was also sought. In this instance relationship quality was defined as the achievement of mutual benefit. This required respondents indicating, using a five-point scale (where 1 = no relationship, 2 = poor relationship, 3 = fair relationship, 4 = good relationship, and 5 = excellent relationship), the perceived quality of the relationship between agencies. An opportunity was also provided for respondents to identify and rate any additional linkages that their agency had with other organisations that were excluded from the initial organisational list. Finally, to identify the most critical linkages respondents were asked to go back through their responses to the linkage survey and indicate which links they believed were the most critical to their agency. This required respondents to circle those ticks that were especially important to their agency’s operation.

An example of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 2. This example excludes specific agency respondents.

**Questionnaire Administration Process**

The processes for the administration of the questionnaire including the pilot test phase, distribution, follow-up and response rate are discussed in the following section. Establishing and pursuing a rigorous process of questionnaire administration, including the emphasis on securing a high response rate enhanced the reliability of the process as well as the validity of responses (Patton, 1987).

**Pilot-test questionnaire**

After securing permission to use the three identified case study networks and before administering the questionnaires, a pilot test of the modified instrument was undertaken with a group of similar level public servants and human service practitioners. The purpose of the questionnaire pilot test was to check the clarity and responses to the questions and to ensure that it could be completed within the specified time allocation. At the same time, following the advice of Kelly (1999), opportunity was also taken to test the proposed data analysis framework. The questionnaire pilot test process was undertaken during June 2001. As a consequence of the test, changes were made to the type setting and lay out of the questionnaire, in particular to Question Fourteen (14), the primary network linkage question, as well as some minor grammatical changes.
The questionnaire was then administered to each network through the principal network contacts. The questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter from the research team as well as from the network contact. These letters restated the purpose of the research, outlined the administration process and reiterated the voluntary nature of participation. A number of options were provided for respondents to return the questionnaire, including the provision of a stamped, self-addressed envelope, an email option as well as the collection of the questionnaires by the network administrators for return to the researcher. Ensuring a maximum response rate from the questionnaires was an important requirement to accurately mapping and measuring the networks (Wellman, 1983; John and Cole, 1998; Provan and Milward, 1995; Milward and Provan, 1998).

Follow-up

Balancing the workload of network members and the potential for non-completion over an extended timeline, a time frame of two weeks was allowed for completion of the questionnaire. Consequently, two weeks after the administration of the questionnaire to the networks, all non-respondents were contacted by email to encourage completion. After three weeks a follow-up email and, in some cases, a telephone call and/or a third party intervention were employed to secure outstanding responses. Using these techniques the following questionnaire response rate was achieved: CEOs (10/11 - 90 %), SIP (18/19 - 94.7%) and Reconnect (16/18 - 88.9%). For the one Chief Executive Officers' network non-respondent a deliberate decision was made not to be involved in the questionnaire. That agency did, however, agree to participate in an interview. The SIP non-respondent, by contrast, was simply not able to complete the questionnaire on time for inclusion in the analysis. With respect to the Reconnect network, of the eighteen (18) actively participating members sixteen (16) completed the questionnaire. Reflecting the inherent fluidity of the non-government sector, the non-respondents had either resigned from the network or their agency was in a state of change and was therefore not able to respond. Nevertheless, the secured response rate secured was adequate (Cross, Nohria and Parker, 2002:71) and approximated those achieved by other network case studies such as Morrissey and Calloway (1994) in their review of mental health networks in the United States, and Martinez-Fernandez’s (1999) study of regional development in New South Wales.
At the same time contact was also made by both telephone and email to collect missing data and check data that appeared to be inaccurate when compared with other responses and historical data. For example, although some people listed the length of involvement in the network as 12 years, subsequent follow-up confirmed that they had meant the length of time involved in the area. Also, during this follow-up stage a number of respondents provided additional information by way of a short ‘interview’ or ‘informal discussion’. Notes from these ‘interviews’ were transcribed and provided to respondents for confirmation of accuracy. In all cases an opportunity was provided to respondents to amend or correct information to ensure accuracy of reflection.

Following the administration of the questionnaire to the three network case studies a focus group session was conducted onsite for both the SIP (11 October 2001) and Reconnect Networks (12 November 2001).

**Focus Groups**

The purpose of the focus group was to use the process of self and group reflection to secure an understanding of participants' experience in and understanding of the network including how it operated, its perceived successes and failures, how participation was facilitated and what they believed was the role of government and, in particular central agencies of government, in the facilitation and management of networks. It is argued (Morrison, 1998; Johnson, 2002) that the group dynamics that transpire within focus groups creates a situation in which members are more willing to disclose and challenge opinions.

As noted above the SIP and Reconnect Networks participated in the focus group process. The decision to use a focus group for these networks was based on a number of considerations. First, these two networks were accustomed to participating in such a process; the SIP through its regular involvement in group interactions and facilitation as part of the Graduate Certificate course, and Reconnect as a result of its ongoing involvement in action research as a guiding principle of its operation. Given the existing level of group cohesion and dynamics within both groups, and their prior experience in operating within effective processes, it was envisaged that this method would generate rich insights into the members’ perceptions of their networks. Thus, given the existing dynamics and trust exhibited within the two networks, it was envisaged that a focus group was more likely to uncover the ‘real views’ of participants’ experience of the
network than a direct interview process (Ferlie and Marks, 2002; Johnson, 2002). In this way, it drew out alternative views and fostered broader discussion that might not have been possible outside the established environment. Second, since the focus group was scheduled to follow an existing network meeting, it was considered to be more time expedient.

Prior discussion with the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee Secretariat as well as the Chair of the Committee indicated that a focus group process was both unsuitable and inappropriate to this network. The reasons given for this were twofold. First, the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee only meets for one hour each month and that time is tightly monitored with strictly adhered to agendas and as such it would not be amenable to the time required to undertake a focus group process. Second, it was identified that the Chief Executive Officers would not be as willing or able as the other networks to talk freely and frankly in a group process. Therefore, the Chief Executive Officers agreed to participate in a series of individual interviews structured around questions similar to the focus group format. Given the operational context in which Chief Executive Officers are located which is often hard to access and which has a higher imperative for confidentiality, the interview process was considered to be an appropriate methodology for gaining insights into the operation of this network.

**Focus Group Administration and Process**

Prior to the commencement of the focus groups the two participating networks were notified by their respective administrators and the research request was placed on the meeting agendas, that the researcher would be attending the meeting and with each group member’s permission, a one-hour time slot was made available following the regular meeting. In this way, participants who did not want to participate would be free to leave. For both sessions, all network members agreed to stay and participate in the focus group session. For SIP the number of focus group participants was nineteen (n= 19) while for Reconnect the participants amounted to fourteen (n = 14). Although this number was outside the optimal size for a focus group (Johnson, 2002), the facilitation process was assisted by the use of a co-facilitator as a process monitor and scribe.

The focus groups were conducted in a structured but relatively informal manner, commencing with an introduction and restatement of the research project and its
objectives. At this point participants were reminded that they had given prior agreement to participate in the research but that there was no formal requirement to stay if they did not wish to participate, nor to answer all questions. The focus group members were assured that any information given would be protected by confidentiality, and that no comment would be attributed to any identifiable individual in any subsequent report. Finally, before proceeding, permission was also sought to tape record the focus group session (Appendix 1 provides a copy of the Tape Recording Permission Script used for the focus groups). To ensure that privacy and confidentiality requirements were met, all tapes were subsequently secured under locked conditions with only members of the research team having access.

In an effort to achieve and maintain the level of informality sought, participants were arranged in a circular fashion. This structure had the added advantage of facilitating the tape recording process. To maximise the discussion and interaction around topics a concerted effort was made to include all focus group members in the discussion. The focus groups were scheduled to take approximately forty-five (45) to sixty (60) minutes to complete. In practice, however, both sessions exceeded the one-hour time limit initially allocated.

Focus Group Questions

The primary emphasis of the focus group sessions was to obtain participant insights into the operation of the networks and, in particular, their experience of the operation of the network. A further emphasis, arising from the questionnaire responses, was to tap respondents’ understanding and perception of the current and emerging role of central agencies in the networked environment. The following questions were used to guide the process:

- What has been your experience in the operation and management of the network?
- Given the amount of time and effort directed toward cross-sector coordination and network participation, what have been the benefits and outcomes of this action for your network?
- What is the role of government in the initiation, facilitation and management of cross-sector networks?
- Specifically what is (or should be) the role of the central agencies of government in networks?
In addition, participants were provided with a written sheet of the focus group questions and were encouraged to document their opinions on each of the questions as well as make general comments and forward these either following the session or by mail or email. A number of respondents took this opportunity to provide additional information and this was transcribed and added to the qualitative database developed for that network. A copy of the focus group transcript was forwarded to the network administrators of the two participating networks for verification at subsequent network meetings. With the exception of some minor points of clarification both transcripts were endorsed.

**Interviews**

In order to enrich the data collected through the questionnaire and focus group sessions as well as gain additional insights not immediately possible through these earlier methods, into the background, formation, operation, management and governance of the three networks a series of interviews across three different respondent groups was undertaken. These groups included the Chief Executive Officers, a set of key informants, as well as key members of the SIP and Reconnect Networks. A semi-structured interview process was selected because while there was set questions for each respondent group there was also a level of flexibility around how they were administered. This process meant that, “the content of the interview was focused on the issues that are central to the research question, but the type of questioning and discussion allow for greater flexibility than does the survey interview” (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander, 1995: 65). However, an interview schedule was used to ensure that all questions were completed and as a mechanism to control the level of interviewer inducted bias (Hughes, 1976; Patton, 1987; 1990). The process and format for each of these interview types follows.

**Chief Executive Officers Human Service Committee Interviews**

In view of the decision not to involve Chief Executive Officers in the focus group process, an alternative mechanism to gain similar insights into the perceptions and experiences of this network was required. To this end, a semi-structured interview based on questions similar to the focus group was developed. The semi-structured interview process was selected in this instance because it both aligned the questions more closely with those of the focus group while also affording the opportunity to further describe experiences as well as to explore emerging themes.
Chief Executive Officers' Interview Process

Having determined that an interview process was necessary, the Chair of the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee was approached for advice and assistance in the administration of the instrument. Firstly, informal approval to participate in an interview was secured by the Chair approaching the CEO Human Service Committee members. This received a general agreement to participate. Following this all twelve member CEOs were forwarded a letter restating the nature of the research and requesting their availability to participate in an interview. Ten of the possible 12 CEOs agreed to be interviewed, with one Chief Executive Officer having recently transferred and the incumbent not arrived. While not agreeing to an interview the final agency provided a written response to the questions provided on request. Two other Chief Executive Officers were not available (annual leave) but in their absence nominated their deputies as substitutes. This resulted in an available interview response rate of one hundred per cent (100%).

CEO Interview Questions

As stated previously, the Chief Executive Officer interview questions were designed to largely reflect those covered in the focus group. This similarity of questions permitted easier cross-referencing of issues between the three network cases. The only variation centred on the inclusion of some broad, general questions aimed at providing a context for the interview as well as allowing a degree of rapport to be established prior to discussing issues that might have been more difficult or contentious. As Oppenheim (1973:38) noted such a “funnel approach, allows a degree of trust and therefore openness to occur prior to discussing more ‘tension-laden’ topics”. A sub-question centred on uncovering the respondents' understanding of the integration terminology (cooperation, coordination and collaboration) was included within the first question. The following questions guided the interviews:

- What was the rationale for getting the CEO Human Services Committee together?
  - How would you define the integration terms of cooperation, coordination and collaboration?

- In your view what is the situation that confronts the delivery of human services in Queensland and how can it be best addressed?
Given the amount of time and effort directed toward cross-sector coordination and network participation by public servants in Queensland, what do you believe have been the benefits or outcomes of this action?

In terms of delivering services, can you identify a difference between cross-sector (network) models and the more traditional models of service delivery?

What is the role of government in networks?

Specifically what is, or should be, the role of central agencies in the initiation, facilitation and management of networks?

The initial Chief Executive Officer interviews all took place throughout a three-month period from December 2001 to February 2002, with some subsequent follow-up interviews conducted in late 2002 and early 2003. While the initial interview varied slightly between respondents, the process and style of interview was kept as standard as possible through the use of a question schedule. No interview questions were pre-circulated to respondents. The interview commenced with the researcher thanking the respondent for agreeing to participate in the interview, followed by a brief restatement of the purpose of the research, and a reiteration of the confidentiality process. At this stage the respondents were also asked to sign a Statement of Consent (Appendix 1). All interviews were tape recorded with the prior approval of the respondents. The interviews were mostly completed within the stipulated time allocation of 45 minutes. The few occasions that the interview exceeded this time period related to the respondents’ interest in further discussion of the research questions. A copy of the full interview transcript was provided to each of the respondents so they could amend or correct any comments. Most respondents took the opportunity to review the transcripts and make adjustments as necessary.

Key Informant Respondents

The first group of key informants interviewed consisted of 21 respondents identified from within the broad public sector (government and non-government), selected for both their experience and understanding of the Queensland public sector and the networked arrangements. These interviews followed a largely informal but semi-structured format that focused simply on gaining an initial understanding of patterns and operation of networked arrangements in Queensland and the processes by which these have evolved over time. Since they were designed to inform the research process the Key Informant interviews
mostly occurred during the 12-month period preceding the research from June 2000 to June 2001.

Although following a more informal process that allowed respondents to follow their own thread of reflection, the interview was nevertheless guided by a question schedule that set the broad parameters of the inquiry, that is, the history and background of networked arrangements in Queensland, and stipulated some key questions such as the nature of their involvement in networks, drivers for change, perceived successes and failures, and personal lessons learnt. At the end of the interview, an opportunity was provided for respondents to raise and discuss related issues they considered to be relevant or important that had not been addressed in the questions.

**Interview Process**

As with the Chief Executive Officers the *Key Informant* respondents were initially contacted informally. This was followed by a formal request for their inclusion in the research project. Interviews were then arranged at times and locations that met respondents’ requirements. Regardless of the location of the interview, all interviews followed largely the same process. At each interview the purpose of the study and the interview was explained. All were conducted in an informal manner, but followed the same basic question outline provided by the interview schedule. At the point of interview a Statement of Consent was secured as well as permission to tape record the interview. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one and a half hours. A full transcript of the interview was provided to the *Key Information Respondents* to confirm or, where relevant, change or amend, to ensure that views and comments were correctly represented.

**Key Network Member Interviews**

The third and final set of interview sources centred on four key members of each of the SIP and Reconnect networks. These four members were those most central to the operation of the network and included both network administrators as well as management team members. Similar to the *Key Informant Respondents* interviews the *Key Network Members* interview process centred on obtaining the respondents’ detailed insights on the history and operation of their respective networks, their experiences within the networks and perceptions of success and failure. Again, while the interview was largely informal an interview
schedule was used to ensure that all the questions were covered and to limit the impact of interviewer bias.

**Key Network Respondent Interview Process**

The Key Network Members Respondent Interview followed a similar process to that of the Key Respondent interview process.

**Overall Interview Schedule**

In total 46 interviews were conducted over a three-year period. Of these 46, four were repeat interviews. In the case of repeat interviews or where more than one interview occurred on the same day, the number of the interview and the order in which it occurred has been noted in the reference. A listing of all interviews, coded in terms of the type of interview but with the respondents’ names omitted to protect confidentiality, has been developed. This process has been necessary because of the relatively small size of the interview group and the potential to identify respondents within their groupings. The interview list is available on request.

**DATA TREATMENT AND ANALYSIS**

This mixed mode research methodology has generated a wide array of data. The analysis of this data has been located under the three main headings of qualitative, quantitative and network analysis. Each will be explained under their main process.

**Qualitative**

All qualitative data generated from the tape recording of focus groups and interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. This data, along with the ‘open-ended’ responses from interviews, was initially examined manually to identify key emergent themes as well as to identify areas that needed further clarification or confirmation. The data was subsequently coded and entered into the Nudist (4) qualitative data analysis software package. Based on the coding, Nudist de-contextualised the data, that is, separated the relevant, identified data from their context and reassembled all the data that belonged to a specific coding category into key themes. These themes were subsequently considered in the context of the Integration Continuum that provided the basis for the organisation of the case studies and the analytical framework against which to compare and
contrast the case studies, their use of integration terminology and strategy
development and expectations for the role of central agencies. For this reason it
continued to be necessary for the researcher to return manually to the original
data throughout the analysis. Thus the Nudist program merely served as an
augmenting tool to the manual analysis. The Feedback from case study report
sessions was also included in the thematic analysis.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data generated from the questionnaire was analysed from a basic
descriptive perspective with frequency results presented in a descriptive form
represented by a percentage, while the ordinal items of the questionnaire were
analysed using mean, median and mode descriptions. SPSS was used as the
computing package for the quantitative data analysis.

Network Linkage Analysis

The responses to the network linkage survey contained within the questionnaire
were collated and arrayed into agency by agency matrices for each of the six
identified network linkage variables: shared information, joint funding, joint
program planning, service contract, contact referrals, and reference group
membership. From this starting point, for each of the three networks, six network
maps were constructed using Statistical Analysis System (SAS) (version 8.2)
Enterprise Miner (version 4.5) – Link Analysis (version 8). This resulted in a total
of 18 network maps in which each linkage relationship – information, joint
funding, joint planning, service contracts, service contacts and reference group
membership – defines a separate network map. Using a process of multi-
dimensional scaling the initial ‘linkage maps’ were then inverted to provide a
more detailed insight into the actual network structure and in particular to uncover
the ‘hidden’ nature of the relationships between network members (Cross et al,
2002). These maps were used initially to provide visual distinctions to inform the
diagnosis of network differentiation and subsequently confirmation of the
differences between the three networks (Knoke and Kuklinski, 1982; John and
Cole, 1998; Cross et al, 2002).

Uncovering Network Structures: Intensity and Density

Since the primary focus of this research was to uncover the exchange structure
of the three network case studies, two main measures of network structure were
utilised. These measures were the strength and density of the linkages or ties
between the network agencies. The first measure, strength, relates to the intensity or value of a network relationship or association (Borgatti, 2002) and can include the frequency or duration (Marsden, 1990). These ties are often referred to as either ‘strong’ (Grandovetter, 1973, 1982) or ‘weak’ (Grandovetter, 1973; Uzzi, 1997). The importance of the strength or intensity of ties within a network relates to the expectations of repeated exchanges and the increased opportunities for the development of trust and reputation as a consequence (Erickson, 1988; Burt, 1990; Gulati, 1994).

The second measure, density, is defined as the “mean strength of connections among units in a network” (Marsden, 1990: 453). While density can be measured statistically as the proportion of network ties compared to the total number of possible ties (Scott, 1991), in this study density was visually determined by the proximity or clustering of the agencies within each of the network maps. More densely connected relationships or linkages implies that the level of network cohesion will be also be high and that members are more involved or committed to the process (Jones, 1991; Wasserman and Faust, 1994) and that network members will have access to a diverse set of connections (Burt, 1990). Also based on this visual analysis it was possible to make a determination of the relative centrality position of the network members. Centrality identifies those network actors who have more ties connected to other members and conversely will highlight those located on the periphery of the network. The assumption is that the more central actors have access to greater resources, are the more powerful or influential members and as a consequence will often undertake the role of network coordinators (Alter and Hage, 1993; Provan and Milward, 1995) or resource brokers (Mandell, 1990).

Interpreting the Network Maps

Each network map consists of nodes and lines. Each node or circle represents one organisation or component of an organisation and can be identified by a number placed against it. The lines between the nodes or network members represent a confirmed link in relation to each of the six identified variables, as reported by the respondents (see Milward and Provan, 1998; John and Cole, 1998; Cross et al, 2002).
Link Analysis, with its ability to colour code linkages according to count values, or linkage associations, provided a valuable tool to aid in the detailed analysis of the three networks and their linkage variables. Within Link Analysis, the link counts for each of the variables are categorised under three groupings. Red links have the highest count values, representing between 8-15 linkages and can be defined as strong links. Blue links account for the middle or medium count values, of 3-8 linkages between network members, and green lines have the lowest count values referring to three and less linkages (SAS, Manual, 2002). In this way, it was possible to use the colour coding to visually demonstrate the strength or intensity of the linkage ties between network members. Further, the colour coding also provided a mechanism to display the full set of underpinning ties for the network structure thus affording a complete perspective of the each of the network variables. Additionally, the length of the line between nodes, or the spatial distance between actors, can provide further insights into the structure and operation of the network. For example, the greater the distance or the length of a line between nodes the lower is the assumed level of integration or cohesion. Conversely, shorter lines imply density and a higher the level of integration and cohesion between members (Wasserman and Faust, 1994; Borgatti, 2002).

ENSURING RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND DATA QUALITY

Preceding sections have presented strategies for gathering and analysing the case study data. The remaining section of this chapter will focus on justifying the research strategy and its administration as well as the procedures employed for ensuring the integrity of the data generated. In doing so it will also articulate identified methodological limitations.

Justification for the Design, Methodology and Administration

The purpose of this thesis was to examine current exemplars of networked arrangements to determine their variation and the effect of this on network design and management and the role of central agencies of government. In doing so, this thesis used a multiple case study constructed from both qualitative and quantitative data, coupled with network analysis to explain network variation, identify network management strategies and determine a role for central agencies in networked arrangements. The strength of this mixed mode research design was that it enabled a detailed description of the function, operation and relationships of the three human service networks as well as providing a
structural model of their linkages as a basis for cross-case comparison and contrast.

Additionally, the use of multiple cases afforded the development of theory building. Multiple cases also increased the methodological rigor of the study by “strengthening the precision, the validity and stability of the findings” (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 29 Yin, 1994:45), and enabled successful theory testing (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994: 24; Yin, 1994).

**Data Quality and Integrity**

Other strategies used to satisfy the cannons of data quality such as reliability, validity and confirmability (Miles and Huberman, 1984, 1994; Patton, 1987) included the full transcribing of interviews and focus groups, the use of an interview schedule and broader case study protocol to guide the overall research implementation, the extensive use of member checking through a regular process of reporting-back to respondents and a chain of evidence linking the raw data to the research findings. Further, the establishment of a Research Reference Group comprising senior public servants and academics provided a forum for both reflection and peer challenge both of which aided the stance of objectivity and provided a method of overcoming threats to research validity. Finally, multiple sources of data (focus group, interviews, questionnaire and documentation) and multiple methods (case study, network analysis and quantitative data analysis) were used as a mechanism to expose the researcher to a range of views and data as a basis for confirming results and identifying conflicting results for further exploration (Denzin, 1984; Patton, 1987).

However, despite the careful attention to research integrity and data quality, it is acknowledged that all research methods have their limitations. In the context of the current study it is important to acknowledge a number of limitations of the methodology that may impact on the interpretation of the data and therefore the final results of the research.

**Limitations of the Methodology**

The first consideration centres on the researcher’s prior experience within the Queensland human services arena as both a senior public servant and community welfare practitioner. This has afforded advanced ‘entry’ to the
networks as well as a level of respondent disclosure that might not have been made available to researchers without this background. The primary concern in regard to this association with the respondent groups is the potential for ‘capture’. In this instance capture refers to the potential for the researcher to move outside the required neutral position to become part of the network itself, thus shifting from a professional to a friendship relationship. The impact of this relationship is twofold. First, there is potential for the project to be presented in a more positive tone, or for respondents to provide the type of responses they think the researcher is seeking. Second, the researcher may accept statements as being true and not pursue alternative considerations.

In this thesis, following the recommendations of both Fenno (1990) and Rhodes (2001) the potential for ‘capture’ or ‘over rapport’ and the associated loss of objectivity has been addressed through a concerted effort on the part of the researcher to remain neutral and distanced from the processes. A meticulous recording of case notes, the full transcript of all interviews and focus groups, and the use of a research diary and Research Reference Group to encourage reflection and self criticism have enhanced this search for distance and objectivity. Nevertheless, since the primary data are subjective and the research deals with the perceptions of respondents, these may be at variance with the actual state of affairs. These reservations should be borne in mind.

While the qualitative data gathering process tracked the progress of the networks over the research period, the quantitative methods, that is, the questionnaire and the network linkage survey, were only administered at one time period. This limits the understanding of the network structure to almost a snapshot of what can actually be a very fluid set of relationships and restricts generalisation (John and Cole, 1998). Further, it limits the ability to make ‘over time’ cross-case comparisons. Reviewing records over a longer period of time as well as periodic attendance at network meetings in part compensated for this limitation. Thus, the one snapshot has been supplemented by an analysis of efforts over a longer period of time.

The selection of the SIP Team as the bounded network unit of analysis omitted the peripheral groups associated with its operation. To accommodate this, the case study report and empirical findings of the research were presented to wider gatherings of the SIP membership, including in particular the Peer Review Group arising from the Graduate Certificate Course, for confirmation and discussion. As
part of the process of review, participants provided written feedback on the presentation, the resonance of the findings with their experiences of the SIP process and its application to their broader work. Overwhelmingly, the Peer Review Group rated the presentation as representing an accurate reflection of the SIP case.

Another consideration relates to the fluid nature of the public sector and in particular the human services arena in Queensland (Marston et al., 2000; Lang, 2002). During the period of the research the sector was subject to considerable personnel and organisational change, affecting primarily the Reconnect Network and to a lesser extent the SIP Network (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). This resulted in changes in the network membership. While the timing of personnel changes in network membership is beyond the control of the researcher, it nevertheless is a consideration as it may have impacted on the nature of the network formation, and operation and therefore the analysis.

Finally, while network analysis has a long history, it is nonetheless an unfolding area of research that is continually being shaped and reshaped by ongoing advances in the computer technologies and programs used to map and measure the networks. One such emergent and relatively untested program is Linkage Analysis, which is incorporated within the SAS (Version 8), software program. This program was used to measure and map the three sets of network variables. Link Analysis was used in this thesis primarily because it allowed the various strengths of the ties between agencies to be differentiated through a colour coding process. Given relatively unknown status of Linkage Analysis as an instrument of network analysis it was supplemented by a limited application of UCINET (Version 5/6) to crosscheck and verify the network maps and analytical results (Borgatti, Everett and Freeman, 1999).

**TOWARD THE NETWORK CASE STUDIES FINDINGS**

This chapter has explained and justified the research design and methodology adopted for this thesis. In building the case studies the primary research tools used included a questionnaire, focus groups and semi-structured interviews as well as documentary sources. The construction of the networks was achieved by gathering of socio-metric data included within the questionnaire.
Drawing on the qualitative and quantitative data generated through the administration of the methodology, the next three chapters report on the findings generated from the methodology set out in this chapter. Each chapter includes one of the three case studies. The first part of each chapter provides an overview of the context in which these networks are located, describes the operational level at which the networks are situated and identifies characteristics of network membership and organisational demographics. Each chapter also utilises the empirical data to develop a descriptive and structural overview of each of the three network case studies and analyses this formation. Chapter Eight draws together the findings for each of the case studies, demonstrates the differences between the networked arrangements and explains the reasons for their variation. The understandings and experiences of network members of integration constructs, their strategic application and the emerging role of central agencies of government in networked environments are also discussed in Chapter Eight.
CHAPTER FIVE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS’ HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduction

The first case study network, the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee (CEO’s Committee) is located at the institutional or policy level of the social strata. It is therefore focused on broad scale policy issues that require active top-level involvement because they have the influence and power through mandate to implement public policy changes across vertical and horizontal axes. As one Chief Executive Officer described it, this group has a ‘helicopter view’ of the issues confronting society and therefore can ‘oversee the implementation of whole-of-government responses down through the tiers of government’ (Interview, 25 January, 2002).

The Chief Executive Officers’ Committee is comprised of eleven members of which 40% are female and 60 % are male. Their educational background shows that they have achieved a high standard of educational attainment as 80% have obtained a postgraduate degree in their field. The age profile is consistent with this level of organisational authority with most in the age bracket 40-50 (70%), and the remainder (30%) in the 51-60 year category. The mean/average time per month allocated to the Committee by members was two days per month, with 50% spending one day or less, and 40% spending between one and three days per month on network activities. Only the Committee Chair claimed that they spent more than three days per month on the network. With an average participation period of 21.6 months, the membership of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee presents as stable. It should be noted that some respondents included their participation time in an earlier version of the Committee thus slightly inflating the average involvement period. Nevertheless, even with adjustments resulting in an average participation period of 18 months, the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee still presents as a stable grouping of public sector personnel.
Table 1: Chief Executive Officers' Committee Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Time in Network (total network age = 2 years)</th>
<th>Days per month spent on network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female 40%</td>
<td>41-50 70%</td>
<td>Year 12 10%</td>
<td>&lt; 1 year 40%</td>
<td>&lt; 1 day 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 60%</td>
<td>51-60 30%</td>
<td>U/grad 10%</td>
<td>1-2 years 40%</td>
<td>1-2 days 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P/grad 80%</td>
<td>2-3 years 10%</td>
<td>2-3 days 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 3 years 10%</td>
<td>3-4 days 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The history of the formation of the Chief Executive Officers' Committee indicates that there have been two different iterations of the network over a period of five years, with the most recent formation occurring in mid 2001. These differences are accounted for by the changing context and expectations of public sector management and shifted the Committee from a largely informal process of operation to a highly structured and vertically integrated arrangement.

Background to Formation: First Iteration of Chief Executive Officers' Human Service Committee

Queensland has a well-developed system of human service provision that is considered to have met the needs of the community in providing quality services (Roach, 1999; Walsh, 2000). Increasingly, though, the services have been charged as being fragmented, duplicative, inefficient and ineffective (GSD, 2000a). The traditional government departmental structures and the accountability models that drive them are seen to be a significant barrier to integration, thus preventing more effective service delivery.

In recognition of these problems a need to develop a coherent policy and service delivery framework that travels from the centre to the furthest regions of the public sector has become a pre-eminent consideration with the current Queensland Government (Menzies, 2002). Consequently, like many other jurisdictions both nationally and internationally, the call for integrated service delivery is an important one across a range of different government service delivery systems. In response to this the Queensland Government has adopted an interest in integrated, whole-of-government policy development and service delivery (Fitzgerald, 2000; Marston et al, 2000; Musumeci, 2002). As one respondent observed of the situation:
While it is not a crisis – you could almost liken it to a critical point in development. … There is a need for a new way of working; more collegiate; more horizontal and more whole-of-government (Interview, 19 December 2001).

In recognition of the need for both horizontal and vertical integration at the highest levels of the public service, the first Chief Executive Officers’ Committee was formed in 1998. This initiative arose from the Human Services Cabinet Committee and was titled the Chief Executive Officers’ (Steering) Committee and its role was to provide support to the Human Services Cabinet Committee.

This initial body comprised the ten government departments with broad responsibility for human service policy and delivery - the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care (now Department of Families); Department of Premier and Cabinet; Queensland Health; Education Queensland; Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Development and Department of Equity and Fair Trading; Department of Housing; Department of Emergency Services; Department of Corrective Services; Queensland Police Service; Queensland Treasury as well as a number of ‘departmental observers’. The Chief Executive Officers’ (CEO) Committee on Human Services had broad responsibility for the progressing human services provision in Queensland in a more integrated manner and reporting this to Cabinet (DPC, 1999). Thus its operational charter centred on bringing the collective knowledge and influence of Chief Executive Officers to bear on key policy issues within the human services arena. This was a whole-of-government initiative that had the potential to link government agencies in the human services sector (Walsh, 2000).

Integration Through Networking

The Human Service Cabinet Committee only met a few times resulting in a dislocation of the activities of the two groups and a reduction of direct authority for the Human Services Steering Committee. In view of the loss of direct Cabinet authority, in discharging its responsibilities the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee, although still receiving secretariat support from the Social Policy Unit of Department of Premier and Cabinet, adopted a largely informal process centred predominantly on information sharing and discussion and the development of overall perspectives. On this it was stated: “It developed a life of its own” (Interview, 8 November 2001). This process was described as “an informal network” (Interview, 11 March 2002). Most respondents considered the
emphasis on sharing information and developing a bigger picture of the issues to be a useful aspect of this initial Chief Executive Officers' Committee. As one participant respondent reflected, the first version of the Chief Executive Officers' Committee was:

…focused largely on information sharing from different Chief Executive Officers, if they felt they wanted to bring something to the table to share and discuss. Also there were a number of key policy initiatives the Families Department were progressing through government at the time and [they] used that forum to keep their Human Services' Chief Executive Officer colleagues informed (Interview, 12 February 2002).

The dominant view was that the discussions and 'informal networking' that took place between Chief Executive Officers was useful and helped to create an understanding of the differing organisational domains and improved relations between Chief Executive Officers. This is exemplified in the following statement:

The last Chief Executive Officers’ Committee was very good because it did actually make an effort to get a meta-picture of a social policy framework. There was an allergic reaction by some to that... Who saw it as not being practical and that explains the tension you have between those who want to be entirely operational and have no big picture and those that want a big picture and see only operational outputs being delivered (Interview, 22 January 2002).

Thus the early Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services (Steering) Committee was generally seen in a positive light by most members and the broader public sector as an “… important opportunity to gain high-level policy leadership on developing more integrated approaches to human service delivery” (Walsh, 2000: 21).

The research identified alternative views or perspectives on the benefits of the Committee. For example, the issue of informality and the lack of structure identified above as positive was also seen as problematic by some members. Indeed, the informality and generalised 'big-picture' discussions characteristic of its operation were considered by at least two members to represent merely a 'talk-fest' (Interview, 7 February 2002). This view is further exemplified as follows:

I sat in on the previous incarnation [of the committee] and it was a waste of space. It was a ‘talk-fest’ – it did not achieve anything…. (Interview, 4 February 2002).
Some Committee members as well as senior departmental officers also identified concerns about the potential for Chief Executive Officers in this forum to ‘overstep their mark’ and become involved in making policy rather than implementing it. The reason for this concern was stated thus:

Cabinet was worried that Chief Executive Officers were developing policy, which is not their role. Policy development was [is] the role of Cabinet (Interview, 8 November 2001).

Participation in the first CEO Committee was also described as ‘fluid’. That is, while there was a regular core of attendees, a review of the minutes of meetings reveals that there were a number of members whose presence was irregular. The rationale for this fluidity of participation was explained as follows: “Often the Chief Executive Officers would base their decision to attend, or send a deputy, depending on the expected presence of the Director-General of Premier and Cabinet” (Interview, 8 November 2001). This suggested that the commitment of some Chief Executive Officers to cross-sector work was at best strategic and at worst, as one member described the process, ‘bordering on superficial’ (Interview, 19 December 2001). Nevertheless, despite the sporadic attendance by Chief Executive Officers the fact that deputies were sent indicates that there was commitment to the concept. The resultant instability of core membership, however, made the development of a cohesive group problematic.

Thus, despite being perceived as ‘very valuable committees to have in place’ (8 November, 2001) and ‘very useful in principle’ (Interview, 7 February 2002) there were a number of reservations about the operation and effectiveness of the initial Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee. These concerns were summarised by the statement below:

First, they did not cover all the activities of government that really needed to be targeted from a whole-of-government perspective. Secondly, they were not outcomes focused. They were more ‘talk-fests’. They were not really accountable to anybody and they didn’t include all the Chief Executive Officers. And, lastly, they were not related to anything that was on the government’s specific agenda (Interview 7 February 2002).

In view of these concerns at the end of 2000, the Policy Division within the Department of Premier and Cabinet prepared a Briefing Paper on the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee on Human Services. In effect this report acknowledged the benefits of the CEO Committee in terms of bringing together
“like department heads’ to work in a more integrated, collegiate manner”, but noted that the current system was “ineffective”, and, in particular that the “committee was not focused or targeted in its work program” (Interview, 8 November 2001; Interview, 7 February 2002). Above all there was a view that the Chief Executive Officers Committee was not linked to the priorities of government. This position is explained:

There was a big issue of effectiveness. Most CEO committees were working on low grade or low level issues rather than the high-level policy considerations that government was interested in. There was a sense that this was a waste of time and effort at such a level. The focus was to be on outcomes. Where were the outcomes? (Interview, 8 November 2001).

At around the same time the government reduced its seven priorities to five broad based issues (Menzies, 2002). This effort changed the focus away from an emphasis on silos to a more integrated and crosscutting approach. Following the establishment of the five government priorities, in July 2001 the Queensland Cabinet also approved the formation of five Chief Executive Officers’ Committees as ‘a key coordination mechanism for the term of government and as a step towards creating a sophisticated collaborative model of strategic policy development and service delivery focusing on the achievement of the five Queensland Government Priorities’ (DPC, 2001; SectorWide, 2001; Menzies, 2002; Musumeci, 2002). Subsequently the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees formed around the five government priorities (Menzies, 2002; O’Farrell, 2002). The Human Services Committee was to take the place of the previously established committee. Menzies (2002) outlined the tasks of the Chief Executive Officer Committees:

The five Committees – Human Services, Governance, Law and Justice, Employment, Economic Development and Infrastructure, and Land and Resources – have been tasked with managing and progressing the whole-of-government elements of the Queensland Government Priorities in relation to its policy area (Menzies, 2002: 26).

In addition to this initial cluster of committees, a Chief Executive Officers’ Committee centred on progressing the Cape York Indigenous Community’s initiatives was established based on the growing awareness of the importance of this issue across all state government departments (Fitzgerald, 2001).
The whole-of-government agenda of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees was based on a desire to break down agency barriers and gain a greater appreciation of the issues and contributions of other providers. The expectation was the development of more holistic and effective policy and service delivery solutions. The underpinning emphasis of such whole-of-government initiatives was articulated by O’Farrell (2002):

> The feature of this Queensland initiative is that it is clearly designed to encourage individual Chief Executive Officers to focus on the whole of government agenda; to understand the linkages between the work of their agencies and the work of others (O’Farrell, 2002: 6).

It was observed that the existence of Chief Executive Officers’ Committees was “a tacit acknowledgement that other [vertical] forms of coordination were not effective or sufficient” (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001). That is, the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee was formed with the intention of establishing both horizontal and vertical linkages and using these to develop and drive integrated responses through the human services arena. What this signalled was that government at the highest levels was now setting an agenda that introduced new and different ways of working that relied as much on the horizontal as the vertical lines of authority. As one respondent commented:

> The government has set priorities. There is not a hope in hell of achieving these without working together. So, more than ever, the challenge is to find ways to work better together (Interview, 30 April 2002).

A significant component of this ‘new way of working’ was not only structural in terms of formation of a crosscutting Chief Executive Officers’ Committee but also around development of relationships as linkage mechanisms. Therefore, from the perspective of the respondents the rationale for the formation of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees was to:

> Bring groups together so that they get a better understanding from a whole-of-government perspective ... exactly where they stand and what is required of them (interview, 7 February 2002).

The move to the integration of service provision was driven by a set of circumstances in the international context that represented a significantly different set of factors informing the change process (6 et al, 1999, 2002; Edwards, 2000). This trend translated to the local environment through a demand for more
seamless services, greater citizen participation and the recognition of the knowledge and expertise that external stakeholders could bring to government policy development and service decision-making (GSD, 2000 a & b; SectorWide 2002). However, the drivers of change also incorporated a broader range of concerns relating to financial, structural arrangements and failure of local program-based initiatives as well as a clear mandate for change emanating from the vertical axis of government.

Drivers for the Second Iteration

The Chief Executive Officers’ interviews identified increasingly restrained budgets, growing expectations and the failure of single agency approaches to deal with complex social problems as providing the underpinning conditions for the move toward more integrated and horizontal service delivery. The following statement exemplifies this situation:

You have got increasingly sophisticated interventions and the cost of those and you have got public expectations... the demands on government services and the expectations by the community and our [government agencies] capacity fiscally and in other ways to actually respond is an increasing challenge (Interview, 21 February 2002).

These reasons for the move to networked based modes of policy development and service delivery were also reflected in the Chief Executive Officers’ responses to the questionnaire which specifically asked them to identify the reasons that their agency was involved in the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee. Respondents were given a list of 16 possible factors to rate using a five-point scale to indicate the reason for network involvement (1 = almost never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and 5 = almost always). Table 2 sets out the full range of drivers and the rating identified by respondents for the movement to the revised operational model for the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees. The top eight responses establish that the core drivers form around the identification of a need for systems change, building relationships, more responsive structures, improved financial dividends, an improved emphasis on client service delivery as well as a mandate for networked action.
Table 2: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Network Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Network Involvement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical situation requiring joint effort</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn from others/share information</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required by mandate</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service needs of clients</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/financial pressures</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve efficiency</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource scarcity</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value joint effort</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of agency</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract requirements</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain legitimacy</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar beliefs and methods of service delivery</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside pressure</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habit/tradition</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location/proximity</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal friendship/social interaction</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This particular constellation of drivers indicate that expectations for the formation and operation of a network at the highest level of public sector revolved around perceptions that the fragmentation of the sector had evolved into a critical situation requiring increased integration through new ways of working. Other key reasons for the move to more horizontal modes of operation included a desire to improve the service needs of their clients and the desire to work more collaboratively, as well as recognition of increasing scarcity of resources. Although clearly aware of the need to work together the Chief Executive Officers were also cognisant that this has traditionally not been easy to achieve. One respondent identified the adherence of a ‘siloed’ culture as a contributing factor:

I think that the whole culture of the public sector Chief Executive Officers is that there is still a very strong motivation for ‘turf’. I think that it is still a bit mechanical (Interview, 19 December 2001).

For others, the barrier to more horizontal ways of working centred on the entrenched systems and processes for government operation. For example, it was stated:
But I don’t see any major revolution in service delivery at this stage and I think that is because there are significant gaps in the way things are done – systems processes in the public service continue to be what they have always been – departments with people reporting in a bureaucratic way to senior officers and there are no parallel structures and systems and processes that are developed in any sort of robust way at a cross-government level (Interview, 4 February 2002).

However, while the Chief Executive Officers identified a range of different drivers for networked action there was unanimous agreement from this group of interview respondents that the imperative to push through these impediments and move beyond ‘superficial coordination’ was provided by the Premier’s desire to establish a coherent and consistent service integration model to provide seamless and effective services to the community. This clear and unambiguous mandate to integrate was evident in the majority of interview responses from the Chief Executive Officers. The following statement provides an example of the Chief Executive Officers’ understanding of the rationale for this more collective approach to service delivery:

The main reason or rationale for the formation of the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee was the desire of the Premier who wants all Chief Executives to work together to deliver the Government’s Priorities (Interview, 22 January 2001)

The realisation of the need to break through the traditional siloed approach and work in more strategically joined-up ways was also clear:

Clearly the Premier and Cabinet are of the view that agencies all very much operate as single silos – operate as ‘fiefdoms’. They don’t operate as natural cluster groups. It is the usual territorial thing where when we do work together with others … it is not in any structured sense. Not with any common goals in mind, with common ends in mind (Interview, 7 February 2002).

Along similar lines, the following respondent contended that while the Premier drove the agenda, the integration mechanism was reliant on achieving more effective relationships and breaking down the barriers between participating departments:

The Premier wanted to ensure he had effective collaboration and coordination between the Chief Executive Officers based on the government’s policy agenda that agencies were working together to contribute to the achievement of the government’s policy agenda in various areas (Interview, 21 January 2002).
It was also identified that the Premier’s views were reflected in the actions in of the principal policy agency of the public sector, the Department of Premier and Cabinet. This body was concerned that the fragmented nature of the sector required a network structure to bring together the threads of the public service to achieve common goals. For some respondents the strong directive role of the principal policy agency was evident:

… through its impassioned control of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees it [the Department of Premier and Cabinet] is seeking to control this particular whole-of-government agenda (Interview, 8 May 2002).

In this way, it is apparent that although there were clearly a range of drivers toward a more integrated and seamless public service sector, the Premier’s sponsoring of this agenda presented as a significant incentive. The Premier’s demand for a joined-up service sector starting with the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees was perhaps best demonstrated in his statement to the newly formed Chief Executive Officers’ Committees. The Premier stated that: “the rewards with this government lie with working together, not in the individual interests of the departments” (cited in Menzies 2002: 26).

**Vertical Integration: Mandate and Structured Procedures**

In view of this imprimatur, the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee gained a greater legitimacy and operational authority to progress the whole of government agenda. Along with a realisation of the need to build horizontal relationships, strong vertical links afforded by the close association with the Premier and Cabinet also contributed to consolidate power and direction. One respondent recognised the influence of these vertical links on leveraging outcomes:

It was strongly supported by the government. It has direct links to Cabinet. Cabinet endorses the plans and monitors outcomes (Interview, 7 February 2002).

Another respondent identified the authority and formalisation of process that comes with vertical integration:

I suspect and believe they have become more targeted in operation, more formalised in operations – having plans and timelines for action and designated leaders around areas of responsibility. It is now a well laid out process ... Because of
this and its strong links to Cabinet it has gained a higher priority and greater legitimacy (Interview, 21 January 2002).

In this way, the tight links to the highest levels of government accompanied by the authority located within the Chief Executive Officers provided a key integrating mechanism. This top down approach indicates control by authority is understood and used by government when there is an imperative to bring together disparate agencies and stakeholders. Direction by mandate provides a clear rationale for what is expected and also guides the agenda for the way in which the network is structured and operated. Direction setting characterised by tight agendas, structured reporting and strong accountability requirements were used to both achieve the Premier’s goal of integrated service provision and aligning with whole of government priorities but also to ensure that the network operated in a way consistent with traditional public services structures and ethos. The specific network management techniques and integration mechanisms utilised by the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee are set out in the following section.

**Managing the Network: Integrating Mechanisms**

With the establishment of the new Chief Executive Officers’ Committees including the re-establishment of the Human Services Chief Executive Officers' Committee, new terms of reference and new operating procedures were put in place. These terms of reference were much more focused on integrating around the whole of government priorities rather than focusing on emergent issues as previously occurred. The Committees now report through the Premier directly to Cabinet, thus strengthening the existing vertical links between these two bodies. From the documentation available and the respondent interviews it was apparent that this was to be a very different way of working than the previous model. One Chief Executive Officer identified the higher level of expectation attached to this new mode of operation stating:

… the Premier made it very clear that performance would be assessed not only on how they ran their agencies but on how well we performed at a higher order level in our involvement in the networks – the cluster groups (Interview, 7 February 2002).

The Committee Chair is appointed by the Premier and Cabinet, thus giving the Chair authority and legitimacy to direct and manage but does not allow leadership to emerge though the network dynamics and peer selection. Further, the
composition of the Committees is signed off by Cabinet and at the outset the Committees had to submit project plans with clear outcomes and deliverables for a 12-month time frame. As a further accountability mechanism, the Chairs of each committee report back to Cabinet on their project plans on a three-month basis. In addition a Senior Officers’ Working Group has been allocated to each Committee to develop the work plans. The Department of Premier and Cabinet (Social Policy Unit) provides the secretariat function for the Committee and chairs the officer level working parties. These arrangements signal a highly structured process that resides in the ‘shadow of the bureaucracy’ (Scharpf, 1978). Indeed, the point that the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees were formed to meet government’s priorities was made obvious in the following statement:

These were not to be agendas driven by bureaucrats but agendas set by Cabinet (Interview, 7 February 2002).

The revised process was described as a structured and organised set of activities and processes designed to achieve specific outcomes over set timeframes. Formalised plans and timelines were the vehicles for achieving set goals and, importantly, to remain focused on demonstrating progress toward those set goals (Interview, 21 January 2002; Interview, 14 February 2002). One interviewee set out the process:

We came up with a certain number of priority issues that we wanted to work on. We put them into priority order and got Cabinet to tell us which they wanted addressed. We then set project timelines for each of those three priority areas. And then under that we have working groups that report to us (Interview, 7 February 2002).

Another respondent commented on the effectiveness of the tight management process and attributed the more focused effort on the Committee’s enhanced status:

I suspect and believe that it has become more targeted in its operation, more formalised in its operation – having plans and timelines for actions and designated leaders around areas of responsibility. It is now a well laid out process … Because of this and its strong link to Cabinet it has gained a higher priority and greater credibility (Interview, 21 January 2002).

The efficiency of the more focused and formalised approach in terms of working toward achieving the government's priorities was also identified:
And I think that having the CEO Committee structure makes it easier to do that. We probably would have done it anyway but because we meet monthly at the same time and same place and the whole agenda setting process is very formalised, very rigorous, it is very likely that we will undertake these tasks more efficiently (Interview, 14 February 2002).

The comments indicate that the difference between the early incarnation of the Committee and the new version relates to the Premier’s mandate but also significant is the highly formalised way of operating, the tight linking of plans to outcomes though timelines, the monitoring role of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the tying of cross-sector performance to salary payments.

**Horizontal Integration: Relationship Building**

In addition to the strong emphasis on hierarchical or vertical integration mechanisms there was also recognition that enhanced horizontal relationships would contribute improved cross-sector experiences and outcomes. This was to be fostered by way of a requirement for all Chief Executive Officers to participate in more than one Chief Executive Officers’ Committee (Interview, 7 February 2002). However, most Chief Executive Officers also expressed a strong emphasis on the importance of relationship building. For example, it was stated: “Interpersonal relationships are critical to the success of these emerging cross-department and cross-sector network arrangements” (Interview, 21 February 2002). On the results of this emphasis on improving relationships between Chief Executive Officers it was stated:

Certainly there are much better relationships. Not that there was a poor relationship before but there is a better understanding if you like of each others’ business through participating in the Chief Executive Officers’ network and that in turn has led to stronger relationships between people and a greater sense of trust to be able to work in a more collaborative way (Interview, 19 December 2001).

Respondents acknowledged the impact of the improved horizontal relationships for achieving greater cooperation between agencies. For example, it was stated:

I think that at the senior levels of the public service there are far better relationships…. And I think that they are relationships that would not have been there otherwise. I think that there are now more cooperative activities around and I can nominate a couple that … that are small-scale examples of success (Interview, 25 January 2002).
The Chief Executive Officers’ responses to the survey question asking them to identify key linkage mechanisms indicated that participation in working parties at one hundred percent (100%) and ongoing liaison at ninety percent (90%), were important integration mechanisms. It was generally considered that the regular process of meetings was a significant contributor to the ‘breaking down of the turf barriers between organisations’. Indeed, seventy percent (70%) of respondents identified regular meetings as a key linkage mechanism for the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee. On this it was stated: “Meeting monthly allows a level of familiarity to develop … and you develop a much better collegiate approach to understanding where each department is coming from” (Interview, 21 February, 2002). The full array of linkage mechanisms identified by the Chief Executive Officers in the questionnaire are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Linkage Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linkage Mechanisms</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in working parties</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing liaison between network members</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings of network</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in reference groups</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination committees</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well developed rules and procedures</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular telephone contact between members</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong lateral communication</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal meetings between members</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in joint ventures/programming</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops to develop mutual implementation strategies</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences to discuss issues &amp; set direction</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in joint case management</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication mostly directed downwards</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The questionnaire results indicate that, while activities associated with relationship building were important linkage mechanisms, these initiatives mainly took the form of more conventional, or institutional, processes associated with roles and responsibilities rather than interpersonal relationships. While the network exhibits strong formality there is nevertheless a perception of stronger relationships formed through ongoing and regular attendance at meetings, working on projects and through participation at the Regional Forums. These underpinning and emerging interpersonal relationships have begun to provide cohesion around ideals and tasks.

In addition to the more traditional mechanisms for developing relationships one respondent identified the unintended positive consequence of the Community Cabinet Forums as a relationship building opportunity for the Chief Executive Officers. Specifically it was stated:

I think the Community Cabinet Meetings would actually be the biggest unintended benefit in that there is a much better relationship generated by the Chief Executive Officers by the fact that we all come together ... to listen to what the community has got to say. We all go to the Chief Executive Officers’ dinner and all that sort of stuff. .... It’s been very good because there has been a dialogue and a shared understanding of what it means to be in the Queensland government and I think that has been very, very good. I don’t think that it was specifically intended or planned. It just emerged through the Premier’s decision that all Directors-Generals were to attend the Community Cabinet meetings (Interview, 22 January 2002).

There were some respondents who were less positive about the ability of Chief Executive Officers to build improved relationships through the existing structures and processes. On this one respondent noted:

There is no culture. No relational culture. So what you are dealing with in your committee structure ... is a structural response, you do not have a relational response (Interview, 19 December 2001).

Along a similar line another respondent indicated that the formalised processes of meetings, with their tight agendas and timelines worked against the relationship building and undermined the value of cross-agency working. From this perspective the current integration arrangements, rather than being based on interpersonal relationships and mutual concerns and goals, were seen to be:
... based on formal positions that people take to meetings—there isn’t that exploration—there is not the time for it—and in my head I still see it as an appendage. I am not saying that is how it should be—I am just describing what I see (Interview, 4 February 2002).

Although acknowledging that the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee process had engendered enhanced relations between participants, there was almost unanimous agreement by respondents that it was at the lower level working groups that the more productive working relationships would be forged. As one respondent commented: “The implementation team is probably where the ‘teas and biscuit’ relationships will happen”. This was considered to be partly because these groups would have more time to establish relationships. On the benefits of these multiple linkages it was stated:

This [new Chief Executive Officer process] has strengthened the Chief Executive Officers’ network across the human service agencies. And, in turn, by establishing a Senior Officers’ Group—who basically do the work—I think that it basically strengthens that network of relationships as well as across the agencies. That’s not to say that a network was not there previously but that this is an impetus for making it more formalised or more of a priority for its development (Interview, 14 February 2002).

The existence and positive impact of networks beyond the higher levels of government was also identified:

I certainly think that at the senior levels of the public service there are far better relationships. How far that extends throughout the system I don’t know. But I suspect that it extends fairly extensively. It is not only CEO Committees that are in existence now, there are various networks including Working Groups and Regional Managers’ Forums and so on. And I think that there are relationships there that would not have been otherwise. And I can see there are some cooperative activities around … (Interview, 4 February 2002).

This approach demonstrates the value of linking together the vertical and horizontal axes of government. The strength of this approach centres on the convergence of the two axes and the location directly on the vertical arm between Cabinet and the line agencies. Changes over time indicate that while the relationship capital established through the horizontal aspect of the initial committee remained to help mould exchanges, the vertical axis was brought into play to make sure there were identified outcomes. Anchoring the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee more closely to the vertical axis meant that it took on
structures and processes associated with directed coordinative endeavours. Thus, in adopting more formalised structural arrangements it could be said that the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee moved it from mainly a networking arrangement to a coordination network.

**From Networking to Networks**

Consistent with the literature, which has discussed the variegated and shifting composition of public sector networked arrangements (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998; Considine, 2001; 2002; Mandell and Steelman, forthcoming), the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee has demonstrated a changing composition and purpose over time. These changes represent a movement along the integration continuum from a loosely connected process to a more tightly linked set of arrangements. Specifically, when compared to the Integration Continuum developed in Chapter One, it can be seen that the first version of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee with its emphasis on loose linkages, informal arrangements, information sharing and broad focus and the fact that it was not linked strongly vertically, represents a networking arrangement. However, as the government’s requirements changed and it became necessary to have more formality around structures and relationships, tighter linkages both vertically and horizontally, and specified plans and reporting processes, the form changed to a network arrangement. On the critical difference between the former Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Steering Committee and the new Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee, a respondent noted:

> So, there was a big difference. It was a fairly loose and informal network previously. There is now a lot more structure around it (Interview, 7 February 2002).

Acknowledging the increased formality and structure of the committee another respondent expanded:

> The approved structure has afforded a degree of formality to what had previously been a largely informal network with defined reporting structures and agendas (Interview, 14 February 2002).

The closer involvement of the Department of Premier and Cabinet in the administration and operation of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee was also noted:
It is a very structured process now that a central agency is more intricately involved (Interview, 21 January 2002).

The interview responses therefore demonstrate that the Chief Executive Officers were able to identify the changes in the focus and operation of the two Committees and were broadly able to locate them as occupying different positions on a continuum moving from loose, informal arrangements to increasing formalisation and structure, including a more centralised and directive administrative process. However, although able to identify the shift in operation of the two versions of the Chief Executive Officers' Committee from largely informal to a more formalised, structured process, at least two members questioned whether such a formalised process could constitute a network which, in their view, was understood as consisting of informal measures of integration. On this it was observed:

I would see issues such as the Chief Executive Officers' Human Services Committee as a more formalised structure – not so much a network. I mean it was established by Cabinet, it has terms of reference established by Cabinet, it reports on a six monthly basis to Cabinet. So I think the general understanding of networks is that they are a far more ill-defined and fluid group then say a Chief Executive Officers’ Committee (Interview, 13 May 2002).

Further, the formality that came to define the new committee’s mode of operating was also seen as contrary to the perceived notions of networking:

When you move into this Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services stuff and not just at the committee level but also at the working party level and all the rest of it – its not really networking arrangements – it's all very formal …I think at Central Office level while we might talk about networks people sit on fairly formalised working parties and well, I think the word network is used – but I am not sure that it really is a network as such (Interview, 4 February 2002).

The expectation for informality and fluidity in networked arrangements was also highlighted in the following comment:

Otherwise they cease to be a network. So the Human Services Committee that exists … is very formalised. I mean we have got terms of reference set by Cabinet; we have got reporting times set by Cabinet, our establishment approved by Cabinet. That is not a network …that is a formalised government structure….. Networking is a far more fluid and less structured process. But it can emerge from formality (Interview, 13 May 2002).
Nevertheless it was agreed by all respondents that the conceptualisation behind the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee was based as much on the value of horizontal integration principles or relationship building as the vertical emphasis on plans and control.

The interview data indicates that network members recognised that a shift occurred in the relationships and structures in the committee from loose, informal linkages to more formalised and structured relationships and processes. This change occurred because of the desire of the Premier to demonstrate a whole-of-government approach to human services planning. This shift from networking to a network occurred because of a specific policy instruction rather than as an evolutionary process and shows that a mandate can be a significant driver of network formation. However, it is argued that in this case the move to a network was responding to a specific external influence rather than the application of a systematic method for determining structure and process.

The changing nature and function of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee from a loose arrangement to a formal and structured mechanism is consistent with the shift from networking to a network on the Integration Continuum. Network analysis provides a visual representation of the structure of the relationships and presents as a way of confirming this diagnosis of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee (Milward and Provan, 1998; Cross et al, 2002). The next section presents the network analyses of the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee around key identified integration variables.

**Network Analysis: Confirming Network Diagnosis**

Using the questionnaire data generated from the Linkage Survey (Questions 14 and 15), a set of graphs, or network maps were constructed to demonstrate the extent to which each agency in the network surveyed was connected to every other agency through each of the linkage relationships of shared information, joint funding, service contract, joint program planning, contact referrals and participation in reference groups and working parties. Set out in Figures 3 to 9, these network ‘maps’ provide a visual representation of the strength of the linkage relationships and therefore the network structure for each of the network variables for the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee. Although only ten of the possible twelve members of the Chief Executive Committee provided formal linkage responses, since the remaining two were reported on by
members it was possible to establish a linkage pattern between all Committee members.

For ease of analysis the linkages between the network nodes (organisations) have been colour coded such that red is associated with between eight (8) and fifteen (15) linkages and represents the highest level of interaction; blue, with between three (3) and eight (8), the middle level of linkage and green the lowest level of linkage with between one (1) and three (3) connections between nodes. Additionally, to protect the confidentiality of the network members and their organisations the network nodes have been coded.

Figure 3: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee - Shared Information

The picture of the shared information network is comprised of all red, strong information links. This indicates that there was a high level of information sharing between all network members. However, although all Chief Executive Officers were clearly involved in the sharing of information, the map shows that there is a group of seven network members clustered more closely together at the centre of the network. This suggests that these agencies were more active and intense in their information sharing than the four agencies located on the network’s boundary.
The second network linkage variable of joint funding displayed only two red or strong linkages between three agencies. Agency N23, acts as the linkage point between the three agencies suggesting that it has a mediating role of some type and acts as a conduit for other organisations. The bulk of the remaining linkages are blue, medium and green, weak connections, with the blue linkages dominating and agencies involved in these medium intensity links clustered more closely together. At least two of the green links are clearly outside the cluster indicating that these are loosely connected. This configuration demonstrates that there is a medium degree of density around joint funding, which is an indicator of coordination.
Figure 5: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee – Service Contracts

With respect to the third network variable, service contracts, the network analysis process has produced a network picture that is comprised predominantly of blue links between the agencies, with some green and only three red connections. This would indicate that service contracting is a moderate feature of the network and where it does occur node N25 acts as a mediator of some type since it occupies a central position between this cluster of agencies. This finding concurs with other research findings that suggest there will be a strong core (Knoke, 1990). This result indicates that there is some emphasis on engaging in joint action in terms of service contracts between agencies, however as these are medium level connections, it suggests the focus for this networked arrangement is on coordinating through vertical links. Service contracts are one of the more formal aspects of the relationships and service contracts fall on the vertical axis. Relationships are mediated by contracts that specify what they are doing. In formalising the connections, the Chief Executive Officers are relying more on the institutional arrangements rather than personal exchanges and relationships.
Figure 6: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee – Joint Program Planning

In this network map, nine of the twelve network agencies have exhibited a high level of participation in joint program planning. Of these nine, five are located closer to the centre of the network with node or agency N23 occupying the most central position. The stronger red links are underpinned by a vigorous collection of blue or medium intensity linkages as well as some weaker, green connections. Collectively this reveals a densely connected network and a high degree of breadth around joint program planning. This emphasis on joint program planning by the Chief Executive Officers is consistent with the definition of coordination outlined in the integration continuum and the network schema.
Figure 7: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee – Contact Referrals

The fifth variable, contract referral, sought to establish the degree to which the Chief Executive Officers use each other to access or distribute knowledge. From this network map it can be seen that the pattern of relationship is comprised of several blue/medium and green/low intensity linkages and an absence of red links. Moreover, the existing contacts are loose and disparate in their dispersion within the network map. This result indicates that contact referral is not a significant feature of this network. This finding suggests that there are limited interpersonal connections being tapped or utilised by the Chief Executive Officers. It also suggests that, for those Chief Executive Officers who participate in more informal or interpersonally based exchanges, it is limited to a set of central players.
Figure 8: Chief Executive Officers’ Committee – Reference Group

The network picture that has emerged around the final variable of participation in reference groups and working parties shows mostly red, strong links with only one blue link between two nodes. This indicates that Chief Executive Officers are very active in their participation on each other’s committees and reference groups. Even though most agencies displayed strong linkages there was a core group of five that appear to be more intensely connected to each other. At first glance it would be tempting to suggest that this pattern of linkage is caused by growing, strong interpersonal relations between the Chief Executive Officers. However, given the results of Figure 7 (contact referral) and the case study data, both of which have not identified strong personal relations, this network map is more likely explained by institutional roles and responsibilities resulting from the requirement of the terms of reference for cross-committee involvement (DPC, 2001b). While this does not indicate a sense of interdependence between these agencies, it nevertheless provides evidence of a willingness to share power around agency direction setting. Further, reference groups and working parties are traditional coordination mechanisms.

Reconceptualising the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee

By using network analysis to ‘unpack’ the network variables and uncover the often invisible structure of the network linkages it can be seen that of the six network variables, for the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee the more dense
and intense linkages were those relating to the variables of information sharing, joint planning and programming and reference group participation. This lends support to the argument presented above that the Chief Executives’ Human Services Committee is a network but retains some underpinning aspects of the more informal networking characteristics. While there was a focus on operating on the horizontal axes through the relationship mode, the predominant emphasis in this committee is on the vertical axis and more formalised institutional roles and relationships. Nevertheless, the results imply that through their increased interactions there is a potential for the Chief Executive Officers’ network to adopt a more collaborative set of relationships, thus eventually moving toward the network structure mode as depicted in the schema.

From the network maps it is also apparent that some nodes consistently occupy a more central or critical position with respect to key issues of planning and strategic decision-making and less so with line agency program development and service delivery issues. Agencies 23 and 25 are examples of this nodal centrality are as their central positions demonstrate the orchestration of links and resources and, this, therefore suggests a strong coordination function.

**Network Impact and Future Prospects**

The collective empirical evidence has demonstrated that the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee, with its emphasis on formalised and structured processes and frequent and intense linkages between agencies presents as a network arrangement. The impact of this mix of horizontal relationship building, coupled with a formalised, structured and vertically aligned approach to whole-of-government integration has been the achievement of some crosscutting initiatives that move beyond narrow sectional achievements to produce broader gains for the whole public sector and which may not have been possible by staying in the networking mode (Interview, 4 February, 2002; Interview, 30 April 2002). For some respondents, although acknowledging that there has been a shift in perceptions and expectations, there was still a questioning of the impact of the network.

I don’t think a lot [of benefits or outcomes]. I think that it has given the issue of integration – collaboration etc – visibility; it is getting more people talking about it. So if there was any benefit
it is probably ... moving towards a preparedness to look at change (Interview, 19 December 2001).

Further, it is believed that without an associated shift in the culture of the network members and the public service that this will revert to the prior reliance on departmental silos. Indeed, there was a reported view that the Premier was driving the shape and format of the change agenda, rather than a shift in culture of the group itself and that this may detract from achieving long-term collaboration (Interview, 19 December 2001). Nevertheless, it was recognised that while the network has been slow to evolve and there is still a way to go, there is nevertheless a sense of a willingness to shift, and that ‘service enhancements’ will come from the shift along the integration continuum from networking to a network.

I am confident that in the long-term, if done properly, this mode of operation will deliver consistently better outcomes for government and people. I am aware that there is currently a lot of this cross-sector or networked work occurring within the sector.... However, there is still a body of people who continue to work in silos (Interview, 30 April 2002).

The use of Chief Executive Officer Committees to draw together the horizontal and vertical axes of government has proven to be a useful strategy for the Queensland government. Through the Premier’s sponsoring of integrated government and the processes and mechanisms put in place, the Chief Executive Officers’ Committees have begun to make some tentative inroads into cross-sector integration. However, for this to continue they need to be able to find the impetus to drive themselves and thus sustain this mode of working when it is deemed necessary.

Conclusions

In summary, the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee was formed to provide a whole-of-government perspective to policy development and service delivery of human services in Queensland. Initially, it was mostly an informal, networking arrangement, based on information sharing and some joint project planning with limited centralised control. Under this networking model, the members were able to develop a broader cross-agency perspective and some joint planning and action between a few agencies, but were perceived to be less effective at delivering on the emerging ‘whole-of-government’ agenda. The revised Chief Executive Officers’ Committee has evolved as a result of a more
directive influence of the Premier and the Department of Premier and Cabinet acting as the secretariat into a highly formalised, more structured arrangement that is based on a more directive approach to joint planning and programming as key mechanisms to achieve the governments’ priorities and goals. Critical to the revised mode was the introduction of a clear mandate for cross-agency work. This position was confirmed by the use of network analysis, which showed that against the six identified integration measures of information sharing, joint funding, service contracts, joint program planning, contact referral and reference group participation, the linkages between the revised Chief Executive Officers’ Committee were most intense and densely clustered around the more functional, early and middle level integration variables of information sharing and joint planning. Although reference group participation was quite high and was indicative of a strengthening of relationship and commitment, it was discounted because of the formal requirement for Chief Executive Officers to involve themselves in cross-departmental committees. Variables such as participation in joint funding and contact referral, which are also suggestive of a more trusting and collaborative set of relationships, were not a feature of this group at the time of the study. Changes in the operation of the Chief Executive officers’ Committee, particularly a strengthened emphasis on planning and programming, the introduction of a clear mandate and structured action, all features of coordination, moved it past basic information sharing through networking, to further along the Integration Continuum where its features matched with those of a coordination network.

Thus, by the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee reconstituting at the network or coordination point on the Integration Continuum the change in operating produces an outcome was aligned with directed intervention and gave them the ability to control the process to better achieve policy delivery outcomes. In this way the network process adopted by the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee represents the correct structural arrangement for meeting their current coordination requirements. However, in order to address more complex social problems such as those experienced within the Cape York region it would be necessary for the CEO’s Committee to enhance their horizontal relationships to enable a more collaborative problem solving process to emerge.
CHAPTER SIX
SERVICES INTEGRATION PROJECT (GOODNA)

Introduction
The second case study network, the Services Integration Project (SIP) focuses on the integration of services within the defined region of Goodna. The problem confronting this community was such that it required a coalition of Regional Managers as well as representatives of other regionally based services to be formed to address the issue. In this way, in contrast to the institutional level, as depicted by the Chief Executive Officers' Committee, the SIP Network deals with issues that emphasise regional issues, rather than broad scope and which involves personnel operating at the middle management level of the organisational structure. This coalition is generally comprised of a set of industry-related organisations that have been able to identify a generalised need for the region and have agreed to work together to meet that need (Waddock, 1991).

Drawing on the survey data the following profile of the SIP project membership was developed. Reflecting its administrative level of operation, the SIP comprised largely middle or regional managers of state and commonwealth government departments as well as senior officers and representatives of non-government human service agencies. Of these representatives 76.2% were male and 23.8% were female. Again as would be expected more than 70% (71.5%) were aged between 41 and 60 years and all have a tertiary education, with almost half (47.7%) having achieved a postgraduate level of education. On average SIP members indicated that they spent 2.43 days per month working on the network. With an average participation period of 15.8 months out of a possible total of 18 months it can be said that the SIP network was quite stable in its membership. The one respondent who indicated a longer participation in the network was commenting on their involvement in the formation period. Table 4 sets out these network member demographics.
Table 4: Service Integration Project Team Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Time in Network (total network age 18 months)</th>
<th>Days per month spent on network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female 23.8%</td>
<td>20-30 4.8%</td>
<td>Diploma 14.3%</td>
<td>&lt; 1 year 47.7</td>
<td>&lt;1 day 28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 76.2%</td>
<td>31-40 23.8%</td>
<td>U/grad 38.1%</td>
<td>1-2 years 42.9</td>
<td>1-2 days 42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-50 42.9%</td>
<td>P/grad 47.7%</td>
<td>&gt; 3 years 4.8%</td>
<td>2-3 days 4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51-60 28.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-4 days 19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background to Service Integration Project

Goodna, the region under investigation, is a small community located halfway between Brisbane and Ipswich in the southeastern corner of Queensland. It is populated by a wide range of disadvantaged groups including immigrants, ethnic populations, many of whom are low-income earners or welfare recipients (Boorman and Woolcock, 2002:5 & 7). The Goodna district has been subject to considerable, ongoing intervention by both government and local services. These initiatives are documented in a number of reports including the Western Gateway Area Strategy Social Planning Study, 2000 (Soule, 2000). As such, over time, it has also been the recipient of substantial amounts of government funds from various sources. Nonetheless, the problems in this area remain entrenched (Department of Housing, 2001; Woolcock and Boorman, 2003; Keast et al, forthcoming), and indeed, are often seen as the unintended consequences of prior government efforts. On this a local public sector employee noted:

Any problem in Goodna we [government] created. We put the public housing there; we put the prisons across the road; we put the mental health hospitals down the road. We developed public housing way, way, away from public transport and the train station; we are going to expand the motorway and take out some of the public housing. It is this sort of activity that has created the issues that are here in Goodna (Interview, 5 August 2002).

The increased and often specialised service requirements resulting from these de-institutionalisation initiatives have placed significant demands on local and government human services in the region to provide effective and coordinated services. The capacity to achieve coordination has been further confounded by the inconsistent service goals and regional boundaries of state government departments in particular. In response to these issues, a number of reports (Ipswich City Council Community Planning Study, 1998; Brisbane City Council, Social Trends and Issues in Brisbane, 1999; Soule, 2000) have stressed the
benefits of a more integrated, localised approach to human service delivery as well as one that enabled citizens to develop the collective capacities necessary to more effectively participate in addressing their needs. There have been many attempts to implement and sustain a network approach to service delivery, however there has been insufficient impetus to bring practitioners together and a lack of high-level support to shift away from silos to this more integrated model.

Drivers for Service Integration

The Goodna SIP was a response by human service practitioners, particularly the Regional Managers of state government departments, following a local crisis in which an elderly man was killed by a group of young people with whom many of the government and local service providers had been working or had some responsibility (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003; Keast et al, forthcoming). This incident brought the escalating social problems and the failure of agencies to solve them under closer scrutiny and highlighted the need for immediate systems change. One respondent indicated that:

People were saying this is terrible – it was the fault of the failure of a whole lot of systems … The whole thing spilt out and over into the community who were expressing real concerns about the failure of the services involved and the safety of the community (Interview, 27 November 2001).

On the immediate reaction of providers to the crisis, it was stated:

And I think, my theory on that is that we all carry a bit of corporate guilt around that corridor, particularly because it has been a place of historical neglect (Interview, 5 August 2002).

In response to the ‘crisis’ a number of public meetings were held within the community. The incident also galvanised the Regional Managers of many of these human service organisations to come together in a series of informal meetings reflecting on what had happened. The West Moreton Regional Managers’ Forum was the auspicing body for much of this initial process of deliberation. From these meetings or ‘discussion groups’ came the recognition that each of the concerned agencies could no longer work alone. In fact one interviewee commented that the idea was to determine “what can we do as a whole-of-community to respond to the tragedy?” (Interview, 7 February 2002b). Thus, one of the distinguishing characteristics of SIP was that it was recognised at the beginning that what was needed was systems change. As Woolcock and Boorman (2003: 9) noted while there was “a clear focus on service”, there was
also an acknowledgement “that change to the system of service provision” was necessary.

So it was an attempt, an active attempt, to change the classic mechanism of a regional group sitting slightly outside of Brisbane thinking quite revolutionary thinking about what had happened here and how we could change the way things work so that it did not happen again (Interview, 7 February 2002b).

As the following statement indicates there was acknowledgement of the need for systems change to move into specific kinds of networked arrangements. A SIP respondent commented that the network was:

Focused on the task of delivery of services – also actively engaged in doing something that moves beyond the provision of services to the creation of processes in which the infrastructure and environment are created which allow for the innovations needed to deal with complex problems (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

The need for a significant change in existing systems of operation to sustain interest and involvement was also identified:

… it would not have happened if we did not have the attitude that if we do not do something really new here then people are going to be all too tired and too bored about it (Interview, 26 July 2002).

The interviews consistently identified the local crisis as a key aspect of the decision to move to a new mode of service delivery. This finding is consistent with the research on collaboration by theorists such as Gray (1989), Huxham (2000) and Mandell (2000). For SIP, however, while the crisis presented as a catalyst for the decision to move to an integrated mode of service delivery for this region a number of other factors also contributed to this shift in approach. Table 4 sets out the responses to the survey question asking SIP members to identify the reasons for their organisation’s involvement in the SIP network. These other aspects incorporated areas such as gaining efficiencies in service provision and better meeting the needs of clients. However, the reasons also reflected a desire to develop a common set of values and principles around new ways of working together.
Table 5: Services Integration Project – Network Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for SIP Network Involvement</th>
<th>Mean n=18</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service needs of clients</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve efficiency</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn from others share information</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value joint effort</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical situation requiring joint effort</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar beliefs &amp; methods of service delivery</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain legitimacy</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of agency</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource scarcity</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal friendship/social action</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required by mandate</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/financial pressures</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location/proximity</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract requirement</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habit/tradition</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside pressure</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laying the Groundwork for Systems Change

Rather than moving ahead quickly, however, the interview comments revealed that there was a period of thinking and initial relationship building that identified a need to change the present way of working. The University of Queensland Community Service and Research Centre provided an environment in which network members could reflect on the issues of appropriate methods of service delivery and discuss alternative arrangements. The benefit of this period of reflection was highlighted in the following statement:

And I think it was probably the most important thing of the whole project where it was a long phase of thinking and reflecting and sorting and getting clear in our own minds … … there was an understanding that we had to work better together but none of us really knew how (Interview, 7 February 2002b).

As such, the empirical data provides evidence of an acceptance of a new way of working, but also highlights that there was, at least initially, a lack of a clear understanding of the type of changes needed. It was broadly understood that the ideas and synergies necessary for systems change needed to come from within
the group. Hence, the allocation of time and effort to ‘better understanding each other and our organisations” (Interview, 26 November 2001).

Following this phase of reflection and direction setting, other positional leaders of key government services in the region were enlisted to join the Project Team. The deliberate targeting of senior organisational members to the Project Team was based on the realisation that a critical aspect of the failure of prior integration efforts in the region was because they had mostly been initiated at lower levels within the organisation and therefore lacked the organisational authority to secure resources or sustain the initiative (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). A decision was also made that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson roles of the project would rest with non-state government agencies and project staff would be employed outside of government in the Ipswich City Council and the University of Queensland, Ipswich Campus (Boorman and Woolcock, 2002). At this meeting there was recognition that more money to do the same types of programs was not going to work. Instead, reflecting recommendations of earlier reports it was agreed that what was needed was “more integrated responses and strategies across agencies and an enhanced focus on community capacity building” (Boorman and Woolcock, 2001:1).

Having decided to take action in 2000 the emergent Project Team sought state government endorsement and funds to resource a pilot project designed to achieve better outcomes by integrating human services within a specific community. A series of ministerial deputations followed in which central government support was sought for the development of a pilot project focused on the Goodna area. One respondent indicated that at this point:

The response (from government) was ‘yes, we know there is a problem but the area already gets a lot of money for community based services (Interview, 27 November 2001).

The concern by government was that this would be just one more project involved in improving the coordination of existing services. But the vision for the project was something different. There was a strong awareness that in order to address these issues they could not ‘go it alone’ (Interview, 27 November 2001; Interview, 7 February 2002). That is, they recognised that there was a strong overlap and interdependency between the various agencies that needed to be identified and built upon (Interview, 26 November 2001). Further, the participants realised that they had to go beyond just seeking additional funding to provide the
same services and coordinating existing services. This had happened before with little success (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). Instead they were looking to achieve a sustainable system of human service provision based on a deliberative policy of integration through the collaboration of different groups and levels in the community (Keast et al, forthcoming). As a result the mission of the Service Integration Project (SIP) became:

> Working better together for sustainable community well-being in Goodna (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003).

On this Boorman and Woolcock (2001: 60) noted that ‘service integration’ in the title of the project indicated that the emphasis would be on systems change and new ways of working rather than just better delivery of existing services. The scale of change shaped by the efforts in this direction amounted to a fundamental reorientation of relationships and structures. These decisions and actions to more tightly link and integrate services clearly encompassed a collaborative approach to relationships and associated networked arrangements.

**Gaining Legitimacy for ‘New Ways of Working’**

Interviews elicited the insight that participants were aware that to work in this new ‘integrated’ or ‘collaborative’ way they would need a mandate that allowed them to go beyond their traditional ways of working as independent entities. A typical comment from the interviews was that:

> The system has got to recognise that the current system does not work and that this integrated work has to take place otherwise this [tragedy] will happen again (Interview, 7 February 2002 b).

However, as evidenced below they were reluctant to go down this ‘integrated line’ without support from their departments. One respondent noted, for example:

> Although we wanted to change the present way of working – we didn’t want to commit or expose ourselves to … another interagency project that wasn’t recognised by our departments (Interview, 27 November 2001).

In order for SIP members ‘not to have to go out on a limb’ as previously; attention was subsequently given to securing a ‘mandate’ or ‘legitimacy’ from government to proceed along this course. Consequently, effort was given to developing relationships with the Chief Executive Officers and central government agencies whose support both philosophically and financially was considered critical to the
implementation of change to human service models in Goodna. On this strategy a respondent noted:

The project has been explicit in its desire and plans to link with central government and establish direct and strong relations. Considerable relationship building has occurred between SIP and higher levels of government, particularly Treasury and some Directors-General (Interview, 27 November 2001).

Through a process of information-giving sessions and direct lobby many of the heads of participating departments and senior officers of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury became aware of and were supportive of the project. Indeed, out of this process two ‘project champions’ emerged and as a result of their support, SIP was able to secure primary operational funding totalling $548,000 from the Department of Families and the Department of Housing’s Community Renewal Program to fund the positions of project and research officer for a three-year period ceasing in March 2003 (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). In addition to the project champions, the SIP Team secured the involvement of a senior Treasury officer on the committee, and this, coupled with the project’s involvement with a number of strategic central agency projects such as the Alignment of Services and Priorities Project (ASAP), provided strong vertical links to higher-level authorities. It was stated:

It is not just about influencing Directors-General but also the decision makers – operators in central agencies (Interview, 26 November 2001).

But, while the involvement of Chief Executive Officers and central agencies, and particularly Treasury, was seen as strategic and as providing necessary vertical linkages, there was also awareness that this might expose the project to central government control. Nevertheless, this was considered a risk that needed to be taken (Interview, 27 November 2001). This dilemma was articulated:

Two Directors-General … have taken a strong interest in the project. This is very good but it also presents us with the challenge of how best to manage this interest? Since in some ways SIP is looking to change the public service but at the same time we are aligning resources and actions to meet the Government’s priority outcomes (Interview, 26 November 2001).

However, as interviews of SIP members and the results of internal reports have indicated over time these ‘champions’ and the vertical linkages to the centre of government have proven to be a key strategy for the project (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). That is, it has afforded the project a higher level of legitimacy.
and hooked it into government funding and project participations that might not have otherwise been possible.

As a further source of legitimacy for the project, the SIP Project Team approached the Chief Executive Officer of the Ipswich City Council to chair the meetings. In adopting such a strategy the Project Team members realised that they, as public servants, ‘could only be so challenging’ (Interview, 27 November 2001) and since the Ipswich Council Chief Executive Officer was “one step removed from the process” and an organisational equal with considerable influence this person would be able to provide that role. As well as providing an important point of legitimacy, the influence of the Chair and his ‘clear and strong’ commitment to the project (Interview, 26 November 2001) was immediately apparent in other, perhaps unintended, yet nevertheless highly beneficial ways:

I think the commitment of the Chief Executive Officer of the City Council to the project in the first instance drew the eye of Regional Directors and in some ways fuelled their commitment (Interview, 5 August 2002).

In addition to securing the vertical support of central agency staff and high-level champions, the project team also recognised the need to establish strong horizontal linkages with other government and community organisations as well as the citizens of Goodna themselves. The rationale for these linkages is explained:

In some areas people have made personal sacrifices to ‘work this new way’. They are not rewarded or even encouraged. The personal sacrifice is too great. So we need to be strategic in how we go about effecting effective change – we need to work with the community. There needs to be strong interface between government and community by way of discussions and joint goals etc (Interview, 27 November 2001).

Thus it was understood that community support and involvement were critical to the legitimacy of the project, in terms of securing better outcomes as well as for its long-term sustainability (Boorman and Woolcock, 2002; Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). There is a growing consensus that the inclusion of stakeholders and in particular community members in service development considerations provides both increased legitimacy and enhanced prospects for successful outcomes (Corbett, 1992; Adams and Hess, 2001).


Engaging Community Support

In view of this the SIP Team went to the community to advise of the project, to ‘get them on-board’ and to involve community organisations and citizens in the decision-making that needed to occur around the project foci and objectives. At first the community was reluctant to be involved. As one respondent noted: “they had been ‘burned’ by government before” and consequently did not really trust government or government employees (Interview, 26 November 2001). The traditional top-down mode of government with respect to community was described thus:

Things were done to the community. Poured on to them from the top (Interview, 27 November 2001).

Because of this and the failure of previous community development and engagement efforts, it was stated:

The thing is the community does not necessarily want to work with government. For many the experience has not been good, and there is not a lot of trust for government. We had to rebuild that (Interview, 26 November 2001).

The example of the Goodna Pool was cited by a number of respondents as indicative of government’s failure to listen to the community. The following statement best encapsulates this widely held view:

A classic example is the Goodna Swimming Pool. The community wanted a swimming pool. Had been agitating for a pool for 25 years. However, after the feasibility studies etc were done, a decision was made that a swimming pool was not really an option. But the government realised that there was a need for ‘something’ and built a new community centre which as far as community centres goes is a wonderful facility. It is just not what the community asked for. The result is that the community are scratching their heads saying “how come we ended up with a community centre when we really wanted a swimming pool?” And the government is saying “why aren’t they grateful for the centre we provided?” Government was trying to do the right thing in providing a centre – they listened to the community to a point but … (Interview, 26 November 2001).

The team looked to overcome the reluctance of community agencies and citizens to become involved in the integration initiative by attending community network meetings such as the Goodna Interagency Meeting and through liaison with local services and groups such as the Goodna Community Centre. It also conducted small group and focus group sessions as well as facilitating public forums and
spoke to schools in an attempt to engage community organisations and citizens directly.

So people [SIP Project Team members] went to community meetings. Went out on a limb saying it will be different this time – trust us. Work with us and we will make it different (Interview, 27 November 2001).

Through this intense period and process of community engagement in which members sought to make some inroads through successes with projects such as the Goodna Pool (Interview, 26 November 2001; Interview 5 August, 2002), SIP was eventually able to ‘win over’ the community agencies and community representatives. And, together, through an ongoing process of meetings and focus groups a set of mutually agreed goals and objectives were developed to guide the project (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). On this it was commented:

So it is important to achieve little things along the way, have some small successes and build trust with the community and government that we can do things differently and better. A lot of the effort so far has been done ‘top down’ and we are now working to make it bottom up as well through a lot of community development work, forums and groups processes (Interview, 26 November 2001).

Thus, an important task for SIP was the facilitation of processes that established stronger relationships between local and regional decision making processes as they relate to the human service system. By bringing together community organisations and members as well as the array of human service providers in the region including in particular 16 State government employees (mostly at the Regional Manager level), representatives of Commonwealth government services (CentreLink, Area Coordinator Ipswich Regional Area Consultative Committee), three Ipswich City Council local government employees including the Chief Executive Officer, and two Directors of Learning Institutes, as well as two project officers, as well as the horizontal and vertical linkages, SIP presents as a very complex and unique structure (Keast et al, forthcoming). However, it was recognised that in order to address the complex, intractable issues within the community all relevant stakeholders would need to be involved. As Rhodes (1997b: xv) noted: “Messy problems demand messy solutions”.

This multiplex composition of SIP with its multilevel operation required an integrating or governance approach that allowed them to work both ‘horizontally and vertically’. That is, “connecting different agencies whilst simultaneously working ‘vertically’ to connect different levels within agencies and to connect
community processes to agency processes and regional processes to central processes” (Boorman and Woolcock, 2001: 10). Since other modes of integration had been less than effective and were widely viewed as having contributed to the problem, a more collaborative mode of governance based on tight networks of relationships was seen as the way forward. Woolcock and Boorman (2003: 12) state that from the outset, there was an acknowledgement that along with government agencies delivering on their core business outcomes there was also “a necessity to explore the possibilities there were for enhanced service delivery through collaboration”.

**Integration Through Collaborative Horizontal Relations**

To move beyond ‘business as usual’ and concentrate on bringing together the often-fragmented service providers the need for relationship building was recognised early in the SIP process (Interview, 27 November, 2001). Indeed, it was stressed that if SIP was to be genuinely different participants would need to make an earnest attempt to build relationships and learn from each other (Boorman and Woolcock, 2002). But it was acknowledged that this would not be an easy task:

> At the very beginning it must have been a struggle. All these departments were trying to work together and the dynamics were really awful. They were just amazing – there was no trust and no relationships … There was no testing of assumptions – just an acceptance that the problem was caused by others (Interview, 19 December 2001).

Another respondent identified the problem inherent in the ‘old ways of working’:

> These silos and demarcations between departments are confusing and present real difficulties. For example, with SIP you have Health and Corrections. One is pursuing a ‘harm minimisation’ strategy and the other ‘zero tolerance’ on drug issues. How do you reconcile the two stances and still go forward in a coherent way? (Interview, 26 November 2001).

From the interviews it was apparent that these perceptions would have a detrimental effect on any attempts at integration and collaboration and that there clearly needed to be steps taken to bring about change (Interview, 19 December 2001; Interview 27 November 2001). As a way to overcome these ‘entrenched positions’, establish enhanced relationships and capitalise on the collective capacities of the project team a Graduate Certificate in Social Sciences (Inter-professional Leadership) was developed (Interview, 7 February 2002). The
rationale for the Graduate Certificate Course acting as an instrument for cohesion is set out below:

At the commencement of the course some members were very prickly initially. There was a fairly wide range of players – many of whom did not share a common language, common training or even common experiences as Regional Managers. Although they were mostly an older and more experienced group of people, they had not all progressed through the public service in similar ways, had different experiences, backgrounds and ideologies. It was vital to develop a skill set, a language and common experience for them to move forward as one (Interview, 27 November 2001).

In this course most SIP participants, spent sixteen full days over two semesters learning new theories, unlearning old behaviour, developing shared language and skill sets and progressing the design and delivery of SIP (Interview, 27 November 2001; Boorman and Woolcock, 2002:12). The Graduate Certificate was described by a respondent as follows:

Its basis was action learning and practices of reflection. The process of learning and the content was about collaborative skills and applying collaborative skills to the program… By the end of the course it was unclear to us which was the real project and which was the learning experience (Interview, 5 August 2002).

In their responses SIP participants frequently attributed the relationships developed through this Graduate Certificate Course as underpinning and facilitating the operation of the project. As one respondent commented:

The different professional backgrounds we have mitigated against us working cooperatively initially. But through the Graduate Certificate and the meeting processes, we have been able to gain a more ‘holistic’ picture of each other and our departments and their needs and limitations. This has helped to break down the barriers of the silos – at least in relation to this project and hopefully with others (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

The important role of the Graduate Certificates in building trust between members was also identified:

It helped to build trust by breaking down the silo barriers and old ways of working (SIP Post Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

For most SIP members their participation in the Graduate Certificate course was a definitive aspect of their experience in the program and central to the progression to a collaborative mode of working. The relationships and trust forged during this experience were described as ‘the glue that bound the group
together’. On this integrative effect the Graduate Certificate course was further identified as an: “Important aspect of building harmony, emphasising the same values and getting commitment to joint action” (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001). Through the ongoing mutual learning and the close interpersonal experiences it engendered it could be said the Graduate Certificate Course effectively ‘short circuited’ the relationship building processes for SIP and enabled members to quickly move into collaborative action.

And I put that down to the learning program that we did together. Because we learnt about each other in ways that would not have been possible if we had just been going to meetings once a month for a couple of hours and having coffee (Interview, 5 August 2002).

The power of the Graduate Certificate to break down the barriers between organisations and build collaborative bridges was stressed again by the following comment:

Having been in the trenches together, so to speak, and sharing the same experiences and learning a common language we were more than colleagues, we had gone way beyond that. We had broken down the barriers and had greater trust and regard for each other and therefore our respective organisations (SIP Post Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

An additional aspect of the Graduate Certificate is that it placed strong emphasis on maintaining and nurturing the relationships established through ongoing experiential work and a commitment to modelling collaborative practices within project meetings (Interview, 27 November 2001; Woolcock and Boorman, 2003).

Relationship building and maintenance have been very important to the operation of the project. The Graduate Certificate was a great aspect of this and a critical element in establishing the relations we all now have. It enhanced and broadened our knowledge of each other and the work of our agencies (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

As well as SIP Project Team members it was decided that other groups or ‘cohorts’ including those SIP Team members who had not participated in the course, front line staff of government agencies and subsequently community members would be availed of the course. The expansion of this course to others increased the strengths of horizontal links. One respondent explained the benefit of this fusing of operational levels:

The level of learning has increased across agencies, because now there is a territorial, horizontal slice. That is, local and
The second cohort of Graduate Certificate is a most ‘interesting group’ as it is comprised of ‘next level’ public servants and residents, along with senior managers who have joined the SIP Team since the first cohort commenced (Interview, 26 November 2001).

The thinking behind the move to include community members in the learning experience centred on a desire to build a more interconnected, multi-level and therefore sustainable set of relationships within the community that would remain beyond the pilot project period. This was articulated as follows:

The goal is to continue delivering cohorts while a demand exists and people want to participate – to create a tight network in the community. This, we hope, will create a community readiness with shared understandings, language and lasting commitment or skill base that can mobilise themselves around an issue when the expertise or project focus is withdrawn (Interview, 26 November 2001).

Thus by involving community members in the Graduate Certificate, SIP fostered local community history and understanding and assisted in the development of social capital and helped to build a sustainable local infrastructure. However, while the process of building relationships was clearly very rewarding, it was also a highly time consuming process. This is very frustrating to those in government who perceived this emphasis on process as being too focused on relationships at the expense of outcomes. Indeed, it was described as “just having cups of tea” (Interview, 21 February 2001) which was seen as leading only to participation in “talk fests without demonstrating much in the way of tangible outcomes” (Interview 7 February 2002b; Interview, 21 February 2002). However, a Senior Departmental/Government representative identified the importance of taking the time to develop relationships as follows:

And some people complain from time to time about the time concern but … there was probably time lost anyway coming up with less effective solutions (Interview, 14 February, 2002).

Although having the relationships linking the various parts of the system, the SIP Team was aware from the ‘learnings’ of the Graduate Certificate and perhaps more commonly through their past experiences of integration or cross-agency work that integration ‘does not just happen by magic’ (Interview 26, November 2001; Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). Indeed, there was a strong level of awareness that a broad framework to guide and where necessary augment the collaborative relationships was necessary. In fact, as the results from the
questionnaire indicate SIP made use of a range of integration mechanisms. These are set out in Table 6. From this it can be seen that while the primary integration mechanisms relate to relationships aspects, there are a number of additional processes such as the development of procedures and practices that were employed to maintain the network members’ involvement and cohesiveness.

Table 6: Service Integration Project - Linkage Mechanisms (n=18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linkage Mechanisms</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing liaison between network members</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in working parties</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings of the network</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-developed rules and procedures</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in reference groups</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in joint ventures programming</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong lateral communication</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops to develop mutual implementation strategies</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal meetings between members</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination committees</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular telephone contact between members</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in case management</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences to discuss issues &amp; set direction</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication mostly directed downwards</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Network Management: Integration Mechanisms

To facilitate the relations between members and various units and to ensure that project moved ahead the SIP Team established a framework for action. As Woolcock and Boorman (2003: 31) noted this framework provided a mechanism by “which integrated services could be considered, planned, implemented and evaluated”. In addition to the establishment of agreed project aims, the primary aspect of the framework was the development of a set of operating principles to guide the decision-making and communication processes of the network.

To start with we sat amongst ourselves and looked at protocols. The framework was documented as part of our guidelines for development (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).
The members of the SIP Team agreed to use this protocol when making all
decisions in relation to the Project. The use of a protocol was intended to provide
an agreed and accepted framework within which members of the group could
work together to progress the SIP objectives, to streamline decision-making, and
to encourage reflective leadership (Interview, 5 August, 2002; Woolcock and
Boorman, 2003). It was generally agreed that these protocols were effective in
facilitating the operations of the network. As one member indicated: “They work
pretty good” (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001). In addition to the
collective/inclusive process of decision-making the experiences of the graduate
certificate was presented as a rationale for the perceived success of the
protocols. This was shown by the following comment made in a Post SIP Focus
Group comment (11 October 2001):

Everyone was involved in the setting of the protocols. So there
were no surprises, demands or ideals that we did not think we
could sustain. It was really about re-establishing the value we
placed on each other as people and professionals and
committing to working more holistically together (Interview, 5
August, 2002).

The same respondent went on to outline their experience of the SIP management
process:

At the outset we made a commitment within the team around
equity and quality input... I felt that it was a very equitable,
caring, supportive environment for the discussion of issues. We
attempted consensus as much as possible. Where there was
dissent, we acknowledged the dissent, listened to the dissent
and tried to work through that. I would imagine that anyone
interviewed for the SIP program would not feel that their voice
wasn't heard, or that their positions were not taken with respect
(Interview, 5 August 2002).

The strong emphasis on collective or collaborative relationships notwithstanding
there was also a deep pragmatic streak running through the veins of the project
to stay on track, produce some outcomes and remain sustainable in the future
(Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). This was brought about no doubt by the number
of members who also had responsibility for managing the regional aspects of
their organisations. As one respondent commented on the need to stay focused
on outcomes:

I think that that is a risk around collaboration. That we can get
so caught up around process that we forget that we are public
servants. That has not been my experience in the SIP project
because of the nature of the seniority of the individuals involved. They are not going to waste time having cups of tea without some deliverables on the ground (Interview, 5 August 2002).

In view of this the monthly SIP meeting structures were especially important and tightly organised with a pre-meeting of the SIP Chair, Deputy Chair and project staff held ten days in advance of the meeting to develop an appropriate agenda (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). The meetings themselves followed a formal agenda and process over a two-to-three hour period. The effect of this pre-meeting organisation was a tight meeting process that better prepared SIP Project Team members for network decision-making and action. The focus group and interviews identified the importance of SIP meetings and procedures being well organised and managed. This is evidenced by the following comment:

However, it is apparent that alongside the processor relationship aspect is a strong ‘task’ element that moves it beyond ‘just cups of tea and a bit of a talk’. This is evidenced by the formal minutes, tight agendas and the way the meetings are chaired and the driver function of the project officer (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

Most SIP members perceived the driver function of the project as a critical element of its operation and perceived effectiveness. This was because with so many elements and so many potential leaders there was the need for a ‘core’ to the project. This was described as the need for ‘one key driver to pull it all together’ (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001). For most SIP members the Project Officer was seen to have assumed this primary linkage role.

From my perspective the real success of the [project] is having the Service Integration Project Officer monitoring – she drives us, she keeps us going, she pokes the needles in (SIP Focus Group, 11 October 2001).

However, emerging from the post focus group responses and subsequent SIP member interviews there was also recognition that the driver function could be undertaken by more than one person with both the Chair and the Project Officer and to some degree the Research Officer often assuming this role (SIP Post Focus Group comment, 11 October 2001; Interview, 5 August 2002). This interchange of roles, particularly between the Project Officer and the Research Officer was highlighted by one of the ‘drivers’:

There has been a really pointed decision to, even those they have given Project Officer and Research officer titles for the staff, that we do interchange our roles often. … It’s not just
been about the staffing of the project; it has also been about trying to pull as many shared interests together as possible (Interview, 26 July 2002).

In order to adequately address the project goals and progress the project the operation of SIP was divided into three key strategic areas of interest and work. Centred on progressing developments in terms of learning including the Graduate Certificate and associated groups, relationship building within SIP and across the sector and establishing measuring and modelling tools to assess the overall impact of SIP, these SIP Strategy Groups met on a monthly basis from March 2001 and reported back to the full SIP Team meetings. Involvement of SIP members in these Strategy Groups also had the effect of sustaining action and commitment beyond monthly attendance at meetings. Other strategies such as the conduct of community forums and small working groups, coupled with a regular schedule of communication updates were employed to retain the close linkages between the SIP Project Team and its community based ‘partners’.

Thus, the preparation for a new way of working was underpinned by an enormous amount of formative work as outlined above. In sum, the SIP was governed by mutually agreed guiding ideas. The vision for SIP was developed through an inter-agency SIP Team and gave rise to the Project Aim. The strategies by which the SIP sought to achieve these aims were Learning, Relationship Building and Measuring and Modelling (Boorman and Woolcock, 2002). The achievement of the Project Aim was reflected in periodic changes to the project outcomes. Action plans and specific project plans guided the delivery process. However, for most participants the building of relationships was, at least initially, a primary focus of SIP, not the completion of tasks (that is, the delivery of services). As one of the participants of SIP put it:

For me the relationship building has been the main thing. Talking about practical outcomes we have created a process that allows for, and continues to encourage, that process. We are talking about the residual capacity of this network, that is, what remains after this intervention [SIP] has been completed. People can go back to this network and the relationships to build or work on other projects and can use those resources as a way of mobilisation (SIP Focus Group, 11 October 2001).

Interviews revealed that from these processes emerged new points of convergence and new synergies were realised that led to a new way of thinking and reshaped the way that this collection of organisations do business.
Impact of New Ways of Working

As a result of the establishment was that organisations’ perceptions of each other began to change. Members began to recognise and appreciate each other as ‘resources’. In effect, the pool of expertise is expanded based on these new ways of relating to each other. This ‘multiplier effect’ was expressed by a SIP member:

I think that it is very different to the traditional model that departments use. From my perspective we have not been using each other’s knowledge and skills to the full capacity and we have been treating our clients and each other only as parts – not whole people. In working in this project I feel that I am a whole person working toward helping whole people (SIP Focus Group, 11 October 2001).

Although the emphasis was not focused on the tasks of delivery of services, the members were actively engaged in processes that moved beyond the provision of services. Through these processes the infrastructure and environment are created which will allow for the innovations needed to deal with complex problems. In SIP this was seen in the way that they have been able to build new capacities for both the government and the community. Several participants clearly indicated this as follows:

…it comes down to the difference between being reactive and proactive. Staying in reactive mode defeats the purpose, you have got to be more proactive. That is why it is crucial to be part of the network: so that you are not always on the back foot when trying to respond to these issues. You are working with others who know bits of the information and together you pool your knowledge and resources to respond – determine issues, set solutions and respond (SIP Focus Group, 11 October 2001)

And further:

I think that the one big difference is just looking at Education is we have got a police officer, health nurse and other services but they were not coordinated. They were still working in their silos instead of working cooperatively, or together. Where we are different now is that all those different agencies are working together. We have not been going long enough to have big outcomes, but this alone is an achievement and we are heading in the right direction (SIP Focus Group 11 October 2001).

This non-traditional way of thinking and working was obvious to many of the SIP participants. For example, the following comment highlighted the higher level of commitment to the project:

This is very different to the traditional models that we have all worked in. I can really notice a difference in working this way.
We have experienced going in to the community to ‘do an intervention’ but they have not worked because we were going in as single departmental workers, all doing our own thing. And it was hard to sustain that, your commitment. Now we are all much more committed to projects and feel that it has a greater chance of being successful. What we have or are working towards are integrated people in integrated systems (SIP Focus Group, 11 October 2001)

For a number of respondents the distinctive and most effective aspect of SIP was not the individual components but rather their unique combination (Interview, 26 July 2002; Interview, 5 August 2002). The impact of the distinctive aspect of SIP is described below:

Again I think a characteristic of the nature of this project being a little bit different; people have rarely walked away from it (Interview, 5 August 2002).

In their earlier mode of operating, SIP members were a group of disparate regional managers all working semi-autonomously in their own jurisdictions. While this allowed for a focus on individual organisational outcomes, it proved to be limited for those social issues that fell between organisational boundaries, especially those of a critical nature. In practical terms SIP has been labelled a committee or a network. However, case study findings indicate that with its heavy emphasis on horizontal, relationship integration as a core governance mechanism, common mission, and unique structural arrangements, SIP can be defined as a network structure. Woolcock and Boorman (2003) confirm this stance in their recent evaluation of SIP.

Thus, in moving beyond networking and networks to demonstrate genuine collaboration, SIP has shifted from simply cooperation and coordinating services to integration of services through a network structure. The next section uses network analysis to confirm this diagnosis of SIP and its operation. Similar to the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee, network analysis was applied to confirm this perspective.

**Network Analysis – Confirming the Network Structure Diagnosis**

The analysis followed the same process as the Chief Executive Officers. The only variation to this process is that with SIP, the network membership was composed of more than one representative for each agency. That is, three agencies had more than one representative from different divisions on the SIP Project Team. In view of the fact that these multiple representatives came from different divisions
within their organisations, a decision was made to treat them as separate nodes. The effect of this consideration, in contrast to the other two case studies, is that the following network maps illustrate multiple points of interaction within and across agencies by network members. This process may dilute the aggregate agency level of linkage and highlight more breadth than intensity of connection.

**Figure 9: Service Integration Project - Shared Information**

The SIP map for the network variable of information sharing is characterised by many strong red linkages and a significant number of medium blue linkages. This arrangement demonstrates that information sharing is a significant aspect of this networked arrangement. There is a group of twelve organisations or network nodes involved in intense information exchange. The strength of the exchange between these agencies is demonstrated by their dense clustering at the centre of the network. This cluster is buttressed by a strong set of blue or medium intensity information links, and only one weak or green information linkage presented between two agencies. In this way, it could be said that SIP is characterised by a strong and dense network of information exchanges. This outcome is reinforced by a high degree of centrality, made visible by the clustering of agencies at the centre of the network map.
Figure 10: Service Integration Project – Joint Funding

The network map for the network variable of joint funding, with its overwhelming emphasis on green, low level intensity of linkages and only one blue or medium linkage between two nodes implies that joint funding was not a feature of this networked arrangement. This result is not surprising for two main reasons. First, SIP was funded predominantly by one agency (at the time of the linkage survey). Second, the qualitative data also highlighted the fact that SIP perceived itself more as a conduit or a process by which other organisations, including community-based bodies, could connect to better share existing resources and funding. In view of this, it is posited that loose connections and a lack of density fosters the ability to shift outside the networked arrangements to access information and resources. This is consistent with Grandovetter’s (1973, 1982) notion of the strength of weak ties where new information is likely to be made available through more distant contacts than those that share a similar domain.
Similarly, the network map around service contracts, which shows only weak green linkages around service contracts and no core, demonstrates that SIP was not a vehicle for the more traditional exchanges of service contracts between agencies. Rather it was involved in establishing broader relationships to enable a wider range of agency access to funding and resources. A significant feature of this process was the brokering role of linking external stakeholders to others to gain the benefit of the ‘multiplier effect’ of network structures.
For the variable joint program planning the network map provides evidence of a dense set of blue or medium intensity linkages, supported by a small number of weaker intensity linkages between agencies. Although there are some outliers, the clustering of the majority of network indicates most of the SIP members are involved in joint program planning. This emphasis on dense relations is consistent with other network research findings that demonstrated that network density, rather than intensity is positively associated with the level of cooperation that is required for joint planning (Ryan, Williams and Brown, 2002).
Contact referrals in SIP relate to those contacts that elicit information outside of the conventional agency channels. Although the network map displays predominantly weak links, there is a cluster of medium links around nine nodes. Thus, a core group has formed to avail themselves of the more diverse contacts available through the network. It was expected that this variable would generate stronger linkages between agencies however it nevertheless indicates that interagency activity has begun to occur. This result supports the qualitative data that members are moving beyond agency boundaries to engage in more collaborative efforts.
Figure 14: Service Integration Project – Reference Groups

The network variable reference group and working parties sought to determine the degree to which network members relied on each other to provide membership and shared involvement in strategic decision-making. There was a cluster of nine agencies or nodes exhibiting dense, strong linkages. This intensity was underscored by a group of nodes showing medium but dense linkages. Only one network node (B58) displayed weak linkages. This agency was located on the periphery of the network structure indicating that it did not participate overly in the reference groups and working parties of other network members.

Unlike the Chief Executive Officers’ network whose reference group membership was required as part of their terms of reference, SIP members participated in each other’s reference groups out of a sense of collegiality and, out of a commitment to ‘living out’ the ethos of the project. The voluntary and on-going nature of this interaction stands it apart from the other kinds of looser networked arrangements and demonstrated a marked difference to a mandated participation often required of a network.
Reconceptualising SIP

The SIP case brought together a broad range of stakeholders comprising both government and non-government actors, to implement a multi-level, interdisciplinary model of service development and delivery. In adopting this complex, interdependent mode, SIP moved from relying on traditional coordination mechanisms to a process characterised by dense, highly integrated services.

Network analysis uncovered the complexity and density of interactions within the SIP system, showing that the relationships and operation aligned with those associated with collaborative efforts. The findings indicate that SIP was characterised by a high degree of information sharing, joint program planning and reference group participation. Collectively these features position SIP as a network structure.

SIP Impact and Future Prospects

As a result of its innovative and highly collaborative mode of operation SIP can legitimately claim a number of successful projects such as the Goodna Integrated Family Support Project, Goodna.net, Goodna Domestic Violence Project and the Goodna Pool (SIP Outcomes Matrix, March 2003, Project Report Documents 2000-2003; Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). However, for the SIP members, although acknowledging the visible project achievements, the real gains of SIP related to the relational infrastructure or the network capital established as a result of working closer together. As one respondent identified:

This project will have failed, if, at the end of the day, we have not created an environment in these state agencies and between others whereby the process continues to encourage these people to act collaboratively (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October, 2001).

The emphasis by SIP on producing more than service delivery was highlighted in the following comment:

It is focused on the task of delivery of services – also actively engaged in doing something that moves beyond the provision services. Creation of processes in which the infrastructure and environment are created which allow for the innovations needed to deal with complex problems. (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001)
Within the context of traditional government expectations these outcomes may be seen as delivering limited outcomes. For instance, in launching SIP the Minister for Public Working and Housing expressed traditional expectations for the project:

The pilot aims to reduce crime, increase school retention rates, encourage stable housing, reduce drug and alcohol abuse and reduce unemployment (Communicate: Ipswich Community Service and Research Centre Review, 2001: 37).

The issue is that the types of results that occur through network structures do not primarily have to do with programs or numbers (although that could be part of the secondary results). Rather these arrangements are focused on more intangible outcomes such as changing perceptions and improving relationships. Reflecting this dilemma, one network member noted:

I think some of the weaknesses of SIP though are around achievements on the ground. And, I am in two minds about this, because the cynical community member will say ‘well what do I get out of a whole lot of government people now working better, knowing each other in intimate ways, having a personal and professional commitment to my area? The flip side of that is that I think there have been some small, gentle wins in the community such as the pool. …I think the risk is that central government won’t see that opening a pool to a community is any big deal but that never would have occurred without the SIP project because of the creative problem solving that went into that process (Interview, 5 August 2002).

Thus, while SIP was able to clearly change the way that government and non-government organisations ‘did business’ in the Goodna community, these outcomes did not correspond with the outcome measures commonly utilised by government.

Transitioning and Sustaining SIP

On 31 March 2003, after three years of operation as a pilot project, SIP ceased. In view of their limited life span the issue of the sustainability of the project beyond the ‘formal project life’ was an early and major consideration of the SIP Team (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). There was therefore a strong desire by SIP members that the ‘learnings’, tools and especially the relationships built within the project would remain as part of the ‘network capital’ of the community and indeed, cross over to other communities (Interview 26 November 2001; Interview 26 July 2002). There was also a concern that the project would become
more than ‘just another interesting experiment in service integration in the region’ (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). Perhaps most importantly there was a strong concern that having raised the community’s expectation for involvement and contributed to enhanced service provision, that the project would just stop and that there would be an eventual reversion to ‘old ways of working’ (Woolcock and Boorman, 2003). In view of these concerns a major part of the SIP Team’s work especially from the middle and end of the project was the development of a process to transition the project back to the West Moreton Regional Managers Forum (WMRMF), SIP’s original auspicing body.

Given the fact that most of the present members of the WMRMF were founding members of SIP and therefore have been involved in the relationship building processes such as Graduate Certificate, and more recently have been involved in the development of a strategic planning process to bring the SIP project under their auspice, it would seem that, in the short and medium term at least, SIP’s unique operational and structural arrangements will be continued and protected.

The advantage of this is that most of those Regional Managers/Directors of the West Moreton RMF and the CEO of the Council have been involved in the SIP Project. So they have a personal and professional commitment to seeing this work through (Interview, 5 August, 2002).

However, given the history of Regional Managers Forums in Queensland and the tendency to bring them in under the ‘shadow of the hierarchy’, it is believed that SIP runs the risk of becoming institutionalised. As Witte et al (2000) note when networked arrangements become institutionalised they loose their inherent benefits. Thus as Woolcock and Boorman (2003:12) point out for the WMRMFG and the community agencies of Goodna, the emerging challenge “…is to find ways of further enhancing and sustaining these relationships in the long term”.

**Conclusion**

For many of those involved with SIP and those on the sidelines of the project, this project presented as a significant departure from the traditional ways of working within government. Indeed, although acknowledging the necessity and responsibility of all government departments to deliver on their core business outcomes, the focus of SIP was on the potential for enhanced service delivery for those areas that did not respond to traditional service delivery modes. This changed emphasis in the way of working was highlighted by network analysis which revealed that although, like the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee, SIP
exhibited an intense and dense pattern of interactions around both information sharing and joint program planning, it differed in that it also displayed very intense, dense and widely connected linkages around the variable reference group participation, which was voluntary and based on shared understandings and personal commitments. Unlike the CEO Committee there was also evidence of a core clustering around contact referrals suggesting higher-level interagency information sharing activity. The highly interpersonal characteristic of SIP, which is dependent on the tight and sustained linkages between its members, coupled with formalised arrangements for collective action and information sharing, differentiated it from both looser information sharing arrangements such as networking and mandated coordination involvement in networks.

Thus, the case study data coupled with the network analysis has provided evidence that the collective characteristics of SIP, including its development of a common mission, the strong level of interdependency between network members and its unique, multi-level structural arrangements, multiple leadership arrangements; and its strong collaborative relationship base identify it as a network structure. The intertwining of these distinctive aspects has enabled SIP to move beyond cooperation and coordination to effect a change in the ways that people and organisations provide services in the Goodna district. In this way SIP has charted a course away from merely ‘business as usual’, through networking and networks, to collaboration through a networked structure.
CHAPTER SEVEN

RECONNECT EARLY INTERVENTION NETWORK

Introduction

The final network case, the Reconnect Early Intervention Network (Reconnect) (now the Gold Coast Family Connections Incorporated) is located at the programmatic level of the human service operation strata. It was created to bring together the full set of service providers in the Gold Coast region involved in the provision of services and support to young homeless people and their families. At this level, networks are typically formed to deal with localised issues that are relatively narrow in scope and which generally concentrate on bringing together a set of services around a particular client grouping (Waddock, 1991).

Profile of Reconnect Network

The survey data provides a profile of the Reconnect network. Reflecting its community based status there is a higher proportion of female (62.5%) than male (37.5%) members within this network (Byrne, 1990) and members are equally distributed over all the age categories. All network members have tertiary qualifications and over half (56.3%) have attained a post-graduate level of education. While many of the members are the mangers or equivalent of their organisation most have relatively little influence beyond their location of operation and many are responsible to parent organisations. The average length of time that members have been involved in the network is 19 months, with the bulk of the membership indicating a period of involvement of between two and three years and two members stating that they had been involved for more than three years. This suggests that stability has not been a feature of the Reconnect network. On average Reconnect members spent 1.63 days per month on the network. However, 62.5% of the members actually spent less than one day per month. These network demographics are set out in Table 7 below.
Table 7: Reconnect Network Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Time in Network (total network age 3 years)</th>
<th>Days per month spent on network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Diploma 25%</td>
<td>&lt; 1 year 6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>U/grad 18.8%</td>
<td>1-2 years 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>P/grad 56.3%</td>
<td>2-3 years 25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 3 years 12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background to Reconnect

Homelessness, and in particular youth homelessness, has been a persistent problem in Australia commencing at the time of colonisation (Tierney, 1970). However, a number of social commentators (Burdekin, 1989; Chamberlain and McKenzie, 1995; 1998; Crane and Brannock, 1996) have shown that since the 1970s the transition from dependence on family and other support networks in the community have become increasingly difficult for many young people resulting in large numbers becoming homeless and distanced from traditional support structures.

In October 1995, in an address to the Australian Council of Social Services, the Federal Opposition Leader John Howard, noted the continuing high levels of youth homelessness in Australia. He highlighted criticisms expressed by some parents and community groups that the existing system placed too little emphasis on intervening before homelessness became entrenched and on the need to assist young people and their families to achieve reconciliation (Putting Families Back in the Picture, 1998). In response to these issues Howard outlined his intention to establish a two-year Youth Homelessness Taskforce Pilot Program designed to improve the community’s ability to re-engage young people in the early stages of home leaving. The following statement provides another perspective of the process:

The ‘real’ background or impetus to the program came from a group of parents who had become very vocal about the Living Away From Home Allowance provided by CentreLink and the easy terms by which young people could access it. That is, there was no early intervention related to re-establishing links with the family. John Howard was present at one such meeting – prior to the federal election – and as a result, when elected subsequently established a Youth Homelessness Prime
Minister’s Taskforce to investigate the issue (Interview, 22 November 2001).

The Taskforce drew together community members with expertise in service delivery, service management and research as well as government members involved in the development of policy and service provision. In May 1996, the Prime Minister announced the terms of reference and membership of a Prime Ministerial Youth Homeless Taskforce, which was to design and evaluate a two-year Youth Housing Pilot Project (YHPP) as a means of investigating critical issues surrounding youth homelessness. It was intended that the program would inform government policy in relation to programs and services designed to assist young people between twelve and eighteen years of age and their families, as well as those young people at risk of homelessness (Putting Families in the Picture, 1998). In July 1996 the Taskforce released its first report, outlining its proposed framework for the YHPP, based around the objective of “improving the level of engagement of homeless young people, or those at risk of homelessness, in family, work, education, training and the community” (Prime Ministerial Youth Homeless Taskforce, 1998; Putting Families in the Picture, 1998).

In total 26 projects were funded under the YHPP across all states and territories, covering a diversity of locations, organisational arrangements, population groups, including projects specifically targeting young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Indigenous and gay and lesbian population. Four pilots were funded in Queensland – Caboolture, Gladstone, Ipswich and Gold Coast. The Family Reconciliation and Mediation Project (auspiced by the Gold Coast Youth Homeless Project) commenced on 7 February 1997 with “a coordinator, a 20 hour a week administrator, a desk, a phone, a budget and a service agreement” to ‘shape it up and give it life’ (Interview, 22 November 2001).

In November 1999, after about one and a half years of operation the YHPP was evaluated. The evaluation highlighted the need for more coordination and required that all existing projects reapply for funding. In these applications there was a specification that they had to clearly demonstrate that they were involved in coordination and integration. A respondent commented on the government’s expectations: “Clearly what was wanted was a ‘whole-of-community’ framework” (Interview, 22 November 2001). For the Gold Coast project this had not been a feature of their work (Interview, 4 July 2002). However, through its other work
such as mediation and family counselling, the program had established a network of relations between other agencies and belonged to other existing networks such as the Youth Services Task Force and the Gold Coast Youth Network, which could be called upon to form a networked arrangement.

A public meeting was subsequently called to which general community service providers were invited. At the meeting the issue of a networked arrangement between a set of agencies focused on youth and family was presented. The process was designed to ‘facilitate general discussion and input for direction’ (Interview, 22 November 2001). Additionally a loose framework for how such a networked service might look was tabled. This draft framework also outlined the proposed funding process. In attendance at the public meeting were the majority of the key service agencies operating on the Gold Coast, including Rosie’s Youth Mission, Gold Coast Youth Service, CentreLink and Education Queensland. The idea of a coming together of service providers into a cooperative arrangement to provide services, rather than the insular practice that had evolved over time had strong resonance for many of the attending agencies. There was a growing concern that the competitive practices engaged by agencies were detrimental to the overall quality of services for young people and their families in the community. This situation was explained:

As the funding got tighter then I believe people, small agencies started to put up the ‘barriers’ type of thing in regard to communication…. And so, they were afraid to tell people what they were doing because they were afraid their ideas would be pinched and used by other agencies, or that they would be ‘done out of’ their funding (Interview, 22 August 2002).

For many agencies the idea of a ‘coming together of like agencies’ around the service needs of young people was seen as a positive and progressive concept. The prospect of a different perspective or style of working made possible by the formation of the Reconnect project and its network model was identified by one respondent as a contributing factor or an incentive to become involved in the network:

It was on about more than sharing and networking. The emphasis was different – it was about focusing on young people as part of a family and a community…. It seemed to move young people through the maze rather than hold them in a dependency type relationship (Interview, 22 August, 2002).
In addition to the clear commitment to improve the quality of service provision to homeless young people and their families articulated in the interviews, the Reconnect questionnaire results identified an efficiency interest as well as the desire by individual network members to work together and learn from others as key aspects driving participation in the network. The total set of drivers or reasons given for involvement in the Reconnect network is outlined in Table 8. From this it can be seen that less pertinent to the formation of the network were external considerations ranging from formal requirement or mandate for involvement (1.88), personal relationships (1.81), contractual requirements (1.75), location of services (1.56) to previous working relationships.

Table 8: Reconnect - Network Drivers
(n=16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Network Involvement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn from others/share information</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value joint effort</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service needs of clients</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve efficiency</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical situation requiring joint effort</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource scarcity</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar beliefs and methods of service delivery</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of agency</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/financial pressures</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain legitimacy</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required by mandate</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal friendship/social interaction</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract requirement</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location/proximity</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside pressure</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habit/tradition</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the public meeting agreement was secured about the development of a network. A tender document was subsequently prepared and submitted to Family and Community Services, the Commonwealth government department responsible for funding and administration of the YHPP program. Also informing the funding application were the results of several community consultations as well as a statement of commitment from participating agencies (Reconnect
Internal Documents Funding Application 18 August, 1999). In December 1999, the project, subsequently renamed as Reconnect Gold Coast, received funding as a ‘collaborative’ model of service delivery. Its purpose was twofold. First, it was to work specifically as a support service agency for homeless young people and their families. A second condition of funding required that Reconnect work with other agencies to provide a coordinated approach to early intervention into youth homelessness, operating on best practice principles of integrated service provision and action research (Reconnect Internal Document, Application for Funding 18 August 1998).

Reconnect: The Network

Reconnect commenced with 27 agencies all involved in the delivery of local services to young homeless people and their families. The inaugural agencies included, in addition to the Reconnect service agency – Yhes House, Gold Coast Project for Homeless Youth, Rosies’ Youth Mission, Centracare, Gold Coast Youth Service, Mission Employment, Department of Families Youth and Community care (now Department of Families), Smith Family, CentreLink, Juvenile Aid Bureau, Education Queensland, Lifeline Gold Coast, Gold Coast Sexual Health Clinic, Queensland Drug Alert Council, Regional Extended Family Services (REFS), Ridgeway TAFE, Nerang Youth Space, Multi-cultural Families Association, Kuronsal, Streetco, Mirakai, SWITCON, ATOD, Community Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS), a child counsellor and an adolescent narrative therapist (Reconnect Brochure, 2000). This collection represented a mix of local and national community based organisations and both federal and state government representatives. Such a wide variety of agencies in the network composition was sought to ensure that duplication and waste were prevented and that comprehensive support was available throughout the North Coast area. As the Reconnect Submission Document (August, 1998) stated, “The intention was to provide a network model of collaborative and coordinated working relationships with these agencies”. The rationale for the formation of the network and the terms of engagement between agencies was outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding:

Having an established alliance, rather than ad hoc groupings which might be formed from time to time, will allow for the development of consistent service delivery, timely response to client group needs, shared resources, improved service delivery through elimination of duplication of waste, and improved
access to services by the client group. (Reconnect Early Intervention Network Memorandum of Understanding 24/8/00).

With its strong emphasis on client service delivery and a realisation of the efficiencies that could occur through joint endeavours and shared information, this official statement of intention largely reflects the top four reasons for network involvement. Further, it indicates that Reconnect was essentially about coordination of existing services.

Although the Reconnect Network commenced operation with a membership of 27 government and non-government organisations, over the duration of its existence the membership composition has been very fluid (Interview, 4 July 2002; Interview 22 November 2002; Interview, 14 May 2003). This fluidity was the result of funding and organisational changes to the participating organisations that produced high levels of staff mobility and, at times, the closure or restructuring and therefore refocusing of organisations. Eventually the network membership settled to around 20 regular members with a core functioning group of between five and 10 members (Interview, 4 July 2002; Reconnect Minutes 2000-2002).

**Integrating Through Relationships**

The network members were aware that bringing such a diverse set of organisations together into a collective or network type arrangement would depend on the formation of improved relationships between agencies. As one network member described the situation: “We knew that relationship building was central to the network’s operation and especially to achieve change and outcomes” (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November, 2001). It was acknowledged that most of these agencies had previously been, if not outright competitors for funds, then at least there had been a reluctance to move beyond fairly superficial ways of working together. One respondent attributed this to the “simultaneous situation of competition and cooperation often characteristic of community agencies’ relationships” (Interview, 14 May 2003).

In view of this desire to ‘work better together’, and because of the mandate or directive from Family and Community Services (FACS), the funding body, to coordinate and collaborate, the newly formed body based its operation on forming tight integration relationships between agencies. It was envisaged that such a model based on the notion of tightly integrated and seamless service delivery would lead to improved services. However, it was quickly apparent that
despite the desire for a more integrated mode of service delivery many of the agencies were not prepared, or able, to go this far. The following statement highlights the problem:

On formation and without clarification of our goals we went straight into forming tight integration through formal relational and centralised authority. This did not work well as we had no common purpose or goals and no real trust. Consequently we had to take a big step back to form better relationships and trust before we could move forward again (Interview, 20 February 2002).

It was recognised that with a limited history or experience in working together, few existing relationships between the organisations and limited trust, it was necessary to spend time learning about each other’s organisations and their operation and building relationships. The need to take time to build relationships and trust was apparent in the following statement:

We tried earlier to bring things together in a bit more formalised way, but people were not there, they were not in the space necessary for that type of commitment. The network was just not in the position to do anything more than meet and share information. So we had to review things and say ‘let’s take this one step at a time’. Let’s spend some time building some relationships before we try to tie things down (Interview, 4 July, 2002).

The relationship-building process took place and was facilitated around a regular schedule of network meetings as well as a succession of workshops focused on determining the direction that the network could take and beginning to develop joint program plans. Relationship building and trust were further enhanced through the closer casework arrangements network members became involved in as part of their commitment to the network ideal. As a result of these processes it was claimed that, “there is shared commitment and shared understanding, and strong relationships” (Interview, 4 July 2002). The notion of ‘understanding’ was a frequently mentioned characteristic of the relationships within this network. In this situation it refers to the shared sense of vision or insight developed between members and has particular emphasis on enhancing the provision of services to clients. An example of this use of the term can be seen in the following: “We just have an understanding between us that this is how things work “ (Interview, 4 July 2002).
Despite the broad agreement for coordinated action, bringing together and maintaining such a wide array of agencies into a networked arrangement whereby services worked together was initially not an easy task. It was stated: “Getting to that point took a lot of commitment. There was commitment to change ways of working. There was a strong acknowledgment of the need for relationships to be built and people worked hard at this”. However, this initial phase of relationship building was followed by a period of hesitation about the ability to work this way when the funding was received. Much of this concern centred on the risks perceived from a loss of organisational autonomy. One respondent reflected on the early phase of the network:

Back then there was hesitation. People were really unsure on how this worked, how it would happen. There was hesitation around making the commitment to come on board. There has been a big shift in trust. They realise now that they have not lost anything in coming on board. The experience has largely been beneficial. You know that it will be better. You know that it will be in the best interest to go this way but you are not really sure how it will happen (Interview, 4 July 2002).

But as one network member acknowledged, moving forward was problematised by the “fact that they were not really sure about what the terms coordination and collaboration meant – just that it was broadly ‘working together’” (Interview, 22 November 2001). In order to guide their actions and maintain network linkages a range of network management processes and instruments were developed. These included a memorandum of understanding, the use of brokerage funds, regular network meetings and a network coordinator. These integration mechanisms coincide with responses given by respondents to the question what processes or mechanisms assist in the way this network operates? Table 9 sets out the full set of network linkage mechanisms identified by respondents. For ease of analysis, these responses are listed from most to least prominent.
Table 9: Reconnect - Linkage Mechanisms
(n=16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linkage Mechanisms</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings of the network</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in joint case management</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing liaison between network members</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in working parties</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in joint ventures/programming</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well developed rules &amp; procedures</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination committees</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in reference groups</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong lateral communication</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular telephone contact between members</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops to develop mutual implementation strategies</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal meetings between members</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication mostly directed downward</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences to discuss issues &amp; set direction</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Network Management: Integration Mechanisms**

Essentially as a sub-project of the Reconnect Project, the network initially operated under the auspice of the parent body, the Gold Coast Youth Homelessness Project. However, in this arrangement it had its own governing processes including a steering and management committee. Comprising all network members the Steering Committee was the overall direction setting body of the network. The Steering Committee was described as “basically a consultation body … that the network consults regarding decision making and changes to anything regarding the network” (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November 2001). Responsibility for the operation and function of the network sat with the smaller management committee where decision-making “happens in the group, using the agenda of the meeting to actually put things forward” (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November 2001). However, in practice, the task of bringing together and fusing the disparate group into collective action largely fell to the Reconnect Manager as the network coordinator.
Integral Role of the Network Coordinator

The focus group and interviews revealed that within the Reconnect Network, there was a strong reliance on the network manager “to bring people together and make things happen” (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November 2001). The specific attributes of the network manager or driver were described as someone who had the ability to ‘nicely’ bring people together, someone who knows how to work with others and take the network in the direction that everybody wants. This was variously described as the ‘velvet glove’ (Interview, 22 November 2001) or the ‘bright light’ to which others are attracted (Interview, 11 November 2002). The critical role of the network coordinator in achieving cohesion between members was described:

I think that it is important – with all the networks that I have been involved with, it has only been as good as the participation of the person, or people, or organisation driving it. And once that wanes the whole network won’t work as well. So I think that is why Reconnect works so good – because there is a paid coordinator to drive it and coming back to the organisations to monitor and secure their participation (Interview, 22 August 2002).

However, some members were very clear that while the network manager was significant to providing the drive for the network it was the network itself that provides the direction of the network operation. For example, it was stated:

I suppose it’s that – that while there’s a paid person to organise [the network] – the driving of issues comes from the members themselves (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November 2001).

In addition to the emphasis on building relationships, and the role of the committee and network coordinator, Table 9 demonstrates there are a number of other linkage mechanisms that were used by the Reconnect Network to maintain the connections between the network members. The principal linkage or integration mechanisms identified related to regular meetings of the network, ongoing liaison particularly through their involvement in joint case management for clients. Other, less prominently acknowledged, tactics included involvement in working parties and participation in joint programs.

Other Integrating Mechanisms

A key initial integrating mechanism for the Reconnect Network was the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed by the network members to
guide their interactions and service delivery processes. Essentially the MOU set out the terms of engagement for the network in which each party agrees to retain its own autonomy, structure and management system, but forms a new collective entity (Reconnect MOU, 2000).

Another key integrating mechanism utilised by Reconnect Network centres on the distribution of a set of funds that can be used to assist network members to provide more seamless casework service provision. An annual allocation of funds to support the brokerage process between network services is provided as part of Reconnect’s funding agreement through FACS. On the integrative potential of these brokerage funds, it was stated they:

... pull the services together into an integrated package. In doing so the clients do not have to ‘work their way around the agencies’. The services are brought together by the broker. Also with brokerage no one ‘owns’ the client. There is a sharing of resources and a sharing of power (Interview, 22 November 2001).

The ability of brokerage funds to ‘smooth over’ network relations and tap into and utilise the diversity of people within the network was also acknowledged:

We use the brokerage funds as a process or a tool to encourage partnerships and relationships within the network (Interview, 4 July 2002).

Respondents identified that the ongoing interactions around case management arrangements also provided a basis for network members to ‘work together’. These meetings and interactions provide opportunities for members to further develop their collective identity and better understand the operational context of their ‘partners’. Although the decision making around the allocation of funds was done by a group it nevertheless gave Reconnect as the holder of the funds and particularly the Reconnect Manager as network coordinator a more central and therefore powerful role in the network. Financial brokerage of services on behalf of a client through the use of a devolved budget is a typical network strategy and locates the broker as a central player (Mandell, 1988; Knoke, 1990).

As a result of their emphasis on improved relationships, the use of a range of integration mechanisms and, in particular the role of the network driver, the Reconnect Network was able to secure some positive and different ways of working to achieve coordinated outcomes. As the next section demonstrates these outcomes occurred at different levels of operation.
Initial Network Results

At the service delivery level of the network’s operation there has been an identified improvement in case management processes as a consequence of the network’s improved relations (Reconnect, 2001a). Through the cluster of agencies coming together around the client the overlap of effort involved when clients have to go to individual agencies for each aspect of their intervention and the resulting duplication of services is avoided or at least minimised. This process is facilitated by the enhanced knowledge and understanding that network members have of each other’s services. Further, as the following comment indicates, because of these relationships service delivery is improved because:

… people know what the others offer and how to access it, people are more prepared to go the extra distance to help out and stick to a problem until it is solved. Sustainability comes from relations and commitment to each other, the ideal and the client. All of this enhances the service provided to the client (Interview, 4 July 2002).

Beyond the case management aspect of coordination of services, the network has also made some early some inroads into integrative action through both cooperative, and even collaborative arrangements. A key early example of this was evident in the co-location arrangement in place between the Reconnect and the Choices projects in which these agencies share office space. Over time, as a result of the Choices projects’ ongoing funding problems this co-location arrangement expanded to include the subsidising by Reconnect of Choices’ overheads and the provision of some key operating resources.

The network has also facilitated the evolution and implementation of a number of joint projects including the Six-Eleven Project that involved three network agencies combining to provide an after-hours support program to homeless young people and their families. Left to the resources of an individual agency this service would not have been possible. However, when three agencies combined their staff, knowledge and funding it limited the overall commitment and enabled the service to be provided (Interview, 11 November 2002). Further, respondents indicated that through the professional and personal relationships and trust that has been built over time some network members have been able to ‘work outside of the box’ to creatively use existing resources. While for some agencies involvement in these collaborative did not provide any immediate outcomes there was a realisation that there was a long-term benefit. A secondary outcome of this
joint project was the demonstration to other agencies they could work together to get outcomes and that sometimes one agency might do something for another just because it is the right thing to do and it benefits the broader membership and the community. This rationale is explained:

So even though this project meant more work for Reconnect and we did not receive any immediate benefit, the trust and rapport and good will that came from us working together on a project – that we showed that we were ‘not in it for us’ but the community and our partner – we received benefits in the long term. These are closer relations with Families and better access to decision-making (Interview, 4 July 2002).

These ‘showcase’ examples of coordination and collaboration were also undertaken to demonstrate to other network members the benefits of the multiplier effect of collective work and to reduce their anxieties about lost autonomy. As one respondent observed:

Some people have gone ‘wow, I did that and nothing really bad happened. ‘I haven’t lost anything’... People may have lost some autonomy but they have gained a lot more. And, because we have changed the way we work together, we are able to challenge other systems and sort of get more out of the process of coming together (Interview, 4 July 2002).

It was also acknowledged that participation in the network afforded members the space, and scope and economy of scale to do things differently (Interview, 22 August 2002). That is, through the collective resources, support and influence of the network it was able to begin to challenge entrenched systems and ways of working.

In our thinking we have started to challenge how the community sector has traditionally been, and how we view the network or networks. You know for many it seems that being in a network is about once a week going along to a meeting and having sticky buns and sharing information – not very productive stuff but also not very risky. You just went along and heard an update of what each agency was doing, that was a network. You know there was not other interaction or limited interaction between meetings and you did not really do anything different. It was sort of business as usual, each of us working in our own little areas. Through the network, through coming together around the network they, the members, see the big picture, not just their little individual bits (Interview, 4 July 2002).
Despite the shift in operation and the benefits achieved it was acknowledged that full involvement in the advanced networked action and adoption of the collaborative ideals was restricted to a few core members. For the remainder, participation in the network was restricted to information sharing and monitoring developments to ensure the best interests of their parent agency were met. Over time, as a result of the inability of some organisations to sustain commitment, coupled with changes to the sector, the number of agencies involved in the network was reduced to between 18 and 20 organisations.

This initial phase of development of Reconnect shows that although it was originally formed around coordination goals and was involved in some case management, joint planning and action, and even had made some tentative moves toward collaborative efforts, its actions were mostly characterised by information sharing and monitoring of outcomes. Thus, when the characteristics of the initial phase of the Network are aligned against the Integration Continuum it can be seen that Reconnect can be defined primarily as networking although there are clear aspects that suggest it was moving toward a network.

**Network Analysis – Confirming the Diagnosis**

As with the two previous networked arrangements, a process of network analysis was applied to the Reconnect network to confirm or deny the above diagnosis based on the case study findings. The application of network analysis for Reconnect replicated that followed for the Chief Executive Officers and SIP. The only variation related to the previously referred to situation of sectoral fluidity which meant that although only 16 of the available 18 members completed the network linkage survey, most also referred to linkages (included connections) to previous or lapsed member organisations. As a consequence the network maps included both existing and some lapsed members. The effect of this, similar to the SIP network is that the network maps are likely to display breadth rather than intensity of connections.
Figure 15: Reconnect Network - Shared Information

The network map for the variable of shared information is characterised by a very close set of information exchanges between a core of ten network members. Underpinning this dense cluster information ties was a strong mat of blue or medium information linkages as well as a substantial number of weak or green linkages. This indicates that, although there was a core group of members heavily involved in information, for the Reconnect network information sharing was a key aspect of the operation of this network.
Figure 16: Reconnect Network – Joint Funding

With respect to the network variable of joint funding the Reconnect network displayed a small set of weak links between a group of seven agencies with one agency or node acting as the primary linkage point. Node N7 is presented as isolated from the core seven agencies indicating that although it was nominated by at least one agency as involved in joint funding arrangements, it was not reciprocated.

From this map it is apparent that, other than some limited joint funding arrangements between a core set of agencies, the Reconnect network is not involved in the more substantial resource exchanges expected in coordination arrangements. The linkage of the agencies by a central nodal point is possibly explained in terms of the brokerage role the Reconnect agency adopted within the network.
The network map for the service contracts variable is comprised of all weak, green linkages that are largely disconnected and quite distant in their connections. From this it can be assumed that service contracting between agencies is not a feature of the Reconnect network.
The network map for joint program planning is represented predominantly by green or weak links with a blue or medium link apparent only between a small cluster of agencies or nodes. This indicates that while there is a breadth of general joint program planning, the more intensive joint efforts in this area are between a few agencies. This is supported by the qualitative information that found that a core set of agencies were more likely to be involved in the planning of joint programs within the network.
The network picture shows that there are 12 agencies involved in medium strength linkages associated with contact referrals. Of these 12 agencies, at least five are clustered close to a centre point, indicating that their links are both dense and tight and that these agencies would use each other to secure information or contacts not readily available through their parent organisations’ contacts. The remaining blue, or medium linkages are fairly evenly arrayed out from this core signifying that although a medium degree of contact referral transpires between organisations linked by this variable, it is not as dense a connection. Underneath the medium linkages is a much larger mat of loose linkage implying that for many of the agencies contact referral is not a regular feature of their interaction. This finding suggests that other than those agencies represented by the blue linkages, the network members do not use each other for accessing information.
Figure 20: Reconnect Network - Reference Groups

The network map developed around the Reconnect network members’ participation in reference groups and working parties displays a collection of thirteen agencies or nodes connected by medium linkages. This cluster is comprised of two cluster groupings each comprised of between three and four centralised agencies with additional satellite agencies attached. Such a linkage pattern implies that there are two network members are likely to participate in two distinct sets of groups. Along with these medium linkages there is also a base of green, weaker linkages. In all, the network map indicates that Reconnect network members are quite well, but not densely, connected.
Reconceptualising Reconnect

The network analysis process highlighted that for Reconnect information sharing and to a lesser extent reference group participation and contact referral were the most prominent features of its operation. The network also exhibited some dense, but weak patterns of relationship around joint programming. For the remaining network variables of joint funding, contract referral and service contracts, Reconnect demonstrated limited interagency linkage. These results suggest that although Reconnect members were involved in some joint planning, in general this was left to a small core group, with the remainder of the participants involved in lower level integration aspects such as information sharing and participation in reference groups. The concentration in this network on these aspects indicates a lower level of commitment and low risk interaction, synonymous with cooperation. Based on this, Reconnect could be characterised primarily as networking but it is acknowledged that some members are clearly involved in coordination through a network process.

Gold Coast Family Connections

Toward the end of 2001, after a period of operation in which a number of gains toward more cooperative, coordinated and even tentative moves toward collaborative ways of working were beginning to be developed around the Reconnect network and its members, a proposal was put forward that the network become an incorporated body. Forming an incorporated body was based on the idea that this would enable the network to apply for funding as a formal collective as well as providing a higher level of creditability and legitimacy in the broader public sector arena. That is, there was increasing evidence of governments wanting and even demanding that to receive government funds community agencies had to demonstrate their ability to work together in more collaborative ways (Interview 22 July, 2002; Interview 11 November, 2002). As a consequence there was a realisation by many community-based agencies that it was necessary to band together not just to receive funds but also to compete against the ‘larger and increasingly for-profit’ agencies that were beginning to win contracts for services (Reconnect 2001b). As one respondent reflected on the move toward incorporation:

I suppose another motivation is that the government told us that no one would get funding unless we could demonstrate we were working together. You know, we had to be integrated, and to do it collaboratively. … And we decided that rather than
government set the conditions and tell us that we had to work together and how. We decided that we would turn the tables and say ‘well we want to work together anyway and we are doing this because we think it is the right thing not because you are telling us to’ (Interview, 4 July 2002).

There was also a strong sense that similar to other incorporated network bodies Reconnect would also be better able to “provide a more seamless service to clients, reduce confusion about service issues, better pool resources and administrative costs, and most importantly give network members more control over their work” (Reconnect 2001b). On the vision behind incorporation it was stated: “This was something that we had always intended” (Interview, 4 July 2002). Other members, however, have alternative recollections of the shift to this more formal, legalised approach to integration, indicating that it emanated from the network coordinator:

Her vision was that the network would be incorporated so that it would be a legally accountable body of agencies, service providers who could own and operate a Reconnect service as well as put in for other sources of funding. Being that we are a collective, we would know what is needed on the ground, we could come together with I suppose more creditability and power in our tender that we are working together, which we believed was where the government wanted their service providers to be. So … the network voted on all of that and I suppose that is how it came to be (Interview, 11 November 2002).

Despite the variation in perspectives, the network ‘embarked on the road to incorporation’ (Interview, 4 July 2002). However, in doing so there was a realisation given the previous experiences that moving too quickly was counter productive. On the need to spend time bringing the network members to the proposal it was stated:

[you] Have to move slowly in this network. There is a lot of history at play. If you move too quickly they will think that they have been railroaded (Interview, 4 July 2002).

As a consequence considerable time and effort was put into conducting workshops and information sessions to provide network members with the opportunity to learn more about incorporation. As an example, a workshop was held on 12 October 2001 at which a similar process by a Victorian network was showcased and discussed (Reconnect Early Intervention Network – Incorporation Workshop, 12 October 2001). Through this workshop and other subsequent meetings and processes including a feedback survey, network members were
given the opportunity to discuss, question and consider the impact of incorporation for the network and their agencies. The importance of spending time working through these issues was highlighted in the following statement:

Because we were really concerned about not losing the relationships that had been established already we spent time discussing what would be the criteria for membership, would it be individuals that were members or organisation, what would be the structure. But underpinning all of those considerations we were clear that the relationships could not be lost (Interview, 4 July 2002).

Although not all network members were fully supportive a collective decision was made that Reconnect would move to become an incorporated body. The reluctance of the part of some agencies to become involved in the incorporation was attributed by one respondent as a lack of understanding of the philosophy of the network, a continuing lack of trust and a reluctance by some agencies to let go of individual autonomy (Interview, 4 July 2002). Others, on reflection, considered that while those agencies did not demonstrate their previously stated commitment to the ideals of the network there was at least a level of honesty about their ability to involve themselves and their agency in a collective process at the expense of individual autonomy (Interview, 22 November 2002).

But the reality was that you could not please everyone and we had to go with the majority, leaving a ‘window of opportunity’ for the others to jump on board when they want to. But initially, those that have come on board are those that are very passionate about what it is that we are doing (Interview, 4 July 2002).

Under the terms of Incorporation membership of the new network took two forms – full and affiliate. Essentially only those agencies that were community based or non-government and prepared to give an undertaking to participate in collaborative endeavours, including funding arrangements, were eligible for full membership and its benefits such as voting rights. The remaining organisations, including government agencies, were able to participate and support the network as affiliate members, however were unable to vote on decisions (Gold Coast Family Connections Inc. Rules of Association, 2002). The network achieved incorporation status in April 2002 with 18 organisations assuming full membership status, with the remaining, including all of the previous government departments and two community based organisations, as affiliate members. It was generally considered by respondents (confirmed from the network meeting
minutes) that the move to incorporation engendered, at least initially, a renewed sense of commitment and enthusiasm for the network and its activities. This shift in network dynamics and action was exemplified by the following comment:

It has been three months since incorporation now. And there is a great energy, great enthusiasm, and increasing ownership by members in taking the network forward ... I don't really feel like I am in the driver seat anymore, which is great. I am still very involved but don't feel the same pressure to make things work to drive the process. The network has taken on that role now and they are doing it really well. ... Since Incorporation I have noticed a much stronger ownership by the members and they are clearly enjoying the process (Interview, 4 July 2002).

The increased involvement of the network members meant that the network coordinator no longer had the key driver function and increasingly network members took responsibility for decision-making and direction setting (Interview, 4 July 2002). However, in order to support and maintain the network and drive the incorporated body an extended model of support and service provision was required.

A New Structure and Model of Operation

This new model centred on the Gold Coast Family Connections network becoming the parent body for the Reconnect Program. By the network becoming an incorporated body that had direction over its former auspice agency it also represented a unique twist to the traditional ways of organising and providing services. The nature of this uniqueness is explained:

It almost sounds paradoxical that there is a network tendering for another network (Interview, 11November 2002).

Along with the revised structural model of operation a new staffing structure was also proposed. This involved the Director of Reconnect becoming the key support person for the Connect Network and the employment of a part-time operations coordinator to administer and manage the Reconnect service component. Based on this enhanced network model and structure a funding application was submitted to the federal funding body Family and Community Services. Having ‘weathered’ the incorporation process and submitted an application to FACS to support the revised model of operation, the feeling within the network was positive. But by the middle of 2002, three interrelated events focusing on the introduction of a competitive funding offer, financial constraints and the loss of the
network driver and key staff occurred placing the network and the relationships that it had achieved under strain.

From a Network to Networking

The first occurrence relates to the decision by the Department of Families to introduce a funding program that was based on examples of collaborative action. In view of its mandate the Connect Network saw itself as uniquely placed to make an application for some of these funds. To this end a meeting was called to discuss a proposal to prepare a joint submission. However, following the meeting when network members returned to their ‘parent agencies’ it became apparent that while the agencies had agreed to the terms of the incorporation including the collective application for funds (Gold Coast Family Connections Inc. Rules of Association, 2002), there was ‘a lack of understanding of what this really would require’ (Interview, 22 August, 2002; Interview, 11 November 2002). As a result, two of the bigger organisations pulled back from full membership because of the funding situation and the desire by the bigger agencies to ‘go for it themselves’. A respondent commented on this reversion to self-interest at the detriment to collective action:

What is happening now is that there seems to be a bit of a pulling back of some of the agencies because of, particularly, around the funding rounds that are coming from the state government … ironically around collaborative programs. They [network member organisations] seem to be going back to their old habits of self–interest and agency protection rather than saying how can we best serve the needs of young people and use innovative ways and means (Interview, 22 July 2002).

Another respondent identified the difficulty in moving beyond the ‘single-agency’ focus:

When we had that whole tendering process, one of the agencies that was going to be involved in the tender, went back to their management committee and they were instructed to put in a separate tender. [As a consequence] they had to change their membership from full to affiliate. There is still the ‘talking the talk’ but when it comes down to letting go of some stuff and go ‘yep, I am going to be a part of this rather than do whatever I want on the outside’, the management committee of the representative may not prescribe to the values or may not be able to (Interview, 11 November 2002).

This is possibly a timely reminder that individuals, while members of networks, are not always the decision-makers of their organisations. It was observed: “The
Management Committee of the representatives may not prescribe to the same values [as the network] or may not be able to” (Interview, 11 November, 2002). Nevertheless, interviews revealed that through the intervention of the Network Coordinator a mutually agreeable resolution was achieved, enabling the reluctant agencies to continue to participate in the network but which limited their involvement in decision-making. The process was described as follows:

The two organisations were reminded of their obligations within the network and found that they could not fulfil those criteria. However, they didn’t leave the Connect family. They just changed their membership and still came along to the General meeting afterwards, which was good. So it seemed like it was resolved adequately (Interview, 22 July 2002).

However, despite the successful resolution of the issue, as a number of respondents have commented, the situation did create at least some tension and probably some soul searching about the ability of independent organisations to work together so closely. Indeed, it was later stated:

We are probably more highly cooperative rather than strategically collaborative and integrative. I mean if we were to become fully integrated then a lot of the services that are in the network would become just one service under the one roof with lots of arms so that you could have economy of scale and management of administrative tasks (Interview, 11 November 2002).

There was also the view, strongly expressed, that as a result of government tendering process around the issue of collaborative action both with respect to the current initiative and previous endeavours there was:

… even more fragmentation and competition here now. Sometimes [this is] dressed up as cooperation and collaboration but really people are looking after their own programs. (Interview, 11 November 2002).

A related perspective on the issue of network participation was:

They come along because money drives everything, unfortunately. Now that’s painting with a broad brush and there are people there with higher ideological goals. But there are also a lot of people there to get more funding to do this, that or the other. They were driven by money (Interview, 22 July 2002).

For all these respondents there was a sense that government, ironically by trying to achieve or enhance collaboration within the community sector, had in fact
‘undone much of what had been achieved’ (Interview, 10 July 2002; Interview, 22 July 2002; Interview, 11 November 2002). In general the impact of government funding processes on the community relations was described as “quite detrimental” (Interview, 11 November 2002; Interview, 14 May 2003).

The second contributing factor to the ‘unravelling of Connect’ centred on the failure of the network to secure additional funds from FACS to support the extended model of service delivery proposed. As a consequence of the lack of funds for a full time network coordinator to support the network operations the Executive had to ‘take up the shortfall’. The situation was explained:

> With the lack of funding that model wasn’t sustainable so it had to return to a full time coordinator position model, which leaves the Executive carrying the burden of the work, the day-to-day work [of the network]. And we are all doing that on a voluntary capacity so that makes it unsustainable. In fact as I said, it won’t, the network won’t grow to its potential without the Executive Committee being supported with someone to do the work, without someone to do the networking stuff, bringing people into the centre (Interview, 11 November 2002).

These factors, coupled with the subsequent resignation of the network coordinator, put additional pressure on the network Executive to take the project forward, follow through on the incorporation and auspicing of the Reconnect project and maintain direction and control over the network’s projects. The impact of the loss and importance of the driver function from the network to maintain network cohesion and directed action was highlighted in the following statement:

> Like all organisations you have got to have good communications. And to have good communication you need to have a person or persons that really have the time to develop it. And I think that [the network coordinator’s] role in the whole thing has been upfront and has demonstrated leadership and been a driver in the whole thing. And now when that role has been pruned back that far I think myself it has become a problem (Interview, 22 August 2002).

Another respondent was more specific on the loss of cohesion and direction arising from the departure of the network coordinator:

> The analogy I use is that it is like a light bulb that is turned on and is bright and all the moths are drawn to it and when that person in that position is gone it is like turning the bulb off and all the moths fluttering around everywhere without any key direction because they are all flat out doing their own thing trying to survive (Interview, 11 November 2002).
The end result of these events was that there was a winding back of some of the network actions and the Executive's attention was directed to attending to issues relating to the change in auspice, dealing with the financial concerns confronting its operations and running the Reconnect Service that had gone into decline (Interview 14 May 2003). The focus was therefore on internal network operational issues and not the network as a whole. On this it was stated:

I think that there was a bit of a crisis … but it was not felt at the network level. It was felt more at a few key roles … so we weren’t able to bring in the whole network and have a contribution from everyone to help sort out the crisis (Interview, 11 November 2002).

A continuing loss of membership also impacted on work of the Executive Committee, since there were few remaining full affiliate members on which to draw from to make up the Executive.

And when we looked at the list there was only seven full members, three of which already sit on the management committee, so it doesn’t really leave many people to pick up a key role (Interview, 11 November 2002).

As a result of the intense work required to keep both the network and the Reconnect program operational, the Executive became insular in its operations. Because it was meeting at least weekly and often more frequently a very cohesive unit was forged. This level of interaction and the decision-making that was occurring outside of the network proper led to an emerging sense of isolation and even distrust by some of the other network members (Interview, 14 May 2003). Reflecting on the operation of the Gold Coast Family Connections one respondent indicated that it was not entirely cohesive and in fact exhibited characteristics that were much more aligned with networking:

Honestly, I see the network as a few key people who have similar service philosophies, who have similar values, very much about similar value systems. And I suppose, I would go back to the bright light analogy, that the core focused on that goal, on the collaboration stuff, and other people, for whatever reason feel that it is important to be part of the network for information and participation. And it really is that there are a few core people that do the work. Beyond that it is monthly meeting participation. Again, that is understandable; people are busy (Interview, 11 November 2002).
In this way, some of the members themselves were able to identify that the network was not connected at the level that had originally been intended or that was necessary to sustain joint action.

**Future Prospects: Back to a Network?**

In late February 2003, after a period in which there were few staff and limited resources, a new project coordinator and several other staff members were appointed to Reconnect, the agency. This has been said to have led to a ‘rejuvenation of interest in the network’ and more enthusiasm by network members to participate more actively in the operations of the network (Interview, 14 May 2003). There are now 20 network members most of whom have been present at the past three meetings or have sent their apologies and allocated proxy voters (GCFC Minutes, March and April 2003). In order to foster more participation and ownership of the network and its operations, the constitution of the network has recently been amended to enable all network members to participate in decision-making processes. Further, as evidenced by the Reconnect Network meeting minutes, the emphasis of the group has refocused on the achievement of its coordinative ideals. Recent examples of this include the co-location of three agencies within the Reconnect administrative centre as well as agreements by some agencies to provide financial and administrative support to a network member who is experiencing funding difficulties (GCFC Minutes, March and April 2003). Commenting on the present situation of the Gold Coast Family Connections Network:

I believe that this is a network. That is, it is coordinating the collective efforts of a number of organisations to achieve agreed mutual goals. There are clear processes in place to make this work. In fact, because Connect is now an incorporated body, a legal entity, that has specific requirements such as regular meetings, endorsed minutes, and a meeting quorum to operate, it can never really revert to a more informal networking arrangement. If that happened it would be against the constitution and would mean that the network was effectively not meeting its legal requirements (Interview 14 May, 2003).

The incorporated status of Gold Coast Family Connections, with its legal regiments for regular and formalised meeting processes, and structured processes around decision making, has meant that there is an extra incentive for the network to remain focused on its goal of coordination.
Conclusion

As a result of funding pressures and an awareness of the growing levels of interdependence of service providers at a local level, Reconnect formed as a coordination network to bring together the full set of agencies involved in delivering services to homeless young people in the Gold Coast region. The highly functional orientation of Reconnect was reflected in the integration mechanisms employed to bring together this set of often previously competing agencies into a collective entity driven by the influence of the network coordinator. Despite the efforts of a core set of network members to involve themselves in joint action and even some systems change, the bulk of the network members restricted their involvement to information sharing and business as usual.

This generally lower level of integration commitment or intensity of relationship for the total Reconnect Network membership, beyond the small core, was demonstrated in the results of the network analysis. This process showed that, of the six integration variables (shared information, joint funding, service contracts, joint planning, contact referral and reference group participation), shared information was the only variable identified as a core undertaking. For the remainder of the variables, with the exception of reference group participation, which secured a medium level of commitment by the small core of participants, there was little effort by members to move beyond basic inter-agency requirements. In view of these limited linkages between network members and since information sharing represents the lowest level integration measure Reconnect was defined as occupying the networking end of the Integration Continuum. However, it is likely that with its newly incorporated status and the revised enthusiasm of the membership that Reconnect will be able to meet the stated goals of coordinated service provision for homeless young people in the Gold Coast region.
CHAPTER EIGHT

NETWORK DIFFERENTIATION AND THE EMERGING ROLE OF CENTRAL AGENCIES

Introduction

The previous chapters drew on qualitative data to construct three network case studies to examine their evolution, operation, governance and structural arrangements. Through a process of network analysis the linkages between the network members were mapped and measured to uncover the hidden topology of their structure and provide additional, alternative insights into the levels and types of connection. However, while mapping and measuring the structure of networks and the linkages that create a network provided a starting point for explaining connections and roles, on its own (Hay, 1998), even when accommodated by case study, it discloses little of the strategies by which network members limit and define practices between organisations. This chapter returns to the qualitative data generated from the focus groups and interviews and quantitative data to determine how network members/participants themselves understand and accommodate the differences and the emerging role of central agencies in these increasingly networked environments.

In this regard, three questions will be addressed:

(1) How do people in networks understand and use the terms and develop strategies in the management of their operations?
(2) What explains the variations in networks? Why are these variations important to the operation of the networks?
(3) What is the role of central agencies of government in networked environments?

In answering these questions, this chapter proceeds in two stages. First, it will unpack the discourse that has developed around networks. Specifically it will examine how network members conceptualise and understand the language or discourse of networks. In doing so, it will apply the conceptualisations to examine strategic decision-making and management around networks. Second, drawing on the perceptions and experiences of a range of network participants, an emergent role for central agencies of state is developed.
NETWORK DISCOURSE: UNPACKING THE ‘3CS’

Although networks were seen as the structural aspect of the integration processes occurring within the three case studies, when integration was discussed by respondents it was mostly referred to in terms of the relationships between network members and their organisations. This section unpacks the various meanings assigned to the key integration terms of cooperation, coordination and collaboration to ascertain how respondents interpret, understand and apply these terms to their work within networked arrangements. The extant literature on networks has identified that the terms are often used interchangeably by practitioners and public administrators and argues that this has contributed to a limitation of their optimal impact (Mandell and Steelman, forthcoming; Lawson, 2002; Keast et al, forthcoming). The following statement from a practitioner encapsulates the problems related to an undifferentiated approach to integration:

They sound great these words don’t they? They are sort of motherhood statements really. It is pretty hard to disagree with them as desirables that you would want to achieve. But then I think that there is a need for unpacking what their meaning is... And I think that one of the problems is that these words often they mean different things to different people (Interview, 10 July 2002).

The purpose of this section is to examine how network participants understand, practice and apply the key integration terms and test whether network practitioners differentiate between integration mechanisms. It will subsequently compare these conceptualisations with those drawn from the literature and summarised in the Integration Continuum outlined in Chapter One.

To recapitulate, it is that argued that the ‘3Cs’ are situated along an Integration Continuum such that at one end is cooperation, which refers to loose linkages between organisations represented primarily by information sharing, autonomous services and mutual adjustment. In the middle is coordination with joint projects, planning and operation to a predetermined goal. At the far end is collaboration, characterised by strong relationships and linkages, shared-goals and projects, and systems change.

Cooperation

Consistent with the literature that locates cooperation at the lower level of the integration continuum, respondents also discussed this concept in terms of it
being an entrance point for integration. This underpinning basis of cooperation is implicit in the following statement:

… we are moving down the pathways that will require integration of services and it will be absolutely key to have some level of cooperation from [network members] (Interview, 21 February 2002).

**Individual Focus and Adjusting**

The interview process also revealed that network members perceived cooperation as an inter-organisational or inter-personal relationship that does not require any loss of individual organisational autonomy. Instead, cooperation was understood as a process in which integration is achieved through the voluntary and more or less spontaneous interaction of organisations. That is, organisations achieve mutual goals by being aware of and being accommodating to the needs of other organisations. This almost intrinsic understanding of cooperation is exemplified in the following:

Frankly, I don’t think we do it [collaboration] very well. But we do know how to cooperate. We can’t be effective without that cooperation because a number of different departments tend to be working with the same clients. So, we have to be able to take each other into consideration and adjust (Interview, 4 February 2002).

In this way although members may agree to ‘work together’ their involvement in each other’s operation is limited and they remain independent. Nevertheless, through an increased awareness and understanding of each other’s goals and characteristics agencies and enhanced communication agencies are able and more willing to make minor adjustments to their operations to enable mutual gains to occur. In this way, as Rogers and Whetten (1982) have identified mutual adjustment is the lowest and most informal form of integration mechanism based more or less spontaneous interaction. Groups come together in shorter term, informal relations that exist without any clearly defined mission, structure or planning effort. Each organisation retains authority and keeps resources separate, thus reducing risk.

**Loose links, Informality and Low Commitment**

The interview data also revealed that cooperation was frequently associated with a lower level of intensity in the relationship between parties, as well as the expectation for limited effort and input. Cooperative arrangements were
discussed in terms of loose connections between actors and agencies. This point was made clear in the following comment in which cooperation was compared with collaboration.

I suppose in my mind collaboration is a more active and intensive form of cooperation. More open, more sharing, more collegiate. I guess you can cooperate and comply, but collaboration to me means more wholehearted activity (Interview, 4 February 2002).

In this way cooperation was presented as requiring a lower level of commitment and a limited investment of effort or resources for the achievement of lower level integration goals. Further, the individualist emphasis of cooperation was identified:

I think that you can be cooperative but not working actively towards goals, not contributing (Interview, 21 January 2002)

The respondents’ views of cooperation presented it as merely the task of “getting along with others so that you could both achieve your own separate goals” (Interview, 5 August 2002). There was an understanding that although participants may agree to work together, this takes place at a limited level and no effort is made to establish common goals. Indeed, the sharing of resources and particularly information provides the basis for ongoing interaction in cooperative arrangements.

**Information Sharing and Low Risk**

The exchange of resources, and particularly the exchange of information was a frequently mentioned aspect of cooperative endeavours during the interview process. In many ways the sharing of information presents as the platform or base level of networked action.

Some of the members just come along for the information sharing opportunities. They don’t really get much more involved than that (Interview, 11 November 2002).

However, while there was an acknowledgement that cooperative relations provided an avenue to access information that might not have otherwise been available a number of respondents identified the self-interested emphasis of participation. That is, the motivation for some network members came from what they could get out of the process rather than what they were prepared to contribute (Interviews, 4 July; 22 July; and 11 November 2002). The following
statement highlights this perception of limited commitment to shared endeavours and individualist focus associated with cooperative relations and networking arrangements:

I see them as ‘advertiser meetings’ … where people come along to a network meeting really just to advertise what they are doing and find out what others are doing. There is no sharing beyond that. There are no ideals of joint operation or even joint programming. It is very focused on what can the organisation get out of this (Interview, 14 May 2003).

The understanding of loose linkages, limited commitment and individualist focus is consistent with the definition developed in the Integration Continuum. One argument put forward for the preference for this low level of commitment and participation was that many small agencies preferred this limited level of involvement over the higher risks associated with the higher level of involvement required in more tightly integrated endeavours. On this it was stated:

It is very frustrating, time consuming and costly for small agencies to come together in a collaborative arrangement. And when things remain the same … it just confirms that it is not worth taking the risk (Interview, 11 November 2002).

Although expressing some frustration at the low level of commitment exhibited by some organisations to participation in networked arrangements, the interview responses indicated that the level of informality and the looseness of connections around these types of networks at least facilitated information exchange as well as discussion and assessment of innovative projects and ideas. That is, although describing this limited level of involvement as ‘disappointing’ there was also acknowledgement that these ‘fringe dwellers’ did contribute to the networks by providing information that might not otherwise be available to the core members. This view is consistent with Grandovetter’s (1973; 1982) notion of the ‘strength of weak ties’, which proposed that loose links between people afforded access to more innovative or less routine information.

Emphasising loose linkages between people and organisations, the retention of organisational independence, and low resource commitment, respondents considered that the utility of cooperative endeavours was appropriate in situations in which minimal integration is required and risks of shared effort were limited. In this way, cooperation established the basis for higher levels of integration including, in the first instance, coordination.
Coordination

Coordination occupies the middle ground of the integration continuum. As such it is expected to display a medium level of inter-organisational linkage and increased commitment to joint endeavours usually demonstrated by more formalised and structured mechanisms.

Operating to Mandate and Some Loss of Autonomy

For those respondents able to define the term coordination it was presented as having a very instrumental function. That is, it was discussed as a process that required organisations to ‘work together’ to implement goals that had already been established, generally by persons of a higher level of authority external to the group. The following respondent made this process clear:

So if four people sitting around this table were coordinating, those goals would already be set by either one of us or externally come to us and we would be working to that goal without ever having to declare to each other, declare our understanding of that goal. And we could actually coordinate and have quite different views, different understandings of what the goal is, of why we are here in the room (Interview, 5 August 2002).

Also consistent across all the respondent groups was the observation that although working to a common goal, participating in a coordination network does not require a full understanding and appreciation of different perspectives of members. This is explained further:

It is just assumed that you are there representing your department on a particular issue and the other agencies are also representing their issue around that and we just continue to represent our own issues without any need to understand where each other is coming from (Interview, 5 August 2002).

In this way, respondents also acknowledged that even though members were involved in joint efforts it did not involve a total loss of organisational autonomy. The semi-autonomous status of coordination is described below:

Because they have actually to give up a function that they currently perform within their own agency – that is they will own the policy but not necessarily the service delivery (Interview, 21 February 2002).
Even though the arrangements were based on semi-autonomous arrangements there were still closer relationships than under the previous mode. Integration occurred in this model principally through an ordering of relations and structures.

So we have got a series of projects which are in addition to what departments are already doing and the fundamental need for coordination on the core delivery stuff is not being affected at all – other than where closer relationships are assisting people to work together (Interview, 4 February 2002).

Respondents were also able to identify that the shift from cooperation to coordination involved an increased contribution of resources, commitment and formality (Interviews 21 February and 3 September 2002). This requirement for increased effort and commitment and formality is elaborated in the next statement:

The second assumption was that maybe departments need a bit of a push along so let’s create another agenda and do some extra things that are about coordinating (Interview, 4 February 2002).

**Driving Action**

Further, the interviews revealed that coordination was often associated with the notion of ‘driving’ an initiative through government. This was particularly in relation to issues that might not be popular with all participating agencies but in which government had a higher order responsibility to produce a coherent or whole-of-government outcome.

Whereas, to me coordination often comes with ‘this is the endpoint that we want to put into place’, this is the process, and there is a tight management of that process (Interview, 3 September 2002).

In order to drive these coordination initiatives the management of network efforts was identified as an important task. Identified elements of good management strategies for coordination included holding regular meetings and ensuring that the tasks and goals were clearly established. Interdepartmental Committees and other mechanisms associated with predetermined terms of reference and strictly managed processes were described by a number of respondents as representing conventional coordination instruments (Interview, 21 February 2002).

It seems to me we have some fairly limited technologies available to us within government to achieve coordination. We lurch automatically to the good old IDC – Interdepartmental
Coordinating Committee as the main method of coordinating (Interview, 21 February 2002).

At least one respondent indicated:

Having an IDC, an Interdepartmental Committee, is to me a coordination function, and it is certainly not, in my experience in IDCs, is not about collaboration (Interview, 5 August 2002).

The limitation of these traditional methods of operating to maintain commitment were also noted:

It seems to me that what happens is that those types of groups start out with enthusiasm and senior representation and quickly the enthusiasm drains and increasingly junior officers are sent along (Interview, 21 February 2002).

Government’s preferential use of conventional ‘controlling’ coordination mechanisms was rationalised as resulting from its need to ensure that goals could be achieved (Interview, 5 August 2002). However, for those networks operating outside the orbit of direct government influence or ‘in the shadow of government’, although using traditional management strategies such as regular meetings and agendas to stay on track, network management was predominantly accomplished through alternative strategies and integration mechanisms. These centred primarily on the use of a strong central person or organisation to provide the direction and act as the facilitator (Interviews 4 July; 22 July; 11 November, 2002; and SIP Focus Group Respondent, Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 11 November 2001). This driver function was explained thus:

To get to coordinated efforts … sometimes you need someone or some agency to drive the process, to pull the network of agencies together around their mutual goals (Interview, 14 May 2003).

Specifically inherent in coordination in some respondents’ views were the time limits placed on processes and the need to ‘get on task’, often without any exploration of positions (Interview, 4 February 2002).

… there is no space for declaring a shared understanding and shared goals. There is no time for that stuff (Interview, 5 August 2002).

A further aspect of managing the relations between network members centres on the need to establish and maintain ‘directive collective action’. That is, setting an agenda that produces outcomes for the client group and not just for the
participating network members of their agencies. The inherent difficulties and skills involved in getting and keeping networks ‘on task’ are described below:

It’s about getting them all on board – all working to the same page – but yet, acknowledging that they are their own players. This requires a lot of effort. You have to be tactful, but firm, flexible but persistent, to keep it all together. You have to make sure that everyone is participating – at least at the level possible and there are occasional ‘runs on the board’, preferably win-win results (Interview, 4 July 2002).

It was generally agreed that while coordination represented an efficient way of driving through goals and undertaking joint tasks, collaboration afforded a way to move beyond this largely instrumental process to find new ways to ‘work better together’ (Interviews, 5 August and 3 September 2002).

Collaboration

Located at the far end of the integration continuum collaborative endeavours were characterised by more intense relationships and a greater perception of interdependence and a need for increased interconnection between participants (Konrad, 1996; Leutz, 1999). The descriptions given by respondents of their understanding and experience of collaborative efforts indicated that they saw collaboration as a more intensive process than the preceding integration forms and one that required much closer relationships, connections and even a blurring of the boundaries between agencies. The need in collaborative endeavours for higher levels of contribution, commitment and joint effort were frequently mentioned variables (Interviews, 4 February and 5 July 2002). For example, it was stated:

I would say that collaboration involves a higher level of commitment, contribution, working together activity around particular outcomes. This requires a higher level of not just commitment but contribution (Interview, 21 January 2002).

Shared Meanings and Missions

Within this mode respondents identified that shared goals, mission and the need for identifying common outcomes and meanings were critical aspects. More specifically, some practitioners identified the development of shared goals, joint dialogue and a higher level of trust as being the primary indicators of collaborative action or a collaborative relationship (over coordination and cooperation). Included within this perspective is the view that collaboration is
about the development of shared goals (Interviews, 21 January and 3 September 2002). This is exemplified as follows:

I definitely see a difference between the terms. The way I see collaboration is that if you and I, or the two people sitting in these chairs, are collaborating we share goals. We have a shared understanding of what we are all about and what we are doing together. We can assume shared values and we have probably had to work over time to get a level of trust around those shared goals and shared values. But before we started putting things down on paper we actually agreed what our goals were for the work that we were engaged in (Interview, 5 August 2002).

Although implicit in the earlier integration initiatives, trust was identified as a vital aspect of collaborative efforts. The strong bonds that developed out of ongoing relationships and shared experiences were also considered to be characteristic of collaborative arrangements. One respondent explained this:

I think it’s through having a common goal, agreeing on that common goal and working to achieve that. And taking the time and the commitment and sometimes it involves a larger commitment by agency than others. … And you will have some wins and you will have some losses – but through all of those it’s about the relationships you build with the people you come into contact with (Interview, 21 January 2002).

A further defining feature of collaborative relationships identified by interviewees across all respondent groups was the notion of putting extra effort into the relationship and the collaborative endeavour, often without the expectation of immediate or any gain (Interview, 4 July 2002). This view was exemplified by the following:

It’s the extra things you do because of these relationships that makes the difference. You know, through having coffee informally after meetings … Having a coffee and a talk in an informal atmosphere and being completely honest and occasionally putting yourself out. This demonstrates that you can be trusted in what you are saying and doing and this goes a long way (Interview, 21 January 2002).

It was also stated that through their relationships and working closer together members were able to think and work ‘outside of the box’ (Interview, 4 July 2002).
New Ways of Working and Systems Change

Through this route of shared understanding, the stronger relationships and growing sense of collegiality and the experience of joint goal setting, collaboration was seen to move beyond the instrumental approach associated with coordination to the formation of new structures and processes. This understanding of the ‘ramping up’ of the relationship stakes between coordination and collaboration was captured in the following statement:

What comes with collaboration is in fact compromise and the ability to actually negotiate an agreed end point. Whereas collaboration can be an element of coordination obviously but collaboration is more about looseness of structures and good will and activities that are moving - are there to move people in particular directions (Interview, 3 September 2002).

There was unanimous agreement from commenting respondents across all sectors that collaboration was a necessary strategy in situations where there was a crisis or where ‘old ways of working’ were no longer effective or appropriate. The notion of ‘working together rather than separately’ was frequently acknowledged as a key strategy response to complex social problems (Interview, 21 January 2002; Interview, 3 September 2002). The following comment suggested the need for innovation:

There is a need for other programs that are more innovative and new and flexible ways to address the social problems. These cannot happen alone. These sorts of problems need the help of a few agencies working together (Interview, 22 August 2002).

Despite demonstrating an understanding that collaborative endeavours provided more successful solutions for intractable or ‘wicked’ social problems the common experience provided by respondents was that there were few real examples on the ground:

There needs to be much more collaboration around these ‘wicked areas’ and I do not see much evidence of that just yet (Interview, 22 August 2002).

Time, Risk and Different Expectations

A key factor in the lack of collaborative endeavours was the degree of risk and time involved in this kind of effort. The reasons these were problems was that in many cases the emphasis was on immediate outcomes when in reality collaboration’s benefits can only be seen over the long term. This long-term gain
is contrary to the traditional expectations of government, which are based on short-term results that fit within electoral/political requirements. Finally, collaboration involves a high degree of risk taking which is not rewarded. As a result participants are reluctant to expose themselves to risk taking outside of normal parameters. This was seen in the following statements:

I think there is a risk in collaboration that people could sit around and have cups of tea if they didn’t come at the work with that sort of spirit, that sort of commitment and that shared sense of urgency ...

But, it [collaboration] takes more time up front and I don’t think governments are patient about process ... While I think it serves a purpose, I think that collaboration is highly risky (Interview, 5 August 2002).

Referring to another collaborative project initiated within government a respondent commented:

The project was looking to the long term. We were not expecting to see hard, tangible outcomes in the short term. In retrospect I don’t believe the sector can or will wear this. They need something in twelve months and something significant in two years (Interview, 20 March 2001).

Commenting on another project, another respondent indicated:

They want collaboration but they want it yesterday. These problems have taken years to evolve and so they can’t be solved overnight. It’s crazy; they want this collaborative action but they want it yesterday (Interview, 22 August 2002)

The view that ‘collaboration is not as valuable as coordination’ was held by many of the respondents involved in integrative work. Some of the reasons for this included the time taken to secure collaborative efforts. For example, a practitioner stated:

An immediate outcome of effort toward cross-sector coordination is the establishment of reference groups and working parties. These groups provide an opportunity for representatives from across government and in some cases from non-government to share information and knowledge, contribute to the identification of duplication and gaps in existing services (Interview, 6 January, 2002).

For many, collaborative endeavours were undermined, albeit unintentionally, by expectations that were embedded around traditional ways of working. Rather than counting numbers of clients served and outcomes achieved, the prime
The purpose of collaboration was that there would be changes in the way that departments, agencies, communities and non-profit organisations worked together.

I see them really impatient about content, needing to get outcomes, which I completely understand because they are in a policy cycle. But where that leads us is that collaboration is not something that is as valuable as coordination (Interview, 5 August 2002).

**Culture Change and Comfort Levels**

In addition to the time and risk involved, for most respondents there was an awareness that, particularly in the government arena, while collaboration was often presented as a preferred way of working it was hard to achieve and even harder to sustain. This was mainly identified as relating to the shift in skills and culture required by collaboration that took people outside of their comfort zone. Further, it necessitated modifications to the existing systems and procedures.

And, in my experience, it is coordination that government mostly is looking for. Coordination is safer. Coordination marries better with our structures (Interview, 5 August 2002).

The need to change culture was seen as major difficulty in achieving collaboration. Further, it was acknowledged that getting to collaboration impacted on the comfort levels of participants. These considerations were outlined in the following comments:

Who knows what they [government] are really thinking or planning? Basically they just want to spend the least amount of money to get the best results. They are scared out of their brains of having to share. (Interview, 22 August 2002).

Its sort of funny in a way because they [government] want you to be flexible and responsive and creative, but only within certain confines, and accountability rules … We need to challenge those systems and collectively we can do that and even retain accountability. We need to say hang on we need to work on our relationships, we need to spend time here or that money there (Interview, 4 July 2002).

In this way the respondents’ description of collaboration as comprised of higher levels of commitment, longer time requirements, interdependence, risk and an emphasis on systems change was consistent with those presented in the Integration Continuum.


**Understanding the Integration Continuum**

These findings established that the respondents clearly understood and were able to articulate distinctive elements and differences for each of the ‘3Cs’ of cooperation, coordination and collaboration. Based on the perspective of respondents, cooperation was conceptualised in terms of loose, flexible and informal linkages, particularly with respect to information exchange and where, although organisations took each other into account, the emphasis remained on the retention of organisational autonomy. For coordination the focus was on the notion of working to a plan, or joint action, driven by outside mandate or direction and the release of some individual organisational autonomy to achieve set goals. With respect to collaboration the interviewees identified stronger levels of trust, common missions and increased commitment and risk, tighter relationships and connections between individuals leading to systems change/different ways of working as core characteristics.

Respondents understood the integration terms of cooperation, coordination and collaboration as differentiated. Furthermore, when these understandings are aligned against the existing integration literature/terminology as set out in Integration Continuum developed in Chapter 1, it can be seen that there was a high level of congruence between the two. This confirmed that the Integration Continuum set out in Chapter 1 had resonance with practitioners.

What is interesting therefore is to understand the factors that lead to one type of integration form or another. The data collected for each of the three case studies allows this critical analysis to be made.

**SUMMARISING VARIATIONS BETWEEN NETWORKED ARRANGEMENTS**

The case study profiles highlight some similarities and variations between the three networks of the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee, the Service Integration Project and the Reconnect network. The Chief Executive Officers’ Human Service Committee, which operates at the high institutional/policy level of social strata, was formed as a result of a number of drivers, including the realisation of shrinking government resources, coupled with increased community expectations, and the growing awareness and desire of Chief Executive Officers and indeed all public sector employees of the need to work together to solve intractable social problems. However, the most significant of these was the clearly articulated desire of the Premier and Cabinet for whole-
of-government integration of public services in Queensland. With its emphasis on formalised and vertical linkages, the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee was defined as representing a coordination network however it was also acknowledged that these formalised relationships were underpinned by an emerging set of interpersonal relations. Although operating on the horizontal governance axis and exhibiting some level of social exchange, the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee was tightly adhered to the vertical axis of institutional control and command. The integration mechanisms employed reflected this institutionalism with tight agendas, regular and controlled meetings, action plans endorsed by Cabinet and the legitimacy of the system.

The Service Integration Project was driven largely by a critical incident that galvanised key regional managers to become involved in systems change. This initial driver was supplemented by a growing experience of resource scarcity, a desire to enhance client service delivery and a realisation that these goals would require an emphasis on collective, as opposed to single agency action. SIP adopted a course of action based on strong, multi-level collaborative relationships between government agencies and the community, underpinned by a deliberative strategic policy to establish a tentative link to the vertical axis of government. In this way, SIP was characterised as a network structure. Further the integration mechanisms such as the Graduate Certificate and operation guidelines supported this finding.

Finally, for the Reconnect Network, the forces for formation of the network centred on the desire to better coordinate client services. There was also a requirement by the funding agency that the members involve themselves in more collaborative efforts. The drive for coordination was successful while there was a network coordinator to broker the integration process. The difficulty was that this role remained focused in one person and never permeated throughout the network. As a consequence when the network coordinator resigned there was a loss of integration and driver focus. In addition, in moving to an incorporated arrangement Reconnect lost sight of the reality of the individual members of networks also being representatives of their parent organisations. The effect of this was that there was a disconnect between network goals and those of the parent organisation. The end result was that Reconnect was no longer as strong as it could have been.
These summarised characteristics of each of the three-networked arrangements are represented in Table 10.

**Table 10: Summary Comparison of Three Network Case Study Attributes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Drivers</th>
<th>Network Structure Relations</th>
<th>Primary Governance Mode</th>
<th>Linkage Mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEOs</td>
<td>Mandate Critical situation</td>
<td>Network Coordination</td>
<td>Vertical Institutional</td>
<td>Imprimatur &amp; Tight Agendas &amp; Action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work together</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DPC Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service needs of clients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limited Interpersonal Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>Crisis Resource</td>
<td>Network Structure Collaboration</td>
<td>Horizontal interpersonal</td>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire Service needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tight agendas &amp; Core Team/driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconnect</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Horizontal Instrumental (Functional)</td>
<td>MOU (best practice principles), strong driver, brokerage and contracts, case management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Network cooperation/coordination</td>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Based on information sharing</td>
<td>Horizontal Instrumental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Drivers for Network Formation/Involvement**

The questionnaire asked the respondents to indicate the reasons for their organisation’s participation in the network. Respondents were given a list of 16 factors to rate on a five-point scale (where 1= almost never, 2 =, seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and 5 = almost always the reason for involvement). The collective results for the three networks are set out in Table 11. To aid the comparison, where there are strong similarities in the higher level mean scores
these were highlighted in bold print. The drivers for each of the networks provided by the quantitative data, which are also set out in Table 11, enables a cross-case comparison to be undertaken for this network variable.

**Table 11: Comparison of Network Drivers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for network involvement</th>
<th>CEO Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>SIP Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>Reconnect Mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person friendship/social interaction</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of agency</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar beliefs and methods of service delivery</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habit/tradition</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location/proximity</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service needs of clients</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required by mandate</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract requirements</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside pressure</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve efficiency</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource scarcity</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/ financial pressures</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical situation requiring joint effort</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain legitimacy with other agencies</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value joint effort</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn from others/share information</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant Similarities in Reasons for Network Involvement**

*From these results it can be seen that there are five high scoring drivers common to all three networks. Presented in the order of the table, these drivers are the service needs of clients (4; 4.49; 4.5), improve efficiency (3.76; 4.29; 4.13), a critical situation requiring joint effort (4.22; 3.81; 3.38), value joint effort (3.67; 4; 4.5) and learn from other/share information (4.11; 4.19; 4.63).*
Service needs of clients (4; 4.49; 4.5)

Given that these networked arrangements are all comprised of human service practitioners, albeit at differing levels of operation, the similarity of response ratings for the variable of ‘service needs of clients’ is not surprising. That is, all respondents would be coming from a similar service ethos that had been engendered through their professional training in the broad human services.

Improve efficiency (3.76; 4.29; 4.13)

The search for an improvement in efficiency was another common high response rating for the three network-case studies. Interestingly, the SIP (4.29), and Reconnect networks (4.13) rated this higher than did the Chief Executive Officers (3.76). Particularly, as within the interview responses for the Chief Executive Officers the desire to improve efficiency or the realisation of the need to change ways of working to achieve increased efficiency were frequently mentioned considerations for participation in networks. Similarly, the other two networks’ interview responses identified the need to address efficiency as a driver for network involvement.

Critical situation (4.22; 3.81; 3.38)

For all networks there was a sense that a critical situation had emerged that required joint effort to inform problem identification and solutions. However, it was the Chief Executive Officers who rated this variable the highest. The qualitative data indicated that this critical situation was different for each of the case studies. For Reconnect the critical situation centred on securing funding for continuing its operation and bringing in other participant agencies to capitalise on access to resources through combining with other agencies. The qualitative data indicated that the catalyst for the formation of SIP was triggered by the failure of community services to prevent the death of a vulnerable elderly citizen and the continuing inadequacy of traditional functional service delivery to address complex and interrelated social problems.

The critical situation for the Chief Executive Officers Committee was the realisation of the urgency of fiscal restraints, greater citizen demands and the growing complexity of social problems due to the interrelatedness of these issues. Second, was the need for CEOs to respond to the imprimatur of the Premier for whole-of-government integration initiatives around key identified priority areas.
The higher rating for valuing joint effort by Reconnect could be caused by their being more aware of the importance of working together at the point of service delivery impact. SIP also demonstrated a high value on joint effort as subsequently exhibited by their ability to break through entrenched departmental and community barriers and establish a new way of working. The CEOs, who continued to work through vertical arrangements, not surprisingly rated this variable lower.

Learn from others and share information (4.11; 4.19; 4.63)

Securing the highest rating for all respondents, this variable ‘learn from others and share information’ emerged as an important theme. This finding suggested that information sharing and learning from others which involves low risk and minimum commitment presented as a starting level of integration for these groups.

Significant Differences in Reasons for Network Involvement

Although the above has demonstrated that there were a number of common variables driving the network formation, there were also some differences between the groups. The most significant difference discerned is the identification by the CEO Network that the mandate requiring the formation of the network was a critical driver for involvement in the network. From this it can be seen there are a number of drivers for involvement in networked arrangements. As Whetten (1977) points out, some networks, especially those prompted by legislation, are more vertical than others. Members in such a network accept the authority of the ‘driver sponsor’ and the position of that person/or agency may influence the future direction of the network.

The findings indicated that all three case studies operated as networks. However, Table 11 highlights that significant variations existed between the three, networked arrangements. In particular, for SIP it is the personal friendships and social interactions, similar beliefs and methods of service delivery and location and proximity that showed the most significant difference between it and the other two networked arrangements. For the CEOs the requirement by mandate resulted in the most significant variation. The lack of any significant difference in the variables for Reconnect indicated that it continued to operate as ‘business as usual’.
Network Operation/Governance

Table 142 indicates that, for all three networked arrangements, being confronted with similar concerns and issues at 90% (CEO), 90.5% (SIP), and 93.8% (Reconnect) presented as the most important aspect of network cohesion. Analysis of the overall pattern of responses for the Chief Executive Officers’ scores for the network governance variables/characteristics indicated that the relational aspects of network governance rated consistently very low (i.e. shared values (40%), reciprocity (50%), mutual understanding and empathy (30%), high degree of mutual trust (0%), informal exchanges (40%); social monitoring (0%)). However, the CEOs did score higher on cooperation at (90%). With this emphasis on cooperation, it suggested that CEOs were more comfortable with the vertical relationships than the horizontal ones.

By comparison, SIP rated high on shared values (85.7%), similar concerns (90.5%), reciprocity (71.4%), mutual understanding and empathy (90.5%), mutual trust (90.5%), cooperation (95.7%), participation in problem solving (85.75) and divergent opinions listened to (90.5%). With this strong emphasis on relationship aspects, it was obvious that SIP was able to form a more collaborative type structure.

Reconnect rated high for shared values (87.9%), confronted with similar concerns and issues (93.8%), cooperation between members (87%), participate in joint problem solving (81.3%) and divergent opinions expressed and listened to (75%). These scores reflect that Reconnect, although more comfortable than the CEOs with relational or horizontal governance, did not take this as far as did the SIP project members.

These findings suggest that although displaying variation in their form and function, the networks all exhibited a predominantly network form of governance based on relationships, trust, mutual understanding, cooperation and joint problem solving. However, when compared, the SIP and Reconnect were stronger than CEOs. This preference for relationship governance was demonstrated in both the qualitative interview data and was supported by the quantitative data.
### Table 12: Comparison of Network Operation/Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>CEO %</th>
<th>SIP %</th>
<th>Reconnect %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared values</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confronted with similar concerns And issues</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocation between members</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term relationships</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible culture</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set rules and norms</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual understanding and empathy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High degree of mutual trust</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions monitored/influenced by social relations</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal exchange transactions between members</td>
<td>20.</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal exchanges/transactions between members</td>
<td>40.</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual obligations between members</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network action monitored by external bodies</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network action regulated by hierarchical bodies</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network controlled by managerial authority</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation between network Members</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members participate in joint problem solving</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divergent opinions expressed and listened to</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Linking Mechanisms

Table 13 sets out the full set of aggregate percentage responses in relation to integration/linkage mechanisms employed in each of the three network arrangements. According to Handy (1979) integration mechanisms refer to the instruments that pull together the various aspects of a system. The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate those linkage mechanisms that assisted in the way that their network functioned. Thirteen responses were provided.
Table 13: Comparison Integration/Linkage Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linkage Mechanisms</th>
<th>CEO %</th>
<th>SIP %</th>
<th>Reconnect %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well-developed rules &amp; procedures</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing liaison between member agencies</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination committees</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in reference groups</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in working parties</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong lateral communication</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication mostly directed downwards</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences to discuss issues &amp; set direction</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops to develop mutual implementation strategies</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal meetings between members</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in joint ventures/programming</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in joint case management</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular telephone contact between members</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings of the network</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mutual integration mechanisms for all three networks centred predominantly on the interpersonal aspects of ongoing liaison between member agencies (90%; 90.5%; 75.%) and regular meetings of the network (70%; 90.5% and 81.3%). For CEOs and SIP, involvement in working parties (100%; 90.5%) was another
common linkage process. Of the three, networked arrangements, Reconnect was strongest in building and maintaining functional service related relationships. For example, involvement in case management at 75%, involvement in working parties (56.3%) and participation in joint ventures/programming (56.3%).

In summary all networks had a core central driver, but these were different. All networks had an embedded, underpinning relationship governance base, but exhibit differing levels of involvement such that the CEOs was institutional, SIP relational and Reconnect was functional. While there are differences between the three networks there was a point of commonality in that they all still had a strong desire to work together to improve service delivery to clients. The importance of understanding the differences among networked arrangements is reflected in the need to be able to pick and choose appropriate strategies for their optimal operation. For if networks are to be understood as strategic alliances forged around common agendas of mutual advantage through collective action, then it is clearly important to examine and understand the strategies or overall plan of action employed to form and manage networked arrangements (Mandell, 1989; McGuire, 2002).

**Understanding the Need for Different Strategies**

From the interviews it was apparent that some respondents and particularly those located at the policy development or institutional level of government were able to articulate quite clearly which purposes required which integration strategy. This differentiation between strategies was exemplified in the following statements:

> The issue is what is used at what time for what purpose or outcomes. And I think that governments will use coordinated action where they want a result and they want to drive a result quite firmly. Where they are not sure about what necessarily, they are not totally sure about what they want to achieve then I think they may in fact drive a more sort of collaborative effort (Interview, 3 September 2002).

> But my conclusion would be that you need a range of strategies. And where it’s appropriate, coordination is obviously really important where often there are blockages to where you want to go and you actually really need to drive the agenda. But you can afford a greater collaborative model once people are on the bus. But you might need to coordinate people to get on the bus if you know what I mean (Interview, 3 September 2002).
There was also a clear understanding by some respondents that collaboration is not the answer to all the issues that confront human service providers.

I actually don’t think we need to collaborate on everything. And I think that is a major inefficiency. I think we need to collaborate where issues are complex, where they cut across agencies and across government. And that is actually not every issue. So, footpath improvements or a tree-planting scheme I don’t need to know about that in my agency. I am very confident that the responsible agencies can just get on and do that, and do it well. So, maybe there is some coordination needed there but as far as collaboration goes, it is not necessary (Interview, 5 August 2002).

**Mixing and matching strategies**

The need to have the full range of integration options was identified as well as the ability to be able to assess and adequately match the strategies to the situation. This capacity to mix and match or target integration strategies is encapsulated in the following:

The issue as I have concluded is that it is not either/or, but rather the appropriate match or mix. As sometimes you need to use collaboration and sometimes you can be really clear about what needs to be negotiated and that a collaborative effort will achieve endpoints but sometimes it only requires coordination and to actually tell people that ‘you are going to pursue this line for these purposes’ (Interview, 25 January 2002).

This mixing and matching was aptly described:

I think it’s like other management theories generally. It’s about knowing what to use at what time and what things that you have in your toolbox. And the tools need to change depending on the nature of the issues or problems that you are dealing with (Interview, 3 September 2002).

Some respondents identified the need to be clearer in terms of assessing situations and determining which of the ‘3Cs’ was necessary. Speaking specifically about coordination but equally relevant to all three, one respondent noted:

I think one of the critical problems in terms of coordination is that there is often a lack of clarity about the purpose or the problem that needs to be addressed. It seems to me that one of the key reasons that our coordinating mechanisms ‘fall over’ or aren’t as effective as they should be is because there is a lack of clarity about exactly what is the problem that needs to be addressed. And, not everything needs to be coordinated. But I
do think that there are some issues that require some better coordination and working together but I think that we have got to get better at getting clearer about what those things are (Interview, 21 February 2002).

It was found that there is no ‘one size fits all’ model for integration strategies. In general, respondents identified that there was a need to be able to effectively choose the relationship and strategy that would achieve the outcomes desired. Network management was the vehicle by which this was accomplished.

**Network Management**

Until recent times there has been a view that networks could not be managed. However, as knowledge of networks and practice have increased there has emerged an understanding that network arrangements can be managed but that this requires a process considerably different to that of traditional management orthodoxies (Kickert *et al.*, 1997; O’Toole, 1997; Mandell, 2000; Agranoff and McGuire, 2001). This section examines the key network management practices that network members have identified within their field of operation and locates them within the existing literature.

**Driving**

One aspect of managing the relations among networked members centres on the need to establish and maintain ‘directive collective action’. That is, setting an agenda for action. Network outcomes did not just happen by virtue of a group of people meeting and establishing rapport. Network relations had to be massaged and actions managed in order to achieve expected results. This made the role of the network managers or facilitator a central and critical function. Although not replacing the network members’ collective driving role.

Within the SIP and Reconnect networks the role of a network ‘driver’ was constantly mentioned as a necessary function to keep network members on track and working toward directed action and collective outcomes. This driver was aptly described as ‘sticking the pins in to keep us moving and driving the project forward to keep it on track and moving toward our goal”. As one senior public servant respondent cynically commented there was a need ‘for someone, a central person or organisation, to move the network participation away from “just cups of tea and feel good results”. However, one network coordinator or driver cautioned against the driver function becoming ‘too central to the network’s operation’ and suggested that the network should have a number of leaders.
emerging at different times around different areas of interest and expertise. This, it was posited, would keep the ‘network alive and move it beyond the scope and influence of one person’.

Thus, in terms of process, network management is to do with stimulating interaction among network members, removing ‘blockages’ to interaction and, where necessary, assuming the role of neutral mediator or arbitrator. Two respondents talked about this in terms of nurturing:

I think that there is a need for a person … who is the nurturer of the group … who is looking at the policies and at the philosophy of the organisation and making sure the vision is always kept upfront and making sure the principles are the vision of the whole group. And that role is to sit down with each individual group or member and discuss “how’s it going?” How’s the situation, are there any problems? You know to nurture the group along, to develop that community (Interview, 22 August 2002).

Like I said, it is not a driver role, it is perhaps more facilitative and, at least initially, nurturing. We have to make sure that these agencies are on board and participating and that may require work at mending some of these bruises (Interview 14 May, 2003).

**Shaping and Reshaping**

The second identified aspect of network management, network composition and recomposition (shaping and reshaping), emerged from the view of some respondents that networks can be too stable and may require the injection of new energy, resources, and new processes to keep the dynamics alive. Even after a network was operational but not performing or ‘becoming stale’, deactivation may be needed to remove some participants. This focus on the prevention of network atrophy was picked up in one interview where the network coordinator/manager described his role as ‘pulling the strings’.

When the relationships or dynamics get a bit stale – I pull the levers and move people in and out of the network (Interview, 1 March 2001).

This respondent went on to state that:

… rotating the membership like the senate, half each time … builds up a critical mass and allows ‘dead wood’ to be diplomatically moved out and brings in new ideas and expands the network out of a committee structure (interview, 2001).
Kickert and Koopenjan (1997) refer to this as “network tinkering”. In this way network members recognise that networks are a growing entity and should be continually subject to review and reform.

**Network Sponsor/Champion**

At another level the strategic role of the network sponsor was also identified as critical to linking horizontal networks to the vertical axis of power and authority. As Bryson (1995) noted, the presence of a powerful sponsor helps to generate resources and support and provides legitimacy to horizontal projects. The following statement provides an interesting perspective on this role:

> Acting on the government’s policy direction and facilitating the overall achievement of it. Very much as a coordinator and a facilitator. Monitoring the overall strategic direction, providing that support, that high level advice, the ‘friend role’ because if you don’t have them [line agencies] on side you just run into brick walls. It is critical that you bring them in right from the very beginning, then actually playing the facilitator, and they may chair or they may not chair, but they can still facilitate the meeting. And may play an active part in the meeting (Interview, 21 February, 2002).

The strength of the CEO’s Committee, for instance, rests on the imprimatur of the Premier. For SIP there was a deliberate strategy employed to engage Chief Executive Officers and senior central agency personnel within the project. On the other hand, Reconnect which only had very weak links to legitimate support mechanisms was not able to access the decision-makers necessary to influence continued participation nor have any influence itself on policy outcomes.

Champions on the other hand are those persons who are involved in the continued operation of the network at the ground level. These people are not necessarily high-level decision-makers but rather are individuals committed to the ideals of the project. The case studies demonstrate different sponsor/champion combinations resulting in different levels of effectiveness.

As can be seen in Reconnect, although there were champions doing the work, the lack of sponsors meant that it could not be as effective as it needed to be to affect systems change. SIP, however, had both champions and sponsors from the beginning which meant that there were not only people to do the work but that work was endorsed at a high level which led to more effective results. The
CEOs were strongest in having a high level sponsor but lacked enough champions to result in any meaningful move toward systems change.

**Need for Frameworks to Guide Integrated Action**

Research findings based on the three case studies demonstrate that in practice the process of integration is not linear: network managers and members may have to reconsider the goals and revise their strategies and tactics (6, 1997). However, while respondents generally were able to articulate the differences between the integration terms, for some there was a lack of awareness as to where and when they could be used for optimal benefit. The following comment from a community organisation representative highlighted this lack of understanding:

> Our project has been set up on the premise that we work in networks – using cooperative and collaborative strategies and we will be evaluated on that. But, since these constructs are not clearly defined we are not certain that what we are doing fits under these models. This is a concern for many community-based service providers dependent on government funds as well as for governments as funders (Interview, 22 November 2001).

Related comments on the need for a framework suggested that along with guiding action a framework might provide consistency in language and intentions:

> It would help to have a framework to guide the building of current relationships and network models by having a common understanding of what we are working toward (Goodna Learning Group Feedback, 12 December 2002).

> It's not like we don’t know what the words mean. It’s more that it was an intuitive understanding without the benefit of a framework to guide the application (New Zealand Community Workshop Respondent, 31 January 2003).

> Sometimes without a framework it is hard to stay on track, rationalise your activities and sort out expectations (New Zealand Community Workshop Respondent, 31 January 2003).

Furthermore, there is a view held by respondents that without a framework to guide the selection process and to forecast the utility of the different kinds of integration mechanisms as well as manage and specify expectations, there was the potential to revert to known and ‘comfortable’ ways of working (Klijn and Koopenjan, 2000, Keast and Brown, 2002b). This view is encapsulated below:
If it’s by direction then it is not sustainable because people will revert when those directing move on and forget about it (Interview, 3 September 2002).

**Guarding against the misuse of collaborative language**

The need for clarity around role and expectations was a common theme brought up by a number of respondents across all levels of public sector operation. This theme is highlighted in the following comments:

And I think that we have to be very careful in government in using the word collaboration with the community, community people. The same is true of the word partnership (Interview, 5 August 2002).

And I think that one of the problems of the baggage of words is that often they mean very different ways of working together. So I think that they are a package of words that get used to flag some broad intent around a different way of working together …and often those terms are used to manipulate … to cloud the water rather than to clarify (Interview, 10 July 2002).

In general, the findings indicated that the use of a framework to differentiate integration efforts would assist in decision-making for optimal selection and matching of integration mechanisms with levels of formality and intensity of linkage to best suit the goals sought and the operational context. This result was consistent with other studies that have sought to investigate linkage and develop typologies to guide implementation (6 et al, 1999; 2002; Mandell and Steelman, forthcoming; Keast and Brown, 2003 a&b). In the next section, how to best to provide the type of framework needed in different networked arrangements is explored.

**EMERGENT ROLE OF CENTRAL AGENCIES IN NETWORKED ARRANGEMENTS**

As has been stated previously the role of organising for networks has largely fallen to the central agencies of government. However, while it is appropriate that central agencies take on this role as a logical extension of their traditional coordination function, it will require a shift to new roles. The perceived role of central agencies was examined within each of the three case study networks. Using these cases the different perceptions of the respondents provided a means for central agencies to distinguish a variety of roles based on representation at different levels of government and different degrees of intensity.
The review commences at the community practitioner level with the Reconnect (Gold Coast Family and Youth Connections) Network and moves through to the Services Integration Project and finally to the Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee.

**Reconnect Network: Community and Practitioner Level**

At the community and practitioner level the impact of central agencies on network operation was identified by all respondents as ‘limited’. This lack of impact of central agencies was evidenced by the following comment made during the Connect Focus Group (12 November, 2001):

> Central agencies really do not have a big impact on what we are doing at this level.

Another respondent acknowledged the present limited impact of central agencies on the operation of community based network but did offer an improved longer-term prospectus:

> Not at this point in time, maybe in ten years time (Interview, 11 November 2002).

The lack of influence of central agencies on networks operating at the field or community level is supported by the empirical data generated from the questionnaire that asked respondents to rate [using a five point scale where 1 = no impact, 2 = very limited impact, 3 = some impact, 4 = significant impact and 5 = very high impact] the level of impact of central agencies on network operation. Based on this scale an overall mean rating of 2.18 was secured (2.14 Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2.54 Treasury and 1.82 Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity) indicating that overall community based network members considered that central agencies have very limited impact on the operation of their network.

The perceived lack of impact of central agencies on the operation of community-based networks can in part be explained by the fact that central agencies, with the exception of the Regional Communities Program within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, by and large do not have a direct service provision role at the community level. As a consequence there was a general lack of understanding as to what a central agency was. Indeed, when the question of the role of central agencies was posed during the focus group, it was necessary to
provide an explanation of what a central agency was (Reconnect Focus Group, 12 November 2001).

Of the three central agencies, Treasury with a mean rating of 2.54, was the central agency considered most influential. This result was perhaps explained by a broad understanding of Treasury’s funding role. Related to this, a respondent indicated that at this level of service operation it was the funding agencies that have been much more influential in pushing agencies toward networked arrangements.

Central Agencies? They don’t really impact on us. The agencies that do are the funding agencies – Department of Families and Family and Community and they, despite the rhetoric on collaboration are not, at the moment ‘walking the talk’ (Interview, 11 November 2002).

A further key reason provided for the ‘limited impact’ of central agencies of government on the operation of community based networks centred on their ‘distance’ from the operational level of community agencies. In general respondents considered that this distance resulted in a lack of expertise by central agencies on the context and operation of community-based networks.

In relation to the ‘central agencies of government’ well they don’t really impact much here [at this level]. Their expertise is not ‘on the ground’. They don’t really know much about what transpires at the community level, who the players are or even what the issues are. But there is a need for them nevertheless to set processes that help break down the barriers between agencies (Interview, 14 May 2003).

This tendency of government departments to expect or even demand collaboration from community agencies but not fulfil their own obligations led a number of community respondents to identify an emerging role for central agencies. On this role it was stated:

So, maybe a role for central agencies is to oversee and monitor the rhetoric and to make sure that departments use integrity in terms of the language they use and the actions they take. It is very frustrating, time consuming and costly for small agencies to come together in a collaborative arrangement – the burden usually falls on a few people – and when things remain the same despite the rhetoric, it undermines everything. People go back to the insular ways. It just confirms that it is not worth taking the risk. The other thing is that it leads to burn out – both
of collaborative ideals and people and networks (Interview, 11 November 2002).

In this way there was a sense of central agencies undertaking an enabling role by establishing processes and mechanisms that supported notions of seamless service delivery. For many community representatives in this task of ‘doing things differently’ there was also an expectation that government should take a greater leadership role.

We need to encourage these collaborative initiatives if we are going to move beyond the current practices. We need to be seeing examples of collaboration by government departments. And frankly I don’t see many or even any examples. They are currently saying ‘do as I say not as I do’. It should be more a case of “look what we are doing and you can do this too”. It should be leadership by example (Interview, 22 August 2002).

There was also a general opinion that, with respect to community based issues, the role of central agencies would be extended and their legitimacy enhanced by acknowledging the ‘on the ground knowledge and expertise’ of community members and including them in relevant decision-making processes:

Perhaps those agencies would have a role to play if they were listening to networks or representatives from networks to influence policy and funding. To listen to us and acknowledge that we have a voice and that we are on the ground doing work with these people and that some of the decision-making at their level definitely needs to include definitely our voice (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November 2001).

However, respondents expressed doubt about the ability of government, at least initially, to ‘let go’ of the power over decision-making and engage in true collaborative or shared decision making around policy development and service delivery.

The decisions should occur further down the decision-making chain. But government is going to struggle with this (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November 2001).

One respondent qualified this view suggesting that it was the machinery of government and more particularly the influence of public servants that mitigates against the shift.

To some certain degree ministers are very receptive to this [community input into decision-making]. Oftentimes bureaucrats have been there for years and they’ve got their agendas, which
can be quite different from the agendas of the government (Reconnect Focus Group Respondent, 12 November 2001).

The entrenched systems and processes of the machinery of government were also identified as preventing a change in the service delivery systems:

In fairness to politicians they mostly have a strong commitment to give the community what it wants. The trouble is that the machinery of government gets in the way: even when it doesn't really know what the problem is or how to deal with it (Interview, 26 November, 2001).

There was a view that the Regional Managers Forums and to a degree the on-the-ground staff of Regional Communities Program, both of which were located within the Community Engagement Division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, would provide a vehicle to better link the community to the machinery of government.

Where Regional Communities has been clever is that it has linked the provinces with the centre of government (Interview, 17 June 2002).

Nevertheless, community level respondents were hopeful of establishing a role with government.

Nonetheless, I guess I see in some ways a lot of actual enthusiasm and hope for these initiatives. That people perceive there is some potential for heralding a new way, a new set of relationships, and a new way of delivering better services to citizens; a new real partnership between the government and non-government sector (Interview, 10 July 2002).

In this way, although generally community agencies and some line agencies participating in the community-level network considered that central agencies had a limited role, it was acknowledged that a potential role was there. A summary of the potential role for central agencies at this level is provided below:

So a role for central agencies is more about having their hands off when they do not have the expertise, but increasing their contact with the field, finding out more about the context and monitoring the use of language and funding arrangements by funding agencies (Interview 14 May, 2003).

Having established an emerging, if limited, role for central agencies in community based networks the emphasis turns to determining a role for central agencies at the regional level of operation.
Service Integration Project: Regional Managers of Government Services

As would be expected of a group of respondents operating at the regional or middle management level, such as many of the Service Integration Project members, there was a greater understanding of the traditional role of the central agencies of government as well as stronger views on an emerging role for this set of agencies with respect to networked arrangements. For this group of respondents there was a frequently stated belief, as evidenced in both the focus group session responses and the interviews, on the importance of central agency involvement in the project. This was exemplified by the following comment:

I think that it is not only legitimate; I think that it is necessary (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October, 2001).

To ascertain the effect of central agencies on the operation of SIP, respondents were asked to rank the impact of central agencies (where 1= no impact, 2 = very limited impact, 3 = some impact, 4 = significant impact and 5 = very high impact). When the results of the question were examined, it can be seen that, with a total mean rating of 2.44, in practice the perceived impact of central agencies on this network was limited. However an examination of individual scores provided greater insight into this situation. With a mean score of 1.63 the work of the Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity was considered to have very little effect on the operation of the network. Treasury and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, which secured mean ratings of 3.67 and 3.00 respectively were considered to have more impact, especially with respect to their role of funding and the setting of overall policy direction.

Direction Setting and Legitimacy

While respondents considered having ‘Treasury on board’ as an important strategy to access funding and secure legitimacy (Interview, 27 November 2001), there was almost unanimous agreement by both interview and focus group respondents at this level that a critical role of central agencies in these more collaborative endeavours was the provision of an overarching policy framework to guide action. As one respondent noted there is a need for the centre to:

... define a common agenda for action which can be used coherently ... to guide the work along the broad direction intended (SIP Post Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).
Furthermore, the development of a strategic framework for action was also considered to be critical to securing a level of public service cohesion around goals and objectives.

I think that the role of central agencies is to provide a policy framework that is reasonable for all service providers. If those central agencies don’t have some integration of course then the overall provision of services is not focused and the government does not present as cohesive. So there is a need for a policy program, or framework that is linked in central agencies and flows down to line agencies to implement (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

Indeed, some respondents expressed frustration at the lack of direction provided by higher-level authorities to those providing services at the regional level. This was explained:

I just find it frustrating that what we are trying to do at the service level … that we are trying to manage it all up. Instead of a model that set some direction for us to follow, we’re trying to follow them, without direction (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

Most importantly however, there was widespread agreement that such a framework was necessary to provide legitimacy for these new ways of working. Further, it was considered that this overall policy direction should emanate from the central agencies.

They [central agencies] should provide the overall framework and the okay [authorisation] to do this (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

It was envisaged that out of such a framework would emerge an agreed or authorised role for horizontal management. The desire for a ‘role authorisation’ for these new ways of providing services was a consistent concern for all respondents at this level of operation. This desire for an ‘authority to act’ is evident in the following statement:

Need to have a role definition that requires and legitimises ‘working together’ (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

Respondents frequently expressed their concern about taking on new ways of working often described as ‘going out on a limb’, without the imprimatur of higher authorities (Interview, 27 November 2001; Interview, 7 February, 2002). This need for some form of higher-level authority to act within these alternative modes
of service delivery was considered important for both the sustainability of the project as well as their own future.

There is a need for us to be given some legitimacy to do this type of work so that we know our efforts will be for something (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

The need for authorisation was present even though respondents believed that they were doing the right thing.

We are trying to do this work but we are doing it in a legitimacy vacuum. We are doing this because it is the right thing, the right way to work with these issues (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

Related to these concerns was the view repeated frequently in the interview process that a critical role for central agencies was the provision and articulation of an overall direction and strategy that would guide the operation of both the government agencies and the broader public sector.

Resource Provision

Related to the issue of direction setting and legitimacy is the securing of the resources necessary to operate in these new ways. For example, it was stated:

I think that it is necessary that the role of central agencies should be strongly focused on delivering that intent [resourcing] and ensuring that processes are established that encourage cooperation and collaboration (Interview, 19 December 2001).

Further, a number of respondents also identified the need for central agencies to take the lead in terms of developing a collaborative knowledge base to inform these endeavours and creating the intellectual space within which collaborative arrangements can take place. Central to this for most respondents was the adjustment of government systems and processes to allow for collaboration to occur and be sustained. Also included within this process of systems change was the need for central agencies to provide the necessary tools and training for line agencies to undertake for this new type of work. This view was evident in the following comment:

They have got a role in trying to do the conceptual work ... to develop the tools and systems to put in place and used by line agencies in upskilling their officers in some of these issues [working with the community] (Interview, 21 February 2002).
Through this process of direction setting, legitimising and resourcing of new ways of working, central agencies take on the role of enabler. The following comment summarises the main roles desired of central agencies by this group of people working outside of the normal processes for providing services.

There is a need for central agencies to ‘authorise’ or ‘okay’ the work – acknowledge it. They should also provide some funding to those [initiatives] that meet certain criteria. There is also a need for a broad framework or set of values to direct the work of government but some flexibility in doing the work (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October, 2001).

Complexity of the Integration Issue and Expertise

There was recognition by most SIP members that the complexities of some issues that the project was dealing with were complex and therefore required collective knowledge and action. Also, similar to the community level respondents, some SIP respondents considered that the lack of expertise of central agencies with respect to regional issues, and especially those occurring ‘on the ground’, precluded their involvement beyond the enabler function outlined above. It was frequently stated that central agencies needed to become more willing and more skilled at tapping into the mood and issues of the community. An example of this view is:

Central agencies need to find out about micro level issues to be more responsive. They need to review existing frameworks and establish closer links – information sharing. These players are very influential and therefore have to be part of the picture. They set the priorities, the frameworks etc but these need to be done in a more informed way, more engaged way (Interview, 26 November 2001).

Taking the issue of the location of expertise further another respondent commented that:

Most of us have been involved in integration before. And even though these have mostly failed we know what it takes, and clearly have had more experience with this sort of work than our head agencies and even central agencies: both of which until now have had a vested interest in maintaining the silos (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

Associated with this was the view that having set the broad agenda for horizontal or new ways of working, central agencies should ‘step back’ and allow these groups the necessary space, freedom and time to develop these new collaborative modes of service development and delivery. One respondent
described this as “central agencies having a ‘hands off’ role” (SIP Post Focus Group Response, 11 October 2001). The potential for networked arrangements to produce alternative or unexpected results was also recognised:

The results of collaborations take shape out of the interactions of groups and, while they do achieve useful outcomes, these are not always what they originally set out to do (Interview, 5 August 2002).

In acknowledging this some respondents identified that central agencies might have to adjust their expectations as to what collaborative work may produce as a final outcome (Interview, 26 July and 5 August 2002). In this way, a possible role for central agencies was to act as ‘sponsor’ and even ‘champion’ of some of the initiatives but not try to control the process. Thus, along with the clear ‘enabler’ role, that is, the provision of a broad framework for action and legitimacy and the allocation of sufficient resources to operate the networks, a more facilitative role for central agencies was also prescribed. In effect this facilitative role was about encouraging collaborative action, introducing new ideas and actors into the process and working at altering perceptions and expectations.

Although preferring a more enabling, facilitative inclusive and ‘hands off’ approach to the achievement of crosscutting outcomes at least one regional level respondent acknowledged that there were occasions in which there was a need for central agencies to adopt a more directive approach. On this it was stated:

And it seems to me that [in these situations] if central agencies provided greater leadership, adopted a carrot and stick approach, whatever was needed to get some resolution. That way we would not still be working on these issues years later without a solution and maybe with the situation even worsening. I would have thought that the central agencies would have driven some of these committees to get answers and resolutions and not let them drag on. None of these issues are resolved today. And it seems to me that if central agencies took a greater leadership role within these committees and networks then we might be further down the track in terms of answers (SIP Focus Group Respondent, 11 October 2001).

In this way a key role for central agencies is to provide the conditions for integration, and then step back and enable this action to transpire. However there were also occasions when the issue was very important or where it was clear that a strong whole-of-government approach was needed, that central agencies take a leadership role and drive the process.
Chief Executive Officers Committee: Policy and Strategic Level

Not surprisingly, when asked to indicate the perceived impact that the central agencies of government had on the operation of the Chief Executive Officers' Committee, this group indicated that with a collective mean rating of 3.78 (4.44, Department of Premier and Cabinet; 4.13 Treasury, and 2.5, Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity) the central agencies had a significant impact on the operation of the committee. The high response for the Department of Premier and Cabinet can be explained by this department’s role in providing the secretariat function for the network but probably more likely relates to the high level of influence that this entity holds as the Premier’s main department. Similarly, Treasury’s hold over funding would give that agency a higher level of impact. The perceived limited impact of the Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity can be explained, at least in part, by its gradual loss of status in terms of providing direction and monitoring of personnel and public sector management resulting from the moves by governments to more market oriented approaches.

For most Chief Executive Officer respondents the old ‘instrumental’ role of central agencies as the primary coordinators of government departments was the first and most frequently identified. These functions centred strongly on the aspects of coordination, and resources and systems management (Interview, 25 January 2002). The following statements provide a more expansive description of this role:

Clearly there are some other instrumental roles. For example, there are legislative requirements that need to be monitored, budgetary and accountability issues implemented and enforced and personnel matters that should be explored such as culture, training and position descriptions (Interview, 30 April 2002).

Well central agencies have a strong role to provide policy coordination – the rigour around the approaches to make sure that the approaches that are being put in place are rigorous and are achieving the intended consequences, not action for the sake of action but actually cutting across intended consequences – that they also provide the necessary leadership in terms of resource distribution in areas of priority. They should intervene to ensure cooperation is in place between agencies, Leadership and authority (Interview, 25 January 2002).
Although central agencies were considered to have a higher-level coordination role, respondents nevertheless indicated that when it came to direct service planning and delivery that role belonged to the line agencies.

If you are talking about facilitating and coordination within government there is no doubt that central agencies are well placed. But if you are talking about the coordination, facilitation of community involvement in government – in service planning and service delivery – I think the dynamics change somewhat and line agencies become more prominent (Interview, 21 February (a)).

I think that when you are actually looking in particular service delivery slash policy areas and you are talking about engaging key community groups then I think the line agencies have a role.
I think that central agencies have a role in working with the line agencies and community groups in policy planning and I differentiate between policy planning and service delivery. In service delivery I don’t think we [central agencies] do, in the policy planning (Interview, 21 February 2002 (a)).

Thus, having identified the instrumental functions of central agencies, many Chief Executive Officers acknowledged that, in this new ‘networked world of government’, central agencies have assumed or will need to assume a number of new roles. The following statements highlighted these non-traditional roles and tasks.

The role of central agencies is to create the drivers and levers to enable that change across the public administration to take place. In particular, that means creating a differently skilled public sector with a different set of tools and devices and permissions to do different kinds of work. Also, new structures to support this new way of working beyond the provision of services. That is, the regulator or regulators moving to an enabling function (Interview, 17 June, 2002).

Generally, there is a role for central agencies to work as pathfinders to identify, initiate and facilitate networking opportunities across the sectors within community, private and other non-government organisations (Interview, 13 March 2002).

However, similar to the previous case studies the Chief Executive Officers also identified that central agencies should not become involved in all networked initiatives. The following statement highlighted this view.

Realistically they should only be involved by exception. If things are going well they don’t add much value by intervening
The negative impact of central agency ‘over-influence’ was noted:

Unfortunately, sometimes central agencies tend to be more controlling. This has a devastating effect on networks and cross-sector initiatives, because the minute they try to control it stifles enthusiasm and the excitement of collective action at the periphery (Interview, 30 April 2002).

For this group the role of central agencies was to maintain the traditional or instrumental functions of overall government coordination but to be aware that there were times when alternative modes of integration were more appropriate. In those situations, the role for central agencies was to provide the over-arching framework and infrastructure in which to work and support initiatives but allow the line agencies to exercise their expertise.

**Networked Environments and the Changing Role of Central Agencies**

The research findings have indicated that in networked arrangements the traditional hierarchical roles of central agencies of government need to be supplemented by non-traditional, horizontal roles. In some cases, these roles will be specifically related to the context of the network. In other cases, the roles are to provide the underpinning foundation in which the collective process can move forward. In the next sections, these roles are examined.

**Different roles for different contexts**

The analysis of the three case studies indicated that central agencies needed to understand that in different situations, different roles needed to be employed. This was explained as follows:

Government is one project partner amongst many, and the role of government and their central agencies will vary according to the nature of the issue, the scope of the program or project, the capacities of the stakeholders and the needs of clients. It is important that government agencies involved in cross-sector networks clearly define their roles in each network and in relation to each other (Interview, 6 January, 2002).

From the information gleaned from the interviews and focus groups and outlined above it can be seen that all three, network case studies have quite different experiences and therefore views of the potential role for central agencies in networked arrangements. It is apparent from the qualitative data (interviews and
focus groups) that the role of central agencies differed depending on the network, its location and the level of integration with which it was involved.

At the service delivery or practitioner level central agencies were not seen to have an immediate role. It was, however, acknowledged that central agencies could have a monitoring role to ensure that there was integrity in terms of networked arrangements including ensuring that this did not dissolve into rhetoric. That is, their role was to monitor and oversee various processes including those related to funding agencies, listening to networks and including them in government policy decision-making and knowing when to step back and allow participants to make decisions and trusting in their ability to do so.

From this it would seem that there were routine crosscutting issues and in some cases the expertise resided in individual agencies and there was just a need to bring this together. Here the role of central agencies was expected to be limited, with the lead agency or network taking on responsibility for the co-ordination. Where the issue was more complex and required greater integration of policies, more active use of coordination was required. This is about the imperative. In this context the role of the centre is likely to increase and they would have a strong driver function. They needed to set key priorities. Ownership of the advancement of the issue was likely to reside at the centre, given the importance and/or complexity of the issue.

Where issues confronting network members represented the most complex, intractable problems and where there was little pre-existing agreement among those involved and where expertise was located in a number of agencies and even sectors, the role of central agencies as catalysts and facilitators became crucial. Here central agencies need to step back and allow the work to happen.

In general, it seemed that the roles of central agencies proceeded, almost as a building block, from basic enabling (empowering, listening, funding, but hands off), to being a catalyst (starts the process, without itself changing) and facilitator (promote, broker, ‘hands on’). These three roles are articulated in the following section.
a) Enabler

In this role, the key is to move away from tight control and regulation to one in which they set up the conditions necessary for others to develop outcomes:

I think there is a kind of recognition now that the public service in democratic countries is shifting from being regulator and service provider to also being an enabler of outcomes by working with communities and businesses. Actually, I think that it has done that kind of thing for a long time, but now that's been given greater recognition or moved into the centre of government business (Interview, 17 June 2002).

Another respondent isolated the need for central agencies in this role to also provide the means to build the skills of line agency staff:

I think the role of central agencies is to provide some coordination of what to do. I mean, we have got two central agencies – Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity and [the] Community Engagement Division that have a got a role in trying to do the conceptual work if you like and develop the tools and systems that need to be put in place and used by line agencies in upskilling their officers in some of these issues. So I think they have a strong role in that (Interview, 21 February 2002 -b).

As another respondent indicated there was also a need to maintain accountability and ethical practices by the central agency. This arose because in horizontal governance the controls provided by the conventional hierarchy were often lacking.

I also think that to move the public sector to an enabling function you are dealing with fundamentally new forms of accountability and ethical practice. For example, one of the benefits of hierarchical models in the public service and in the separation from the executive government and from the community is that in a strange way it can be transparent for what it does. But as soon as it builds relationships into networks across the representative system, across business and community, it muddies the waters about what is ethical behaviour, when you have charge of essentially public funds (Interview, 17 June 2002).

b) Facilitator

In this role, central agencies were seen as a means by which conditions were provided that would set the stage for collective action to occur. The following are examples of this facilitative role:
In this environment they need to be facilitating cooperation, setting directions, providing resources and permission to act (interview, 7 February, 2002).

Generally, there is a role for central agencies to work as pathfinders to identify, initiate and facilitate networking opportunities across the sectors within community, private and other non-government organisations (Interview, 6 January 2002).

c) Catalyst

Respondents also identified that there was a need for central agencies to be a catalyst for change. Key examples of this perspective follow:

Central agencies should act as a catalyst for change and seek to assist departments to overcome institutional barriers that potentially limit the effectiveness of client-focused service delivery strategies. There has already been significant reform of the traditional funding and accountability arrangements utilised by Queensland Treasury with a view to supporting whole-of-government responses to the delivery of government services. This serves as a good example of the kind of commitment that is required (Interview, 11 March 2002).

At the moment I don’t really think they do [have a role]. I really don’t think that they are producing catalyst for change. I think they should – but having said that – you are still going to get that top down. With your central agencies it’s very much a top down role – in trying to influence. If that is the case then you have to give your central agencies a profile at the point at which you really want to produce the change and give them the authority (Interview, 19 December 2001).

In this catalyst role, the emphasis was on central agencies becoming involved, but only when necessary. Whereas in the enabler role, the government’s responsibility was to set up the conditions by which collective action would be able to occur on its own, the catalyst role was one in which government was more proactive at the point of intervention. This role occurred because the government needed to step in to initiate the change in working and ensure that action was initiated but then needed to adopt a ‘hands off’ position and allow the process of change to occur.

One respondent suggested that in relation to this catalyst role of government:

Realistically they should only be involved by exception. If things are going well they don’t add much value by intervening (Interview, 30 April 2002).
Another respondent provided insight into the consequences of not moving to the ‘hands off’ stage of this process:

Unfortunately sometimes central agencies tend to be more controlling. This has a devastating effect on networks and cross-sector initiatives, because the minute they try to control it stifles enthusiasm and the excitement of collective action at the periphery (interview, 30 April 2002).

It seems that while the range of options and roles were many, that two main issues – complexity of the issue and, level and location of expertise – cut through and provided some direction around a comprehensive role for central agencies within networked environments.

A more generalised view of the changing role of central agencies

Nevertheless, there was still an overarching set of roles for central agencies. These were based on the need to provide an overall framework to determine the most effective integration mechanisms to employ. The following generalised roles for central agencies were seen as needed across the board. These roles include:

(a) Direction Setting
(b) Providing legitimacy through systems changes
(c) Risk taking

(a) Direction Setting

In terms of identifying a role for governments in networked environments there was a strong view, held across all respondent groups, that government had a primary responsibility to provide the overall policy direction within which the broader public sector would operate. A key aspect of this was the specification of the outcomes that were to be achieved. An example of this view of government as the direction setter is the following statement:

I think fundamentally the role of government is to outline what outcomes it wants to achieve. And where government policies have been most successful is where realistic and achievable targets have been set for changes and that provides a focus for the bureaucracy to provide the substance – the meat on the bones- that can be achieved (Interview, 25 January 2002).

Related to the setting of the direction for the public sector and the identification of key priorities one interviewee indicated:

Government should recognise the value of networks and be prepared to support any necessary reform to traditional
methods of public accountability in order to accommodate new and innovative client-focused service delivery strategies (Interview, 11 March 2002).

A related view was:

Well the reality is that the government is the one well placed to initiate and to help facilitate these networks. There is no doubt about that (Interview, 6 January 2002).

(b) Providing legitimacy through systems changes

There was also a strongly held view, particularly from senior public service respondents, that in order for networked arrangements to be implemented there was a need to change the existing systems and processes of the machinery of government. Further, having set the new direction there was an imperative for government to provide sufficient infrastructure, conceptual space and the time necessary for these initiatives to be fully and adequately implemented (Interview, 19 December 2002).

Government has to ensure that adequate infrastructure support such as research, and it needs to be a formative…style of research where you are researching and informing as you go. And the courage that if things don’t actually work to be able to say that and identify and make those changes as you go and actually move that back up. (Interview, 19 December 2001).

In terms of infrastructure government also needed to change funding systems so that the funding rewards were going to collaborative arrangements rather than individual agencies. For instance, in the Reconnect case the idea to incorporate was a means that could have strengthened the network. The difficulty was central agencies did not provide sufficient direction to the funding agency to support line agencies based on their support of the corporation. This lack of new direction led to the weakening of Reconnect.

(c) Risk taking

For some respondents there was an acknowledgment that in moving to networked or horizontal integration, governments would have to be risk takers. Indicating that governments need to be involved in systems change is an extremely risky political decision to make. It would require government to take a stance against a well-established and entrenched political machinery. It is much easier to fall back on the traditional methods of doing business in government.
The Chief Executive Officers’ Human Services Committee presents as an example of this phenomenon. In addition, these changes may or may not prove to be more effective. These difficulties were captured as follows:

I think that first of all government has to be sufficiently brave to say we’re actually going to build and trial and work a completely different style of government service delivery and it may work and it may not. So I think government has to have the courage and confidence to go down this road (Interview, 19 December 2001).

Summary

In general, the three case studies showed that what was important was to be able to provide the appropriate drivers and to eliminate the inhibitors of different networked arrangements. These drivers and inhibitors are apparent in Table 14.

Clearly, different roles were needed in each of these cases. For the CEOs what was needed was continued support by the Premier’s Office but in addition more emphasis needed to be placed on the horizontal relationships to augment the vertical arrangements. For SIP, the key was to maintain the buy-in of key actors, but provide legitimacy for new ways of working as well as to allow for more time and non-traditional outcomes to be supported. Finally, for Reconnect, the emphasis should have been on the development of a broader base of leadership and a more realistic view of the role of individual members as representatives of their various organisations.
Table 14: Summary of Integration Drivers and Inhibitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Drivers</th>
<th>Inhibitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Premier’s directive and the perceived need to work together</td>
<td>Too much reliance on vertical arrangements and traditional authority modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>Crisis, upfront buy-in of key stakeholders</td>
<td>Time constraints, lack of legitimacy and lack of traditional outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconnect</td>
<td>A key leader, government funding requirement Incorporation</td>
<td>Loss of key leader, risk to autonomy of individual organisations, lower level representation and ability to make key decisions on behalf of the parent organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next chapter provides the conclusion and implications for these findings. Further, it sets out the limitations of this research and the directions for further study.
CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Following on from the empirically informed chapters, this final chapter integrates the research findings within the context of the research questions. The research examined networked arrangements for developing and delivering integrated human services with the purpose of determining what factors account for the variation in these networked arrangements and the emerging role of central agencies of government. The research project was a significant contribution to network theory and practice, because, although networked arrangements have become a prominent integration mechanism within the public sector, the development and management of these constructs resides on the boundary of theory.

To unpack the structure and operation of networked arrangements and uncover the emerging role of central agencies in this context, a multiple case study approach was adopted. The empirical data generated by the case study mechanism was coupled with network analysis to confirm the structural arrangements, gain additional insights into network operation and practice.

The key findings generated from the research project are:

(a) That networked arrangements are differentiated;

(b) That these differences expand the options for designing, managing and sustaining networked arrangements;

(c) There are revised roles for central agencies of government.

This chapter will first discuss these three key findings. The broader implications of networked arrangements will then be covered. Following this the limitations of the research and the disconfirming evidence will be explored. Finally the thesis’ original contribution to knowledge and implications for further research will be set out.

DIFFERENTIATION OF TYPES OF NETWORKED ARRANGEMENTS

In much of the literature networks have been discussed as undifferentiated (Huxham, 2000; Szirom et al, 2002). However, there are a growing number of
theorists and practitioners who have begun to conceptualise networks as comprised of different structures, purposes and mechanisms. As a result there has developed a number of typologies and schema differentiating among the different types of networked arrangements (Alter and Hage, 1993; Alexander, 1995; Mandell and Steelman, forthcoming). However, in general these have been based on descriptive rather than empirical analyses (Hay, 1998; Börzel; 1998).

The case studies have provided empirical support for the previously largely fragmented theoretical propositions that networks are differentiated. Based on the findings of the case studies, a set of core common characteristics based around horizontal governance, a commitment to integrated service delivery, and capitalising on the synergies of collective modes of working were identified. Alongside these similar aspects, key variations were revealed. Thus, it was pertinent to discuss networks in terms of a broader conceptualisation referred to as networked arrangements. Encompassed within these networked arrangements are three distinct types: networking, networks and network structures, referred to as the ‘3Ns’.

The research findings also uncovered that networked arrangements are underpinned by different integration relationships. These are cooperation, coordination and collaboration, that is, the ‘3Cs’. Further this research demonstrated that two previously unconnected sets of literature, network theory and integration practice, when moulded into a single framework provided a cohesive and expanded set of principles to guide network implementation and ongoing management. The next section distils and summarises the key characteristics of these networked arrangements.

The ‘3Cs’ and ‘3Ns’: Unpacking Networked Forms

The different types of networked arrangements have not previously been unpacked enough to fully understand the contribution of each type of integrating mechanism and structural relationship to achieve optimal outcomes in public policy and service delivery. The thesis posits that a more comprehensive and refined approach to networked arrangements will expand the array of integration options available to governments. This places government in the new position of having to pick and choose the most appropriate mode or combination of modes.
Table 15 outlines distilling the key characteristics of the two integration forms and establishes the expanded terrain onto which the various networked arrangements can be mapped. It extends the explanatory power of the continuum of integration mechanisms in Figure 2 identified in Chapter One, to indicate the differences in outcomes, goals and objectives and ways of working together that align with the differing network arrangements.

**Implications for Network Actors**

The research has demonstrated that all of the ‘3Cs’ and the ‘3Ns’ have merit and utility. They should not be viewed as competitive methods but rather as complementary methods. It has been found that the key to implementing successful integration mechanisms is to decide upfront, what results are to be achieved. If all that is required is a sharing of information, then cooperative efforts will be successful and sufficient. Similarly, if what is needed is an alignment of resources and activities across departments or programs so that joint effort is achieved but organisations retain their autonomy then network coordination will be the appropriate intervention. However, if the problems are so difficult to resolve that ‘working as usual’ is not effective then collaboration through network structures may be needed.
### Table 15: Unpacking Networked Arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network Arrangements</th>
<th>Integration Relationship</th>
<th>Time taken to establish</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Structural Density</th>
<th>Formality</th>
<th>Risks/Rewards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>Independent outcomes, Participating organisations remain autonomous</td>
<td>Movement in and out by members, loose links, low intensity Density around low risk exchanges</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Low risk/modest reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Short to medium term this depends on previous working relations</td>
<td>Joint planning and programming -semi-autonomous</td>
<td>Some level of stability of membership, medium links density around plans</td>
<td>Informal/Formal</td>
<td>Increase in risks and benefits up to a point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Structure</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Long term</td>
<td>New systems and operations; Highly interdependent with sharing of power; Requires systems change.</td>
<td>Members move outside traditional functional areas’, tight links Density high</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>High risk/high reward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mixing and Matching

The task for those responsible for the architecture, administration and management of networked arrangements is to be able to mix and match the array of solutions and strategies to meet the particular service requirements. With the plethora of options and strategies it can be expected that there will be difficulties in selecting the right mix. In the past, cooperation (networking) and coordination (networks) have been the dominant modes, but in recent times with the increased fiscal restraints experienced by governments, the growing awareness that government does not have all the answers to resolve the persistent ‘wicked issues’, the necessity for greater integration of people and resources has come to the fore and governments have moved further along the integration continuum and are using collaboration through network structures as a preferred strategy.
In this networked environment the role of government and other administrators has moved from managing programs to managing the networked processes necessary for designing and delivering networked arrangements (Kickert et al, 1997; Kettl, 2001). This process has been referred to as network management.

**Network Management**

Chapter Eight highlighted major network management strategies used within the case study networks. These include driving, shaping and reshaping and being a sponsor/champion. The emphasis in the driver strategy is on the need to establish and maintain ‘directive collective action’. The focus of shaping and reshaping is the injection of new energy, resources, and new processes to keep the dynamics alive. Being a sponsor/champion refers to linking horizontal networks to the vertical axis of power and authority and engaging participants to become involved and committed to the new way of working.

There is a high degree of consistency between the network management strategies identified by the network participants and those encapsulated within the official literature as cited in Chapter Two. This reveals the understanding by participants that networked arrangements require a different way of working and managing. The implication is that the participants understand the need to stimulate interaction among network members, remove blockages to this interaction and, where necessary, assume the role of neutral mediator or arbitrator.

**THE REVISED ROLE OF CENTRAL AGENCIES IN NETWORKED ENVIRONMENTS: FROM GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNANCE**

In this thesis it has been argued that the move to networked arrangements has meant a shift in emphasis from the concept of government based on hierarchical control and authority to the concept of governance based on horizontal relationships, decision making by a diverse number of groups and power sharing. The importance of this reconceptualisation is that government entities, including central agencies, will now need to take on new, and often uncomfortable, roles. Through the analysis of the three case studies, central agencies have been identified as having specific roles in networked arrangements. Chapter Eight delineated these two categories of roles. These roles exist on two dimensions: at the strategic level and the operational level.
The first dimension relates to the provision of an operating environment in which networked arrangements can be optimally utilised. In this dimension the roles include direction setting, providing legitimacy and risk taking. These are the overarching, strategic roles that are needed to provide a foundation for any of the networked arrangements to be able to proceed and be sustained. Direction setting refers to providing the overall policy and operational framework for networked arrangements. This includes the specification of outcomes and the monitoring of processes to ensure that the integrity of the reform process remains intact. Providing legitimacy to act refers to giving participants the authority needed to work outside traditional modes. Finally, risk taking has to do with the need for systems changes to accommodate the move to networked arrangements. This requires strength of commitment to the process to ensure networked arrangements can move forward.

The second dimension establishes more finely tuned functional roles for central agencies when operating within networked arrangements. In this category, the roles include enabler, facilitator and catalyst. An enabler role refers to the process of empowering line and community agencies, listening to their issues, and providing the necessary funding to operate. In effect it is a ‘hands-off’ role. The facilitator role is more active, requiring the central agencies to adopt a ‘hands-on’ role, brokering relationships, and breaking through barriers of resistance. Finally, the catalyst role centres on enabling change to occur but once the process begins to step back and allow it to occur on its own.

The analysis carried out in this thesis therefore clearly delineates the need for central agencies of government to be aware of the impact of managing not only at different levels of government, but also being able to cut through the complexity that is inherent in networked arrangements and provide the appropriate levels of support and expertise.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NETWORKED ARRANGEMENTS

Difficulties of Working Differently

Official recognition by policy makers and network administrators in all sectors of the differences required in working in networked arrangements will be needed if they are to be able to make the necessary adjustments and utilise them to their maximum potential. Adjustments will have to be made to the traditional methods
of government operation for the reviewing, financing, administration and implementation of public programs. In other words, the effectiveness of these new, horizontal ways of working can only be achieved if non-traditional processes and outcomes are accepted as legitimate. However, as this thesis has shown, operating within networked arrangements means ‘working outside the box’ and many of systems and processes and in particular organisational cultures are not structured to easily enable such a change. The issues of time, risk, and changing expectations of government identified in Chapter Eight highlight the difficulties of achieving and sustaining this new way of working.

In terms of time the problem is that traditional government views are focused on delivering immediate outcomes. In networked arrangements, many benefits will only be realised over the long-term. The requirements of the traditional, political/electoral system are such that support of long-term gains is hard to maintain. Further, the traditional operating environment of government is considered to be risk averse and as such does not support or reward personnel who adopt the higher risk interventions necessary to solve complex intractable issues. Finally, traditional government expectations focus on counting numbers of clients served and outcomes achieved in networked arrangements. It is not these outcomes that are critical, however. Rather, the prime outcomes of networked arrangements are the need to build relationships, establishing trust and forging closer links among participants. This means that government expectations have to change to include the benefits of the new ways that departments, agencies, communities and non-profit organisations work together. Until this occurs, it is argued there will continue to be a tendency for government entities to either not engage in these new arrangements or, if they do, and they become difficult for them, to revert back to their more comfortable traditional roles.

Rhodes (2000), commenting on the British Government’s move to horizontal government modes, identified a similar concern where although government recognised the need to manage networks it failed to recognise that “hands-off is the hardest lesson for all British central governments to learn” (2000: 163). This was underscored by Keast and Brown (2002: 455) who indicated that: “While networks represent a useful mechanism to coordinate services through collective action within and across government, their inherent push to the periphery will inevitably be met by an equal if not greater pull to the centre”.

240
Based on the interviews conducted in the three cases it becomes clear therefore that effective design, operation and management of networked arrangements requires higher levels of commitment, longer time requirements, an acknowledgement of the interdependence among participants, a high degree of tolerance for risk and an emphasis on systems change. What is required, therefore, as was discovered in this thesis, is the difficult process of changing organisational cultures. The difficulty in achieving this, as pointed out in Chapter Eight is that culture change takes people outside their comfort zone. Further, it necessitates modifications to the existing systems and procedures of government that are not usually politically acceptable.

**Expanded Choices**

By being able to differentiate between different types of networked arrangements policy makers are able to choose among a variety of integration options. Rather than having to assume that innovations can only be achieved in one way, governments may adopt a more strategic framework within which to operate. This not only opens up the options available to governments to work on solving complex problems, it allows them to choose between horizontal integration mechanisms that are more traditional such as cooperation and coordination as well as the more non-traditional methods such as collaboration in which to accomplish this task.

In this way there is a recognition that many social problems can be resolved at lower levels of integration. Commencing at a lower level on the Integration Continuum provides an environment in which interventions based on low risk, commitment and linkage can be tried and some success achieved. Following from this, the basis for making decisions requiring systems change needed for the more complex problems can be established.

**Combining Methodologies to Enhance Understanding of Networked Arrangements**

Many studies of public sector networks have tended to use either detailed case studies of particular situations or events or survey analyses examining the characteristics of members of organisations in general (Rhodes, 1997; Ferlie and Marks, 2002). The originality of this thesis is that it has combined multiple case study methodology including qualitative and quantitative data with network
analysis to enable a systematic exploration of the operation, governance and management characteristics of human service networks and in doing so to uncover the emerging or revised role of central agencies of state within this networked context. This meant that rather than relying just on the impressions gained from network members, the researcher was able to map both similarities and differences in the structure of networks. This approach allows for a better understanding of the complexities of the different types of networked arrangements, the underlying reasons for the variations and the strengths and weaknesses of each networked arrangement.

Limitations of Research

While the utilisation of network analysis permitted a deep description of these complex social processes, time and access difficulties with respect to the Chief Executive Officers’ Committee meant that it was only possible to obtain network data for the three networks at one point in time over the duration of the research period. In effect this meant that the network structures developed represented only a ‘snap-shot’ of what has been shown to be fluid and changing arrangements. Since networks are apt to rapid change, it is hard to generalise precisely what set of relationships the network measures actually capture. However, this limitation does not detract from the significance of the findings of this study because of the strong case study underpinning which traced the evolution of the networked arrangements over the three-year period of the study.

Due to the fluid nature of the human service sector in Queensland the case study networks experienced a number of personnel and organisational changes over the course of the research. This may have resulted in an incomplete set of perspectives of the participants’ experience in the networked arrangements and may have narrowed the consideration of some of these differing viewpoints and experiences thereby limiting the richness of experience available to the research. Although the network analysis undertaken in this thesis provided a rich source of alternative data, network analysis is still an unfolding area of research. As a result, the findings may not reflect the insights that could be possible using this methodology. Nevertheless, it has shown to be an invaluable tool for this type of investigation.

It was originally expected that there would be considerable structural differences exhibited between the three, networked arrangements chosen as case studies.
These expected differences were based on the researcher's preliminary knowledge of the nature of the three cases. To expand, it was believed that the Reconnect Network as a service delivery 'network' would have close relationship ties among the practitioners and would therefore resemble a network structure. By comparison, the expectation for the Chief Executive Officers' Human Services Committee, because of its vertical ties to the centre of government and an emphasis on the protection on organisational domains, was that this group would only be involved in the traditional networking mode as characterised by low levels of cooperation, information sharing and limited joint action. In view of the researcher's prior knowledge of the SIP project the expectation from the beginning was that this arrangement would be a strong network structure.

Contrary to these expectations, the initial quantitative network data provided through the network analysis presented the three, networked arrangements as exhibiting similar structural characteristics. It was only after a more detailed analysis involving a reconceptualisation of networked arrangements that a more differentiated perspective was forthcoming. Although the networked arrangements were differentiated as the researcher expected, these differentiations were not the ones that the researcher originally expected. Instead, it was found that the Reconnect Network represented the lowest level of interaction (cooperation and networking rather than collaboration and network structure). The Chief Executive Officers' Human Services Committee was found to be a coordination network. Although the vertical ties were important it was the formalised arrangements and the mandate of the Premier that moved it from networking to a network. The expectation of SIP constituting a strong network structure was unfounded. Although it was a network structure it was not as strong as the researcher expected it to be. In spite of the initial surprising results, it was nevertheless possible to be able to use these results to develop a better understanding of networked arrangements.

As a tool for conceptualising the broad nature of integration relationships that existed within each of the networked arrangements the Integration Continuum provided useful. However, the one-dimensional aspect of this model did not accommodate the different levels of commitment, intensity and trust that were found to exist simultaneously within networked arrangements.
Original Contribution to Knowledge

The research has contributed to the knowledge of networked arrangements in a number of ways. First, the research provides a means to differentiate various types of networked arrangements (networking, networks and network structures) as opposed to the practice of referring to all networked arrangements as the singular concept of a network. This extends network theory and allows a richer understanding of the integration options available to policy makers. Second, by synthesising the previously parallel integration literatures on structures and relational processes, this research provides new insights into the differing strategies possible within horizontal modes of integration. Third, although some theorists have discussed the revised role of government and to a lesser extent the role of central agencies in networked arrangements, this research extends the existing body of knowledge to provide a more realistic view of the complexities, the significance of the role changes needed and the difficulties inherent in carrying out these roles.

Finally, a further unexpected and unconsidered outcome of the research was the simultaneous existence of multiple sets of integrative action in each network. That is, the data uncovered that, rather than being a singularly oriented process, network agents actually participate in networked arrangements and engage with other network members at different levels of commitment, purpose and relational intensity. This finding suggests that while the Integration Continuum has proven to be a useful tool for conceptualising the broad nature of integration relationships that exist within each of the networked arrangements, the one-dimensional aspect of this model does not accommodate the different levels of trust, commitment and interaction that were found to operate simultaneously within networked arrangements. In this way the research has provided a conceptual link between theoretical concepts to action-orient interventions.

Implication for future research

This thesis has illuminated several theoretical areas that would benefit from future research. First, there is a need to undertake network analysis measurements at a number of points of time in the networks’ evolution and operation, to measure change over time. This would provide a more detailed and realistic understanding of the dynamic nature of networked arrangements. Second, this work can be extended beyond the visual mapping of network
differences to the next level of network analysis by measuring network variables including centrality, strength, and density. A third area of future research emerges from the recommendations by Milward and Provan (1995; 2001) and Agranoff and McGuire (2001b) for an examination of the effectiveness of networked arrangements as structures for achieving enhanced human service outcomes. Finally, the context in which networked arrangements are examined could be extended to include environments outside of the human services arena such as the physical sciences or the business sector. A comparison of networked arrangements across sectors would strengthen insights into the optimal operation of these networked arrangements and provide more empirical data to inform the mixing and matching strategies.
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We are researchers from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) working in partnership with the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Our research seeks to understand the nature and operation of cross-sector networks in Queensland. We are interested in your experience of working in a cross-sector or network models of coordination generally and within the Reconnect Network in particular.

The focus group will take approximately 45-60 minutes. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate in the focus group altogether or you may decline to answer any question. However, we would appreciate your full and open participation.

The focus group will be tape-recorded and the tapes transcribed and analysed. Confidentiality and anonymity of the research data is of the utmost importance to us and therefore your comments will only be seen by QUT researchers. We will collate and analyse the data and report the results in such a way that individuals will not be identified.

The focus group questions are provided on the back of this document. You are welcome to provide written responses and forward them to the researcher at the address provided below.

If you have any subsequent queries regarding this focus group, please contact:

Robyn Keast
Ph: 32247449/mobile 0404032182
Email: Robyn.Keast@premiers.qld.gov.au
Community Engagement Division
Department of Premier and Cabinet
PO Box 185
Brisbane
Albert Street, 4001
This interview follows an earlier questionnaire on the operation, management and structure of the network relations that have been formed around the Services Integration Project (SIP) and seeks to obtain more detailed insight into the actual operation of this network.

During the interview six broad questions about network operation will be presented for network members’ response and comment.

The interview will take approximately 40-60 minutes. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate in the interview altogether or you may decline to answer any question within the interview schedule. However, your full and open participation would be appreciated.

Unless otherwise requested the interview will be tape recorded. You are advises of your right to stop the tape recorder at any time during the interview as well as to decide on the subsequent storage and treatment f the interview tape.

We consider the confidentiality and anonymity of this research data to be of the utmost importance. The data gathered from the interview will be collated, analysed, and reported upon in such a way that individuals will not be identifiable in any way and the information will only be seen by QUT researchers. While we have asked for your name in the interview it is for follow-up purposes only and will not be used in any other manner.

Thank you for your participation in the interview.
Cross Government Coordination

Statement of Interview Consent

This is a joint research project undertaken by the Queensland University of Technology, Faculty of Business and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Queensland in collaboration with the Community Service and Research Centre, University of Queensland.

The research team for the project is comprised of: Robyn Keast MA, Kerry Brown Ph.D., Neal Ryan Ph.D. and Tony Callaghan Ph.D. School of Management, Queensland University of Technology

Statement of consent

By signing below you are indicating that you:

- Agree to participate in the project;
- Have read and understood the information sheet about this project;
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction;
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team;
- Understand that you are free to withdraw from answering any question or the entire interview;
- Understand that you can contact the research team if you have any questions about the project, or the Secretary of the University Human Research Ethics Committee on 38642902 if you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project.

Name  
______________________________________________________

Signature  
______________________________________________________

Date  
____/____/____

278
Inter-organisational arrangements, or networks, have become common mechanisms for the development and implementation of policy in the human services sector.

Despite their popularity, there is currently limited information about the operation, management, and effectiveness of such networks. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect the information necessary to gain insight into the structure, operation, and effectiveness of cross-sector networks operating within Queensland.

The focus of this questionnaire is on the set of relationships that have been formed around the Reconnect Network on the Gold Coast.

The questionnaire is arranged in four main sections—(1) general network membership information including personal and organisational characteristics, (2) network linkages and relationships, (3) network operation, and (4) network effectiveness - and will be used to map and measure aspects of the network's structure and operation.

The questionnaire will take approximately 30-40 minutes. Your participation is completely voluntary. A Focus Group Session will follow the questionnaire. You may decline to participate in the questionnaire (and subsequent Focus Group) altogether or you may decline to answer any question within the questionnaire. However, your full and open participation would be appreciated.

We consider that confidentiality and anonymity of this research data to be of the utmost importance. The data gathered from the questionnaire will be collated, analysed, and reported upon in such a way that individuals will not be identifiable in any way and the information will only be seen by QUT researchers. While we have asked for your name in the questionnaire it is for follow-up purposes only and will not be used in any other manner.

A joint research project undertaken by the Queensland University of Technology, Faculty of Business and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Queensland.

Robyn Keast MA, Kerry Brown Ph.D., Neal Ryan Ph.D. and Tony Callaghan Ph.D.
School of Management, Queensland University of Technology

Contact: Dr Kerry Brown
Telephone: 38642939
Email ka.brown@qut.edu.au

Robyn Keast
Telephone: 0404032182
Email Robyn.Keast@premiers.qld.gov.au
Section 1: General Information

This first section asks for general information about you (as a network member) and your organisation. This information is for statistical purposes only and will not identify you individually in any documentation.

Personal Characteristics:

1. Please give your name ________________________________________

2. Please name your organisation ____________________________

3. Please indicate your sex (tick the correct box). Male ☐, Female ☐

4. Please indicate your age category by ticking the relevant age grouping.
   20 - 30, ☐ 31 - 40, ☐ 41 - 50, ☐ 51 - 60, ☐ 61 - 70, ☐ 70 + ☐

5. Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed, by circling the most relevant category.
   • Up to and including Year 10 (or equivalent) 1
   • Year 12 (or equivalent) 2
   • Diploma /Certificate from TAFE (or equivalent) 3
   • Undergraduate degree 4
   • Post Graduate degree 5
   • Ph.D. 6

6. For tertiary qualifications please indicate your main field of study. ___________________________

7. Please indicate your current position level? (Eg SACS Award Level, SES 1, AO8) ________________

8. Please indicate how long you have been involved in this network ________ years ________ months

9. Are you a member of any other networks? If yes, please indicate. _______________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________

Organisational Characteristics:

10. What is the total number of full time equivalent employees in your organisation? Please tick the most appropriate response.
    Not for profit organisation
    • Less than 5 ☐, 5-10 ☐, 10 -20 ☐, 20-50, 50+ ☐
    Government organisation
    • 100 -200 ☐, 200 -500 ☐, 500-1000 ☐, 1000-2000 ☐, 5,000+ ☐
11. Approximately how much time **per month** do you spend on this network? Since you may not have exact figure, please provide the best estimate you can.

Less than 1 day ☐, 1-2 days ☐, 2-3 days ☐, 4-5 days ☐, more than 5 days ☐

12. What is the **core business** of your organisation?

13. Overall how important would you say is the coordination of services to the overall mission of your agency? Using the scale below, please circle the number that best matches your response. 1 = no importance, 2 = very little importance, 3 = some importance, 4 = fairly important, and 5 = very important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Importance</th>
<th>Very little Importance</th>
<th>Some Importance</th>
<th>Fairly Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 2: Network Linkages and Relationships

14. Following is a list of agencies and organisations that are part of the Goodna Services Integration Project. We would like to know if your organisation engaged in any of the following types of network activities listed below with one or more of the agencies listed during the past six to twelve months.

**Definitions:**

**Shared information:** Did your agency share (receive/ send) information/ data **(with some regularity)** to the agency listed?

**Joint Funding:** Did your agency provide/receive funding **(with some regularity)** to the agency listed?

**Service Contract:** Did your agency fund or receive funds from the agencies listed for providing services on a contractual basis to human services clients?

**Joint Program/Planning:** Did your agency have any programs (or participate in joint program planning activities) with the agency listed in which clients are served jointly through a formal collaborative effort?

**Contact Referrals:** Did your agency provide 'specialist/insider' information to other agencies that assisted them to access previously inaccessible services and/or funds?

**Reference Group Participation:** Did your agency participate **(with some regularity)** in inter-organisational or cross-departmental groups, committees, working parties etc.?

**Instructions:**

For each agency listed below, please indicate if your organisation was linked through shared information, service-contract, joint funding, joint program planning, contact referrals, or reference group membership, by placing a tick in the appropriate box. If your organisation engaged in any of the activities
described below with any other agency (not listed) please list these and the activities in the space provided. Where you had no involvement with any agency in relation to any linkage, leave the space blank. In the last column we would like you to rate the overall quality of your agency’s working relationship with this other agency. Relationship quality is defined as the achievement of mutual benefit. Please circle the number that best reflects the relationship quality using the following scale:

1 = no relationship, 2 = poor relationship, 3 = fair relationship, 4 = good relationship, 5 = excellent relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
<th>Types of Links - past 6 to 12 months?</th>
<th>Relationship Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check ✓ the box if you had this link</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared Information</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint Funding</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service Contract</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint Program Planning</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact Referrals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reference Groups, Working Parties</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please circle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. Using the space provided below, please **identify** and **rate** any additional links you may have with other agencies.

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

16. Now, please go back through your answers to **Question 14**, and indicate which links **have been most critical to your agency**. To do this, simply circle the ticks you made for those links that you believe are especially important. Please circle no more than one (1) tick for each type of involvement (i.e. the most important for service contracts, the most important for joint projects etc.).

17. To what extent do Central Agencies (e.g. Department of Premier and Cabinet) impact on the operation of this network? Using the following scale, please circle the number that best matches your response:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Premier and Cabinet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasury Department</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Public Service Merit &amp; Equity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. If you have responded ‘significant impact’ (i.e. 4) or ‘very high impact’ (i.e. 5) to Question 17, please indicate what form this impact might take. For example, the provision of a whole-of-government perspective, overall strategic direction, policy direction setting, or funding.

________________________________________________________________

19. The following is a list of potential reasons why you and your agency might choose to be involved with the network. Please rate each one as to the importance of that reason. Circle the number that corresponds to your reason using the following scale:

1 = **almost never** the reason for involvement  
2 = **seldom** the reason for involvement  
3 = **sometimes** the reason for involvement  
4 = **often** the reason for involvement  
5 = **almost always** the reason for involvement.

a.  **Personal friendship/social interaction**  
    1  2  3  4  5
b.  **Reputation of the agency**  
    1  2  3  4  5
c.  **Similar beliefs and methods**  
    of service delivery  
    1  2  3  4  5
d.  **Habit/tradition**  
    1  2  3  4  5
e.  **Location/proximity**  
    1  2  3  4  5
f.  **Service needs of clients**  
    1  2  3  4  5
g.  **Required by mandate**  
    1  2  3  4  5
h.  **Contract requirement**  
    1  2  3  4  5
i.  **Outside pressure**  
    1  2  3  4  5
j.  **To improve efficiency (better processes)**  
    1  2  3  4  5
k.  **Resource scarcity**  
    1  2  3  4  5
l.  **Funding/financial pressures**  
    1  2  3  4  5
m.  **Critical situation requiring joint effort**  
    1  2  3  4  5
n.  **To gain legitimacy with other agencies**  
    1  2  3  4  5
o.  **Valuing joint effort**  
    1  2  3  4  5
p.  **To learn from others/share information**  
    1  2  3  4  5
Section 3: Network Operation

20. We would now like to get some information about the way that this network operates. Please indicate (by circling) which of the following aspects in your opinion keeps this network together and functioning.

a. Network members have shared values
b. Network members are confronted with similar concerns/issues
c. There is reciprocation between network members
d. There are long-term relationships between network members
e. Network members have compatible cultures
f. The network has set rules and norms about how to work together
g. There is mutual understanding and empathy between network members
h. There is a high degree of mutual trust between network members
i. Social relations monitor/influence network actions
j. Network actions are influenced/controlled by legal requirements/sanctions
k. The exchanges/transactions between members are formal
l. The exchanges/transactions between members are informal
m. There are contractual obligations/arrangements between members
n. The network’s actions are monitored by external bodies
o. The network’s actions are regulated by hierarchical regulation/direction
p. The network is controlled by managerial authority
q. There is cooperation between network members
r. Network members participate in joint problem solving
s. Divergent opinions are expressed and listened to
t. Other (please specify) __________________________________________

21. Next, please indicate (by circling) those structures and/or process (linking mechanisms) that assist in the way this network functions.

a. Well developed rules and procedures
b. Ongoing liaison between member agencies
c. Coordination committees
d. Involvement in reference groups
e. Involvement in working parties
f. There is strong lateral communication across and between members
g. Communication within the network is mostly directed downwards
h. Conferences to discuss issues and set joint direction
i. Workshops to develop mutual implementation strategies
j. Informal meetings between members
k. Participation in joint venture/programming between agencies
l. Involvement in joint case management of particular clients
m. Regular telephone contact between members
n. Regular meetings of the network

22. Please list and/or describe any other mechanisms or approaches that have been used to manage and coordinate the activities of this network.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
Section 4: Network Effectiveness

23. Below is a list of issues that your agency may be concerned about in providing services to clients. Please go through the list and indicate how you believe your agency and its services have been affected through participation in this network for (a) the past financial year (2000/01) and (b) are likely to be affected over the next year (2001/2). For each item, circle the number (1-5) that best matches your answer using the following scale:

1 = The network has had/will have a **significant negative** impact on my agency
2 = The impact of the network has been/will be **mostly negative** for my agency
3 = The impact of the network has been/will be **mostly neutral** for my agency
4 = The impact of the network on my agency has been/will be **mostly positive**
5 = The network has had/will have a **significant positive** impact on my agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network impact on individual agency</th>
<th>July/June 2000/01</th>
<th>July/June 2001/02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Improved access to resources</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Saving on programs</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Enhanced problem solving/service solutions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Enhanced quality of service provision</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Better information</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Increased legitimacy</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Increased number of services offered</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Coordination/integration with other services</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Reduced duplication</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Increased access to services by clients</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Greater understanding of other services</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Innovation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Improved referral processes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Reduced confusion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Enhanced client satisfaction</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Other aspects/effects (please list and rate)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. Finally, we would like your opinion about the impact the network has had over the past twelve months (2000/01) and is likely to have (over the next 12 months-2001/02) on the **overall human services delivery sector** on the Gold Coast (i.e. not just the impact on your agency, as in the last question). Again, circle the number that best matches your answer using the following scale:

1 = **significant negative** impact on overall service provision
2 = **mostly negative** impact
3 = neutral impact
4 = **mostly positive** impact
5 = **significant positive** impact
## Overall network impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>July/June 2000/01</th>
<th>July/June 2001/02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Enhanced quality of services offered</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Cooperation among service providers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Improved coordination/integration</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Improved communication &amp; information</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Enhanced funding to the human services sector</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Controlling the cost of services</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Increased innovation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Enhanced access to information</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Enhanced access to resources</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>j. Enhanced sector service outcomes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>k. Enhanced utilisation of services</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>l. Enhanced client satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>m. Improved community well-being outcomes</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>n. Reduced duplication</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>o. Reduced services confusion</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>p. Enhanced trust/understanding</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>q. Broader range of services offered</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>r. Other aspects (please list and rate)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other aspects (please list and rate)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your participation.
Please use the reverse side to add any additional thoughts you might have on this network (or others that you are involved in) and how it might affect the delivery of human services in Queensland.