Working with what is there
A systems psychodynamic framework for inter-agency collaboration

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A thesis submitted for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy
I, Janelle Morgan, certify that:

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Abstract

External pressures, globalisation and advances in technology mean that organisations increasingly need to work together to achieve desired outcomes. However, despite an extensive literature on collaboration, much of it does not translate into effective practice. Even in the face of recognition that collaboration is essential in an increasingly complex world, many collaborations fail. The difficulty in explaining such failures may be in part because much of the literature focuses on the superficial, rational aspects of human behaviour and does not take into account the fact that collaboration is a complex relational process that requires sophisticated, mature working relations between partners. This thesis uses a systems psychodynamic perspective to examine inter-agency collaboration.

As an interdisciplinary social sciences orthodoxy, systems psychodynamics brings together key elements of the disciplines of psychodynamics, group relations theory and systems theory. The unique perspective taken by the systems psychodynamic orientation offers a significant heuristic opportunity to study inter-agency collaboration through an understanding of the powerful unconscious group processes that may derail collaborative efforts.

The study centres upon a small unit in a Victorian government department and a court working together to implement a problem solving initiative. The Court Integrated Services Program sought to reduce repeat offending associated with complex and co-occurring problems such as drug and alcohol addiction, mental health problems, disability and homelessness. Based on a single case study, this research utilises clinical methods including, participant interviews, workplace observation, keeping a journal, using a working note, a research reflection group and insider researching.

Theoretical interpretation and the search for themes and trends are used to analyse the data. The data is presented through the examination of a number of critical social events based on the symbolic value of those events to hold meaning for the groups under examination. Each critical social event is described and analysed through the simultaneous use of action, reaction and interpretation streams. A number of working hypotheses are generated.
The working hypotheses are utilised to develop a framework for inter-agency collaboration based on the case study. The framework is set out in two parts. The first part, called the pre-collaborative phase, describes two groups coming together to collaborate on a joint task as separate entities. In the beginning, the groups are embedded in the wider system and the strong system forces emanating from the system cause anxiety and the dominance of basic assumption behaviours to defend against resultant paranoid and depressive anxieties. There is little correspondence between the sentience and task systems because the groups maintain strong allegiance to their parent organisations. The only factor that holds the two groups together long enough for a collaboration to emerge is the importance of the task to the wider system. In the event that this importance diminishes, the collaboration is likely to fail.

The second part, referred to as the emergent collaboration phase, focuses on what needs to happen in order to facilitate the emergence of collaboration and argues in support of a central hypothesis. This thesis argues that a safe reflective space needs to be created where the collaboration itself can be reflected upon. This reflective space needs to facilitate the emergence of a ‘good enough’ container where the members of the two groups can express and examine the positive and negative aspects of the collaboration and facilitate the formation of the group-as-a-whole. The safe reflective space is the central element of the framework.

Participation in relational activities leads to new ways of working together on the task and learning to trust each other. Working ‘in the presence of the other’ through participating in relational activities then facilitates collaborative learning.

The emergence of a new task group is characterised by alignment in the sentience and task systems whereby members build increased allegiance to the new group and the task, the establishment of a collaborative state of mind and joint leadership of the collaborative endeavour. The new group becomes a new system in its own right and is contained within new boundaries which overlap the boundaries in the wider system. The new boundaries provide a holding environment within which the new group can define group membership and identity, contain anxiety, experience a new relatedness and the exercise of new authority relations. Within a ‘good enough’ holding environment, the experience of the group-as-a-whole will facilitate the emergence of a potential space within which creativity and innovation is possible.
Preface

This thesis tells the story of two agencies working together to develop and implement a new program designed to reduce criminal offending behaviour in Victoria, Australia. Early in the thesis I describe the program and the theory underpinning it, however the story is really about how the two organisations worked together to implement the program and achieve a significant change.

Prior to the implementation of the program being studied here, the two organisations had worked together for many years at different levels to achieve a range of day to day, programmatic and strategic outcomes. The nature of their relationship changed many times over those years depending on the people involved, leadership, government policy and task.

The processes and outcomes achieved in this study are fundamentally different to much of that which had preceded them. The way we worked together was different in that, in addition to working on the primary task, we purposefully worked on the process of working together and did not focus solely on the outcomes we needed to achieve. I am confident now that even in spite of a long history of tension in the relationship between the two organisations, that which was achieved might be achievable again in the future through the application of the knowledge we gained during this study. We believe we have found a new way of working together.

At various points throughout this dissertation I have struggled to find my voice and the personal pronoun is used extensively although my wish is always to take an objective stance. This is because it is a first hand account from an insider researcher perspective. It reflects the struggle that I experienced throughout the research process and the fact that as an insider researcher I am integrally part of the study and part of the process that generated the data under examination.

I have also struggled with writing in the correct tense, again because of my insider researcher position. Working as an insider researcher has meant that at times I have been so immersed in the process that it has been difficult to extract myself from the process and be sure whether I should be writing from the past or in the present tense. Getting the tense right was a struggle
throughout the writing of this thesis and despite my best endeavours, I know it is still wrong in places.

The thesis is also very much my interpretation of events, observations and findings. I say this because I am sure that others who participated in the research will hold different perspectives and interpret what took place over the time we worked together differently. Each of us holds our own reality of the program development and research experiences, what we thought was going on and what, if anything, it meant.

I wish also to be clear from the outset that the views expressed in this thesis are mine and mine alone unless directly and clearly attributed to another. I am at no time expressing a view that claims to be on behalf of the Department of Justice, Victoria despite my being an employee of the department during the time this research was conducted, and the research being directly associated with my workplace role for much of that time.

About half way through the research, and as a result of a preliminary analysis of the data collected at the conclusion of the first round of interviews, I began to think of distilling a number of conditions necessary to facilitate good inter-agency collaboration and the possibility of developing a model or framework for inter-agency collaboration. However, even while holding that idea, I was worried that it was influenced by my history in biochemistry and experimental psychology and the pursuit of reliability, validity, generalisability and the search for ‘truth’. I was worried that this thinking might not be able to be reconciled with the social sciences perspective I was taking here.

In reality, the data generated throughout this study reflects a moment in time and as such cannot be replicated. It represents a particular time in the history of the two organisations involved, the development of a particular program and the people who were involved; many of whom have now moved on to different roles.

That is not to say that there is no evidence for necessary conditions for collaboration. It does mean however that where possible, corroboration for this evidence needs to be drawn from the relationship that is established between the researcher and the reality being studied (Corbetta, 2003). In the natural sciences we are interested in explaining the cause and effect laws we observe whilst in the social sciences, we are attempting to understand what is being observed
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(Crotty, 1998). As I will explain in more detail within this dissertation, I have chosen the interpretivist stance where the task of the researcher is to discover and negotiate the meanings that guide social behaviour and make sense of actions through the use of abductive logic (Crotty, 1998; Cherry, 1999).

Finally, the title of my thesis is derived from a metaphor that has increased in significance as the writing of it progressed. As I wrote, I held in mind a picture of a patchwork quilt. However, it wasn't until one of my doctoral colleagues mentioned that she had started making a patchwork quilt whilst writing her thesis that the importance of this metaphor for my own work became clear. During the writing of my thesis I took up a quilt that I had set aside twenty years earlier! I finished that one and then started another. The making of these quilts has been a welcome accompaniment to my research. Working on a quilt has provided me with space to fill a creative need but also allowed me the freedom to keep thinking about the creation of my thesis. At some level, I feel as if I was working on two different types of quilts simultaneously. In my more rational moments when working on a quilt, I often wonder why I cut material up into small shapes only to sew them back together again. Maybe by the end of my thesis I will understand why.
About the Researcher

To assist in placing this thesis into an appropriate context, it is important that the reader know something of the researcher in order to understand the influence the researcher had on the research process and the outcome. When commencing my doctoral candidacy, like all other doctoral students I had two significant decisions to make; the selection of a research subject and my theoretical perspective.

I have worked for twenty years for the Department of Justice in Victoria, Australia in the areas of corrections, courts, victims services and currently the Sheriff’s Office. As a public servant, my role is to implement Government policy. For many years I did this as a generalist manager and more recently as a project manager. I am guided very much by a social justice perspective which for me, emerged out of an early interest in human behaviour and criminal behaviour in particular.

My workplace role throughout the research component of my doctoral candidacy was as the manager of the then Courts and Programs Development Unit (CPDU) in the Courts Portfolio within the Department of Justice. As such, I was responsible for leading the development and field testing of the problem solving initiatives being introduced into the courts in Victoria. I have recently moved to the Sheriff’s Office. The CPDU was established in May 2005 for two primary reasons. The first was to enable a more concentrated focus on the development, implementation and evaluation of a range of problem solving approaches in the courts. The second was in recognition of the complexity of this work, the fragility of the relationship between the courts and the department and the need to work more closely with the courts. At the time of writing, the CPDU no longer exists as a separate business unit within the courts portfolio. Its function has recently been incorporated into the wider Courts and Tribunals Unit.

As I will explain in more detail later, I chose to conduct research in my workplace in order to try and solve a dilemma I faced in carrying out my workplace role. This meant that I also naively took on the role of insider researcher and all of the associated challenges that presented. And I was naïve to these challenges in the extreme. When I started out on this journey I had no idea that the role of insider researcher really meant the simultaneous holding of multiple roles. Managing myself in these multiple roles necessitated my having to monitor the boundaries
between my researcher and manager roles which required my constant vigilance. Nor did I anticipate the pulls from one role to another or the need to be constantly alert to the possibility of forgetting which role I was in at a particular time. The challenges of being an insider researcher will be examined in more detail in the body of the thesis.

In relation to my choice of theoretical perspective - this was simple. In a previous workplace role some years earlier, the business unit I was working in at the time agreed to engage the then Dr. Susan Long and Dr. John Newton (both then with Swinburne University) to help us develop a model for the case management of offenders. It was during this time that I was first exposed to the idea of systems psychodynamics as a way of working and understanding the world. As soon as I began to grasp the underlying concepts I recognised it as a framework and language that was familiar to me. Not because I knew anything about systems psychodynamics at the time, but because it gave a form and structure to the way I intuitively looked at the world. I have of course had to learn about how, as a theoretical perspective, systems psychodynamics came about, what the fundamental elements of the theory are, how they work together and how as a discipline it can be applied.

The point at which my research became real for me coincided with my decision to move from the Professional Doctorate to the PhD stream of study half way through my first year. I had initially enrolled in the Professional Doctorate which entailed the completion of a practicum report and submission of the university research program and ethics application in the first year. Subsequent years focussed on the carrying out of the research and writing the dissertation.

My decision to change streams was influenced by the speed at which the implementation project got under way half way through 2005. I knew that if I wanted to use the CISP as a case study I needed to carry out the research and the implementation project simultaneously. If I waited until the beginning of the second year, in line with the Professional Doctorate timetable, I would be too far behind the project and would have lost irreplaceable data. By the middle of the year I was acutely aware of a building urgency as the project built momentum and henceforth made the decision to change study streams.
Introduction

“If you collaborate in a good collaboration, which works generously, you become each other a wee bit.”

John Clarke
Talking Heads
ABC Television
29 October 2007

Like many of its national and international counterparts, the Victorian court system has recently been undergoing significant change as a result of the introduction of new specialist courts and problem solving (Freiberg, 2004) models of practice, based on the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence (Winick, 1997) which will be discussed further in chapter 2. Over recent years a number of new practice models have been introduced into the Victorian Magistrates Court which aim to address the underlying factors that contribute to crime, including substance misuse, mental illness, acquired brain injury and significant social disadvantage, often resulting in homelessness.

The Magistrates Court, both as an organisation and through the work of many of the individual Magistrates, has demonstrated remarkable leadership in adopting the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence and introducing associated new practice models. This had been characterised by the progressive introduction of a range of court support services from the mid to late 1990s focussing on intellectual disability, mental health problems, youth justice, drug and alcohol services and homelessness to name just a few.

A series of internal and/or independent process and outcome evaluations conducted over this time demonstrate early evidence for the effectiveness of these programs in reducing re-offending and where appropriate, diverting defendants from the criminal justice system. However, observation throughout this period indicated that these changes had sometimes been hard won and differences in how some of the initiatives had been taken up by the court system meant that a number continued to be fragile some years after implementation. This fragility can be attributed to a number of factors, including the way the early programs had been established and funded and the relationship between the court and the Department of Justice.
When first being introduced, these support services had mushroomed in an ad hoc manner as the court perceived the need for them and project specific funding was secured. Each of the programs was funded separately and under the aegis of separate bodies. For example,

“mental health nurses were provided to the Magistrates’ Court by a Department of Human Services statutory body; juvenile justice workers were provided by Youth Justice from the Department of Human Services; the Magistrates’ Court funded a Disability Officer through its own budget; the drug program was initially funded through a grant from a crime prevention fund, but then secured ongoing funding from the Department of Justice and the Commonwealth Government [Tough on Drugs] strategy and the Bail Support Program was funded through Corrections Victoria” (Morgan & Popovic, 2007 p. 3)

Because of the way these programs had emerged, the support services lacked a cohesive structure and appropriate framework to support their ongoing operation and development.

The Magistrates’ Court had for some time been calling for the development of an overarching framework for court support services and asking that permanent funding be secured. Had these programs continued to evolve and operate in the absence of some type of coordinating mechanism there was a risk that services gaps or duplication would occur (Zagier Roberts, 2004). In 2004 the Attorney Generals Justice Statement (Department of Justice, 2004): the 10 year forward vision for the Victorian justice system, announced its intention to implement 25 major initiatives. Included amongst these were the development and implementation of a ‘framework for problem solving approaches in the Magistrates Court to consistently address the underlying cause of offending behaviour” and the adoption of a:

‘multidisciplinary approach to address the offending behaviours of people who may by mentally ill, have an intellectual disability, are dependant on drugs or who are homeless and caught up in a cycle of offending and punishment’ (p.15).

The Policy Framework to Consolidate and Extend Problem-Solving Courts and Approaches (Department of Justice, 2006) was developed in 2006 as the framework for problem solving approaches and the Courts Integrated Services Program (the subject of this study) was the multidisciplinary response. The Courts and Programs Development Unit was responsible for the original development of both of these initiatives.
Background to the research

Tension has been a long-standing characteristic of the relationship between courts and the executive arm of Government and this is no less true for Victoria than other state and federal jurisdictions across Australia and in the United Kingdom. As will be explained in more detail in this thesis, this tension is historical and in a large part can be attributed to structural arrangements that emerge out of the separation of powers between a government and the court system; especially in the context where judicial independence is the paramount tenet (Mason, 1989; Mason, 1990; Popovic, 2006).

Specifically in the context of the provision of court support services in Victoria, the tension was largely attributable to the fact that in the past, the Magistrates’ Court had been almost entirely responsible for the development of the services and the emergence of the ethos of therapeutic jurisprudence which underpinned them. However over time, the development of these programs had been taken up largely by the Department of Justice (Morgan & Popovic, 2007).

The tension played itself out in a number of ways including a lack of trust about budgeting and resource allocation and a struggle for power and control over policy-making. Additionally, some of the Magistrates’ Court personnel held concerns about what they saw as the erosion of judicial independence and jurisprudential principles.

Implementing problem solving initiatives in courts

My first exposure to therapeutic jurisprudence and working with the court to develop and implement a ‘problem solving’ program was in 2001 when I was responsible for the introduction of the Drug Court. In that role, I was required to work closely with the legal policy arm of the Department of Justice in the development of legislation to support the Drug Court and then with the Magistrates Court to implement the operation of the Drug Court. It was during these early days in the courts portfolio that I first experienced the tension in the relationship between the Department and the Court that I had previously heard about from others.

Following the establishment of the Drug Court, I spent eighteen months working to re-structure victims services. I then returned to the Courts Portfolio to manage a unit that supports the legal, court and dispute resolution system to ensure the implementation of Government policy to improve community confidence in, and fair and equitable access to court and other support services and mechanisms. In this role, I was exposed on a daily basis, to the tension in the
relations between the Court and the Department. The struggle about budget, policy, accountability and power often felt unremitting. When, eighteen months later I came to establish a new unit to work directly with the courts to develop and field-test problem solving and other strategic initiatives, the development of effective relations with the courts was at the forefront of my mind.

I was sure by this time that good working relations between the Courts and the Department were critical for the ongoing development, success and sustainability of these new initiatives so the idea of using my research as a means of trying to establish an effective working relationship with the courts made the choice of a doctoral research topic simple. My day to day role required my unit to work together with people within the courts to develop and implement new programs, hence my focus on inter-agency collaboration.

Rationale for the research
The central focus of this thesis is to understand and assist in the development of a framework for effective inter-agency collaboration. This will be achieved by studying the implementation of the Courts Integrated Service Program (known as CISP) in the Magistrates court. CISP is a new model of practice which adopts best practice principles (Department of Justice, 2006) to respond to repeat offenders with co-occurring and complex problems. This will be achieved by integrating and expanding a number of the existing models of practice in the court. The implementation of this program represents a significant development in the evolution of problem solving approaches in Victorian courts in that it seeks to consolidate a number of the problem solving initiatives that had been developed in the preceding years and continue the mainstreaming of these initiatives in the Victorian context (Popovic, 2006). Mainstreaming is used in the context of “integrat[ing] a problem-solving orientation into the mainstream criminal justice system” through the generalisation of the elements of the problem oriented approach referred to by Freiberg (2004 p. 14).

The use of a systems psychodynamic perspective to examine the practice of implementing new initiatives through an inter-agency collaboration is relatively unexplored in the Australian context and non-existent within the context of the unique aspects associated with the Court system. Systems psychodynamics is an interdisciplinary field amalgamating the practice of psychoanalysis, the theories and methods of the field of group relations, and the task and boundary awareness of open systems perspectives (Fraher, 2004) and is a relatively new field
(Neumann & Hirshhorn, 1999). It is thought that this approach will provide a useful framework to examine inter-agency collaboration and implement organisational change from the perspectives of task, role, authority and boundary, social defences and conscious and unconscious organisational dynamics (James & Huffington, 2004).

Through the deliberate exploration of the development of collaborative relationships through a systems psychodynamic lens, it is thought that this research will benefit the court and the Department of Justice by identifying a model that can be utilised for the joint implementation of future initiatives. Benefits will also be derived by the Victorian community following the successful implementation of the CISP because of its anticipated capacity to tackle the problem of repeat offending by vulnerable offenders from backgrounds of disadvantage and marginalisation.

The collaborative aspects associated with the implementation of significant change between the courts and a government department are known to be particularly challenging. It is hoped that a deliberate focus on the development of the necessary relationships between all of the key players will assist the implementation process and ensure all elements of the planned change are implemented within critical timelines and in accordance with the integrity of the program model.

The structural and process arrangements within a court are unique because of the separation of powers doctrine and judicial independence as will be explained further in Chapter 1. My workplace experience and that of many of my colleagues indicates that implementing change across these unique organisational boundaries often brings particular challenges that add complexity to the task and require considerable and careful negotiation. It is argued that the utilisation of a systems psychodynamic framework will assist this process and enhance the possibility of a successful outcome because of its capacity to study the dynamics of groups and organisations.

It is also anticipated that this research will add to the body of knowledge by assisting researchers, practitioners and students who work with the theory and application of systems psychodynamics and those working in the areas of change management, project implementation and collaborative relationships. It is hoped that this work will contribute to the
growing understanding of the field of systems psychodynamics, especially in the context of working in a uniquely complex environment such as a court.

Research questions

At the centre of my decision to use my research to think about how the department and the court could work together more effectively was a fundamental question about the causes of the longstanding tension in the relationship between the two organisations. When I first set out on this journey, I didn’t really understand what caused the tension. It was only as a result of my research and my thinking about this issue that I came to understand the impact the separation of powers doctrine has on the courts and how they relate to others. This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 1.

Through the use of a single, in-depth case study conducted over an 18 month period, this thesis seeks to understand what organisational dynamics underpin the relationship between the court and the department and find ways for the two organisations to work together more effectively. This will be achieved by exploring answers to the following questions.

Questions relating to the emergent system dynamics

- What dynamics might be at play in the two agencies as a result of anxiety about major change and how might these dynamics be surfaced and worked with to support the change process?
- What were the court and the department thinking about each other during the collaboration and how might that impact on the collaborative relationship?
- How do you understand and explain the psychic and systemic factors at play within an inter-agency context?
- What influence does the group dynamic have on the collaborative relationship?

Questions relating to the antecedents or conditions for collaboration

- What conditions are necessary to build collaborative relationships in a complex organisational environment?
- How do you work with the existing structural and process arrangements within an organisational setting to facilitate collaboration?
Questions relating to the outcome of the research process

- What impact does interdependence have on a collaborative relationship?
- How might the application of a systems psychodynamic framework assist in understanding the unique dynamics within a court environment?

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is comprised of 3 Parts and 8 Chapters. Part 1, incorporating Chapters 1, 2 and 3 sets the scene for the research.

Chapter 1 examines the environment and context within which the research was conducted. It describes the development and some of the characteristics of the Westminster system of government, the Department of Justice and the Magistrates Court of Victoria, the courts portfolio and the Courts and Programs Development Unit. The separation of powers doctrine and judicial independence are discussed, as are Government policy and ‘joined up’ government and how all of these entities are interdependent as part of the wider justice system.

Chapter 2 briefly examines Therapeutic Jurisprudence as the theoretical underpinning for problem solving initiatives and describes the history of the introduction of these initiatives into Victorian courts. As the platform for this research, it describes the process behind the conceptualisation and development of the Courts Integrated Services Program including the project implementation and project governance arrangements. This background material, written from a project management perspective assists in understanding the relationship between the project and the research in later chapters.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the main theoretical concepts used throughout this thesis.

Chapter 3 examines the theoretical concepts underpinning this thesis. It begins by outlining the systems psychodynamic perspective and its origins in the psychoanalytical, group relations and open systems theories and then moves onto a consideration of the application of the systems psychodynamic orientation in the study of group and organisational processes from a consultancy perspective and then in the context of research in social systems. The chapter concludes by describing some of the fundamental assumptions underpinning systems psychodynamics and then goes on to examine some of the main elements of the orthodoxy relevant to this research.
Chapter 4 reviews some of the literature on collaboration. It begins by defining collaboration and inter-agency collaboration and then looks at the differences between simple and complex collaboration. It then examines some of the theories, models and frameworks that attempt to explain and facilitate inter-agency collaboration. Each different perspective is assessed in terms of its ability to answer the research questions and its capacity to further understanding of the collaborative process. The chapter concludes that the collaboration literature examined is uni-dimensional and only when the systems psychodynamic orientation is employed can the research questions begin to be answered.

Part 2 comprises Chapters 5 and 6 which cover the research design and method, describe the conduct of the research by way of a single case study and concludes with an analysis of the data.

Chapter 5 commences with an examination of some of the ontological and epistemological considerations that informed the research design and methodological choices. This is followed by an outline of the research design approach, including a single case study and clinical methods. This is then followed by a detailed description of the research methods including interviews, participant observation, document collection and the use of a field journal and a working note. The establishment of a Research Reflection Group and insider researching are also examined. The chapter concludes with an examination of the role of the researcher, ethical issues, and gaining access for the research.

Chapter 6 presents the findings that emerged out of the research as it was carried out alongside the conduct of the CISP implementation. Because the findings emerged from the actions taken during the case study and the research process, the chapter attempts to work simultaneously with three streams: action, reaction and interpretation. Where interpretations led to the development of working hypotheses, these are elucidated. A rationale for and description of the methods used to analyse the data can also be found in this chapter.

Part 3 comprises Chapters 7 and 8 and explores a framework for inter-agency collaboration and closes with some concluding remarks.

Chapter 7 describes a framework for inter-agency collaboration. The chapter begins by describing the search for an organising construct and then defines and describes the
usefulness of a framework in the context of this thesis. Drawing upon the systems psychodynamic literature, the chapter then describes the framework for inter-agency collaboration. The framework is set out in two parts. The first, which refers to and is called the *pre-collaboration phase*, examines the environment before collaboration began to emerge. This enables a context for the emergence of the collaboration to be understood and elaborated. The second part, that is named and examines the *emergent collaboration phase*, focuses on what needs to happen in order to facilitate the emergence of collaboration and argues in support of a central hypothesis.

**Chapter 8** begins with a review of the research then goes on to highlight a number of lessons learned that may be applicable to other collaborations. It then sets out the major contributions of the research and its limitations. It concludes with a reflection on my subjective experience as a researcher and final thoughts.
Part 1
Chapter 1
The environment and context of the research

This chapter examines the environment and context within which the research was conducted. Its intent is to ensure that the reader has a sound understanding of the research environment and the challenges inter-agency collaboration presented for the two agencies involved in this particular study. It will describe some of the characteristics of the Westminster system of government, the Department of Justice and the Magistrates Court of Victoria, the courts portfolio and the Courts and Programs Development Unit. The separation of powers doctrine and judicial independence are discussed, as are government policy development and ‘joined up’ government. It describes how all of these elements are inter-dependent as part of the wider government and justice systems and concludes with a discussion on the paradox of courts working with government in an inter-agency collaboration.

The Westminster system, judicial independence and the separation of powers doctrine
The Victorian system of government, like others across Australia, is founded on the Westminster system of government that originated in the United Kingdom. There is no particular date on which it can be said that the Westminster system came into being in the Untied Kingdom (UK); rather it evolved over a number of centuries. The origins of parliament can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times before the unification of England in the 9th century when Saxon kings were advised by councils of wise men. Great councils, consisting of the powerful subjects of a realm who were to be consulted on major decisions, began to evolve into the parliament of England. Initially these councils were represented only by the monarch and the nobility (including the ecclesiastics) but during the 12th century the knights of the shires began to be summoned and in the 13th century burgesses from each borough were summoned to a Parliament by Simon de Montfort; thus marking the birth of a gentry class and the roots of the House of Commons (Wikipedia, 2008). By the 16th century parliament had become increasingly important. The Tudor monarchs, particularly Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, were very powerful and active in affairs of government but while they ‘were able to dominate Parliament, they ruled through Parliament in order to legitimise their actions’ (Leyland, 2007 p. 10).
Leyland (2007) points out that it was not however until the turbulent events of the 17th century that the foundations for the modern parliament began to be laid. During this time, the Stuart monarch Charles I sought to reassert the divine right of kings to govern. The ensuing struggle between the monarch and the Parliament over the right to raise taxes, make laws and summons and dismiss Parliament resulted in a civil war between 1642 and 1649. The Parliamentarians prevailed and the monarch was tried and executed. In a constitutional sense things were relatively quiet during the reign of Charles II but they came to a head shortly thereafter with the succession of James II. Like his father Charles I, James II was prepared to disregard the Parliament and was an unpopular ruler because he was a catholic in a predominately protestant England. In 1688 he was forced to flee the country and was jointly succeeded by his protestant daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange. Parliament had offered the throne to Mary II and William III conditionally and in 1689 the Declaration of Rights ensured the prominence of the Parliament and marked a separation of the roles of the monarchy and parliament and the establishment of the contemporary constitution. Over the ensuing centuries, and right up until the first half of the 20th century when women received equal suffrage, the UK democracy would continue to evolve. The Westminster system became known as such as a result of the House of Commons having been granted a regular meeting place in Westminster Palace in 1548.

Parliaments in Australia
Parliaments in Australia differ somewhat from the UK Westminster system in that they are constrained by the Commonwealth and State constitutions. Some of the differences between the UK and Australian systems of government can be explained by what Melleuish (2006) refers to as the co-evolution of the British and Australian systems over the 18th and 19th centuries. Never-the-less, the essential features of the:

‘Westminster style of government [in both Australia and the UK] are: a sovereign, bicameral parliament makes the laws; the party or group of parties with control of the lower house forms the government. There is ‘rule of law’ and the judicial system is independent of the parliament. The executive (group of Cabinet Ministers) is drawn from within the parliament and is answerable to the parliament. The head of state is a constitutional monarch who is above politics. The public service impartially serves and advises the government of the day’ (Victorian Parliament, 2008).
Foundations of the Judiciary
At the same time as the Westminster system of government was emerging, the foundations of the judiciary as we know it today were co-emerging. It was during the 12th century that the judiciary began to develop as separate to the royal household when Henry II ‘chose five members of his personal household … to hear all the complaints of the realm and to do right’ (Brooke, 2000 p. 90). In discussing the history of judicial independence in England and Wales, Lord Brooke J (2000) reports that between the 12th and 14th centuries the Kings Council (the origin of the Court of Common Pleas), the Court of the Kings Bench, and the common law Court of the Exchequer all emerged as the basis of the modern court system. During this time however, the judiciary was beset with problems associated with uncertain tenure and remuneration leading to allegations and incidences of corruption and continued blurring of the boundaries between the political and judicial processes. As long as judicial officers held office ‘at the good pleasure of the Crown’ as was the case during its reintroduction during the reign of the Stuart monarchs in the 17th century, it was not uncommon for ‘Stuart Kings to sack their judges if they disapproved of their judgements’ (p. 95).

As with the evolution of the Westminster system, the events of the 17th century led to the development of the modern judiciary. Brooke (2000) reports that following the flight of James II a ‘Heads of Grievances’ was drawn up to be presented to the new regime which included:

‘for making judges’ commissions quamdiu se bene gesserint; [during good behaviour] and for ascertaining and establishing their salaries, to be paid out of the public revenue only; and for preventing their being removed and suspended from the execution of their offices, unless by due cause of law’ (p. 99).

These provisions were incorporated into the UK Act of Settlement (1701) and have remained in place since that time, ensuring the impartiality of the judiciary in the UK constitution and laying the foundation for the same provisions in the Australian Federal and State constitutions.

Judicial independence
In any system based on the Westminster model including that in Victoria, judicial independence is fundamental to the liberty of the individual. Following the French writer Montesquieu, Brooke (2000) records Blackstone in 1783 as saying:
'in this distinct and separate existence of the judicial power in a peculiar body of men, nominated indeed, but not removable at pleasure by the Crown, consists of one main preservative of the public's liberty which cannot subsist in any state, unless the administration of justice be in some degree separated both from the legislative and also from the executive power’ (p. 102).

Judicial independence is a fundamental principle that defines the role of the judiciary and is as dear to judicial officers today as it was to their predecessors in the 17th century.

The separation of powers doctrine
The separation of powers began to emerge as an early doctrine as a result of the turmoil of the 17th century and has remained a fundamental aspect of the Westminster system of government ever since. It is the basis on which the functional separation of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary is achieved. Warren, CJ (2004) gave an indication of the function and importance of the separation of powers doctrine and the nature of the relationship between government and the judiciary when she said:

‘For about the last twenty years the judiciary has frequently drunk from the well of the doctrine of separation of powers to reinforce the defensive shield that protects the judiciary against the encroachment of modern twentieth century and twenty-first century government. The defensive shield provided by the theoretical trinity embodied in the doctrine of the separation of powers is relied upon to protect one of the ‘prizes of the kingdom’: judicial independence’ (p. 3).

The source of the longstanding tension in the relationship between the judiciary and executive government arises out of the fact that despite the wishes of the purists, in both the UK and Australia, the separation of powers is limited (Melleuish, 2006). Membership of the Executive (the Cabinet) is drawn from the government of the day; the Governor-in-Council appoints judicial officers on the advice of the Executive and Cabinet approves funding through the annual budget process. Sitting behind the doctrine is the tension that necessarily arises out of the need to ensure a current government can implement its policy priorities and at the same time, maintain a stable judiciary (Melleuish, 2006).

In leading the judicial independence debate in Victoria, the judiciary leans strongly towards the purist model and focuses on the need for both adjudicatory and administrative independence believing both are inextricably linked. Even the question of the nature of executive interference is seen differently by both sides of the debate. The executive see the threat as theoretical
(Lynch, 2008) whereas the judiciary perceive it as a subtle and indirect (Warren, 2004) but none-the-less real threat to judicial independence. The Victorian Constitution Act 1975 (s77 (1&2)) makes an Act of Settlement statement by ensuring the appointment and remuneration of judicial officers and in so doing enshrines the adjudicatory independence of judicial officers. However the debate about administrative independence and the extent to which it is said to be linked to adjudicatory independence and governance of the courts will continue so long as there is no clear administrative separation between the courts and the government department responsible for courts administration.

From the judicial perspective, the biggest threat to judicial independence is the fact that there is not an independent income stream for costs associated with court administration (Lynch, 2008). Judicial salaries and pension entitlements are funded through a special appropriation arrangement set out in the Supreme, County and Magistrates Court Acts and supported by the passing of the Appropriation Act each year as part of the budget process. Funds are drawn down from the consolidated fund and as such are independent of government savings policies and perceptions of Cabinet control (Cooper, 2008). The appointment of additional judicial officers however can only be approved by government, in the main through the budget process. Court administration costs including registry staff, facilities etc. are funded through departmental appropriations and as such are seen to be directly influenced by Cabinet decisions.

In a recent attempt to progress the courts governance debate, the Attorney General’s Justice Statement (Department of Justice, 2004) reaffirms the importance of judicial independence as a ‘fundamental element of a civilised society and the Government will be vigilant in protecting such independence’ (p. 42) but is also clear that the ‘provision of funds is ultimately a matter for the Government, acting through parliament’ (p. 43). It indicates that a well managed court system should be based on agreed court governance arrangements including ‘the clarification of roles for direction setting, management of activities and reporting frameworks’ (p. 43). The Justice Statement proposes that the government work with the courts to determine areas for reform to the current arrangements but at the time of writing these discussions have not taken place. Inevitably the longstanding debate in relation to courts governance and judicial independence is inextricably linked to arguments about adjudicative and administrative accountability (Department of Justice, 2004).
The independence of the Magistracy

Before moving on to discuss other aspects of the research environment and context it is important to think for a moment about judicial independence and magistrates specifically. What of the independence of the magistracy who are one of a number of key players in this case study? Is judicial independence as important to magistrates as it is for the judicial officers of the higher courts? The evolution of the role of the magistracy in Victoria and many other states in Australia followed a quite different path to that of the judiciary. It is only relatively recently that magistrates have been ‘welcomed into the judicial family’ (Warren, 2004 p. 1) albeit they are at the bottom of a three tiered judicial hierarchy in Victoria.

As was the case with higher court judicial officers, the magistracy emerged out of a long history of precedents that ‘stretch well back into pre-Norman England’ (Weber, 1980 p. 142). In Australia, the role of Magistrate has evolved in the context of what Willis (2000) refers to as three distinct phases: the early colonial period, the public service period and the modern period. During the early colonial period, Stipendiary Magistrates were appointed to exercise a summary criminal jurisdiction and had considerable administrative powers. They were predominantly remunerated, as opposed to the local gentry carrying out an honorary role as was the case in England during the 19th century. Willis (2000) reports that ‘the appointment of paid magistrates … was vigorously opposed by many who saw such magistrates as far more liable to be controlled by government than were unpaid magistrates’ (p. 130). During the public service period, Stipendiary Magistrates became incorporated into the public service but because there could therefore be no clear separation of powers, there was an inevitable ‘tension between their judicial role and their status as public servants’ (Willis, 2000 p. 131). Interestingly, and despite this tension, it was the early and widespread use of paid magistrates that provided the early underpinnings for the independence of magistrates. Lowndes (2000) reports that after 1850 (in New South Wales at least) paid magistrates acted more independently and were expected to be more like judges. Weber (1980) gives a good account of the evolution of the Victorian magistracy from early colonisation to 1980.

Following considerable increases in jurisdiction and growing tension in terms of judicial independence, the modern period (which encompasses the last 30 years or so) saw magistrates removed from the public service and a significant professionalisation or judicialisation (Warren, 2004) of the Victorian magistracy. This included the mandatory requirement for legal qualifications before appointment and provisions for security of tenure.
Concomitant with this increase in judicialisation was the inevitable focus on the pressing need to ensure judicial independence. Commencing in the latter part of the 19th century and continuing throughout the 20th century (but especially during Willis’ modern period), the role and the status of the magistracy increased. They exercised all of the functions of judges of the higher courts albeit in different but none-the-less complex jurisdictions (Lowndes, 2000).

Along-side actions to ensure magistrates remuneration and codifying security of tenure and removal from office provisions, the removal of the magistracy from its connections with the public service was probably the most significant step in ensuring the adjudicative independence of magistrates. When arguing that magistrates should be renamed as judges, Lowndes makes a strong case in terms of the equivalence of magistrates with higher court judicial officers in terms of judicial independence wherein magistrates ‘are now recognised as truly independent judicial officers’ (Lowndes, 2000 p. 595). Having said that however, many magistrates hold the same concerns about the link between adjudicative and administrative independence and an independent income stream as their counterparts in the higher courts.

It has been important to think through the evolution of the separation of powers doctrine and the development of judicial independence because of the influence, as fundamental principles these aspects have over how the whole justice system operates. What becomes clear when you look at judicial independence in its context and its entirety, is how important it is as a fundamental principle that underpins our justice system and how it influences the ongoing relationships between the executive and the courts. Despite it having first emerged as part of an early doctrine that has it roots in England in at least the 17th century, judicial independence remains at the heart of executive and court relations in Victoria to this day. This point needs to be held in mind throughout the remainder of this thesis.

**Key players in the research**

The two agencies participating in the case study underpinning this research are the Department of Justice (or more accurately, a small business unit within the Department) and the Magistrates Court of Victoria. The following is a brief description of the departmental context followed by a description of the Magistrates Court. A table outlining the structure of the system and the roles of key parts of the system can be found at Figure 1, p. 26.
The Department of Justice

The Department of Justice is one of 10 Victorian government departments in the Victorian public sector and is responsible to three Ministers covering six portfolios including the Attorney General, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Minister for Corrections, the Minister for Consumer Affairs, the Minister for Gaming and the Minister for Racing. The Department brings together Government activities concerned with reform, administration and enforcement of the law in Victoria.

It is a large Department employing in excess of 21,000 staff:

‘and consists of business units and statutory entities aligned under eight key functions. This includes all police and prosecutions functions, administration of the court system, provision of the prison and community corrections services, administration of various tribunals and agencies established to protect citizen’s rights, emergency management, provision of emergency services, policy on racing and gaming issues and the provision of legal advice to government’ (Department of Justice, 2008).

The courts fall within the administrative purview of the Department of Justice but are statutory agencies authorised by their own legislation in order to maintain the separation of powers and the necessary independence. Each jurisdiction has its own Chief Executive Officer (who reports to the Executive Director of the Courts portfolio) and is governed by its own council of judges or magistrates.

The Courts Division

From a departmental perspective, the administration of the court system is carried out by the Courts Division or Portfolio which is comprised of each of the court jurisdictions, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the Judicial College of Victoria, the Sentencing Advisory Council and a number of departmental business units that either support the overall operations of the courts system as a whole or carry out associated activities, including until recently, the Courts and Programs Development Unit. The role of the division is to:

‘lead and direct the development of the courts… provide authoritative strategic advice to the Secretary and Government… provide efficient, comprehensive and integrated support services… and enhance community confidence in the courts system and in fair and equitable access to its services’ (Department of Justice, 2008).
In the main, this role is largely the responsibility of the Courts and Tribunals business unit (previously known as Court Services) which is responsible for supporting the courts. This is achieved through overseeing the development of court policy and legislation, providing budgetary and employee and industrial relations advice and representation, measuring performance and statistical analysis and managing the courts capital works program (Department of Justice, 2008).

The Courts and Programs Development Unit

The following description describes the Courts and Programs Development Unit (CPDU) at the time the research was being conducted. The unit was recently incorporated into the Courts and Tribunals division and its name has changed but in essence the function remains unchanged from when the research was conducted.

The CPDU was a business unit situated within the Courts portfolio. The unit was established in May 2005 to enable a more concentrated focus on the development, implementation and evaluation of a range of problem solving approaches in the courts. The unit was created in recognition of the complexity of this work, the fragility of the relationship between the courts and the department and the need to work more closely with the courts. This function had originally been located in the Court Services business unit referred to above, but it was felt that the primary role of that unit in providing overall coordination for the whole court system meant that insufficient attention could be paid to the implementation of the problem solving initiatives that were gaining traction as new models of practice in the Magistrates Court in Victoria. I had been the Director of the then Court Services and left that role to establish the new unit.

The CPDU was made up of a small number of highly skilled staff from a range of disciplines and represented a mixture of government and non-government experience. Our primary objectives were to investigate opportunities for court innovation; field-test new programs; implement policies, programs and methodologies and collaborate with the courts and other agencies to develop, consolidate and maintain best practice (Department of Justice, 2005). Over the first two years of its operation, the Unit gained considerable experience in working on problem solving initiatives through developing, implementing and evaluating projects associated with the Drug Court and other drug diversion programs, a range of family violence initiatives, Koori Courts, a major sexual assault initiative and programs for adolescent males.
All of these initiatives had been carried out in varying degrees of collaboration with the Magistrates Court. Shortly before I left in July 2007 to move to another role, the Unit was beginning to determine a research agenda and work towards the implementation of a Koori Court in the County Court. The role of the Unit in the development and implementation of the Courts Integrated Services Program will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

**The Magistrates Court of Victoria**

The vision of the Magistrates Court of Victoria is to provide ‘...the Victorian community with a strong, trusted, independent and responsive court that effectively and equally services the needs of a diverse community’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2005 – 2008, p. 1). The Court operates out of 52 venues across metropolitan and rural and regional Victoria. It exercises both civil and criminal jurisdictions, Family Law and Crimes Family Violence jurisdictions, a Work Cover jurisdiction, the Industrial Division, the Municipal Electoral Tribunal, the Victims of Crime Administrative Tribunal and a number of specialist problem solving jurisdictions including the Drug Court, Koori Court and Family Violence Courts. The Court also runs a number of problem solving lists and programs which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

At the time of writing, the Court employed a total of 108 Magistrates, seven Acting Magistrates, 3 Judicial Registrars and approximately 500 registry, support and program staff. Magistrates are appointed by the Governor in Council upon the recommendation of the executive government. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the registry and other staff are public sector employees.

The judicial administration of the court is overseen by the Chief Magistrate and 5 Deputy Chief Magistrates. In order to ensure judicial independence, each magistrate is not subject to direct discipline by any other person except in ‘extreme cases where they may be removed by the Governor [in Council] on an address from both Houses of Parliament’ (County Court of Victoria, 2008 p.1). The relationship between the Chief Magistrate, the Deputies and the body of magistrates is such that the Chief Magistrate is the first amongst equals.

The Chief Magistrate is responsible for ‘assigning duties for magistrates, calling and chairing meetings of the Council of Magistrates, making Rules of Court in consultation with Deputy Chief Magistrates, issuing practice directions and performing statutory functions’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2005-2007 p. 15). The Council of Magistrates meets at least annually to:
‘consider the operation of the *Magistrates Court Act* 1989 and the Rules, consider the working of the officers of the Court and the arrangements relating to the duties of Court officials and inquire into and examine any defects that appear to exist in the system of procedure or administration of the law in the Court’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2005-2007 p. 15).

Each year the Council of Magistrates elects an Executive Committee responsible for dealing ‘with matters of policy and [to] report to the Council of Magistrates’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2005-2007). The Deputy Chief Magistrates all have portfolio responsibilities and there are also a number of Jurisdictional and Internal Committees comprised of both magistrates and court staff which support the work of the Court and deal with both magisterial and general business. There is also a state-wide coordinating magistrate and a number of supervising magistrates and regional co-ordinating magistrates.

The general administration function of the court is managed by the CEO who is appointed by the Secretary of the Department (upon a recommendation from the Chief Magistrate) and reports to the Executive Director of the Courts division. The CEO is the principal non-judicial officer of the court and in close consultation with the Chief Magistrate, is responsible for all of the administration functions of the court including strategic and business planning, human and financial resource management, information technology, facilities management and meeting annual performance targets linked to the annual funding cycle. The court administration comprises registrars, deputy registrars, trainee registrars, administration staff, and program staff. Registrars have duties, powers and functions that derive from the *Magistrates Court Act* 1989 which include ‘issu[ing] process, determining certain types of applications, conducting mediations and pre-hearing conferences in civil cases, listing cases and providing the public with procedural advice regarding court processes’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2005-2007 p. 22). Registrars, deputy registrars and trainees work closely with magistrates to assist in the operation of court hearings.

The relationship between the Chief Magistrate and the CEO is critical to the success of the court. The Magistrates Court Strategic Plan (2005-2007) refers to the mutually supportive and constructive partnership that exists between the administrative and judicial arms of the court as an organisational enabler. While both the Chief Magistrate and the CEO have separate and distinct functions, their relationship is in reality a critical collaboration between the Court and the Department of Justice but outside the scope of this research.
Standing outside the court and looking in at the complex judicial and general administrative arrangements, the system looks confusing and unwieldy. The first amongst equals principle means that every matter of magisterial policy must be debated in a highly consultative and democratic environment. Despite this, and the fact that the role delineation between the Chief Magistrate, the Council of Magistrates and the Executive remains unclear (Popovic, 2008) the Court operates effectively. This is due in part to the fact that each week the magistracy and administration meet to work through operational issues; an example of the collaborative relationship between the two arms of the court.

As will be discussed further in chapter 2, the CISP was established as a pilot program at Melbourne, Sunshine and the Latrobe Valley Magistrates Courts. The Melbourne Magistrates Court is located in the Courts precinct in the Melbourne central business district and is an exceptionally busy venue. It exercises all Magistrates court jurisdictions including a busy remand court and often hears the most serious matters that come before the court. Sunshine Magistrates Court is a regional headquarters court located in metropolitan Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley Magistrates Court is a headquarters court located in Morwell in Regional Victoria.

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<td>Department of Justice</td>
<td>Government Department</td>
<td>Supports Executive Government</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible to number of Government Ministers including Attorney General</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Funded through government budget appropriation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courts Division</td>
<td>Division within Department of Justice</td>
<td>Responsible for the administration of the Court system by leading system wide development, providing strategic advice and integrated support services</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Funded through Department budget process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courts and Programs Division</td>
<td>Business unit within Courts Division</td>
<td>Supports the Courts Division and Courts operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for development, implementation and evaluation of range of problem solving initiatives in courts</td>
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**Table 1** Summary of the structure of the system
Inter-dependence of the system elements

In an environment where the separation of powers doctrine is paramount, judicial independence is highly valued and closely guarded and the head of a jurisdiction is the first among equals, all of the elements must still function as a system. Each component of the overall system, that is the Parliament, Executive Government, Judicial Officers and public servants must and do find ways to work together to ensure the implementation of Government policy and the effective operation of the courts.

My experience over seven years working in the Courts portfolio is that, generally speaking and despite sometimes deep seated frustrations, the people who represent the elements in the system respect the roles each part plays and understand the need to work together; although it should be said that some jurisdictions are more willing to do this than others. An example of the increasingly cooperative relationships in the Magistrates Court was when, several years ago the Court worked with the Departments of Justice and Treasury and Finance to review and expand the number and type of performance indicators used to measure court performance.

In recent years, the courts have learnt a lot about how the government budget bidding processes work and they are now more likely to work with departmental staff to prepare budget bids. This type of collaboration would not have been possible five years ago and has grown out of the fact that the court would be very hard pressed to obtain additional funding on their own. Collaboration with the department is essential. Despite the Chief Justice’s belief that the courts do not wish to be referred to as Business Units (Warren, 2004), the reality is, each of the jurisdictions has become more business-like in its administration and accountability without compromising adjudicative independence.

There are however, still very tense moments in relations between government and the courts around some policy issues. Government necessarily consults with the courts when considering the implementation of new policy that directly impacts upon the courts and the two do not always see eye to eye on these matters. The appointment of acting judges was one such matter. Following a lengthy consultation where the courts indicated a strong view that acting judges would compromise judicial independence, the government introduced legislation enabling the appointment of acting judges.
A move towards joined up government

Juxtaposed to the Westminster system and the functional separation of the three arms of government is the growing recognition, in government at least, that a new way of working needs to be found to find solutions to entrenched social problems such as drug addiction, poverty, disadvantage and crime etc. ‘Joined up’ government, (originally an initiative of the United Kingdom Blair New Labor government) was introduced into the UK in 1997 in recognition that “wicked” problems could not be resolved by a single department and that a multi-dimensional response across government departments and levels of government was necessary (State Services Authority, 2007). Armytage (2008) attributes the concept of wicked problems to pioneering design and planning theorist Horst Rittel who described them as ‘messy, circular and aggressive’ (p. 10). Earlier attempts to solve wicked problems often created new and more complex problems. Following the UK trend, in the early 2000s, the Victorian government began to talk up the rhetoric of working in a joined up way. In the Victorian context ‘joined up’ government is defined as ‘working collaboratively across departments, portfolios or levels of government to address complex issue which cross individual agency boundaries’ (Armytage, 2008 p. 7).

The talk of joined up government came at the same time as I started working with courts. Knowing nothing about inter-agency collaboration, joined up government or courts, my task was to set up the Victorian Drug Court which emerged as a multidisciplinary model of practice incorporating the Magistrates Court, Victoria Police, Victoria Legal Aid and drug and alcohol services provided by the Department of Human Services. In my experience as a public servant during this time, the idea of working in a joined up way made intuitive sense but was exceptionally difficult. There was no clear direction about what this meant and how working in a joined up way might be achieved in the Victorian context. Nor was there a common language or mechanisms in place to help minimise the impact of the significant systemic impediments that existed as part of normal government processes at that time. There was never-the-less a sense that there was a change beginning to take place.

Over the last five years this situation has changed significantly. In its 2007 report on a review of joined up government in Victoria, the State Services Authority has found evidence of a number of significant ‘joined up’ activities (including the Courts Integrated Services Program) and a range of whole-of-government funding and governance mechanisms that support this way of working (State Services Authority, 2007).
In definitional terms, joined up government (or Whole of Victorian Government (WoVG), as it has become known in Victoria) might be seen as a variant of collaboration that aims to ‘better integrate and coordinate government policy and service delivery’ (State Services Authority, 2007 p. 7). Joined-up government emerged out of an emphasis on cross government strategies and more recently an increasing involvement of the non-government sector; the primary task for all of the participating organisations is to solve otherwise unsolvable problems.

**The department and the reluctant collaborator**

It was in this environment, where on the one hand, the predominant concern was to maintain the separation of powers doctrine and judicial independence and on the other, a growing emphasis on joining up and working together, that the court and the department came to work together on the Courts Integrated Services Program.

Throughout the early implementation of the program I thought of the court as a reluctant collaborator. I felt that the court was caught in a difficult position whereby it was resentful and angry about what they saw as the Department taking over the problem solving initiatives and fighting to maintain judicial independence and policy control whilst at the same time having to join with us to obtain additional funding and ensure the sustainability of these initiatives. Despite wanting an overarching problem solving framework, the court felt as if the CISP was being thrust upon them in an environment where there was no clear courts governance model. Throughout the implementation project, court representatives continued to ask questions about the role of Court Services and who the client was.

Feelings of resentment, mistrust and suspicion permeated both sides of the project from the very beginning and in the early days it often felt as if we were walking on eggshells when we were working together, despite already having long-standing relationships with many of the people we were working with.

**Summary**

This chapter has described the environment and context within which the research was carried out. In tracing the historical development of the Westminster system and the emergence of the judiciary and the magistracy and explaining the inextricable links to the separation of powers doctrine and judicial independence, it discusses the impact these elements have on the relationship between the court and the department. The chapter describes the limitations of the
separation of powers doctrine in contemporary governments and how that, along with the interdependence of all of the players and the emergence of joined up ways of working in government brings the court and the department together as reluctant partners in a collaboration. The next chapter describes therapeutic jurisprudence and the introduction of problem solving initiatives into Victorian courts. By way of further background material, it then goes on to describe the conceptualisation and implementation of the Court Integrated Services Program from a project management perspective.
Chapter 2

Background to the Project

This chapter briefly examines Therapeutic Jurisprudence as the theoretical underpinning for problem solving initiatives and describes the history of the introduction of these initiatives into Victoria. As the platform for this research, it describes the process behind the conceptualisation and development of the Courts Integrated Services Program including the project implementation and project governance arrangements. The focus is from a project management perspective. This background material will assist in understanding the relationship between the project and the research in later chapters.

Defining therapeutic jurisprudence

Traditionally, courts have functioned as neutral arbiters, determining outcomes on the basis of disputed facts (Berman & Feinblatt, 2001). More recently, many courts are now taking up a role in attempting to understand and respond to the underlying issues that bring people before the criminal courts. These courts are known as problem solving courts or in Australia (Freiberg, 2002) are sometimes referred to as problem oriented courts. Problem solving courts are defined as courts that:

‘...use their authority to forge new responses to chronic social, human and legal problems. They seek to broaden the focus of legal proceedings from adjudicating facts and legal issues to changing the future behaviour of litigants and ensure the future well-being of communities’ (Berman & Feinblatt, 2001 p. 126).

The American Bar Association (1996) defines problem solving courts as those that use the authority of the courts to address the underlying problems of individual defendants, the structural problems of the justice system and the social problems of communities. This new way of working emerged in the United States following the establishment of the Florida Drug Court in 1989 as a response to increasing frustration by judicial officers of the perceived crime and punishment merry-go-round; increasing rates of recidivism and a concern that people from marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds were over-represented in the criminal justice system. Problem solving courts are now an international movement and are either being planned, tested or are already a feature of courts in Australia, England and Wales, Canada,
Africa, Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand, Bermuda, Jamaica (Berman, & Feinblatt, 2005), and at the time of writing were being considered in the Fiji Islands (Ratu, 2007).

Problem solving courts are generally thought to be distinct from specialist courts which Freiberg (2002) define as courts that have ‘limited or exclusive jurisdiction in a field of law presided over by a judge [or magistrate] with expertise in that field’ (p. 2). In the Victorian context, the Children’s Court and the Coroner’s Courts are specialist courts as are the Drug Court and Family Violence Courts. What distinguishes the latter two examples is that they operate from a problem oriented perspective thus making the distinction between specialist and problem solving less clear.

Despite definitional dilemmas, problem solving courts and the specialist courts that operate within a problem solving framework are based on the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence. Therapeutic jurisprudence is a body of knowledge and a movement that seeks to mobilise the therapeutic effects of court processes. It recognises that legal procedures, substantive rules and the roles of lawyers and judicial officers can have a therapeutic or anti-therapeutic impact on people appearing before courts. The policy framework (Department of Justice, 2006) that was developed in Victoria as part of the Attorney General’s Justice Statement states that:

‘Therapeutic jurisprudence is an interdisciplinary perspective that shifts the focus from the offence to examining the underlying causes of offending behaviour. It is the theoretical foundation for problem solving courts and approaches which aim to improve outcomes for defendants processed through the courts’ (p. 5).

The background to development of court support and diversion services in Victoria

Morgan and Popovic (2007) report that the Magistrates’ Court in Victoria has a long history of leadership in the development of innovative ways of working, especially in the context of therapeutic jurisprudence and addressing the offence related needs of defendants including social or cultural disadvantage, disability, substance abuse or mental illness (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2008). Each of the programs compliment current legislation and are interdependent or complimentary to each other to some extent and can be utilised creatively by Magistrates to meet the often complex needs of defendants and offenders.

In the early to mid 1990s the Magistrates Court began the introduction of problem solving initiatives with the implementation of the then Disability Services Officer and the piloting and
eventual full implementation of the Mental Health Court Liaison Service. The Disability Services Officer was a court employed position that provided advice to Magistrates and referral and assistance to defendants with an intellectual disability. The Mental Health Liaison Service pilot commenced in 1994 and is a:

‘…court based psychiatric support service…which aims to divert offenders with a mental illness from the criminal justice system into appropriate mental health treatment services, reduce rates of recidivism…through facilitating access to…services and reduce the frequency and length of custodial remands to obtain a psychiatric report’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2007 p. 18).

In the mid 1990s Community Correctional Services (CCS) and the Juvenile Justice branch of DHS (now known as Youth Justice) began working closely with the court. Youth Justice established the Adult Court Advice and Support Service for 18 to 20 year olds who where ‘appearing in the adult courts in relation to criminal matters’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2007 p. 19). It is a state wide service that provides suitability assessments, progress reports, case management, pre-sentence support, advice and referral to community agencies. At around the same time CCS established a Court Services Unit to conduct eligibility assessments for adult offenders being considered for community based dispositions, the preparation of pre-sentence reports, offender progress reports and the prosecution of breaches of community based orders.

In the latter part of the 1990s the Court Referral and Evaluation for Drug Intervention and Treatment Program (CREDIT) and the Criminal Justice Diversion Program (CJDP) were introduced. CREDIT (which has recently been amalgamated with the Bail Support Program which was introduced in the early 2000s) focuses on increasing the likelihood of a defendant obtaining and successfully completing a period of bail by providing access to drug treatment programs, housing, legal and welfare services and monitoring and support. The CJDP provides mainly first time and minor offenders with an opportunity to avoid a criminal conviction through their ‘undertaking conditions that benefit the offender, victims and the community as a whole’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2007 p. 7).

The early 2000s saw the introduction of the Aboriginal Liaison Program and the Koori Court, both of which were initiatives of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 1 (2000) and seek to address the over-representation of Koori people in the criminal justice system. The Aboriginal Liaison Program provides assistance and advice to the court on cultural issues,
Working with what is there

advice and access to services to defendants and families, liaises with local Aboriginal communities and consults with agencies and organisations to coordinate service delivery. The Koori Court:

‘...provides an informal atmosphere and allows greater participation by the Koori community in the court process...reduces perceptions of cultural alienation and tailors sentencing orders to the cultural needs of Koori offenders’ (Magistrates Court of Victoria, 2007 p. 16).

The Enforcement Review Program (ERP) was also implemented during this period. The ERP assists defendants who have outstanding infringement matters with the Infringements Court that are progressing to the warrant stage and allows the court to take into consideration the circumstances of the case. People with a diagnosed mental health illness, neurological disorder, intellectual disability, serious drug addiction or are homeless are eligible to apply to the court for revocation of their infringement orders.

The Drug Court, located at Dandenong in metropolitan Melbourne, was established in 2002 and represents a fundamental shift in the way the courts deal with people with serious drug related offending. It focuses on the protection of the community and rehabilitation of the offender. Recipients are sentenced to a Drug Treatment Order which has a treatment and supervision component and a custodial component. The custodial component is suspended to allow the offender to participate in core and program conditions but may be activated if the Drug Court magistrate determines that it is necessary to sanction the offender.

This remarkable take up of the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence and the development of new models of practice to deal effectively with family violence in recent years is evidence of the Magistrates Court’s ability to adapt to address the serious social needs of the community. The evolution of these new ways of working and the associated gradual acceptance of therapeutic jurisprudence by judicial officers and the court administration laid the groundwork for the development of the Courts Integrated Services Program.

The Courts Integrated Services Program

Morgan and Popovic (2007) describe the Courts Integrated Services Program as an integrated model of support and services provided at the pre-sentence stage of the court process primarily for persons charged with criminal offences. Defendants are referred for assessment to
determine the level of intervention and nature of services required. Referrals to CISP can be made by police officers, lawyers, defendants, other service providers, court staff and magistrates. For defendants in custody, the assessing officer prepares a report for the Magistrate presiding over the bail application and if bail is granted, participation on the CISP program becomes a condition of bail.

The CISP program is delivered by multi-disciplinary teams based in the Court who provide assistance with drug and alcohol problems, homelessness, mental impairment (including mental illness, personality disorders, acquired brain injury and intellectual disability) juvenile offenders and Aboriginal Liaison. The level of intervention for a person accepted onto the program varies depending on need and risk and can range from a simple referral to a community agency to intensive case management. Program officers (generally referred to as program staff) are considered to be ‘Officers of the Court’. They are able to provide assessment services, advice to magistrates, case management, referral to treatment agencies and access to treatment services brokered in the areas of drug and alcohol treatment, housing, mental health, disability and acquired brain injury services.

Each participant has an individually developed case management plan which sets out all the services arranged for the defendant either internally or by outside agencies. A CISP officer, generally one with expertise in the defendant’s primary presenting problem, is assigned to monitor progress. Judicial supervision is also encouraged, with progress reports provided to the presiding magistrate for each court appearance. Case-managed defendants usually remain on the program for 3 to 4 months, although from time to time, longer periods may be required to ensure that appropriate treatment is in place.

The development of the CISP
CISP came about as a result of the convergence of two factors. The first was my having worked on the development and implementation of the Drug Court and my subsequent search for program sustainability and the second was the development of the Attorney General’s Justice Statement. While the magistracy had been very supportive, the Drug Court had not been welcomed by the then Magistrates Court administration and as a consequence, was very fragile for the first couple of years of its operation. This experience and that of watching some of the other problem solving initiatives mature over time started me wondering about whether it was possible to build sustainability into these programs from early in their development and if
so how might you go about it. At the same time, the development of the Justice Statement was commenced by the Department of Justice. I saw the opportunity to bring to two processes together and worked to ensure that the Justice Statement included the development of the Policy Framework to Consolidate and Extend Problem-Solving Courts and Approaches referred to earlier and the implementation of a strategy to integrate the existing programs in the Court. Following the release of the Justice Statement in May 2004, work commenced simultaneously on the development of the policy framework and the business case that was necessary to obtain government funding to develop, implement and field test CISP.

A key step in these two processes was the establishment of a Reference Group to inform the development of the policy framework. The Reference Group also provided a critical vehicle for consultation with key stakeholders. Careful consideration was given to the representation on the Reference Group and finally it was decided that the Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health, Disability Services and Housing branches of the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Departments of Treasury and Finance and Premier and Cabinet and the Magistrates and County Courts would all be invited to participate.

It was a large group (often between 15 and 20 participants) of predominantly government people and from the first meeting it was clear that the Magistrates Court representative was uncomfortable about the membership of the committee. The court members were unhappy with the heavy influence of DHS and this was compounded by the fact that the County Court representative did not attend despite having agreed to participate. In compiling the membership of the committee, consideration had been given to the number of DHS representatives but the departmental structure is such that the various branches in DHS are not able to represent each other and in our case we needed to be sure we were consulting with all four branches because of the way we saw CISP operating.

The other concern held by the court was that they thought we were treating them like any other stakeholder and not as a key stakeholder. In retrospect, I think this was the court expressing a view that it should have been treated as an equal partner although this was never expressed explicitly at the time. It was only later, during the research that this became clear.

The resulting impact of those two concerns, combined with an underlying resentment that the Department was taking over the Courts early problem solving initiatives was that at the first
couple of meetings of the committee, the courts representative was hostile and defensive. In an attempt to increase the court representation, the Magistrates Court representative tried to facilitate the County Court representation and when this failed invited additional Magistrates Court representatives to participate. As the Chair of the Steering Committee I was told, not asked about this. Relations with the primary court representative remained strained during the life of the Reference Group, however the policy development process progressed satisfactorily and the Policy Framework was finalised in March 2005.

Parallel to the development of the policy, during the 2004/05 financial year, the CPDU made progress on the preparation of a business case to Government for funds to implement and evaluate CISP. This business case formed part of the wider departmental Justice Statement funding bid. The development of the business case involved modelling work to determine the nature, extent and location of serious social problems in the Victorian community and how much of that resulted in court appearances, the development of the CISP concept to a point where it was able to be costed in terms of infrastructure, staff and service delivery, considerable negotiation with other government departments and negotiation through the departmental bidding process and the wider government funding processes. It took the best part of a year and in May 2005 it was confirmed that the bid had been successful in obtaining $24.3 million dollars to continue the Drug Court and to implement and evaluate CISP at three sites over four years.

The CISP project team
The funding bid had included salaries for a small team to be engaged and located within the CPDU to implement the program. As soon as confirmation of the funding bid had been received, the process to recruit a Project Manager, two Project Officers and a Business Analyst commenced. It was thought to be important that the team included some people from the court in order to ensure first hand operational knowledge and to help promote the credibility of the team within the court. In an attempt to build for sustainability and support the program in its early days in the court, it was also decided that the more senior of the project officer positions would work with the CPDU project team for 12 months during the development and implementation phases and would then return to the court with the program as it transitioned into the operational phase. I talked to the court about the importance of ensuring court staff members were on the team and they undertook to assist in identifying court staff who might be suitable to fill the project officer positions.
Within a couple of months all of the positions had been filled. The CISP Project Manager was from Corrections and had extensive experience in project management. The Court had been invited onto the interview panel and had expressed some concern about recruiting people from Corrections but the selection was made on the basis of merit. The two project officer positions were filled by court staff, both of whom had sound court operational experience. The Business Analyst position was filled by a person with good analytical and program evaluation skills. My role, as the Manager of the CPDU was to provide overall direction to the project, oversee the implementation process and management of the strategic relationship with the court to ensure successful implementation. My role will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

Unfortunately within a couple of months of the appointment, the CISP Project Manager, who had been seconded from Corrections, was required to return to her substantive position. Despite the court having expressed some concern about the appointment during the recruitment process, they were very unhappy about her leaving and the appointment of the replacement Project Manager. This will be discussed in detail in later chapters. Apart from this change, the membership of the CISP Project Team remained relatively stable for the first twelve months of the project.

Court personnel
As was usual practice when commencing a new project in the court, the Chief Magistrate was asked to nominate which magistrates he wanted us to work with throughout the development of the program. He nominated two Deputy Chief Magistrates, both of whom had played a role in the earlier development work. I had a similar conversation with the then CEO and he nominated the Manager, Court Support and Diversion Services to work with us from the court administration side. In addition, key judicial and administrative representatives from the city, metropolitan and regional sites were also invited to participate in a CISP Working Party that will be described later in this chapter. As the project approached the operational phase, the direct service delivery staff of the court, including the then Coordinator of the CREDIT/Bail Program, became increasingly involved. I had advocated for the involvement of this position early in the project but this was strongly resisted by the court at the first joint planning meeting discussed below. The Manager, Court Support and Diversion services and the Deputy Magistrate with judicial responsibility for Court Support Services and later the Coordinator, CREDIT/Bail were the court representatives that the CISP Project team and I worked most closely with throughout the implementation of CISP.
Like the CISP Project Team, the court personnel remained relatively stable for the first twelve months of the project but as the result of a more sweeping organisational change in the court there were some significant changes in the latter part of the project.

**CISP project planning**

Project planning started as soon as the CISP Project Manager commenced with the CPDU. Preliminary planning involved the Project Manager and I talking about how we might proceed and who we needed to have involved. We discussed project governance arrangements and the establishment of a Project Control Group and a Working Party and who should be represented on these groups. We also agreed that a Project Governance document be drafted for discussion and agreement by the Project Control Group. During these discussions we were very much focussed on working within an established project management framework that had been endorsed by the department. At this time I was in the first year of my doctoral candidacy and in the process of obtaining program and research ethics approval. I had told people about my plans to use CISP as a case study but had not formally started my research.

The first major step in the planning process took place in August of 2005 when we invited the court to participate in a planning workshop. The two Deputy Chief Magistrates, the CEO and the Manager, Court Support and Diversion Services attended for the Court. The department was represented by the CISP Project Manager, three CPDU Project Officers who had each made some contribution to the early development of CISP and myself as Chair. The recruitment for other members of the CISP Project Team was still underway at the time. I had arranged the workshop because I wanted to mark the beginning of the implementation process now the Project Manager was on board, to talk about how we might begin to work together and to talk about my roles as researcher and manager.

**CISP project governance**

Throughout the life of the project, from a project management perspective at least, the two most important bodies were the Project Control Group (PCG) and the Project Working Party. The Project Control Group was established in October 2005 and was comprised of the two Deputy Chief Magistrates, the Magistrates Court CEO, the Manager, Court Support and Diversion Services, the CISP Project Manager, a CPDU Senior Project Officer and Principal Program Advisor (as technical advisors) and myself. Executive support was provided by the CISP Senior Project Officer. At the first PCG meeting the draft Project Governance document,
which set out the project governance arrangements, was discussed. The PCG was guided by the following Terms of Reference. The PCG:

- provides overall direction and management of the project;
- is accountable for success of the project by way of ensuring the project plan is realistic and can be delivered within the agreed budget and timelines;
- approves any changes to scope, timelines and budget;
- is responsible for the Project Assurance function by way of ensuring the project delivers outcomes and provides the expected benefits; and
- takes ownership of the identified risks and manages these by actions to minimise or eradicate the impact.

After considerable discussion at the first meeting it was agreed that during the project development and implementation phase I would chair the PCG. Once CISP became operational in the court, the role of the PCG would change to that of monitoring and evaluation and would then be chaired by the court. The PCG met approximately monthly from October 2005 till December 2006 at which time it was agreed that the purpose of the committee had changed now the program was operational and it would translate into the Program Monitoring Committee in the new year.

The PCG also authorised the establishment of a CISP Working Group that was guided by the following Terms of Reference. The Working Party would:

- provide advice on how the project will operate at the local level;
- provide localised information and data; and
- make recommendations for the consideration and endorsement of the Project Control Group.

The membership of the Working Group was comprised of the two Deputy Chief Magistrates from the PCG, coordinating Magistrates from the Sunshine Court, and the Latrobe Valley Region, the Manager, Court Support and Diversion Services, the Operations Manager and Principal Registrar from the city court, Senior Registrars from Moe and Sunshine, the CISP Project team and the Principal and Senior Program Advisors from the CPDU. Executive
support was provided by the CISP Project Officer. The Working Group met on an as needs basis and worked on a range of activities that informed the implementation of CISP.

January 2007 marked the transition of the PCG to the Program Monitoring Committee in recognition that CISP had become operational in November 2006 at the three sites and the subsequent need to change the focus of the governance arrangements. The new committee was now chaired by the Court as had been agreed at the first PCG meeting and was now comprised of the Manager, Specialist Courts and Court Support Services (who was also the Chair), one Deputy Chief Magistrate, a city court Magistrate, the Manager, Court Support and Diversion Services and the Manager CISP, the CISP Senior Project Officer (providing Executive support) and the CREDIT/Bail from the Court. The department was represented by the CISP Project Manager and myself. New Terms of Reference had also been agreed. The Program Monitoring Committee would:

- monitor the CISP Program delivery, communication and evaluation;
- promote the integrity of the CISP service delivery model;
- identify and implement service enhancements as required;
- ensure the CISP service integration through agency collaboration and partnerships; and
- provide a forum for judicial feedback

One of the first decisions the Monitoring Committee made was to establish an Evaluation Steering Committee. The Monitoring and Evaluation Committees met alternately on a roughly three weekly cycle. The membership of the Evaluation Steering Committee was the same as the Program Monitoring Committee but included the CISP Process and Outcome Evaluator and the CISP Economic Evaluator who had been engaged to carry out the evaluation of CISP.

**CISP project implementation**

The implementation of CISP took place over a 12 month period on a number of fronts. It began with a process mapping exercise to work through all of the steps in the CISP process. Mapping out the processes gave everyone an opportunity to work together to think through the process from beginning to end, how it might work and who made what contribution and when. The next step was the development of the Service Delivery Model (SDM). This encapsulated the underlying principles and then articulated the target group, eligibility criteria, referral and
Working with what is there

assessment processes, the case management model, reporting and sentencing. It spelt out the levels of case management, judicial monitoring, individual management planning, access to support services, case monitoring and exit planning.

Building onto the process maps and the SDM, an existing software program already used to assist with the case management of defendants on other programs was adapted to support the CISP case management model and capture data. The adapted software would support the day to day case management of defendants and capture data for the program evaluation.

The original business case had allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of CISP at the three pilot sites. A successful evaluation outcome would be critical to obtaining funds for a state wide expansion of CISP beyond the pilot sites into the future. Following completion of the SDM work commenced on the development of the specification that would be used to commence the public tender process to engage an external agency to conduct an independent process, outcome and cost effectiveness evaluation. It was important to engage the evaluators early in the development phase so they could advise about data requirements so that information could be built into the case management system. In addition, part of their task was to assist in the development of the assessment tool and the associated training of staff.

The assessment tool was adapted from one developed some years earlier for corrections sentenced offenders although in this case it would be re-developed for defendants not yet sentenced. Over a number of months the assessment tool, the case management system and the purchase of services were completed. Services were either directly purchased or brokered through the Department of Human Services. They included housing assistance, neurological assessments and case management for acquired brain injury, psychiatric and psychological services for mental illness and personality disorders, disability services and drug and alcohol assessment and treatment and accommodation for homeless defendants.

Because the funding provided for an additional 13 new staff and the service delivery model required the existing court staff to work in a different way, a new staffing model was developed and negotiated through the Community and Public Sector Union and the current staff. A multidisciplinary team model was developed that also provided an improved staffing structure which introduced new team leader positions and more career progression opportunities. Once the new staffing structure was agreed upon, a process to fill all of the positions with existing
and then the new positions was commenced. Following the development of the new service delivery model and staffing structure a professional development program for all staff was developed and implemented.

Finally, upon completion of the new staffing structure, capital works commenced at each of the three sites. Open plan seating for staff and interview rooms had to be retro fitted into Melbourne and Sunshine Courts. Fortunately, a new regional courts complex was being built in the Latrobe Valley at the same time as CISP was being developed and it was possible to have the program requirements designed into the new facilities from the beginning. CISP became operational at the three sites in November 2006; a couple of months later than originally intended due to recruitment and building work delays.

CISP was an important milestone in the evolution of therapeutic jurisprudence and problem solving initiatives in Victoria. It represented a maturing of problem solving models of practice in the Magistrates Court and provided a vehicle to mainstream or integrate these services into the everyday operations of the court. It was also instrumental in early indications that the County Court was interested in taking up this way of working. Because of what it represented on so many fronts, the implementation of CISP would always be a watershed for the court. One that it both wanted and resisted.

Figure 1 on the following page provides a diagrammatic representation of the major steps taken by the Court and the CPDU project team in developing and implementing the CISP program. It represents a simplified version of the process and is unable to represent the complexity associated with the various processes or working on a number of different tasks at the same time.
Summary

This chapter gives a brief description of therapeutic jurisprudence as the theoretical underpinning for the introduction of problem solving initiatives into the Victorian Magistrates Court. It then describes the introduction of these initiatives and the conceptualisation of the Courts Integrated Services Program, the implementation of which is the platform for this research. By way of further background, it details the project management and project governance arrangements and describes the major components of the implementation of the project. The next chapter begins to lay the theoretical framework for the research through a consideration of the systems psychodynamic orientation.
This chapter begins the examination of the theoretical concepts underpinning this thesis. It begins by outlining the systems psychodynamic perspective and its origins in psychoanalytical, group relations and open systems theories and then moves to a consideration of the application of the systems psychodynamic orientation in the study of group and organisational processes from a consultancy perspective and then in the context of research into social systems. The chapter concludes with a description of some of the main elements of the orthodoxy as they relate to this research.

What is Systems Psychodynamics?
Rather than a theory per se, systems psychodynamics might best be described as an interdisciplinary social sciences orthodoxy or core tradition (Fraher, 2004) that seeks to study groups and organisations by bringing together and applying key elements of the disciplines of psychodynamics, group relations theory and systems theory. The conjunction of these three fields:

‘...creates [an] emergent, but not yet fully articulated field. In this vein it may be argued that a systems psychodynamic perspective implies working simultaneously from “the inside out” and the “the outside in”, with neither perspective being privileged’ (Gould, Stapely, & Stein, 2001 p.4).

The psychoanalytical contribution
The theory and practice of psychoanalysis was originally developed by Sigmund Freud in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for application with individuals and was heavily based on his idea of the dynamic unconscious (Long, 2008). Freud later expanded his thinking to include an interest in group and organisational processes; particularly in the context of the church and the army. One of Freud’s enduring concepts, for example, is the role of objects in satisfying instinctual human drives. The object of a drive is the thing that satisfies the drive; as food is the object of the hunger drive for example. As such, objects can be people, parts of people or an inanimate thing (St. Clair, 1986). It was the work however of Melanie Klein followed by her
analysand Wilfred Bion that made the primary psychoanalytical contributions to systems psychodynamics.

In developing her Object Relations theory, Klein (through her work on the psychoanalysis of children) built upon, departed from (Fraher, 2004) and significantly extended the work of Freud, particularly in relation to the concepts of objects and object relations (St. Clair, 1986). Klein retained the Freudian concepts of drives and instincts but altered the idea of object, starting with the idea that infants can first only attend to part objects which are experienced as good or bad and must be reconciled as whole objects at a later stage of development. Klein (1970) states:

The hypothesis that the infant's first experiences of feeding and of his mother's presence initiate an object-relation to her is one of the basic concepts... This relation is at first a relation to a part-object, for both oral-libidinal and oral-destructive impulses from the beginning of life are directed towards the mother's breast in particular' (p. 199).

A Kleinian concept adopted by systems psychodynamics is that of psychic positions: the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position as outlined by Klein (1970). These distinct but over-lapping developmental positions are thought to develop from an early age as mechanisms to protect the infant against the anxiety and confusion that results from the experience of birth (Klein, 1970) and good and bad objects. The psychic mechanisms of projection, introjection, splitting and projective identification are commonly in use (Klein, 1970; Fraher, 2004).

The paranoid-schizoid position is that where the characteristic mechanisms used are those predominant during the first three or four months of an infant's life when its anxieties are of a paranoid nature and schizoid, primitive defences are common, i.e. splitting and projection (Klein, 1970). Bad part objects are split off and kept separate from good objects (which are thus protected) and dangerous feelings are kept separate from gratifying feelings. Negative and destructive emotions are also disowned by the infant by projecting them onto others (Fraher, 2004; Krantz, 2001). Other primitive defences include introjection and projective identification. In the former, the infant phantasises that the external object or source of anxiety is introjected into him or her self. A protective form is to internalise the good object while projecting out the bad. In projective identification, by splitting off a bad part of itself and projecting this onto
another object, the bad experience becomes ejected. The other object (person/mother) may then modify the bad experience through love and understanding and a capacity to tolerate anxiety which is then re-internalised by the infant (Klein, 1970). Alternatively, the ‘other’ may be unable to modify or neutralise the bad experience and the infant may have to re-internalise it. This can be disturbing and might explain the unconscious thought that, for example, ‘because I am hurting and need you and you don’t feed me, you are bad and are attacking me and devouring me and I feel bad’ (St. Clair, 1986 p. 41).

The **depressive position** represents a later stage of development and begins when the infant is approximately five months old although Klein points out that ‘it must be kept in mind, though only a rough estimate can be given of the duration of stages of development, as there are great individual variations’ (Klein, 1970 p. 209). The depressive position is characterised by a shift to the capacity to relate to whole objects containing both good and bad parts and a more realistic view of the world. In this position, denial and omnipotence are used as mechanisms to defend against feelings of guilt and despair. Such feelings emerge as the reality of a world that is both good and bad is contemplated.

While these positions were originally developed in the context of normal early childhood development (Klein, 1970; St. Clair, 1986) they are now also often applied to adults and organisations and for many create the link between individual and group functioning (Gabriel & Hampton, 1999). While the leap from individual to organisation may at first seem large, there are many who argue in support of this position. Long (2008) for example argues that:

‘...if the organisation is a piece of social reality constructed *in-the-mind* as much as in bricks and mortar, then *in-the-mind* it may have character as much as any other social construction...[and]...we may experience the organisation as an entity with volition and character and behave with this in mind’ (p. 3).

In an organisational context, operating from the paranoid-schizoid position is thought to lead to ‘...highly compromised functioning because it engenders rigid, concrete thinking, blame, idealisation, massive projection, persecutory frames of mind and diminished capacity for reality testing’ (Krantz, 2001 p. 3). Whereas operating from the depressive position enables an organisation to contain its anxiety and people:
‘...are able to mobilize their resources to confront the reality of complex tasks and challenges in sophisticated fashion. They are able to think and to collaborate as whole people with whole people. When managing our experiences in this more integrated frame of mind, we are able to tolerate complexity, assess reality from multiple perspectives, and understand realistic opportunities. It also allows us to take responsibility for our actions, rather than to externalise our unwanted parts and create “persecutors” in our environment’ (Krantz, 1998 p. 3).

The Group Relations contribution

In addition to the early work on groups of Le Bon (Alderfer, 1987), followed by McDougall, Freud and Lewin, it was Bion that was to make the most significant contribution to the group relations aspect of systems psychodynamics (Fraher, 2004). Building on Klein’s object relations work, Bion put forward a theory of group processes that was founded on his work in therapeutic groups. This, together with the work of others in the War Office Officer Training Board in Britain during the second world war, underpinned the establishment of the Tavistock Institute in 1946 (Fraher, 2004).

Bion (1961) argues that ‘every group, however casual, meets to “do” something’ (p. 143), that is, carry out a task and that all groups have two ways of behaving. The first way informs the more sophisticated, rational work group where the mental activity of the group is directed toward achieving the task. The second way of behaving is found in the basic assumption group where ‘work group activity is obstructed, diverted, and on occasion assisted by certain other mental activities that have in common the attribute of powerful emotional drives (Bion, 1961 p. 146). Bion hypothesised that there were three basic assumption modes: dependency, pairing and fight-flight, each of which are based on ‘the assumption which is basic to the behaviour...[which is]... deductible from the [observable] emotional state of the group’ (Rioch, 1975). Bion held the view that the often chaotic and irrational behaviour observed in groups can be attributed to basic assumption behaviour common to all members (Stokes, 1994). Basic assumption behaviours are discussed in more detail in following chapters. See Bion (1961), Rioch (1975) and Stokes (1994) for a detailed description of the basic assumption modes.

The other formative contribution to the Group Relations approach was the development of the Tavistock approach to the theory and practice of group relations (Gould, Stapely, & Stein, 2001) which also became known as the Leicester Model (Miller, 1990). Bion was instrumental in this development as a result of his work with groups in a non-therapeutic setting after the second world war. Rice, Miller, Trist, Bridger and many others built on Bion’s methods for
working with groups and developed the Group Relations or Leicester Conference model (Miller, 1990; Fraher, 2004; Gould, Stapely, & Stein, 2001; Bridger, 1990).

The essential element of a group relations conference, even today, is that it is designed as a temporary learning institution, convened for the experiential study (by members and staff) of group and organisational behaviour (Miller, 1990). Each conference is comprised of 30 – 70 members and a small group of staff. Conference structures generally include small study systems, inter-group events and institutional system events. More recent innovations include community system events and the introduction of Organisational Role Analysis (Long & Newton, 2005). The Leicester Model has so endured that over 60 years after the first experiments in this method, group relations conferences are still being conducted all over the world based on the same task.

The Open Systems contribution
The third and final contribution to the systems psychodynamic orientation is that made by open systems theory. Prior to and after the second world war, the Tavistock (Clinic and then Institute) members were exploring the idea of whole systems (Fraher, 2004), however the contemporary conceptualisation of open systems theory originates from writings by Rice in 1950 where he conceptualised an organisation as an open system and Miller’s 1959 work on boundary differentiation following Bertalanffy (Gould, Stapely, & Stein, 2001). Further seminal work was conducted by Jaques in 1952 and Menzies in 1960 demonstrating how social systems could be used to defend against anxiety in organisations (Fraher, 2004).

Both ‘socio-psychological’ and ‘socio-technical systems’ were important concepts during this time. The socio-psychological system referred to the ‘interrelatedness of psychological forces and social systems’ and the socio-technical system ‘provided a way to optimise both human elements and technological imperatives within organisations’ (Fraher, 2004 p. 33).

In addition, the idea of boundaries (which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter) also emerged as a pivotal concept. According to Rice, a ‘closed system [was a] mechanically self-sufficient organization neither importing nor exporting across the boundaries of the organisation [and] open systems in contrast, exist and can only exist by the exchange of materials with their environment…the process of importing, converting, and exporting materials is the work the system has to do to live’ (Fraher, 2004 p.34). Building on this work, by the late
Working with what is there

1960’s it was now possible to study organisations from the perspectives of the individual worker, the work group, the organisation and the organisation’s environment (Fraher, 2004). Furthermore, it is now understood that a number of systems operate within these micro systems including the task, political, economic, socio-emotional, socio-technical and more recently the community level systems (Long, 2006).

Another important contribution from open systems theory is the idea of task. The original idea of task had been put forward by Bion in relation to his work groups. Later Rice reconceptualised or refined the idea of task to become that of primary task; being that function an organisation had to perform to be what it says it is. The enduring nature of concepts such as boundary and task and their interrelatedness to each other and the system as a whole is evidenced in their importance in the literature and practice of systems psychodynamics 50 years on.

Applying systems psychodynamics in organisations

There is an extensive body of literature documenting the application of systems psychodynamics thinking and method in organisations. This work most often takes the form of consultation practice (Gould, Stapely, & Stein, 2001). A consultant working with an organisation from a systems psychodynamic perspective pays careful attention to structural matters such as boundaries and roles alongside issues of organisational design and culture, group processes and task. The consultant may also attend to dynamic and unconscious group processes and issues such as the use of projection and splitting, social defences, the relatedness between roles and how authority is distributed.

The consultant generally works collaboratively with the organisation and uses selective interpretations of their observations and experience of the organisation (through transference and counter-transference) to work through the collective dynamics and hopefully ‘enlarge the organisations capacity to develop task appropriate adaptations that include a more rational distribution of authority, and clearer role and boundary definitions, together with their management and regulation’ (Gould, Stapely, & Stein, 2001 p. 4). More will be said about transference and counter-transference later in this chapter.

Another application is that of organisational role analysis (ORA). The ORA process involves exploring the place where the person in the role meets and overlaps with the system they are
working in. This is achieved by a collaborative exploration of the person’s role and the system within which they work. Long (2005) indicates that the process involves asking questions, making associations and developing working hypotheses about the role and its place in the system as a means of exploration and understanding. The use of working hypotheses facilitates the collaborative exploration. ORA helps the role holder to make explicit the hidden or unconscious theories that are held about their role and the system being worked in. By making these unconscious processes conscious, the role holder is able to examine them, test them against reality and better understand the roles they have taken up (Morgan, 2006).

The precise origins of the development of ORA are unclear but the method is generally attributed to either Irving Borwick or the Grubb Institute in the UK (Newton, Long, & Sievers, 2006). ORA consultations draw on psychoanalytic and open systems approaches and were used initially to work with individuals on how they took up their roles in the workplace. They are said to be especially useful when used with a senior executive or manager who has ‘taken up a new role, needs to reassess role performance in light of changing organisational circumstances, or is experiencing chronic difficulties in functioning effectively (Gould, Stapely, & Stein, 2001 p. 9). More recently the application of this method has been adapted to a range of other circumstances including group relations and research applications.

Finally, Gould et al (2001) suggest a third application which is derived from the work of Menzies whereby an organisational consultant analyses ‘the social defence aspects of an organizational structure and its relationship to task and process’ (p.10). In describing her method of psychoanalytic practice in organisations, Menzies (1988) says that of first and foremost importance is the capacity to recognise and understand unconscious and implicit thoughts and processes through their ‘manifestations in the conscious thoughts, feelings, speech and behaviour’ (p.463) at an institutional level. Implicit processes, says Menzies, are not unconscious per se but are held in the conscious minds of some of the members, perhaps shared with a few others, but not widely and openly available for work.

Menzies believed that the primary skill for an organisational consultant is to be able to bring forward the unconscious or implicit processes that are held back by the clients defences and make them available for work with the client. Menzies also talks about the need for the consultant to take a particular stance in order to allow meaning to emerge that is akin to Freud’s ‘evenly suspended attention’ or Bion’s ‘eschewing [of] memory or desire’. Menzies
(1988) describes it as ‘the need to take a fresh look at the situation, to set aside habitual ways of looking at things, to blind oneself to the obvious, to think again (p.464). As Halton (1994) has so eloquently described it, ‘the psychoanalytically oriented consultant takes up a listening position on the boundary between conscious and unconscious meanings, and works simultaneously with problems at both levels’ (p. 12).

These and other psychoanalytical techniques are used to recognise and understand the social defences in place in organisations and bring them forward for work with the client. In so doing, it is necessary for the consultant to provide a containing function (Halton, 1994) for the client while the ‘working through’ takes place and more adaptive mechanisms are instituted.

**Applying systems psychodynamics in the research context**

In addition to its application in organisational settings, the systems psychodynamic approach also lends itself to application in the context of research in social systems. As might be expected, many of the psychodynamic strategies that have been developed for work with groups and organisations are also useful when used specifically as strategies for researching groups and organisations. Using the systems psychodynamics approach as a theoretical underpinning or organising principle (Prins, 2006) for research purposes assists in containing the anxiety inherent in all research.

The systems psychodynamic approach particularly lends itself to application in conjunction with an action research approach. Long (1999) describes action research as a methodology used to study social action and its effects and one that focuses on those aspects of a social system that are dynamic and changing. Newton (2002) suggests that action research is a means of managing the research process rather than a method in and of itself and involves a ‘political social change process as well as a research process’ (p. 2). Action research is said to take advantage of the relations between the researcher and the organisation so that changes occurring as a result of the research are available for study. It provides a capacity to study the impact of the relationship between the researcher and researched in addition to the study of the organisation which is the subject of the research. Participative action research uses action research methods and involves ‘the members of a particular system in a collaborative research process with each other as a research team, on an aspect of their own system’ (Long, 1999 p. 264).
Participative action research involves three basic conditions. Firstly it includes active collaboration between the researcher or research team and the organisation in the development, implementation and evaluation of the research. Secondly there is an iterative, cyclical process where data is gathered, fed back to the organisation, interpreted and employed to form the basis for further data gathering and finally, a consultative process where participants act also as researchers in their own research process and hence develop their own capabilities in the process (Long, 1999).

Systems psychodynamic methods provide mechanisms that can be used to study and understand the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Berg and Smith (1988) describe this relationship as a central issue because it is known that ‘human beings studying human beings are inevitably influenced in complex ways by a variety of social and psychological forces’ (Berg, & Smith, 1988 p. 13), all of which impact on the capacity to make research decisions, take action and generate theory. Attending to the transference and counter transference between the researcher and research participants, recognising, understanding and working with unconscious processes, attending to evidence of projection and projective identification and managing oneself in role all provide opportunities for better understanding these critical relationships. In the context of collaboration, these factors minimise the risk of moving from a collaborative to a collusive relationship.

The capacity of researchers (either as individuals or as part of a research team) to take up the interpretive stance is also important because it enables the integration of the experiences of the researcher and the system they are researching. Shapiro and Carr (1991) describe the interpretive stance as a ‘method that individuals might use to integrate an evaluation of their experience... and an interpretation of that experience from the context of their institutional role’ which they suggest leads to a ‘thoughtful study of the organisation’ (pp. 76-77). The interpretive stance is one of broad self-reflection and is comprised of two features. The first is ‘speculative, imaginary and heuristic’ (p. 78) and the second is the capacity of the researcher to join together the hypotheses that have been generated from the first. This stance allows the researcher to make sense out of what they are observing and experiencing in the research role within the system being studied.

The use of working hypotheses and working notes are also useful in the research context. Working hypotheses are ‘sketches of the reality of a situation to be either elaborated or erased
Working with what is there

and replaced by another sketch. A working hypothesis is always an approximation. It is ‘valid and reliable at a particular point in time of the relationship between researcher and subject’ (Lawrence, 1999 p. 22). The use of working hypotheses facilitates the collaborative exploration that is so often the primary feature of the psychodynamic study of organisations. Reed and Bazelgette (2006) have found that working hypotheses allow unconscious processes to be revealed, understood and worked with. Long (2005) suggests that working hypotheses allow for the possibility that partial understanding can lead to further exploration and deeper understanding. In the event that a working hypothesis does not lead to further understanding it can be abandoned and new working hypotheses can be generated and explored.

Working notes are written forms of communication with the client or research system. Sometimes they take the form of working hypotheses. Working notes are used to generate a dialogue with the client or research system to reach a fuller understanding of observations and findings; either through support for or refutation of the data presented in the working note (Miller, 1995). The use of working notes evolved out of the Tavistock Institute’s work with organisations and systems as a means of generating a dialogue with the client system to arrive at a shared understanding of the issues under examination (Miller, 1995). A Working Note is a means of presenting a ‘work in progress’ account of observations and findings and is derived from interview data and observations in the workplace (Hirschhorn, 1988).

Systems psychodynamic methods are useful in analysing the internal dynamics of a consulting or research team. Prins (2006) gives an example where the dynamics in the system were being mirrored in the consulting team. Parallel processes are described as ‘the tendency of living systems in a relationship to develop internal, emotional dynamics that parallel each other’ (Berg, 1985). Alderfer (1987) states that the ‘primary mechanism by which parallel processes occur is generally emotional and frequently involves unconscious processes at both individual and group levels’ (p. 210). As such, research teams can find themselves experiencing or playing out the dynamics that are present in the social system being studied. The benefit of analysing parallel processes is that developing an understanding of what is taking place in the research team provides the opportunity to use this information to generate working hypotheses about what is occurring in the participating system (Gilmore & Krantz, 1985). In her example, Prins (2006) attributes the failure of the research team to pay sufficient attention to its own functioning to a parallel reduction in the effectiveness of the multi-party collaboration under study.
On first examination, it might be thought that psychoanalytically informed research methods are directly in contra-distinction to those employed in positivist and neo-positivist forms of research, where the objectivity of the researcher is paramount. This is not the case. Objectivity is always important in research informed by a systems psychodynamics framework. The objectivity is achieved by attention to subjective experience as part of the data; a factor that is often seen as error in other forms of research. In discussing the use of a systems psychodynamic approach as a research framework, Nossal (2007) argues that ‘while it has elements in common with other research approaches, [systems psychodynamics] …has sufficient interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological coherence and integrity to be defended as an approach to social research in its own right’ (p. 76). Psycho-dynamically informed research methods will be taken up further in chapter five.

Assumptions underlying systems psychodynamics
To make sense of the systems psychodynamic orientation it helps to hold a number of assumptions in mind.

Levels of analysis
The first of these relates to there being multiple levels of analysis: that is, the individual, the group and the system within which a group or groups function. Systems psychodynamics focuses primarily on the group and/or a wider system such as an organisation or society but must also attend to the individuals that comprise the group and the wider systems within which the group, organisation or society operates. Individual group members can sometimes behave in a particular way or say something that gives an indication that they are holding something for the whole group (Alderfer, 1987). Analysis of these behaviours can lead to a deep understanding of the group dynamic. In much the same way, circumstances or events taking place within the wider systems will also impact on the behaviour of the groups being studied. These circumstances need to be analysed and understood in order to understand their impact. Systems psychodynamics is well placed as a heuristic tool to study inter-agency collaboration because of its ability to focus on multiple levels of analysis at the same time, albeit with a particular focus on the group and systems levels.

From a research perspective, the decisions made about the primary level of analysis will influence methodological choices. If interviewing participants for example, decisions need to be made about which level or levels interviewees will be selected and recruited from. As will be
discussed later in chapter 5, in my research, interviewees were selected from within and between groups and the wider system.

**Group as an entity**

A second assumption is that a group is more than the sum of the individuals that comprise the group (Alderfer, 1987). In essence, this can be understood to mean that ‘a group exists, as distinct from an aggregate of individuals’ (Bion, 1961 p. 142). A further element of this conceptualisation of a group is that both the rational and emotional mental activity of the group can be discerned in relation to its function or task (Bion, 1961). Without the existence of a function or task a group does not exist (Rioch, 1975).

**Groups as part of systems**

A third assumption is that all groups are impacted upon by the systems within which they operate. In discussing the impact of the ‘suprasystems in which [a group] is embedded’ (Alderfer, 1987 p. 208) Alderfer (1987) states that failure to analyse inter-group relations from their system context seriously limits inter-group research. He states that in observing embedded inter-group relations there are a number of perspectives including:

1. The effects on individuals who represent the groups in relation to one another
2. The consequences for subgroups within groups as the groups deal with one another
3. The outcomes for groups as a whole when they relate to significant other groups
4. The impact of suprasystem forces on the intergroup relationship in question’ (p.208).

**Unconscious group processes**

A fourth assumption is that groups display unconscious group processes. Le Bon, in his late 19th century work, is attributed by Alderfer (1987) with the first studies of inter-group behaviour of individuals and groups in the context of the French political situation at that time. Of particular interest is where Alderfer (1987) cites Le Bon as referring to ‘the substitution of unconscious action by groups for the conscious actions of individuals’ (p. 191) whereby Le Bon accepts that unconscious group behaviour is displayed by groups. Alderfer describes unconscious group processes primarily from the position of parallel processes (discussed earlier) which he says are conscious and unconscious emotional reactions that occur within and between both individuals and groups. Freud studied unconscious group processes from a psychoanalytic perspective in the early 20th century (Stokes, 1994).
Bion (1961) also refers to the emotional life of groups and uses his observations that groups ‘pass through a series of complex emotional episodes’ (p.143) as a key feature of his theoretical considerations on group behaviour. Bion was of the view that evidence for the existence of unconscious group processes could be found in the involuntary, automatic and inevitable emergence of basic assumption behaviour and associated anxiety and mechanisms such as splitting and projective identification. Unconscious group processes are derived from unconscious fantasies within the group (Bion, 1961). Rioch (1975) indicates that Bion believed that, in the context of valency, all individuals have a tendency to enter into group life including the ‘irrational and unconscious aspects of group life’. Halton (1994) suggests that further evidence supporting the existence of unconscious group processes can be found when, consultants for example, come in to work with a group or organisation and ‘feel’ the strong emotions being denied by the group. This is an example of the use of subjective experience to develop hypotheses about the organisation which can then be objectively assessed.

Defences against anxiety
A fifth and final assumption for the purposes of this thesis is that individuals and groups wish to avoid pain (Prins, 2006; Halton, 1994) and that they employ a number of strategies to defend themselves against pain. The experience of pain at the group or organisational level is experienced as ‘crippling anxieties, intense psychic pain and disorienting confusion’ (Krantz, 1998) and includes:

‘difficult emotions which are too threatening or painful to acknowledge. These emotions may be a response to external threats such as government policy or social change. They may arise from internal conflicts between management and employees or between groups and departments in competition for resources. They may also arise from the nature of the work and the particular client group’ (Krantz, 1998 p. 12).

Bion (1961) was of the view that anxiety in groups was best explained in terms of Klein’s paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. He suggested that the basic assumption behaviour observed in groups referred to earlier, corresponds with primitive part objects and that ‘sooner or later psychotic anxiety, appertaining to these primitive relationships, is released’ (p.189).

In a more contemporary context, anxiety and pain in organisations can be understood in terms of the impact of rapid or radical change as a source of high levels of anxiety. When traditional structures, roles and authority relationships are changed in organisations, there is a resultant
increase in fear and uncertainty (Krantz, 1998; James & Huffington, 2004). When this anxiety is too difficult to bear it must be defended against using social defence mechanisms.

The theory of social defences posits that the compelling need to contain the anxiety experienced within a group or organisation has its roots in early childhood development. The anxiety experienced by adults associated with the primary task of an organisation or rapid change may represent the fantasies of death and annihilation experienced by all infants, which were originally contained by the use of primitive defences i.e. splitting, projection and projective identification. Social defence theory hypothesises that individuals within an organisation experience some form of anxiety associated with the task and unconsciously collude to develop a social defence system to contain and protect against the threatening emotions. These social defences can be observed by outsiders as part of the ‘structure, culture, and mode of functioning of the organisation’ (Menzies, 1975 p. 287). Old and new members unconsciously collude to keep these structures and ways of operating in place to protect against anxiety and these elements then become part of the external reality of the organisation.

Key concepts in systems psychodynamics
Having described some of the assumptions underpinning systems psychodynamics, a number of the key concepts contained within the theory will be described in order to lay a conceptual foundation for the later chapters. Only those concepts that are directly relevant to this thesis will be described.

Transference and counter transference
Freud was the first to write about transference and counter transference as psychoanalytical phenomena (Patterson, 1959) and their description was among his most significant contributions (Giami, 2001). Both concepts emerged from his work with individual patients. Diamond and Allcorn (2003) cite Moore and Fine in defining transference as ‘the displacement of patterns of feelings, thoughts, and behaviour, originally experienced in relation to significant figures during childhood, onto a person involved in a current interpersonal relationship’ (p. 498).
Counter transference on the other hand, is defined as:

‘…a specific reaction to the client’s transference….It arises out of a context in which the consultant’s feelings and attitudes toward a client are influenced by the client’s transference into the consultant and elements of the consultant’s life that are displaced onto the client which then influences analytic understanding’ (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003 p. 498).

From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, it is believed that the transference is a metaphoric regression to an infantile state where earlier object relations re-emerge (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003). In the context of psychoanalysis, the transference is a key feature of the relationship between the analyst and the analysand. The analysis of the transference is the task of psychoanalysis.

From an object relations perspective, psychoanalysis attempts to work with the patient’s fantasies and behaviours as they are experienced in the moment in the analytic relationship. The transference is by definition irrational because the ‘affects and emotions, conflicts, attitudes, wishes, fantasies and ideas originally directed toward earlier significant figures are displaced onto, or transferred to, the analyst’ and are inconsistent with the objective reality of the relationship (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003).

There are however, those who do not believe the transference is a regression to an infantile state and attribute it to other factors including the personality of the analysand. They believe dependence on the analyst is a result of anxiety and not regression to infantile object relations (Patterson, 1959). Might it not be conceivable that elements of both perspectives are at play at the same time?

In a therapeutic setting, counter transference refers to the experience of the analyst as a result of their reaction to the analysand’s transference. It ‘derives from the analysts own neurotic conflicts and his/her reactions to the analysand’ (Giami, 2001 p. 2). Freud originally suggested the analyst should try to overcome the counter transference but contemporary practitioners now acknowledge the counter transference as a major source of information and attempt to analyse their counter transference to better understand the analysand’s transference (Giami, 2001).

In an organisational context, the concepts of both transference and counter transference are important tools for diagnosing organisational dynamics. As is the case in a therapeutic
relationship, organisation members bring with them into the organisation, their history of past object relations which influence organisational dynamics and form the basis of the transference and counter transference (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003). The self aware consultant is able to interpret the transference and counter transference that takes place between themselves and the members of the organisation (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003). Diamond and Allcorn believe that the consultant becomes ‘an instrument of observation and data collection, thereby revealing the subjective and intersubjective world of work’ (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003 p. 496). It might also be concluded that the consultant does more than observe and collect data. Rather, the consultant becomes an instrument for the generation of data and the data is generated or constructed as a function of the complex relationship between the consultant and the organisational members.

Upon entering an organisation, the consultant seeks to make conscious many of the early patterns of individual object relations and organisational behaviour that make up the often chaotic transference dynamics of the organisation. These old patterns can be characterised as regression, projection and projective identification and the like and will be transferred onto the consultant who must then interpret these transference dynamics and the consultants own counter transference dynamics to make an organisational diagnosis and intervention (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003).

In a research context, Giami (2001) reports that Georges Devereux was said to be the first person to have taken the concept of counter transference out of the therapeutic arena and apply it as a research method in the social and behavioural sciences. Devereux believed that psychoanalysis provided an epistemology of the behavioural sciences and that counter transference was central to data generation. He thought that data was comprised of three elements as follows:

‘(1) the behaviour of the observed subject; (2) the “perturbations” induced by the presence of the observer and by the activities he performs in the context of observation and, last but not least, (3) the behaviour of the observer – including his anxieties, his defence mechanisms, his research strategies and the ways in which he chooses to attribute meaning’ (Giami, 2001(p. 4).

Conducting research generates a range of emotions in the researcher. Analysing and understanding these emotions facilitates understanding of the researchers’ perceptions of the emotional context the research was conducted within. Berg (1985) suggests that because of
the complex authority relations in research environments, they are fertile ground for unconscious re-enactments of parental and familial conflicts.

The systematic use of the transference and counter transference as a research method requires sophisticated listening and interpretation skills on behalf of the researcher. Of critical importance is the need for the researcher to be self aware and work with an ‘observing ego’ in order to be able to interpret the transference and counter transference in a constructive manner and avoid the possibility of generating further problematic dynamics in the workplace or colluding with organisational members (Berg, 1985). Working in this way means working with subjective experience.

In summary, transference and counter transference are important concepts that emerge out of unconscious social processes. Their importance lies in their capacity, if handled properly, to make the unconscious available for analysis and interpretation. The understanding derived from interpretations of the transference and counter transference phenomena provides the therapist, or researcher or organisational consultant with critical information that enables them to develop working hypotheses about what might be happening in the client system.

Regression

As with transference and counter transference, Freud was the first to write about regression in a psychoanalytical context and as an individual defence mechanism. Regression is an essential element of the transference and is defined as ‘a metaphoric return to earlier modes of object relations in which stage-appropriate conflicts re-emerge in the present’ (Diamond, & Allcorn, 2003 p. 500). In the workplace, regression is one of the mechanisms organisational members use to manage their anxiety and as such, is one of the critical components in understanding organisations and group behaviour (Diamond & Allcorn, 1987).

Anxiety, albeit unconscious, is characteristic of group membership and arises out of the necessity to reconcile the competing needs between the feelings of dependency associated with membership and the desire to retain individuality. The conflicting fear of annihilation by the group and the possible loss of affiliation can result in a return to infantile and primitive responses. Both Freud and Bion believed that psychological regression coincides with group membership (Diamond & Allcorn, 1987) and the group anxiety is the sum of the individuals regressed and primitive coping mechanisms.
Diamond and Allcorn draw on the work of Winnicott when they report that it is:

‘...often the consequence of a failure of the “facilitative environment” (whether mother-infant matrix, family, work group, and organisation) to provide security, enjoyment, mastery, self-esteem, and ego-relatedness, a failure to provide for “good enough” self- and other relations’ (Diamond & Allcorn, 1987 p. 527).

In the extreme, Diamond and Allcorn (1987) suggest that the shared individual anxieties of groups can generate a cycle of regressive and defensive responses that reinforce the schizoid dilemma when discussing authoritarian organisations.

A case in point is the organisation within which I am currently working. In response to a major change initiative that proposes changes to a number of fundamental structures and processes, the workforce might be described as having regressed to infantile responses. Examined from the perspective of regression, the removal of traditional containing structures and processes has resulted in the task of the organisation becoming irrelevant. An example of this was when a member of the public rang to complain about the way the organisation had handled her case and she was told ‘you reckon you’ve got problems. My job is going and I am being made redundant. I am not interested in your problems’. Evidence of the paranoid fantasies prevalent amongst field staff is the belief that a black vehicle drives around the suburbs of Melbourne watching their every move. It would be funny if it wasn’t so serious.

Diamond and Allcorn (1987) describe a typology of regressive and defensive trends in groups. They describe homogenized, institutionalized and autocratic work groups; each of which are regressed solutions to the anxiety present. They also describe the intentional work group that still experiences regressive and defensive responses but which uses reflective processes to learn about themselves and increase effectiveness. The authors assert that the four work groups in their typology represent a continuum from the primitive homogenized group to the “sophisticated” intentional group with the institutionalized and autocratic groups representing ‘compromise formations against the primitive, regressed schizoid withdrawal of the homogenized group’ (p. 537). They conclude that groups are in constant motion and move along the continuum at different points in time. See Diamond and Allcorn (1987) for a detailed description of the work groups in their typology.
When describing the paradoxical conception of group dynamics, Smith and Berg (1987) approach regression in groups from an interesting perspective. They suggest that the regression of the individual members joining the group is a necessary part of the group dynamic. They draw on the work of Bion in proposing that in joining a group, members have to let go of the way they have previously learned to integrate themselves as individuals in order to allow the group to work out how it is going to integrate them into a new entity. ‘Whole’ individuals must become ‘part’ individuals to allow the group to become whole. Hence the paradox.

In essence, previously whole members temporarily become fragmented. They become part members which can be experienced as a primitive form of regression. The part members are then integrated into a whole group. The group then has to develop a way of containing the ‘anxieties stirred in its members as they regress in the service of the group development’ (Smith & Berg, 1987 p.646). The authors draw on the objectives of group therapy in highlighting the positive aspects of regression in groups when suggesting that the ‘group and the individuals who become skilled at regressing can learn about how to interact so they do not end up remaining regressed’ (p.646).

In summary, there is strong evidence for the view that individual membership in groups generates a conflict between annihilation and affiliation, which results in primitive and infantile responses. In turn, this regression aggregates into group anxiety. This anxiety can in turn result in unconscious infantile and primitive responses in defending against the group anxiety. Finally, this regression can have negative or positive impacts on group effectiveness depending on how it is dealt with. Regression nevertheless provides critical information about group and organisational behaviour.

**Boundaries**

The concept of boundaries is key to the psychoanalytic understanding of organisations. Boundaries are found at the individual, group, organisational and macro system levels of analysis and are found within and between all of these levels of analysis. While much of the literature discusses boundaries as if they were ‘concrete’, they are better understood as socially constructed spatial, temporal and psychological concepts (Diamond & Allcorn, 1987) and they represent a delineation between everything that is within an organisation and all that which is without the organisation (Diamond, Allcorn & Stein, 2004).
Boundaries at the individual level, while difficult to articulate, are generally well understood, especially when transgressed. We are each aware when the boundaries that we create around ourselves to provide some protection against invasion by other people, have been overstepped. The concept of personal space is contingent on the idea that we can construct a psychological boundary around ourselves.

At the group and organisational levels, boundaries can be defined as:

‘the break point between one element and another, this is between one task and another, between one role and another, between different areas of authority, between sub-systems and between an organisation as a whole and its environment (James & Huffington, 2004 p. 213).

At the group level, boundaries define group membership and a sense of identity, provide structure within which to carry out a task and help contain anxiety.

At the system level, boundaries assist with the flow of information, the management of relationships with different parts of the system and the distribution of authority. Stable boundaries help with the clarity of role and task and the containment of anxiety. Unstable or disrupted boundaries result in increased anxiety. Boundaries can be rigid or undefined. Getting the permeability of organisational boundaries right is a delicate balancing act. The optimum degree of boundary permeability for each organisation is determined by its relationships with other parts of the system. Rigid, too tight boundaries, while increasing certainty and initially containing anxiety, ultimately result in a reduced capacity to respond and adapt to the organisations external environment. In extreme cases the organisation becomes isolated, collusive, paranoid and fearful of annihilation. Underbounded systems on the other hand, leave themselves open to being swamped by other parts of the system and losing their sense of identity and cohesiveness (Alderfer, 1980).

Organisational change, especially rapid or radical change, inevitably disrupts established boundaries, resulting in heightened anxiety (James, & Huffington, 2004). Organisational restructures, downsizing, amalgamations and takeovers are all examples of organisational changes that create serious challenges to boundaries requiring appropriate individual and organisational responses to assist with the containment of the resultant anxiety to enable work on the task to continue. During periods of turbulence, the challenge for managers and leaders
is to create temporary boundaries to assist in the containment of anxiety until new boundaries are established.

It is a critical role for leaders and managers of organisations to maintain the boundaries of their organisations, thus ensuring the organisations ‘integrity and standards of effectiveness and efficiency’ (Diamond, Allcorn, & Stein, 2004 p. 34). Boundary maintenance is a difficult task. Boundaries can become filled with anxiety and defensive responses elicited by the potential for boundary crossing from the resultant efforts to work with other parts of the system through integration or collaboration (Diamond, Allcorn, & Stein, 2004). Effective managers and leaders spend increasing amounts of their time working at the boundary, representing their organisations and negotiating on behalf of their organisations with other parts of the system (Czander, 1993). Czander (1993) believes that boundaries between all systems offer opportunities for either collaboration or conflict. It is this place, on the edge between two organisations that inter-agency collaboration is played out, often in a mire of anxiety and defensive mechanisms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overbounded Systems</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Underbounded Systems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals clear; priority unequivocal</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Goals unclear; priorities equivocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monolithic</td>
<td>Authority relations</td>
<td>Multiple and competing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal short-term stress</td>
<td>Economic conditions</td>
<td>Impending economic crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precise, detailed, restrictive</td>
<td>Role definitions</td>
<td>Imprecise, incomplete, overlapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with openness when people meet</td>
<td>Communication patterns</td>
<td>Difficulties in determining who can and should meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constrained, blocked</td>
<td>Human energy</td>
<td>Diffuse, exhausting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive inside, negative outside</td>
<td>Affect distribution</td>
<td>Negative inside; negative outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational groups dominate</td>
<td>Intergroup dynamics</td>
<td>Identify groups dominates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>Unconscious basic assumptions</td>
<td>Fight-flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Time span</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-theory ideology</td>
<td>Cognitive work</td>
<td>Multiple or no theory ideologies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2** Properties of underbounded and overbounded systems

*Source: Alderfer, CP (1980)*

In the application of ‘boundaries’ in an organisational context Alderfer (1980) has developed a set of 11 dimensions that distinguish over and under bounded systems. Table 2 above describes the properties of over and under bounded systems against each of the dimensions. Each of the dimensions are distinct but interdependent and Alderfer claims they are useful for diagnosis and intervention in organisations.
Diamond, Allcorn and Stein (2004) take the concept of boundaries further when they argue that contemporary discussion in relation to organisational boundaries confines itself to the ‘concreteness’ of this concept and ignores the experiential element. They suggest that the sensate surfaces that people experience also warrant exploration in order to fully understand how people experience organisations. Organisational surfaces, they argue ‘adds psychological and affective texture and dimensionality to our understanding of organisational boundaries’ (p. 32). Diamond et al (2004) draw heavily on the work of Ogden and his expansion of the Kleinian concepts of paranoid-schizoid and defensive positions. Ogden (1989) recognised the paranoid-schizoid and defensive positions but his principal contribution to object relations was his development of the third concept of the autistic-contiguous mode of experience where ‘the sensation of organisational boundaries as surface is located’ (Diamond et al, 2004 p. 43). The autistic-contiguous mode is described as a primitive, infantile, preverbal and pre-symbolic mode of experiencing which might best be understood as similar to an infant experiencing the world at a tactile level through coming into contact with its mother’s skin through its own skin (Ogden, 1989).

Diamond et al (2004) use the organisational metaphor of silos to good effect in explaining this mode of experiencing. They state that:

‘Workers perceive themselves as ‘inside’ silos, which are in turn ‘inside’ workers. These experiences of organisational silos speak to a profound sense of organisational fragmentation, one that, although clearly present in horizontal relationships, is equally present in vertical relationships, where the many layers of organisation do not appear to function in a fully articulated and rational manner….Vertical and horizontal fragmentation is often fused in the minds of workers. This becomes more apparent as workers are challenged to articulate their experience.....While the silo metaphor reflects many negative and certain positive or constructive attributes, it is ultimately an artefact of the unconscious mind – experienced as a boundary with a sensate surface’ (p. 47).

In essence, the silo is experienced as a fragmenting and isolating place, peopled by part objects: a place where reality testing does not exist and the silo becomes reality. The silo is experienced as a containing, hard surface which protects the individuals and the group against the anxiety provoked by being part of the group.

In summary, boundaries are important to the understanding of organisations because they represent the permeable interfaces between all of the elements of a system. Boundaries play a
critical role in the functioning of social systems in terms of managing what moves across them and the way in which they support and contain what goes on within and between the system. Boundary maintenance is a key role for managers and leaders in terms of containing anxiety and negotiating with other parts of the system. The concept of boundary is fundamental to this thesis because inter-agency collaboration, by definition, takes place at the boundary between two organisations or systems; a place full of hope and fear.

**Containment**

Bion has been attributed with the development of the concept of containment, which has a central place in the theory and practice of systems psychodynamics (Bain, 1999). Bion originally used it in the context of individual psychotherapy but later extended it to groups and organisations. Hoggett and Thompson (2002) attribute Bion as using the idea of a mother comforting a distressed child as a metaphor to describe the relationship between the container and what is being contained. Hoggett and Thompson (2002) describe it thus:

‘The infant, full of overwhelming affect, is taken into the embrace of the mother who contains its distress both physically (in the bounded space of the embodied embrace) and psychologically. Put simply, we could say that if the infant has experience of something resilient, safe, and supportive, it will calm down sufficiently to be able to feed, but it takes in not just physical nourishment but also the idea of “a presence” which is reliably there. The gradual internalisation of this presence…is vital for further development…the affect is still there, but it is now bearable (i.e. contained)…’ (pp. 119-120).

Hoggett and Thompson (2002) point out that containment allows for the transformation of emotion, not its suppression. Once adequately contained, the energy derived from the transformed emotions can be used for socially constructive purposes in a safe way.

Combining the science of complexity and psychoanalytic theory and drawing on the work of Bion, Klein and Winnicott, Stacey (1996) brings together the concepts of boundary and containment when he concludes that creativity lies at the edge of disintegration but within a bounded instability. He maintains that it is just at the edge (or boundary) that creative ideas are generated, that is, at the point where the system might disintegrate into chaos. Put simply, there is a space between what Stacey refers to as group ossification (the stable zone) and psychotic fantasy (the unstable zone) where creativity becomes possible. However, the anxiety generated by the creativity needs to be contained. Stacey (1996) states that ‘in the space for novelty a group of people is both stable and unstable at the same time’ (p. 174) and that the
Working with what is there

presence of this paradox is essential if a social system is to operate effectively at the edge of chaos.

In the Stacey model, the containment of anxiety in a manner that allows creativity to emerge is achieved through a number of mechanisms. The first relates to the nature of the relationships between the elements of the system. Trusting, compassionate and empathetic relatedness between group members supports the containment of anxiety and remaining on the edge of chaos. Secondly, if the members of the group jointly reflect upon themselves as a system, the resultant learning contains anxiety. Finally, the exercise of leadership that avoids authoritarianism assists in containing the anxiety.

In summary, the concepts of container and contained go hand in hand and relate to what is contained within the container. Effective containment is about ‘holding’ the group and the emotions or anxiety within the group and through repeated experiences of safety and support, the group learns to transform its emotions into constructive energy for creativity.

**Task and task systems**

In its simplest form, the idea of primary task is that which an organisation must undertake to be what it says it is. Chapman (1999) extends the work of Rice and others by defining the primary task of an organisation as ‘that one thing the system needs to do in order to survive as itself’ (p. 130). A bakery must bake, a smelter must smelt metals and a farmer must engage in some form of agriculture. Bion (1961) held that every group meets to do something, that is, carry out a task. Understanding how a group, organisation or system carries out its task, how it feels about the task and how it organises itself to carry out its task is key to understanding organisations and as such, is a critical concept in the theory and practice of systems psychodynamics. Because a group or organisation comes together primarily to carry out a task, the idea of task is intrinsic to the definition of any group.

Long (2000) is of the view that the dynamics of task are best understood by focusing on how role holders carry out and experience their tasks in the wider work system. Task starts off as an idea about what might be done and in the doing of it, becomes a realisation. Tasks can be conscious or unconscious, can be experienced as present or absent, can be loved or hated, can be rewarding or persecutory and the carrying out of tasks may in themselves provoke anxiety in the role holder or the whole task system. Tasks change over time and may need to
be re-negotiated. Discovering the value of the task says Long, (2000) ‘comes through a careful
process of engaging with the task and encountering the meanings it has held over the years’
(p. 92). It is only by close examination of our “doing, thinking and feeling” a task can we
understand its value.

Some of the importance of task in an organisational context lies in its capacity to raise anxiety
in the person or organisation responsible for its execution. Long suggests that the doing of
every task raises some anxiety (Long, 2000). In her classic paper on social defences against
anxiety, Menzies (1975) describes a situation where carrying out the primary task in a British
hospital arouses very strong feelings. In this case, the anxiety is attributed to the proximity of
the objective elements of the task (that is the actual physical patient care) to the fantasies held
by people carrying out the task. The carrying out of the task stimulated the early fantasy
situations and re-activated their accompanying emotions.

Task itself is enacted within a wider systems context, i.e the task and sentient systems within
an organisation which Miller and Rice (1990) define as:

‘…a task system…[is] …the system of activities…required to complete the process of transforming an intake
into an output…plus the human and physical resources required to perform the activities. A sentient system
or group is one that “demands and receives loyalty from its members”. “An effective sentient system relates
members of an enterprise to each other and to the enterprise in ways that are relevant to the skill and
experience required for task performance”; it also provides its members with some defence against anxiety’
(p.259).

Put simply, the task system is concerned with accomplishing the work objective of the
organisation and is comprised of all of the elements in a workplace that support the
achievement of the task including structures, processes and procedures, technology and
human resources. The sentient system is concerned with the social processes within an
organisation and includes symbols, meanings, attitudes, beliefs etc. (Krantz, & Maltz,1997).
The sentient system determines how much a person is prepared to commit themselves to the
task and the organisation and is the place from whence they draw their emotional support in
the carrying out of the task. These two systems have boundaries and exist alongside each
other and in some cases overlap. It is not necessary for the two systems to be closely aligned
for the individual to carry out their task although some degree of alignment increases
commitment to task. Too tight an alignment of the two systems however, can make the
introduction of organisational change difficult because of a reluctance to withdraw sentience from the parts of the system that need to be dispensed with (Miller & Rice, 1990).

In an extension to the thinking about task, Chapman (1999) focuses on what happens in organisations when task is ‘voided, transformed, hated or corrupted’ (p.127). As Chapman points out, task avoidance usually takes place at an unconscious level in the system. Chapman suggests that task can become hated when:

‘...the task is itself hateable... where a dysfunctionality in the personality or personal history of the doer links with a characteristic of the task itself to produce hatred ... [and]... where the task has become corrupted to the point of impossibility’ (pp.139-142).

Chapman (1999) concludes, by way of working hypotheses, that task hatred and corruption may be more common than we believe, that task corruption ultimately leads to the corruption of the role holder and motivations for task corruption are strong and will be well defended. Further, dealing with task corruption requires acknowledging and working with task hatred and this is the responsibility of organisational leaders.

Building on the work of Long, Potter (2006) examines the impact of an ambiguous or absent task idea on an organisation. He describes a situation where the absence of a unifying task idea (the absence of which was unable to be worked with) resulted in projective and persecutory relationships and:

‘...the manifestation and enactment of splits at a number of levels: between strategic vision and reality; between leadership and management; between the Executive Director and the Executive; between Executive members between field staff and the Executive (or head office); between departments or groups; and within groups’ (p.56).

Sometimes the absence of a primary task (or multiple tasks in some cases) or a unifying task idea haunts an organisation, suggests Long (2000), as something that might have been, or had been in the past, resulting in a loss of organisational identity.

In summary, the idea and realisation of task is fundamental to an organisation’s survival. Understanding how a system organises itself around the carrying out of its primary and associated tasks is a useful strategy for understanding organisational dynamics. Task is best
understood by studying how an organisation engages with its task, how it is experienced and what it has come to mean. It is important to recognise that a task can have a number of dimensions including absence and presence and is associated with both the task and sentient systems within an organisation. Task can be experienced as rewarding or persecutory and can be loved or hated. It is important too to recognise that task can become corrupted, that the carrying out of a task generates anxiety in the work system and that an absent or ambiguous task idea results in a loss of identity and unifying mechanism in an organisation.

**Role and organisations**

Throughout our lives we each of us hold many roles; some permanent and some temporary. We are variously mothers, sisters, daughters, employers and employees and students at different points in our lives and sometimes we hold many of these roles at the same time. While our family roles are permanent, our roles in the workplace are temporary. When we no longer hold a workplace role, we are no longer part of the organisation (Borwick, 2006). It is with workplace roles that this thesis is primarily concerned, although many of the same principles apply to roles we take up in other parts of our lives (Reed, 1988).

Role is a significant concept within systems psychodynamics and is closely aligned to the idea of task. In an organisational context, it is the role holder whose endeavours are directed towards realisation of the system task. Reed and Bazalgette (2006) define role as a ‘mental regulating principal, based on a person’s lived experience of the complex interaction of feelings, ideas and motivations, aroused in working to the aim of a system, integrated consciously and unconsciously and expressed in purposive behaviour’ (p. 45). Role is that dynamic place where the individual and the system intersect.

Reed and Bazalgette (2006) suggest that to understand the idea of role in the workplace, one must think about it from the perspective of the person, the system and the context within which the role is located. They explain this in terms of the psychological (or subjective), the sociological and the contextual aspects of role. Many of us commence in a new role with a position description. This is not role. Position descriptions are our first encounter with the system’s conscious expectations of us in role through a brief description of the purpose of the role, its key accountabilities and the necessary qualifications required from the incumbent including functional experience, knowledge and skills and personal qualities. As the role holder, the person brings their beliefs, wishes and feelings about the role and the ‘necessary
knowledge and skills to do the work and a grasp of the task of the system and an appreciation of the other conditions such as available resources and the state of the environment’ (Reed, 1988 p. 1). This is not role but it is a beginning. The psychological aspects of role come about as the role holder ‘constructs a set of behavioural patterns so that [the person] can act on the situation to achieve a desired goal’ (Reed, 1988 p.1).

The sociological aspects on the other hand, are expressed as the expectations of the person in role by the other role holders in the system; the ‘boss’, the colleagues and the customers for example. The contextual aspects include the internal environment and the ‘external, social, political and economic conditions’ (Reed, 1988 p.1). Reed and Bazelgette (2006) suggest that the sociological and contextual elements influence the way the person defines the role but that ultimately it is the person who finds, makes and takes the role.

The person-in-role is a representation of the integration of the person and the system. Reed and Bazelgette (2006) refer to this as the ‘taking up’ of a role which implies ‘a regulating principle inside oneself which enables one, as a person to manage one’s behaviour in relation to what needs to be done to further the purpose of the system within which the role is to be taken (p. 46). They go on to say that a role is taken up as the person:

‘...identifies the aim of the system they belong to; relates their own desire to that aim; takes ownership of the aim as a member of the system; [and] chooses the action and personal behaviour which from their position best contributes to achieving the system’s aim’ (p. 49).

The concept of role is a very powerful tool to assist in the understanding of organisations. Examining organisations from the perspective of role allows us to use the intersection of the person and the system to understand how the one impacts on the other. Krantz and Maltz (1997) say that:

‘Roles have conscious as well as unconscious components, they have informal as well as formal features, they have symbolic meaning that shapes the attributions and projections through which others decode the meaning of an individual’s behaviour. There are always a range of discrepancies among official roles, the roles individuals are called upon to play, and the roles people actively assume. We know that the role one "plays" exerts a powerful effect on one’s sense of self and that people “take up” and perform the tasks and duties associated with their roles in different ways, with often vastly different consequences’ (p.141).
Krantz and Maltz (1997) put forward a framework that thinks about how a role is authorised, which assists in understanding its complexity. Their framework comprises two components i.e. how a role is ‘taken’ and how a role is ‘given’ and how these two dimensions pertain to the task and sentient systems. They state that the way in which a role holder internalises, interprets and enacts a role is the way a role is ‘taken’. A role is ‘given’ on the basis of how the ‘role influencers’ define the role. These two aspects together constitute a role’s authority. Authority in role can be formal i.e. given by the system, or informal i.e. self-authorised or taken.

It might be useful at this point to draw upon my recent experience in role to help explain these concepts. Approximately twelve months ago I took up a new position in a small business unit in the Department of Justice. The position had been offered to me following my expression of a desire to move out of the court environment. As such, the role had not been clearly defined at the outset. At the time of my commencement I was given a number of tasks to undertake and several months later I developed my position description. Over the last six months or so I have become very aware of the fact that I have been given no new projects by the system but that I have authorised myself to take on a range of new projects (or tasks) that fit with the way I have conceptualised my role and the way I think it should be enacted to meet the needs of the system. The system has authorised me to do that.

This arrangement has never been formally agreed but is either unconsciously or informally endorsed through the performance management process. During the early months I was conscious of having to find myself in role and seeking to understand my role boundaries. It surprised me to discover that in essence, the boundaries are largely where I chose to define them and the system allows me an enormous amount of latitude in terms of what I do and how I do it.

In line with Krantz and Maltz’s (1997) framework, I understand the task system largely because of my skill and knowledge base and a deep understanding of the primary task of the organisation. I have also learnt to interpret and integrate the sentient system and how to locate my role within both systems. While this experience suits my way of working and my capacity to self-authorise, it is easy to understand how the role might be different for someone else.

In the context of this research, the ideal of role will be important for a number of reasons. I did of course have to find, make and take my role as researcher which was complicated by my
being an insider researcher and my continuing to hold my workplace role. The holding of multiple roles and insider researching will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

To summarise, role is closely linked to the idea of task and is a social construct comprised of psychological, sociological and contextual dimensions. While the sociological and contextual dimensions influence the enactment of role, it is ultimately the role holder, the individual who defines the role by finding, making and taking it. Role is a very powerful tool in assisting the understanding of organisations because it is the place where the person and the system intersect. Authority in role is derived from that given by the system and the extent to which the person authorises themselves. Understanding how roles are authorised assists us in understanding the complexity of roles and organisations.

Social defences and anxiety
Elliott Jaques (1955) is attributed with the development of a working hypothesis that underpins the idea that social defences were used to protect against the ‘recurrence of the early paranoid and depressive anxieties’ (p. 478). Despite later reviewing his ideas, what Jaques did was join the idea of social behaviour with that of defending against anxiety and in so doing, illustrated ‘how the mechanisms of projective and introjective identification operate in linking individual and social behaviour’ (p. 478).

Based on a case study carried out with the Glacier Metal Company over many years, Jaques’ (1955) fundamental proposition was that:

‘...one of the primary dynamic forces pulling individuals into institutionalized human association is that of defence against paranoid and depressive anxiety; and conversely, that all institutions are unconsciously used by their members as mechanisms of defence against these psychotic anxieties’ (p. 496).

In 1955, Jaques concluded that if his working hypothesis was valid, two conclusions could be drawn. The first was that observation of social processes in an organisation may lead to a means of studying ‘the operation of paranoid and depressive anxieties and the defences built up against them’ (p. 498). The second was that implementing change effectively in an organisation required an analysis and understanding of ‘the common anxieties and unconscious collusions underlying the social defences determining phantasy social
relationships’ (p. 498). This seminal work laid the groundwork for others and formed the basis of what is known today as the social defences theory.

Menzies (1975), building on the work of Jaques, describes a number of defensive techniques used to defend against the anxiety generated by the task of primary care in a British hospital. Menzies suggests that ‘socially structured defense mechanisms appear as elements in the structure, culture and mode of functioning of [an] organization’ (p. 288). Further, Menzies was of the view that:

‘...a social defense system develops over time as the result of collusive interaction and agreement, often unconscious, between members of the organization as to what form it shall take. The socially constructed defense mechanisms then tend to become an aspect of external reality with which old and new members of the institution must come to terms’ (p. 288)

See Menzies (1975) for a full description of the defensive techniques, but in essence she describes them as:

‘Splitting up the nurse-patient relationship; depersonalisation, categorisation and denial of the significance of the individual; detachment and denial of feelings; the attempt to eliminate decisions by ritual task-performance; reducing the weight of responsibility in decision-making by checks and counter-checks; collusive social redistribution of responsibility and irresponsibility; purposeful obscurity in the formal distribution of responsibility; the reduction of the impact of responsibility by delegation to superiors; idealization and underestimation of personal development possibilities; and avoidance of change’ (p. 288-297).

Menzies (1975) concludes that the success of an organisation is intimately connected to the types of techniques it uses to defend against anxiety. She also supports the earlier propositions of Bion and Jaques that it is possible to use this aspect of a social system as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool for facilitating social change.

Over the intervening years, the idea that the members of an organisation can unconsciously collude to act to defend against anxiety has moved from a working hypothesis to theory status (Long, 2006) that has significantly informed the work of researchers and practitioners in the psychoanalytical tradition. More recently however, Long (2006) has suggested that the social defence theory needs to ‘move more fully into a broader social analysis if substantial social change is to be achieved’ (p. 294).
Having examined the evolution from hypothesis to theory over the last 10-15 years, Long (2006) supports the view that social defence theory provides a useful tool to help us understand why it is often difficult to effect change in organisations. Importantly she points out that ‘the critical point … is that social defences are not only intrapsychic structures shared by different covalent individuals as first delineated by Jaques and Menzies. They enter the social structure in more pervasive ways’ (Long, 2006 p. 285-286). From this perspective Long then goes on to expand the social defences theory by bringing in the ideas of intersubjectivity (drawing on the work of Hegel and Winnicott) and what she refers to as the community-level system. Extending the traditional social defences thinking, Long (2006) hypothesises that:

‘…social defences may operate when people feel their subjectivity under threat: when the role of “community member” is threatened. This may be through not having an authentic voice in the organisation or by going unrecognised in work or endeavour; through being used instrumentally or perversely. Examples of such a defence would be the assumption of a false self within the corporation; the taking on of a role that stands in opposition of one’s beliefs and values, and hence being conflicted; the following of narcissistic pathways that reject or deny the group through basic Assumption Me’ (p. 288).

In essence, Long’s hypothesis is that if our subjectivity is not recognised in a system or we are not invited to take up our roles at the community-system level, social defences will operate because subjectivity is under threat.

Looking around the court system at the time of reading much of the social defences material left me in little doubt about the existence of this phenomena. Difficulties being experienced in the Coroner’s Court at the time could be understood in the context of needing to defend against the abhorrent primary task of this part of the system. However, the idea that social defences are maladaptive and work against the service of task must be balanced by the idea that when adaptive and constructive, they are an essential element in organisations being able to carry out their primary task.

Both Jaques and Menzies-Lyth wrote about social defences from two perspectives. Mnguni (2008) reminds us that Jaques talks about containing task related anxiety in order to enable the creative aspects of task and that Menzies-Lyth considered ‘social defenses to be a double-edged sword in that they both permit the continuing performance of the primary task, while simultaneously, contributing to inefficiency’ (p. 39). As one of my doctoral colleagues said recently, ‘if we didn't defend ourselves we would all be in a screaming heap on the floor’. It is
primarily when these defences mitigate against the achievement of task that they become a problem.

**Relationship and relatedness**

Closely linked to the idea of role are those of relationship and relatedness. Reed (1988) refers to relationships in terms of how we relate to people on a personal level and how we feel about them regardless of ‘context, position and background’ (p. 13). Relatedness on the other hand refers to recognising that people can have a connectedness to someone in terms of the roles they hold in organisations or groups. It has nothing to do with liking someone on an interpersonal level (although the two are not mutually exclusive) but rather both belonging to the same system through role. The distinction between relationship and relatedness is important for this study because of the need to consider any possible tension between my pre-existing relationships with some of the people taking part in the research and role relatedness with everyone in relation to my workplace and research roles (Newton, 2005).

Gould, Ebers and McVicker Clinchy (1999) make a very clear distinction between the two concepts in their work in a joint venture between three major robotics enterprises. They provide a case example where the quality of the relationship and the relatedness were quite different. The nature of the relatedness manifested itself as dark feelings of persecutory anxiety, paranoia beliefs and ambivalence whereas some of the relationships were underpinned by feelings of professional respect and admiration which attenuated some of the darker aspects of the quality of the relatedness. It was the prevailing negative impact of the nature of the relatedness that threatened the success of the alliance.

Role relatedness is a central issue to all collaborative work. It is at the level of role where the collaboration necessarily takes place. At the group level of analysis, when considering relatedness in the context of a collaboration between industry partners, Long and Newton (1997) draw on the work of Bion when utilising a typology of relatedness taken originally from biology, to examine the nature of the relatedness between the partners in their research. Long and Newton (1997), following Bion, refer to three types of relatedness:

‘... commensal, parasitic and symbiotic. Commensal relations allow the two entities to develop alongside one another, perhaps sharing some aspect of the environment or the relationship but basically leaving each other alone. Parasitic relations involve one entity subsuming the other in both an instrumental and destructive'
manner. Symbiotic relations indicate the possibility for creative development of both entities. Each forms part of the environment of the other in such a way that mutual benefit can be derived. Together they form a micro-climate, beneficial to both’ (p. 19).

This typology provides a useful framework to think about relatedness and collaboration at the same time which brings me back to my earlier view that relatedness is central to collaboration. It seems that relatedness and not relationship supports the early and ongoing development of collaboration but once collaboration becomes the preferred mode of operation, it feels more like relationship.

Potential Space
The final concept to be considered is that of potential space. Winnicott developed the idea of potential space as part of his work on infant development. He described it as the ‘third space’ between the infant and its environment: a place of experience and for play and creativity (St. Clair, 1986; Young, Undated). Winnicott (2002) described potential space as:

‘The interplay of mother and baby gives an area that could be called common ground... the no-man's-land that is each man's land, the place where the secret is, the potential space which may become a transitional object, the symbol of trust and of union between baby and mother, a union which involves no interpretation’ (p. 77).

The ideas of playing, creativity and potential space were inextricably linked in Winnicott’s theory and practice (Amado, 2009). He believed that play and cultural experience took place within the potential space and that ‘it is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and is it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self’ (p. 76). It is within this potential space that individual development takes place.

While Winnicott (1971) originally conceived of potential space and play in the context of infant development, he utilised the concept as an integral part of his psychoanalytic work with patients. He held as a general principle, the view that work with patients was carried out in the overlapping play areas of the patient and the therapist (Long, 1992). He believed that ‘playing is essential [in] that it is in playing that the patient is being creative’ (p. 75).
Of particular relevance to this thesis is the fact that Winnicott’s idea of potential space has not only endured but been taken up and adapted by those studying and working with groups and organisations. Amado (2009) notes that the idea of potential space has been difficult to integrate into psychoanalytic theory because it is ‘neither an object nor an agency’ nor does it ‘appear as a completely stable and independent notion’ (p. 16) Amado believes that these factors have led to potential space sometimes being referred to by other names, including ‘transitional space’, the ‘intermediate area’ or the ‘third area’ for example.

In the organisational, context potential space is essential to the development of innovative thinking which is thought to be similar to the play of a child exploring its environment and trying out new possibilities. Amado and Ambrose (2001) believe that this innovative thinking is a process of discovering how old and new possibilities can be integrated. They state that:

‘Potential space is that space, in the minds of those who play, within which they still feel able to exercise freedom to explore in thought and act. It is a space in which their perceptions, imaginations, even illusions can mingle kaleidoscopically, in which new meanings and action possibilities can be stumbled upon almost accidentally, in which quantum leaps can be made, and in which the ownership of ideas – their own or other people’s – is not an issue’ (p. 21).

In organisations, potential spaces can be either spontaneous or designed (Amado, 2009). Spontaneous potential spaces are said to be those ‘which fulfil a transitional function without a planned purpose’ (Amado, 2009 p. 22). Designed potential spaces are constructed deliberately to provide a place within which a group or organisation can reflect on its task and find new and creative ways of working. When considering working with potential space with individuals, groups and organisations Long (1992) gives an example of a manager who, despite resistance from other ‘hard-headed men’, was over time able to establish a space where ‘the group developed their own shared potential space where ideas about their work emerged and new creative ways of working were developed’ (p. 72).

Summary
This chapter commenced with the examination of the theoretical perspectives that underpin this thesis. It examined the emergence of systems psychodynamics as a theory that grew out of the conjunction of psychoanalytical, group relations and open systems thinking. The contribution of each of these perspectives was examined and was then followed by a description of the way that systems psychodynamics can be applied in organisational and research contexts. A
number of fundamental assumptions were discussed and the chapter concludes with an examination of a number of key concepts as they relate to this thesis. These included transference and counter transference, regression, boundaries, containment, task, role, social defences theory, relationship and relatedness and potential space. The next chapter will explore some of the collaboration literature.
Chapter 4
Theoretical Concepts II
Collaboration

This chapter examines some of the theoretical aspects of collaboration. It commences by defining collaboration and inter-agency collaboration and then moves on to look at the differences between simple and complex collaboration. Then follows an examination of some of the theories, models and frameworks that are said to explain and facilitate inter-agency collaboration. Each of the different perspectives is assessed in terms of its ability to answer the original research questions and its capacity to further understanding of the collaborative process. The chapter then moves to take up the position that the collaboration literature goes only some way towards answering the research questions and it is not until the collaboration and systems psychodynamic perspectives are linked that answers are likely. It concludes by setting out why the systems psychodynamic perspective is ideally placed to study and explain inter-agency collaboration. A summary of the theories and their capacity to answer the research questions can be found in tabular form at page 104.

The literature selected for review in this chapter represents much of what I read as part of my early search for an understanding of what happens when two organisations come together to work on a joint task. Examining a selection of the collaboration literature in terms of models or frameworks was chosen as a way to manage the enormity of the collaboration literature. I have already foreshadowed, when earlier providing information about myself as researcher, (see p. 5) that I have a preference for working from the systems psychodynamic orientation. I am aware that because of this preference I will be more or less critical of any model or framework that does not at least try and take into account some of the key systems psychodynamic concepts into its thinking. That is my bias. I have however attempted to represent a range of models and frameworks that examine collaboration from a number of perspectives and in so doing, introduce a number of ways to think about inter-agency collaboration and how to facilitate good collaborative relationships.
Defining collaboration

The Macquarie dictionary (1985) defines collaboration as ‘1. To work; one with another; cooperate, as in a literary work. 2. To cooperate treacherously: collaborating with the Nazis’ (p. 368). This thesis seeks to deal with the constructively cooperative component of collaboration, rather than collusion but as will be demonstrated in later chapters, even if not cooperating with the enemy, positive collaboration sometimes feels like it has a dark side.

Collaborative relationships can take many forms including strategic alliances, networks, joint ventures and partnerships (Schruijer and Vansi na, 2008) and they can take place across a range of sectors. These include for example, collaborations between private sector organisations, public private partnerships, joined up government projects and government working in partnership with the not-for-profit sector. The proliferation of collaboration in the UK is well documented (Huxham & Vangen, 2005).

Increasingly, the problems or issues confronting organisations cannot be addressed by focussing collaborative efforts only within organisations as was often the case in the past. Systems issues, external pressures, globalisation and advances in technology all mean that the problems faced by organisations today cannot be solved by individual organisations alone (Gray Gricar, 1981; Mankin, Cohen & Fitzgerald, 2004). Organisations increasingly need to work together to achieve desired outcomes. This increased inter-dependence has generated a need to focus on collaboration between organisations.

Defining inter-agency collaboration

In attempting to define inter-agency collaboration, I found a definition of inter-group collaboration was a useful place to start. Zagier Roberts (2004) defines inter-group collaboration as the place ‘where two or more groups of people come to work together because of their membership in other groups or institutions whose tasks overlap’ (p. 191). The key element of this definition in relation to my research is ‘groups of people working together, because of their membership in other groups or institutions and working on overlapping tasks’.

In expanding on this definition, Zagier Roberts (2004) attends to two important elements of inter-group collaboration. The first is that of dual membership whereby in the early days at least, group members belong both to their original or what Zagier Roberts (2004) refers to as their ‘home group’ and to the new collaborative group. The difficulties associated with dual
membership provide one of the early challenges to any new collaboration and must be managed carefully in order to avoid the sometimes competing demands of the two groups. The second element is the emergence of a new group that forms around the overlapping task as the task takes on increased meaning and importance. As the new group begins to emerge, the allegiances of group members often shift from the home group to the collaborative group as they begin to develop shared values.

A second useful definition was that offered by Gray (1989) in referring to multi-party collaboration. According to Gray (1989) multi-party collaboration is ‘a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain’ (p. 227). Gray maintains that inter-group characteristics are predominant in collaborations and that there are five characteristics of multi-party systems which include: independent stakeholders; solutions that emerge out of differences; decisions that are jointly owned; collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain that is assumed by the stakeholders; and, collaboration is an emergent process.

The distinction between the terms inter-group, inter-agency and multi-party or multi-agency in the context of collaboration can I think, be considered a matter of degree. While inter-group may refer to collaboration between groups from different organisations it may also be used to talk about collaboration between groups within the same organisation. Inter-agency collaboration on the other hand is more clearly referring to collaboration between groups from different organisations; agency in this context referring to a commercial or other organisation carrying out some function (Macquarie, 1985). While inter-agency can be used to refer to action between or among any number of agents greater than one, I am using it here in the context of two agencies. I am doing so to distinguish if from multi-party or multi-agency collaboration that is commonly used to refer to collaboration between many different organisations (Stiles & Williams, 2004; Prins, 2001); that is greater than two. For the purposes of my research I have drawn on other’s definitions to define inter-agency collaboration as two groups of people from different organisations coming together expressly to work together on a joint task. The key elements of this definition are 1) two groups 2) from different organisations, 3) coming together expressly to work together 4) on a joint task. This definition best describes the process that took place between the two organisations described in this thesis.
Simple or complex collaboration

Mankin, Cohen and Fitzgerald (2004) point out that ‘people have worked together since the beginnings of human time’ (p. 1) and that traditional forms of collaboration have been in place for centuries; serving, for example, both pyramid builders and machine operators working in a plant equally well. They argue however, that because of changes to technology, the nature of work and market places, traditional forms of collaboration are no longer sufficient and a much more complex form of collaboration is necessary.

When seeking to develop a set of principles that can ‘create collaborations that can address the business challenges of the new global economy’ (p. 2) Mankin et al (2004) distinguish between what they refer to as simple and complex collaboration. They distinguish the two on the basis of task, people, differences, goals and whether the interaction is face to face or virtual. In essence they say that the more ambiguous the task, the more people involved, the more diverse the people or organisations involved, the more divergent the goals and the less direct the interaction, the more complex the collaboration. Their distinction between simple and complex collaboration is set out below in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIMPLE</th>
<th>COMPLEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well-defined task (predictable inputs, well defined procedures, low uncertainty)</td>
<td>high task uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two people</td>
<td>multiple people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much in common (language, goals, organisations etc.)</td>
<td>diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>common goals</td>
<td>different goals and agendas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>face to face</td>
<td>virtual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Simple versus complex collaboration


Principles for complex collaboration

Mankin et al (2004) then describe what they refer to as a set of principles that can be used to design complex collaborations regardless of the form the collaboration might take. They start at the organisational level with shared goals and complementary capabilities which they say are the ‘magnetic forces’ that pull the organisations together and provide the reason for the collaboration. Also, at the organisational level are compatible cultures which are underpinned
by a bias for performance and mutual respect and trust, all of which act as the ‘glue that keeps them together’. These are followed by the ‘factors that propel them forward’ which include high level management support, access to resources and prior experience with complex collaboration.

Next is the structural level, which contains three categories of principles, although Mankin et al (2004) point out that these categories do not follow the same clear logic as the organisational principles. The formal roles, task, expectations and understandings category focuses on role responsibility and relationships and contains charter and formally defined liaison roles as subsets. The second category is special governance and authority structures which encompasses representation by all entities, simplicity and clarity and clear decision authority as general rules of thumb. The final category in this level relates to information and performance metrics and information technology and systems based on the idea that ‘complex collaborations require more information…to manage the uncertainty and make these projects more manageable’ (p. 14).

Mankin et al (2004) maintain that at their next level, that is people and their interrelationships, the principles are ‘few, straightforward and very basic’ (p. 14) and they are synonymous with ‘good relationships among competent people in the right roles’ (p. 15). The principles relate to liaison roles and collaborating pairs and lateral skills.

The final level relates to the collaborative process itself and focuses on the design and implementation of complex collaborations. The principles start with establishing the collaborative process by focussing on facilitative but flexible leadership and communication that is frequent among participants and external stakeholders and preferably face to face. In establishing collaboration it is also necessary to overcome time, distance and cultural boundaries through attitudes, expectations and norms based on mutual respect and communication norms.

Once the collaboration is underway, it is important to ensure formal and informal learning processes are in place to monitor progress and identify improvement opportunities directed towards adaptable goals and plans and build on the utility of early wins. The final principle at this level is that of fun and playfulness. Mankin et al (2004) indicate that this principle is difficult
Working with what is there

to grasp but suggest that good collaboration brings intrinsic pleasure and that ‘fun is a by product of...successful efforts’ (p. 23).

These principles provide a comprehensive coverage of many of the aspects of collaboration, however, even Mankin et al (2004) acknowledges that it might be overly detailed for those beginning the collaborative journey and distil their work to a ‘meta-principle which underlies and integrates the basic principles’ (p. 23). The interdependence between structure and relationships is they say, the key to implementing any collaboration no matter what shape it takes or the circumstances.

Despite containing a very comprehensive number of elements, the Mankin et al (2004) framework is fundamentally a management guide to collaboration and misses some important considerations. It does not for example, pay sufficient attention to the need to work across boundaries: surely one of the defining features of all collaborations. It pays only scant attention to role boundaries and the boundaries between collaborating organisations or divisions within organisations and does not consider at all, the boundaries between the collaboration and the wider system within which the collaboration is taking place.

In considering the emergence of flexible and “boundaryless” organisations, Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1992) point out the importance of boundaries. They suggest that when traditional boundaries are removed, as is the case in any collaboration, new boundaries need to be developed. They suggest that:

‘...just because work roles are no longer defined by the formal organizational structure doesn’t mean that differences in authority, skill, talent, and perspective simply disappear. Rather, these differences present both managers and employees with an added challenge. Everyone in a company now must figure out what kind of roles they need to play and what kind of relationships they need to maintain in order to use those differences effectively in productive work’ (p. 105).

Mankin et al (2004) maintain that the people and their inter-relationships are fundamental to successful collaboration however, beyond the liaison roles and collaborating pairs principle (which in themselves are useful concepts) their framework does not pay any attention to what is happening at the individual, group or system level dynamic.
Finally, Beyerlein, Johnson and Beyerlien (2004) state that ‘complex collaboration represents dynamic complex systems...[that have]...special vulnerabilities that increase the likelihood of system failure’ (p. xvi) but the Mankin et al framework does not account for the dynamic complexity and seems to suggest that if, at the beginning of a collaboration, you follow the prescriptive steps they give, the collaboration will be successful. It does not account for the possibility of failure and how to avoid it or what might be done if a collaboration is going off the rails.

**Representativeness and complexity**

One of the factors that add to the complexity of collaborative endeavours overlooked by Mankin, Cohen and Fitzgerald (2004) is that of representativeness. Prins (2006) argues that all collaborations are comprised of representatives ‘who speak’ for their constituencies and are faced with a dilemma as a consequence. Huxham and Vangen (2005) suggest that ‘confusion stems from ambiguity about whether the members of a collaboration are the individuals who work together in a collaborative group, or the organizations that they represent’ (p. 129). They argue that when thinking about this dilemma, people tend to hold both conceptualisations in mind but there is an assumption that the ‘individuals are usually representing something beyond their own self-interest when they participate in a collaboration’ (p. 130). Despite this being the case, it is sometimes believed that it is the individuals themselves who are seen as critical to the success of a collaboration. Huxham and Vangen (2005) believe that the ambiguity arises out of the idea that members are likely to sit at different places on a continuum where, on the one hand, members are collaborating in their own capacity and their organisation is not interested or at the other extreme, where the organisation is fully involved and the individual is an authorised representative of the organisation.

**Collaborative motivation**

In light of the background of the case study underpinning this thesis and the involuntary nature of the motivation of both parties to collaborate, it is important to explore some of the factors relating to collaborative motivation. Stiles and Williams (2004) examined the impact of collaborative motivation on the effectiveness of complex multi-agency collaborations in the United Kingdom. They focused particularly upon collaborations between health boards and trusts, local authorities and statutory, voluntary and private sector stakeholders. After reviewing the literature to identify the key drivers of motivation, the authors apply an investigative framework to determine the extent to which these key drivers influence the success or failure of
the collaborative relationships and finally use the framework in two case studies to inform their conclusions.

Stiles and Williams (2004) employ Olivers' model of critical contingencies for inter-organisational relationship forming as a basis for developing their framework for comparing motivational factors. Oliver lists the contingencies as necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability and legitimacy. Having applied this framework to existing theoretical and empirical research on collaboration, the authors conclude that ‘a number of factors are influential in driving motivation within both private and public sector organisations’ (Stiles & Williams, 2004 p. 91) and ‘that multi-agency collaboration is subject to a highly complex number of drivers which can influence either success or ultimate failure of the relationship if the interface is not managed effectively’ (Stiles & Williams, 2004 p. 93). They also suggest that different motivations have profound impacts on collaboration and that relationship forming is often based upon multiple contingencies.

Of particular interest to the present case study is the motivational impact of necessity or mandated cooperation on the process and outcome of collaborative endeavours. The necessity contingency is said to relate to the need to respond to stakeholder demands and in the public sector environment this is ‘instigated by government as a key stakeholder, and operationalised through mandate in an effort to improve efficiency of operation and meet need’ (Stiles & Williams, 2004 p. 92). The CISP case study is similar to the two examined by Stiles and Williams in that there was little alternative to working together to implement the program and the two parties were required to work together out of a necessity imposed by wider system structures.

Sitting alongside this, and maybe acting as an even more powerful motivational driver is what Stiles and Williams (2004), using Oliver's model, refer to as reciprocity or mutual interest and benefit. In the CISP case study, people in both the court and the department had separate but never-the-less longstanding and deep commitments to trying to find solutions to entrenched social problems that underpin criminal behaviour like drug and alcohol misuse and mental illness for example. Despite being reluctant about having to work together as a function of the wider system requirements, it may be that the reciprocity contingency or a deeply held mutual interest was the strong driving force in our collaboration that the authors believe it to be.
The asymmetry contingency is defined in terms of the power one partner exercises over the other through domination or the control of resources. There is no discernable evidence that power or control were motivating factors in the CISP collaboration and in reality the fear of losing judicial independence inclined the court to wish to not collaborate had there been an alternative means of achieving the expansion of the problem solving initiatives within the court.

On the other hand, it may be that the efficiency contingency did have an unrecognised influence on at least one of the two organisations willingness to work together. The efficiency contingency is said to be related to cost reduction and economies of scale in both the private and public sectors but is more likely to be balanced against social value in the public sector as opposed to bottom line returns in the private sector. The court was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to obtain additional funds to expand their problem solving initiatives, whereas the department was motivated by a desire to restructure and integrate these initiatives in such a way that made them more streamlined and accessible to defendants. The department recognised from the beginning however, that it could not achieve this outcome without the cooperation of the court. It might be argued that the department at least in part, was motivated by the efficiency contingency but was reluctant to openly admit this in the early days of the collaboration in light of the courts heavy emotional investment in these programs. It was felt that to admit to this motivation would reinforce the view held in some parts of the court that the department wanted to take the problem solving initiatives over and push the court into becoming an even more reluctant collaborator.

The stability contingency relates to the need to reduce environmental uncertainty which Oliver (cited in Stiles and Williams, 2004 p. 93) says ‘is generated by resource scarcity and by a lack of perfect knowledge about environmental fluctuations, availability of exchange partners, and available rates of exchange in an interorganisational field’. It could be argued that the court was motivated to work with the department to ensure the stability of funds to support and expand the problem solving initiatives albeit at a cost to its own perceptions of independence and control.

Finally, in the public sector, the legitimacy contingency is said by Stiles and Williams (2004) to have a strong social element where an agency ‘seeks to add social value as its main purpose...[and]... legitimacy in terms of having the skill and prestige to provide increasingly complex service offerings’ (p. 93). There is no evidence that this was a motivational factor for
either the court or the department. The court had already established itself as a legitimate player in the problem solving arena and social value is the raison d’etre for the department.

Even briefly applying Oliver’s critical contingencies to the CISP case study supports the proposition put forward by Stiles and Williams, that the willingness to participate in an inter-agency collaboration can be influenced by multiple and complex factors that differ for each agency.

**Collaborative Capability**

Schreiner and Corsten (2004) have an interest in the social and affective aspects of collaborative relationships and have developed a multi-dimensional construct of collaborative capability ‘which integrates structural, cognitive and affective dimensions’ (p.126). They argue that despite the growth in research on collaborative relationships in recent decades and the strongly held view expressed in much of that research that capability for collaboration is an indicator for success, research examining capability for collaboration is limited. In an attempt to deepen the understanding of the phenomena, they employed a qualitative approach based on grounded theory to examine collaborative efforts in the software service industry. A diagrammatic representation of the findings follows at Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Structural Capabilities</th>
<th>Cognitive Capabilities</th>
<th>Affective Capabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Components</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Absorption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Empathising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Infusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4 Collaborative Capabilities**

*Source: Schreiner, M & Corsten, D (2004)*

Structural capabilities are said to include resource dedication and coordination components. The dedication of management time, resources to enhance partnership skills and competencies and the incremental accumulation of investment into resources all characterised the resource dedication component. It is interesting to note the authors’ observation that small investments reciprocated by each party indicated a willingness to commit to the partnership. Informal coordination mechanisms and the appointment of what is referred to as a ‘partner
manager’ are all said to enhance partnership relationships which in turn enhances collaboration.

Reading this reminded me of the very early days of collaboration between the department and the court when it felt as if all of the investment in resources came from the department and little was reciprocated by the court. I recall sometimes feeling as if we were making all of the concessions and the court just wanted us to give all of the time. Over time however, it transpired that the court felt as if the department had control of all of the resources and were resentful about this. In reality the department did have control of the majority of the resources during the project development phase and in retrospect I can understand the resentment of the court members. I recall early feelings that moved between the extremes of a willingness to contribute resources as a gesture of goodwill on the one hand, and on the other hand, resentment that we would never be able to give enough. The issue of resources clearly impacted upon how both parties entered into and participated in the collaborative process, especially in the early days.

The cognitive dimension focuses on preparing and learning the text and is comprised of the knowledge absorption and knowledge infusion components. Knowledge absorption includes ‘generating, assimilating and employing partner related information and knowledge in order to achieve the partnership objectives’ and knowledge infusion relates to ‘conveying information and knowledge about own [sic] competencies, interests and organisational settings to the partner company’ (Schreiner & Corsten, 2004 p.135). Both of these components are said to be critical to effective collaboration.

The authors conclude that the affective dimension, including the ability to deal with the emotional aspects of collaborative relationships, are important capabilities for relationship management. The components focus on empathising and validation. While the emotional aspects of this dimension were enacted at the level of the individual, the authors also report finding evidence at the overall organisation level. Empathising in this context is reported as the capacity to sense the unspoken meanings of partners and taking the others’ perspective. Validation relates to the ability to express care and appreciation for the partner company and the employees.
Schreiner and Corsten (2004) suggest that, singly and together, each of the capability dimensions has a positive impact on collaborative outcomes. Important in the context of the present research are their findings relating to the ‘pervasiveness of affect-based phenomena in collaborative partnerships’ (p.146). The authors suggest that the affective aspects of the capability dimensions have not been extensively researched to date and identify only a small body of literature that has emerged predominantly within the last decade that examines this issue.

The Collaborative Capability framework is useful in that it expressly takes a position in relation to the affective dimension and examines the interplay between the three dimensions and some of the processes taking place between the collaborating partners at both the individual and group levels of analysis. It does pay some attention to what conditions need to be met to facilitate collaboration. It begins to explore some of the emotional aspects of collaboration although does not take this concept far enough to facilitate an understanding of the dynamics between the collaborating partners and how the dynamic impacts on the collaboration. Nor does it explore how these dynamics might be worked with to deepen the collaboration or is any consideration given to the wider systems context that the collaboration is taking place within.

**Collaborative Capacity Framework**

Fitzgerald (2004) introduces a conceptual framework that attempts to integrate a number of different collaborative perspectives. After reviewing the cooperation literature across a number of dimensions, he introduces the terms collaborative entity (CE) and collaborative capacity (CC) and then describes and applies the CC Framework that is comprised of 10 constructs. A collaborative entity is said to be a ‘social action system whose members exchange information, alter their activities, share resources and enhance each other’s capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards’ (p.164). Collaborative capacity on the other hand is defined as ‘the extent to which a CE and the factors that comprise it foster collaboration both internally and with external stakeholders’ (p.164). The 10 interdependent constructs that Fitzgerald distilled from the literature can be found on the following page at Table 5.

The Collaborative Capability Framework recognises the complexity of collaborative relationships and the similarity of issues that arise irrespective of the context of the collaboration or the level of analysis. Fitzgerald (2004) also points out that the complexity of the
Working with what is there

way the constructs relate to each other and the multi-faceted nature of each of the constructs would need a multi-dimensional model to represent them accurately. Despite the complexity of his framework, Fitzgerald argues that he has evidence that application of the framework provides a ‘bridge building language [that helps] facilitate inter-disciplinary, multi-dimensional dialogue, research and practice regarding collaborative entities’ (p.193).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Definition and sub-dimensions of each construct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context*</td>
<td>The environments within which CEs are individually and or collectively embedded, and the cultural, disciplinary and theoretical frameworks through which CEs and their environments are construed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>CE membership and how that membership is structured and governed. Includes formal (e.g. written bylaws) and informal (e.g. norms) structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>The extent or range of a CE and its resultant complexity. Dimensions include endogenous-exogenous (in relation to the focal CE).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>The strategic rationales, missions visions and/or “raisons d’etre” that are explicitly and/or implicitly expressed by the CE, its members, and/or key external stakeholders. Dimensions include voluntary-mandated, explicit-implicit and utilitarian-visionary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementarity</td>
<td>The degree to which CE features, including structures, systems, processes and/or member characteristics are thought to complement, match or “fit” one another, key external stakeholders and environments. Dimensions include extant-emergent, member-systemic and differences-similarities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>The entire spectrum of individual and collective behaviours that enhance both current collaboration and members’ capacity for future collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>The nature, strength, clarity and unity of a CEs identity and image among all levels of CE membership and key external stakeholders; the CE’s level of autonomy; and boundaries that allow the CE to be distinguished from other entities (including its members) and surrounding environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>All of the results or outcomes of collaboration. Consequences may have a symmetric or asymmetric impact on members, and may also influence the CEs external stakeholders and environments. Dimensions include tangible-intangible, intended-unintended, constructive-destructive, narrow-broad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalyst</td>
<td>A person, thing or event that precipitates a sudden, transformative CE change process. Dimensions include endogenous-exogenous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Processes of change within and among CE members, external stakeholders, and/or environments that impact on one or more aspects of the collaboration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Each construct represents a generic theme that became apparent in the trans-disciplinary literature review. Each construct transcends disciplinary boundaries, theoretical perspectives, methodologies, levels of analysis and types of collaborative structures.

Table 5 Collaborative Capacity Framework

Source: Fitzgerald, SP (2004)

It may be that the Framework is too complex to keep in mind when participating in a collaborative endeavour unless it was being carried out in an action research frame as Fitzgerald did; but it could be a useful conceptual model for the researcher because of the comprehensive nature of the constructs. Examination of any collaboration through the endless
possible combinations of the constructs and sub-dimensions within this framework seems to allow for the possibility of a deep understanding of what might be taking place. Valuable too, is the fact that the framework allows a collaboration to be examined and understood from a number of different perspectives; as Fitzgerald says, the constructs are trans-disciplinary.

The Collaborative Capability Framework does not specifically attend to the conditions necessary for collaboration but rather allows for a deeper understanding what is taking place within the collaboration. It allows consideration of the collaborative processes at the systemic and group levels of analysis, recognises that collaboration is a dynamic process that emerges and changes as a result of wider system impacts and learning by the members. It also allows for the possibility that many of my research questions could be answered using this framework in conjunction with a systems psychodynamic orientation.

A Multi-disciplinary Model for Leadership of Networking Organisations

Higgins and Marcariello (2004) propose a multi-disciplinary model for leading networking organisations that contains four imperatives to achieve a successful collaborative outcome. The model emerged out of research carried out by one of the authors when examining six inter-organisational teams containing participants from external partner organisations. The authors define a networking organisation as ‘an organisation that operates within a web of interdependent organisations for the purpose of achieving an objective that is agreeable to the partner organisations within that network’ (p. 208).

In thinking about the leadership of these organisations, the authors consider how it differs from the leadership of traditional organisations. In so doing they indicate that traditional command and control methods will not work because collaborating leaders do no have direct authority over partner organisations and suggest that new models of management are required that have a systems orientation. They suggest that systems thinking lies at the heart of all collaboration and that leadership of these organisations has a profound impact on the outcome. The four leadership imperatives can be found below at Table 6.
A “System” of leadership
- translates input from the external environment into strategy, goals, and competencies
- shapes management systems to influence the internal environment, goal alignment and performance

Goal alignment
- shapes the internal environment
- directly influences success

System interaction and supportiveness
- complementary and dynamic interaction ensures adaptation and flexibility to external environment
- leverages awareness of interdependence among external environment, management systems, internal environment, external organisations and performance

Trust-based interpersonal relationships
- Lubricant for complementary and dynamic interaction among parts of the management coordination system

Table 6 Four Imperatives for Leading a Network Organisation

The system of leadership focuses on the need for the rapid processing of information and adaptation of changing environmental factors. The system of leadership should ‘maintain an environment of trust, interpersonal relationships and collaboration using influence rather than control’ (Higgins & Marciariello, 2004 p. 237). The authors maintain that goal alignment is one of the most important elements in achieving goals in a multi-agency environment because any ambiguity about goals or how they are to be achieved will result in failure of the joint venture. They refer to the alignment of goals of individuals within the collaborating organisations, between the organisations themselves and between the organisation value systems. The system of interaction and supportiveness refers to the need for the collaborating organisations to work together, foster trust and commitment and support each other. The focus is on the internal environment or dynamics of the collaborating partners. The final imperative focuses on trust-based interpersonal relationships which are said to be ‘a hallmark of network organisations’ (Higgins & Marciariello, 2004 p.238). This final imperative is not well developed and appears to refer to trust in the organisation and leader and does not examine the need for or how to develop trust between the people participating in the collaboration. It does not explain how trust might be developed beyond saying that good communication and leaders who act with integrity are essential.

Within the context of a management model for the leadership of collaborative endeavours, this model has both strengths and weaknesses. For example, the need for a different model of management makes sense if, as the authors suggest, authority relations change when you move away from a traditional hierarchical and command and control scenario. The model does not however give any consideration about where, under changed authority relations, the
leaders might now draw their authority or how new authority relations might be established by the collaborating partners. It may be too, that the four imperatives need to be highly interdependent but the model does not consider how they are inter-dependent. Does one element need to be present before another can emerge? It is not enough to say ‘goal alignment enhances commitment and trust and commitment and trust enhance goal alignment’ (Higgins & Marciariello, 2004 p. 231).

The emphasis on systems thinking is helpful, as is the emphasis on the dynamics with the groups. But the imperatives do not appear to attend to the boundaries between the various components of the system and how working across these boundaries might impact on the collaboration. It does however raise the issue of understanding about how interdependence between the collaborating partners might impact on the collaboration. In broad terms this model has limited utility in deepening understanding about collaboration.

Social capital and collaboration

Johnson and Knoke (2004) have developed a theory that they believe explains the role of social capital in complex collaborations of inter-organisational work teams. In this context the work teams are employed by two partner organisations on a single task project over a limited period of time; much as was the case with the CISP case study. The concept of social capital has been used extensively but its definition is not always consistent (Johnson & Knoke, 2004). Johnson and Knoke (2004) suggest that there are three approaches used in defining social capital, all of which relate to the idea of the resources (or potential resources) available as a result of belonging to a more or less durable group. See Johnson and Knoke (2004) for a detailed description of the three approaches. They define social capital as ‘the product of resources controlled by an alter, times the probability that ego could gain access to those resources, summed over all alters in the ego network’ (p. 259). It is not an especially helpful definition unless you read the authors work in full. In this context, ego refers to the focal actor and alter refers to the set of actors who have ties to a focal actor. Both terms are derived from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, cited by the authors.

The social capital theory rests on a number of assumptions. The first is that because the scope of the theory relates to work teams from different organisations for a limited period of time, the hierarchical authority structures from the parent organisations do not exist in the work groups, making informal networks more important. The second assumption is that resources allocated
by the partnering organisations become project specific and the third is that team members act as agents for their organisations and the team. The final assumption is that team members do not act in a self interested way although the authors do recognise that this is not always realistic. Johnson and Knoke (2004) believe that the following two assumptions and eight propositions (found below at Table 7) which form the basis of their theory, explain how work teams acquire social capital and how increases in social capital increase the likelihood of the success of project goals.

Each of the propositions is contingent upon the others to some extent and the availability of resources is a key factor. In essence the authors approach is that:

‘beyond the obvious importance of resources, lies the key factor of the probability with which the team can gain access to those resources. That probability is shaped by several social network variables: the number of prior reciprocal exchanges with team alters; the number of strong locations occupied by team members; the degree of debt aversion of team members; the work teams prestige; and the strength of ties between team members and alters. These factors combine with the volume of alter resources to constitute a work teams’ social capital. In turn, great team social capital raises the changes of a successful project outcome through three mechanisms: use of alters’ resources, additional financial resources form parent organisations and efficient team interactions’ (Johnson & Knoke, 2004 p. 259).

| Assumption 1 | The greater the aggregated resources held by all the work team members’ alters, the higher the team social capital |
| Assumption 2 | The higher the probability of access to the aggregated resources held by all the work team members, the higher the team social capital |
| Proposition 1 | The greater the number of prior reciprocal exchanges between a work team and its alters, the greater the probability that the team will gain access to its alters’ resources |
| Proposition 2 | The more strong locations that a work team occupies, the greater the probability that the team will gain access to its alters’ resources |
| Proposition 3 | The less willing a team is to incur exchange debt, the lower the probability that the team will gain access to its alters’ resources |
| Proposition 4 | The higher a work teams prestige, the higher the probability that the team will gain access to its alters’ resources |
| Proposition 5 | The stronger a work teams ties to alters, the higher the probability that the team will gain access to its alters’ resources |
| Proposition 6 | The greater a work teams social capital, the more resources the team will acquire from its alters |
| Proposition 7 | The greater a work teams social capital, the more financial resources the team will obtain from its parent organisations |
| Proposition 8 | The greater a work team social capital, the more efficient the team members’ interactions. |

**Table 7** Social capital and collaboration

*Source: Johnson, LR & Knoke, D (2004)*
Despite the quasi mathematical underpinnings of this theory and the seemingly clumsy way it is expressed by the authors, it does take into account many of the social aspects of people working together to achieve a joint task. In its simplest expression, there is some merit in the idea that actors bring organisational and personal resources to a process and then a range of social network conditions increase the likelihood of the group being able to access their own and each others resources resulting in an increased likelihood that the project will be successful. It does however pay no attention to the affective aspects of the actors or the group dynamic. What is happening for them? How do they feel about the people they are working with? How do the groups relate to each other, make decisions and resolve conflict? If, as the authors suggest, authority relations and structures change as a result of the formation of the new group working on the task, what are they replaced with? For me this theory raises more questions than it provides answers in relation to collaboration.

A theory of collaborative advantage

Huxham and Vangen (2005) suggest that there are three common approaches that have been used to describe the practice of collaboration. The first of these is a life cycle phases or stages approach and uses the idea of a marriage as a metaphor for collaboration. The second approach is based on the identification of attributes or conditions that must be present for successful collaboration and the third approach deals with the development of tools to support collaborative workshops and often includes modelling methods.

Over a period of 15 years working with practitioners of collaboration, Huxham and Vangen (2005) have developed a theory of collaborative advantage which is based on what they refer to as themes of collaborative practice. Initially these themes were derived from interviews with collaborative practitioners and are: common aims, communication, commitment and determination, compromise, appropriate working processes, accountability, democracy and equality, resources, trust and power. More recently the authors have added leadership, learning and success as themes and cautiously make a case for the inclusion of concepts such as identity and social capital.

In attempting to understand what lies beneath each of these themes, the authors conclude that ‘the data has revealed that the issues underlying the themes are less straightforward in a number of respects than [the] initial views would suggest’ (Huxham & Vangen, 2005 p. 32). They examine many of their key themes in detail, providing examples drawn from case studies.
to enhance understanding and then invite the reader to apply this understanding to manage their own collaborations. They also reluctantly set out what they refer to as Ten Tips For Collaborating which are set out below.

TEN TIPS FOR COLLABORATING
Use these with care!
They are intended to provoke thought
Only the first and last should be taken as absolute truths

1. Don't use it unless you have to! Joint working with other organisations is inherently difficult and resource consuming. Unless you can see THE POTENTIAL for real collaborative advantage (i.e. that you can achieve something really worthwhile that you couldn't otherwise achieve) it's most efficient to do it on your own…...but if you decide to go ahead...

2. Budget a great deal more time for the collaborative activities than you would normally expect to need.

3. Remember that the other participants involved are unlikely to want to achieve exactly the same thing as you and make allowances. You need to protect your own agendas but be prepared to compromise.

4. Where possible, try to begin by setting yourselves some small, achievable tasks. Build up mutual trust gradually through achieving mutual small wins. If the stakes are high, you may need a more comprehensive trust-building approach.

5. Pay attention to communication. Be aware of your own company jargon and professional jargon and try to find clear ways to express yourself to others who do not share your daily world. If partners speak in ways that do not make sense, don't be afraid to seek clarification.

6. Don't expect other organisations to do things the same way as yours does. Things that may be easier to do in your organisation may, for example, require major political manoeuvring in another.

7. Ensure that those who have to manage the alliance are briefed to be able to act with an appropriate degree of autonomy. Wherever possible, they need to be able to react quickly and contingently without the need to check back to the 'parent' organisations.

8. Recognise that power plays are often a part of the negotiation process. Both understanding your own source of power and ensuring that partners do not feel vulnerable can be a valuable part of building trust.

9. Understand that making things happen involves acting both facilitatively and directly towards others.

10. Assume that you cannot be wholly in control and that partners and environments will be continually changing. Then, with energy, commitment, skill and continual nurturing, you can achieve collaborative advantage.

Table 8 Ten tips for collaborating
Source: Huxham, C & Vangen, S (2005)

I had trouble grasping the theoretical aspects of this work. The ten tips are useful in as much as they point out many of the pitfalls that might beset a collaboration but beyond that, they do not deepen understanding about what is taking place. The framework does recognise the impact of the wider system but does not attend to working across boundaries, the group dynamic, interdependence or a number of other factors pertaining to the original research questions.
Towards a dynamic theory of inter-organisational relations

In laying out a practical method of working to find common ground for multiparty problems, Gray draws on organisational theory and a model of inter-organisational relations modified by the introduction of a negotiated order perspective when developing a process-oriented theory of collaboration. She uses this as a theoretical underpinning for her work. Gray (1989) states that ‘recent conceptualizations in interorganizational (sic) relations have been criticized for emphasising transactional patterns and structural arrangements among established networks of organizations... [and in so doing] ...they underrepresent (sic) the dynamic, emergent and mutable character of interorganizational relationships’ (p. 227). The negotiated order perspective within Gray’s theory is expressed through the idea that relationships within the collaboration are negotiated and re-negotiated and as a new negotiated order emerges, the social order is shaped through the interactions of the participants.

Focusing at the domain level, Gray (1989) maintains that collaboration allows organisations to respond to environmental turbulence through participation in ‘collective strategies’ between organisations that increase flexibility to respond to rapidly changing environments that organisations are unable to respond to alone. This theoretical position recognises the capacity for collaborative efforts to better ‘organise’ around the task or common interest through the emergence of temporary interactions which can, over time, result in more enduring agreements. Collaborations then become accepted as a legitimate means by which new outcomes are achieved when traditional methods do not work in the face of increased turbulence. Finally, action learning takes place as a result of reframing the problem and searching for solutions.

Gray (1989) claims that while not all collaborations are the same and nor do they follow the same path, there is a general pattern that emerges that has allowed the development of a three phase model of the collaborative process seen as follows at Table 9.

Gray’s three phase model is useful as a guide to process but I think the real value of her theoretical perspective lies in the possibilities it allows for understanding the collaborative processes. It takes the wider system contribution into account, connects the collaborative processes to task or common interest and recognises that collaboration is an emergent and dynamic process by focussing attention at the group level of analysis.
Phase 1: Problem Setting
- common definition of problem
- commitment to collaborate
- identification of stakeholders
- legitimacy of stakeholders
- convener characteristics
- identification of resources

Phase 2: Direction Setting
- established ground rules
- agenda setting
- organising subgroupings
- joint information search
- exploring options
- reaching agreement and closing the deal

Phase 3: Implementation
- dealing with constituencies
- building external support
- structuring
- monitoring the agreement and ensuring compliance

Table 9 The collaborative process
Source: Gray, B (1989)

Systems psychodynamics and collaboration
In taking stock of my position at the end of this review of some of the literature pertaining to theories, frameworks and models of collaboration, I find my search has largely left my questions unanswered. I have found a useful set of principles, an account of factors that explain motivation to collaborate and arguments supporting the need for different models of management and authority. I have also found systemic considerations and group analysis, social and affective considerations, useful guides to collaborating, recognition that collaboration is an emergent and dynamic process and models that go part of the way to answering some of my questions. While I have found many useful constructs; on the whole, these collaboration models and frameworks feel uni-dimensional and unsatisfying. It is only when I look at the literature linking collaboration and the systems psychodynamic orientation that I feel as if the answers might be close. Only then do I feel as if I might begin to understand why collaborative processes are always so difficult.

Despite an extensive literature on collaboration, much of it does not translate into effective practice (Mnguni, 2008). Even in the face of a recognition by many people leading contemporary organisations that collaboration with likeminded organisations is essential in an
increasingly complex world, many collaborations fail (Gray, 1989). The difficulty in explaining such failures may lie in part because much of the literature focuses on the superficial, rational aspects of human relations and does not take into account the ‘compelling forces that cause those who try to collaborate to fall short’ (Gray, 1989 p. 54). As Mnguni (2008) points out, collaboration is more than just sharing resources to resolve a common problem. Collaboration is a complex relational process that requires sophisticated, mature working relations between partners (Long & Newton, 1997).

My feelings echo the views of Gould, Ebers and McVicker Clinchy (1999) when they point out that much of the work on collaboration does not take into account ‘the emotional and relational processes involved in forging robust and enduring partnerships that can withstand the conflicts and difficulties that will inevitably arise’ (p. 698). Much of the collaborative literature responds at the rational process level and does not pay attention to unconscious, often irrational processes that underpin all inter-group endeavours which might include, at the very least, paranoid concerns and fantasies about inequity in the new arrangements or anxiety about mutual dependence and losing control.

The development of a collaborative relationship is paradoxical in nature in much the same way that Smith and Berg (1988) thought about the paradoxical nature of groups and that is part of what makes collaboration so fraught with danger. Think about Bion’s (1961) view, discussed in the previous chapter, that in service of the group, whole objects come together and become part objects in order for the group to become whole. If you think then about two or more whole groups, comprised of a number of part objects, coming together in order to form a collaborative group, the tension generated by the magnitude of the paradox is almost unbearable and the emergence of primitive, unconscious group processes is inevitable.

While there is no specific theoretical position on collaboration within the systems psychodynamic literature, there is an extensive literature on inter-group relations that can be applied quite logically to collaboration which is after all a form of inter-group relating. For example, Alderfer (1987) presents a theory for inter-group behaviour that contains the following properties:
‘1. The group is the primary level of analysis.
2. Groups appear embedded in social systems.
3. The orientation toward research is clinical.
4. Concepts from the theory apply to researchers as well as to respondents’ (p. 202)

In addition to the inter-group literature, systems psychodynamics offers explanations about how groups defend against the anxiety generated by emerging collaborative processes and how the quality of the relatedness between the collaborating organisations impacts on collaborative processes (Prins, 2001; Gould, Ebers, & McVicker Clinchy, 1999). Importantly, it is able to provide explanations about the impact inter-dependence has on collaborating groups and the role of social defences in defending against the anxiety experienced as part of all collaborations (Gould, Ebers, & McVicker Clinchy, 1999). It is also able to throw light onto how understanding unconscious group processes can deepen a collaboration and the importance of working on the collaboration itself, in addition to the task, to avoid the possibility of collusion (Long & Newton, 1997). Schruijer and Vansina (2004) believe that ‘understanding of the dynamic nature of multi-organizational relationships...is crucial if one wants to increase the effectiveness’ of collaboration (p. 219).

The unique perspective taken by the systems psychodynamic orientation offers a significant heuristic opportunity to study an inter-agency collaboration through a deep ‘understanding of the powerful irrational processes that may infuse or derail even the most manifestly sensible relationships’ (Gould, Ebers & McVicker Clinchy, 1999 p.720) It also allows this understanding to take place through the observation of and often participation in emergent organisational and group processes in their natural setting (Prins, 2006). Only through a systems psychodynamic lens it is possible to find a ‘...setting that could allow and contain negative as well as positive aspects of the collaboration so that these could be understood, learned from and worked with alongside the primary task of the project’ (Long & Newton, 1997 p. 1). I first read this quote in 2005 in the first year of my research and knew instantly (despite my as yet unformed ideas about the shape my work would take) that this idea lay at the centre of my research.

The following is a summary, in tabular form, of the collaboration literature examined above. It sets out the principal features of each theory, framework or model and summarises the capacity of each perspective to answer my original research questions which have been grouped into two main categories – group dynamics and conditions necessary for collaboration.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories, frameworks, models</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Assessment against research questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principles for complex collaboration</td>
<td>Mankin, D, Cohen, S &amp; Fitzgerald, S.P. (2004)</td>
<td>Set of principles that can be used to design a complex collaboration</td>
<td>Management guide to collaboration. Little contribution to answering research questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Motivation</td>
<td>Stiles, J &amp; Williams, P (2004)</td>
<td>Examines the factors influencing motivation to collaborate</td>
<td>Explains how motivation influences collaboration but no assistance in understanding group dynamics or conditions necessary for collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Capability Framework</td>
<td>Schreiner, M &amp; Corsten, D (2004)</td>
<td>Examines the social &amp; affective aspects of collaboration</td>
<td>Touches on the affective aspects of collaboration and provides some insight into the conditions necessary for collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Capacity Framework</td>
<td>Fitzgerald, S.P. (2004)</td>
<td>Proposes a conceptual framework based on 10 inter-dependent constructs for the collaboration literature.</td>
<td>No consideration of necessary conditions but does provide for a deep understanding of the collaborative process at the group and systemic level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital and Collaboration</td>
<td>Johnson, L.R. &amp; Knoke, D (2004)</td>
<td>Proposes a theory that explains the role of social capital in collaboration</td>
<td>Examines social aspects of collaboration but does not attend to group dynamics or necessary conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic Theory of Inter-organizational relations</td>
<td>Gray, B (1989)</td>
<td>Proposes a Process-oriented theory for collaboration</td>
<td>Lays out a practical method of working that leads to the understanding of the collaborative process through understanding the emergent and dynamic process by focussing at the group level of analysis.</td>
</tr>
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Table 10 Summary of theories, frameworks and models
Summary

This chapter began by defining collaboration and inter-agency collaboration and then went on to examine simple and complex collaboration. Following the examination of a number of theories, models and frameworks for collaboration in some detail, it concludes that they do not comprehensively answer the original research questions. The inter-group literature emerging out of the application of systems psychodynamic concepts on the other hand, was found to provide answers to many of the questions. It concludes by arguing that the systems psychodynamic perspective is ideally suited to both studying and facilitating collaboration. A summary of the theories and their capacity to further my understanding of collaboration by answering my research questions was provided in tabular form to assist the reader. The next chapter describes the research design and method.
This chapter commences with an examination of some of the ontological and epistemological considerations that informed my research design choice of method. This is followed by an outline of the research and design approach, including a single case study and clinical methods. This is then followed by a detailed description of the research methods including interviews, participant observation, document collection and the use of a field journal and a working note. The establishment of a Research Reflection Group and insider researching are also examined. The chapter concludes with an examination of the role of the researcher, ethical issues, and gaining access for the research.

**Ontological and epistemological considerations**

Even at an unconscious level, beliefs about ontology and epistemology underpin decisions about how to go about research and which methods to choose. When considering how to start my research journey, I knew I had a preference for the interpretive perspective as my inquiry paradigm but it was first necessary for me to examine my ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.

Ontology considers the question of social reality. It asks what is the nature of the thing being researched and if reality is out there to be found (realism) or if it is created by human consciousness (nominalism) (Cherry, 1999). Ontology asks whether or not social phenomena are ‘things in their own right or representations of things’ (Corbetta, 2003).

Epistemology considers the question of the relationship between the ‘what’ being observed or examined and the observer. Epistemology asks two questions. Is knowledge objective and therefore accumulated independently of the perceptions of the observer? Or, is knowledge subjective and therefore a product created by the observer?

Methodology considers the question of how the social reality can be examined. It gives shape to the strategy that lies behind the use of particular methods.
Corbetta (2003) points out that these three concepts are by definition closely linked. The answer to the epistemological question will depend on the answer to the ontological question. If, on the one hand the world is thought to exist in its own right, independent of human action then it follows that it might be observed objectively. If on the other hand, the world is thought to be created by human consciousness, it can never be observed independently of the perceptions of the observer. The answer to the methodological question depends on the answers to the ontological and epistemological questions.

Corbetta (2003) reports that not long after Auguste Comte (the founder of nineteenth century sociological positivism) established the positivist position, others began to articulate a different vision of science. In 1883 Dilthey (a German philosopher) asserted that there was a key distinction between the science of nature and the human sciences based entirely on the relationship that is established between the researcher and the reality studied. He suggested that in the natural sciences we are interested in explaining the cause and effect laws we observe whilst in the case of the social sciences, we are attempting to understand what is being observed (Corbetta, 2003).

Max Weber extended the work of Dilthey. While agreeing with the basic viewpoint of Dilthey with regard to the distinction between explaining natural phenomena and understanding social phenomena, Weber wanted to preserve the notion of objectivity in the social sciences through the reduction of the impact of value judgements and the possibility of understanding social reality through the expression of generalisations. The work of Weber provided the basis for future developments in the interpretivist paradigm and gave rise to phenomenological sociology, symbolic interactionalism, ethnomethodology (Corbetta, 2003), hermeneutics and action research (Cherry, 1999).

**Interpretivism and abductive logic**

Cherry (1999) states that the interpretivist perspective sees social reality as fundamentally different to reality in the natural world and that the task of the researcher is to discover and negotiate the meanings that guide social behaviour and make sense of actions through the use of abductive logic. Wirth (1998) draws on the work of Peirce (the original philosopher to describe abductive logic) when he says that abductive inference or reasoning is the first step in any scientific enquiry and involves the selection and formation of hypotheses. Wirth reports that ‘as a process of finding premises, it is the basis of interpretive reconstruction of causes and
intentions, as well as of inventive construction of theories’ (p.1). In the context of the social sciences, abductive inference involves ‘listening for and reconstructing the theories and constructs used by the actors instead of imposing one’s own theories or borrowing and applying the theories of others developed in other situations’ (Wirth, 1998 p. 56). This research is based on abductive logic.

The ontological perspective of interpretivism postulates that ‘reality’ or the knowable world is that which is based on meaning attributed by individuals (constructivism), that these realities vary between individuals (relativism) and there are therefore multiple realities. Epistemologically, interpretivism assumes that the researcher and the object of study are interdependent and observation cannot be objective in the same way the positivists would espouse. The search therefore is to understand social actions in terms of value, meaning and purpose (Corbetta, 2003). Because the purpose of research in the social sciences in an interpretivist framework is to gain understanding of the meaning of human behaviour, the methodologies employed are subjective, qualitative and interpretive in nature.

A single case study
The research design centres on a single case study carried out from an interpretive stance, at the group level of analysis and informed by a systems psychodynamic orientation. The case study is hypothesis generating (Berg, 1990) in nature and seeks to understand how to facilitate collaboration between two organisations.

Robson (2002) argues strongly in support of the value of case studies and cites Yin when he defines a case study as a ‘strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence’ (p. 178). Robson (2002) suggests that the important points in this definition are:

- ‘a strategy i.e. a stance or approach, rather than a method, such as observation or interview;
- concerned with research, taken in a broad sense and including, for example, evaluation;
- empirical in the sense of relying on the collection of evidence about what is going on;
- about the particular: a case study of that specific case (the issue of what kind of generalization is possible for the case, and of how this might be done, will concern us greatly);
- focused on a phenomenon in context, typically in situations where the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clear; and
- undertaken using multiple methods of evidence or data collection’ (p. 179).
Yin (2003) suggests that there are three different types of case study - exploratory, descriptive and explanatory as follows:

‘An exploratory case study (whether based on single or multiple cases) is aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study (not necessarily as case study) or at determining the feasibility of the desired research procedures. A descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. An explanatory case study presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships – explaining how events happened’ (p. 5).

When thinking about the purpose of case studies, Stake (2005) on the other hand, categorises single case studies in terms of either their intrinsic or instrumental interest. An intrinsic case study is said to be conducted when a better understanding of the particular unit of analysis (an individual, a project or an organisation for example) is desired. Intrinsic case studies are not used for theory building and the study is undertaken because of an intrinsic interest in that which is being studied. An instrumental case study is carried out when examination of a particular case will lead to insight or understanding about an issue. In this case, the phenomenon being studied is of secondary value in that its study is to facilitate an interest in something else. All three authors take care to point out that their different typologies are not mutually exclusive.

Berg (1990) also makes reference to different types of case studies which include comparative case studies, illustrative case studies, representative case studies, interpretive case studies, anomalous case studies and hypothesis-generating case studies. In essence, these different types of case studies seek respectively to: explain a phenomenon by way of comparison, illustrate a particular phenomenon, attempt to generalise to a wider population, illustrate a theory in the context of a particular case, examine out of the ordinary cases or uncover hypotheses about a phenomenon of interest. Stake (2005) does point out that is it not always possible to fit all studies neatly into his categories.

My research is best described as hypothesis generating on the basis that the two social systems under investigation have something of interest to contribute to the study of inter-agency collaboration and working hypotheses were generated about how to deepen a collaborative endeavour.
Methodological choices: Clinical methods

In conducting research in the social sciences, I strongly believe it is not possible to separate the researcher from the research and I have had to think about this a lot in light of my decision to take up the role of insider researcher. How could I hold an objective position throughout my research? Did I need to? I approached the research from the perspective that psychoanalytic research is different from the social and natural sciences because of its approach to subjectivity. Even so, had I chosen to take up the research role from an ‘outsider’ perspective, I cannot help but be aware that as a researcher interviewing a ‘subject’, we would be constructing the data together. Nor can I ignore the fact that as I was observing what took place around me throughout the research, I was searching for clues to help me understand what was taking place between the two organisations as we attempted to collaborate.

I was taking the interpretive stance which, as discussed in an earlier chapter, Shapiro and Carr (Shapiro & Carr, 1991) describe as:

‘… a method that individuals might use to integrate an evaluation of their experience…and an interpretation of that experience from the context of their institutional role…integrating experience and context could lead to a thoughtful study of the organisation’ (pp. 76-77).

As to method, in the early days of my research, I vividly recall what at the time felt like a desperate search for an answer to the questions ‘What am I doing? What method am I using? Before my research was fully formed in my mind I recall being drawn to the idea that I was going to construct some sort of ethnographic study. I think this was because of my decision to research in my own workplace in a project that I was deeply involved with from my workplace role.

As time went on, I abandoned this idea because it did not fit the now partially formed idea beginning to take shape and began to wonder if I was ‘doing’ some sort of action research. I spent a lot of time reading the Action Research literature to try and satisfy myself that that was what I was doing. When I found I could not do this, I searched the Action Science, Action Learning and Cooperative Enquiry literature; and still couldn’t find an answer. Upon reflecting back on this time, I think I was trying to manage the anxiety that all new researchers must experience. Did I know what I was doing? Was there a prescribed course I could or should follow? What if I overlooked a key step or did something wrong? I felt at the time that if I could
locate my method within an established body of knowledge it would somehow give my methodological choices a legitimacy that I could not bestow upon myself as a new researcher.

What this search did was help me understand my role as researcher. I stumbled across the insider researcher literature and knew instantly that, regardless of my broader methodological quest, I was now clear about my role as a researcher. This understanding allowed me to locate myself in my research and accept the role of insider researcher as part of my method. At the same time I found the work of Berg and Smith (1998) on clinical methods in social research. Their basic premise is that:

‘The nature and quality of social research findings are powerfully influenced by the relationship between the researcher and the researched...this relationship should receive the same intense scrutiny as other methodological issues in the research process...[and]...any system of investigating social reality must address the whole research process, including the research relationship as well as the formal procedures represented in our methodological canons’ (p. 21).

The centrality of the research relationship, the idea that the researcher is an instrument for studying a social system and my understanding of my role as insider researcher coalesced to become a containing idea (Bain, 1999) and I could let my anxiety about method go. I was happy now to sit with the idea that my research was what it was. I was able to let go of the frantic search and accept that I was working in an emergent process that would unfold as it went along.

Oddly enough, or maybe because of the earlier search and as will be discussed in a later part of this thesis, the idea of action research (or maybe more precisely, action learning) came up again. Not so much in the context of the traditional action research cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, but more in the context of the research being instrumental in providing a mechanism for feedback and reflection that lead to different understanding and action.

**Features of clinical methods**

Decisions about the research design and method were influenced by a psychoanalytically informed way of thinking about how humans study human systems referred to as the ‘clinical method’ by Berg and Smith (1988). The authors chose the word *clinical* to describe the following aspects of research:
‘1) direct involvement with and/or observation of human beings or social systems;
2) commitment to a process of self scrutiny by the researcher as he or she conducts the research;
3) willingness to change theory or method in response to the research experience during the research itself;
4) description of social systems that is dense or thick and favours depth over breadth in any single undertaking; and
5) participation of the social system being studied, under the assumption that much of the information of interest is only accessible to or reportable by its members’ (p. 25).

It was these five points and their relevance to my ontological and epistemological position that influenced my decision to work as an insider researcher and use a single case research design. Being an insider researcher enabled my direct involvement with the system I wished to study and I thought the use of a single case study design would allow the best opportunity for a dense description that focussed on depth rather than breadth. I used a research journal to facilitate my process of self scrutiny throughout the research. I used the journal to record my experience of the research process, reflections on difficult or troubling aspects of the research process or encounters with others and descriptions of how my reading was influencing my thinking at the time. Participation of the social system being studied took place primarily through the involvement of members of the system in the Research Reflection Group that will be described in more detail shortly. Finally, my willingness to change my theory or method during the research can be evidenced by the recognition from the beginning that my research was an emergent process and by changes to some of my methodological decisions made along the research journey.

Interviews
The decision to conduct participant interviews was informed by my interpretivist ontological position whereby I believe that the knowable social world is based on meaning attributed by individuals. It therefore seemed to me that interviewing key people involved in the implementation process was the most logical and direct way to access the subjective construction of the world we were working in at the time.

Criterion for selecting interview participants
The initial criterion for inviting people to participate in an interview was that they have some direct involvement in the process of implementing the CISP. My thinking was based on the idea that membership in one or the other of the two organisations involved in working together to implement the CISP would give them a unique experience of the collaboration. I therefore
invited the four members of the CPDU Project Team to participate. Because the original Project Manager (who had been seconded from a different part of Justice to fill this role) was called back to her substantive position, I also invited the new Project Manager to be interviewed. I also invited the two Magistrates, and the then Manager, Court Support Services who were the key court representatives. Once the Court was happy for us to begin working directly with the service delivery staff I also invited the Manager of the CREDIT Program to be interviewed. Lastly, I invited the Principal Program Advisor from the CPDU because she had been involved in the implementation of other problem solving initiatives in the past and had a role as advisor to the current project.

In light of my wondering about how a place in a system might influence a person's experience of collaboration, my next criterion was to invite representatives from one metropolitan and one regional court. I was curious to understand how working on the same task but from a different place in the system might influence the experience of collaboration. I therefore invited the senior registrars and most directly involved magistrates from these courts. I also invited the Chief Magistrate and the Executive Director, Courts to be interviewed on the basis that their roughly equivalent positions might have a particular perspective on the way the two organisations worked together. I thought these interviews might provide useful contextual material. On the same basis I also invited the Chief Executive Officer of the Magistrates Court and the Director, Court Services as also roughly equivalent positions from both parts of the system.

The next criterion was determined approximately half way through the interviews as I was thinking about what I was observing in the context of the CISP implementation and whether the same behaviour was present during the implementation of some of the other problem solving initiatives that we were working on with different people in the court. I therefore invited the magistrates who were responsible for oversight of the implementation of the Koori Courts and a range of Family Violence courts and initiatives and the Manager, Family Violence Courts.

Finally, the Melbourne Magistrates Court conducted a review of its organisational structure whilst the research was being conducted and there were a number of resultant staff changes. Some of these changes involved court staff who had been involved in the implementation of CISP from the beginning and now new people were involved. I invited three people who were
new to the CISP implementation to be interviewed to ask them about their experience of the collaboration.

Although I had not originally set out to do so, by the time I had finished inviting people to be interviewed, I felt as if I had covered all of the various perspectives from which people might be able to talk about their experience of the collaboration. There were representatives from the two organisations, representatives from different levels within the organisations, representatives with direct involvement, those who were not directly involved but doing similar work and representatives from the different sites across the collaboration. I hoped that these different perspectives might help deepen my understanding of what was taking place.

In all, 23 participants were invited to be interviewed, comprising 7 magistrates (including the Chief Magistrate and two Deputy Chief Magistrates), the CEO of the Court, 8 senior court staff, the Executive Director, Courts, the Director, Court Services and five CPDU staff who were members of the CISP project team or advising them. Everyone who was invited agreed to be interviewed.

**Recruiting interview participants**

All but two of the participants were invited to be interviewed as the result of a direct verbal invitation by myself because I knew each of them in the context of my workplace role. I either spoke to them face to face or by telephone. The two remaining participants were invited to participate by email because I had not been able to make contact by telephone. At the time of the invitation I briefly explained the research and how long the interview would take. I explained that I understood if people wished to decline the invitation or withdraw at a later time. At the same time I gave them, or undertook to send them a copy of the plain language statement and consent form prepared as part of my human research ethics applications. Each of the 23 participants returned the signed consent form either at the time of their first interview or ahead of it.

The interviews were conducted during normal business hours at a time and place that suited the participants. Some people chose to have the interview in my office and others their own workplace. I travelled to the regional court and two metropolitan courts to interview some participants because that is what suited them. Generally speaking, I contacted people shortly after they had agreed to participate, either by telephone or email, to arrange an interview time.
Only on one occasion did an interview have to be re-scheduled to meet the needs of a participant.

**Interview method**

The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in a conversational or dialogic style. The idea was to encourage participants to actively participate in the interview (Foley and Valenzuela, 2005) and tell the story of their experience of the collaborative process. Foley and Valenzuela (2005) suggest that the advantage of this interview style is that:

> ‘a more open-ended, conversational interviewing style generate[s] more engaged personal narratives and more candid opinions. It also tend[s] to humanize the interviewer and diminish [the interviewers] power and control of the interview process’ (p.223).

**Interviewing peers**

In discussing interviewing one’s peers, Platt (1981) reminds us that generally speaking, our peers can share some or all of the following characteristics; they can be our ‘equal[s] in role specific senses, they share the same background knowledge and sub-cultural understandings, they are members of the same groups or communities’(p. 76). In most cases, the participants I interviewed shared at least two of these characteristics and some shared all of them. Interviewing peers can be a double edged sword. While there are enormous advantages to be gained by the researcher and the participant sharing a history and community or group membership, the additional social pressures associated with the conduct of the interview and post interview relationships can cause increased anxiety and increase the possibility of unconscious collusion (Platt, 1981).

**Anxiety and interviewing**

As the interviews were one of my primary sources of data, I was anxious that they went well. My anxiety emanated from a number of sources. My experience in conducting interviews of this type was limited, so some of my anxiety was derived from feelings about my competency to carry out the task. Would I be nervous and would it interfere with my ability to conduct the interviews? Would I be able to engage the participant in the right sort of conversation to allow the right material to emerge? Would I get lost in the material or the process?
I was also conscious of the fact that with some of the participants at least, we would be talking about something that we were both involved in. I was anxious about my capacity to hold what I saw as dual interview roles; that of someone who needed to be able to maintain a degree of objectivity that would actually allow me to manage the interview and hold the researcher role, and someone who had to acknowledge my own role in the process under discussion: someone who on some level had to be able to represent themselves in the process and acknowledge the reality that I had been directly involved in the process under discussion. This felt like an almost impossible task and I was not sure that I would be able to get right what felt like a very delicate balance between the two positions.

On another level, I was very aware of the fact that I was interviewing my workplace colleagues and I didn't want them to feel as if they had wasted their time. Prior to the first interviews it did not occur to me that many of the participants might get something out of the interviews. I was worried that they had agreed to be part of this process and it should not feel like an imposition. The idea that I would continue to have some sort of working relationship with my participants beyond the life of the interview weighed heavily on my mind.

I was aware too of holding a fantasy that the interviews would be like an intimate conversation between two likeminded people working closely together to understand the collaborative process, but I had no idea if I would be able to achieve that position or even if I should. I was influenced strongly in this thinking after having read Fontana and Frey (2005) where they note that:

'It has become increasingly common in qualitative studies to view the interview as a form of discourse between two or more speakers or as a linguistic event in which the meanings or questions and responses are contextually grounded and jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent' (p. 716)

When examining the anxiety aroused in research relationships, Berg (1988) states that anxiety can be aroused because:

'Research relationships have the potential to arouse some degree of anxiety because the relationship is felt to be the source of threat in three areas: personal, professional and group level' (p. 216).

Taking up the advice offered by Berg (1988) when he says that researchers should ‘use the experience of the anxiety to guide and enhance their understanding of social systems’ (p. 227)
I tried to understand the source of my anxiety. In hindsight, my situation was most closely aligned with what Berg calls professional anxiety which is said to be aroused when the research itself feels threatened in relation to questions about professional ability or competence or the assumptions underlying the research. Berg describes a number of sources that can result in professional anxiety including the responsibility to the system being studied, fears about losing control and relationships with existing authority structures. Berg suggests that when combined with high levels of professional investment, these factors can combine to raise anxiety. I was heavily invested; I wanted my research to succeed and I wanted to maintain my workplace relationships. Finally, Berg suggests that researching social systems has the potential to question and break down the defences that the system has put in place to defend against its own anxieties and this may increase the anxiety in the system, which in turn can increase the anxiety experienced by the researcher.

I think my anxiety around the interviews was real enough but I think it went deeper than I was conscious of at the time. I now feel sure that some of it emanated from working up against the existing and newly emerging authority structures. I was working and researching right in the middle of the existing authority structures between the department and the court and with my direct reports and my superiors, with colleagues and in some cases, friends. At the same time, I was gradually becoming aware of a newly emerging authority structure that was beginning to take shape out of the collaborative process.

Part of my evidence for thinking that at least some of my anxiety was related to my working up against the existing authority structures actually came from someone else. One of my interview participants was working in a rural town for a few days and while there, reviewed one of her interview transcripts. Having read and amended the transcript, when she returned it to me via email she also sent a picture that represented for her, how she saw my role. This had come to mind for her as she was reading her transcript. It was a picture of a ham sandwich and I was the meat in the middle. We had a good laugh at the time but the reality was, it was a very accurate portrayal of how my role felt at that time.

I tried to contain some of my anxiety through the use of a number of strategies. When interviews were conducted in my office, I would make the space as comfortable as possible by ensuring we sat adjacent to each other at a table, by providing water and ensuring no interruptions. A clock was close by to allow me to manage the time in not too obvious a
manner. I had prepared a list of open-ended questions (Clarke, 2002) as part of research ethics committee requirements but generally I only used these as an aide memoir. I rarely had to refer to this list after the first two or three interviews but I found having it close by in the early interviews assisted in containing my anxiety about getting lost in the process.

I managed the time and task boundaries carefully and generally speaking, interviews started and ended on time unless the start was delayed by the participants’ late arrival or we negotiated a short extension to the original hour. At the beginning of each of the first round interviews I re-affirmed that the participant agreed to having the interview taped and that the interview would last approximately one hour. I briefly re-iterated the confidentiality, anonymity and data storage arrangements as they had been set out in the consent form and reminded participants that they could withdraw at any time. At this point I also indicated that they could be as frank as they felt comfortable being. I reminded participants about the nature of my research and indicated why I had sought to interview them. Once the formalities were concluded, I would generally point out that the interview was more by way of a conversation rather than a set of questions. I would then start them off by asking them to give me a brief history of their workplace roles and then talk about their current role and how (if it did) it related to the implementation of the CISP. I found these initial instructions were helpful in giving people somewhere familiar to start and establishing rapport (Fontana and Frey, 2005).

First round of interviews

When each interview commenced I tried to attend to how the participants were feeling. Some said they were nervous, others didn’t but looked nervous and others seemed comfortable. It had not occurred to me, ahead of the early interviews, that anyone might be nervous and the first time I became aware of it I was prompted to say that there were no right or wrong answers and it was people’s experience (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Clarke, 2002) of the collaborative process that I was interested in. In all but one case, participants quickly forgot about the tape recorder and relaxed into our conversation. The one exception was a person who had always struck me as socially awkward and their behaviour during the interview was similar to our interactions outside the interview.

At some point during each interview I also tried to attend (but not too deeply) to how I was feeling. I did this to try and get a sense of the quality of the interaction between myself and the participant but I did not want to focus too much on myself; in part because there were so many
other aspects to attend to. Were we on task? How were we going for time? Did I need to probe, seek clarification or ask for an example? I had in mind too, Bion’s words about ‘eschewing memory and desire’ and Menzies wish to let meaning emerge. I was also thinking about what Clarke (2002) had said when describing his interviews and his not being a psychoanalyst and his attempts to ensure ‘psychoanalytic interpretation does not take place in the interview, but in the analysis of the data collected’ (p. 174). I did not want somehow to confound my data collection and analysis. So long as we were on task, I just wanted to hear what the participant had to say; to let the data emerge. Even though the interviews were conversational in design, I tried hard to listen to what I was saying in my part of the conversation. I didn’t want to run the risk of dominating the interview or using it as a platform to articulate my own experience of the collaborative process. I am sure I failed on both of these counts on occasion.

In the last minutes of each interview I would point out that we were nearly out of time and indicate that this might be a good time for any comments they particularly wanted to make or ask any questions. Sometimes participants asked questions in relation to the conversation we had just had or about the interview process or about my research in general. I finalised many of the first round interviews by asking the participant what their experience of the interview process was. On many occasions they responded that they had found the interview process useful both in terms of providing an opportunity to reflect on a complex workplace task and to help get some aspect of what they had been thinking about clear in their minds.

**Second and third round interviews**

Second and third round interviews were more relaxed on the part of both parties because we had a sense of what to expect this time. I chose six participants to be interviewed a second time and two for a third time. People were selected for a second round interview on the basis of their ongoing and direct involvement in the collaboration. The two people selected for a third round interview were selected on the basis of their particular roles in the implementation process. One was the CISP Project Manager and the second was the CISP Senior Project Officer. This latter role will be discussed in detail in a later chapter. The second and third round interviews were conducted in much the same way as the first round, the only difference being that at the beginning of the interview, participants were briefly reminded of the confidentiality and anonymity arrangements and then I asked them to reflect on their experience of the collaboration since the last interview.
Taping of interviews

When initially thinking about the interviews and about whether or not I would tape them, I had been somewhat reluctant to do so because of what then seemed like an enormous time commitment in transcribing the interviews and my anxiety about being able to rely on the technology. In the end, the factor that finally convinced me to tape the interviews was my strong feeling that I did not want to take notes during the interviews and if I didn’t I had no way of accurately recalling what had been said. Despite my being right about the time commitment in the transcription of the tapes I am now enormously glad that I did tape them. Each interview took roughly eight hours to transcribe which is a lot of lost Sundays but the feeling that I had spent the whole day with each person during the transcription was invaluable.

It was as Hollway and Jefferson (2000) describe when they talk about:

‘After a whole day working on the transcripts of a particular participant (a process we often referred to as ‘immersion’) we would feel inhabited by that person in the sense that our imagination was full of him or her. The impact such work had is best demonstrated by the fact that our interviewees could appear in our dreams and waking fantasies. The process of dreaming about them suggests that our developing insights into a person were not occurring just at a conscious intentional level, but that unconscious processes – our fantasy life and emotions – were also working on that ‘Gestalt’ (p. 69)

In the early days there were moments when I seriously considered employing someone else to transcribe the tapes or finding a more efficient technological solution but in the end came to the view that you cannot help but benefit from doing it yourself and the time was well spent. As each interview was transcribed I felt as if I was able to immerse myself in the material and as a result knew my data intimately. There was no other way I could have achieved this position. The interpretation of data from the interviews will be considered in a later chapter.

Finally, when I began listening back over the tapes, I was struck by the strong sense of intimacy I heard in many of them. Even though I had been part of these conversations I had not been aware of this level of intimacy at the time. This was not true for all of them of course, and not all of the time. There was also a lot of laughter and passion, but quite frequently the taped conversations sounded very intimate and somehow cosy. I am still not sure what this was about but it felt like I was listening to a conversation between two people about a personal experience they had both been involved in and as if somehow they were re-experiencing it together. Maybe I had achieved my fantasy or desire (referred to earlier) for the interviews to be like an intimate conversation after all.
Validation of interview material

Validation of interview material was achieved by participants reviewing their interview transcripts. At the end of each interview, I indicated that I would transcribe the interview and then email it to them (marked confidential) to check and that at that time, they could amend, remove or add anything as they wished. I did this to ensure participants were comfortable with their interview material, to provide them with an opportunity to reflect on what they had said and to ensure the interview material was factually correct (Foley and Valenzuela, 2005).

On all but two occasions, participants reviewed their transcripts. Generally speaking it took between two and four weeks for me to transcribe each interview and return it to participants to check. Most participants appeared to read their transcripts quite carefully. Some provided corrections to my typing errors, others filled in blanks that had come about as a result of the inability to make out something that was being said on the tape. On one occasion, a participant elected to remove a portion of what had been said during interview. In retrospect the participant felt that something that they had said about some of their colleagues during the interviews was now best left unsaid. On another occasion a participant read, amended and returned their transcript and a day or so later emailed me with some additional thoughts that had come to mind as a result of reading the transcript. Participants generally took about two weeks to return the checked transcript. In the two instances where the interview material was not validated by return email, one had left the Department for another job not long after receiving the transcript and the other moved to another role in the department shortly after their interview. In both instances I followed up with emails to remind them that their transcripts were outstanding but got no response. In the end I decided not to pursue them any further but included the material in my data analysis on the grounds that I was confident that it would be substantially correct because it had been tape recorded.

Participant observation

Observation is thought to be one of the fundamentals of social and behavioural research (Angrosino, 2005). Arguing in support of observation as method, Robson (2002) states that the advantages of observation include its directness, its capacity to contrast or compliment other methods and its capacity to get to ‘real life’. He does point out though, that in his view, one of the major disadvantages relates to concerns about the impact of the observer on the situation being observed. There are however others, originating with Devereux, who, in acknowledging the impact of the researcher, believe that the role of the researcher as observer is essential to
understanding social behaviour. In arguing the case for the use of counter transference in research, Giami (2001) quotes Deveraux as saying ‘we can only observe the phenomena that occur near or inside the experimental apparatus and the observer himself is the most important part of this apparatus’ (p.4). It was Devereux who laid the groundwork for the clinical methods which informed this research. The use of clinical methods goes a long way towards ensuring that the researcher is instrumental to the research rather than being a problem (Berg & Smith, 1988).

Having decided to employ participant observation as a method, my next decisions related to how and what to observe and was what was my observational stance to be? It seemed that having decided to work as an insider researcher, and in light of my ongoing workplace role in the project, I had little choice but to take up the participant observer stance. This role is described by Patton (2002) as someone who is able to share:

‘...as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the setting under study in order to develop an insider's view of what is happening...This means that the participant observer not only sees what is happening but feels what it is like to be a part of the setting or program’ (p. 268).

Patton (2002) points out that while the participant part of the process is accentuated, at the same time, the observer ‘remains aware of being an outsider’ and must ‘combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the setting as an insider while describing it to and for outsiders’ (p. 268).

I am concerned now that I was not open enough with the people with whom I was working about my participant observer role. I had no intention of observing people covertly but nor did I make a ‘full and complete disclosure’ (p. 273) as recommended by Patton (2002). I was aiming for some form of unobtrusive observation where the fact that people were being observed was eventually forgotten and people could behave naturally. Looking back now, I think I had in mind the idea that because I was fully participating in the project and because I tried to be as open as I could about when I was in the researcher or manager roles, that I somehow had it covered. Now I don't think that is the case although I am not sure what I might have done differently. Maybe I could have included a clause about participant observation in the consent form I asked people to sign? It would not have covered the full range of situations. Maybe I should have kept...
telling people that I was observing them? That seems implausible. For me this continues to be an unresolved ethical dilemma associated with working as an insider researcher.

Finally, having decided that I wanted to observe the implementation of CISP from when we got the funding until after the program was implemented, I then had to think about what I wanted to observe. Fundamentally I decided that I wanted to observe as much as I could of the two organisations working together on the implementation process. This meant, within the confines of available time, I would make myself available for as many one on one, formal and informal, and structured and unstructured meetings, workshops and interactions as possible. I would also keep data on telephone and email conversations and any unscheduled chats or conversations that took place. These sometimes took place in corridors, lifts or out in the street.

I was also interested to observe how the CPDU project team worked when they were away from the court people and how I worked with the CPDU and court people separately. This latter was about trying to gauge how we felt about the other when they were not present. I was interested in language, turns of phrase, patterns of behaviour, interaction styles, decision making, conflict, how humour was used and anything that gave me an insight into conscious and unconscious group dynamics. I was interested in evidence of projection and projective identification, the presence of anxiety and how it was defended against and issues such as trust, anger and envy. I was also interested in observing how I felt during a situation as I observed or participated in it and any sense that I had about the group dynamic. I recorded my observations in a journal.

When thinking about how I would take up the observer part of the participant observer role, I was very influenced by the work of Hinshelwood and Skogstad (2000) on observing organisations. Their method, adapted from a model for observing mother/infant interactions into one for the observer-as-intruder, is informed by a psychoanalytic framework. What I wanted to do was ‘to develop a psychoanalytic attitude on which one retains, feels and thinks about the experience of the other, the observed’ (p.18). The authors talk about attaining this position whilst at the same time not needing to respond to the pressures to act on what was being observed. I knew this latter position was going to be difficult given I was a participant and not an ‘intruder’ and I would be faced with situations where I would have to act from my participant if not my observer role. It was none-the-less a useful framework to work within and assisted in the formation of working hypotheses to work with at a later time.
The other work that influenced me at this time was that of Willshire (1999) who discusses a workplace observation method developed for application in teaching managers. I did want to be ‘fully present’ in my attempts to understand the experience of others but I had to manage the delicate balance between total immersion in the system I was observing and being emotionally and physically distant enough to enable me to hold my researcher role. My fantasy was that I could apply the method described by Willshire (1999) as follows:

- ‘observing from a position of not knowing, without believing an ultimate ‘truth’ will be discovered;
- Recognition of one’s own emotional state as a valuable source of data;
- Attention to conscious and unconscious dynamics with the observed group and between group members and the observer;
- Retention of an interested, friendly demeanour, without becoming merged with, or intruding judgement and views upon the group’ (p. 196)

Whilst in the observer role I did not take notes at the time but recorded the interaction in my journal as soon as possible after the event. To a large extent my participant role determined how I was able to take up my observer role. When I was required to be fully present as a participant I did so and the observer role took second place. When my participant role was less demanding, as it sometimes was depending on the nature of the interaction, my observer role was able to take centre stage. It was a matter of vigilance and self scrutiny, being clear about which part of the dual role had precedence and paying attention to my emotional state. There were of course, times when I abandoned the observer role altogether because it all got too complicated or difficult and too hard to hold. Sometimes it was just an impossible task.

Indirect observation

Because it was not possible to observe everything, I also kept copies of minuted meetings that I had not attended and documents associated with implementation of aspects of the program. Emails were also an important source of data. Sometimes quite important aspects of the collaborative process were played out between the two organisations via email. Many of the emails were useful either because they dealt directly with an issue or alerted me to something that I wished to follow up.

Finally, on occasion other people talked to me about what had taken place at meetings that I had not attended. This feedback generally came about as a function of my supervisory relationships with my staff but other people sometimes raised these meetings with me because
of my participant role in the process. While I recognised that this feedback was given from the other persons particular perspective, I was often able to ask questions that allowed me to get a sense of how their bias was informing their views about what had taken place. In the end, everything was data.

**Keeping a journal**

As part of the process of self scrutiny and consistent with the clinical methods approach, I kept a research journal between March 2005 when my research journey commenced, till March 2007 when I completed my data collection. I used the journal for a number of purposes. When I first started my doctoral candidature, I did so as part of a cohort commencing a Professional Doctorate so much of my early journaling in the first months was for the practicum component of that program. However, by July 2005 I had changed to the PhD stream and my journaling related specifically to my research. I used it to record workplace observations and what I thought and felt about what I was observing. I used the journal to think through problems with the research and reflect on my experience of the research process. I used the journal to think through troubling aspects of relationships with my colleagues and anxieties associated with my experience as researcher. I recorded impressions and feeling after interviews and sometimes recorded thoughts about what I was reading and how that influenced my thinking about the research and what was going on around me. Finally, I used the journal to record thoughts and feelings to come back to later. Towards the end of the data collection period, I was feeling so ‘full’ of material I didn’t think I could hold any more and used the journal just to park thoughts and ideas to return to at a later time.

Having recently written a Masters thesis, I also understood something about the value of using writing as a research method. I knew keeping a journal would deepen my learning about myself and what was going on around me. As I reflected on the research process I would be deepening my learning about myself as a researcher (Hogan, 1995). Even whilst knowing this in the early days of my research, there were times when I still felt ambivalent about the journaling process. On the one hand I felt resentful about the time it took and on the other hand, when I did take the time, journaling felt like a really useful activity. I persevered and got into a habit of regular writing and missed it for a time after I stopped.
Using a ‘working note’

As has been discussed previously in chapter 3, working notes are used to generate a dialogue with the client or research system. In November 2006, after completing a preliminary analysis of the data from the first round of interviews, I prepared a Working Note for consideration by the Research Reflection Group. A copy of this Note can be found at Appendix A. The Working Note represented my early thinking about what conditions might be necessary for collaboration based on early interview and participant observation data.

When preparing the working note, I had in mind the idea that, because they were as immersed in the collaboration almost as deeply as I was, the Research Reflection Group members would be able to validate (or otherwise), my early observations based on their experience of the collaboration. I prepared the Note and sent it to members via email a day or so ahead of the meeting. At the meeting I started off by saying that I had consolidated all of the data to date and was putting forward a working hypothesis about what conditions might be necessary to build an inter-agency collaboration. The dialogue generated by the Working Note was lively and wide ranging. We worked our way through the content and there was discussion, agreement and disagreement around the points I had raised and some new elements were added.

The Research Reflection Group

At the suggestion of my research supervisor, in October 2005 I invited a number of my colleagues to participate in a reflective group to assist with the research. The establishment of some sort of group comprised of members of the system under examination and the researcher/s to support a research process is a common strategy in social sciences research. These groups can take a number of forms depending on their primary task. For example, a steering group might be a decision making body, whereas a discussion group may not make decisions but may still influence the direction of the research. No matter what form they take, these groups can provide a useful vehicle for engaging directly with the social system being examined which is consistent with the clinical method underpinning this research. They can also provide a containing function for the research process itself (Long & Newton, 1997).

When first thinking about inviting people to participate in this group, I had in mind the idea that I wanted the collaborating system to think about the research with me. I thought that a reflection group would assist in the process of containing the research and help me to think in the researcher role. Although I was not sure how it might happen, I was also hoping a reflection
group might allow us to think together on the collaboration and provide a forum to examine and understand the collaborative process. I was hoping that a reflection group might function as a mirror for the larger collaboration between the Court and the Department as we implemented the CISP.

I thought that as a researcher, a reflection group might allow me (and all of those involved) to gain multiple perspectives of the collaborative process and provide another mechanism for us to work together as collaborating partners (Long & Newton, 1997). A reflection group would also provide an ongoing forum where the collaborative process could be continuously renegotiated and monitored. I was hopeful that a reflection group would allow the collaboration to be linked to the task at hand and create a space to explore the collaborative process at both conscious and unconscious levels which is thought to deepen the collaboration (Long & Newton, 1997) and its possibilities. I was hopeful that a reflection group would not only assist my research but also the overall CISP implementation.

I thought about whom to invite to participate very carefully and selected people in terms of their membership with either of the parts of the collaborating systems, their roles in the CISP implementation process and their capacity for reflective practice. I chose the Deputy Chief Magistrate who was responsible for the oversight of the CISP at that time, the then Manager, Court Support Services, the CISP Project Manager and the CPDU Principal Program Advisor, all of whom met the above criteria. Before the first meeting, the CISP Project Manager was called back to her substantive position and I invited the new Project Manager to take her place. Between the first and second meetings, the CPDU Principal Program Advisor left the Department for another role; no-one was invited to take that place because the position was not re-filled at the organisational level. All of the major elements of the system were represented on the reflective group: the government, the department, the magistracy and the administrative arm of the court. It was not until some time later that I realised that, not only had I invited the people whom I thought represented the diverse interests across the system but also the major power brokers directly associated with the implementation of the CISP.

I was also conscious that I had only invited women to participate. This had not been a conscious decision although I am aware of my preference for working with other women when the opportunity arises. I thought about what, if any, the impact of having all women might have on the functioning of the Reflection Group. When I sent an email inviting people to participate, I
asked them if they thought there was anyone else who should be involved and pointed out that I had not invited any men. In responding to the email invitation, one participant indicated that she had no issue with the group I had chosen but if I was worried about there being only women I might want to invite one of the male registrars and suggested a particular person on the grounds that he might be able to bring a particular perspective on the basis of his location within the system. In the end, I decided to stay with the original invitation list because I felt that participation on the grounds of gender alone was less important that my original criteria and I was confident that original members would work very productively together.

In October 2005 I sent an email inviting everyone to participate; all of whom agreed. Between December 2005 and November 2006 the group, which became known as the Research Reflection Group, met four times. As will be seen in a subsequent chapter, the Research Reflection Group became central to the collaboration.

The role of the researcher - My role in the project

Before going on to discuss my experience as researcher, it might be helpful to explain my role in the project i.e. the other half of my dual roles of researcher and manager. As I have explained earlier, I had been responsible for the initial conceptual thinking underpinning the CISP and the development of the business case that sought the funding. Now, during the implementation of the CISP and whilst conducting most of my research, I was the manager of the unit that implemented a range of problem solving initiatives in the courts including the CISP. In essence that meant that I had overall responsibility for the successful implementation of what was a high value project that was a key element of the Attorney General’s Justice Statement (Department of Justice, 2004).

At an operational level, this meant that the CISP Project Manager, who had day to day responsibility for implementing the program, reported to my role as the unit manager. We met regularly to work through a range of issues and monitor progress. I also chaired the Project Control Group until the negotiated change of focus in January 2007 discussed earlier. At a strategic level, I was involved in much of the decision making about who should be consulted or directly involved in the implementation project. I was also involved in many discussions with the Project Manager about implementation strategies to assist us in achieving our task, particularly between the CISP project team and the court. During these strategic discussions, the Project Manager and I would consider what my role might be in relation to progressing a particular
Working with what is there

aspect of the project. On a number of occasions I facilitated processes between the project team and the court. The development of the staffing profile at each of the court locations and the development of the new staffing profile were cases in point.

I was also responsible for high level relationship management to support the project between ourselves, the department, the Minister’s Office, the Public Sector Union and the Court. On occasion I was required to manage conflict between the project team and the court. I was also involved in providing support to the court as it worked through a complex change management strategy with its own staff. In essence, while I did not have day to day responsibility for the project, I was intimately involved from its inception to its implementation in November 2007 and then its ongoing evaluation.

Dealing with multiple roles

In the early days of the project I struggled to find what I thought was the right degree of proximity between my management and research roles and the project. In previous roles as a project director I had been directly involved in all aspects of project implementation. In the case of CISP however, I had to get used to the idea that I was one step removed and working largely through the project manager yet still wanting to be close enough to what was going on to inform my research role. In the end I just had to get used to the reality that my responsibility for all of the projects within the unit meant that I had to work through the various project managers and make strategic decisions about when I got directly involved with CISP.

Researcher as bricoleur

I have recently come back to the question of method; partly in preparation of this chapter and partly in response to a reference by one of my doctoral colleagues to researcher-as-bricoleur. (See Acknowledgements for source). As mentioned in the preface, I am drawn to the metaphor of a patchwork quilt. The ideal of piecing together the different aspects of a complex situation and constructing a representation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) or bricolage of what is taking place around me is a deeply powerful metaphor for my research and for myself as a researcher; as is the idea that researcher-as-bricoleur can itself be viewed as a legitimate methodology. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe the process as:

“In the active bricolage, we bring our understanding of the research context together with our previous experience with research methods. Using these knowledges, we tinker in the Levi-Straussian sense with our
research methods in field-based and interpretive contexts. This tinkering is a high-level cognitive process involving construction and reconstruction, contextual diagnosis, negotiation and readjustment. Researchers' interactions with the objects of their inquiries, bricoleurs understand, are always complicated, mercurial, unpredictable, and of course complex. Such conditions negate the practice of planning research strategies in advance. In lieu of such rationalization of the process, bricoleurs enter into the research act as methodological negotiators. Always respecting the demands of the task at hand, the bricolage, as conceptualized here, resists its placement in concrete as it promotes its elasticity’ (p. 317).

It was a reference to *bricoleur* (one who is skilled at constructing things by using whatever tools and materials that happen to be available) that brought it all together for me because of the way it represents what I think I have been doing throughout the writing of my thesis. I feel as if I have been working with what is at hand to construct something; a *bricolage*. In this instance, I was trying to construct an understanding of what was happening in an organisational context. In this context, what was at hand was what I and others brought to the collaboration as we worked with it together. It is almost as if working on the collaboration was symbolic of us all making a patchwork quilt together.

This viewpoint resonates strongly with the part of me that wants to have all of my options available and the capacity to make a choice when the time is right, based on what is going on at the time. It explains in part also, why I have held on so tenaciously to what was originally a working title – ‘Working with what is there’.

**Insider researching**

Having decided to work as an insider researcher I found that while it is becoming an increasingly common practice (Humphrey, 1995), insider researching is not examined in detail in the research methods literature. In this context, insider researchers are those people who are conducting research in their own organisations and to whom Adler and Adler (1987) refer as ‘complete members’ within their organisations. Coghlan and Brannick (2005) define the insider researcher as a person who has full membership in his or her organisation and intends to remain a member when the research has been completed, and where the research role is additional to their usual functional role within the organisation. Despite the recent burgeoning of insider research in the social sciences reported by Coghlan and Brannick (2005), its examination in the literature is predominantly descriptive. Aside from a small number of exceptions, (Humphrey, 1995; Holian, 1999; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Morgan, 2006) there
has been little serious attempt to address the often complex issues associated with carrying out research from the insider perspective (Coghlan, 2003).

One of the most complex issues associated with being an insider researcher is that of needing to hold the researcher and workplace roles at the same time. In discussing the application and implementation of the Australian National Statement On Ethical Conduct In Research from the perspective of the insider researcher in business, Holian and Brooks (2004) draw on Mirvis and Seashore when they suggest that ethical dilemmas often arise from roles ‘not because roles are unclear but because they are clearly in conflict’. They give a summary of the ethical issues associated with the conduct of insider research and point out:

‘...that where the researcher is an existing member of an organisation and may have multiple roles within the organisational context, then role clarification to do with research related tasks, information collection and data analysis is not a simple process’ (p. 14).

Humphrey (1995) considered how the inter-relatedness of role, ideology, power and language impact on the research process for the insider researcher. He sought to explore participant perceptions of the role of the insider researcher through the administration of a questionnaire and debriefing discussions. Interviewees reported that in addition to data collection; information was shared and a number of workplace matters were discussed during the interviews. Humphrey discusses the possibility of conflict between the researcher and multiple workplace roles and concludes that any attempt to resolve these conflicts will necessarily involve ethical decision making, judgement and the balancing of competing requirements.

Holian (1999) gives a personal account of some of the difficult lessons learned as an insider researcher when carrying out research in her own organisation. She describes a case study in which she held multiple workplace roles in addition to that of insider researcher and the role conflict that emerged as a consequence of divided loyalties between her ‘informants’ and the organisation.

When discussing the practice of action research from the insider perspective Coghlan and others (Coghlan & Casey, 2001; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Coghlan, 2003) discuss role duality in some detail. They state that it is a significant challenge for people considering research within their own organisations and that it can be difficult and awkward and likely to
lead to role conflict when the organisational role demands full participation and the research role requires some degree of detachment. This is exactly how I experienced the insider researcher role. Organisational roles are often lodged within an existing network of organisational affiliations and can lead to what Coghlan and Brannick (2005) refer to as loyalty tugs. They conclude that the nature of the organisational role will often determine how much role ambiguity is experienced, with the highest level of ambiguity likely where the organisational role is that of manager.

A number of characteristics distinguish the insider researcher from the person who enters an organisation expressly to conduct research. These include the requirement for the insider researcher to span boundaries as they enact roles in both the researcher and organisational settings; the requirement to manage organisational politics that they are often part of in an intimate way and a pre-existing closeness to many of the people in the organisation. Insider research is political and in some cases subversive and insider researchers are required to work harder and more explicitly at the process of enquiry (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005) than outsider researchers.

Even though working as an insider researcher was as complex and as challenging as described by the literature, it was nonetheless a useful way to take up the researcher role. I was able to utilise the advantages unique to the insider researcher including having a deep understanding of the culture and informal structures and history of the two organisations. I was fluent in the ‘native language’ and I had established relationships with the members of the organisation and I was able to gain unlimited access to a wide range of data and people within the organisation (Holian, 1999; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). I also struggled with the challenges inherent in this method including maintaining an appropriate balance between my researcher and manager roles and how to respond to the tugs or pulls from one role to another. Despite the challenges of this way of working, taking up the insider researcher role allowed me to immerse myself in the research process with my colleagues that I do not think would have been possible had I chosen to work as an outsider.

**Finding myself as a researcher**

As an instrument of the research process, and particularly in the context of the relationship between the researcher and the researched, it is important that I consider my frame of mind as the researcher. As I began to think about this, I struggled to sort out what had been uppermost
in my mind as a researcher. I thought about working within the Berg and Smith (1988) clinical methods framework and taking up the interpretive stance described by Shapiro and Carr (1991) discussed earlier, but how did I see myself as a researcher? What ideas were I holding in mind?

Under the direction of the doctoral Program Director, who was also my research supervisor, my doctoral cohort had been using a role conversation method to explore our research roles. The method involves one person taking up the role as researcher, another as an interviewer and a third as a facilitator. The interaction between the researcher and the interviewer is by way of a conversation rather than in interview based on questions and answers. The facilitator generally only intervenes to the extent necessary to keep the conversation going and on task. The remaining members of the cohort are observers. The researcher, interviewer and facilitator converse for about 20 minutes and then the observers reflect amongst themselves about their observations, feelings and associations. Having listened to these associations, the researcher, interviewer and facilitator then feedback their thoughts and feelings in response to the observer’s comments. We had conducted three or four of these role conversations when I decided I should participate in the researcher role to help me understand my state of mind as researcher.

What became clear to me was the extent to which I had been holding the balance for the whole system. Taking dual roles within a two-part system has been a recurring theme throughout my research. Carefully and thoughtfully holding the balance between the dual roles associated with being an insider researcher and participant observer has required my constant vigilance and, alertness throughout the research. Much of the anxiety I experienced as a researcher now seems to be associated with what I saw as my responsibility to hold the balance between a ‘good enough’ objectivity as a researcher and the subjectivity associated with my workplace role in the system. I did not think I could carry out my research effectively without being about to find and hold this place.

My research supervisor pointed out that the scales of justice are a representation of the courts as balanced arbiters and that there were two systems alive within the CISP collaboration, the ‘good work group and the paranoid system’. Bion’s (1961) fight flight basic assumption came to mind for me. I felt as if I was somehow trying to hold both the court and the department together in some way to allow it to function as a work group and allow the task (that is the
development of the CISP) to be carried out rather than becoming a paranoid system that would spin off into fight-flight behaviour that had its roots in the establishment of the judiciary and the separation of powers. It is clear now that I was holding the balance for the whole system.

**Ethical issues**

Thinking and working through the ethical issues associated with the research took place on a number of levels. Initially, as is the case for all doctoral candidates, I was required to complete a university Human Research Ethics Committee application. The process was relatively straightforward and answering the questions on the application form was helpful in developing my thinking about the research process as I understood it at that time. I was also required to make an application to the Department of Justice Human Research Ethics Committee because I wished to interview department staff. This process took rather longer than the RMIT application, largely due to the fact that the Committee did not understand what I was seeking to do. They were, perhaps understandably so, unfamiliar with systems psychodynamic theory and method and had in mind the idea that I was seeking to evaluate the Court Integrated Services Program. Had that been my intention, such research would clearly have constituted a conflict of interest given that I was responsible for the implementation of the program. It took a number of submissions of additional material and a meeting between the Chair of the Committee and my Research Supervisor before the misunderstanding was clarified and approval was given. During this time I did not commence interviews but was aware of having taken up my role as participant observer. I felt uncomfortable that I was doing this ahead of receiving departmental approval but reconciled it (at least in part) on the grounds that I couldn't avoid seeing what was going on about me on a day to day basis once I had determined that participant observation was to be part of my method.

In addition to the usual human research ethics issues associated with the selection and recruitment of subjects, risks associated with participation and informed consent, on a different level, I was very aware of my strong desire to act ethically throughout my research because of a need to continue working in the courts area at the conclusion of my research. I was keen to ensure there was no damage to my relationships with colleagues with whom I wished to keep working because of any thought that I had somehow behaved unethically. This concern was further compounded by my decision to work as an insider researcher.
As the research progressed, I became aware of the difficulties associated with holding increasing amounts of information in mind and remembering who had said what and in which context. I was concerned that I would inadvertently disclose information I had been given in a confidential interview context in the workplace. I tried to contain this risk by managing myself in role. I always took care to ensure that whomever I was talking to at any point in time understood what role I was in at that time, i.e. researcher or manager. While I was confident that in most cases people I might have interviewed one day and was working with as a colleague the next day continued to see me as the same person (Holian & Brooks, 2004) and didn’t make the distinction between researcher and manager, holding the boundary between the two roles assisted me greatly in making sure I maintained the confidentiality of interview material. It meant being constantly vigilant about what I said to whom and how I conducted myself in the workplace. Despite keeping a journal, I found that over time it became increasingly difficult to recall how material came to me and to hold the boundaries between my research and workplace roles and avoid unconsciously slipping out of role.

There were times however, when I deliberately chose to respond to the pull from one role to another by consciously making the role shift. However, I was very aware that to the extent it was possible, my colleagues should be able to know to whom they were speaking at that moment in time and I endeavoured to tell them which role I was working from. I think one of the cornerstones of good ethical practice as an insider researcher is to be as clear as possible about which role you are holding at any particular time (Morgan, 2006). I will discuss the insider researcher perspective in more detail later in this chapter.

In addition, I also had to consider any ethical issues associated with interviewing my peers about a process that, on the whole, we were all involved in, within a system to which we all belonged. Platt (1981) reminds us that when interviewer and interviewees belong to shared communities it can be ‘enormously helpful in some ways, but it implies personal relations which carry social obligations that can make the normal impersonal and instrumental use of the interview difficult’ (p. 78). For example, it may be that people become embarrassed at having revealed too much, or cannot avoid the identification of third parties known to both the interviewer and interviewee. This latter was a case in point. At the commencement of their first interview, people invariably tried hard not to identify others that might be mentioned in passing. However, as it became obvious that we both knew who was being referred to, it became increasingly difficult to maintain these efforts and they were quickly abandoned.
In line with advice provided by Holian and Brooks (2004) I sought consent to conduct my research from both the Department of Justice and the Magistrates Court as well as from each of the people that agreed to be interviewed. I was careful to avoid disclosing material from one person to another amongst interviewees to assist in maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. I do know however, that many of those interviewed discussed the interviews amongst themselves. I did not seek to find out what was being said. I was not concerned that interviewees might be talking amongst themselves and disclosing to each other what the interview was about and what might have been said. I accepted the reality that groups of people working together would talk and there was nothing to be gained by trying to stop them even if I could. My concern was primarily that I behaved ethically and maintained the confidentiality of what had been said to me and the anonymity of who said it.

Finally, when I think now about informed consent I have to wonder how naïve I was at the beginning of an emergent research process in terms of ethics. In the context of conducting research in your own organisation, Coghlan and Brannick (2005) raise questions about emergent processes which apply equally in this setting. They ask:

‘If action research is a ‘journey’ and ‘evolves’, how can informed consent be meaningful? Neither action researcher nor participants can know in advance where the journey will take them and cannot know to what they are consenting’ (p. 77).

I have never been able to satisfy myself about whether there is a right or wrong answer to this question. My attempts to resolve this dilemma were from three perspectives. On a formal level, I chose to obtain consent from both the organisations and the individuals. Individuals were given as much information as was available about how their confidentiality and anonymity would be protected, how their material would be used in the writing of my thesis and given the option to not participate or withdraw at any time. On an informal level, I have included as many of the participants and my research supervisor as I could in my thinking and planning on the basis that if I was inadvertently moving into unethical territory someone would raise an objection. Finally, I tried to hold the ethical interests of the participants (Clarke, 2002) in mind throughout the research so I could ask myself if I was doing them any harm.
Primary, secondary and tertiary access

In the context of insider researching, Coghlan and Brannick (2005) refer to primary and secondary access. Primary access is said to be ‘the ability to get into the organisation and be allowed to undertake research’ (p. 67). Secondary access refers to access to ‘documentation, data, people and meetings’ (p. 68). I found the idea of primary and secondary categories of access a useful place to begin thinking about what access I needed to carry out my research as an insider. As time passed and I understood more about what was actually involved in gaining full access, I began to think more in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary access. I will explain these concepts in more detail shortly. Nor do I agree with Coghlan and Brannick’s (2005) view that ‘as you are already a member of the organisation, you have primary access; you are already in’ (p. 67). I do not think it is always so straightforward for a number of reasons.

As was the case with both organisations in my study, it may be that for any number of reasons, there is no tradition of pure or applied research in the organisation. The department, and to a lesser extent the court have a long history of review and evaluation but less so research per se. Membership in such an organisation will not therefore give you automatic access without first needing to convince the organisations to participate in a research process.

Other factors that may impact upon gaining primary access despite membership in the organisation are (i) the workplace role of the member also wishing to take up an insider researcher role or (ii) their position within the hierarchy of the organisation. It is possible that an organisation holds the view that a member’s workplace role or hierarchical position would create a conflict if combined with the role of researcher.

Finally, there may be other, more difficult to articulate reasons about why an organisation decides not to allow a particular member of the organisation to research within the organisation or carry out research on a particular topic. These reasons may be rational or irrational. Rational reasons may relate to the individual’s position within the hierarchy of the organisation or the confidentiality of material. The irrational reasons may be unspeakable and deeply personal and may even be held unconsciously but are founded in the relationship between the organisation and the individual.

In my case, and despite there not being a strong research tradition, both the department and the court willingly agreed to my research proposal and actively supported me throughout the
research process. I think this was as a result of two factors. The first was a function of the personal relationships I had with key decision makers because of my membership and role with the organisation. The second was because both organisations saw some value in the research for themselves in the context of the work that we were doing at the time.

At no time during the conduct of the research did I feel in any way constrained in terms of access (to people, process or documentation) or in terms of what I could say in the writing of this thesis. Both organisations were exemplary in ensuring I had access to all of the people I wished to interview, participation in meetings and access to documents. In writing this thesis, beyond the normal imperative to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, I did not experience any constraint on my academic freedom or feel that there were areas that I could not discuss.

Before moving on to describe the process I went through to obtain access, I should come back to the idea of primary, secondary and tertiary access. Notwithstanding my concerns above, I agree with the Coghlan and Brannick (2005) proposition that primary access is obtained as a function of membership in the organisation but I do not think it is automatic as Coghlan and Brannick suggest. I think that where it is necessary to obtain organisational or university research ethics approval, this might be seen as secondary access. This might also include obtaining university approval for the original program of research. Having obtained what is effectively ‘in principal’ approval from the key decision makers in the organisations and the university, the prospective researcher must then obtain a different sort of approval from ethics committees. It may be that Coghlan and Brannick (2005) were carrying out research in organisations where ethics approval was not necessary but I think seeking ethics approval is fundamentally different to obtaining approval from the organisation. In my experience, ethics committees, quite rightly, focus on different aspects of the research process when considering granting access and should be considered as a separate class of access. Finally, in this three level order of access, Coghlan and Brannicks’ secondary access, that is, to documents, data, people and meeting becomes tertiary access.

**Gaining access to the organisations**

Having decided to research inter-agency collaboration using my workplace and the court, the first step in gaining access was to obtain permission from my manager (who headed up the courts division in the department) and the Chief Magistrate. I talked to my manager very early in the process of thinking about my university program proposal and even thought the proposal
working with what is there

was not yet fully developed, he willingly and unreservedly endorsed my request and continued to support me throughout the research process. When I think back now, it is clear that his approval was based on my membership in the organisation, my role and place within the organisational hierarchy and on our longstanding workplace relationship.

Upon receipt of my manager’s approval, I prepared the university program proposal and ethics application. Having had an earlier telephone conversation with the Chief Magistrate, I then sent him a copy of the university ethics application and he responded with a letter endorsing the research proposal. I then began writing the Department of Justice ethics application.

In terms of access to documentation, data, people and meetings, I was in a very fortunate position. Because I was leading the implementation of the CISP as part of my workplace role, the project management team, the court and I were generating the data, writing the documents (including email correspondence) and arranging and participating in the majority of the meetings. Access to the people we were working with took place on a day to day basis as we carried out our task and access to interview participants is described in the previous chapter.

Continuous data collection

There is no doubt that being an insider researcher assisted enormously in terms of gaining access at all three levels. That is not to say that the court and the department would not have fully cooperated with an outsider researcher conducting the same research; rather it was more about ‘being there’ throughout the whole process. Even with full cooperation from both organisations, an outsider researcher could not have had the same level and quality of access as I had. Because I was an ‘insider’ I could attend all of the meetings, both formal and informal, read all the drafts of documents and the emails and be there for all of the thinking and many of the telephone conversations. The thing that comes to mind for me now is that as a researcher in the area of group relations, you can’t always know what is going to happen and what is going to be important. You just have to be there and sometimes sit with what is taking place and it is oftentimes not until later you understand the importance of what occurred. You have to work with what is there and that process is immensely supported by being there as an insider researcher.
Overview of data collection

The data was collected over a 20 month period between August 2005 and March 2007. Data was collected from a range of sources including – interviews, participant observation, indirect observation, journal notes, meeting minutes and papers, project documentation, personal notes following meetings and my personal experience as a researcher.

The following table represents an overview of the data collection approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of data collection</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants/Setting</th>
<th>Type of data</th>
<th>Quantity of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>August 2005 – March 2007</td>
<td>Personal notes</td>
<td>Workplace and indirect observations, thoughts and questions on readings, reflections, research problems, anxieties about research process, meeting notes and personal feelings.</td>
<td>Approx. 650 pp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>August 2005 – March 2007</td>
<td>Field notes</td>
<td>One on one meetings, formal project meetings, informal meetings, workshops, email and telephone contacts.</td>
<td>Recorded in Journal notes above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 Overview of data collection process
Working with what is there

Features of the data collection process include:

- Data triangulation – use of a wide variety of different data sources in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005)
- Longitudinal – data was collected throughout the life of the project over the longest possible period of time
- Data validation – use of a working note to check emergent working hypotheses, informal conversations with participants and colleagues, preparation of a joint conference paper and discussions within the Research Reference Group.

Overview of the research process

The purpose of this research was to understand how to facilitate collaboration between two organisations. The research design and method were based on the premise that as an insider researcher I could immerse myself in the experience of the two organisations working together, and I could use my experience and that of the other participants to deepen the understanding of collaboration. The research was based on the assumption that the two organisations would learn to collaborate and further, that the knowledge and understanding gleaned through the experience of collaboration could be distilled into practical knowledge and outcomes that might inform other collaborative endeavours.

The following is a broad overview of the research process. Details about key methodological elements were described earlier in this chapter.

The research was carried out in conjunction with the development and implementation phase of the Courts Integrated Services Program in the Magistrates Court. In the beginning, the research ran parallel with the project work but as time passed, the two processes became conjoined through the Research Reflection Group which will be described later in this chapter.

A research journal was started in March 2005, initially to record thoughts and feelings as a researcher and later to participant observations. Recruitment for the Courts and Programs Development Unit (CPDU) project team commenced in June 2005, with the first two members of the team in place during July and August 2005. The Project Working Group was established in September 2005 and the Project Control Group met for the first time in November 2005.
Following Department of Justice Human Research Ethics Committee approval the first round of interviews commenced in December 2005. 23 participants were interviewed over a period of 14 months between December 2005 and March 2007. Some participants were interviewed once, some twice and a small number three times during this period, for a total of 31 interviews. A Research Reference Group was established in December 2005 and it met four times between then and November 2006.

After the first round of interviews an early analysis of the data led to the preparation of a working note for discussion by the Research Reflection Group. The working note was developed as part of the search for evidence of themes and trends within the data. The working note put forward a working hypothesis about some of the conditions that might be necessary for collaboration. Upon completion of the interviews in March 2007, a further examination of the whole data set was carried out using theoretical interpretation as the major analytical tool. Analysis of the data is discussed in the next chapter.

Summary
This chapter focussed on the research design and method. I described my ontological and epistemological position which underpins my methodological choices and my research approach including a single case study and clinical methods. I then described the elements of the method including interviews, participant observation, using a field journal and the use of a working note. The establishment of the Research Reflection Group was described as is working as an insider researcher. The chapter also examined primary, secondary and tertiary access and concludes with an examination of how I found myself in the role of researcher. The next chapter will examine the conduct of the case study, the outcomes and the analysis of the data.
Chapter 6

Integrating Data and Theory

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the research as it was carried out alongside the CISP implementation. Theoretical interpretation, themes and trends are used to analyse the data. An argument is made for segmenting the data into major events on the basis of the magnitude of the quantity of the data and the desire to present it in a way that is parsimonious, yet illuminating. Because the findings emerged from the actions taken during the case study and the research process, the chapter attempts to work with three streams simultaneously: action, reaction and interpretation as described below. Where interpretations led to the development of working hypotheses, these are elucidated.

Data analysis

The data collection period for the research covered some 20 months between August 2005 and March 2007. In addition to 31 interview transcripts, 4 Research Reflection Group transcripts, research journal notes, hundreds of hours of participant observation and meeting minutes and program documentation, I also draw upon material from a number of informal sources including emails and journal records of telephone and face to face conversations.

Because of the sheer volume of data it was necessary to be selective about how to focus on the narrative of the research journey and what material was presented. Following Piterman (2000), the data and findings have been organised in a way that allows a focus on the relationships and organisational dynamics associated with the collaboration between the court and the department as we worked together to implement the CISP. For this reason the research narrative commenced from the August 2005 joint collaborative workshop and not earlier when the department was working largely independently on the early preparations for the implementation project. Time and space do not allow for the examination of issues associated with budget, recruitment, reporting, external communication and politics and stakeholder management except where they directly impact upon the collaboration. While this is an arbitrary boundary, it allows for a deeper analysis of the collaborative data.

Because of the quantity of data generated over the twenty months, it was an impossible task to try and present it in its entirety. It was necessary therefore to make choices about what to
present. I was assisted in these choices by Long (1992) when she talks about needing to define the entity being studied and segmenting the history of the group.

Long (1992) says that before ‘preceding to describe the research it is necessary to outline the nature of the entities being studied’ (p. 85). In this research the entities under examination are the two small groups (the CPDU Project team and the Court representatives) as they represent their parent organisations. The focus of the study is on the behaviour and dialogue of these two groups as they work together on a joint task. As was the case with Long, ‘it is the group that is under focus, rather than the individual’ (Long, 1992 p. 85). The emergence of a new entity during the implementation process will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Organising the data to be analysed**

The most important decision in preparing to present the data and findings was concerned with how they could be organised. Because I could never hope to present it in its entirety in a sequential, step by step narrative, a way had to be found to describe the data that was both parsimonious and illuminating. Following Long, (1992) the data was segmented into ‘major events in the group’s history and considering these as central foci, traumas or episodes …[which] …may lead to an understanding of the symbolic organization of the group’ (p. 139). I found Long’s thinking (drawing on the works of Harre and Freud for example) helpful in managing the presentation of the data. Of particular value was the idea that:

> ‘a group case study ...would involve the segmenting of the history of the group into particular moments or states that may be seen to contain meaning’ (p.80).

And further that:

> ‘An explication of the groups central foci should lead to a valid dissection of its history, valid at least in terms of the phenomenology of the group members, and of the group as an emergent entity. By proceeding from the surface level punctuated in this manner, it is hoped that a further examination will lead to insight about the underlying symbolic structure’ (p.140)

I chose the segments or critical social events described below for their symbolic value. When looking back over the implementation process, even as we were working directly on our task, many of the participants were able to pin point particular moments in time where, they believed, something of significance had taken place; albeit not always being fully aware of what it meant.
at the time. The symbolic value of these moments holds meaning for the group in a way that goes beyond theory. In this way we were able to construct meaning about the implementation process as we lived the experience.

**Interpretation**

In the context of psycho-dynamically informed research into social systems, interpretation is a useful approach when attempting to construct meaning about what is being observed about the system and what is being experienced by the system and the researcher. Huffington, Armstrong, Halton, Hoyle and Pooley (2007) define interpretation as ‘the act of giving a meaning different to the intended meaning or literal meaning of thoughts, words or actions’ (p. 226) This definition felt incomplete. Shapiro and Carr (1991) define interpretation in a way that is closer to the way it was utilised in this research when they talk about ‘ideas that provide connections, meanings or a way of comprehending previously unrelated experiential data…[and]…taking the interpretive stance as a way of making sense of our reality’ (p. 5).

Interpretation is carried out within the context of experience and is theory driven (Long, 2007). In this research, the data gained through the experience of implementing the CISP is interpreted through the lens of theoretical concepts described in chapter 3.

Interpretation has its roots in the theory and practice of psychoanalysis where its primary purpose is therapeutic. Its use in the research, as opposed to the clinical setting is distinguished by two primary differences. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) state that the primary difference is that:

‘…clinicians interpret into the encounter, whereas researchers, not being therapists, will be careful not to interpret at the time the information is being provided by interviewees. Their interpretive work comes later, is separate from the participant and has a different audience. Research interpretation is therefore an activity associated with data analysis as opposed to data production’ (pp. 77-78).

They contradict this point however, when they go on to give an example where the interviewers’ questions are informed by having taken an interpretive stance during the interview. The second difference, Hollway and Jefferson suggest, relates to the objective of the interpretation. In the clinical setting, the objective is to meet the needs of the individual (or in
some cases couples or families) whereas in the research context, the objective is to understand the wider social system.

Shapiro and Carr (1991) point out that there are two major limitations to the use of interpretation. These are said to be:

‘First, any approach to interpreting human experience must take uncertainty into account. Second, the irrational dimension of human behaviour cannot be discounted. It follows that we cannot claim to “understand” social and organisational behaviour – the term is too final and too certain. These phenomena can however, be grasped or “interpreted” collectively if we can agree upon the relevant context for that interpretation’ (p. 5).

In the context of using interpretation as a research approach to construct meaning, all interpretations are temporary in nature. Because they are context and experience specific, interpretations will continue to evolve as contexts change and as experience expands. Interpretations are however, fundamental to the development of working hypotheses which are themselves valuable research tools. Despite these limitations, interpretation is a useful and natural approach for this research.

Again in the research context, the interpretive approach is assisted by two other approaches or what might be better described as states of mind; reflexivity and keeping the whole and the parts in mind. Reflexivity, or engaging our own subjectivity ‘is not a substitute for utilising theory but that it does help to strengthen a theoretical conclusion or alert us to a misreading’ (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000 p. 67). Keeping the whole and the parts in mind on the other hand helps to avoid fragmentation of data and keeps it in its correct context, resulting in the greater likelihood of better construction of meaning (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

Searching for themes and trends
In preparing to interpret data, I also searched the data for themes and trends that would help construct meaning about what was taking place. I did this both formally and informally. The formal search took place at two points in time as mentioned previously: at the completion of the first round of interviews and again at the completion of the final interviews.

About half way through the first round of interviews I realised that my reading and what people were saying in their interviews were beginning to coalesce into a number of themes. The
recognition of these themes started me thinking about what the necessary conditions for collaboration might be. I began to see patterns emerging around themes such as trust, reflective space, vulnerability, the primacy of the task and containment for example.

At the same time as these patterns began to take shape I also became aware that I was searching for evidence of them as they occurred in our lived experience of the collaboration. I began to recognise them as the subject of the dialogue in our day to day conversations and in the interviews and used a Working Note to check my thinking with other members of the collaboration. As will be seen shortly, the members of the Research Reflection Group confirmed and expanded upon the presence of these themes. We were beginning to construct meaning together.

Overview of the data analysis process

It is necessary to articulate the methods used to analyse the data. In so doing, I hope to make explicit the relationship between data analysis, interpretation and theory. As with the decisions taken in the case of the research design and method, so too my decisions about data analysis are informed by my ontological and epistemological beliefs. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) refer to Bateson when they so eloquently point out that ‘These beliefs shape how the qualitative researcher is “bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which – regardless of ultimate truth of falsity – become self-validating”’ (p. 22). The analytical tools needed to reflect my belief that ‘reality’ or the knowable world is based on meaning attributed by individuals and that the researcher is part of this fundamentally social process. The two analytical approaches, that is, interpretation and the search for evidence of themes and trends, complimented my inquiry paradigm.

As indicated previously, I had conducted a preliminary analysis of the data following the completion of the first round of interviews. This was achieved by reading all of the interview transcripts and participant observations notes and identifying consistent themes about the conditions necessary for collaboration.

At the conclusion of the data collection and following Clarke (2002), the first step in the analysis of the full data set involved listening to the interviews and reading to all of the written material generated throughout the research. This included the interview and Research Reflection Group tapes and transcripts, meeting minutes and journal notes. This was done in order to immerse
myself in the material (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000) and to begin thinking about the data in a theoretical way (Clarke, 2002). When considering the interpretive process in interview based studies, Chase (2005) suggests that ‘rather than locating distinct themes across interviews, narrative researchers listen first to the voices within each narrative’ (p. 663).

As I listened to and read the material, I made notes about key themes and issues as they emerged from the text. The program documentation was not used as part of the data analysis. It had been helpful in understanding aspects of the program development but did not add value to understanding the collaboration.

The second step involved making theoretical observations of the issues and themes (identified in the first step) informed by my understanding of the systems psychodynamic literature and the theoretical concepts described in Chapter 3.

The third step involved examining the issues, themes and theoretical observations to identify segments or critical social events for analysis and interpretation. I chose the critical social events on the basis that they were major events in the life of the group and their symbolic value in the organisation of the group (Long, 1992). The analysis of the critical social events was theory driven (Long, 2007) by the systems psychodynamic literature and the theoretical concepts described earlier. Klein and Bion were major influencers. The working hypotheses emerged out of the analysis of the critical social events and were used to inform the development of the framework in the next chapter.

Validation of the analysis outcomes was achieved through the preparation of a joint conference paper with one of the court participants, discussions in the Research Reflection Group and Research Reference Group members reading sections of the analysis of the critical social events.

**Analysis of critical social events**

The next part of this chapter presents the findings through the examination of five critical social events in the history of the case study and an overall interpretation of the collaboration. I have tried to keep the identity of individual players anonymous to maintain confidentiality and keep the focus on the group rather than the individual. However, if the reader is part of the systems under examination, it may be that on occasion, the identity of individuals is discernable through
their workplace roles. I am sorry that this is unavoidable. The chapter attempts simultaneously to work with three streams: action, reaction and interpretation. The action stream describes the critical social events that took place during the progressive project implementation and research processes. Sometimes the actions were deliberate and other times without intent. Sometimes the actions were influenced by the project implementation plan and at other times by the research process. The reaction stream documents what happened in response to the actions and the interpretation stream seeks to make sense of what was happening in the action and reaction streams using a systems psychodynamic framework and drawing upon theory. Where working hypotheses emerge out of an interpretation, these are elucidated.

Critical Social Event 1: The First Collaboration Workshop

The first critical social event deals with the initiation of the collaboration between the court and the department. The action component comprises a short description of a workshop held between the two groups in August 2005 and the reaction component that follows will describe some of what took place during the workshop. Interpretation of the action and reaction attempts to make meaning out of what took place. The significance of this workshop was that it marked the symbolic start of both the project and the data collection component of the research.

In thinking about who should participate in the workshop and as a matter of protocol, I contacted the Chief Magistrate seeking his nomination of magistrates to work with us on the project. I then sent an email to the two Deputy Chief Magistrates nominated by the Chief, the Court CEO and Manager of Court Support Services and the CISP project staff in my unit inviting them to participate in a workshop.

The workshop was organised with the intention of inviting the key players in both the research and the implementation project to work on the two major tasks. I hoped to do that by bringing everyone ‘up to speed’ on where the project stood at that time, by starting the conversation about how the implementation project might proceed and how we might work together. I also wanted to make sure everyone was clear about my research, how it would work alongside the project and what they might expect of me in the roles of manager and researcher. Ahead of the meeting, a presentation was prepared setting out the background of the project, the main features of the CISP, high level project milestones and performance indicators.
The days leading up to the workshop where characterised by high levels of anxiety for both myself and the CISP project team. At the time of writing this chapter, I re-read a copy of the email I had sent inviting the court to participate in the workshop and I was struck by how formal and stilted is sounded; a sure sign of my anxiety leading up to this event and a desire to get it right. My research journal indicates that I wanted the workshop to mark the beginning of the project and saw it as an opportunity to begin talking about how we might begin working together. I also wanted to talk to the court and my staff about my role as researcher. Despite there being no evidence to the contrary, and even though I had the approval of the Chief Magistrate and my own manager, now that my research was about to become real, I was anxious about formally and publicly taking up the role of researcher. My journal records my anxiety in the morning preceding the workshop about how it might go.

Members of the CISP project team were also anxious in the days leading up to the workshop. They were worried about how the court, and one person in particular would come to the project. The anxiety focussed on how the court people would take up the invitation to work with us on the basis that some of them had expressed an ongoing and public rejection of the CISP concept.

People arrived for the workshop at much the same time and I noted that even though we did not sit directly opposite each other, the two groups sat apart from each other and did not intermingle. As the Chair of the workshop, I opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, thanking them for coming and setting out how the meeting would proceed. Because everyone had come to the workshop with different levels of involvement with the project up to that point in time, I started by filling in a little of the background of the project thus far and describing the key elements of the CISP.

We talked about what was to be included in the project and the possibility of including all related problem solving initiatives. My journal notes recorded that after the meeting, we had finally reached an agreement to work together to include all of these initiatives. We talked also about whom else should be consulted during the implementation process and agreed that while the Department of Human services were key to the success of the project, we would do some more work amongst ourselves before consulting them. The court was keen to point out that we also had to consult with both the judicial and the administrative arms of the court and reminded us that there were times when these two did not agree between themselves.
We agreed that a Project Control Group would be established to oversee the implementation project and a Working Party would be established to meet as required to work through the development of the project design. The Project Control Group and the Working Party are described in Chapter 2. The administrative arm of the court was adamant too that at this time the court program staff were not to be included in the development process.

The workshop drew to a close around a discussion about how often we should meet. One suggestion was that we meet next when we had a concrete model to discuss. A second suggestion was that we should not meet until we could all be present. As one person was about to go on two months leave that meant that we would not meet again for at least two months. It was agreed that the CISP project team would do some more work and invite people from this group into the process as required.

Reactions to the workshop
In terms of reaction, the workshop was characterised by high and low points. Several aspects of the workshop elicited strong responses. The first for example, was during the early part of the presentation that related to which groups of defendants would be included in the CISP. As I talked about which defendants might be eligible to participate in the program one of the court people got very angry about the possibility that a particular group of defendants, who they believed needed the services the CISP was designed to offer, might be excluded. This exclusion was cited as yet another example of how the department was making decisions without consulting the court.

The anger flared up very quickly and felt to me to be disproportionate to the situation. The reaction was so strong in fact, that everyone else in the workshop was momentarily stunned into silence. In my role as Chair of the workshop I felt a very strong pull to respond and said that we had not meant to exclude this group per se but given the long history behind the court establishing this particular defendant list we were keen to not be seen to be ‘taking over’ a successful court initiative. My journal notes record my feeling at the time that this was a particularly sticky moment and my feeling the need to talk fast to get the whole process back on track. It felt as if the collaboration could go off track even before it had started and that even despite our best intentions, we had still stumbled inadvertently into a minefield. It was only after my frank disclosure about not wanting to take over and the dilemma we had found ourselves in
that we were able to move beyond this point. Throughout this exchange the rest of the participants continued to remain silent.

On a more positive note there was very strong support from the court members for my research and no concern about my trying to hold the dual roles of manager and researcher. The person who had so strongly reacted to the possible exclusion of the group of defendants referred to above made a very forceful and public affirmation of myself and my work. Someone else responded with a comment about lampposts being for holding up lights and something to lean on and another person made a reference to “Janelle De Bono” in reference to my wearing a number of hats at the one time.

The final reaction to be considered here is the discussion around when the group should meet again. There had been a lengthy discussion during the workshop about collaboration and boundaries and yet when it came time to decide how often we should meet it was difficult to get agreement. The reality was that because of our responsibility for implementing the project against tight timelines and because we knew we had to work with the court, the CISP project team would have agreed to any reasonable meeting schedule suggested by the court. As it was, the group had difficulty deciding whether to let the CISP project team take the development process to the next level on its own or not doing anything until everyone was available in approximately two months time. In the end we settled for the unsatisfactory compromise of the CISP team doing some more work largely on its own but inviting the court representatives to work with us on an ‘as needs’ basis.

**Interpretations about the workshop**

From an interpretive stance it felt as if a number of group processes were taking place throughout the workshop. The work of Jaques (1955), Klein’s psychic mechanism of projective identification (Fraher, 2004) and Bion’s (1961) basic assumption behaviours came particularly to mind when trying to understand what was taking place.

In his seminal study of the Glacier Metal Company in the 1950s, Jaques (1955) describes a case study involving two parts of an organisation attempting to work together. In the Jaques case, the workers and managers in a department of the factory are struggling to agree on a change to the method of paying wages. Jaques’ observation that despite largely being in favour of the proposed changes, during the negotiation phase of the project, workers expressed deep
suspicion and mistrust of management and yet the two groups continued to work harmoniously along side each other on the shop floor. This resonates with some of the dynamics present in the first CISP workshop. Jaques is of the view that the split in the group dynamics is a means of defending against persecutory and depressive anxieties.

The discussion and disagreement about the defendants eligible for CISP and the more than friendly support for my research can be seen as a split in the group dynamic similar to that described in the Jaques study. Within the same meeting there was tension around the defendants (similar to that between the workers and management in Jaques’ study) and the almost more than friendly agreement (similar to the harmonious relations on the workshop floor in Jaques’ study) about the research where no competition existed. My research supervisor commented that ‘it is as if there are two sets of collaborations going on in parallel with associated paranoid and depressive anxieties’ (Long, 2009).

Based on my experience with court processes and personnel at the time, the angry outburst about the perceived exclusion of the particular group of defendants was borne out of a deep and longstanding mistrust of the department and the fear that the good work of the court would be taken over by the department resulting in the paranoid anxieties referred to above. There is evidence that this fear was well founded in that the implementation of the CISP meant taking apart the problem solving initiatives established by the court over many years and re-building them into an integrated service delivery model. While there was a sound government policy reason for proceeding in this direction, some sectors of the court believed that they should determine court policy and had worked hard over many years to implement these programs and were understandably angry that they were about to be taken over.

The CISP project team and I were aware that we were in fact pulling the work of the court apart, and while we agreed with the policy position that this was the best way to proceed, we nonetheless felt bad that in essence we were about to demolish the work of the court and knew how the court felt about it. The angry outburst can therefore be explained in terms of Klein’s concept of projective identification explained earlier in Chapter 3. In this interpretation, the CISP project team split off its bad feelings (depressive anxieties) about destroying the work of the court. To make it easier for us to manage these bad feelings we unconsciously projected them on to an ‘other’; in this case the most vocal opponent of the CISP project within the court.
Our unconscious projection of our bad feelings onto an ‘other’ also accounts for the anxiety about this person in the days leading up to the joint workshop.

The angry outburst itself can be further explained on the basis that if the idea around the CISP implementation process was so hated that it was not possible for the ‘other’ to modify or neutralise and thus re-internalise these bad feelings, they must ultimately be expressed as anger and anguish. St Clair’s (1986) tortured cry of ‘I am hurting and need you and you don’t feed me, you are bad and are attacking me and devouring me and I feel bad’ (p. 41) suddenly becomes powerfully apropos in this context.

When reflecting on the outburst after the workshop, for a long time it puzzled me that only one court person took a stance during the workshop. The other court people remained silent during the outburst despite my being aware that some of them held similar views about the project. Thinking about it now from the perspective of projective identification, it is clear now, that if the CISP team and I were projecting our bad feelings into only one ‘other’ it would be that ‘other’ alone that was struggling with the pain and anguish associated with these feelings and expressing them so forcefully. The silence of that person’s colleagues can also be explained initially by their shock at the force of the outburst and because they were not holding nearly the same level of anguish about the project despite some misgivings on the part of some of them.

As an aside and not associated with the interpretation of the group dynamic, with regard to the very positive response to my proposal to use the CISP implementation as a case study for my research, particularly from the same person who had been so angry only a short time before, there are a number of possible explanations. First and foremost, is the fact that this person and I have a longstanding friendship that surmounts our work relationship and the positive affirmation of myself and my research reflected a genuine support for me. Second, an enduring characteristic of this relationship has been the ability to separate feelings associated with unhappiness about something that is taking place in the workplace and our personal relationship. There is evidence in earlier aspects of our relationship that this person can passionately disagree with me about some aspect of our work and yet maintain an enduring personal warmness towards me. Finally, I have always wondered if in fact the strength of the outburst startled the person as much as it did everyone else and the public support for my research was meant as a reparation.
In essence, similar to the Jaques' study, the projective identifications worked two ways during the workshop. The court had to defend against their paranoid anxieties triggered by the belief that the department was taking over their work and the department had to defend against its depressive anxieties triggered by the belief that it was taking over the work of the court. Following the angry outburst, depressive anxieties about damage led to reparation.

Despite my desire (or fantasy) for collaboration, it was clear that there were two separate groups operating within the workshop: the CISP project team and the court group. It is not surprising that this was the case given that this was the first time we had all come together to work on what was for some a despised task and the long history of mistrust and antipathy between the court and the department. The reality was that at that time, while we could talk about collaborating on certain aspects of the implementation, we were not yet able to commit to working collaboratively on the entire task.

An alternative way in which I tried to make sense out of the first part of the meeting was through an analysis of the behaviour of the two separate groups. The distinction between these groups was so strong that for a time I found it impossible to analyse anything of the overall group. It did not feel as if there was an overall group.

If you think about the workshop in the context of the two groups and start by examining each group separately from the perspective of Bion’s (1961) basic assumption behaviours it is possible to come to some understanding of the dynamics.

During the workshop, the CISP project team (including myself) was operating in a basic assumption dependency mode. The anxiety in the days leading up to the workshop, the fact that the people in this group had only just come together as a group and my role as leader all contributed to this behaviour. Drawing on the work of Bion, Rioch (1975) describes the basic assumption dependency group thus:

> The essential aim of the basic assumption dependency group is to attain security through and have its members protected by one individual. It assumes that this is why the group has met. The members act as if they know nothing, as if they are inadequate and immature creatures. Their behaviour implies that the leader, by contrast, is omnipotent and omniscient....In this emotional state the group insists that all explanations be extremely simple; no one can understand any complexity; no one can do anything that is difficult; but the leader can solve all difficulties, if only he will. He is idealized and made into a kind of god who will take care of
his children. The leader is often tempted to fall into this role and to go along with the basic assumption of the group' (pp. 24-25).

As the leader of the group, I had taken on the role of trying to contain the group's anxiety. As most of the members of the newly formed CISP project team were still becoming familiar with CISP, their new roles within the project team and the court. I did fall into the role of the all knowing god like leader who could contain everyone else's anxiety and make it all work. I believed that at the time.

The court group on the other hand was operating in a basic assumption fight-flight mode of behaviour. Again drawing on Bion, Rioch (1975) describes the fight-flight basic assumption mode as:

‘The assumption is that the group has met to preserve itself and that this can be done only by fighting someone or something or by running away from someone or something. Action is essential whether for fight or for flight….A leader is even more important than in other basic assumption groups because the call for action requires a leader. The leader who is felt to be appropriate to this kind of group is one who can mobilize the group for attack or lead it in flight. He is expected to recognise danger and enemies. He should represent and spur on to courage and self-sacrifice…He is expected to feel hate toward the enemy and to be concerned not for the individual in the group but for the preservation of the group itself. An accepted leader of a fight-flight group who goes along with the basic assumption is one who affords opportunity in the group for flight or aggression’ (p. 26).

It can be argued that in addition to the reasons set out above, the angry outburst was in fact the leader of the court group fighting for the preservation of the court group in the face of what for them was a very real threat. It might now be possible to understand something more of the overall dynamics of the workshop by examining the behaviour of the leaders of the two groups.

By virtue of our positions within the overall system, the leader of the court group and I were, at this point in time, diametrically opposed in our views about the implementation of the CISP. I had been one of the major architects of the concept and was now responsible for its implementation. The leader of the court group believed that the court should determine court policy and was concerned to make sure the court got the best possible outcome from a program that had been opposed at the beginning. In hindsight, and despite our personal friendship, it was always likely that our coming together on this project would result in a power struggle. There was little that was personal in this struggle; as representatives of our parts of
the system we were playing out the roles the system had ascribed to us. I was fighting for the implementation of the CISP in line with the government policy, hopefully in collaboration with the court and the leader of the court group was fighting against the implementation of the project. These battles continued to play themselves out in many aspects of the implementation as it progressed as will be seen shortly.

In terms of the dynamics of the whole group, the inability to come to an agreement about how often we should meet is synonymous with Bion's (1961) description of basic assumption behaviour described earlier in Chapter 3. When we were engaged in a productive discussion about who should be eligible to participate in the CISP, the whole group can be said to have been behaving as a work group because our mental activity was directed towards achieving the task. However by the time it came to decide how often we should meet, the group had moved to basic assumption behaviour whereby our rational work group activity on the task became obstructed by powerful emotional drives and chaotic and irrational behaviour.

**Working hypotheses I & II**

On the basis of an examination of some of the unconscious group processes played out in the workshop it is now possible, at this point in the analysis, to arrive at two working hypotheses about inter-agency collaboration.

The first working hypothesis is that in the early days of any collaboration, the groups that come together to work on a common task, no matter how good their intentions, will come as separate groups dominated by their own group dynamics expressed as basic assumption behaviour. The dominance of these basic assumption behaviours made it impossible for the two groups to function as a work group and achieve even the simplest task.

The second working hypothesis is that when coming together in the early days of a collaboration, because each of the groups holds a position determined by their place within the wider system, these positions will initially continue to be ‘played out’. In this case, the longstanding tension in the relationship between the court and the department described in detail in Chapter 1 continued to be played out in the CISP workshop, particularly by the leaders of the two groups.
Critical Social Event 2: The Second Project Control Group

Over the next couple of months work proceeded on the development of the CISP service delivery model. In line with the decision at the August workshop, the CISP project team took the lead in this development work but did so in consultation with the CISP Working Party and other key stakeholders. This work progressed well and will not be detailed here in order to move on to the next critical social event.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Project Control Group (PCG) was established as a key feature of the project governance arrangements. It was comprised of two deputy chief magistrates, senior court staff, two members of the CISP project team and myself. It had been agreed that I would chair the meeting during the development phase of the project and then the court would take over chairing of the meeting during the implementation and operational phases. Its primary purpose was to provide overall direction and management of the project.

In anticipation of the first PCG meeting to be held in November 2005, and at my request, the CISP project team developed a draft project governance document for consideration at the PCG meeting. This is a common project management process. My journal records my hope that the PCG would provide some structure around the project in order to contain some of the anxiety and for the participants to agree to the decision making processes. My journal indicates that the CISP project team members and I were happy with the outcome of the first PCG meeting in November 2005 despite some difficult meeting dynamics. The group had gone through a current draft of the service delivery model and the draft project governance document and agreed on many of the recommendations. Those that were not adopted were deferred to the next meeting for further work or further consideration by members outside the meeting. The action and reaction in this section centres on the second PCG meeting in December 2005.

Reactions to the second PCG meeting

Before describing the reaction to the meeting it is timely to remember that in the four weeks between the first and second PCG meetings, the original CISP project manager returned to her parent organisation and a new project manager was appointed. One of the project manager's first tasks had been the preparation and distribution of the papers for the second PCG meeting.

On the morning of the meeting, as soon as the CISP project team members and I walked into the meeting, the leader of the court team apologised for not having made coffee as was the
usual practice. One other member of the court team was present and two others arrived part-way through the meeting. The court team leader was obviously very angry and immediately burst out into an angry tirade about it not being appropriate to use the term consultation in the context of this project because the papers were not distributed until the night before the meeting and they could not understand them. Further, this was a corrections project that was taking place somewhere other than the court and there are major problems with the staff deployment paper because the court was not going to get the staff it wanted. The other court team members who had arrived during this outburst remained silent throughout.

The anger felt overwhelming and immediately put the CISP team members and I on the back foot. The strength of this anger took me by surprise and really upset me. I was almost in tears and it was all I could do not to respond with an angry outburst of my own. I recall a very strong desire to run from the room to escape this tirade. My journal records my desperate attempts at trying to contain my own very strong emotional response and calm things down. I felt sorry too for the new project manager who felt responsible for the late distribution of the meeting papers. She apologised and explained it in the context of this being her first meeting. While it is not good practice to distribute the papers so late before a meeting, it was her first meeting and I thought she could be forgiven but the court members were scathing.

As the meeting proceeded I had real trouble containing my anger. I resented having been hijacked as we walked in and recall feeling that the meeting felt, as so often before, like a power and authority struggle between the two leaders of the two groups. It came to mind for me that there was nothing collaborative about this. It felt more like our team fighting to get a semblance of the policy model we thought we were implementing on behalf of government and the court fighting for a semblance of something they could live with in something they didn’t really want at all. It did occur to me momentarily during the meeting that it might be helpful if the participants could reflect on the meeting dynamics as they were playing out but decided that as I could barely contain my anger it was a naïve proposition and wasn’t possible.

**Interpretations from the second PCG meeting**

In terms of interpretation, I can’t help but come back to the idea that the two leaders were continuing to fight for power and control. At times during this and other meetings, I had the very strong feeling that all of the action was taking place between myself and the other leader based on the basic assumption behaviour described earlier. After the meeting I asked one of the
project staff if she thought this was the case and she indicated that the leader of the court team often behaved in this way but it was more pronounced when I was there. We were playing out our roles in accordance with the assumptions that underpinned the two groups, that is, basic assumption dependency and basic assumption fight-flight respectively. Later, during one of our interviews, I asked the leader of the court team if she was aware of this dynamic between us and she indicated that she had not been aware of it.

I recall being aware of the silence of the other meeting participants during this exchange as was also the case in the previous example. I can only attribute this to the members of both groups consciously or unconsciously colluding with us as we took up our basic assumption leadership roles. If this was about power and control or maybe competition between friends, I can only think they were waiting to see who might succeed to the dominant position. A rapprochement did not seem possible at this time.

Although it was not spoken about until two days after the meeting, the anger was in part about the appointment of the new project manager. They were unhappy about not being consulted about the appointment and she had inadvertently played into their hands by distributing the meeting papers late. It was clear that they were unhappy about her corrections background but I think this was just another reason for not wanting her.

It is interesting to note that I have a corrections background but this never seemed to be a problem in terms of my relationship with the court. The previous CISP project manager had come to the project directly from corrections. The court had been on the selection panel for this position and I recall when I rang them to tell them the outcome of the final selection they made a comment about being uncertain about her corrections background but supported the appointment. I learnt in a later conversation between myself and the court team leader that they were resentful about not being consulted about this appointment but at the time if felt as if there was a personal animosity towards the new project manager, although over the course of the project this changed.

A final aspect of this meeting that requires examination is my naïve hope that the project governance framework would help in containing the anxiety around the development of the CISP. It clearly didn’t work. It was not until the first research reflection group meeting two days later when I heard myself talking about defending against our anxiety that I realised that we
were resorting to traditional management practices to defend against the high levels of anxiety being experienced whilst implementing the CISP and that in a collaborative environment this was not going to work.

Interpretation for me often comes over time. While it is sometimes possible to get an understanding of what is going on in the moment, more often that not full understanding only comes after the passage of time and other pieces of the jigsaw fall into place. This was one of those occasions. Full understanding of what was happening in the PCG did not come for me until the Research Reflection Group two days later when one of the participants (who was also a member of the PCG) said, in reference to the documentation and agendas at the PCG meeting:

“I think I expressed it the other day when, I didn’t mean it to sound like a melt down, it came out like a meltdown. I find it really overwhelming all that stuff. I’m overwhelmed by it and I’m scared, it scares me. I do struggle with the jargon and the terminology and how things have to be done because this is the way it is done in the public service. It’s completely foreign to us. I’m feeling like I am walking this really tight, really high, difficult tightrope in this project.” (Extract from transcript of Research Reflection Group 21 December 2005)

As soon as I heard this I knew what a terrible mistake we had made in thinking that we could use traditional project management practices to contain our anxiety in this context and it was the use of these practices that had provoked the outburst during the PCG meeting.

My journal notes the link between this understanding and my reading at the time. Prins (2002) discusses the anxiety provoked when working in collaboration and cites a number of reasons for this. The aspects that seem to be most relevant to the current situation are:

‘…a lack of trust, dealing with diversity and difference in power and influence among the parties, power games, rivalry and competing for resources, conflicting objectives of the stakeholders, the fear of losing one’s identity while creating a new common identity, the lack of road maps, the fear of being left out of the final deal’ (p. 3).

In the same paper Prins goes on to say:

‘One general feature of multi-organizational systems is that the containing function of stable structures and clear authority relations is lacking. Paradoxically, a collaborative relationship might even be more anxiety
provoking than a competitive relationship, because stakeholders have to acknowledge their mutual
dependence for achieving success’ (p. 3).

And finally, when examining distributed leadership in multi-party collaboration, Prins and
Bouwen (2003) suggest that:

‘Multiparty collaboration fosters an ideology of participation, consensus and empowerment and these
traditional perspectives on leadership are not relevant in such systems’ (p. 2).

If this newly emerging collaborative process had any chance of success, I needed to change
the way I was leading the process. Future PCG meetings were conducted more as information
update and discussion sessions and were much more successful. We never had a repeat of
the outburst of the second meeting.

**Working hypothesis III**

*On the basis of the failure of the project governance framework to contain the anxiety in this
meeting and the overall failure of the meeting I have arrived at a further working hypothesis in
relation to inter-agency collaboration.*

*The third working hypothesis is that trying to work within a collaborative environment with pre-
existing organisational structures, roles, authority relations and management practices
significantly contributes to increases in anxiety and is doomed to fail.*

**Critical Social Event 3: Establishing the Research Reflection Group**

The analysis of this major event centres on the establishment of what became known as the
Research Reflection Group (RRG). As detailed in Chapter 5, the group was established at the
suggestion of my research supervisor. In establishing the group I was hopeful that it would
provide a confidential and containing place for us to think together through some of the issues
we came across as we worked together and thus assist the collaborative process.

In October 2005 I had invited a number of my colleagues to participate in a reflection group to
assist me with my research. The first meeting of this group was scheduled to take place two
days after the second PCG meeting in December 2005. My journal notes that in the two
intervening days I was wondering if and how I should raise the issues from the recent PCG
Working with what is there

meeting at the reflection group meeting. A big part of me just wanted to avoid the whole issue but I knew that such strong emotions had somehow to be dealt with, especially as it had happened only two days previously. Evidence for the extent to which I wished to avoid going back to the pain of the meeting was the fact that at the same time as I was thinking about how to raise the issue, I had actually forgotten which day the meeting was scheduled for. In my mind the meeting was to take place on December 22 when in fact it had been arranged for December 21. I recall being taken by surprise when I discovered on the morning of 21 December that it was to take place that afternoon. Why did I misplace it? I was unconsciously trying to avoid the meeting.

On the day of the meeting, I went to the door to let the two court representatives in and they were giggling hysterically as they waited to be let in. I didn't know what to make of this at the time but found it unsettling. I found out later that they were laughing about how high maintenance they were.

As the convenor of the meeting, I started by thanking everyone for coming and providing a little background about my research, where I was up to at that time and my hopes for the group. At that point, I set aside the role of convenor and just participated in the ensuing discussion.

Reactions in the Research Reflection Group

In terms of reaction, the most powerful response came very early in the meeting when, as I talked about my hopes for the meeting, one of the court representatives said:

'I like it better already cause I don't feel the hostile…I actually feel it's a more friendly environment than the meetings that we have…hostile might be too strong a word but its less formal or something…more like the old days. More like let's sit around and talk'. (Extract from transcript of Research Reflection Group 21 December 2005)

The same person also made a comment about the documentation and agenda used in the PCG meetings and went on to say:

'I felt so bad after Thursday [the day of the second PCG meeting]. I just felt so terrible that I had upset you so much on Thursday without meaning to and I was really just trying to explain, explain my exasperation and frustration.' (Extract from transcript of Research Reflection Group 21 December 2005)
So there it was. I need not have worried about how to raise the outburst at the PCG meeting. It was out on the table and available for discussion.

At this first meeting we talked and laughed. We talked about the need to trust each other to do our jobs. We talked about how factors within our own and each others wider systems made working together difficult. For example, we discussed factors such as the court taking the line of least resistance and accepting what they were being given without question and a public service approach that was not well understood and that the court was uncomfortable with; factors such as government funding arrangements and the need to meet targets and justify funding and to work in a particular way.

We talked about being pushed along by government policy on the one hand, and judicial independence and not caring about government policy on the other. The court members talked about being pulled along in the wake of a juggernaut and we all talked about the wider system and the impact that had on how we take up our roles. We talked about the tension between operational areas and policy people and stereotypical roles. The court members talked about the original project manager and what she had bought to the process; talking to her everyday, learning to trust her and how they felt when she left.

**Interpretations about the Research Reflection Group**

Interpretation focuses on a number of aspects of the first meeting. Although throughout its life, the RRG only met four times, it in fact became the focus of the collaboration. My first observation is that in comparison to the PCG, this group felt different. Not only was it that this group was functioning in a way that Bion would describe as a work group, there was a different quality to our interaction. We were working on the collaboration itself. We talked frankly about what we thought was happening for us in working together, what Prins and Bouwen (2003) refer to as ‘individual and collective sense making’ (p. 2).

Another quality that was different to the PCG was that the RRG had created a space for reflection. Ringer (2001) argues that a reflective space ‘promotes the initiation, development and voicing of ideas and emotions in group members’ (p. 87).

Ringer suggests that there are nine characteristics of group reflective space and goes on to say that:
‘The existence of a good reflective space results in a climate that supports open and curious reflection, thinking and experiencing on the part of participants. Reflective space supports internal processes of cognition and processing of affect that enable participants to derive learning from their participation in the group’ (p. 104).

The absence of formal structures imposed by a meeting agenda and documentation and the fact that we all knew each other in the context of our organisational roles allowed us to come together and talk about our experience of the collaboration thus far. Without the imposition of project methods, external structures, management practices and organisational authority we could come together just as ourselves and talk about what was happening for us individually and collectively. The RRG provided what Prins and Bouwen (2003) refer to as a minimal facilitation structure that lays a ‘foundation for a space where stakeholders feel safe enough to share their questions, dreams, insecurities, unpleasant emotions and concerns’ (p. 11).

Following Winnicott, Prins and Bouwen (2003) refer to the space where parties can ‘work through their difficulties, make sense of them and learn from their joint experiences’ (p. 11) as a relational space where party members learn to relate to each other by participating in relational activities with each other. These relational activities are said to ‘link the parties to the collaborative task’ (p. 3) and support the emergent collaborative task system by building relationships and increasing commitment to the task and other parties by ‘providing containment…, some stability and emotional reassurance’ and protecting ‘the parties against the turbulence and demands of the situation’ (p. 11).

Almost serendipitously, in setting out to work together to reflect on the research, we had created a space within which it was safe enough for each of us to bring our fears and hopes about the collaborative process to the table to be shared and collectively examined. The task of the RRG had shifted from that of working on the research process to providing a place where we could reflect on our experience of the collaboration and begin working on the collaboration itself.

Prins and Bouwen (2003) also describe the interviews they conducted as part of their research as relational activities. They suggest their interviews could be seen ‘as a relational practice and as a powerful intervention because it made the stakeholders think about their practices and it made their assumptions and expectations explicit’ (p. 7). Conducting the interviews in parallel
with the implementation project and the RRG meetings assisted in the emerging collaboration. As was the case with Prins and Bouwer, the interviews provided a space for me and each of the participants to jointly think about our experience of the collaborative process and what it meant for us. During the final RRG group one of the participants noted in reference to the interviews that:

‘One of the things that you haven’t said…is the opportunity for feedback. You are the person who hears what everybody has to say and even though its, we know you are maintaining our confidences, you are still in a way able to impart feedback to us. And that feedback is valuable in terms of interpersonal relationships. I didn’t realise that I was scary. And you basically told me that people, because I just think I am me and I don’t think of myself as a scary person. When you sort of said oh well, your title and what you’ve done before can, might be alienating for people, made me, I had to re-evaluate how I can across’. (Extract from transcript of Research Reflection Group 10 November 2006)

The RRG became the centre of the collaboration. As we worked together on the task, over the ensuing meetings we also learned to trust each other and to listen to each other. For the most part, the early anxiety generated as a result of having to work together abated and when it did re-emerge around specific aspects of the project we were able to work through the issues together.

One final aspect of the RRG that requires examination is the way that it influenced our day to day practice on the project implementation task. In addition to the broader relational benefits that were derived from the opportunity to reflect together in the RRG, there were a number of occasions when learning that emerged out of the RRG process was able to be translated directly into the implementation project. One of these opportunities is discussed in detail below.

My journal notes at the time, that I was beginning to use what I was learning through the interviews to influence the way we were working together on the project. I did this by modifying the way I worked and by encouraging others to work together differently. Generally speaking, I attributed these changes to my reflection on my research material as it emerged out of the interviews and the RRG, taking care to always maintain confidentiality and never to disclose a source.

By the end of the project we had all come to the conclusion that the RRG was so important that it should become a regular feature in the way we worked on joint projects in the future. There
are a number of working groups and reference groups and governing boards and the like associated with other joint projects being developed between the court and the department and other stakeholders and while they are generally effective in terms of achieving their primary task they are fundamentally different to the RRG. Interview material from some of the participants in working on these projects indicated that they were all established expressly to work on the workplace task and not on the collaboration itself and as such are diminished by the loss of opportunity to create a reflective space.

**Working hypotheses IV, V & VI**

Following the examination of the establishment of the RRG and its role in supporting the development of the collaboration, a number of new working hypotheses have emerged in relation to inter-agency collaboration.

*The fourth working hypothesis is that a safe reflective space within which to jointly reflect on the collaboration needs to be deliberately created to assist the emergence of the collaborative task system.*

*The fifth working hypothesis relates to the importance of finding a way to ensure that the learning that emerges from reflection is able to be translated into workplace practice. It is important to ensure that, as in this case, the two processes are linked.*

*The sixth working hypothesis is that the relational aspects of groups working together are of the utmost importance and practices to enhance relationships between groups and group members must be factored into the way of working.*

**Critical Social Event 4: Development of the new staffing structure**

This critical social event centres on the development of a new staffing structure to support the operation of the CISP. It was a critical piece of work, upon which the successful operation of the program rested. It was also a component of the project implementation that generated a lot of anxiety on the part of the court, who understandably wanted to get the right staff into the right positions.

The action involved working with the court to determine the staffing profile of the three sites where the CISP was to operate. This involved developing a new staffing structure including a
new career structure, determining how many new positions (funded through the project) were required at each location, what the overall skill requirement was to be for each location and across the wider service delivery system and developing a process to transition from the current staffing arrangements to the new structure. As a matter of government policy we were required to consult with the staff and the public sector union before the new arrangements could be implemented.

In preparing for this task, the CISP project manager and I talked about how we might approach the task. We decided to do two things. The first decision related to who we should work with within the court. During the project we were often reminded that we had to work with both arms of the court and yet each arm might be thought to be responsible for different aspects of the court’s functioning. We were also often reminded that some decisions were purely the domain of judicial officers but at times judicial officers sometimes seemed to step outside the boundary of their role and involve themselves in court administrative functions.

In one of the interviews, a judicial officer had talked about the different interpretations by different judicial officers of judicial independence and where it began and ended. My journal notes that as this topic was being discussed, I got a very strong sense that the reliance on judicial independence was a collusive social defence that the court system used to defend against paranoid anxiety about being invaded by the other arms of government (the parliament and the executive) and to keep things out that it could not tolerate; threats and significant change for example. My journal records that as I was writing about this at the time I was also thinking about the whole court system being ‘defended’ against challenges to its authority.

By the time the work on the implementation of the CISP began I had been working with the courts for a number of years and was reasonably confident that I knew where the boundaries around judicial independence and the separation of powers lay but I still inadvertently blundered across a line at times. This project had everything to do with boundaries and I decided that our approach to the court should be bound by the task. We were working on a purely administrative task and as such should seek to work on this only with the administrative arm of the court. I decided to try and get the boundaries to work towards achieving the task.

The second decision related to how we would work with the court. I had been thinking a lot about what we had learnt as a result of the RRG and was keen to try a different approach. I
had been transcribing interview and RRG meeting material and was aware that, in an effort to defend ourselves against our anxiety, we were over-strategising and going to the court with fully developed proposals rather that with ideas for joint consideration. The project manager and I agreed that this time we would approach the court and say we wanted to start working on this element of the project but we had no strategy; we just wanted to listen to what they had to say and then work with them until we got a solution we were all happy with. Our strategy was that we would start with no strategy.

We met with the manager representing the court in these discussions who was also a member of the RRG. I explained that as a result of my reflection upon the outcomes of the first RRG meeting, we were aware that we needed to come to the court with a different approach and I explained our no strategy position and explained that we wanted to start by listening. Because of her participation as a member of the RRG the manager understood where we were coming from and became a willing participant.

Reactions to the new staffing structure
In terms of reaction, what ensued was an amazing piece of collaborative work and provides evidence that reflection on the collaboration itself and not just the workplace task assists with furthering the collaborative endeavour.

The first step in the process was a small workshop where we worked with the court to determine which skills were required across the system. We had asked the magistrates and senior registrars at the metropolitan and regional court what they thought they required and now we needed to try and fit that into the picture across the whole system. It involved working on a whiteboard with a lot of sticky notes to work out numbers and what services and skills were needed where. It was a really productive exercise and everyone worked well together and came up with some really creative solutions.

The second step was for all of us to meet with the department’s human relations (HR) representative and begin to work through the staffing and career structure for the new system, incorporating the skills information from the earlier workshop. The HR representative was new to the department and knew little about the courts or what we were trying to achieve. She tried to push the process into a different direction and it was interesting to find ourselves working
with the court against the HR representative for a little while until we got things back on the right track.

We were able to work together to talk through what the issues were that needed to be addressed for state wide coverage and the Melbourne court in particular. It was a really useful meeting. We also identified the need to develop a transition strategy to move to the new structure and we all went away with items to follow up and agreed to meet again shortly.

The most interesting aspect of this work was that we were able to identify new ways of working that were unlikely to have emerged in a different situation. The first related to a significant change in some of the line management arrangements and the second was the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams as opposed to teams developed along traditional discipline lines. Suddenly, these new ideas emerged and everyone picked up on them straight away. The moment the new idea crystallised was characterised by an immediate recognition by everyone of its potential. Everyone laughed and looked around at each other as if it was too good to be true. There was an immediate lift in the energy in the meeting and a growing excitement as the idea was explored further. It was evidence that we could work collaboratively and reap benefits as a result.

I recall this meeting very clearly. It was like a light coming on for all of us. At the following RRG meeting, the court representative said:

‘I must admit, and it was something I hadn’t got my head around, how this was going to make a difference. I still wasn’t convinced that prior to this staffing structure, that anything was going to make a real difference. Because it just looked very much the same thing in a different, bigger package’. (Extract from transcript of Research Reflection Group 10 November 2006)

The day following this meeting the court representative rang me to say that in principal approval had been given by the court for us to proceed along the lines of the new line management arrangements and to ask for additional information about how the multi-disciplinary teams might work. She also sought assistance in promoting this idea in the court because it was not within her area of expertise. We agreed that she would send an email out to all of the court program staff and the union to commence the consultation process and that we would carry out the consultation together.
Over the ensuing weeks we finalised the work on the staffing structure and commenced the consultation process. The court called a meeting of all of the staff likely to be impacted by the proposed changes and some even came in from leave. We had prepared a document setting out the rationale for the changes and the transition process. The court representative talked through the document we had sent out to everyone a few days before the meeting. At one stage she said 'I didn’t see how it was all going to come together but now I am really pleased with what we are putting forward'. We both talked about the collaborative process that had underpinned the development of the new arrangements and how pleased we were with it. The consultation and implementation of the new structure took place without any major difficulties over the following months.

**Interpretations about the new staffing structure**

In terms of interpretation, sense making of this critical incident covers a number of areas. The first is that the outcome of the development of the staffing structure provides evidence for how the creation of a reflective space is related to the idea of potential space from which new innovations can emerge. It also provides weight to the idea about being able to link the outcomes from the reflective space to outcomes in workplace practice.

However, the most important aspect of this critical event is the importance of boundaries. As discussed in Chapter 3, the concept of boundaries is one key to the psychoanalytic understanding of organisations because they represent a delineation between everything that is within an organisation and all of that which is without the organisation (Diamond, Allcorn & Stein, 2004). Their importance in this context is the ability of boundaries to provide a structure within which to carry out a task and help contain anxiety.

Our decision to work only with the administrative arm of the court on the development of the staffing structure was in recognition that the boundary for judicial independence is often fuzzy. It also recognises that judicial independence can be interpreted in different ways by different people and can result in increased anxiety. We needed to find a way to work within a stable boundary that would help with the clarity of the task and the containment of anxiety. The task boundary for the administrative arm of the court was not only similar to our own and therefore familiar, it was also stable because it is less open to interpretation.
The idea of role and task boundaries in a systems psychodynamic sense was not well understood by the court members when my research first started. However, by the end of the process, we were all familiar with the concept and how boundaries impacted upon our relationships and the way we achieved the task. One of the court people said of the department for example:

‘And that's where the angst, it does, does occur...is where that boundary comes, you come over the boundary and that's where things can flare. So its, I am sure, most times it is done inadvertently, you don't realise, the way they may have expressed something had given the impression to the other side that they have gone over but, you know, it is obviously very important for us, the boundaries...’ (Extract from transcript of Research Reflection Group 10 November 2006)

During one of the RRG meetings someone also commented:

‘One of the benefits of this process, this reflection group process for me is ...is just trying to work out where government sits in all of this and where we sit, where we all fit in, where our roles fit in. And that's what for me, the boundary stuff is such an important outcome of the research reflection group’. (Extract from transcript of Research Reflection Group 10 November 2006)

One final aspect of this critical incident warrants a brief examination; the importance of the idea that having ‘no strategy’ was the right strategy. It means that at least one of the parties seeking to open a negotiation with the other party has to go into the process being vulnerable. In this context, being vulnerable is about being prepared to learn in public with collaborating partners without fear of reprisal. It is about linking thought and experience to find new solutions. It is about the preparedness to ‘think out loud’. A tolerance for ‘not knowing’ is required, as is the idea that the two parties can work together from a common base and allow an idea or solution to emerge as part of the dialogue. The RRG provided a safe environment where we could be vulnerable together.

In many ways, the development of the staffing structure was a seminal moment in the development of the project and the collaboration. It allowed the court to see what was different about CISP from the existing service delivery arrangements. Anxiety about the task was well contained and our collaboration had demonstrated its worth in terms of the new ways of working and innovative ideas that had emerged.
**Working hypothesis VII & VIII**

*Following an examination of the development of the staffing structure and the importance of boundaries in clarifying the task and containing anxiety, the following working hypotheses emerged.*

*The seventh working hypothesis is that the importance of boundaries is paramount. Boundaries must be sufficiently stable to provide structure within which to carry out the task and help contain anxiety.*

*The eighth working hypothesis is that collaborating parties need to create a space where they can learn to be vulnerable together and use the resulting dialogue to find innovative ways of working.*

**Critical Social Event 5: Creating a new position**

The action in this critical event focuses on a specific position that was created to support the development, implementation and ongoing operation of the CISP. Thinking back over the implementation of the Drug Court a couple of years prior to commencing work on the CISP, I was of the view that the one major shortfall in that project had been the failure of the court to finally take up the new initiative and support it effectively in its first years of operation. During the development phase, the Drug Court was actively supported by the judiciary but the court administration at the time had worked against its introduction. I hoped the new administration in place in the court now offered an opportunity to avoid these problems.

In thinking about how to support the transition of the program from the department to the court, I talked to the court about creating a new position that would work with the department during the development phase and then move across to the court as it became operational and provide ongoing support as the project continued to develop. I was trying to find a way to encourage the court to take ownership of the program and to build for sustainability given the time it takes for these programs to mature in the court environment. The court agreed to try the idea and assisted in developing a position description. In essence, the successful applicant was to be someone who was currently working in the court, was willing to be seconded to the department for a period of about nine months to help with the development of the program and then move with it back into the court during implementation.
The position was advertised within the court and filled and the successful applicant worked well with the CISP project team. Because the incumbent had only ever worked in the court system he quickly had to learn a range of project management skills but he was very keen and found his place within the project team shortly after commencing in the role.

The program staff members employed by the court are largely responsible for direct service delivery to defendants. Within a therapeutic jurisprudence framework, they provide assessment, treatment and referral services for the court support and diversion services described in Chapter 2 and provide sentencing advice to magistrates. They are clinically trained professionals who are not court registrars and as such have always struggled to find a place within the court system. This is largely because at the time, the court administration did not see the delivery of these services as core court business. There is a strong dependency relationship between the judicial officers and the court registrars that requires them to collaborate in carrying out their task but this has never flowed to the program staff and this split leaves the program staff feeling resentful and isolated.

At the beginning of the development of the CISP, the current court administration were emphatic that the program staff were not to be involved in the early project development work but gradually that position softened and we began to include them in the consultation about the new service delivery model. As the project progressed, they were instrumental in providing advice about the model and the development of a reporting database, participated in training sessions and were consulted about the new staffing structure discussed earlier.

As the project progressed and we got closer to the actual implementation phase, the focus of the relationship shifted from the court management to one with the program staff, requiring a lot of work to get them on board about the changes. They were in a difficult position, having been excluded from the early development and now being asked to participate in the changes. They were understandably angry about not having been consulted earlier in the process and felt they had not been told enough about what was going on. The court had also recently completed a restructure of its support services and while as an observer, I agreed that it had been necessary to resolve a previous difficult situation, there was some residual bad feeling about this process amongst the program staff.
We found ourselves working with different parts of the court. During this time our collaborative relationship with the court management was sound and very productive, but with the program staff it felt as if we were just starting out. They were resentful and mistrusting of both us and court management at this time. In an interview one participant said of the program staff:

‘I think it would be hard to see if the clinical team trusted anyone. That’s going to be the hard thing. I think it is put down to trust. Trust is, I think you get over respect and I know it is part of trust but you build respect by having trust. That’s my view and so, and that’s how you operate and how you work with whoever you are trying to get to trust you and I don’t think there is any trust from the clinical staff to our team. I think there is less trust to the court management and then there is obviously the other side of it where there is the judiciary and that is different again because they, the view to the magistrate is that they will make a decision in the way they want to anyway because they have got that sort of judicial independence and that’s fine. Everyone understands that and doesn’t have any grief with that’ (Extract from transcript from participant interview).

In this context, partly in response to early complaints about all the project resources being located in the project team, and partly to assist the role holder in transitioning into the next iteration of the role, in August 2006 it was agreed that he would start working in the court one day per week as a lead up to his return to the court full time with the project. I was beginning to have misgivings about how successful the creation of this position had been at about this time. My journal records that despite my thinking that it was still a good idea in principle, it did not seem to be working as well as we had hoped. After talking to the person holding the role I wrote:

‘it seems not to be working in the way I had hoped it would. This seems to be for three reasons per my discussion with [name deleted]. 1) The court does not seem to be taking it up in a sufficiently authoritative way nor authorising [name deleted] to take up this role. 2) He can’t use the time to get closer to the clinical staff because the court can’t locate him physically near them and most importantly 3) the clinical staff seem to be treating him as the “bad” object and attempt to denigrate his contribution because he doesn’t “understand” what their role is, yet block him from finding out (Extract from Research Journal 28 August 2006).

Reactions to finding a scapegoat
The reaction of the program staff to the transition position was completely unexpected. Admittedly, some people perceived the incumbent as having taken up his role in a manner that appeared on the surface to be rather brash, largely it was thought, to cover for a lack of confidence and the fact that he did not have any service delivery experience. I recall that in one of the later RRG meetings that the court representatives thought he was under-developed in
his role and hadn't yet made the connections with the court staff that he needed to in order to carry out the role. It was a case of a little knowledge and not enough experience but the program staff were unforgiving and made life very difficult for a time. They criticised him for not knowing anything about case management but blocked any of his attempts to gain the knowledge. They also criticised his appointment to a Grade 5 position and asked “what does he do?” He was in a very difficult position.

**Interpretations about finding a scapegoat**

From an interpretive perspective, inadvertently, I think we had unconsciously set the new staff member up to become a focus for the high levels of anxiety the program staff were experiencing about the proposed changes. On the one hand, because of the still strong feelings following the earlier restructure of the court services area, the court management were reluctant to include the program staff in the early part of the development of CISP. On the other hand, the program staff, already angry and upset about the restructure, were more angry, resentful and mistrusting about these new changes that they understandably felt they were not being consulted about. My journal notes at the time:

> ‘I interviewed [name deleted] yesterday and her experience of the collaborative process is radically different from everyone else. She talked at length about not being at all kept in the loop about the proposed changes because the court keeps them away from the process. It is pretty clear, at least from [name deleted] perspective that the court still does not accept the clinical staff and that little if anything has changed over the last five years’ (Extract from Research Journal 11 April 2006).

Finding themselves in this situation, the program staff had to find a way to defend themselves against their anxiety, albeit unconsciously. As is detailed in Chapter 3, it is not surprising that they might unconsciously collude to defend against their ‘paranoid and depressive anxieties’ (Jaques, 1955 p. 478) by disowning their bad feelings and projecting them into the incumbent in the transitional position. As discussed earlier when examining inter-subjectivity and social defences, Long (2006) suggests that if our subjectivity is not recognised in a system or we are not invited to take up our roles at the community-system level, social defences will operate because subjectivity is under threat. Nor is it surprising that the person into whom the bad feelings were being projected initially struggled to modify them and thus enable the program staff to re-internalise them.
As an observer throughout much of this process, I was aware of a strong feeling that the program staff members were scapegoating the person in the transitional position who was unwittingly ‘serving as a receptacle for projections of unacceptable impulses and blame’ (Eagle & Newton, 1981 pp. 283-4). In their study of scapegoating in a Tavistock Group Relations Training Conference, Eagle (1981) and Newton conclude that:

‘Regarding the individual, psychological contribution to the occurrence of scapegoating, we found that individual scapegoats behaved in ways that invited targeting for projective identification….If anything, our scapegoats got attacked for being too strong and independent, for “resisting” and “interfering”. They appeared to be attempting to work at the same task as the rest of the group. But their attempts to have decisive personal impact upon the direction the group took made them vulnerable to being isolated for projective identifications’ (p. 299).

This is exactly what was happening in this critical event. In effect, one person was unconsciously being asked to carry the whole project in relation to working with the program staff and in an effort to defend against their anxiety, they attacked him. The role that we had created was required to overlap a number of different parts of the overall system and while the department and the management in the court had negotiated about how this might work, no-one had negotiated with the program staff which was in effect a different part of the system and obviously did not agree with the idea.

Once we became aware of this behaviour, the court and the department moved quickly to remedy the situation. Over time, the incumbent was able to develop links with the program staff and learn to work effectively with them in the transitional role. In his final interview he concluded:

‘But as time has gone on…the relationships have improved and in terms of, acceptance is probably not the right word but being accepted into the clinical mould as it is, I'd say that the majority of people have accepted me to whatever level they want to accept me…and that we get on with the day to day business. There are a couple of challenges with some personalities within that area that make it difficult. Like any, but it makes it difficult and part of it is because of what you just said Janelle around the background of not having that clinical experience. And so, and I don't think it is really as much coming from the department or the registrar role, its more around that clinical experience…I start building the trust that you do know what you are talking about, that you do understand and that you are working for them’ (Extract from transcript from participant interview).
Working hypothesis IX & X

Having examined some of the unconscious group processes played out around the creation of this new position it is now possible to arrive at further working hypotheses in relation to inter-agency collaboration.

The ninth working hypothesis is that significant organisational change will inevitably lead to increases in anxiety which results in the development of social defences necessary to defend against that anxiety.

The tenth working hypothesis is that when introducing organisational change it is important to negotiate with all parts of the system, not just the obvious ones. Had we been able to access the program staff from the beginning and been able to negotiate with them about the new position the outcome might have been different.

Interpretations about the emergence of a new group

This last section is not a critical social event. It is more by way of an overall interpretation of the whole collaborative process based on my experience of the process. As has been seen through the examination of the earlier incidents, when the court and department first came to work together, it was against a longstanding background of mistrust and animosity. Over the ensuing months, primarily through the endeavours of the RRG, the two agencies found a way to work collaboratively together. Slowly we learned to trust each other and work in a way that meant all of our efforts could be focused on achieving the task and not protecting ourselves from each other and defending against the anxiety that arose from the task and the process. The court gave up feeling as if we were trying to ‘do them over’ and we gave up our need to control. This is not to say that on occasion issues did not still blow up that caused friction and short bursts of increased anxiety but on the whole we were able to resolve these issues through dialogue.

Throughout much of the latter part of the research I often had the feeling that the collaboration rested with myself and the senior court administrator. Despite a number of role changes within the court resulting in both key court representatives not being so directly involved with the project in the later months, we continued to work together to oversee the implementation of the CISP. My journal notes at the time:
‘I have a really strong sense that [name deleted] and I are pairing now, this might be the wrong word but we are really connected now. It is almost as if the collaborative group has formed to take on a life of its own’ (Extract from Research Journal 28 June 2006).

And further:

‘[name deleted] rang me today following the email about her change of role. She rang specifically to let me know about the change...When I had seen the email announcing the changes my first reaction was “oh hell!” I felt a really keen loss of her in that role because of the way our relationship has been evolving as a result of the research, the RRG and working together for so long. She says that she will not walk away completely...We talked about her staying on the RRG because of the way it is evolving to focus more on my research in a broader sense...We talked also about how the collaborative relationship is evolving around hers and my relationship’ (Extract from Research Journal 3 October 2006).

These feelings were evidence that a new group had formed around the collaboration and we were all members of the new group and not just members of our two parent organisations. Our allegiances had shifted to the collaboration and each other. I was also aware at this time that I was actively holding the court in mind even when they were absent from a particular process. I often heard myself say ‘what would the court think of this?’ It was as if I was trying to represent their views in the discussion in their absence and make sure their voice continued to be heard. As pointed out by Schreiner & Corsten (2004) in chapter 4, it is important that each party is able to ‘hold the other in mind’ and respect them and their perspective especially when making overall project decisions in the absence of that other. I found that it helped to see the court as the ‘other’ but one that was joined with us around task.

When we first came to work together our allegiances were primarily with what Zagier Roberts (2004) refers to as our home agencies but over time we began to ‘gradually invest more and more in the collaborative group over a period of time as [our] task took on meaning and importance. The group built up a shared value-system as well as personal relationships among members’ (Zagier Roberts, 2004 p. 192). Zagier Roberts points out that there is a risk when this happens that members of the new group become a closed system and drop their allegiance to their home agencies but this was not likely to happen in this instance. No matter what new ideas we came up with in the collaborative group or what decisions we made, we were always conscious that we had to take significant changes back into our organisations to
get them approved from a wider system perspective. We did however support each other when this needed to be done.

When examining inter-group relations Zagier Roberts (2004) describes what she refers to as the ‘essential conditions for successful collaboration’. The new CISP collaborative group met all of these conditions set out below:

- ‘The task of the collaborative group was clear and feasible,
- It did not conflict with the aims and priorities of the home-groups,
- It was important enough to its members for them to invest sufficient commitment to do the work,
- It was important enough to the home-groups involved for them to allocate sufficient resources (mainly staff time) and delegate sufficient authority to the collaborative group for the task in hand,
- Membership of the collaborative group related to its task, so that each person felt that he or she had and was soon to have a specific and needed contribution to make, and
- The group created a management system based on what was needed to achieve the joint task’ (p. 195).

The idea of the task being important enough for the members and the home-groups in this case study is interesting. From Zagier Roberts (2004) home-groups perspective, clearly both the government and the Magistrates Court wanted the CISP to be implemented and you might say they were aligned in this desire. From a members perspective the importance of the task took on a different meaning. The CPDU obviously wanted it implemented but the court representatives were more ambivalent. In the early days they were actively resistant and then moved to a position whereby they wanted to influence the implementation in order to get a program that would work best for them. Later in the project and certainly by the time it was evident that a new group had emerged, they were actively supporting the implementation although maybe for different reasons to those from government.

During some of the research interviews, a number of people remarked on the importance of getting the program up and running. This started me thinking about what impact the primacy of the task had on the collaborative process. I began to think about achieving a task that is vitally important to both parties assists and how that importance helps in overcoming some of the difficult inter-group dynamics because the achievement of the task is paramount. One interviewee commented thus:
‘That drive and motivation to achieve a result like that has got to override the process of mistrust, whether it is a personal level or a side A against side B level. The driving motivation has to be the creation of a system and that has to be able to overwhelm any, any measure of distrust’ (Extract from participant interview).

The final factor that undoubtedly had an influence on the collaboration was the pre-existing friendship between myself and the leader of the court group. Despite our different views about the CISP and our struggles for power and control during the early days of the project, our enduring personal relationship worked hand in hand with our role relatedness around the task we were working on together. Reed (1988) suggests that ‘to the extent that we acknowledge the same task, we are free to disagree, challenge and be challenged, become angry, without fearing we will prejudice a relationship, or feeling guilty, because we accept as the criterion for what we say or do whether it advances the task we are working at together’ (p. 1). Reed maintains that relationships can be strengthened by good role relations. In this case, good role relations were strengthened by a pre-existing relationship and the pre-existing relationship helped mitigate some of the darker aspects of the role relations as was the case in the earlier example described by Gould, Ebers and McVicker Clinchy (1999) See page 77.

In the end we were able to find a space to collaborate and the quality of the CISP is testament to that. The program was launched in November 2006 and has been well taken up by magistrates and defendants alike. The early data indicates that it is achieving its aims and depending on the outcome of the process and outcome evaluation it is hoped the program will be established at all courts across Victoria.

**Working hypothesis XI, XII & XIII**

The eleventh working hypothesis is that, given the right conditions, a new group will form around the collaboration on the task. Evidence for this is the development of new allegiances to the collaboration that go beyond those to members parent organisations.

The twelfth working hypothesis is that it is important for group members to be able to keep the system in mind in order to represent the interests of other members in their absence.

And finally, the thirteenth working hypothesis is that the primacy of the task, even if members come to the task for different reasons, is critical for good inter-agency collaboration. Its importance lies in the fact that when the achievement of the task is paramount, it assists in
overcoming difficult group dynamics because both parties have to continue to find ways to work together.

Summary
This chapter has focussed on the presentation of the research data and the use of interpretation to make sense of what was taking place. The data was presented through the examination of a number of critical social events that took place throughout the implementation of the CISP. Each critical incident was described in terms of action and reaction, and then interpretation. It concludes by suggesting that even in difficult circumstances collaboration is possible. The next chapter presents a systems psychodynamic framework for inter-agency collaboration.
This chapter builds on the working hypotheses and interpretations developed in the previous chapter to shape a framework for inter-agency collaboration. The chapter begins by describing the search for an organising construct and then defines and describes the usefulness of a framework in the context of this thesis. Continuing to draw upon the systems psychodynamic literature, the chapter then describes a framework for inter-agency collaboration. The framework is set out in two parts. The first, which refers to and is called the pre-collaboration phase, examines the environment before collaboration begins to emerge. This enables a context for the emergence of the collaboration to be understood and elaborated. The second part, that names and examines the emerging collaboration phase, focuses on what needs to happen in order to facilitate the emergence of collaboration and argues in support of a central hypothesis. The chapter concludes with some general points for other collaborations.

Developing a model or framework?
As indicated in the preface to this thesis, about half-way through this research I began to think about distilling a number of conditions for successful inter-agency collaboration into a model of some sort. At this point, I began searching for a way to present the main argument in this thesis cogently; to develop a potentially cumbersome idea in an accessible manner. During the writing of this thesis, I have been aware of a need to be able to ‘see’ each chapter in some sort of mental diagrammatic representation before I could write it and now as I write this chapter, I am looking for the shape, the representation, in order to consolidate and communicate my thinking.

Searching the literature to find a way forward, I read about conceptual models for information seeking and retrieval research (Jarvelin & Wilson, 2003), about the development of conceptual models, about the quality and evaluation of conceptual models (Teeuw, 1997) and about knowledge acquisition and model abstraction (Kotiadis & Robinson, 2008). There is a heavy reliance on conceptual models in the information systems, education and accountancy fields. It became clear that there are a number of definitions of and uses for conceptual modelling.
Recker (2005) for example, defines conceptual modelling as ‘the description of relevant facets of a certain universe of discourse that should be represented through the artefact to be developed’ (p. 1). Put more simply, Kotiadis and Robinson (2008) suggest that ‘conceptual modelling is the process of abstracting a model from the real world’ (p. 1) and go on to say that:

‘The modeller is presented with a problem situation that is amenable to simulation modelling and then has to determine what aspects of the real world to include, and exclude, from the model, and what level of detail to model each aspect.’ (p. 1).

It seems that conceptual modelling works from the real world back to the abstract rather than from the abstract to the real world, or an approximation there-of, which is the way I wished to proceed. I decided at this point that a framework would be a better way to communicate my thinking.

On discussing the use of conceptual frameworks in research, Smyth (2004) defines them ‘as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation’ (p.1). Smyth states that a well developed conceptual framework should be the starting point for the research and is useful ‘to scaffold research’ and ‘assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings’ (p. 2). It is the last part of the Smyth position that is relevant to this thesis: the making, accessibility and communication of meaning.

For the purposes of this thesis, a framework is a mental representation of a structure through which an idea can be organised. This definition is an amalgam of a number of definitions and underpins how my thinking comes together.

**The utility of a framework**

To be a useful research tool, a framework needs to be able to describe the relationships between the component parts. A framework needs to be able to articulate the inter-relatedness and in some cases, the inter-dependence of the parts and their relative importance in the overall whole. It needs to provide a containing function and be bound in such a way that can determine what falls within and what is outside of the framework.

In the context of this case study, a useful framework must also help link ideas to some critical concepts found within the systems psychodynamic literature that are the foundation for this
thesis. It also needs to be able to help identify gaps and contradictions in logic. A framework also needs to be able to help make meaning out of the research data, and organise and express thinking and ideas in a way that is accessible to others. Finally, the ultimate test of the framework developed here will be its usefulness in consolidating ideas into something that could move from a set of abstract concepts to a whole that could be applied in the real world in practical ways by organisations wishing to collaborate.

A framework for inter-agency collaboration

The next part of this chapter seeks to articulate a framework for inter-agency collaboration drawing upon the work of a number of established writers in the field of inter-group dynamics within the systems psychodynamic tradition. Where it is helpful, diagrams and examples from the case study will be used to elucidate the framework. Refer to p. 205 for a diagrammatic representation of the model for inter-agency collaboration.

As stated above, the framework is in two parts. The first part is best thought of as a description of the environment before the emergence of collaboration; the environment out of which the collaboration emerges. It is included here primarily to set the scene for the second part but may also help those new to inter-agency collaboration to recognise the impact of the wider system on the collaborating agencies. It may also help in understanding factors that may be contributing to the failure of the emergence of collaboration.

The second part details the framework for the emerging collaboration. It describes the way the framework builds on the pre-collaborative foundation and then goes on to describe some conditions necessary for collaboration and how these conditions relate to each other.

Although somewhat arbitrary, the distinction between the pre-collaborative phase and the emerging collaboration phases is deliberate. The two phases are fundamentally different in that collaboration is not evident in the pre-collaborative phase and only begins to emerge in the emerging collaboration phase.
The pre-collaboration phase
Embedded-ness and system forces

In the pre-collaborative phase there are two characteristics that describe the relationship between groups that come together to work on a joint task. First, the newly arrived groups come to the task as separate entities, dominated by their own group dynamics and second, the groups are embedded in their respective places within the wider system.

It is not surprising that this should be the case in the present case study. Despite the members of both groups knowing something of each other in terms of their place within the wider system, in the context of the new task there was no pre-existing relationship. In the beginning, each group came to the task as members of their parent organisations, both of whom had a long history of tension in their relationship with each other. This tension originates as a function of the separation of powers doctrine examined in chapter 1. Limits to the separation of powers between the three arms of government and perceived challenges to judicial independence continued to dominate relations between the court and the department. Consequently, early in the CISP case study, each group continued to play out the wider system dynamic in meetings. Unconsciously, the groups defended against the paranoid and depressive anxieties (Bion, 1961) relating to the task by resorting to traditional ways of operating or crying out for judicial independence. This position is consistent with the first and second working hypotheses.

Figure 2 provides a diagrammatic representation of the wider system within which the CISP was being implemented. Each of the layers of the system is represented in a way that attempts to demonstrate the embedded-ness. The arrows represent the forces within the system. Even in this minimal representation, it is easy to see that the two project teams are deeply embedded (Alderfer, 1987) within the wider system and that they are subject to a range of system forces.

Alderfer (1987) suggests that any inter-group activity takes place within the context of the wider environment or system. He believes that ‘interpenetration’ from one level of the system to others operates to influence the groups under examination. Interpenetration he says, results from individual group members carrying ‘images of their own and other groups as they serve representational roles’ (p. 208). This is taken to mean that group members take the beliefs, values, culture, fears and anxieties from their part of the wider system into the new collaboration. He goes on to suggest that ‘splits within face-to-face groups reflect differing
degrees of identification and involvement with the group itself, which in turn are shaped by the relationship of the groups as a whole to other groups' (p. 208).

**Figure 2** Collaborating teams located in their systems

**The impact of system forces**

In the early days of a new collaboration, there are strong system forces at play that work against the emergence of collaboration and the achievement of task. These forces come about as a result of the embedded-ness of the groups within the wider system and contribute to the dominance of basic assumption behaviour, unconscious group processes and splits in the sentient and task systems. These forces are systems forces because they largely emanate out of the wider system or subsystems to impact upon the groups established to collaborate on the task.

The strong system forces are those Rice (1969) describes when he talks about ‘a complex pattern of group processes’ that takes place:

‘…within the individuals who represent their groups, within the transactional task system, between the groups and their representatives, within the groups and within the environment that includes the two groups’ (p. 581).

Rice goes on to say that:
‘Even a simple intergroup transaction is, therefore, affected by a complex pattern of authorities, many of which are either partly or completely covert’ (p. 581).

Having worked for many years in the public service, including a number of years in the Courts Portfolio, my experience is, these forces come in the form of organisational culture, established practices, rigid hierarchies and authorities, competitiveness, political pressure and expectations about delivery schedules and budget to name just a few. These forces are relentless, often covert and require people working individually and in groups to work in ways, often unconsciously, to protect themselves from their impact.

As a temporary task system (Rice, 1969) established to work on a new task, both groups involved experience considerable pressure from their respective parts of the wider system. The CISP project team experienced the system forces as political pressure and expectations about delivering a high profile project within tight timelines and budget. It was also required to work within established practices and authorities. The court group on the other hand, experienced the forces from within their part of the system as a rigid court hierarchy, internal political pressure from magistrates, registrars and program staff and a strong court culture that is resistant to what is considered outside interference.

**Basic assumption behaviour and unconscious group processes**

In early collaborative endeavours, there is a link between the embedded-ness of the groups in the wider system, the strong system forces resulting from this embedden-ness, basic assumption behaviour, and the continued existence of two groups in the pre-collaborative phase. It may be that this link lies in what Bion (1961) thought was the reason for the existence of basic assumption behaviours; that is, depressive and paranoid anxieties. He was of the view that:

‘…no matter which basic assumption was active, investigation discloses that the elements in the emotional situation are so closely allied to phantasies of the earlier anxieties that the group is compelled, whenever the pressure of anxiety becomes too great, to take defensive action’ (p. 163).

And further, that:

‘…basic assumptions emerge as formations secondary to an extremely early primal scene worked out on a level of part objects, and associated with psychotic anxiety and mechanisms of splitting and projective..."
Working with what is there

identification such as Melanie Klein has described as characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions’ (p. 164).

Consistent with the third working hypothesis, the two groups initially defended themselves from the anxiety emanating from the system forces and as a result, basic assumption behaviour dominated the inter-group process. Bion (1961) states that:

‘no matter what basic assumption is active, investigation discloses that the elements in the emotional situation are so closely allied to phantasies of the earlier anxieties that the group is compelled, whenever the pressure of anxiety becomes too great, to take defensive action’ (p. 163).

Basic assumption behaviour is always present in groups. Bion (1961) states that while it is possible for one basic assumption to be dominant in a group for some considerable time, it is also highly likely that a group will move in and out the three basic assumption behaviours that he identified, in a short space of time.

In the first collaborative workshop between the court and the department, discussed in the previous chapter, strong system forces created high levels of anxiety in the two groups. Both groups experienced the system forces and the subsequent anxiety (either paranoid or depressive) differently because they represent different parts of the wider system that encapsulates them both.

The CISP project team experienced considerable depressive anxiety resulting from the belief that it was dismantling the earlier work of the court. It defended against this anxiety through basic assumption dependency behaviour and projecting its bad feelings into the most vocal court opponent. In the first collaborative workshop, they behaved as if there was an unconscious assumption that an omnipotent leader would protect them (Bion, 1961) from the court person onto whom they were projecting their bad feelings.

The court group on the other hand, experienced paranoid anxiety about their work being taken over by the department and the loss of the capacity to determine court policy. The court group was unable to neutralise and re-internalise their bad feelings, and expressed them as pain and anguish and basic assumption fight flight behaviour in order to defend against their anxiety. They behaved as if there was an assumption that ‘the group ha[d] met to fight something or to
run away from it’ (Bion, 1961 p. 152). Unconsciously, the court group chose to fight as expressed by an outburst of anger.

The task and sentience systems

A second factor that contributes to the continuance of the groups operating separately in the early days of a collaboration relates to where members’ allegiances lie. Zagier Roberts (2004) suggests that when a new collaborative group ‘first comes together, its members are likely to identify themselves predominantly in terms of their home agencies’ which in turn may ‘make it difficult for the collaborative group to work effectively’ (p. 192). This was the situation with the CISP case study. The CISP project team was keen to implement the project in line with government policy. The court team on the other hand, was determined to ‘make the best of a bad lot’ and get the best outcome for the court.

Figure 3 adapts Zagier Roberts’ (2004) diagram\(^1\) to represent the CISP project as an inter-group process whereby the members maintain their allegiance to their parent organisations. The two outer boxes represent the court and the department. The inner box represents the task and the members of the two groups selected to work on the CISP project. It also represents what Miller and Rice refer to as a ‘discrepancy between the task and sentience systems’ (p 260).

\[ 
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{X} & \text{X} & \text{X} \\
\text{X} & \text{X} & \text{X} \\
\text{X} & \text{X} & \text{X} \\
\end{array} 
\]

\[ 
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{X} & \text{X} & \text{X} \\
\text{X} & \text{X} & \text{X} \\
\end{array} 
\]

Figure 3 The CISP pre-collaborative sentience system

Zagier Roberts goes on to talk about how the degree of ‘sentience or emotional significance’ in a group determines its ‘loyalty and commitment to the group’s aims’ (p. 191). Because members of both of the CISP case study teams represented the interests of either the court or the department, it is not surprising that members initially had strong allegiances to achieving

\(^1\) Figures 3 & 4 in this chapter are adapted from Zagier Roberts (2004) who originally adapted them from Miller and Rice (1967).
the task in a manner that was consistent with the aims of their parent organisations. Because
the aims underlying the task were different for both organisations, these allegiances had the
effect of maintaining the two groups as separate from each other and making the likelihood of
effective collaboration difficult.

When work on the implementation of the CISP commenced and the Department invited the
court to work with it, a new project team was established. It was what Rice (1969) refers to as a
‘temporary and transitional task system’ (p. 571) where members of this new task system had
to find, make and take up their new roles (Reed and Bazelgette, 2006) in relation to each other
whilst working across their organisational boundaries. In essence, there were two new groups,
a new task, changed organisational boundaries and no correspondence between the task and
sentience systems.

The interpretation of dynamics present in the Second Project Control Group: the second critical
social event discussed in the previous chapter, demonstrated that traditional structures, roles,
authority relations, management practices and boundaries were not working in this new
environment. Nor were the usual defences against anxiety helping. So how did the two groups
hold things together for long enough to allow the collaboration to emerge?

The primacy of the task
Given the very shaky early start to the collaboration highlighted in the first two critical social
events described in the previous chapter, it could only have been the importance of the task
that kept the two groups working at the task. Despite the differences both groups felt about the
CISP, its implementation was non-negotiable. Neither the court nor the department could say to
Government that they did not want the program and were not going to implement it. Aside from
physical infrastructure projects, the funding attached to the CISP was the single largest
government investment into the Victorian Magistrates Court for many years and at no time was
the court going to say it did not want the money or the project. Some within the court struggled
with the way the program was to be operationalised but they would never have rejected it out of
hand. The CPDU on the other hand, had been involved with the project since its inception and
were always committed to its implementation. In this context, the primacy of the task is akin to
Returning to Zagier Roberts (2004) ‘essential conditions for successful collaboration’ discussed in the previous chapter, the only conditions that are able be met in this pre-collaborative phase relate to the importance of the task. The task was thought to be important enough to both organisations that they invested sufficient commitment to do the work, and they allocated sufficient resources and delegated authority to the collaborative group for the task at hand. None of the other conditions could be met at this time. The importance of the task was just enough to get the two groups across the line and keep them working towards its achievement. In this framework, the importance of the task is the link between the pre-collaborative and emerging collaboration phases.

Finally, and consistent with the thirteenth working hypothesis, it is the importance of the task to the wider system and the corresponding motivational impact (Stiles & Williams (2004) that is the critical factor in an early collaboration. If the task had become less important to any part of the wider system and commitment, resources or authority to proceed were withdrawn, at least one of the collaborating partners would have been left with nowhere to go and the collaboration would have foundered.

Envy

Another dynamic that can be present in the pre-collaborative phase of a collaboration is that of envy. In the CISP case study envy arose in the context of resources. As early as the first joint collaborative workshop, the court raised the issue of not having additional resources to assist with the extra work associated with the implementation. Throughout much of the first half of the project, the court continued to express considerable disquiet about the CISP project team having all the resources to work on the implementation task. It became evident in meetings, interview material and in the RRG.

The court did not raise this issue directly; it was more by way of observation. It nevertheless raised the anxiety of the CISP project team who then tried to make amends. This ongoing issue had a toxic impact on the relationships between the two groups for the first half of the collaboration. The court felt itself to be a ‘loser in a competitive struggle’ (Halton, 1994 p. 15).

Envy and its place in the object relations and internalisation processes of individuals was studied intensively by Klein (1956) who defined envy as ‘the angry feeling that another person possesses and enjoys something desirable’ (p. 212). It is characterised by the often
unconscious feelings of ill-will that the envious has towards the envied and is often associated with a dependency relationship between the envious and the envied.

Klein (1956) studied envy in the context of the early development of infants. She hypothesised that an infant's relation to the breast, in some part restores the lost pre-natal unity with the mother. Klein believed however, that there would be a consequential element of frustration and associated destructive impulses and persecutory anxiety with the breast because it could not fully restore the need for unity. Nor could the infant's desire for an 'inexhaustible and ever present breast' be met. This then results in the 'early emotional life [of the infant being] characterised by a sense of losing and regaining the good object' (p. 212) and leads to the splitting of the breast into good and bad objects. Klein further hypothesised that the infant's frustration will be expressed as 'a destructive aspect of projective identification' (p. 212) whereby the infant puts bad parts of itself into the mother. This ‘envy contributes to the infants difficulties [in developing the capacity for gratitude and happiness] in that he feels that the gratification he was deprived of has been kept for itself by the breast which frustrated him’ (p. 212).

In accepting that the early development of object relations in individuals has a parallel with the early development of relations between groups, it is possible to understand how envy might impact upon an emerging collaboration. If, as Klein suggests, excessive envy in an infant results in disturbed relations with its mother and the resultant splitting of the breast into good and bad objects, it is conceivable that envy might result in disturbed relations between two groups working together and result in the splitting of the envied group into good and bad objects.

It is hypothesised that in the CISP case study, unconscious envy underpinned some aspects of the early relationship between the two groups. An example might be found in the courts' relationships with some of the CISP project team members throughout the first part of the project. It felt at times as if the court were projecting into one particular role as a bad object and into another as a good object. Moreover, it felt as if this splitting was itself underpinned by an idealisation of the second role based on the court's dependence on this role as the budget controller.
Stein (2000) argues that, in the context of social systems, envy has a fundamental significance. He suggests that a social system can envy something thought to be good or desirable and the resultant ill-will or envious attack leads to ‘a chaotic and endemically malfunctioning social system’ (p 8). Stein believes these envious attacks are directed towards the linking, learning and leadership aspects of the social system.

In the CISP case study, envy did not have a lasting impact on the collaboration. It may be that the CISP project team was able to make ‘good enough’ amends, or that the reflective space created in the emerging collaboration phase enabled the emergence of a new group that at some level meant the two groups became part of the same group, meaning there was then no division of resources and no longer a place for envy.

Taken from a general and wider perspective, the pre-collaborative phase of this framework can be summarised thus. Groups come together to collaborate on a joint task and initially function as separate entities. In the beginning, the groups are embedded in their wider systems and the strong system forces emanating from the system cause anxiety and the dominance of basic assumption behaviours to defend against resultant paranoid and depressive anxieties. There is little correspondence between the sentience and task systems because the groups maintain strong allegiance to their parent organisations. Envy may also be a feature. The only factor that holds the whole process together is the importance of the task to the wider system. In the event that this importance diminishes, the collaboration is likely to fail.

**The emerging collaboration phase**

If the primacy of the task is the glue that holds the two groups together in the pre-collaborative phase, it is also the foundation on which the emerging collaboration phase is built. Throughout the life of a collaboration, the importance of the task remains as an unconscious touchstone to which participants can return during difficult periods when the collaboration is at risk of failing. It helps in overcoming some of the difficult inter-group dynamics because the achievement of the task is paramount. In and of itself, the importance of the task is not enough to carry the collaboration. It is necessary but not sufficient.

**The creation of a reflective space**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Research Reflection Group was critical to the success of the collaboration. Its establishment allowed the creation of a safe space where
representatives of both groups could reflect on the collaboration itself. It became the central focus of the collaboration. Out of that reflective space a new group emerged, a third space that enabled the new task system (Miller and Rice, 1990).

Depending on the type of research, there are a number of methods that can be employed to facilitate the creation of a reflective space. In their collaborative action research study of authority in a government school, Bain, Long and Ross (1992) established a steering group and an advisory panel as part of their research method. The steering group had delegated authority from the school council to oversee the project and consider funding options. The advisory panel was established to ‘provide guidance and support for the project, to discuss ideas and issues emerging from the project, and to link the project to the wider education system’ (p 8). There had also been plans to establish a school management group, which amongst other tasks, would work with the feedback from the research findings. This last group was not established and alternative arrangements were made within the steering group to reflect on the research findings. These arrangements were reportedly less than satisfactory although eventually a subset of the steering group was able to create a space to function as a reflection group and work with the research findings. Unfortunately, the project closed before it got to the action phase.

In another action research project, Long and Newton (1997) established a steering committee to provide a place where the collaborating partners could work together and:

‘...take on the tasks of designing, steering, monitoring and evaluating aspects of the research in an ongoing way and in light of the progress occurring within the project. It was to be a forum for discussion of the activities within the project and a place where there was a sense of the whole of the project’ (p. 8).

Had a model different to the RRG been chosen in the CISP case study the outcome may have been different. Early consideration was given for example, to the idea that the Project Control Group might be a space where the key players could reflect on the process as well as the task. This idea was quickly abandoned because of the emotionally charged environment in the first Project Control Group meeting.

Another option considered was the establishment of an overarching steering group; possibly chaired jointly by the Executive Director, Courts and the Chief Magistrate. On reflection, this
option was thought to locate the governance of the project at too high a level in the hierarchy of the wider system and be at odds with the authority that had been delegated by that system to carry out the task. In addition, due to the work demands of these role holders, it was unlikely that they would be able to attend regular meetings. If the task of the proposed group was to provide advice and support for the research and a way to think through some of the issues the two groups encountered as they worked together, a high level steering committee would not be the place to do that because many of the participants would be too far away from the day-to-day experience of working together.

How the reflective space assists a collaboration
Consistent with the fourth working hypothesis, the central hypothesis of this thesis is that the creation of a reflective space within a collaboration acts as a catalyst that allows the collaboration to take shape. It provides a ‘physically and psychologically safe setting’ where the groups could be vulnerable enough together to ‘experience and explore issues that might normally be anxiety-provoking, politically subversive or counter-cultural’ (Long and Newton, 1997 p. 2). The reflective space needs to be ‘good enough’ (in Winnicottian terms) to allow the expression of anger and frustration with the project, the implementation process, with each other (in the context of role) and with the wider system. It becomes a holding environment (Winnicott, 1971) or container where the two groups could examine the positive and negative aspects of the collaboration, find new ways to work together and find solutions to problems. Being able to express feelings of anger and frustration reduced the risk that they would unconsciously be present to subvert the collaboration (Long and Newton, 1997). Finally, the creation of a reflective space can facilitate a shift in the group dynamics from a paranoid-schizoid position which characterised the pre-collaborative phase, to the more collaborative depressive position observed in the emerging collaboration phase. It is within the reflective space that collaboration can begin to take shape.

The reflective space also enables the members of the groups to begin forming as a group-as-a-whole. Building upon the work of Bion (1961) who ‘examined the way in which the group-as-a-whole engenders a collective state-of-mind in its participants’ (p. 4), Long and Newton (1997) suggest that the group-as-a-whole or organisation-as-a-whole are ‘systems of interlinking persons in roles’ (p. 4). They go on to say that:
‘...the-organisation-as-a-whole, through its constituency of roles, each being dynamically created and modified by the persons incumbent in those roles, has an effect on those constituents. This is no one way causality. The whole, which is more than the sum of its parts, has an effect on each part. This is a paradoxical or circular causality’ (p. 4).

In the CISP case study, the RRG members began to explore the multiple roles that were being found and taken up in pursuit of the task. They not only worked on the primary task but also on the collaboration itself. The RRG provided a ‘suitable ongoing forum where the collaborative process [could] be continuously renegotiated and monitored’ (Long and Newton, 1997 p. 22) and where the two groups could work together in a collaborative ‘state-of-mind’, (Long and Newton, 1997; Prins, 2001) thus facilitating the emergence of a new group.

Relational activity and learning to trust

Schruijer (2006) points out that in a collaborative environment, it is unlikely that trust will ‘be present from the start’ (p. 236). In the CISP case study, this was evidenced by the court talking about needing time to read carefully through project documentation to be satisfied that the CISP project team were not ‘pulling the wool over our eyes’. The court also accused the CISP project team of not trusting them to do their job properly. This is evident in the following example.

After a long period of harmonious working relations between the two groups, suddenly a small storm blew up about the make-up of a selection panel being convened to select for new positions being created as part of the new staffing structure discussed in the previous chapter. The CISP project team insisted on being on the panel and court made it clear that it did not think the CISP project team trusted them to make the best appointments. The conflict played out between the two groups as a series of terse emails and representations to myself to resolve this dilemma.

Consistent with the sixth working hypothesis, the task in the RRG had changed to become the primary relational activity. As such, the RRG now provided a space where the two groups could begin to relate to each other around the new task and learn together. Rather than being collusive or a corruption of the task (Chapman, 1999), the shift in task represented a move in the group dynamics from a paranoid-schizoid position to the more collaborative depressive
position. This shift in task supported the collaboration, which in turn supported the achievement of the primary task.

As the two groups learned to work together through relational activities, they also learned to trust each other. This face-to-face working together in the RRG enabled the development of trust and mature working relations (Long & Newton, 1997). The RRG provided what Schruijer (2006) believes is the environment necessary to build trust, described as:

‘...a minimal structure and some ground rules or rules of logic that provide some security (Gray, 1989), facilitating face-to-face interactions and securing equity and fairness’ (p. 236).

Had the RRG not provided such a space, it is unlikely the two groups could have learned to trust each other as they did. Basic assumption behaviour and the psychic mechanisms of projection, introjection, splitting and projective identification would have continued to dominate the relations between the two groups.

Long and Newton (1997) suggest that it is working together ‘in the presence of the other’ that underlies a capacity for groups to learn together. They suggest that:

‘...learning may occur unconsciously in the presence of the other. It seems that...collaborative learning occurs when the other is present to us in a state-of-mind compatible with our own’ (p. 22).

They go on to say learning may take place in the same way that a child unconsciously learns from its parents and that:

‘...symbiotic collaboration only occurs when the partners can be in the presence of the other, that is, they can bear to listen to each other in a way that makes them available to each other for learning. Moreover, in order for this learning to be linked to the task at hand rather than a collusion around unspeakable dynamics, the collaborative process requires ongoing scrutiny. Finding a space to explore this at both conscious and unconscious levels, we believe, leads to a deepening of the relationship and its possibilities’ (p. 22).

Before going on to discuss the emergence of a new group, it is timely to provide a brief summary of the links between the concepts underpinning the emerging collaborative phase of the framework thus far.
In the early days of a collaboration, the primacy of the task to the wider system functions as the glue that kept the two groups working together in the pre-collaborative phase, despite ongoing tensions. Upon this foundation, the creation of a safe reflective space acts as a catalyst within which the two groups can begin to learn together and gradually form into a group-as-a-whole. The formation of the group-as-a-whole, learning in the ‘presence of the other’ and participating in relational activities enables the two groups to learn to trust each other. The destructive presence of factors such as envy can be overcome by the emergence of a new group that forms to carry out the task.

**The emergence of a new group**
Evidence for the emergence of a new group centres around the shift in allegiance by the members of the groups from their parent organisations to each other in relation to the task. This shift results in the creation of a new space where the task is able to be worked upon; a new task system is formed. The shift in allegiance does not mean that the new group is working independently of their parent organisations. Now efforts can be focused on achieving the task rather than defending against the anxiety that arises from the task, splits in the task and sentient systems and the depressive anxieties that arise from feeling that joining the other group would represent a defection from the parent group. Allegiances now shift to the collaboration itself.

In this case study, both groups still reported back into their parent organisations but more often than not, they agreed about how and when this might happen. This was not collusion but rather trying to achieve alignment in working with the wider system in support of the task.

An example of this was how the group talked to the wider system about the outcome of the new staffing structure. Because of the magnitude of the proposed changes, it was necessary for the court members to seek approval from the court proper to proceed along these new lines, especially in light of the proposed line management arrangements between senior registrars and program staff. The new group discussed how to achieve this and agreed that the senior court administrator would seek the approval of the court CEO. At the same time, the CISP project team would seek the support of the department for the proposal. The new group was using its knowledge of the different parts of the system in support of the task.
The consultations with the program staff and the union about the new staffing structure provides a further example of how the new group worked together to obtain the support of other parts of the wider system in pursuit of the task. Having obtained approval to proceed, the new group worked to prepare a document setting out a rationale for the changes and the process to transition from the current to the new arrangements. The group discussed how to proceed and agreed to carry out the consultations together even though technically the consultation was a matter for the court as the employer.

The new group had developed what Prins (2001) refers to as the ‘collaborative state of mind’ which she believes is:

‘...characterised by trust, the capability to work with different power relations, the capacity to work in a situation of not-knowing and the will to learn from the experience of the collaboration’ (p. 12).

Corresponding task and sentience systems
A significant factor in relation to the emergence of a new group is the change in sentience. Both groups invest more into the collaboration as the task takes on more importance (Zagier Roberts, 2004) and build ‘a shared value system, as well as personal relationships among members’ (p. 192). There is now a correspondence between the task and sentience systems, which provides the right environment to support the effective achievement of the task. Figure 4 is a diagrammatic representation of the CISP sentience system at the time of the emerging collaboration. The two outer boxes represent the court and the department and the box in the middle represents the new group that formed around the task.

Miller and Rice (1990) argue that there needs to be some degree of correspondence between the task and sentience systems or otherwise commitment to carrying out the task will be inadequate and the task will flounder. They point out that:

‘...sentience may arise in different ways and have different meanings at different times. Sentience is likely to be strongest where task and sentient boundaries coincide and, more particularly, where members share both a common belief in the objectives of the group and complementary beliefs about their respective contributions to it’ (p 264).
Working together to gain support for the new staffing structure demonstrated the extent to which the task and sentient systems were now aligned and the common belief that both parties in the group had about the objectives of the task. It also demonstrated the acknowledgement of the value of the contribution by all members and a new interdependence and reliance upon each other. Consistent with the tenth and eleventh working hypotheses, there was now one group.

There was no nominated leader of the new group. The group worked with the authority that the wider system had given them to carry out the task. Zagier Roberts (2004) points out that if the matter of leadership is not adequately addressed collaborations may fail. In the CISP case study, the group had come to appreciate their mutual dependency and joint ownership of the project. The traditional notion of one person taking up the leadership role on behalf of the whole was not going to work in the CISP context because no one had formal authority (Schruijer & Vansina, 2004). A new distributed leadership had been developed on the basis of the relational activities that originated in the RRG (Prins & Bouwen, 2003) and that was contained by the corresponding task and sentience systems.

The emergence of new boundaries
A feature of this framework is the change in boundaries that surrounds the new group. As represented in Fig. 4 above, there is now a new boundary around the group working on the task. The overlapping boundaries with the parent groups remain but do not provide the same containing functions as those around the new group. This is consistent with the views of Hirschhorn & Gilmore (1992) referred to in chapter 4.
An example of this is found in the development of the new staffing structure. Having jointly discussed how to proceed, it was agreed that a representative from the department’s Human Resources Unit (HRU) should be invited to work on this aspect of the task. The HRU nominated a representative to participate who was new to the department, knew little about the court environment and initially tried to take the process in a direction that was different to that agreed by the task group. This raised short-term feelings of resentment about the system pushing across the boundary of the task group. The emergence of the new group was accompanied by the establishment of new boundaries which were stable enough to contain anxiety but sufficiently flexible to allow the new group to be able to work with its wider systems. Zagier Roberts (2004) points out that there is a risk that a new group has to guard against becoming closed, losing touch with reality and becoming collusive. She believes a closed group can become:

‘...a closed system whose members have lost touch with their dual membership and its linking function, in which their effectiveness depends’ (p. 192).

Prins, (2001) believes that the boundaries of a new group must also stay sufficiently flexible for the group to function as a transitional space that is able to stay in touch with both its inner and outer realities. The new group in the CISP case study retained its links with the wider system through the retention of their roles within the strong hierarchical court and departmental systems. Even in the face of a shift in allegiance to the new group, it was always understood that it was the system that authorised the new task roles and the group was working on the task for the system and not the new group alone. The strong task and sentience systems allowed the group to carry out the task, but not at the expense of connectedness to the wider system.

The emergence of new boundaries also has another important function for a collaboration. It provides a safe facilitating or holding environment. Winnicott (1971) first used the term holding environment in relation to his work on the developing relationship between an infant and its mother. St. Clair (1986) states that ‘[t]he good-enough mother sufficiently provides for what the child needs at a particular developmental period’ (p. 70) and thus provides an environment that holds the child in such a way that it can safely develop mature object relations. He goes on to say that ‘…holding denotes not only the physical holding of the infant but also the whole environment, which facilitates growth’ (p. 75).
Consistent with the seventh working hypothesis, the boundary around the new group provides a unique holding environment which enables its ability to define its membership and gave it a sense of identity. It provides structure within which the task can be worked on, and helps contain anxiety. It facilitates the experience of a new relatedness and the exercise of new authority relations. Although often intangible, the boundary is always present and essential to the success of the collaboration. The new group becomes a new system, whereby the roles overlap in relation to the task.

**The creation of a potential space and creativity**

The development of the new staffing structure provides evidence that everything that grew out of the RRG lead to the emergence of a potential space where the group could work together and come up with creative solutions and innovations in pursuit of the task. In the context of multi-party collaboration, Prins and Bouwen (2003) suggest that it is:

‘…a space where the stakeholders can ‘play’ with ideas, try out potential scenarios for the future of the problem domain, make connections that were never [previously made] and invent the conditions in which they want to work. It a relational space where the participants can work through their difficulties, make sense of them and learn from their joint experiences. This allows for creative and innovative collaboration’ (p. 11).

It is in this space that the collaboration is able to work and play together to find novel and creative solutions that might not otherwise have been found.

Throughout the CISP case study, the most cogent evidence for the existence of this potential space was during the development of the new staffing structure. It was the moment the possibility of using multi-disciplinary teams was discovered. In the context of the CISP staffing structure, this discovery was monumental.

Different ideas were being ‘played’ with and all of a sudden, a new idea just dropped into the conversation. The idea that multi-disciplinary teams could be established to meet the ‘whole-of-life’ needs of the defendants was important to the notion of an integrated service that underpinned the original development of the CISP.

Consistent with the eighth working hypothesis, the potential space emerges out of the experience of each other in the *group-as-a-whole*: a place where members learned to trust
each other and be comfortable with vulnerability to enable ‘play’ with ideas together. Akin to the idea of Winnicott’s good enough mother, the group provides the infant (the collaboration) with sufficient mothering to enable it to begin growing and take shape. As the collaboration begins to take shape, the group no longer needs to be fully occupied with the mothering (St. Clair, 1986) and in the space between itself and the infant, new ideas can emerge.

**The framework summarised**

Having described the component parts of the emerging collaboration phase, it is now timely to summarise the framework for collaboration. A diagrammatic representation of the framework can be found below at Figure 5.

Building on the primacy of the task to the wider system, a safe reflective space needs to be created where the collaboration itself can be reflected upon. This reflective space needs to be physically and psychologically safe enough to allow the emergence of a ‘good enough’ container where the members of the two groups can express and examine the positive and negative aspects of the collaboration and facilitate the formation of the group-as-a-whole. It is the safe reflective space that is the central element in this framework; that upon which all else depends. The shift from the pre-collaborative phase to the emerging collaboration phase corresponds with a shift from paranoid-schizoid position group dynamics to depressive position dynamics.

Participation in relational activities leads to new ways of working together on the task and learning to trust each other. Working ‘in the presence of the other’ through participating in relational activities then facilitates collaborative learning.

The emergence of the new group is characterised by alignment in the sentience and task systems whereby members build increased allegiance to the new group and the task, the establishment of a collaborative state of mind and joint leadership of the collaborative endeavour. The new group becomes a new task system in its own right and is contained within new boundaries.

The new boundaries overlap the boundaries in the wider system and need to be stable enough to contain anxiety but sufficiently flexible to allow the new group to continue working with the wider system within which it is operating. This flexibility is necessary in order to avoid the new
group becoming a closed system, prone to collusion and out of touch with reality. The new boundaries provide a holding environment within which the new group can define group membership and identity, contain anxiety and experience a new relatedness and the exercise of new authority relations. Within a ‘good enough’ holding environment, the experience of the group-as-a-whole will facilitate the emergence of a potential space within which creativity and innovation is possible.

Figure 5 Representation of framework for inter-agency collaboration
Alternative explanations

There will be alternative interpretations of the critical social events described in Chapter 6. My interpretations are informed by my experience of the collaborative process and my ontological and epistemological paradigm or interpretive framework. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that ‘All research is interpretive’ and that ‘it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied’ (p. 22). Others may therefore interpret the same critical social events in a different way because they hold a different interpretive framework or their experience of the events was different. Alternative explanations for some of the critical social events are described below.

An alternative interpretation for the third critical social event (establishing the Research Reflection Group) for example, might be that the groups were colluding rather than collaborating. Prins (2006) reports that some form of collusion emerged in all of the cases examined in her doctoral research. She found that ‘participants tacitly agreed to cover up unwanted or unacceptable aspects that emerged in the [collaboration] process' and in so doing ‘seemed to protect the group from confrontation with reality and the anxiety this may have provoked’ (p. 290). I will come back to the idea of collusion in the next chapter.

In considering the fourth critical social event – the development of the new staffing structure – it might be that the initial exclusion of the HR representative can be interpreted as the court and the department working together against a common enemy rather than evidence for collaboration. It could be interpreted that the two groups were unconsciously resisting the inclusion of the HR representative because they did not trust what she was thought to represent of the wider system or simply because her presence represented an unwelcome difference. Vansina and Taillieu (1997) for example, argue that ‘Dealing with diversity amongst the in the here-and-now is a task people shy away from’ (p. 198). Diversity is said to add value to a collaboration (Vansina and Taillieu, 1997) but it takes time through negotiation and re-negotiation (Gray, 1989) and ‘a process of framing and re-framing until the appreciated divergencies can be incorporated…' (Vansina and Taillieu, 1997 p. 197) and diversity can be welcomed.

Lessons learned and other collaborations

In thinking through this framework, a number of general lessons can be learned that may be applicable to other inter-agency collaborations.
First, the distinction between the pre-collaborative and emerging collaboration phases is not always as black and white as is being presented here. However, there may be a point at which each potential collaboration teeters on an edge, whereby it could succeed or fail depending on what happens next. At this point an appropriate reflective space needs to be created to allow the collaboration to emerge and stop the pre-collaborative phase becoming a failed collaboration.

Second, when considering establishing a group to work jointly on collaborative process, it is always going to be a matter of working with what, or more correctly, who is there. Each project, set of collaborating partners, design and method and collaboration is different, as is the system within which the collaboration is taking place. Creating the right space to reflect upon the collaboration needs to be thought through carefully. Aside from administrative questions such as when and where it should meet, consideration needs to be given to the following questions:

- What are the aims of the group?
- How will it take its task up?
- Should it be established at the very beginning of the process or later?
- Will participants be selected on the basis of representation, role or task?
- How will participants be recruited?
- Will the selected participants be able to adopt an observational and reflective stance?
- How will the politics and the current organisational dynamics influence the group?

Third, it is believed that getting the best results from the application of this framework will be achieved in a participative, psychoanalytically informed, action research or action learning environment where the major focus is on ‘the experience of those within the social system’ (Long, 1999 p. 262). Long states that participatory action research, when successful, will lead to ‘a state of mind [being] engendered where collaboration and organizational development are possible – as is an increased capacity to tolerate anxiety, ambiguity and other forms of psychological and social pain’ (p. 262). Action research typically involves the systematic gathering of data about an organisation using a variety of methods. The data is then collated, analysed and fed back to the organisation. Long (1999) describes the next stage of the action research process thus:
During the feedback process, the meaning of the data is examined and those involved are able to reflect on it, in the light of their general experiences of the organization as well as from the perspective of their particular role. As meanings are developed, a new knowledge of the organization begins to emerge. From this new knowledge comes the possibility of new ways of acting. These may then be tried out in an experimental manner, each change being monitored and evaluated as it is implemented. The results of these further studies are then 'fed back' and reflected on as with the earlier cycle (p. 263).

Action learning on the other hand, 'brings together (a) knowledge of theory, (b) professional or craft expertise, (c) tacit and local knowledge, and (d) intrapersonal, interpersonal and group dynamics...in a context of continuing experiential learning' (Long, 1999 p. 265). Participants work with others on a real life project in real time ‘through a questioning process, and carry[ly] that work to implementation and evaluation’ (Long, 1999 p. 265).

Next, the application of a method informed by psychodynamic and systems thinking is important in understanding the obstacles to inter-agency collaboration. In the context of multi-party collaboration, Schruijer (2006) points out that:

'it is important to sort out whether difficulties experienced are due to the underlying intergroup relationship, to (incompatibility of) organizational goals, to task complexity, lack of progress, to pressures arising from the context, or indeed to individuals' (p. 236).

The same issues arise in inter-agency collaboration. Only through the application of a psychodynamic perspective and engaging directly with the system under examination will it be possible to understand these obstacles and the unconscious group processes that are present in every group.

Finally, there are a number of reasons why this framework, or elements of it, may not be applicable to other inter-agency collaborations. First, the framework evolved out of a research process. It may mean that some aspect of the research design or method has influenced the shape of the framework meaning that it may not be suitable to a collaboration that does not have a research foundation or employs a different design and method. Second, this framework may not be suitable for a collaboration that is being established to work on a less critical task. The importance of the task to the wider system and its non-negotiable nature was a critical factor in this case study. Third, there was a strong pre-existing personal relationship between some of the individuals in the CISP case study which may have influenced the outcome.
Finally, there is not sufficient evidence, on the basis of the CISP case study, to support the idea that this framework would have application in a multi-party setting where there are more than two parties considering collaboration.

**Summary**

This chapter began by describing an organising construct and its usefulness in the context of this research. Drawing upon the systems psychodynamic literature, it then went on to describe a framework for inter-agency collaboration. The framework was set out in two parts, the pre-collaborative and emergent collaboration phases. The pre-collaboration phase examined the environment before collaboration began to emerge. The emergent collaboration phase examined the emergence of collaboration and argued in support of my central hypothesis. The chapter concluded with some general lessons and the usefulness of the framework to other collaborations.

The next and final chapter provides some concluding remarks. It starts with a review of the research and then moves on to reflect upon limitations of the research. It concludes with an examination of my subjective experience as a researcher and my final reflections.
Chapter 8
Concluding remarks

This final chapter reviews the research, the central hypothesis and the outcomes of the research and then goes on to highlight a number of limitations in the research design and data analysis. It concludes by reflecting upon my subjective experience as a researcher.

This thesis puts forward a description of a systems psychodynamic framework for inter-agency collaboration. The framework grew out of the study of a new system that emerged out of a collaboration between a unit within a Victorian government department and the Melbourne Magistrates Court whilst working together to implement a major court initiative.

Review of the research

The idea for the research grew out of a need to find a new way for the department to work with the court on the implementation of a new problem solving initiative in the court. This desire had been informed by the experience of the long-standing tension between the court and the department during the earlier implementation of a similar project.

Chapter 1 describes the research environment and context. It argues that the tension between the court and the department is largely structural and has its roots in the separation of powers doctrine and judicial independence and is a natural consequence of these structural arrangements. In examining the development of the Westminster system of government and the establishment of the separation of powers, it became clear that, while still wanting the project to go ahead, the court would be a reluctant collaborator. It was only in examining the history of the emergence of the separation of powers doctrine and judicial independence that it became clear why the court came to the table with the department so reluctantly.

In describing therapeutic jurisprudence and the conceptualisation of the Court Integrated Services Program in chapter 2, I am reminded about how heavily invested the department was in the successful implementation of the program. Involvement commenced when the idea was first put to government and continued throughout the conceptual and business case processes through to development and implementation, over a period of about three years. This long history with the project was a double-edged sword in working with the court. The advantage
was that some members of the CISP project team knew the project intimately and had a clear picture in mind of what the program should look like once it was operating.

This long-standing intimacy was also a disadvantage. It meant that at times, especially in the early days of working with the court, the CISP project team was working to its own vision of what the program should look like rather than a vision shared with the court. As the collaboration progressed, the CISP team was able to let its vision go and replace it with the joint vision.

The use of a systems psychodynamic approach in this research provided a capacity to work with conscious and unconscious group dynamics. In order to place this research into a theoretical framework, chapter 3 sets out the relevant ideas and concepts underpinning the systems psychodynamic perspective. I found that in the early days of this research, the language and psychodynamic concepts extant in looking through a systems psychodynamic lens were foreign to workplace colleagues and I sometimes found myself having to re-interpret in a language available to us all.

Chapter 4 reviews some of the literature relating to collaboration. It began by defining collaboration and moved on to concentrate on some of the theories, models and frameworks said to facilitate inter-agency and multi-party collaboration. Writing this chapter was very challenging. As I indicated in the preface, I have a preference for observing and making sense out of my world from a systems psychodynamic perspective. Any explanation that does not at least try to take this perspective into account will therefore fall short. The literature felt empty and like a prescription for management and did not begin to answer my questions about how to proceed both with my research and the development of a collaborative relationship with the court. It was only as I began to read the work of those working from the systems psychodynamic perspective that I began to find my way forward. I am grateful for the work of Long and Newton (1997), Alderfer (1987), Prins (2001) and Gould et al (1999) among others, for pointing me in the right direction.

I argue that the systems psychodynamic perspective offers a unique heuristic opportunity to study inter-agency collaboration through an in-depth understanding of the unconscious processes at play within the collaborating partners and the system within which they are located. Without an understanding of the unconscious processes, groups will always be blind-
sided by dynamics such as basic assumption behaviour, parallel processes and projective identification among others, and not understand why their collaborative efforts are foundering.

The methods common to the systems psychodynamic approach also fit neatly with my ontology and epistemology which I describe along with my research design and method in chapter 5. Because of a belief in the centrality of the relationship between the researcher and the researched, I was drawn to methods that would facilitate this relationship and utilise my lived experience as part of both method and data analysis. Also discussed in this chapter is my attraction to the metaphor of a patchwork quilt. It fitted with my idea that I was piecing together the different aspects of a complex situation and constructing a representation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) or bricolage of what was taking place in the research setting. I understood my working title for this thesis – working with what is there – to mean I was working with the dynamics that were at hand to construct my research.

The research data is presented and analysed in chapter 6. I followed Long (1992) in deciding to present my findings as critical social events that were illustrative of key aspects of the collaborative process. There were so many more that could have been selected but time and space would not allow. In deciding to present the data and analyse it in terms of action, reaction and interpretation I was hoping that my narrative would tell the story of the evolving relationship between ourselves and the court and still manage the data in a way that was both parsimonious and illuminating. Working with the data from an interpretive stance is also set out in chapter 6. I was hopeful that the ‘net of epistemological and ontological premises’ (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2005) upon which my decisions about the analysis of my data were made, would allow me to construct meaning from the data and make sense of the research experience.

A framework for inter-agency collaboration is detailed in chapter 7. The main argument is that the initiation of the Research Reflection Group provided a safe reflective space that acted as a ‘good enough’ container within which the collaborating partners were able to experience and work through the positive and negative aspects of the collaboration. In this space, we were able to learn to trust each other and establish a collaborative state of mind out of which a new group emerged. Within the boundaries of this new group, we were able to define our group membership and identity, contain our anxiety, experience a new relatedness and exercise new authority relations. These boundaries provided a ‘good enough’ holding environment to foster a potential space where we could ‘play’ together, link creatively to each other and be innovative.
Original research questions
For the most part, the original research questions, set out as follows, were answered.

Questions relating to the emergent system dynamics

- What dynamics might be at play in the two agencies as a result of anxiety about major change and how might these dynamics be surfaced and worked with to support the change process?
- What were the court and the department thinking about each other during the collaboration and how might that impact on the collaborative relationship?
- How do you understand and explain the psychic and systemic factors at play within an inter-agency context?
- What influence does the group dynamic have on the collaborative relationship?

Questions relating to the antecedents or conditions for collaboration

- What conditions are necessary to build collaborative relationships in a complex organisational environment?
- How do you work with the existing structural and process arrangements within an organisational setting to facilitate collaboration?

Questions relating to the outcome of the research process

- What impact does interdependence have on a collaborative relationship?
- How might the application of a systems psychodynamic framework assist in understanding the unique dynamics within a court environment?

It is clear that at the time, these questions were originally framed in the context of major organisational change in addition to the idea of collaboration. While the court and the department were working on what was to be a major organisational change, the focus of the research shifted fully to collaboration soon after it commenced.

The question *What impact does interdependence have on a collaborative relationship?* was not directly addressed in this study. However, in chapter 7 the case is made that it is only through the formation of the two parties into a group-as-a-whole and working ‘in the presence of the other’ that the collaboration can develop and flourish. Members of both groups must be
available for each other and this is a form of interdependence. You cannot have one without the other. Without both parties fully taking up their roles in the collaborative process, albeit unconsciously at first, the collaboration will founder. Working together to carry out the consultation with the union and the program staff is evidence that we had learned to be comfortable with our interdependence.

Contributions of the research
This thesis makes an original contribution on a number of levels. First, its main contribution is that it adds to the body of knowledge pertaining to the application of systems psychodynamics theory and practice through the development of a practice based framework for inter-agency collaboration. Through a detailed account of a ‘collaborative process in a natural setting’ (Prins, 2006 p. 241) it demonstrates how the deliberate use of a reflective space helps facilitate inter-agency collaboration; an area that is relatively unstudied in the Australian context and unique in the court environment. The systems psychodynamic approach offers insight into understanding how unconscious group processes contribute to the failure of some collaborative endeavours. It also points to what can be done to assist the emergence of collaboration. A better understanding of the dynamics underpinning the dilemmas, tensions and ambiguities that occur when groups work together on collaborative tasks increases the likelihood of successful collaboration. The practical application of elements of the framework may be of assistance to future collaborators.

Second, the detailed examination of the insider researcher perspective makes a significant contribution to the knowledge relating to research design and method. In highlighting many of the pitfalls and anxieties associated with insider researching and focusing on how to manage oneself in the multiple roles of the insider researcher, this research will assist others in finding ways to take up the insider researcher role. It will also assist others to manage the complexity associated with managing the role conflict and role ambiguity associated with researching in one’s own organisation.

Finally, the successful joint implementation of a major problem solving initiative in the usually adversarial criminal justice arena makes a significant contribution to reducing offending behaviour. The reduction of repeat offending associated with complex and co-occurring problems associated with drug and alcohol dependency and mental health problems has far reaching financial and particularly social and health benefits for the Victorian community.
Limitations of the research

Engagement of the program staff

The most significant limitation was the failure to find a way to engage the court program staff earlier in the implementation of the project. The CISP project team sought to have them represented when discussing the make up of the PCG and or the CISP Working Party as early as the first collaborative workshop but the court were resistant and continued to resist their involvement until much further into the development process and their involvement was essential. I am not sure that I could have pushed harder for their earlier involvement, but in not finding a way to do so sooner, I feel as if I colluded with the court management to maintain the often dysfunctional relationship between the court and the program staff. Had it been possible to involve them earlier, it may have avoided some of the difficulties encountered when working with them later and it may have gone some way towards minimising the anxiety that this group experienced.

Focus groups

The idea of convening one or two focus groups to explore the experience of collaboration across a number of different joint projects being worked on alongside the CISP was not part of the original research design. Part of the way through the research however, approval was obtained from the Department of Justice and RMIT human research ethics committees to do so. In the end, I did not go ahead with this idea. The intention was to see if there were different perspectives on the court and the department working together on similar problem solving initiatives.

The decision not to proceed was influenced by time constraints and a realisation of the time commitment other people were already making to the research through their participation in interviews. I was not sure if asking people to participate in a focus group was a good use of their time. I decided to expand the interview pool and seek to interview some of those involved in the other programs. Eliciting this data through interview questions is not the same as asking the question of a focus group. The opportunity to observe the dynamics that might emerge in the focus group in response to the question was lost by conducting single interviews with these people.
Analysis of data
Analysis of the research data would have benefited by having been examined in more detail by the RRG group or through some other mechanism. Nor were the working hypotheses formally shared with the RRG. The RRG did reflect on some of the early data through the use of a Working Note and through ongoing informal discussion but it could have been asked to be more formally involved in the data analysis all of the way through the research process. In retrospect, this limitation might be attributed to a lack of clarity about the task of the RRG. It may also be that I was seduced by the intimacy of the RRG and did not wish to jeopardise that by shifting the focus away from the relational work that we were doing because of its obvious benefit on the collaboration.

In choosing not to analyse the data fully with the RRG an opportunity for the collective reflection on the data was lost. It is also likely to have worked to enhance the collaboration. Nor was the opportunity taken to discuss my data with my second research supervisor. In retrospect, this was an error of judgement. Fortunately, regular meetings with my research supervisor provided a useful container within which to examine and make sense of the data.

Future avenues for exploration
Participative action research
Using participative action research methods in conjunction with a systems psychodynamic approach provides significant heuristic and practical opportunities for further exploration. Using this combined approach will not only continue to add to the body of knowledge about inter-agency collaboration but will also provide opportunities to enhance the practice of collaboration between organisations and increase the likelihood of successful collaboration.

The direct engagement of members of collaborating systems in a deliberate, reflective, action oriented, data rich process is likely to provide an ideal environment for the facilitation of many of the elements identified in this framework including, a safe reflective space, relational activities and an opportunity to learn together. Facilitating these elements will lead to increased trust, alignment of the sentience and task systems, new allegiances and the emergence of a new group with a collaborative state of mind. Working together simultaneously on the workplace task, the research task and the collaborative task are thought to increase to likelihood of a successful inter-agency collaboration.
It would have provided a more direct engagement with the social system being investigated through the study of the conscious and unconscious dynamics present in our working together and ‘coming to know’ (Long, 1999).

**Expanded focus of data analysis**

Out of necessity, the focus of the data analysis was on the collaborative process. However, had there been more time, there were other issues that arose during the research that merited further investigation and analysis. It would for example, have been interesting to examine the ongoing sustainability of the collaboration and whether or not what had been learnt about collaboration in the CISP case study could be translated into other projects. By the end of the CISP project the participants agreed that future projects should have a RRG but did anyone go so far as to establish such a group in later projects? Unfortunately, by the end of the CISP, many of the key participants had moved onto other roles and it may be that the opportunity to try and replicate the RRG model was lost.

Another aspect of this research that was not examined in detail was the response of the court program staff. The manager of the program staff was interviewed but not the others. In not interviewing them, the opportunity to more fully understand their perspective in the implementation and collaborative processes was lost. In making the decision to not interview them, I was replicating the unconscious parallel process between the court and their program staff. I was not aware of it at the time but now I am sure I was unconsciously colluding with the court. Apart from the manager, as a group, the program staff was not present in my mind as a collaborative partner. They represented a problem because of their resistance to the CISP and become an out-group into which we projected our fantasies and anxieties (Long, 1999).

Finally, it would be of value to explore if the collaborative development of the CISP had any impact on how the program was received by the wider court environment. Once developed, the program was to be operationalised by a number of other people (including magistrates, registrars and program staff) whose roles in the developmental work were not examined in detail. What of those that participated in the CISP Working Party for example? Did their involvement in the Working Party make for a smoother uptake of the program in their court locations or not? The focus of this research centred upon those who were most directly involved in the collaboration but similar projects might benefit from an understanding of what was going on from this wider perspective.
My subjective experience as researcher

I began the research journey four and a half years ago as a novice; knowing little or nothing about the demands of research at the doctoral level. At the end of the journey, I am still a novice. I have gained confidence in using some of the research tools but still have so much to learn. I understand above all else, the value of a safe reflective space within which to work and learn with collaborating partners and the value of engaging directly with the social system being examined. I understand too, something more about the decisions that need to be made throughout the research process and I am more confident with ‘not knowing’ and working with an emergent process.

Of all of the issues that I encountered through my research journey, taking up the role of insider researcher presented the most difficult challenge. I recall the trepidation with which I announced at the first collaborative workshop, that I was using the implementation of the CISP as a case study for my research. Although some of the people who attended that meeting were already aware of my having commenced my doctorate, it was the first time I publicly took up my researcher role outside my doctoral cohort. I was still finding myself in the researcher role and it felt presumptuous to be talking about my research and myself in that role.

Over time, I became more comfortable with the role of researcher but then became aware of the struggle throughout the project of holding the multiple roles of researcher and workplace manager. The only way I was able to hold both roles was to be constantly vigilant about which role I was holding at any one time. I struggled too with what felt like the subversive aspects of holding the researcher role (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005) at the same time as my workplace role. I was constantly aware of the ethical issues associated with the possibility that I might confound my roles and damage my workplace relationships by failing to maintain confidentiality. The knowledge that I needed to be able to continue working with many of my colleagues at the conclusion of my research was a constant reminder that I needed to manage my researcher role very carefully.

I was conscious too, that at times I took up what I might refer to as the consultant or facilitator role. There were times when I felt the need to resolve a conflict or facilitate a process in pursuit of the task. While I was taking this role up from my workplace perspective, it felt somehow different to my normal workplace role and although it was not my researcher role, I knew I was informed by and observing the outcome from that position. I think this new role came about as
Working with what is there

a result of the fact that I was working from the boundaries of both my workplace and researcher roles. It was as if the heightened consciousness that came with my research role somehow enhanced my workplace role at times.

I was aware of sometimes taking up this new role towards the latter half of the implementation project as I began to piece together the data that was coming out of the research. As I began to make sense of the data and put the pieces of the jigsaw together, it provided an opportunity to deliberately intervene in pursuit of the task. Two examples of taking up this new role were when I decided to work only with the court administrator on the early development of the new staffing structure and to commence the discussions without already having a fully developed strategy in mind; the idea that the strategy was to have no strategy.

The realisation that I was using what I was learning from my research to assist the project was an issue that I struggled with for a time. It felt like an ethical dilemma about what I should be doing with the information that I was gathering in the context of my research role vis a vis my workplace role. I reconciled this in thinking that I had no choice. Once I became aware of a solution to a problem or a way to progress the task it would be impossible to do nothing. Nor did it seem possible to hold the information within the boundaries of my workplace and researcher roles; hence my taking up the consultant or facilitator role in order to deal with this new information. I did however, have to be very careful about how I proceeded in order to maintain the confidentiality of the source of this information. It became clear at a later RRG meeting that at least some of the participants were aware that I was doing this and they indicated that this was a legitimate way to proceed.

This new role, is evidence of how inextricably linked my research and the implementation project had become. I felt at times as if I was the lynch pin around which it all revolved. I was the one person who held the whole of the emerging picture in mind and understood the most about people's anxieties about the project and the research. I felt like a container into which people projected their fears and hopes about both the project and the collaboration. I felt as if I was sometimes the instrument through which people sought to have their needs and aspirations about the project achieved. This relates particularly to some of the CPDU staff but I am aware that the court also sought to do this on occasion. It was a great responsibility. My research supervisor and the RRG assisted me in this task by providing more than 'good enough' containers within which to work.
Final reflections

At the end of the journey, I am left with a number of unanswered questions. Did my research design and method lead to my results or did they come from somewhere else? Would the collaboration have emerged simply because we were working together on a task that was sufficiently important to ourselves and the wider systems, or did my research assist the process in some way? Did the establishment of the RRG, a product of my research design, influence the collaboration? What would have happened had I decided to go down the participatory action research pathway? Did the emergence of the new group go some way towards resolving the envy that was present? I will never know the answers to these questions and will continue to ponder upon them.

I also come back to the idea of myself as researcher-as-bricoleur and the analogy of a patchwork quilt and my earlier question about why I cut material up into small pieces only to sew them back together again. I now think that the sewing of the pieces into a new pattern is analogous with making sense of my research data and what was taking place in the collaboration. It was about discovering the patterns and fitting them together in a way that made sense. I took up the role of bricoleur in constructing this thesis out of what was there, what was at hand. This thesis is my bricolage.

I shall miss working on this thesis but at the same time welcome the opportunity to be free to think about other things. I believe there is a great deal of truth in the John Clarke quote at the beginning of this thesis – ‘If you collaborate in a good collaboration, which works generously, you become each other a wee bit’. We became each other a wee bit in the new group that emerged out of our collaboration.
Appendices

Appendix A

Working Note 061106

The use of Working Notes evolved out of the Tavistock Institute’s work with organisations and systems as a means of generating a dialogue with the client system to arrive at a shared understanding of the issues under examination (Miller, 1995). A Working Note is a means of presenting a ‘work in progress’ account of observations and findings and is derived from interview data and observations in the workplace (Hirschhorn, 1988).

For the purposes of my research, I thought using the Working Note format might be a useful way of starting a dialogue with you as members of my Research Reflection Group in order to test some of my thinking. I have been thinking about the conditions necessary for the support of the collaborative process between two organisations. The following is a very early working hypothesis that seeks to identify the elements of a model for inter-agency collaboration. As a working hypothesis, I am not suggesting that it is ‘right’ or exhaustive. I am hoping that the dialogue this Working Note generates will further refine my thinking. It is at best a collection of my current ideas about what needs to be present to support the collaborative process. Feel free to agree or disagree with my thinking.

Primacy of the task

The implementation of the CISP is important to both the Court and the Department, although for different reasons. A number of people commented during interview about the importance of getting CISP up and running which started me thinking about what impact the primacy of the task had on the collaborative process.

My working hypothesis is that when achieving a task is vitally important to both parties, albeit for very different reasons, the primacy of the task supports the collaborative process and overcomes many of the differences that are encountered when two parties work together. Even when experiencing very difficult inter-group dynamics both parties continue to find ways to work together because the achievement of the task is paramount.
Reflective space

Because of the structural separation that exists between the Court and the Department, there was always going to be some tension that arose out of the two parties having to work together. The Research Reflection Group was originally established to work on the research process but has provided a space where the two groups can work together to reflect on the inter-group dynamics as they impact on the collaborative process. The Research Reflection Group has emerged as a new group that sits between the two parties. The dual roles of this new group are to work on the research and the collaboration to achieve the task. The reflective space allowed us to “link ideas together in pursuit of a shared task” (Krantz, 1995) and facilitate the collaborative process.

Potential Space

This is a space where the two parties can work together and find novel and creative solutions that had not existed before and were unlikely to have been identified in the absence of the potential space. I am not sure that you can deliberately create these spaces, they just seem to come into being but they are very fertile and exciting.

Being vulnerable

For me this came out of the idea that having ‘no strategy’ was the right strategy. It means that one of the parties seeking to open a negotiation with the other party has to go into it seeking to open a dialogue with the intention of achieving an aim by listening and talking with the other party. Being vulnerable is about being prepared to learn in public with collaborating partners without fear of reprisal. It is about linking thought and experience to find new solutions. It is about the preparedness to ‘think out loud’. A tolerance for ‘not knowing’ is required as is the idea that the two parties can work together from a common base and allow an idea or solution to emerge as part of the dialogue.

Trust

Mistrust was evident on both sides in the early days of the project. It took time for the parties to trust each other. Trust is critical to the development of a true collaboration. Working together over time and being able to reflect on the relatedness between the two parties assists in the development of trust.
Working through
This is essentially about both parties participating in a dialogue. It is about needing to achieve a certain aim and agreeing to work together from naive position and working on the topic until a satisfactory outcome emerges. Working through involves the linking of reflection and experience from the different perspectives of both parties.

Selecting the right people
It is important to select people who demonstrate a willingness to work together despite organisational and personality differences. They need to have a capacity for reflective practice and respect those from the other organisation.

Action learning frame of mind
Members of both parties need to be curious and be comfortable in a space where the outcomes are not always known and immediately apparent. I think it helps to have a capacity for action and reflection and sufficient confidence in themselves and the process to allow solutions to emerge. A capacity to move forward with only part of the solution and a willingness to try and maybe fail is necessary.

Managing self in role
Each of us has had to manage ourselves in role and understand how our day to day workplace roles are different but linked to the new group in relation to the task. We needed to link our role authority to others to create an interdependent web of relationships around task.

Containment
To think and work collaboratively, it is necessary to contain the anxiety that comes with working with another party and the loss of familiar structures (Krantz, 1995). The Research Reflection Group has become a place to contain both the negative and positive aspects of the collaboration (Long, 2003). It contains the anxiety associated with collaboration and allows new ideas and ways of relatedness to emerge. Simone and I also take up a containing function on behalf of the project.

The Project Control Group is less successful at containing the anxiety associated with the implementation of CISP. This might be because it is/was an attempt to institute an ‘old’
bureaucratic structure (or form of organisation) in a highly volatile environment. The Research Reflection Group recognises and enacts the need for new structures and containing functions.

**Boundaries**
Both parties need to be aware of and respect the boundaries of each others organisation and at the same time, the changed boundaries of the new group that emerges out of the collaborative process. This is enacted in part through decision making, especially when the parties are making overall project decisions in the absence of the other. Effective collaboration requires collaborating partners to work with new and different authority relations that emerge out of the collaborative process around the new group that forms.

**Acceptance of other and relatedness**
It is important that each party is able to ‘hold’ the other in mind and respect them and their perspective especially when making overall project decisions in the absence of the other. Need to see them as ‘other’ but related.

**Dialogue**
Dialogue is the basic tool of collaboration. It is where the work is done, it is the means through which issues and ideas are worked through and the trust builds. It is what takes place in the potential space.

**Interdependence of the elements**
Each of these elements are separate but inter-related. My hypothesis is that each must be present for a collaborative relationship to be established and flourish but they are not mutually exclusive. The quality of the collaboration is improved when a number of these elements occur together. For example, it is hard to imagine a party allowing it's self to be vulnerable in a low trust environment.

There is some evidence that the relationship between these elements needs to be linear; that is, one needs to exist before another can emerge. For example, trust must exist before the parties can be vulnerable to learn together.
Other interdependencies may include:

- Working through, potential space and being vulnerable.
- Action learning frame of mind and reflective space
- Containment and reflective space are interdependent
- Boundaries and acceptance of the other are interdependent
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