Paucity Management Models in Community Welfare Service Delivery

by
Susan Huhana Elaine Mlcek

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Dedication

I am proud of my Māori Indigenous heritage. My mother, Piuna Judith Turiri Rikihana Fisher, was a revered kaumatua (elder) of our āwi (NZ Māori tribe) Ngaiterangi, and hapū (NZ Māori sub-tribe) Ngaitukairangi. She was, and is, my greatest inspiration. She died in Matapihi New Zealand, on 28th March 2006, a year after the death of my sister, Karen Annette Hart. This thesis is dedicated to their memory because they inspired me with their strength, fortitude, and good humour, to overcome the most arduous of tasks.

Anei taku mihi aroha ki a korua,
kua awhi tonu a matou te whanau,
i runga i to korua moemoea ki Hawaiki nui.

(Translation Anthony Fisher: This is my loving acknowledgement to you both, who continue to guide us your family, from your resting place in Hawaiki.)
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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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(Signature)
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Abbreviations

ACOSS – Australian Council of Social Service
ACWA – Australian Children’s Welfare Association
CLAST – Centre for Learning and Social Transformation
CSOs – Civil Society Organisations
DoCS – Department of Community Services
DFaCS – Department of Family and Community Services
DFaCSIA – Department of Family and Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs
HSOs – Human Services Organisations
IMF – International Monetary Fund
NCOSS – Council of Social Service New South Wales
NGOs – Non-Government Organisations
NPOs – Non Profit Organisations
NSW – New South Wales
UWS – University of Western Sydney
Abstract

The juxtaposition of doing ‘more with less’, and ‘being privileged to be a community welfare worker’ gives some indication of the anomalies present in how community welfare work is conceived and manifested. The original contribution of this thesis is to provide further knowledge and understanding of the nature, level and extent of paucity management models to inform the way that community welfare services are delivered in rural communities. Paucity management relates to the way that managers identify and utilise strategies to counter the anomaly of possessing a deep philosophical underpinning in the value of community work, with the lack of means to meet all the needs and expectations of community members. Fifteen managers from the Central West Region of New South Wales in Australia were asked to share work narratives about the way their activities contributed to sustaining their communities. The research confirms yet again that community services are delivered strategically in spite of, or because of, a resource-poor environment that is mainly punctuated by the non-availability of ever-decreasing funds. New ways of seeking resources has resulted in managers and workers navigating competing priorities at ground level, with trying to balance the tensions implicit in a directive provider-purchaser work dynamic that has seen the evolvement of the hybrid government organisation.

This qualitative research used a phenomenographic approach to collect the managers’ stories. Data collection methods included individual interviews, focus group discussions, as well as further consultative communication. A complex theoretical framework, incorporating ideas from paucity management, aspects of structuration, and chaos/complexity, was used to analyse the data through a structure of awareness of variation in the managers’ experiences. The findings show that community welfare managers do work in a resource poor environment, do acknowledge the presence of paucity management, and do address the limit-situations of service delivery through different,
but complimentary, paucity management models that are creative, pragmatic, communicatively competent, and ‘auto-managed’. Their combined narrative gives a clearer understanding of the style of management that the managers used, as well as some of the strategies that contributed to ‘chameleon qualities’ of management.
Chapter 1 – Introduction and Conceptual Framework

1.0 Introduction

This first chapter sets out the context and conceptual framework for the research. I wanted to show how experiences from my own work, particularly in the community welfare sector, gave me not only insights into what is happening in an age of neoliberal, market-driven policies, but also the impetus to want to find out how workers manage in the delivery of services today as a result of those policies. One of the most exciting concepts in recent years put forward about community welfare services is that they are being delivered through strategies that can be grouped under the rubric of paucity management. This chapter explores some of the ideas behind paucity management, and lays the foundation for an interesting premise upon which to investigate further, the management activities behind this community welfare phenomenon.

The opportunity presented by this project is that the relationship of ideas about individual and collective practice wisdom, informs a more complex, rather than just diverse, character of community welfare services delivery, and these ideas can be usefully explored through community welfare managers’ view of their world. However, there is one domain of paucity management that has provided the most useful touchstone for my investigating the stories of a select group of managers from the sector, and I introduce the Reader to the concept of ‘work and managerial responsibilities’ as the domain that seemed to hold the potential to highlight particularly the managers’ social practice. That is, much of the work they do revolves around social relationships that occur at different levels of engagement including, with self, with community members, with management committee, with peak organisations, with other agency managers, with overarching organisations, with funding bodies, and with government departments.
This chapter indicates how the thesis highlights the complexity that is drawn from the stories about the work of fifteen managers in the central west regions of New South Wales, Australia. It then considers the extent and level to which these managers employ certain styles of management and leadership to enact models of paucity management as a result of working in a resource poor, rural environment.
1.1 Context for the research

The context for this research arose from a combination of three influences: my own knowledge and experience of limited resources in the community welfare sector; informal analogies shared amongst over-stretched workers in that sector, and relevant literature revealing the magnitude of community welfare service delivery issues in resource poor rural communities. The work of community welfare managers has been played out over many years amidst a seesawing dynamic of diversity of practice on the one hand, and responding to the boundaries of funding regimes that can otherwise be identified as “imposed rationalities” on the other (Shaw and Allen 2006: 214). My own knowledge comes from two types of knowing – knowing enough, and knowing a little. My experience comes from straddling the boundaries of three work disciplines: adult education, human services, and management of vocational training. Having worked in the community welfare sector, as a volunteer and a trainer of volunteers, I know what it is like to exist in those situations ‘on the smell of an oil rag’. I know enough about both the resource-poor and resourcefulness aspects of community welfare services delivery. As a volunteer in international programs, I knew about the lack of basic necessities such as food, water, shelter, and educational opportunities, whilst living in economically depressed villages in Tonga, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea. Back here in Australia, the plight of Aboriginal communities and other marginalised groups in regard to accessing health facilities, family support, employment, and education and training options, is well documented. Community welfare service delivery is under siege and no more so than in the rural regions of New South Wales (NSW), to which the ‘in crisis’ tag, or the ‘in trouble’ concern has been used or implied by several writers including Alston (2005a) and Earles (2006, accessed [online] 5.01.08). In these rural communities, welfare services constantly regroup to try to overcome gaps left by the effects of a crippling drought, dispossession, high unemployment, suicide, family breakdown, economic stress, and country-to-urban migration.
Although my involvement with the sector began nearly thirty years ago, I have touched base with its services on a number of occasions only to find that circumstances have not changed all that much, especially in the passion that continues to drive those who choose to work in its environs, and despite working within the ‘oil rag syndrome’ that I suspect is still present to this day, in some form or another. The informal stories that have come my way, through my connections to academic community services, social welfare, and social work degree programs at the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and Charles Sturt University (CSU), best illustrate my knowledge of what continues today. One UWS degree participant from around Bourke in the northwest of NSW, shared her concerns that it is not unusual for her to cover vast distances trying to complete a full program of services to outlying communities in just a 3-day cycle of employment. As well, her Centacare diocese regional manager was stationed in Forbes, over five hours drive away, and this meant a whole day from her precious three days, when a visit was warranted.

This research draws participants from Coonabarrabran in the northeast of NSW, to Parkes and Forbes in the southwest. Referred roughly as the central west region of NSW, the rural isolation of some of these communities is profound, and community welfare workers are exhausted, over-worked, and under-resourced. My first real understanding of the arduous nature of their work came from my involvement in a series of leadership fora designed by the Association for Children’s Welfare Agencies (ACWA) and the Centre for Learning & Social Transformation (CLAST) of the University of Western Sydney (UWS), to bring together managers from that area. Each forum provided a platform for showcasing strategies that could work for managers dealing with the advent of a concerted business partnership regime favoured by governments, and the resulting evolvement of the hybrid government organisation that not only reflects the new public management era, but also tends to mirror private sector practices of competitive tendering and scrutiny of the economic triple bottom line. At one of the workshops, a participant shared her story about the two days it took her to complete a funding application for the final amount awarded to her of $2,000, from which she ended up constructing a six-month life-style program for single mothers. This
was not only an example of the resourcefulness displayed by these managers but also the idea that community welfare situations are not as straightforward as they may first appear.

In 2004, during my teaching at Charles Sturt University, I was asked to present a talk to final year students of the Bachelor of Social Work Degree about my experience in the sector. I chose to present a paper that I had refined from a conference presentation at the University of Technology’s Education and Social Action 2002 Conference, titled ‘Who manages the community leadership role in welfare partnerships?’ The event gave me the opportunity to talk about the different levels of engagement in which community welfare managers appeared to be involved, for example, with community members, community business people, management committees, other agency managers, peak organisations, their own organisation, the different funding bodies, and government departments in general. I changed my focus slightly from the conference presentation, to a quite different question, ‘Who manages the leadership factor in community welfare services delivery?’ I still talked about the levels of engagement, but I wanted to emphasise two things to the social work students: the magnitude of the overarching, influencing arm of government policies and rhetoric on the managers’ work, and the constant questioning of self-identity to try to understand the roles and responsibilities that came with the territory of being a community welfare manager. And I encouraged the students to critically discuss how consideration of the above ideas meant there could be no other answer to the question but that it needed to be the managers themselves who ‘managed the leadership factor’.

My observations about the sector, had led me to suspect that the community welfare workers’ *lifeworld* – an environment that involves the familiar, everyday practices around them - is more complex than being just diverse. That is, there are more consideration layers within relationships, than ways that call for a flexible approach to engagement with those community welfare sector layers. It is a sector that is continually being colonised through economic and politico-administrative interruptions that lead to what Habermas refers to as a sociocultural crisis or *legitimation crisis* (Gregory 2000, in
In particular, in relation to the way community welfare services are delivered, the involvement of governments in mediation and managing our social systems, has allowed the prevalence of unfamiliar “monetisation and bureaucratization” practices to drive changes in the sector (Gregory 2000). The resulting dilemma is that while governments may have approached concerns about the sector from a mainly instrumental angle, the legitimation crisis for community welfare workers continues to include situations that are not just technical matters to be decided on a purely rational basis, but ones that require a measure of “moral-practice consciousness” to produce favourable outcomes for communities (Gregory 2000). Producing these outcomes seemed to require a hefty dose of leadership as well as management skills and wisdom.

My research continued the collaborative work completed by Dr Regine Wagner (UWS) and Nigel Spence (ACWA). Their research began in Australia in 1999 to explore the effects of changing funding and accountability regimes experienced by community-based organisations, as well as the introduction of private sector management strategies to the third sector overall. I realised that the little I knew about the management of resources in rural and isolated communities would provide a motivational springboard for doing research into paucity management, which is the strategising phenomenon within the community welfare sector that was identified and documented by Wagner (several publications including with Spence 2002 and 2003a). I wanted to find out more about the prevalence of this type of management, given that managers seemed reluctant to identify themselves as doing anything associated with ‘paucity’. I also wanted to gain a clearer understanding of what is actually happening in the sector, in an era of “hybridisation” where the ‘shape’ of community welfare service delivery is changing amidst a mixture of funding, accountability, employment roles and responsibilities, and types of service options offered (Evers 2005: 744).
1.2 What is *paucity management*?

Working from the ‘smell of an oil rag’ is a little like doing paucity management. However, where the first implies a sometimes-ideological existence, paucity management is a conceptual framework that can be used to identify strategies that community welfare workers employ, to counter resource-poor situations, and to achieve favourable outcomes. Put simply, ‘paucity management’ is that set of strategies used by managers to operate effectively and ethically under conditions of resource poverty (Wagner and Spence 2003). For example, one of the aspects that informs the existence of paucity management is how community sector managers deal with pressures and opportunities. The outlook for the continued practice of paucity management is that organisations will be involved in balancing competing needs of clients, workers, managers, and the organisation, as well as addressing tensions between balancing, trading off, professional standards and ethical practice.

There are five nominated strategy domains through which paucity management is conducted (Wagner and Mlcek 2005): *networking and inter-organisational collaboration; intra-organisational collaboration and pooling of competence; service delivery focus; working conditions and managerial responsibilities, and relationships between paid workers, paid management and governing body*. The Wagner and Mlcek research investigated the relationship between the paucity management domain - *networking and inter-organisational collaboration* – and the other four domains identified by Wagner and Spence (2003). An explanation of the emerging five domains and organisational practices of paucity management is summarised from the work of Wagner and Spence (2003: pp. 48-51), as a precursor to choices made about the directions taken for the current postdoctoral research.

*Networking and inter-organisational collaboration* provides both negative and positive outcomes for agencies. In the long term, these partnerships are seen as beneficial for an
organisation’s wellbeing, but in the short term they place a drain on available resources, by taking up valuable time, creating conflicts of interest and ideologies within collaborations, and additional costs relating to administrative tracking tasks. They are seen as a necessity particularly in relation to government discourse around the need to maximize resource sharing. However, although many agencies use them to share knowledge about funding and services, they are also seen as the domain that is the first to come under pressure when resources start to shrink.

Intra-organisational collaboration and pooling of competence relates to the extent and level to which internal collaborative strategies are used to develop teamwork and capacity building in order to combat organisational constraints. By pooling competence, the cumulative worth of groups of individuals provides more expertise to facilitate favourable outcomes for agency clients. The other side to these supportive relationships means there is also a favourable input to workers’ personal wellbeing.

Service delivery focus is a strategy used to respond to the compliance pressures from government for community welfare agencies to provide more face-to-face client services. Workers are able to focus on specific aspects of service delivery in the need to meet individual client needs and expectations, and in so doing, providing better resource utilisation as well as focused accountability measures.

Working conditions and managerial responsibilities provides the most problematic gaze into the situation of resource poverty in community welfare work. The reason for this state of affairs relates to a number of factors including the conditions for paid staff, the lack of knowledge and qualifications in some areas around compliance and legal issues, and the over dependence on volunteers in many situations. Strategies that relate to this domain include the workers’ willingness to engage in organisational practices that, although they rely on the good will, commitment, and resourcefulness of the worker, are sometimes in tension with professional and ethical standards for the sector.
Relationships between paid workers, paid management and governing body mean that workers can experience greater levels of autonomy in what they do, because of the discrepancies within their job activities. Workers may find that they are taking on more managerial tasks, for example in terms of management decision-making, because of the advent of a time of greater accountability, and so the boundaries between their job descriptions and their intended tasks, become blurred. Because of a lack of resources, workers engaging with this domain, strategise to undertake management and decision-making tasks as well as embrace differing levels of professional autonomy in order to support performance.
1.3 Aim and purpose of the research

I wanted to take the *working conditions and managerial responsibilities*’ domain and use that as the main canvas on which to build the narrative of community welfare managers’ work around layers of phenomena such as professional practice, ethical practice, practice bounded by agency and organisational structure, and innovative activity. With this research, I wanted to explore models of paucity management within the non-profit community welfare sector and I particularly hoped to build knowledge and understanding of the impact that phenomena had on the way that community welfare managers undertook social relationships in their work, in a rural setting. But not just any work, and not just any rural setting; the research focused on the exploration and explanation of managerial responsibilities within not-for-profit community welfare organisations in the central west regions of NSW, particularly where operations occurred under conditions of ever-diminishing resources. These conditions related mainly to the overlay of ‘new’ manifestations of doing work, particularly with regard to the “dominance of conservative ideas of liberal democracy and market oriented neoliberalism” (Phillips, 2006: 59), and working with the ‘hybrid government organisation’ that is part of a regime that promotes a commercial response to the delivery of welfare services (Darcy 2002). The research would explore ethical service delivery on a macro level, within the sector that incorporates community welfare organisations – the Third Sector. This sector is seen as an integral part of civil society and there are relevant factors relating to the ways that community welfare services are delivered to promote a ‘civil society’, which were further evaluated to add another dimension to researching and establishing *models of paucity management*.

The purpose of the research was not only to build knowledge and understanding of the existence of models of paucity management as they apply to community welfare service delivery in the nominated rural setting, but also to identify the *style* of management adopted to counter structural impacts on managers’ work. That is, research outcomes
from the managers’ stories would not only describe models of paucity management being used as an effective resource management tool, but also the way in which managers reinforced the possibility of alternative strategies to those offered by ‘new’ private sector principles, or renewed ‘old’ public sector practices (Wagner and Mlcek 2004). The reason for this assumption is that there is growing evidence to suggest that community welfare organisations are looking to develop their own set of management strategies that are peculiar to the sector and not ‘borrowed’ from either the public or private sector. This research would explore the notion of ethical practice within the framework of paucity management, and open up further premises for study along these lines. Within the present, relevant rhetoric, resource sharing through partnerships is seen as one solution to the poverty of the sector. This research sought to enhance managers’ knowledge of how to effectively manage and lead in situations of resource paucity.

Additionally, the continuation of research would inform management issues in the non-government, community welfare sector and expand our own practice wisdom. All of these considerations would add valuable discussion contacts, as well as provide a basis for the continued study of paucity management. So it is worth noting the anticipated benefits of the project, flagged in the original research proposal, that included:

- Managers would benefit because research would identify and inform the way that managerial practice was conducted in community welfare organisations. Strategies may be developed by managers through an analysis of other organisations’ practices to either counter ‘paucity management’, or to implement efficiencies to enhance their own work.
- Organisations would benefit, again through the identification of their own models of managerial practice. An evaluation of the way their structure and partnerships impacted on service delivery could have either a consolidating effect or one that allowed the organisation to critically evaluate and review service delivery.
- Not only the community welfare sector as a whole, but also the public and private sectors would benefit because this project would share stories of
practice wisdom that would help establish the theoretical relevance of ‘paucity management’ being able to add to the discourse on management practice overall. Could outcomes of the research, for example, add relevant and appropriate management models that could be applied to all sectors, first, second, and third, or public, private, and community?

1.3.1 Terminology – the place of ‘stories’ and ‘narratives’

Before reading the thesis, the following points are clarified for the Reader. In collecting and reporting information from the managers, I am aware of using the terms ‘stories’ and ‘narratives’ interchangeably throughout the thesis. There are arguments from the broad interdisciplinary field of narrative studies which view ‘narrative’ as the primary form of human understanding whereby people make sense of their experiences of other people and the world by embodying them in terms of socially and culturally specific stories, that is, stories which are supported by the social practices, rituals, texts, and other media representations of specific social groups and cultures (Bruner 1986; Ricoeur 1984). Cheers, Darracott and Lonne (2005: 236) indicate that there are several ‘worlds’ that the rural practitioner inhabits and these are comprised of narratives, and stories, that tell them how to understand and respond to practice situations. However, there is an acknowledged recognition of the subtle difference between the two terms, narratives and stories. After O’Sullivan et al (1994: 16), in this thesis, story provides the “irreducible substance” of what the managers say about their work, whereas narrative is the way that the story is related. Sometimes the boundary seems blurred but when I take a narrative approach to presenting the data, I re-author their stories while allowing the substance to remain; their narrative is retold against a backdrop of subsidiary questions, both implied and noted, in the previous section relating to the aim and purpose of the research.
1.4 Conclusion – reading the thesis

This introduction chapter has provided a touchstone for what this research is about and the reading of the thesis is set out schematically to move from the issue/s at hand driving the research, through to an interpretive end. The thesis started out as a standard five-chapter offering but quickly grew to seven, to accommodate the different levels of analysis, so that the data and findings could be reported across two chapters. A discussion chapter follows the reporting of the findings and critical reflection on models of management sits within the final conclusion chapter.

In the next Chapter 2 – The Literature Review I identified a series of issues that informed the current work of community welfare workers. In order to look at the present and allow room to project into the future, I also viewed aspects of the past to inform the significance of discourse to render change in the community welfare sector, particularly in relation to working within a new management era that is typified by the hybrid organisation.

Chapter 3 – Methodology includes an outline of the setting, and the research design of data collection. This chapter includes explanation of the phenomenographic approach to the methodology that involves a multi-layered and multi-stage approach to working closely with the data. Processes employed during data collection and analysis are explained in the way that levels of understanding would begin from the first bracketing of the raw data and then progress across three more levels including engagement with metaphorical language. The Wagner and Spence (2003a) working domain of ‘working conditions and managerial responsibilities’ is introduced as the main tool to inform an analytical framework of variation in experience related to the managers’ community welfare work.

Data is presented across Chapters 4 and 5, to correspond with the levels of analysis and interpretation. In Chapter 4 – Presentation of Data, the data is reported after undergoing
a secondary stage analysis process to culminate in categories of description. The report represents the seamless culmination of processes that move dynamically against and with each other, not separately, to give a clear sense of what it is like to work as a manager in a community welfare agency, and further information from the managers reinforces this point.

When the thesis moves to Chapter 5 – Theory-driven Interpretation, aspects of Giddens’ Structuration Theory (1985) and the ideas from Gleick (1993) and Lewin (2001) in relation to chaos and complexity theories join criteria from the Wagner and Spence paucity management domain, to add to a structure of awareness of variation interpretation framework. The initial categories of description are further interpreted to provide a simultaneous reading across three organisational levels, micro, mezzo, and macro.

The next Chapter 6 – Discussion, builds knowledge and understanding of the style adopted by managers to implement strategy, through emergent and developing qualities in new and exciting facets of community welfare management.

Finally, what does this all mean for the managers, the community welfare sector, and ultimately, the third sector? Chapter 7 – Conclusion, explores these questions and gives clarity to models of paucity management as indicated by the style of management adopted by the managers in executing models of paucity management. Reference is made to the work of Wagner et al, and other luminaries noted in the literature review, who write about aspects of the community welfare sector.

In proceeding consciously to search for ways that managers in community welfare organisations make sense of their practice and activities, I borrow the idea of Leont’ev (1979: 59) that “there can be no activity without a motive”. ‘Unmotivated’ activity “is not activity devoid of a motive: it is activity with a motive that is subjectively and objectively concealed”. Coupland and Crawford (2002: 1) extend this notion further with their summary that “motive energises the activity” and the choice for listening to
community welfare managers’ stories was in a sense to validate the fact that activity is mediated, as mine was, by the managers’ responses, which in turn were themselves mediated by the definition and determination of conditions under which their managing prevailed. The outcomes of this mediation continue to highlight the heterogeneity of practice despite the ongoing dilemma of trying to maintain (or contain) activities that are at odds with a ‘tick box’ culture and the view that all community welfare service agencies must be part of an homogeneous group (Shaw and Allen 2006: 213). The relationship between phenomena that influences the way that managers work, including their style of management and the strategies they use, will help to establish a defining link between the extent of sustainability within the community welfare sector, and the managers’ strength of purpose. This research provides a window of opportunity to note how community welfare workers have reacted to the changes in spaces of production, consumption, and regulation of their services, over time and through a redefinition of the economic environment in which they work.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present three main themes: first the evolution of paucity management from other philosophical approaches to all-sector management, second the nature and characteristics of community welfare work, particularly in the rural community welfare service delivery context, and third, specific accompanying issues for managers that relate to their work practices. The argument is made here, that the relationship between the above specific themes and the extent and level to which paucity management is practised, will provide a better understanding of the makeup of community welfare service delivery.

The literature about paucity management provided scant results indicating this is very new, dynamic and potentially controversial research. Almost all the international and national literature refers to the work of Wagner and associates (several dates including 1987, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005) and these all refer to different degrees of paucity management emerging “as a set of strategies used by managers and workers in non-profit human service organisations in Australia to operate effectively and ethically under conditions of resource poverty” (Wagner and Mlcek 2005: 85). With the above thoughts in mind, a broad list of ideas and themes was compiled from researching a raft of possibilities, including: community welfare services, human services, service delivery, impact of neoliberal policies, the third sector, civil society, peak organisations, community welfare partnerships, governance and accountability in the community services sector, welfare management and leadership models, structure of welfare organisations, and funding regimes. Other relevant themes include, community welfare situations, work experience, management role and responsibilities, and the effect of being part of the third sector in a rural environment, in a new management era of the
hybrid organisation. Perusing the literature was about discovering, discussing and understanding further, the links to which managers’ work coincides with paucity management.

Information from the literature is explored from a multi-theoretical perspective in order to determine which kinds of engagement with a resource poor environment has created emerging strategies to highlight practices that continue to evolve. For example, management and leadership approaches are presented using positivist and constructivist comparisons of information from the literature, the different ways of viewing community welfare work benefit from modernist, post-structuralist and socio-cultural lenses, and the nature of rural community welfare service delivery is grounded in a critical perspective. These perspectives are noted in the following sections, and overall the review uses relevant focal points as subheadings to strengthen the argument that intense, ongoing, and changed expectations of work outcomes in the current community welfare sector has resulted in complimentary, dynamic work behaviours.
PART ONE: DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

Section 2.1 presents a broad overview of the influence of management theory on organisation structure, and a speculative placement of paucity management within a resulting management and leadership strategies framework, indicates another possible type of management – an Ethnomethodological approach, which denotes a complex and adaptive management model.

2.1 The evolvement of paucity management

Research on paucity management as well as the *style* of management used by community welfare managers, includes reference to management and leadership literature that addresses any relationship to other theories of management that could shed light on the *way* that managers achieve outcomes. Furthermore, a perusal of management and leadership models across all sectors has the propensity to reveal the existence and evolution of predominant directions that have influenced community welfare management behaviour.

Paucity management in the third sector differs from other sector management models (Salamon 2001, Smith and Katz 1993). However, considerations within operations management and conventional management practices bear some similarity to the way that paucity management is conceived as impacting the work environment of community welfare managers. For example, there are existing management theories from the 1990s and into the early 2000s about change management (see for example Kaplan and Norton 1992, 2001), resource management (see for example Hammer 1990, Robbins et al 2000), interdependency (see for example Billet 2001: 23), complexity-uncertainty (see for example Bititci, Turner and Ball, 1999:195, McMillan 2002), innovation and work (see
for example Brown and Duguid 1991: 40, Fung and Wright 2004), and creative organisations/leadership (Anderson and McMillan 2003, Andriopoulos 2001: 834, Dodgeson et al 2005). But although enlightening conclusions can be drawn from the above sources of information, they all seem to evolve to a great extent from reconception and redesign, that is ‘what is not there’, and ‘what can be done instead’. A positivist analysis of managerial techniques that come from the above theoretical frames indicates outcomes that are achieved more often than not, from highly auditable circumstances. By contrast, in many community welfare situations, managers operate from what is there and what can be done with and from that level. From a constructivist gaze, community welfare management discourse (Darcy 2002) suggests that managers rarely accept ‘generalisable truths’ but instead respond better to exploring outcomes and meaning of situations through describing experience.

In the following Table 2.1, a speculative placement of paucity management within a strategies framework indicates the link between the different analytical models and concepts behind some of the more common management approaches, to their major source of philosophical frame, the systems characteristics to which they answer, and the main strategies employed to achieve typical outcomes for each approach (details summarised from Chaousis 2000, MacLaughlin et al 2002, Robbins et al 2000). The main types of leadership are also noted within each management frame – transactional (more process-oriented) or transformative (more people-oriented). There is also a nomination of those sectors (PU=public sector; PR=private sector; TH=third sector) that have typically used certain approaches more than others. Further explanation is given in the following sub-Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, relating to some of the characteristics of the different sector management models, as well as clarification of details from the table itself.
Table 2.1: Speculative placement of *paucity management* within a strategies framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Models &amp; Concepts (technique)</th>
<th>Major source of Philosophical Frame</th>
<th>System Characteristics</th>
<th>Main Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/ Bureaucratic (Transactional leadership)</td>
<td>Organisational Management</td>
<td>Emphasis on organisational authority, administrative rules &amp; regulations, standardisation of activities &amp; other administrative mechanisms to ensure appropriate employee behaviours to meet performance standards.</td>
<td>Typified by having many levels of management; staff have highly specialised tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector:</strong> PU/PR</td>
<td>Henri Fayol (early 1900s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max Weber (1940s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contingency Management</td>
<td>A contingency theory that is intuitively logical, situational, and focuses on followers’ maturity.</td>
<td>Four strategy styles that relate to assessment of the maturity of the individual being ‘led’, or mentored, or trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector:</strong> PR/PU</td>
<td>Blanchard and Peale (1980s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K Cole (1990s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hershey &amp; Blanchard (1990s &amp; 2000s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Leadership (Transactional leadership)</td>
<td>Contingency Management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sector:</strong> PR/PU</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Management (Transactional leadership through potential to be transformational)</td>
<td>Transformational Management</td>
<td>Can still be fairly hierarchal but a way of approaching strategic challenges that includes all levels of an organisation, through both a disciplined and innovative approach.</td>
<td>The ‘balanced scorecard’ allows for goals and objectives, together with activities to be designed by all employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector:</strong> PR/PU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kaplan &amp; Norton (the ‘Balanced scorecard’ influence in late 1990s &amp; 2000s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warren Bennis (influence in 1980s &amp; 1990s)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chris Argyris (1990s)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Senge (the ‘fifth discipline’ influence in 1990s &amp; 2000s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic Leadership (Transactional leadership)</td>
<td>Strategic Management</td>
<td>Followers make attributions of heroic or extraordinary leadership abilities when they observe certain behaviours. Addresses the development of individuals to perform at their optimum best.</td>
<td>Demonstrated confidence in ability and decision-making. Projection and assessment of resources to bring about change. Articulation of goals and confidence in staff to be able to achieve those goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector:</strong> PR</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Has similarities to the Learning Organisational Management focus)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Welfare Management; Third Sector / Not-for-Profit Management approach = Inclusive management (Transactional &amp; transactional leadership)</td>
<td>Community Work &amp; Community Organisation Practice</td>
<td>Response to different contexts of needs and problems of community members. Change happens through planned and sustaining community action to undertake such things as locality development, social planning, or social action.</td>
<td>Different forms and methods of community organisation practice, rather than one method. In response to different contexts, an emphasis could be placed on participation, technical processes of problem-solving, or partnerships &amp; networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector:</strong> TH</td>
<td>Ailinsky (1930s &amp; 1940s)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Movements in the 1950s &amp; 1960s</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mark Lyons (1980s-2000s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Frames Resource Dependency (Transactional leadership)</td>
<td>New Public Management (NPM)</td>
<td>Advent of hybridity; new discursive practices that produce shifts in power and authority in organisations because of a drive mainly to ‘modernise’ governments.</td>
<td>Facilitation of ‘old’ strategies with ‘new’, but also prioritisation in business planning and corporate positioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector:</strong> PU</td>
<td>Maclaughlin et al (leading authors in Great Britain, 2000s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paucity Management (Transactional processes with potential to be transformational)</td>
<td>Ethnomethodological approach = Complex adaptive management</td>
<td>Emergence = hybrid form of change management. Resource poor environment / resource poverty.</td>
<td>Networking &amp; collaboration Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sector:</strong> TH</td>
<td>Instinctive resource management</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.1.1 Characteristics of different sector management models

The management and leadership framework offered in Table 2.1 straddles a ‘chaordic age’ whereby systems appear to become complex in a way that they cannot be served by traditional management methods alone (Hock 2003, accessed [online] 13.11.07). Management characteristics from the three sectors – public (includes nonprofit organisations engaged in commercial activity), private (for-profits), and third sector (nonprofit sector) – are best viewed in the context of ‘pace of work’ (Cooney 2006: 157). Cooney summarises the ideas from Hansmann (1994) that “nonprofits tendency to respond “sluggishly” to changes in demand for services is related to both sunk costs (when demand slackens) and limited ability to raise capital (when demand rapidly increases)”. Additionally, the work of DiMaggio and Anheier (1990: 146) indicates that “there are historical contingencies that can be preserved indefinitely in the nonprofit sector, in contrast to for-profits, which must adapt more quickly to environmental change due to market discipline”. New Public Management that impacts both the private and third sector, is now used prevalently in the public sector and includes the idea of “nonprofit hybrid organisation(s) engaged in commercial activity” which must restructure internally to accommodate both paces of work (Cooney op.cit.).

Public sector management: From the early 1900s, management models evolved from the scientific administrative and bureaucratic forms, to incorporate human relations and behavioural scientist thinking, so that by the 1960s, integrative models of management were being based more and more on a situational approach that emphasised motivation and leadership (Robbins et al op.cit.). However, even the New Public Management approach of the 2000s, achieves a predominant transactional leadership model because of increased engagement in commercial activity. The positivist perspective of public sector system characteristics is that generally, they focus on standard neoclassical economic analysis which assumes that organisations are ‘machine-like’ and humans are rational and pragmatic. This ‘rational man’ assumption is probably still in practice today through efficiency assessment, transparency and accountability, and maximising competitiveness through skills development. However, the assumption is aligned more to
cause and effect relationships, and has the potential for many shortfalls that can lead to unrealistic economic analysis and policy-making.

**Private sector management:** Private sector behaviour utilised the same early approaches as those for the public sector, but with a more outcomes-oriented focus regarding commercial trends (Cooney *op.cit.*). A paradigm shift in management thinking occurred before the 1960s to acknowledge that ‘one size did not fit anymore’, and that managers get things done through working with people. Private sector management is focused on attaining profitable outcomes by responding to customer expectations and needs. With practice becoming more specialised and consultancy-focused, a positivist interpretation of private sector systems characteristics is that objectives are continually being assessed, mapped and audited against final performance criteria that respond to “market competition, niche change, and fitness measures” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 150). Hence leadership models still tend to be transactional but they do have the potential to be transformative through an integrative and change management approach. From a constructivist gaze, private sector management, through its dabbling in philanthropy and the channelling of research funds, also includes participatory learning and action research in order to contribute in the development of ‘the knowledge society’.

**Third sector management:** From Table 2.1, it is clear that the concept of community welfare management in the third sector has evolved from at least the early 1930s, and to a great extent, its practices have been able to influence other-sector management models for many years, and vice versa. Community sector management relates to flexible models of community management that have developed out of the philosophy of community organisation practice, and have the potential to produce both transactional and transformative leadership (Communitybuilders website, accessed [online] 25.01.08). A constructivist gaze of community welfare system characteristics acknowledges participants in different social action situations creating knowledge through interaction and communication, and interpretativity. One example comes from the Illawarra region in New South Wales, where five community organisations adapted their constitution to their particular needs, both philosophically and practically, and utilised five different
models of community management (The IllawarraForum 2005, accessed [online] 25.01.08). The different models used in the Illawarra organisations ranged from participation on management committee from local residents and groups with executive positions rotated, delegation of authority to sub-committees, collective decision-making, council of members as governing body, and democratic participation of general members and committee members to effect steering committees and working parties.

The practice of paucity management is borne out of a response to community needs in the third sector, but it is also defined by what is happening in the New Public Management form that has both public and private sector approaches to management and leadership. In comparison with the latter two approaches, paucity management does include elements from the for-profits sector whereby efficiencies are achieved in different ways. In the following sub-section, another layer is posited to the definition of third sector management, by making links to the idea of models of ‘community’, and the possible employment of strategies from the above table and summary.

2.1.1.1 Linking ideas of ‘community’ to community welfare management

Prior to understanding the management of community welfare work, is to acknowledge the fundamental debate that revolves around our notion of ‘community’, a concept that is notoriously difficult to define. An aspect of this debate seems to appear on a regular basis in the idea that any definition is going to either describe community in an ideal sense or in terms of a community as it is experienced. Wild (1981:14) described this as the confusion between a “normative prescription” and an “empirical description” of any given community, that is, whether we engage with a community on the basis of what we are told of what ought to be going on, or whether we make conclusions based on what we see and hear from people who are directly involved.

At the macro level of engagement, there is relevance in the way people are perceived to come together in communities, as well as the strengths and weaknesses in what those models of community might be. This kind of insight gives some grounding for understanding how and why community welfare managers might approach their
Within the rural-urban continuum view of community espoused by early social theorists such as Redfield or Frankenbourg (in Wild 1981: 22) there are close-knit networks and integration on the ‘rural end’ to characteristics of specialisation of labour and organic solidarity from the ‘urban end’ of the scale. Another model of community – the social political network - was conceptualised as community members having subjective feelings of belonging together (Weber 1947:136) and having definite lines of interaction (Barnes, in Bell and Newby 1978:52); sharing values and beliefs. The third model of community is especially relevant to this research because it views communities as localised social, political or economic systems that always exist within geographical boundaries and as a “combination of social units and systems that perform the major social functions having locality relevance” (Warren 1983: 28).

However, “when the romantic rhetoric is stripped away” the ‘political’ dimensions attributed to communities is much more interesting and “within the New Welfare system community agencies are seen as brokers of assistance” (Cass and Brennan 2002: 254). Community welfare managers then, can be seen to ‘broker assistance’ for community members, but they do not do this in isolation from the management models of those organisations that impact their existence. The suggestion is made at the end of this subsection, that services are delivered based on a response to the internal community situation, the external environment, together with available strategies and resources.

2.1.2 Models of management and leadership and the impact of organisational type

There are consistencies in the literature about the universality of the manager’s job. That is, managers engage in approximately five main functions, “planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling” (Pace and Faules 1994:103), and may also be involved in covering approximately ten generic roles that are divided into three basic groups: (1) Interpersonal Roles (Figurehead, Leader, Liaison), (2) Informational Roles (Monitor, Disseminator, Spokesperson), (3) Decision Roles (Entrepreneur, Disturbance Handler, Resource Allocator, and Negotiator) (Mintzberg 1973). Furthermore, it would appear that regardless of the type of organisation, and particularly where situations are the same in other parts of the world, there could be commonalities to all managerial roles.
2.1.2.1 Models of management

Models of management are determined by responses to accountability issues that result from the political, economical, cultural and ideological nature of the environment in which an organisation exists (Lyons 2007, Lyons 2004, Lyons 2001). Where the type of organisation determines management practices, these are manifested through the personal ideology and professional orientation to work, ethics and values (Crofts and Begg 2005: pp. 330 and 342, Munn and Munn 2003: pp. 22-34, Lewis 2007). For example, a broad overview of some of the main players’ activities and behaviour in delivering community welfare services suggests an overriding human endeavour in lobbying, accountability, provision, and advocacy in order to change the lives of those who are disadvantaged and marginalised: UnitingCare Australia provides a lobbying voice against governments, for those struggling to live with dignity in the face of poverty and exclusion (UnitingCare website accessed [online] 05.01.08); ANGLICARE focuses on social inclusion and growing communities through human relationships (ANGLICARE website accessed [online] 05.01.08); Centacare Catholic Community Services provides for the social and emotional wellbeing of communities, families, and individuals (Centacare website accessed [online] 05.01.08); and Barnados advocates on behalf of children to build relationships between them, their families and the community (Barnados website accessed [online] 05.01.08).

The situation may be for many of the managers in the above organisations, that their work is defined by the various capacities of their particular agencies (Castelloe, Watson and White 2002, Chaskin et al 2001). Within some organisations for example, there are efficient and effective management practices and structures, but in others there will be an emphasis on the use of volunteers with no professional management or accountability expertise (Onyx and Leonard 2007, accessed [online] 14.02.07, Niland 2000: 93). The issue of funding community welfare services, especially where the continuation of funding is no longer a ‘given’ and the lack of funding stability adds to an environment that is very much resource poor (Wagner et al 2001a), then the work of managers in the above organisations is further impacted.
At a local level, the situation has developed momentum since the mid-1970s to the point where social welfare is now at a crisis stage and there is a continuing critical need for managers to become expert policy analysts in order to understand “the politics of policy making processes” (Bessant 2002: 12). Community welfare managers’ models of work engagement and management must necessarily take into account their responsiveness to the political positioning and location of ‘problems’ as being either with individuals, families, or the community. For example, the challenges faced by the phenomenon of project-based funding and competitive tendering constrain the ability of managers to provide beneficial advocacy to whole-of-communities (Earles 1999, Melville and Perkins 2003, Onyx et al 2007, accessed [online] 14.02.08). In the end, the strategies they adopt are often a combination of an ability to both provide resources and services to community members, and also to lobby for them (Kerr and Savelberg 2001: 23).

Also at the micro level or agency level, a number of processes are underway in response partly to the macro trends manifested in the political and economic makeup of the industry. One of the challenges for community welfare managers is not only to know what to do within their place as managers and leaders but also to find their sense of place (Chenoweth 2004: 279). This idea relates to their self-efficacy and locus of control to be able to determine the degree to which they believe they are capable of doing their work (Chaousis 2000: pp. 29 and 87). A sense of ‘place’ in this research is taken to be an important part of the structuration process, “both constitutive of, and constituted by, social relations” (Duncan 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: 583). It is also implied here as coming from the improvisatory nature of habitus whereby actions are both governed, or not governed, by structures (Bourdieu 1990). In other words, management practices have always been based on the social/political settlements of the time, and furthermore, relationships have been redefined “between the state and citizen, between public and private, between providers and recipients of social welfare, and between management and policies” (Clarke and Newman 1997: ix).
Bennis (1989: pp. 40-45) suggests that managers are their “own raw material”, and holds to the traditional way of thinking about a kind of divide existing between what it means to be a manager compared to what it means to be a leader. Somehow his following words “managers wear square hats and learn through training …leaders wear sombreros and opt for education” seem ‘old-fashioned’ and far-removed from the unique rural community welfare environment of the manager participants in this research. Being part of the community welfare sector, their practices substantiate the ideas of Drucker (cited in Stewart-Weeks 2001: 33) who places a high value on the non-profit sector to set the foundation of a healthy society, and poses a model of management that appears to include the wearing of both ‘square hats and sombreros’. Drucker advises that when one wants to gauge the direction and characteristic of leading edge management practice, we should not look to the first or the second sector, but the third sector. He reminds people that, “when you want to see leading edge performance in management, leadership and governance, you look not in business or government, but in the third sector” (Stewart-Weeks 2001: 33).

While Bennis and Drucker have been nominated as ‘gurus’ of management and leadership in the field of management and organisational studies, they still write from primarily an American perspective; their world-view appears to come from scrutinising activities in organisations from a scientific management lens whereby the triple bottom line of economic management is of paramount concern. Of interest to know is the level and extent to which those ideas have been transferred and embraced in an Australian community services context, and particularly in a rural setting. In terms of building social capital in rural communities for example, Alston (2001: 94) argues that the effect of the government’s “policies of devolution of social welfare programs to non-government organisations and local levels” have in many cases decimated communities. It seems that issues arise not just because of the dismantling of the welfare state, but from the “expansion of expectations from the non-government sector”. Onyx and Bullen (2000) also give an Australian perspective to the way that social capital can be built despite the impacts of government regimes, through principles of trust, mutual reciprocity and actions that are ‘normalised’ in the context of work. Onyx (1999) also notes the profound
influence of the third sector, with the inclusion of community welfare organisations, to have an impact on societal sustainability, changes and direction. She writes, “civil society is more than the third sector; but the third sector is central to civil society” (Onyx 1999: 3). In 1999 Onyx also admitted that “we know precious little about how third sector organisations work and with what impact” and she continued to indicate that “over the last 15 years, economic rationalist public policies have had a severe impact on the management of third sector organisations” (Onyx 2001: 3).

So far, the above references give a picture of models of management that are somewhat paradoxical; leading edge, flexible, knowledgeable, but also somehow unknown, ponderous, constraining, and ‘weighty’.

2.1.2.2 Models of leadership

Regarding different models of leadership, there is comprehensive literature referring to several different types, but the ones of most relevance to community service delivery and paucity management, relate to behavioural perspectives about innovation, creativity, and strategy. Some of these concepts have their base in contingency theories (Vroom and Jago 1988, Vroom and Yetton 1973), plus the transactional versus transformational models of leadership (Bass and Avolio 1995). In terms of the research wanting to know what it is that managers do in certain situations, the above models give an insight into understanding whether a manager is more about wanting to just get the job done no matter the consequences, or concerned more about values, morals and ethics.

The most effective leader doing community welfare work is one who has self-awareness (Bennis 1999, Cooper and Argyris 1998) and has a more flexible, sustaining communication, collaborative and nurturing style (Stephenson Jr. 2006: 47). Government stakeholders in Australia have been approached through various summits and fora to continue to make leadership development models a part of their core business in trying to redress the imbalance of opportunity within the rural and regional communities. Studies by Rogers and Barker (2000) into community leadership have added to a growing pool of authors who have made specific reference to the need for community leadership.
development as a central element in managing the rapid change that many rural and regional communities are experiencing. In fact, “leadership development was heralded an essential component in reversing the downwards trends in rural Australia” (Rogers and Barker 2000: 1). Additionally, Martinez-Brawley (2002: 295) nominates integrative thinking as a way for practitioners to equip themselves strategically, particularly for rural practice. In this way, they engage in,

… the kind of thinking that experienced practitioners engage in to arrive at meaningful solutions for particularly challenging problems. It is the kind of thinking that looks backwards and forward at every step of the way, because the practitioner knows that all experiences must be interpreted in terms of conceptual schemes that are historical, linguistic, contextual and so on.

In ending this section, the information in Table 2.1 was compiled to provide an understanding of the more common influential theories of management and leadership across all three sectors, private, public and community. The ideas behind the theories were grouped logically into two broad categories that are derived from the way that activity and operations are surmised through traditional methods of management, as well as change management practices. The latter includes new public management, which in turn involves hybrid models of management and leadership. Within any management and leadership frame, there had to be a place for seminal theories of practice such as Weber’s Charismatic Leadership, and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership. The conceptual category of paucity management, together with its strategy of partnerships and networking, can also be legitimately placed in a typology of management and leadership models determined by strategies, and the overall picture offers a tantalising option of what could be.

The picture presented so far provides a basis from which to make an initial comparative analysis regarding paucity management, particularly in terms of its importance in the landscape of management and leadership practices over the last fifty years (Andriopoulos 2001: 834). The information in Table 2.1 suggests a cyclical aspect to types of management and leadership models that have evolved to combine more transformational and pragmatic processes, and the research into paucity management models raises the opportunity to try to build understanding of the manifestation of processes involved.
PART TWO: KEY ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICES DELIVERY

In this next part of Chapter 2, a typology of the kind of literature accessed during the preliminary research process is presented (refer to Table 2.2) as a broad summary of themes and ideas about aspects of the community welfare industry, from both international and national perspectives. A suggestion is made here that community welfare situations deliver effective services through consideration of socio-economic and political influences, and overall, the outcomes are similar for local, national, as well as international contexts because the issues are similar.

The phenomenon of the hybrid organisation is introduced towards the end of Section 2.3, against a backdrop of change that continues to occur, in both local and international community welfare situations. Throughout the thesis, facets of hybridity will be introduced to expand knowledge of how the phenomenon is manifested in the context of community welfare management (and particularly at sub-Section 2.6.2 in Part three), however at this initial stage, its occurrence arises as an off-shoot, not unlike a metamorphosis, from traditional methods and processes to those that are influenced by the changing nature of global market systems. This change can result in more open, multi-faceted and accessible systems that move away from conventional structures that are ‘closed’ and specialised. At a local level, a hybrid organisation can be one that has offices and functions co-located and centralised to provide shared access to documents and records (Kampschroer et al 2007).

In Section 2.4, the Reader is presented with an overview of community welfare in a rural environment, followed by another dimension to ‘ways of viewing’ community welfare work.
2.2 Community welfare ideas and themes from the literature

The typology in Table 2.2, offers a snapshot only of ideas and themes about community welfare work from the international and national arenas. Several writers refer to aspects of phenomena that relate to practice driven by government policies and accountability regimes, diversity of practice within different environments such as rural situations, sustainability of services, capacity building through service delivery and community engagement, the impact of practice on civil society, the impact of organisational structure on service delivery, and engagement with evolving and different types of management discourse practices. Furthermore, some fairly specific specialisations or ‘leanings’ towards critiquing certain aspects of community welfare services, the third sector, community welfare management, and the influence on environment by management structures can be attributed to particular writers, some of whose ideas were used to inform the direction of this project. The main themes that evolve from the following perspectives relate to the juxtaposition of individual and community expectations of community welfare, against situations of structural constraints. The writers have been chosen for their ability to contribute leading and sustaining debate on community welfare issues, and some are recognised as being leaders in their field of research, both nationally and internationally.
The above typology has been constructed to give an insight into how broadly defined community welfare work can be, but the list is not meant to be exhaustive or definitive. The main ideas, themes and phenomena have been placed in descending order of ‘importance’ and focus, as they relate to the initial premise for this research. Salamon’s work needs to be highlighted here because of its influence in informing the direction of how to approach managers to share their experiences of paucity management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of main ideas, themes &amp; phenomena</th>
<th>Significant contributions</th>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Third Sector; mixed welfare systems &amp; hybrid organisations - the concept of hybridisation contributing to governance; the nature of human services organisations as complex organisations.</td>
<td>A Evers (2003, 2005), Y Hasenfeld (1992).</td>
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Specifically, Salamon, Hems and Chinnock (2000), undertook a longitudinal study of practice in the nonprofit sector, begun in 1989 and encompassing 40 countries, in which they raised questions about the extent and level to which both barriers and positive enabling phenomena influenced organisations in delivering effective services to communities. Regarding different roles within organisations, the study posed positive contributions from the service role, the innovation role, the advocacy role, the expressive and leadership development role, and the community building and democratisation role. The study also highlighted drawbacks and vulnerabilities in relation to particularism, paternalism, excessive amateurism or professionalism, resource insufficiency, and the accountability gap. The above ideas were influential in guiding the direction of the research to determine the managerial roles of the participants as they implemented paucity management strategies.

An interesting point from the literature is that the influence of ‘civil society’ to impact the third sector, results in a determining effect on community welfare services as they evolve into complex delivery systems. This latter idea extends into the next Section 2.3, whereby community welfare practice is best defined through looking at both the nature of community welfare work, and links to multi-level expectations that arise from personal, community, organisational, and global situations.
2.3 Practice within community welfare situations

Evidence from the literature indicates that factors affecting community welfare situations such as the cultural and social characteristics of work practices have undergone readjustments, and continue to do so. For example, Wagner has used her research focus since the late 1980s, in some cases in collaboration with others, to explore the way that community welfare workers’ practice has evolved to accommodate political, economical and institutional influences (see for example, Wagner 1987, Wagner, Spence, van Reyk and Scott 1999, Wagner and Spence 2003, Wagner, Spence and Burnstein, 2001, Wagner and Romic 2003, Wagner, Spence and van Reyk 2000). In other words, the capacity of community welfare organisations to deliver effective services rests on the socio-economic and political conditions of their practice context (Ward [ed.] 2005). Additionally, the effectiveness of community welfare services both internationally and locally, is founded on diverse relationships depending on the desired outcome (Shaw and Allen 2006: 211, Sidel 2006: 205). Similar information about community welfare situations can be sourced from literature about non-government organisations [NGOs] (Jordan and van Tuijl [eds.] 2006, Lipchutz and Rowe 2005), non-profit organisations [NPOs] (Boris and Steuerle [eds.] 2006, Lyons 1998), community foundations, philanthropic agencies, human services organisations [HSOs] (Gardner 2005), and civil society organisations [CSOs] (Sorgenfrei and Wrigley 2005).

Community welfare managers operate at the interface of service delivery, most often between management boards or committees, and clients. And because community sector organisations are generally spoken of in the context of the third sector, it is important to understand that organisations from the nonprofit sector see their role as contributing to a civil society, especially in terms of service and advocacy provision through agency intervention. A good example relates to the way some locally experienced problems, such as unemployment, need to be understood in the wider systemic context so that appropriate organisational links can be made between different issues at the local
(perhaps from external elements such as drought), state (perhaps from infrastructure concerns), and national levels (perhaps from funding decisions).

The nature of community welfare work can be thought of as a four-fold entity that includes program, method, process, and movement (Lupi 1975). As a program, a specific service may be created from plans and strategies to overcome a problem within the community, and achieve tangible outcomes such as a child-minding facility for single mothers. As a method, the child-minding facility could have evolved from the community welfare worker collaborating with the mothers to achieve certain objectives for the childcare program. As such, there is a process involved that includes problem-solving activities whereby the worker and mothers assess the ‘problem’ together, then evaluate suitable alternative solutions, and finally decide on the best way to achieve positive outcomes for all. A community welfare worker does not have to become involved, but by doing so, she is continually re-inventing and re-establishing community welfare work beyond just the local level to reinforce the idea of the work being part of a movement; a philosophy of ongoing engagement and relating to communities in order to solve problems.

Despite the previous information, the scrutiny of what practices constitute effective community welfare service delivery, raises tensions between the ideological understanding of a community’s perceived right to access community welfare, and responding to the business management discourse of governments, that is, “between mission and profit” (Cooney 2006: 159). Technically speaking, organisations that respond to the evolving competitive practices implicit in business management ought to employ work activities and tasks that strictly monitor and guide uniformity in access to services. However, anomalies arise when community welfare organisations, particularly at the agency level, create spaces for a wide range of informal work processes to emerge in order “to respond flexibly to street level conditions” (Cooney 2006: 145).
2.3.1 The continuing effects of globalisation on community welfare work

In a climate of micro economic reform that has persisted globally for almost twenty years, and with a constantly moving emphasis on the bottom line for many organisations, there has been little relief for workers (Salamon 1999). The actual place and work practices of community welfare organisations has come from a definite historical base that informs both a generalist and a normative view (Ife 2002: pp. 200-225). At a generalist level community welfare organisations are traditionally, like all community organisations, based on principles of participation, consultation and self-determination (Nabben 2001: 46, Pawar 2005: pp. 14-18). However, a normative view of a participative/consultative framework indicates that the latter has been determined by the evolving impacts of deinstitutionalisation that produces a reduction in social expenditure as well as a more rigorous and competitive tendering environment for community welfare managers. Such an environment “reflects not only changes in governments’ understandings of their role in the community, but also major changes in governments’ welfare funding” (Honner 1998: 29). Honner’s work is informative in expanding the ideas posed earlier about community welfare practice in the face of a world-view imposed by governments that seeks efficiency and order. Paradoxically, the world-view of community workers is that they defend “complexity and community” which takes into “account the intangibles of human need and community values” far away from the global context (Honner 1998: 30).

The generalist view of work practices in community welfare organisations on the other hand, is bound to the above factors that come under the rubric of globalisation. Resulting effects on the third sector in the first instance are critical to the dynamic shifts in community welfare situations. In relation to service delivery, these shifts evolve from a reciprocal dance between the manifestation of activities at the local level and their alignment with neo-liberal policies that privilege privatisation and contracting for services (Cheers and Taylor 2005, Healy and Meagher 2000). However, the effectiveness of community welfare services is founded on different types of relationships, depending on the outcome sought. For example, at a ‘local’ level, in New Zealand and Australia, “relationships … are increasingly defined by the philosophy of rational management”
(Shaw and Allen 2006: 211). In the United States however, relationships appear to be more community-oriented and founded on local understanding and acceptance (Sidel 2006: 205).

From the literature concerning work in community welfare organisations, there is no doubt that activities are defined also through the acceptance of a traditional view of the role of community organisations to work within and through a caring framework. Such a framework, for example, could see the implementation of early intervention programs for at-risk youth, through holistic case management activities that promote health and well-being at the individual, school, and community levels (Macgarvey 2005: 133). This kind of approach to community welfare work is recognised as being integral to maintaining civil society (Salamon et al 1999); generally contributing to social well-being (Rogan 1995), and improving life in communities by “the linking of people with systems that provide them with resources, services and opportunities; and the development of effective service systems” (Compton and Galway 1989, cited in Jones and May 2002: 6).

The translation of the above links gives rise to further definitions and operations. One aspect of the caring framework is the notion that community workers help to give ‘a voice’ to people in potentially disempowering situations through processes that improve access and participation. For example, Nabben (2001: 46) writes in respect to human services programs as “giving voice to less powerful interests … disempowered and marginalised people” within the community. However, this aspiration is contestable, particularly when problematised against the expectation of managers to consistently reflect the behaviour of their organisation, and the degree to which their convergence along those lines, is then manifested through individual practices so that communities are actually helped to have a ‘voice’. It may well be that the expectation does not reflect the reality, and that more often than not, organisational-practice is at odds with service-practice (Earles 2006, accessed [online] 05.01.08).

From both an international and local gaze, changes can be examined from a post-structuralist stance whereby models of community welfare engagement are played out
along a trajectory that is multi-dimensional, enterprising, and multi-level. That is, theory advances community welfare activity along both horizontal and vertical lines. The change in ideological constructs of what it means to be part of the community welfare industry arises from the predominance of a social development emphasis (Midgley 1995) that has tried to ‘harmonise’ economic and social policy with specific service programs that at best try to ‘help’ communities (Crofts and Begg 2005: 331, Pawar 2000). As an example, chronic unemployment in some communities can be addressed collaboratively with the participation of those both directly and indirectly involved. Solutions are created from developing and promoting new training and job opportunities, developing and promoting employers with a ‘positive bias’, developing small business cooperatives, enhancing opportunities for employment of local residents, or increasing volunteer support in community initiatives (Crofts and Begg 2005: 332).

The effect of globalisation introduces neoliberal solutions to developmental problems that show no sign of closing the social justice anomalies and resource inequalities around the globe. Some interesting outcomes to international practices have had similar, though different kinds of ‘trickle-down effects’ on Australian and New Zealand practice. In South Africa, the local customs for ‘helping’ in the industry include practices of horizontal and vertical philanthropy. In “shar(e)ing the desire to get resources where they are needed the most” (Wikinson-Maposa et al 2006: 119), cultural issues of support and trust, as well as solidarity amongst communities in resource-poor environments, add to the debate on community welfare development and empowerment. Perhaps the closest to this line of thinking in the Australian rural context, is through sometimes ‘defying the odds’, whereby local solutions to problems may very well have their root causes in external global macro-structures, but are being addressed through local actions (Crofts and Begg 2005: 336, Pawar 2000).

The above ideas of community welfare situations extend the socio-cultural perspective; the point of view of new ways of individuals collaborating in the face of globalisation and the power of the market that is seen as both an organising and legitimating device (Bruyn 2005). Actions in the international arena are mirrored by the activity at a local
level, and can sometimes reveal the divide between what it actually means to try to maintain organisational capacity against a commitment to a social mission direction (Onyx et al 2007: 8, accessed [online] 07.01.08). Bruyn (2005) writes about the motivation to “work for the common good” (page 29) which results in entities with “unlike cultures” and from quite different sectors in society, coming together in a ‘new market system’ or ongoing modernisation within developed market economies (Anheier 2007: 6). The manifestation of these entities gives rise to the hybrid institution.

Countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, are exemplars of the New Public Management drive that has promoted such institutions and hybridisation through the advent of distinctive new styles and patterns of public management (Hood and Lodge 2006, Barzelay 2001). The significance of this shift relates to the perceived need for policy reform, new accountability regimes and the demise of old ways of working freely, to a system that calls for greater accountability, validity and relevance. As stated, these same movements have happened at both international and local levels but their contribution to a global civil society is contestable particularly in relation “towards inclusion and global democracy” (Sherraden et al 2006: 165). That is, issues around the lack of promotion of democracy and accountability that contrast to the presence of elitism, and non-representation, provide a cautionary tale for community welfare situations (Baker 2002, Scholte 2000).

The above section has presented the idea of the nature of community welfare work being a four-part entity that includes program, method, process, and movement. The work is sustained despite issues of globalisation that impacts all four parts, particularly in terms of the effects from a more commercialised, market-driven environment. In Section 2.4, the edification of community welfare work is contextualised through its enactment in a rural setting.
2.4 Community welfare services delivery in a rural setting

Ways of viewing community welfare work in a rural environment can be grounded in a critical perspective (Alston 2002, Lonne and Cheers 2004b). Phenomena such as geographical distance from services, the uniqueness of small-town communities, the sometimes marginalisation of different ethnic groups, lack of employment and government infrastructure, all play a connecting role in adding to the isolation of work and life in rural situations. Taking a critical perspective of isolation means to look beyond the above phenomena to other aligned issues. At a confronting level, “rural Australia is in crisis” and “decades of restructuring, overlaid with a crippling drought” have resulted in a myriad of social and economical issues (Alston 2005a: 276). In terms of paucity management, some of these issues relate to the attraction and retention of welfare workers in these regions (Bowles and Duncombe 2005: pp. 284-285, Lonne and Cheers 2004a, Lonne and Cheers 2004b), dwindling services that border on the minimisation of Human Rights in rural and remote areas which sometimes result in the marginalisation of different groups of people (Alston 2002, Alston 2005a, Alston 2005b, Alston and Kent 2004, Ife 2001), and scarce opportunities for pragmatic solutions to benefit communities (Bowles and Mlcek 2006, Ife 2002a).

Additionally, community welfare workers are involved in dual and multiple engagements within rural settings and are confronted daily by practice dilemmas that include themes such as confidentiality, conflict of interest, privacy and visibility (Gregory 2005: pp. 267-275). These engagements can be the result of “routinized and repetitive conduct” between people, place and space as “intersections between knowledgeable and capable human agents and the wider social systems and structures in which they are implicated” (Gregory 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: pp. 778 and 799). But they can also include engagements fraught with ‘incapacity’. Because the ‘people, place and space’ of this research project, happen primarily in a rural environment, ‘ruralness’ is a major contributor to the social system and structure in which the managers of this research live.
and work, and it has a defining impact on how people behave in certain situations. A community welfare worker who could be well known both socially and professionally to all members of a small rural community for example, may be the only source of help for a family in crisis, but with nowhere else to go, the family may still feel reticent in seeking help because of the fear that everyone else in the community will become aware of its problem.

A central important way of understanding the further effect of ruralness on community welfare service delivery is to compare this phenomenon to what it must mean to deliver services in an urban or city environment. Where accountability is the Achilles heel for not-for-profit entities (Phillips 2006: 71), a similar service delivery agency situated in for example, Leichhardt in Sydney, would be in greater ‘touch’ and proximity to respond expeditiously to regulatory and legislative environments than would its ‘country cousin’. Furthermore, where challenging community norms can be a natural terrain of the metropolitan or rural human services worker, “in rural locations such activities can be particularly difficult” (Green and Lonne 2005: 258) and result in harassment and work-related violence (Green, Gregory and Mason 2003).

One of the most defining summaries relating to community welfare work in the rural context comes from Green and Lonne (2005: pp. 252-266) who write about its paradoxical nature in promoting both highly satisfactory and stressful work situations.

*Social workers, welfare workers and others living and working in small rural communities report that they are generally highly satisfied with their work and lifestyle. Paradoxically, high levels of occupational stress are also reported. Rural welfare work has elements such as the adoption of dual and multiple roles, cultural ‘isolation’, the blurring of work and home, professional and citizenship roles, and lack of anonymity, which can contribute to occupational stress. Concerns about personal and family safety with exposure to episodes of violence, harassment and bullying within small communities also contribute to feeling stressed (page 252).*

There are other problematic situations that introduce some additional thought-provoking layers to community welfare work in the rural context including: lack of appropriate

Part of the ‘problem’ then being investigated through this research is to know and understand the experiences of managers in relation to the previous factors that impact work role and practice issues (Green and Mason 2002, Ife 1997, Lloyd, King and Chenoweth 2002, Munn and Munn 2003, Woodward and Marshall 2004). There are other ‘ways of viewing’ practice that implies structural issues, social relationship issues, and process implementation issues. The following application in the next sub-sections, of both a structuration lens (modernist), and a chaos/complexity lens (‘post’ theories, postmodernism and post structuralism), provides other useful perspectives to project further insight into aspects of community welfare work in a rural setting.

2.4.1 Ways of seeing the experience of work through structuration processes

In rural areas, a number of work related factors can determine overall work response and outcomes, including the tensions between control and autonomy (Munn and Munn 2003: 23), role ambiguity (Cheers 2004), organisation structure that impacts culture, local disadvantage (Crofts and Begg 2005: 335), statutory obligations, and movable workloads (Lonne 2003). These are structuration phenomena that also represent structural boundaries, or “structural work stressors” (Green and Lonne 2005: 254), through which managers are produced, and via an enactment process are being constantly reproduced (Dollard, Winefield and Winefield 2001, Gee 1999). In a rural community welfare situation, these ideas can ‘simply’ relate to a situation that has high job demands, but low support structures, and could have the potential to produce workers who are stressed and dissatisfied, which could also result in adverse work performance. A disgruntled worker then becomes ineffective and counterproductive to maintaining a positive organisational culture.
Responses from community welfare workers can be bracketed under similar features of the structuration process, namely levels of reflexivity, recursiveness, and regionalisation (Alston 2005a: 278, Gregory 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: pp. 798-799). These levels relate to the practice of rural community welfare workers being viewed via a practice lens that is intersected with numerous narratives that give greater understanding to, and about, workers’ choices to produce and reproduce social life (Darracott and Lonne 2005: 236) with those who are co-present, or absent in time and space (Gregory 2000). The following summary from Wendt (2005, cited in Cheers, Darracott and Lonne 2005) gives further insight into rural work experience that is impacted by processes of structuration:

*From our organizations, for instance, we hear that we should implement policy and follow procedures; from our profession that we should meet the client’s needs; and from our communities that we should support the privacy of the family, even in the face of suspected violence*.

From the above ideas, it would appear that thought, action, and interaction are simultaneously structured by institutional forces (Beck 2001, Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994, Giddens 1984, Giddens 1987). Furthermore, the nature of time, space, human relationships, and communities (facets of structuration) are being radically transformed at the rural local level through community welfare workers in their ‘practice domains’ (Bauman 2000, Bauman 2001: 143). And from an ecological perspective that can be similarly compared to notions of structuration, practice domains are impacted by the interaction between physical, social and psychological aspects of the agency workplace (Becker 2007).

2.4.2 Understanding work through aspects of time and space

In a physical sense, the geographical size and distance between welfare services and rural communities, provides a clear argument about the presence of disadvantage. However, an aspect of structuration is the place of time-space distanciation to understand the ‘absences’ that are ‘present’ in any given social situation. This is an interpretivist notion that comes from Giddens’ work (1990, 1991, 1994) whereby previous ‘localized
condensations of social practices” (Gregory 2000, cited in Johnstone et al [eds.] 2000: 799) have been stretched away from the government radar into a state of mismatched perplexity. Assumptions that local and national development proceeds hand in hand are not always correct but in fact is rather problematic and has been so for many years (Khinduka 1975: 179). The actions and accountability measures decided in the urban context, for example by government departments away from the reality of rural community welfare service delivery, take time to ‘catch up’ to the managers in their agencies. Similarly, concerns from the managers via their agencies, organisations or peak body organisations back to the government representatives are often ‘out of kilter’ to overall expectations (Melville 2003). Therefore, a constant loop of ‘cultural lag’ prevails not only through the ‘local versus government’ debate, but also about rising distrust on several levels, different economic efficiencies, broadening political space, and tenable positioning (Anheier 2007: pp. 5-6, Ogburn 1957, cited in Donini and Novack [eds.] 1982: pp. 141-148).

2.4.3 Understanding work practices through emerging systems

There are some common threads in the Australian literature about what community welfare managers say they do, ought to do, and have to do (Mlcek 2005b: 308). In rural and remote locations, they are “constantly engaged in limit-acts that transverse their situations of resource poverty into creative and innovative, manageable chunks of work” (Mlcek 2005b: 308). Additionally, their “practice wisdom and integrative, reflexive thinking play a critical part … to distil and analyse the complexities and contextualities they confront” (Cheers, Darracott and Lonne 2005: 247). This sound practice wisdom can be equated to an emerging process whereby rural human service workers also “use themselves in creative and innovative ways to facilitate change processes that are contextually appropriate for their community, service users, and themselves” (Cheers, Darracott and Lonne 2005: 247). McMaster (1996: 150) states that “‘emergence’ is the cause and effect of complex adaptive systems where time is a function of possibility …” and given that ‘time’ is a critical component of work at the coal-face of delivering community welfare services, then the demand for new ways of looking, thinking and understanding change and temporality must surely impact models of management.
The relationship between symbolic (social) constructionism ‘emerging’ through different levels of complexity provides a further useful lens through which to view the work of community welfare workers (Gleick 1987, Lewin 2001). For example, there are some writers who see the dual banners of ‘managerialism’ and ‘new public management’ as an approach to reduce complexity by offering “simple models and providing straightforward formulae for improvement” (Nabben 2001: 43). In terms of this research, the resource-poor environment helping to inform, define and construct models of management, is itself informed, defined and constructed through complex social situations that are increased or decreased depending on the presence and degree of time-space differentiation (Giddens 1984, 1991).

At a fundamental level then, the link between paucity management, and ideas about complexity as well as change in ‘chaos’ situations, is that they all “negate the tendency to nominate simple cause and effect processes” (Mlcek 2005b: 298). In relation to accountability and governance issues for example, much of the latter concern comes from the multipurpose and intersectoral characteristic of community welfare service and in particular,

... comes from the complication of trying to work in a purchaser-provider model of business activity rather than within a sponsored model of service delivery. For many managers the accountability and governance comes not from just one government level but can stretch to multiple levels of government as well as different levels within their own organizations. As the practice of being a community welfare manager appears to become more chaotic and therefore limiting, what is most likely occurring is a manager working in situations where they are being inundated with more complex information than can be handled (Mlcek 2005b: 299)

In ending this section, key ideas such as: the isolation of rural practice; lack of appropriate management training; complications in working in a purchaser-provider model of service delivery, and the inundation of complex information, expand the available knowledge of integration, community activity and responsibility, functions of socialisation, and interdependency in community welfare work. They are ideas that are
also embedded in the notion that production and reproduction of activity are not discrete entities to be analysed separately but in a model of duality whereby structural impacts are implicated in every aspect of community welfare managers’ work (Giddens 1984, 1990).
2.5 Management role and responsibilities in rural community welfare work

The situation of community welfare workers generally, is not fully understood and that "In reality, Australian non-profits, like their counterparts in other countries, are 'black boxes', the internal functioning of which is opaque" (McDonald 1999a: 12). In a rural setting, the situation has the propensity to be compounded. Management and leadership effectiveness for example, can be an elusive construct and evolve from movable definitions within roles (Parry, Cross and Connell 2002: pp.139-149). That is, the work experience of managers in community welfare agencies in the rural areas of the central western regions of New South Wales, Australia, is about the overall responsibilities they undertake, as fairly autonomous managers in a vast geographical expanse that can include up to seven hours road travel from one service point to another. Work is conducted in sometimes-extreme environments and includes “vulnerabilities in generating a reliable stream of resources to address community needs” (Salamon, Hems and Chinnock 2000: 8). Therefore, an integral part of the functioning of the community welfare manager is that they not only provide services, but they also pursue advocacy (Phillips 2006: 62). That is, the work they do is not just straightforward managerial work encompassing ideas of a conventional management role in a static environment; planning, organising, leading, and controlling (Robbins et al 2000: pp.10-11). It is not even work that can be clearly defined as ‘manager’ work compared to ‘operative’ work because the changing nature of organisations and agency work has tended to blur clear lines of distinction between managers and operatives (Robbins et al 2000: 6). Fundamentally, community welfare work in rural settings is about “overcoming disadvantage” (Crofts and Begg 2005: 343), so it is not unusual to find community welfare managers exercising their own sense of agency doing operative work and vice versa (Crofts and Begg 2005: 336).

The impact of the organisation on the role of the manager can result in varying managerial responsibilities that range from building social capital (Onyx and Bullen
2000) and high-level communication networks (Ife 2002) to building business acumen and strategy implementation (Tuckman 1998). For example, *paucity management* as a set of strategies, allows managers to operate ethically and professionally under conditions of resource poverty, but the nature of those strategies is in all probability determined by the organisational context (Wagner and Mlcek 2004, Wagner and Spence 2003). However, Jones and May (2002: 6) suggest a critique of the nature and purpose of welfare work being determined only in an organisational context. That is, *how might such a consideration help to determine management role and responsibilities?* The question presents an interesting assessment of management decision-making, particularly in the area of potential clashes over an adherence to organisational orientation at the possible expense of compromising personal, professional and ethical values. These ideas are embedded in the way that management strategies are exercised, and with some tension (Bartol, et al 1995, Benjamin and Corcoran 1996, Dixon 1993, Schermerhorn 1986). At an agency level, an example could be that in order to satisfy their organisation dictum, community welfare managers should respond to new OH&S legislation through implementing staff training programs, but if there are too few workers to deliver services, then the training programs could take a back seat.

The development in funding models has the potential to redefine roles and relationships between sectors or between agencies in the community sector (Edwards 2001: 78). For example, processes that focus on innovative practice in the community welfare sector, as well as engagement with networks and partnerships, the social responsibility of managers, and the demonstration of ethical and professional practice appear to inform all aspects of the manager’s role and responsibilities (Cox 1998, Kilpatrick 2000, Putnam 1993). The importance of revisiting ideas behind these concepts will assist in forming a picture of how managers deal with their role and responsibilities.

2.5.1 Innovative practice

The immediate effect of changes wrought by government policies that promote “enhancement of productivity and competitiveness” (O’Neill 2002: 3) has led to the need for reassessment of the way that managers continue to offer their services to the
community. More realistically, community welfare managers are compelled, more through the effects of an ever increasing “audit culture system”, rather than by design, to find new ways of doing things (Shaw and Allen 2006: 212). Working within a resource poor environment can reveal riches in other ways, particularly where workers are committed and passionate and are challenged to “develop innovative practice” (Alston 2005: 231). Their work is characterised by situations that are also complex and ‘limiting’; they engage with “limit-situations” during the course of every working day (Freire 1972: pp. 74-79). For example, the working environment appears to be marked by “very complex job descriptions and performance difficulties” (Wagner and Spence 2003: 52) that still require the use of appropriate management models for the overall sector (Jackson and Donovan 1999, Lyons 1997, Rees 1995). Therefore, managers undertake to perform “limit-acts” (Freire 1972: pp. 74-79) to achieve positive outcomes, at each level of relationship activities that can include: with self, individual community members, whole of community, peak body organisation, own service organisation, other service agencies, the other two sectors, and the global impact of governments (Mlcek 2005b). In fact the latter influence transcends all relational levels in which the manager is involved, and innovative practice is almost ‘a given’ (Falk 2003).

Innovation requires managers to deal with the limit-situations of work, by getting ‘in sync’ with other elements that relate to not just controlling (coordinating) them, but adapting to (getting coordinated by) them. This idea of being synchronised applies not just with people/relationships in a given community, but with the norms and regulations of their organisations. The manager’s situation applies to things and symbols, as well; they cannot just do anything they want with a particular resource or piece of funding for instance, because the funding has certain limitations that make it easier to use in some ways than in others. Managers’ activities are mediated through their knowledge of how to react to certain situations, which is a practice honed by many years’ experience but not necessarily implicit in all that they do. For example, the relationships at each engagement level that they experience can often be new and complex and fraught with sophisticated and chaotic elements of ‘unknown’ entities. In response to the sustained adverse effects on rural communities such as crippling drought conditions, managers are being required
to become explicitly concrete in trying to maintain the most basic of support services to rural people.

Innovative community welfare practice can enable activities to impact the lives and environment of many community members by building the social capital of communities through democratisation processes and presence(s) (Brown, Onyx and Bullen 1999, Coleman 1988, Putnam 1995). These activities are manifested through work organisation that respond to discourses around different types of work and increasingly, the rhetoric espoused by particular political elements of the community/society, have contributed to new ways of thinking and valuing (Cheers, Darracott and Lonne 2005: pp. 234 and 235). Fundamentally, situations (contexts) do not just exist. They are rarely static or uniform, but are actively created, sustained, negotiated, resisted, and transformed moment by moment through ongoing work that is enactive and recognition work. Innovative managers in these situations try new behaviours and see what happens, by testing rules, and ignoring precedents and traditional expectations (Daft and Weick 1984: 288).

However, there is a counter argument to innovative practices in community welfare service delivery that relates to the degree of participation and capacity required. Such concepts rely on a sophisticated sense and level of activities that goes beyond mere rhetoric. For many of the managers their ‘sophisticated’ engagement would not go beyond functional task level and in any case there is a view of participation that is framed by a lens of critique and sometimes cynicism when applied to contemporary practices. This latter idea is perhaps best explained by the work of Darcy (2001: 32) who writes about community management and “how management discourse killed participation”. Along with others such as Wagner, Spence and van Reyk (2000: 11), he alludes to the issues surrounding new managerial responsibility directions manifested through changes in social and welfare policy as well as influences from the micro-economic reform.

2.5.2 Networks and partnerships

In times of shrinking resources, Wagner and Spence (2003a: pp. 44-55) note that paucity management is a “pragmatic response to resource poverty” (page 45) and can include
collaborative work with other community organisations, agencies or other sectors. Furthermore, in response to government managerial discourse, the use of networks and partnerships is seen as one of the most appropriate activities that community welfare service organisations should utilise in order to create more effective outcomes (Darcy 2001). A prominent conclusion from Wagner’s research appears to relate to the prominence of networking and collaboration techniques and strategies that managers use to effect human service delivery. The onus then appears to be on managers to incorporate this practice within their role and responsibilities.

At first, it may be difficult to see the dilemmas surrounding the use of networks and partnerships, but Keast and Brown (2002: 444) refer to them as being “a double edged sword”, despite the known positives of their use contributing to growth, resilience and sustainability (Eisenhardt and Galunic 2000). In reality, the use of both partnerships and networks to offset an environment of resource poverty is both contested and contestable (Wagner, Mlcek and Spence 2004). On the back of the new type of market approach to service delivery, there are concerns with the inappropriateness of using private sector management strategies within the community sector, that inadvertently respond to “welfare service as an expense” (Wagner and Spence 2003: 120). Still on this broader scale, one of the recurring themes of ‘threats to the third sector’ comes from the notion of “co-option”, whereby the “rhetoric of partnership and collaboration” may inadvertently influence the restriction of operations and service provision (Stewart-Weeks 2001: 32).

Part of the contestable nature of partnerships and networking, is that responsibilities within partnership arrangements appear to evolve dynamically, and sometimes problematically, depending on the situation. In earlier examples of collaborative practice, Gee (1999) adopts the Vygotskian term of “joint practice” whereby members are “scaffolded” into characteristic practice that is not unlike collaboration activities within a community of practice, for example the community welfare managers’ community of practice (Lave 1996, Lave and Wenger 1991, Mlcek, Wagner and Childs 2003). When Wagner poses the use of partnerships as the strategy that is most effectively implemented by community welfare organisations, she makes the distinction of these arrangements
being either “informal” or “formal” partnership arrangements depending on the context (see for example, Wagner and Mlcek 2004, Wagner and Romic 2003). In this same vein, Snow (2001: 369) emphasises the “interactional contexts or webs of relationships”, to search beyond the simplistic and linear configurations within certain situations, to ones that offer inevitable complexity.

One of the relevant partnership models that has been fielded over the last five years for community welfare agencies to consider, is the DoCS’ partnership model of purchasing services. This model was introduced to improve community capacity (Niland 2000) and is based on the “aim to support and strengthen the diversity of the community service system as well as partnerships and linkages between providers” (DoCS 2005: 8, accessed [online] 19.11.07). Implicit in these words is the direction that purchasing arrangements include a gradual shift in emphasis from funding or purchasing inputs to purchasing outputs within an outcomes framework that is part of a more rational system (Pierce 2002: 1, accessed [online] 19.11.07).

Further debate indicates that networks and partnerships are an attempt to improve productivity within organisations after various approaches have been espoused, including: corporatisation; privatisation; micro-economic reform; enterprise bargaining, and labour market reforms (Corcoran and Benjamin 1996:13). The type of partnership model from DoCS, leads one to question and analyse government departments’ approach to the way that working with managers of NGOs and their peak bodies will be conducted, and the consideration is one of the pivotal concerns for the way managers use their role and responsibilities to progress relational levels throughout their daily activities. Under the competitive tendering model between governments and third sector organisations, partnerships and networks are part of an ongoing regime of strategies and methods to create joint management and integration of services (Considine 2005: pp. 9-10).

However, further ideas from Considine (2001, 2004, 2005) suggest more complexity in the changing nature of partnerships, which ought to be addressed alongside an historical overview of the evolvement of social policy within Australia, as distinct from linking practice only to an era of new public management.
2.5.3 Social responsibility

The social responsibility aspect of work arises when managers relate (organise, coordinate) their activities and resources in relation to other people and situations. Community welfare managers do ‘enactive work’ and other people recognise what they do through acknowledgement and participation. While others can engage in enactive community welfare work from outside the community welfare context, managers spend their working lives engaging in enactive work from inside the opus operatum configurations of their organisations. An interesting consideration for this research is to look at the potential different approaches to the modus operandi (Bourdieu 1973) of managers’ practices that can be unique, at times ad hoc (Brown and Duguid 1991) but still being socially responsive, through a suitably reactive approach to the changing work climate that requires “multidimensional skills” (Alston 2005a: 277).

Following from the last point about skills, social responsibility is played out in a way that is unique to rural practitioners, that is, “rural practice … requires highly skilled professionals to work in the intricate political and social environments of small communities” (Green and Mason 2002: 42). In the informal orientation-to-the-field research process, managers were quick to say how their roles are increasingly diverse whereby one has to be an expert not only at human resource management, marketing and public relations, quality and compliance, but also to be an expert in financial management involving budgeting, grants submissions, and funding reports. They must also be prepared to take on the role of trainer, counsellor, facilitator, mentor, and negotiator. Ife (2002: 240) highlights the broad nature of social responsibility through the involvement by community welfare workers in communication strategies whereby, “in the course of a single day, a community worker might find her/himself talking to a cabinet minister, a group of homeless young people, a priest, and Indigenous rights activist, a school principal, a 70-year-old woman from a cultural/ethnic community, a community health nurse, a group of ‘long-term unemployed’ and a senior police officer”. It would appear that on top of operational pressures, there is also a burden on time to keep up-to-date with the outcomes of policies and procedures. Therefore, social responsibility relates to the
role and tasks used to enact proactive and productive engagement with communities, and determined within organisational contexts (Jones and May 2002: 6, Mlcek and Barber 2005).

From a critical perspective, social responsibility comes from sound management and leadership behaviour but trying to operate within a market framework could lead to counter-productive feelings of social responsibility that managers hold towards their community members. Wagner, Spence and van Reyk (2000: 12) see future community welfare situations as “problematic”. They illustrate potential issues for managers who have to move from a primarily helping and advocacy role to now having to review the kind of leadership and management characteristics required in their work. They also problematise the perceived new direction of welfare work and the managers’ roles in the following way:

*It would be the rare manager who would whole-heartedly accept, for example, that success depends on understanding ‘that everything that they do is marketing’ and they should see ‘every act, from service provision to how the phone is answered, as a marketing opportunity’. Such a view is contrary to the belief that third sector service delivery does not, and largely cannot, operate within a market framework.*

And yet if a composite list of tasks/roles is compiled of the services delivered by similar organisations that are most likely to be covered by the managers in this research, then we start to see the magnitude of their situations and the way that management discourse in response to welfare directional change, is more often than not fuelled by the ‘market framework’. To certain degrees, community welfare managers cover all the Mintzberg roles of the likely manager, but when we overlay the ensuing skills and knowledge needed to counter the current political and economical climate, we arrive at something like the following list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘New’ Current Tasks</th>
<th>‘New’ Skills Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive tendering</td>
<td>Environmental scanning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global decision-making</td>
<td>Political ‘know-how’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part of the managers’ social responsibility, is to keep up-to-date with current trends regarding their work. In every case relating to ‘new’ current tasks, the skills required need to come from having a sense of the ‘bigger picture’, or need to incorporate a ‘global outlook’. A manager who faces a shortage of housing for her clients for example, needs to look beyond that one example to trends in government prioritisation of funding and allocation of housing resources, to note if there are indications from other areas, from which predictions about other resource implications could be made. The above list is not exhaustive and neither is it all ‘new’ but defining such tasks and skills has the potential to open up the magnitude of issues faced by community welfare managers in their response to an environment that is paradoxically highly satisfying in terms of work and lifestyle, but also with “high levels of occupational stress” (Green and Lonne 2005: 252).

2.5.4 Ethical and professional practice

Community welfare organisations generally strive to operate within a framework of social responsibility that is underpinned by ethical and professional practice (Gregory 2005). Gregory (2005: 267) notes that “… welfare workers are confronted daily with ethical dilemmas arising from engagement in dual and multiple relationships within their communities”. Ethical dilemmas arise through dual and multiple relationships that impact visibility and privacy issues (Gregory 2005: 269). Additionally, professional dilemmas surface when a community welfare worker ‘overuses’ volunteers or low and unpaid workers to undertake the bulk of service delivery. Problems in these cases are compounded when reporting and accountability processes are ‘opaque’.

One of the ways that ‘professional’ management practice can be identified, is through the transparent level and degree to which managers affect change when engaging in strategic management processes such as planning and forecasting of intentions and actions.
(Chaffee 1985: pp. 90-92). Generally however, this idea is not something that is associated with management in the community welfare sector, particularly to the extent of specificity about which level and model of strategy is actually used, if at all (Chaffee 1985: 89). There has been a tendency to associate ‘low-key’ activities to improve the well-being of community members with more of the kind of work that happens in the sector, but some degree of planning and strategising for future outcomes in the workplace and community is an inevitable expectation of community welfare managers’ practice. For example, Lillywhite (2002, 2006, accessed [online] 19.11.07) discusses ethical business practice on behalf of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, a for-profit NGO, as being about ensuring that the social, environmental and economic implications of operations are considered and planned for in order to contribute to a sustainable society.

Sustainability is at the forefront of Lillywhite’s model of recommendation that organisations adopt socially responsible practices that produce continuous dialogue, establish partnerships and alliances, and progressively improve compliance with appropriate labour and environmental standards through activities that encourage worker participation and empowerment. A comparison to the ‘sustainability model’ can be made using Chaffee’s (1985) three models of strategy: ‘linear’ being concerned with profit and productivity; ‘adaptive’ being concerned with the match between organisational internal and external conditions, or ‘interpretive’ being concerned with an interest in symbolic management to enable legitimacy of the organisation/ agency.

The above practices do not happen without some degree of concern because strategic management in the community welfare sector is influenced by values of a more expressive nature rather than an instrumental one (Steane 2001). As mentioned previously, there is substantial evidence to indicate that the politicisation of working in partnerships and through networking has given rise to “an identity crisis” (Parker 2001: 46). For example, community welfare organisations are now being asked to become more business-like, more accountable, more rigorous in record keeping, and have a tighter control over their ‘bottom line’. Even before the 1999 Prime Minister’s ‘Community Business Partnerships’ initiative to increase collaborative sources of funding and
resources, there were concerned refrains from the community sector about the plausibility of managerial competency being played out in a financial accountability regime. At the time, Jinkins and Jinkins (1998: pp. 54-55) wrote about the managers’ dilemma.

Leaders of nonprofits of all sorts, from religious groups to charities to museums, now constantly repeat the same refrain: The people who are doing the best job in leadership (and management – Researcher words in brackets) understand that while the mission of nonprofit organisations is not the same as that of for-profit corporations, nevertheless their bottom line has just as much bottom to it as any industry, and their leadership requires as much shrewd business sense.

‘Shrewdness’ requires a certain attitude that is not normally associated with community welfare work which has more the ‘street-wise’ air about its activities, but these can also cross the boundaries of ethical and professional practice. The reference to partnerships came up at sub-Section 2.5.2 and quite often these government-instigated couplings have been created as a ‘means to an end’. In other kinds of partnerships, lessons can be learned from some situations whereby a lack of appropriate skills has led to a compromise in professional practice. That is, the idea of pooling competence is problematic to community welfare workers concerned with possible ‘demarcation’ relating to qualifications, knowledge and experience, and the affect on professional practice (Childs [ed.] 1997). In 2005, issues around the public-private partnership model began to bring logistical nightmares in terms of risk and compensation to such a degree whereby central figures such as Bob Sendt, Auditor General of NSW, noted there were “disadvantages in playing with private players” fundamentally because “government departments cannot match the skill and expertise of the private organisations involved in public-private partnerships … from the very beginning the State is at a disadvantage even at the negotiation level” (Interview, 24 November 2005, Radio National). Sendt went on to admit that in these kinds of situations, the government was “on the horns of a dilemma”, and one has to wonder then if the community welfare managers, through their reluctance to adopt similar engagements could manage through yet another government rhetoric without compromising further professional and ethical behaviour (Bryant, in Sheil [ed.] 1997: 74).
Community welfare managers would like to think that because of the implicit benevolent values behind their service provision, they pursue their operational practices guided by sound professional and ethical management. From both an ideological point of view, and a historical one, these practices can be seen as a form of legitimisation that is managed through the widespread adoption – “the social adoption” (Lye 1997:1) – of notions of what should be the particular actions that underscore the way of the community welfare worker world, and how this ‘world’ ought to operate. However, as noted above with the entrepreneurial case of government preferred partnership and networking strategies/options, these sentiments are not without their concerns. One implication from this practice is that having multiple partners could create relationships that are complex and at times ‘promiscuous’ (see Edwards and Onyx 2003: pp. 99-117), but also increase “boundary issues” in achieving ethical practice (Gregory 2005: 267).

In summarising this second part of the chapter, characteristics that define community welfare situations, and particularly those that relate to a rural environment, have been presented. The main ideas posed to this stage, relate to the commonality of experience from both an international and national perspective. The reason given for this observation comes from the literature, which identifies that there are some common themes, ideas, issues, and impacts on community welfare work. That is, there are specific phenomena that impact not only the operation of community welfare service delivery, but also the ways in which these operations can be viewed. For the purpose of this research focus, these phenomena include: the external influence of globalisation; ways of understanding community welfare services through structuration processes and emerging complex systems, and the enactment of managerial responsibilities in addressing innovation, social responsibility, networks and partnerships, as well as ethical and professional practice. In the following Part Three, the literature review narrows its focus to highlight specific issues that resonate for the community welfare sector, in a new management era.
PART THREE: ISSUES OF MANAGEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY WELFARE SECTOR

What are further ways that managers respond to a market approach framework and what is the legacy of the resultant engagement? This question goes to the very heart of appropriate management models that should be, or could be used in the community welfare sector. So far, all the arguments, issues and concepts presented in the previous sections, lead to accepting a new way of doing work in community welfare agencies, perhaps through an extension of leadership and management models that include notions of an ethical and professional manner when involved in entrepreneurship, strategic management and innovation (Slappendel 1996). To engage in these kinds of operations is to move from a traditional view of the planning, leading, managing and controlling role of managers to one that is more receptive and responsive, and that “combines the passion of a social mission with an image of business-like discipline” (Stewart-Weeks 2001: 23). However, this new kind of engagement comes framed with certain issues.

Part three gives more insight into the important influences from the advent of the hybrid organisation including: how services are contracted and funded; the affiliation of certain bodies such as peak organisations; aspects of hybridity to change the face of management roles and processes, as well as strategies to affect professional and ethical practice. The chapter ends with a section that poses the Research Question for this project. All the ideas and issues, arguments and dilemmas presented in this literature review are encapsulated in a focus question that seeks to understand paucity management alongside the effects of certain phenomena such as the structure and affiliations of organisations.
2.6 Key community welfare issues in the new management era

In reference to community welfare service delivery, the current management era has given rise to contradictions that belie the historical experience of access to community care from a social purpose perspective. One of the most important influences comes from the advent of the hybrid organisation that tries to meet the divide between “business enterprise and social purpose mission” (Cooney 2006: 145). This type of organisation tries to address neo-institutional theory parameters (McDonald 1997) that include formal responses to competitive market forces, as well as more informal societal norms and behaviours that are not so heavily monitored. As can be seen in the following information, these seemingly contrasting factors do not strictly give rise to a dichotomous situation, but are natural dimensions that impact environments to varying degrees (Powell 1991: 186).

2.6.1 Financialisation … value-adding for some

The explanation of financialisation as a process whereby activities lend themselves to a value-added scrutiny (Newberry and Robb 2007, accessed [online] 16.11.07), is one aspect of micro economic reform that best highlights the way that community welfare workers understand government initiatives in trying to create a more ‘effective’ service delivery environment (Mlcek 2005: 300). The characteristics of such an evolving system, together with the support of current processes within managerial practice lend themselves to an activity-based management system that is identified as “one of the most important ways to be competitive” (Maher, Stickney and Weil 1997: 12). In this type of management, and in reference to the situation faced by many community welfare organisations, is the practice of scrutinising ‘value-added’ and ‘non-value-added activities’ whereby costs become ambiguous because they more often than not are analysed out of context. When governments present policies that appear to identify welfare service in terms of being just an expense then there is a risk that the practices inherent in financialisation will contribute to “disinvestments” (O’Neill 2002: 5). These
practices, for example “increased competition, bargaining and negotiating for funding” (Mlcek 2005: 300), may influence the level and extent to which managers will continue to participate wholeheartedly in community welfare work.

The contracting out of services is not new (Healey 2004) and neither is the idea of an overall shrinking welfare service (Ife 2000). Consequently, several such trends come from the ability or otherwise, of managers to maintain a service ‘of value’. This dilemma arises out of the macro level of constraints and is best exemplified by the ‘new’ funding regime and operational developments by governments, regarding service delivery. McDonald (1999: 21) indicates three ways to best understand these developments.

*First, contracting and competitive tendering are designed to promote efficiency and effectiveness in government expenditure. Second, they are also designed to reconstruct the manner in which service delivery is funded. Third, and finally, the developing model reconstructs service delivery systems as markets, embodying beliefs that market systems promote desirable individual and collective outcomes.*

Perhaps a fourth consideration, and one of the main issues to do with the way that managers work in these situations, is that their practice is being reconstructed to fit the resultant resource poverty environment with a “focus on the economic bottom line” (Wagner and Spence 2003a: 44). A further summary of the changes derived from the implementation of the government’s reform agenda is reinforced through practices identified by the Australian Children’s Welfare Association (ACWA) (1998, cited in Wagner et al 2003a: 8):

1. **Privatisation** – where governments enter an agreement with a provider/supplier to deliver a service for which the government has had some legal, fiscal or traditional responsibility.

2. **Contracting out** – the mechanism by which outsourcing or privatisation is achieved. This can involve negotiated arrangements with existing providers/suppliers to formalize existing arrangements. The move from grants to ‘Service agreements’ in the Department of Community Services (DoCS) funding in NSW is an example.
3. **Competitive tendering** – in which governments formally invite organisations to bid to provide a service according to published contract specifications. Organisations may compete on cost or the cost may be fixed and known (at the time of this writing as little amounts as $150 was being ‘competed for’ by new and emerging communities).

4. **Compulsory competitive tendering** – derived from the National Competition Policy.

But, how has the community welfare sector ended up with a state of financialisation? Several writers allude to the mismatch of government and third sector discourse regarding the way directions in service delivery was determined and proposed to accommodate the advent of *managerialism* throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Chenoweth and McAuliffe 2005: 28). This situation has contributed to a difficult and divergent operational environment that is best understood through the origins and nature of the direction of social welfare (Chenoweth and McAuliffe 2005, Compton and Galaway 1989). In trying to determine that direction, there seems to be little doubt that managers have been attempting to adapt to the complexity of the environment for some time, so that now features of social work and human services delivery appear to have come full circle in the 2000 period, from being *professionalised, bureaucratised, scrutinised, partialised, globalised, casualised,* and *de-professionalised* (Chenoweth and McAuliffe 2005: 30).

In the early 1990s a new competitive direction was espoused for Australia to improve economic stability (Kenny 1999, Marginson 1993, Marginson and Considine 2000). The Labour Government under Hawke and Keating started on the road to building a competitive Australia. A resultant 1993 publication – The Hilmer Report – came about as a result of an Independent Committee of Inquiry on National Competition Policy and was never meant to include welfare, just business and industry. Throughout the 1990s, debates continued about the ability of any policy to close the divide successfully between ‘testable defined outputs’, ‘benchmark standards’ of service, and ‘monitoring of performance’ (taken from the Industry Commission’s final report *Charitable*...
Organisations in Australia, June 1995). In 1996 the national government’s reform agenda was taken up with enthusiasm by the state governments on the back of monetary incentives “provided they make satisfactory progress on implementing National Competition Policy reform” (Honner 1998: 30). By the end of 1996, beginning of 1997, and without in-depth consultation with either agencies that delivered services, or peak organisations that monitored services, state governments were already looking to rewrite and implement a new welfare service delivery direction with the belief that competition and collaboration were two commensurate concepts. This kind of conceptualisation would define the expectation of governments towards those service delivery agencies and impact the way that managers were compelled to work for the future (Bessant 2002, Kerr and Savelsberg 2001).

The whole idea of a competition policy takes on new meaning when viewed from a global perspective. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2007: pp. 3 and 9, accessed [online] 24.11.07) tracks the influence of Australia’s micro-economic activity at the macro level. From noting in 2005 that Australia was one of the most, if not the most, competitive countries in the world, it now proposes in 2007, that following a lengthy 16-year period of expansion in fiscal policy, competition and regulatory reforms, “the economy (is in) a position of high capacity utilization and high labor markets”. The preoccupation with ‘globalisation’ has produced analysis about the effects of globalisation but in terms of community welfare work, the latter is typified by a cyclical phenomenon whereby activities at ground-level both impact and create the condition of global effects (Bahnisch 2002). Earles (1999: 47) alludes to the cyclic nature of activities by referring to the need to understand an “enterprise culture” that is best viewed through the comparison of “pre-existing landscapes” and “changing landscapes” and in particular that,

*The diversity in pre-existing organizational shape in the third sector and the diversity in the directions for change produced a scene of chaos, always a difficult landscape to describe* (page 49).
Who would have thought that a policy direction dependent on a competitive framework could have produced anything less than a ‘chaotic state’? The reframing of third sector organisations appears to have gone beyond mere business reform manifested through a change in the mode of service delivery, but more as a way to introduce and enforce cultural change. The metamorphosis of community welfare has evolved through several stages from public policy that addressed welfare pluralism to consumerism and markets, and then to contracting of services as a result of de-institutionalisation (Blau and Scott 1991: 51, Donovan and Jackson 1991: 7, Jackson and Donovan 1999, Popple 2002: 151). The sector as a whole, together with its agencies seem to be cast as provider units, new regional relationships are encouraged, new roles are separated and defined into discrete activities, and hierarchical interventions, for example the role of peak organisations, are reinvented (Earles 1999: 51, Wagner, Spence and van Reyk 2000: 9). The reframing of community welfare service delivery has resulted in a scrutiny of the re-definition of work practices.

2.6.2 Hybridity … re-defining work practices

As community welfare agencies are introduced to a new way of working whereby work practices are becoming more focused on the ‘business’ of delivering services within a strict funding regime (Lyons 2001), their ‘partnerships’ with government departments have continued to evolve through being swept up in the new wave of hybridity involving interactions with the hybrid organisation. The ‘new’ look government department-as-hybrid organisation informs the governance framework of community welfare organisations, and act as regulators and/or facilitators of exchange (Baker 2005, accessed [online] 14.11.07). In this type of organisation, isomorphic behaviours (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) that involve copying and replicating practice from the private sector, appear to have evolved originally to create organisations that are more ‘alike’ in terms of ideological commitment to better performance rather than a ‘best practice’ approach to achieving the bottom line (Stewart and Walsh 1992: 500). Nabben (2001: 43) writes about the “philosophy of managerialism” that allows the application of private sector models to the public sector, and now to the community sector which is being “re-conceptualised as a business, with customers, competitors, products, throughput and
efficiencies” (Nabben 2001: 43). Where managerialist practices of ‘doing more with less’ are typical of the new public management focus and are enshrined in neo-liberal, microeconomic reform policies relating to “best practice” in human service delivery (Stewart and Walsh 1992: 500), there may be a case to answer regarding an understanding that hybrid organisations are manifested in the new public management activities as a strategy to implement new identities.

Again, an interesting consideration to move forward here, is that at the same time as Australia is increasingly defining itself as a kind of welfare state through roles that identify being both purchaser and regulator of services provided by private and community sector organisations, “the new public management phenomenon has resulted in a restructuring of public administration according to the routines as developed in private enterprises – concerning financing and investment, personnel management, and performance management” (Evers 2004: 5). These ideas – a new direction in public management and restructuring based on private sector management phenomena - are of considerable relevance to this research because while much reference has been made throughout this section to comment about the effects of micro-economic reform and neo-liberal politics on the service delivery of community welfare managers, the latter are really just part of a huge hierarchical ‘food chain’ in service delivery. Furthermore, trying to resemble the management practices exhibited in the private sector are not new trends and there is a cautionary tale in trying to engage in isomorphic behaviour that “militate against transferring unproblematically private sector practices into the (community) sector” (Brown, Waterhouse and Flynn 2003: 239, researcher word ‘community’ in brackets). For example, there are considerations about the ‘real’ nature of work experience and whether the ideological commitment to performance outcomes and improved performance that are principles embedded in new public management strategies are just a ‘smokescreen’ to hide what are essentially cost-cutting measures.

The identification of market practices and influences on public sector activities is what really defines activities in the community sector (Gilbert 2002, Jamrozic 2001), and the above points indicate that the use of private sector practices is problematic because they
question the notion of ‘value’, particularly where the value of human service delivery is re-defined through a web of competitive tendering, strategic partnerships and accountability.

But, *who are the real ‘customers’ of this re-conceptualisation process?* There is legitimate debate that the customer in this case is actually the government, and with the addition of ‘competitor’ into the equation, the scrutiny by governments into the operations of community welfare services is predicated on the belief that a ‘purchaser-provider model of management’ is an effective definition for business process (DoCS November 2001: 18). There are writers (see for example Massey 1994, Rose 1997, Young 1995) who note that engagement with hybrid organisations is not an easy interaction because the power relations implicit in their makeup are not only diverse, but complex as well, with disparity in the way that people have the potential to feel empowered or disempowered through engagement with their processes.

The dichotomy of working to find the balance between operating with *process* on behalf of *people* is not lost on rural community welfare managers. The supporters of business process architecture, including governments, look to the value-added components that human service organisations bring to clients and community. Porter’s value chain (Porter 1985) is a useful reference framework to note the way that business processes can be grouped to reflect the ‘new’ government direction about how to manage within a community welfare situation. The framework identifies primary processes that add value to an organisation (for example the level and extent to which funding is successful), and support processes (for example the level and extent to which implementation expertise can utilise the funding effectively) that are in place to support the primary processes.

A dialectic gaze can be continually turned back to interpret the above framework; in the case of work within the community sector, especially from non-government organisations, the primary processes that add value for the government are those processes that indicate a need for accountability and cost-effective practices (again for example, in the case of funding applications/ submissions). Additionally, this gaze
highlights more examples of the ‘pedagogical metaphors’ that help to clarify positions and situations of accountability and cost-effectiveness. For example, being an entrepreneurially community welfare manager will make the difference between being an ‘active or passive worker’, in an ‘active or passive system’, and in an ‘active or passive society’ (Bessant 2002: 17). These are practices however, not necessarily on behalf of community welfare workers, but on behalf of the government’s accountability regime (Mlcek 2005b).

Community welfare agencies derive most of their funding from the public sector, and so there are considerations that go to the very heart of the managers’ world, especially to provide not only the means to continue the delivery of welfare services, but the actual sustainability of managers’ work in the long term. From this dilemma is the knowledge that the changing role of governments and its relationship with the community sector is to affect “an attempt at the beginnings of a participatory governance framework for Australia” (Edwards 2001: 78). The new public management direction described a decade ago, is now espoused through practices in hybrid organisations: professional management that is more hands-on; measuring performance against specific standards; greater emphasis on controlling outputs; a shift in the way different units are set up and scrutinised; a shift to greater competition; an emphasis on private sector styles of management practice, and greater discipline towards doing ‘more with less’ in terms of resource use (Brown and Waterhouse 2003: 232, Hood 1991).

In response to the hybrid organisation, there are considerations for how the community welfare manager reconciles effective and viable service delivery with cost-cutting strategies, to still reflect the ideological welfare framework. Or, does community welfare organisational practice resemble other sector organisations not through being forced necessarily to adopt similar practices and structure on an ideological level, but rather because of “common isomorphism-inducing factors” and that “shared dependencies can be expected to lead to shared compliance with directives, quite specific examples of coercive isomorphism” (Leiter 2005: 24)?
2.6.3 Changing roles: the place of affiliated bodies

Affiliated bodies in this research refer collectively to peak organisations for the community welfare sector, and they too have been caught up in the changing role of governments. Long before the rationalisation of community welfare work, there was already growing concern from the NSW peak organisation for social services (NCOSS), about an anticipated government reform agenda that envisaged human services delivery being provided through a market-driven approach. Where once it had “traditionally informed governance”, the multiple voice of the community welfare peak organisations was now “being ignored or deliberately excluded from the process” (Phillips 2006: 61). NCOSS (August 2001) had always been a peak organisation voice of concern about the push for competitive tendering being “little more than a desire for greater accountability and greater clarity of expectations between the funding provider and NGOs”. Where NCOSS and other peak bodies appear to have evolved from a major player in policy design and implementation, they now seem to be relegated to one of a ‘voice of concern’ about ‘damning’ reports on government departments’ response to social issues (see for example NCOSS Media Releases, accessed [online] 14.11.07). They now appear to have been accommodated in a changing position on the ‘innovative wheel’ that is concerned with hybridisation, or new public management (Evers 2004, Pollitt 2000). That is, where once the Council was a critical voice in policy scrutiny, change and possible innovation, there now seems to be no such active involvement; the ‘wheels are turning’ in the name of the new innovative public management of welfare services, and bodies such as NCOSS can comment (through perhaps a rigorous research program of its own) but are not the creators or main implementers of that management.

However, what is the real meaning of the change in these events for community welfare managers? Much of the debate about what is seen as the inappropriateness of government to push peak bodies and managers of community welfare organisations to become more business-like in their management of services, comes from a belief in the seeming mismatch of trying to embed community welfare services within the last 15-year period of government micro-economic reform. On the back of this type of reform, Wagner and Spence (2002: 2) raised doubts about the appropriateness of using private
sector management strategies within the community sector, and again, the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) also voiced their concerns ten years ago:

*Market approaches to human services are not appropriate. The trend towards marketisation of welfare is of major concern to the community services sector, and the people we assist and represent. Australia has developed a mixed economy of welfare because of public recognition that the market has failed to deliver adequate economic and social outcomes for a significant proportion of the population. Individuals and families do not have an equal capacity to purchase the goods and services they need, and for this reason government intervention is important. Human services are fundamentally different from other types of business and production, and this needs to be reflected in the way in which governments fund and deliver human services’* (ACOSS 1997: 5).

The above opinion was at the national level, but at a more direct relational level there were peak organisations whose positions were now being rationalised and redefined to accommodate a more directive government whose approach to participation and accountability is driven by their perceived status as being the main source of funding (Baulderstone 2007: pp. 9-19).

Melville (1999, 2003) and a number of other researchers (Hamilton and Barwick 1993, Melville and Nyland 1997, Raper 1998) also note the changing relationships that service providers have with their clients and the core of this re-definition is the way that peak bodies have needed to assess their level of co-option and ‘collusion’ with governments. More and more, peak bodies are being left out of the policy-making loop with governments (Lyons 2002: 222) and reduced to operating within the context of neoliberalist policy making (Melville 2003: 108). That is, these bodies are now focusing on promoting their organisations to look to service provision in the context of a provider/purchaser model with government. The nature of the split between policy-making and service provision, and the emphasis on the purchase of services rather than the funding of organisations to provide services, has seen peak bodies reassess and sometimes change their relationship with their member organisations to whom they were always aligned. Where historically advocacy by peak organisations was an accepted norm, it is still built into current practice but more in terms of providing information to
their member organisations, and part of this process involves managers having to sift metaphorically, through a mountain of information that may or may not address the way that they implement service delivery on a daily basis. The shifting dynamic in the relationship provides another interesting layer to models of management.
2.7 The Research Question

The Research Question was designed to provide a narrative of community welfare work, from the stories of the participants. The process is about developing knowledge and understanding of models of work utilised by community welfare managers in their environment of resource poverty. An initial Research Question was designed as a focus for investigation to determine an expansive definition of models of paucity management (after the work of Wagner et al): *What are models of paucity management, and how does the structure and affiliations of organisations within the non-profit community welfare sector, impact the use of those models?* The question has two underlying parts: the structure of organisations, and the relationships that exist because of, and/or in spite of, phenomena within those structures.

For the purpose of this research, structural elements relating to organisations are made up of component parts – *phenomena* - such as timeliness, decision-making, management skills and capacity, situational aspects of time and space, organisational philosophy and ideology, ethical practice, relational levels, and working relationships. They are phenomena that relate to a combination of aspects of bureaucracy, hierarchy, and organisational environment, as well as the way that people behave (Ashkenas et al 1995, Mabey, Salaman and Story 2001: 164).

Although this research is not a formal study of organisational behaviour, nevertheless it was important to have the above initial considerations in order to have some sense of direction for the research, based on what the managers could say. However, embedded within the characteristics of phenomena impacting possible models of paucity management, are the overriding influences of working with different affiliations such as volunteer management committees, peak organisations, and the government hybrid organisation. These considerations raise the idea of social relationships being enacted by the managers to reveal behaviours and actions that signify ways of doing work in the
community welfare sector. The research instrument (see Section 3.3, Chapter 3) incorporates the main Research Question supported by questions-as-prompts, some of which originated from the ideas of Salamon et al (2000, refer back to Section 2.2), and used to inform the collection of information that would elaborate on both organisational structure, affiliations, and social relationships, including:

1. Specific management activity that is unique and innovative in terms of acquiring funding, and delivering services.
2. Changes in management behaviour and actions that managers have witnessed since the government’s encouragement of the need for community welfare groups to seek partnership arrangements.
3. Expectations within community welfare partnership arrangement, for managers to both lead and manage outcomes.
4. Changing needs that have led to a reassessment of the way service is being delivered in organisations.
5. The structure and affiliations of non-government, community welfare organisations to determine the way that managers should act in their positions.

Section 2.7 has shown that the research focus is definitely poised to elicit information that will highlight the models of paucity management used by managers, through questions that ask about phenomena impacting community welfare service delivery, such as: organisational structural constraints, funding, service delivery arrangements, response to government directions to incorporate partnerships into practice, the use of innovative practices, and the extent and level to which managers construct social relationships to undertake community welfare work.
2.8 Conclusion

In ending this chapter, the information presented in Table 2.1: Speculative placement of *paucity management* within a strategies framework, provides an understanding about the possibility of including paucity management strategies as viable and valid management and leadership activities within a range of different options. Furthermore, management and leadership frameworks are influenced by aspects of structuration such as *regionalisation* whereby the relationship between action over time, within specific places, and by certain people, have a culminating effect on the overall type of management and leadership practice that is employed in a particular context (Alston and Kent 2004: pp. 215-217, Giddens 1984, 2001, Leiter 2005: pp. 24-25).

A review of the literature for this study extended the idea that managers from quite different human service delivery organisations would have stories that could in all likelihood emphasise functional plurality through the different ways of experiencing various phenomena surrounding their practice. Several authors have written about the effects of globalisation on the operations surrounding community welfare situations today, in both international and national contexts, and these effects are manifested in ideas that include how services are delivered at both the organisational and agency levels. The practice of paucity management has the potential to reach across all boundaries of society. In the context of this research, its practice relates particularly to the way that rural community welfare managers, operate within an environment of resource poverty. Increasingly, the private sector creep of hybridisation and financialisation across the human services profession has had an impact on the roles of people within those organisations whereby their services are being scrutinised continually to show value-for-money in a market-driven environment. The development of hybrid organisations can be seen as a giant strategic initiative on the part of governments to enact a public private partnership model to be applied to most engagements with all-sector arrangements.
Unwittingly perhaps, changes in the historical configuration of markets, welfare states and civil society have contributed to the driving force behind the emergence of hybrid organisations, and gives another dimension to community welfare managers’ actions and behaviour. That is, hybrid organisations can be seen to act as regulators and/or facilitators of exchange. In the case of community service delivery, they are seen by people at the ‘top of the food chain’ to be ‘collaborative ventures’ that are usually typified by the completion of a given project involving the creation of shared or joint governance structure, and access to specific joint resources and processes. This idea is more akin to utilising a symbolic constructionist gaze regarding ‘shared’ meaning and values’, which does not camouflage the politicisation of community services delivery through the response to hybrid organisations, but gives a new meaning to governance and accountability structures.

In community welfare situations, managers are constantly trying to balance and ‘trade off’ actions and activities, in order to manage ethically and professionally, as they traverse different terrains that evolve from government rhetoric on how to best manage service delivery. The literature reveals that community welfare management is management in complex situations, which at its best addresses ways to deal with potentially limiting situations such as rigorous accountability regimes that could debilitate service delivery. The outcome of these situations involves a series of innovative and creative practices such as subtle partnership arrangements to counter the effects of operating within resource-poor situations.

This chapter set out to introduce the extent of involvement by community welfare workers in dual and multiple engagements particularly in rural situations, so that a picture of models of management could start to evolve. Highlighting levels of complexity and structuration processes at work to frame community welfare service delivery, gave another useful dimension to the nature of the work that is being investigated. These insights provide one valuable perspective about how work in general, is structured and enacted. An idea that is inseparable to this project is the need to
foreground prior research on paucity management that nominates this “emerging concept” as a “pragmatic response to resource poverty” (Wagner and Spence 2003: 45). While this study is limited to exploring community welfare managers’ behaviours and activities, it would not be unreasonable to expect that one of the implications from this research could be to provide alternative options for future practice by managers across all contexts and sectors. That is, there is an incentive for further exploration of management and leadership techniques (including new standards of governance) within the third sector, to counteract what is happening in the other sectors.

The Research Question arose from the above considerations: What are models of paucity management, and how does the structure and affiliations of organisations within the non-profit community welfare sector, impact the use of those models? In recognising those aspects of research already conducted by Wagner and associates, this research project now leads into an area of confirming the existence, and nominating the types of paucity management models based on stories from the fifteen rural managers. The next chapter sets out ways that these stories were elicited, and outlines the premise and platform for data analysis. In the preliminary orientation-to-the-field process, there was acceptance that such situations of paucity management existed, but there was also some dislike for the term being ‘too negative’. Further research will determine whether dissent comes from possible avoidance tactics of just ‘getting on with the job’ and of ‘doing things on the cheap’, or an acknowledgement that the behaviours and actions demonstrated could be the result of balancing tensions caused by structural constraints posed by organisations and peak bodies. For now, this research sets out to focus on eliciting models of paucity management from being yet another ‘elusive construct’.
3.0 Introduction and general overview of aspects of the research focus

The methodology for the research project was guided by the research question: *what are models of paucity management, and how does the structure and affiliations of organisations within the non-profit community welfare sector, impact the use of those models?* The link is made back to the aim and purpose of the research (see Section 1.3 in Chapter 1) relating to building knowledge and understanding of the existence of models of paucity management as they apply to community welfare service delivery in a rural setting, as well as to identify the style of management adopted to counter structural impacts on managers’ work.

The study engages with the debate about the reconciliation of action and structure within all levels of inquiry; at the macro, mezzo and micro levels (Giddens 1984, Slappendale 1996, Van de Ven and Poole 1988). As such, the methodology is qualitative, interpretative research that is approached from an empirical stance, and using a multi-method focus (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 1, Geertz 1983). Because qualitative research can be described as pragmatic, strategic and a self-reflexive process about the discovery of meaning in experience (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 1), as well as including “essential tensions, contradictions and hesitations” (page 3), it suits this research project better than adopting the positivist and scientific stance.

The research adopts a phenomenographic approach as the vehicle for the qualitative research methodology, because of its potential to expand knowledge about experience through multi-layered research processes. In practice, the achievement of the multi-layered process affected the choice of data collection methods, the way they are employed and most importantly the ways in which the data was analysed. A multi-method approach to data collection utilised semi-structured interviews, focus groups,
follow-up interviews and field notes. The methods examined the stories of fifteen community service managers and how they experienced their work.

In a manner typical of phenomenographic research, the data analysis is complex and involved micro, mezzo and macro levels. In the first instance, interview data was used to start to organise categories of description. Rich metaphorical expressions were extrapolated from the raw data to give an overall description of the managers’ work. The metaphors were further discussed in the focus groups. At the same time, themes from both the interviews and focus groups were formalised into categories of description as experience. A secondary stage of analysis explored the way that managers experienced professional practice within each of the categories of description. Then, a third stage of analysis which then progressed into an initial interpretation phase, explored the relationship between what happened within those categories, compared to working conditions and managerial responsibilities as a domain of paucity management. Initially, this third stage covered micro and mezzo levels of variation in experience that related to organisational activity as professional practice.

The reason for the protracted process of analysis is to arrive at a category of description of the essence of an overall experience of a phenomenon. When the Research Question asks what are models of paucity management, dimensions of variation in experience are important, but so too are the commonalities as they can identify a consistently defined model of paucity management.

Part 1 of this chapter discusses the methodology including the nature of phenomenography and the relevant epistemological and ontological concepts. Part 2 presents the process of data collection and a discussion of the related issues. Part 3 presents and discusses the complex processes of the analysis.
PART ONE: PHENOMENOGRAPHY GUIDES RESEARCH

In Part one of this third chapter, perspectives in the research paradigm are juxtaposed, overlapped and integrated in a scaffolding exercise to frame the phenomenographic approach to the research project. Ontology is highlighted before epistemology in order to move from ways of knowing to ways of doing, and this latter idea is represented further through an early stage epistemological framework that is metaphorical and dynamic. Using phenomenography as the vehicle for the qualitative research methodology has the potential to expand knowledge about experience through multi-layered research processes. In particular, the sub-Sections 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.2.4, relate to both the framework, and processes associated with key related phenomenographic concepts such as hermeneutics and contextualisation.

3.1 Selection and justification of the phenomenographic approach to qualitative, empirical research

Stories are common in qualitative research and in this project these came from the social interactive nature of the research processes (Cope 2002, Marton 1981). How did the research design evolve in order to explore then, the stories of the fifteen managers who participated in the research? Out of necessity came the application of frameworks built from concepts and principles about how people react to, and change with, the impact of place, time, and historicity, to then allow those stories to be transposed into clarifying description. The use of phenomenography as a qualitative method adopts an empirical orientation, rather than a theoretical or philosophical stance to seek description, analysis, and understanding of the experiences that others have with certain phenomena (Åkerlind 2005, Marton 1981: 180).
Taking a phenomenographic approach privileges the telling of experience of community welfare managers by the managers themselves as the primary source of meaning making, and from their descriptions, an understanding of the essence of experiences and conceptions of a phenomenon would be gleaned (Åkerlind 2005, Marton 1986). The primary focus of phenomenography is that investigation is not about the phenomenon itself, but that when the community welfare managers describe the relationships they have in dealing with a particular phenomenon, then the essence of their conceptions becomes understandable (Bowden 2005). Furthermore, the qualitative research methodology sits within an interpretivist paradigm so that explanation of meaning through the subjective experience of the managers becomes the main frame of reference rather than mine as researcher (Hitchcock 2006: 110, accessed [online] 07.01.08). Phenomenography allows for the qualitatively different ways that the managers experience a phenomenon (Marton and Booth 1997), and so research activities have the potential to be broad and open whereby multiple constructed realities can evolve through primacy placed on the words and behaviour of the participants (Lincoln and Guba 1985: 295. The resulting variations in experience would evolve from analysis of the managers’ stories into categories of description, after they became involved in first, semi-structured interviews, then focus groups, and lastly individual consultations about some of the research findings.

The empirical orientation of the research would clearly reflect what was heard and observed about activity at the coalface of practice, but with one caveat. While empirical research ought to be, or could be, replicated by other researchers at a later time, there was an acknowledgement that the participants’ stories shared in this study, might not be the same for others, or indeed produce the same meanings for others. The reason is one of interpretation and of context. Gudmundsdottir (1995, 1998) for example, indicates that narratives are simultaneously created by the individual and framed by our culture but the conditions of context do not remain the same; in terms of temporal, climatic, situational, social, or psychological factors. That is, even if the environment of community welfare is still there, the culture of individuals interacting with their environment will not stay the same.
In another vein, this study presented the chance to offer analysis, interpretation, and discussion that were meaningful to the interpretative nature of data. For example, just as there would be a multiplicity of stories from the community welfare managers, then the historicity – the historical nature - of community welfare would evolve into a variety of outcome spaces depending on the contextual approach (Thrift 1999); the different experiences of each participant would most probably be translated into different outcomes, but only by committing to the interpretative quality of research could this process occur.

3.1.1 Phenomenography versus phenomenology in this research

There is a universal understanding among qualitative researchers that the research ‘rules of the game’ will explore the differences of experience in as broad a scope as possible, but choosing the significance of phenomenographic research is probably best understood if a comparison is made to, for example, phenomenological research. That is, is there a difference? Quite simply, phenomenology relates to what people perceive in their world, and phenomenography relates to the way people conceive of their world (Marton 1981). In the former situation, while everyone experiences phenomena in quite different ways, the researcher then makes sense of his or her own understanding of similar phenomena by looking through the lens of the participants and how the latter understand the phenomena. In this research, the primary lens is that of the participants and the sense of the experience starts and rests with the participants. However, when I think and talk of bringing certain lenses to the research process, I am doing so in respect of comparison, that is what I know compared to what others know and describe, and how that knowledge will assist in my establishing an analytical framework for exploring variation in managers’ work practices (Cope 2002).

Phenomenography is sometimes thought of as a branch of phenomenology but this is not an accurate development apart from the similarities the two hold in their epistemological foundations such as having human experience as their object (Marton 1981). Both research traditions would recognise the individual stories of these managers to make
sense of the world in which they operate and acknowledge the primacy of human knowledge being based on conceptions of reality (Sandberg 1997). A purely phenomenological focus however, seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon but ultimately, I wanted to gain a collective example of practice by understanding the essence of experiences as well as the managers’ conceptions of a phenomenon.

Several ideas about narrative analysis suggest a view that stories are a primary form of human understanding (Bruner 1986 and 1991, Gee, Hull and Lankshear 1996, Ricoeur 1991). Gee (1994: pp. 82-104) argues that people make sense of their experiences of other people and the world by exploiting them in terms of socially and culturally specific stories, stories which are supported by the social practices, rituals, texts and other media representations of specific social groups and cultures. Understanding the different ways that the managers experience phenomena is a typical outcome of phenomenography. That is, the underlying value of phenomenography as a research approach lies in its ability to make transparent those different conceptions – variations – of work practice (Cope 2002). The whole process would be similar to a quasi-stationary situation that moves and sets as knowledge is revealed and then reinterpreted to accommodate conceptual understanding of the managers’ own ‘situat edness’. Pong Wing Yan (1999:2) suggests that this is part of the process in understanding the same phenomena, “to include conceptual fitting based upon context”. Taking such an approach acknowledges the overall ethnographic context of the community welfare managers, the different agency contexts of each manager, and also the dynamics of awareness as being the relationship between variation and discernment from individual perspectives.

Continuing the theme from the above paragraph is that this particular kind of research requires data from multiple individuals because of the limitations of the single perspective. That is, a phenomenon is referred to as a conception but “in some cases a specific conception cannot be seen in its entirety in the data obtained from a single individual, but only within data obtained from several individuals” (Sandberg 1997: 205). Therefore, in using phenomenography my focus would be on the relationship between knowing what the aspects of a phenomenon involve, and the way the managers
think or experience that phenomenon. For example, when I posed prompting questions to the managers around balancing ethical practice \(\textit{[how do you balance professional practice as ethical practice?]}\), my purpose was not only to gain more content knowledge that would help to explain what ethical practice was, but also to understand the various ways that professional practice was \textit{experienced} as ethical practice.

\textbf{3.1.2 Fundamental behaviours in the phenomenographic approach}

When conducting the research, the plan was to be systematic but also to value the interview process initially as a way to present a series of open questions that would garner rich data from the participants (Macionis and Plummer 1998: pp. 42 and 44). The process therefore required some fundamental decisions to be made about how descriptions could be drawn from the participants, and although not unique to the phenomenography method, the approach does require certain adjustments to be made to the way communication with participants is conducted. Consequently, the relationship between researcher and participant was played out in a frame that denied \textit{knowing} as a purely cognitive act (van Manen 1990: 6). That is, in this research \textit{ propositional} knowledge, which is more the realm of scientific inquiry that is based on facts and propositions (the knowing ‘that’), was replaced by the \textit{ performative} act (the knowing ‘how’) of interacting empathically with the managers in order to not only obtain reflections on experience, but also to gain as complete a picture as possible from links or connections to various facts and propositions (Marton and Booth 1997: 130). For example, in the following summary (Table 3.1.2), instead of proposing at the interviews in the first type of communication considered, I probed for a reflective quality in the second way:
Table 3.1.2: Communication considerations: Fundamental behaviours in the phenomenographic approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowing ‘that’ approach</th>
<th>Knowing ‘how’ approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your organisation is structured like xyz so you must work in a manner like abc.</td>
<td>What are the main characteristics of the present structure of your organisation that allows you to define how you must deliver service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in a manner like abc, would mean that your considerations would be quite specific.</td>
<td>What are some further specific considerations for you, to inform the way that you choose to work today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know that you would need to follow certain criteria in order to work for an organisational structure of xyz, to reflect an abc manner of working.</td>
<td>Which of the following criteria can you talk about in terms of what you know about the organisation and community sector, according to past and current practice?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above example of communication considerations provides one of the cornerstones of phenomenographic research whereby information about a particular phenomenon, can be extrapolated from several encounters over sometimes a lengthy period of time, in order to better understand the different ways of thinking about phenomena (in this case, aspects of work practice that could help to identify models of paucity management).

3.1.3 An ontological perspective that is pragmatic and symbolic

In keeping to the phenomenographic approach, the research design incorporated a variety of methods to gather data and to achieve both pragmatic and symbolic outcomes to further understanding about models of paucity management, and how any such model could inform future management practice within the community welfare sector. Furthermore, the research makes sense through privileging an ontological and/or an epistemological direction that has the social construction of the individual as a central consideration. Ontologically, a belief in the experiential worth of others allows the telling of experiences to be incorporated into an interesting tapestry of ideas about how the world is constructed, and how the lifeworld is played out (Habermas 1984, 1989). The latter process is fundamental to engagement with the totality of ordinary life within a given environment whereby individuals interact with their surroundings, and the
surroundings impact the lives of individuals (Buttimer and Seamon 1980). Therefore, there is also an awareness of an ecological perspective to this research that not only gives credence to ontology before epistemology, but also a pragmatic gaze to the presumed interaction between physical, social, and psychological aspects of that lifeworld (Becker 2007). An understanding of an ontological consideration is that it asks the questions, what do I know to be true? For example, what is the ‘truth’ of paucity management practice? It also asks the question, what is the object of cognition – of knowing?

In this particular research, an ontological paradigm that is integrative and interpretivist, leads to accepting an ontological idealism over ontological realism. In the case of the latter, reality exists objectively, independent from personal knowledge (Bunge 1977) while in an ideal situation, reality is not a ‘given’ but is socially constructed and dependant on subjective perception, ways of knowing (cognition), and language (Berger and Luckmann 1966). As the researcher, an acknowledgement is made of a worldview that is premised on an eclectic integrated approach, that makes sense of the world with the pragmatic use of multiple lenses through which to decipher meanings of truth and being. One aspect of this worldview is that it is supportive of a symbolic perspective which is a way of ‘reading’ several texts – visual, written down, spoken or even inferred despite ‘absence’ - particularly when trying to analyse the changing landscape of human service delivery within the third sector. Further understanding of the perspective in relation to this research is that it provides a basis upon which to begin to see how individual managers might conceive of themselves as social beings acting within their roles through a socialisation process between self and organisational environment. The environment holds chaos_complexity characteristics in which community welfare managers must engage (Mlcek 2005), and the research needed to indicate some fundamental variables that interconnected, dissected and in some cases, juxtaposed against each other. Those variables relate to how discourse is constructed through social interaction, impacted by time and space.
The problematic of the phenomenographic approach is in its tendency to live vicariously the experience of a phenomenon, which is through the eyes of another, for example through the eyes of the community welfare managers. What is not always explicit in this process is the researcher’s own experience of community welfare work, of management experience, and of working with and for government organisations. Several writers on the topic of phenomenography would be inclined to see the above point as relating to the role of second order reflections to determine empirical depictions of the nature of experience of something specific. Furthermore, Hasselgren and Beach (1996: 3, accessed [online] 15.11.07) see that this second order reflection, as distinct from critical reflection, is a “characteristic form of the empirical production” that is typical of phenomenography and any problems that could arise are essentially ignored by phenomenographers. However, employing critical reflection throughout these research activities makes sense in ensuring that the data and findings would really reflect the understanding and experiences of the managers.

Regardless, the important assumption that is made in Section 3.1 is that studies of this nature are best informed through documenting stories to inform understanding. The managers have a story to tell and the use of the phenomenographic approach accommodates a multi-focus role in how stories are collected and interpreted, as the essence of experience of a phenomenon, and across several layers of analyses that begin from a careful consideration of fundamental communication behaviours.
3.2 An epistemological framework to determine the research outlook

A three-tiered scaffolding framework was used to provide an initial research outlook. The scaffolding process accommodates an ontological perspective that has resulted in choices made with particular reference to phenomenography. The framework’s conception is metaphorical; the metaphor of scaffolding illustrates its own story of connecting, buffeting and strengthening, leading to building. From the very start of the research – possibly in its earliest phase – there was always a notion that knowledge would develop with increasing degrees of sophistication via a series of sequencing strategies. In Diagram 3.2: Early Stage Epistemological Framework, there is the notion expressed through the randomness of lines falling that the framework is without a structure of its own. Two things come to mind: in keeping with the phenomenographic approach, there is an awareness of viewing the diagram in several ways including the circular motion being eidetic, made up of both iterative and linear processes, but also illustrating the ultimate lead-up to building something more concrete, and the ‘randomness’ effect helped form an awareness that a disciplined approach was required for this research.

There are two further illustrations that help clarify what this crude diagram is attempting to achieve; Ausubel’s (1963, 1978) general-to-detail sequence strategy proposes progressive differentiation of more general and inclusive anchoring ideas, and Gagne’s (1988) hierarchy of learning prescribes a parts-to-whole, bottom-up sequence, in which the most elementary parts at the bottom of the ‘waterfall’ are revealed first, followed by progressively more complex combinations of the parts. Adopting a phenomenographic approach allowed the choice of the first tier in the process of building knowledge of the impact of structure on management practices.

At point number 1 of the diagram, there are three ideas to consider:
i) The framework operates like a fountain that pushes ideas – that is, ‘streams of ideas’ – to the top.

ii) The force of the accumulation of possible phenomena impacts, defines, changes, influences or determines the experiences of managers.

iii) It is itself, a building phenomenon that provides the scaffolding at point number 2.

At point number 2, the following considerations are made:

a) The 3-tiered framework is the ‘scaffold’ that is anchored and strong, but light and permeable. Metaphorically, it is ready for the ‘skin of water’ to lie flat against the frame.

b) The ‘skin’ holds up future models of management.

c) The ‘holding up’ process is expanded at point number 3.

At point number 3, processes became more focused, whereby:

1. The combination of eidetic and linear structures amounted to an iterative process perspective

2. These are processes that build on, and add to others

3. They are also processes that do not necessarily give greater outcomes, but more saturated results.

The framework allows for future considerations. At point number 4, two notions were considered, including:

- In ‘flowing upstream’, if the journey started out in a particular way and in replicable conditions, would the outcomes be similar?

- That is, if resource poor conditions appeared to be situated endemically to occur in the future, could new questions be developed as one of the outcomes of this kind of research?
3.2.1 The place of hermeneutics in an integrated approach

Incorporated in the second tier of the epistemological framework was the understanding that ‘multi-voicedness’ would be achieved through adopting an integrated focus. This outlook is essentially pragmatic because its intention is to arrive at useful conclusions towards an approach to management, rather than a correct or best way to go about work (Badley 2001:162). Processes were therefore more tentative than they were definitive, but they also evolved and operated through an implicit, disciplined engagement. This is true of the narrative inquiry adopted through the managers’ interviews that started out as being semi-structured and then developed heuristically. Adopting a hermeneutic approach privileges the notion that boundaries are also socially constructed, clarified and revealed; they are negotiated and re-negotiated after endless (re)interpretations (Thompson 1996: 360).

Heuristics has been the binding tool to engage in useful data collection. The reason is because of the inherent notion of trying constantly to achieve a balance between
intuition and formalised focus (Bernstein 1983, Herda 1999). Furthermore, heuristics is the vehicle to engage usefully in what is known as the hermeneutic circle (Barnes 2000: pp. 334-336, cited in Johnston et al [eds.]) whereby the “loop of interpretation has no end” and is fed by the juxtaposition of the known with the unknown, the complete with the partial. When a formal interview guide to inform the direction of the talks was used, intuition was at the fore to allow both the participants and researcher, to take the conversations to a different level and concern, depending on the particular perspective at the time. The process was about exploring possibilities, re-explaining the already-explained, fielding other possibilities that had not been voiced previously; for several of the managers it was indeed participating in “conversation as experiential learning” (Baker, Jensen and Kolb 2002) and also exposing notions of pre-understanding with notions of prejudice through human conversation (Gadamer 1975).

In the data presentation and interpretation chapters, interchanges are related between the participants that had the effect of ‘clearing the air’ and re-establishing contact with each other. This semiotic process of nominating language and social behaviour is embedded in the ‘tool of heuristics’ whereby relationships, boundaries and information are explored, re-investigated, contemplated and then given a new or different symbolism.

3.2.2 Using ‘model’ as part of a contextual approach

The third tier in the scaffolding was one that was intricately balanced to accommodate the idea that what this research set out to do was to build theory, or at least to place the analytical concept of paucity management within a relevant theoretical context. The research set out on a (brokered) journey of discovery that sought to understand more about community welfare managers’ work in the rural context, and have them try to identify what models and styles of management they used. This direction proved to be not as easy as one would expect though should have been evident from the literature review because traditionally welfare managers do not spend time trying to theorise, analyse or clarify what they do beyond trying to meet the needs of the community. However, the intention was to show that ‘model’ was more than a set of generalised ideas pertaining to work in general, but specifically about work practice in the context of
a paucity management environment. The analysis would be helpful in indicating whether or not activity and practice was consistent across several levels of engagement.

### 3.2.3 Importance of triangulation in this research

Consistency in research inquiry is “closely tied to conceptions of truth, and validity in the representation of information” that can be enhanced through triangulation (Cousins 2002: 193). Alston and Bowles (2003: 137) write about triangulation involving the use of “more than one method to increase the validity of results and to synthesise results from different sources”. Aspects of this research that were triangulated included the methodological techniques, the strategies of analysis, and the process of interpretation. For example, the data collection methods were triangulated with interview methodologies forming the basis of the three research activities. Taken individually, the face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, and consultative interviews, are sometimes seen as “competing research methodologies” (Green 1999: 35) that have at the core of serious consideration, issues to do with authentic accounts, timeliness, social dynamics, rigour, professionalism, relevance, and applicability. However, despite the constraints espoused implicitly in the above concerns, undertaking all these activities, would achieve a “well-diversified” (Daly and Lumley 2002: 299) yet ‘balanced’ research outcome that would add to the validity of the managers’ information about paucity management.

Triangulation in this type of research relates to the *basis* of arguing validity of the research process in order to provide validity and efficacy in models of paucity management. Strategies of analysis complemented each stage of the data collection process, and were triangulated through an integrated and ongoing approach. For example, *on the basis* of the similarities of answers received in both interviews and focus group discussions, the inquiry generated greater validity. From the beginning of the process, *on the basis* of how the managers’ thoughts about their work determined their ongoing practice, the initial research question was then conceived. *On the basis* of the feedback from the informal interviews, rich metaphors were collected from that activity, as the focal point for discussion in the focus groups. *On the basis* of subjective
revelations from those group discussions, a closer understanding of models of paucity management through the style of management operations was developed, and *on the basis* of social theory and conceptual analysis, the preliminary definition of models of paucity management would be further clarified and elaborated with the help of consultations with individual managers.

But primarily *on the basis* of knowing that this research had the potential to reveal interesting management permutations regarding style and workplace activity, the process was revealing; one of meaning-making through a saturation of ideas (Sarantakos 1998). These ideas provided an opportunity for interpretation to be triangulated through the application of different theoretical lenses, in order to layer additional meaning to the data.

Section 3.2, and the first part of the chapter have brought to the fore the ontological grounding of the research, as well as the epistemological processes at hand in trying to extract and interpret community welfare managers’ stories. The previous Table 3.2 gives a concrete example of how phenomenography is realised through communication considerations that help to achieve reflective quality in the methods adopted. Processes, which empathise and explicate in a dual approach that refers particularly to effective interviewing, include the type of choices that underpin behaviours common to a phenomenographic methodology.

Other approaches to the research could have been used, such as case study methodology, and different methods could have been adopted, for example, in the interview techniques. In the end however, methods arising from taking a phenomenographic stance have been chosen; to accommodate logical connections to be made between the most appropriate research activities used to gain answers to the Research Question (see sub-Section 3.3.1), to provide an appropriate stage for heuristic questioning in the interview and focus group research activities, and to allow an unfolding complexity of analyses to take place.
PART TWO: DATA COLLECTION

This second part of the chapter relates to how methods were devised and used to extrapolate data for the project. The process and timeframe for the research can be viewed in the Appendices (Appendix 3-1), but the orientation to the geographical area of the study is given in the following Section 3.3. The design of the main research instrument that included a set of semi-structured guiding questions, was begun for the ethics clearance process in November 2002, and refined for the actual interview activities begun in August 2003.

3.3 Data collection methods

Three different research activities were employed for the data collection: individual interviews using an interview schedule (see sub-Section 3.3.1); focus group discussions using metaphors extrapolated from the interviews, and further consultative dialogue with several of the participants. Epistemologically, how to build knowledge about models of paucity management led logically to these qualitative data collection methods to provide thick description (Geertz 1983). Collecting stories through interviews and focus group work, as well as consultative discussions, provided the pivotal empirical work to this research project and are also accepted practices for exploring the interrelationship of phenomena especially using a phenomenographic approach (Marton 1998, Runesson 1999). For example, the research began with a notion of structure as it referred to the organisational constraints placed on managers while they went about their work in the Central West of NSW. But, the project also deliberately set out to accommodate the boundaries of structure that would be determined heuristically through contact with research participants over a two-year data collection period. Furthermore, personal accounts of work practice seemed to be the best option with which to ascertain models of paucity management as the main research outcome, and whether or not action is
determined through reflexive options; knowledgeable choices and moral rectitude (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1996).

The semi-structured interview was chosen as the most appropriate activity/tool to be used in the first research activity. Participant ontologies, regarding the nature of ‘paucity’ and understanding of management practices, would be revealed through the use of questioning techniques developed heuristically from previous answers. In considering the purpose and participation in the interviews, trigger questions that had been formulated to capture literature content, were used to guide the narrative pathway of each participant. These questions were at once, and together, both dynamic and subdued but always revelatory; they were strategic prompts. Narrative discourse was draped over a question framework that was sturdy and finely constructed, as well as flexible and yielding.

Metaphors were used to inform the second research activity. They came from the managers’ interviews (see Part three for a full description of this process), and just like the previous three-tiered scaffolding (see page 81) these metaphors had the ability to transcend the actual of a given situation into an actualisation that is ‘out of the ordinary’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

The third research activity employed several of the managers in ‘top-up’ consultative interviews, in order to clarify some aspects of the data that would benefit from further insight. They are referred to as ‘consultations’ because this is exactly what involved, that is, going back to the managers to consult with them about what they had said.

**3.3.1 Developing the research instrument**

The main research instrument was the list of *guiding* questions that were used in the individual interviews, to support the main Research Question. The guiding questions were used as prompts in the individual interview process, and started to be formed in the content analysis phase, where they came from the potential contributions and potential drawbacks of nonprofit organisations that were identified by Salamon, Hems and
Chinnock (2000: 4). These contributors help to define the nonprofit sector and are manifested through questions about the service role, innovation, advocacy, leadership and development, and community building and democratisation, which provided useful triggers for my own list of questions. In the end, what I sent out to participants in preparation for their interviews were really ‘conversation starters’ designed to have them thinking about how best to describe their practice:

**Research Question:** What are models of paucity management, and how does the structure and affiliations of organisations within the non-profit community welfare sector, impact the use of those models?

1. What are the main characteristics of the present structure of your organisation that allows you to define how you must deliver service? That is, how accountable to them are you?

2. What are some further specific considerations for you, to inform the way that you choose to work today? (They need not be the same as above.)

3. Which of the following criteria can you talk about in terms of what you know about the organisation and community sector, according to past and current practice? The list relates to some ‘hypothesised’ criteria with which to assess the structural impacts of NGOs on service delivery/ work output:
   - Potential contributions (of any organisation)
     i. The service role
     ii. The innovation role
     iii. The advocacy role
     iv. The expressive and leadership development role
     v. The community building and democratisation role.
   - Potential drawbacks/ vulnerabilities
     i. Particularism
     ii. Paternalism
iii. Excessive amateurism or professionalism
iv. Resource insufficiency
v. Accountability gap.

4. What other things would you add to the list that relates to your own management practice?

5. Given that one idea about ‘paucity management’ refers to that set of guidelines and principles “whereby managers are constantly balancing, weighing up the competing needs of clients, workers, managers and their organisation, as well as addressing tensions between balancing, trading off, professional standards and ethical practice” – are you aware that you could be operating (all the time? some of the time?) within a paucity management environment?

In Section 3.3, the scene has been set regarding the research data collection methods, through the use of the all-important research instrument. The Research Question is posed at the end of sub-Section 3.3.1, with supporting guiding questions that were used to prompt participants in the sharing of their stories. Three research activities were involved to provide opportunities for data collection; individual face-to-face interviews (including one phone interview), focus group discussions, and follow-up consultations with some of the managers.
3.4 Orientation to the geographical area of the study

The geographical area of the study impacted the timeframe relating to scheduling activities and the phenomenon of *time-space distanciation* on work activities in the central west regions of New South Wales, was experienced through conducting the research. That is, as indicated by the solid black lines on the map below (Diagram 3.4a), regarding the journey starting from Katoomba on each occasion, the ‘space’ between Coonabarrabran and Forbes for example, was not just one of ‘time’ and distance, but the potential of the three phenomena, juxtaposed with each other, to create quite distinct and unique research opportunities at each destination. In the end, all the managers (100%) participated in the initial interviews. For the second activity, which involved focus group discussions, two-thirds (66%) of the managers participated in that encounter. For the third and final consultative research activity two-thirds (60%) of the managers were also engaged in offering final comments about possible models of paucity management but in each of these activities, the make-up of participants was different.
In reference to Diagram 3.4a above, eight of the fifteen managers worked in agencies that were situated in different directions approximately five hours drive away from the home base of Katoomba. The driving covered Katoomba to Lithgow, Mudgee, Kelso [between Lithgow and Bathurst], Bathurst, and then Orange, Dubbo, Coonabarabran one-way, and then Parkes and Forbes another way. Seven of those managers had two individual visits from me within one year. Only one of the managers from the whole group was accessible within one hour’s drive but worked a three-alternate-day-week, so those visits were scheduled with going to see others who were located on the same route but further along (see diagram below – Diagram 3.4b Application of \textit{time-space distanciation} to accessing participants).
In ending Section 3.4, the extensive travel involved in the data collection process is implicated by the geographic placement of the participants’ agencies. A clear indication has been fielded, of other phenomena that impact service delivery; including, rural isolation, the effect of distance, networking and partnership implications, and all these ideas are relevant for addressing the Research Question.
3.5 Recruiting participants for the study

The timing of the leadership and management fora (mentioned in Chapter 1) appeared to coincide with a burgeoning concern on the part of managers and workers in the community welfare sector that seemed to come to a peak also during that time. Before specific managers were approached to participate in the research, some of them also attended other workshops or events to do with scrutinising the effect of government policies on community welfare work practices. There was an awareness that at least five of them had participated in professional tertiary studies as part of the same cohort of students at the University of Western Sydney. This made it easier to focus on those managers that thought would be of interest and relevance to the study. Their interest in what the inquiry was trying to achieve, related in part to common concerns for what was happening at that time in the sector, at the level of individual work practices but also because of their developing critical awareness through academic study that helped them to question anomalies in the system.

Telephone and email (sometimes both) were used with each prospective participant to gauge individual willingness to be part of the project. Initially there were nine possible candidates taken from the leadership and management database, but then the number grew to fifteen because of affiliations within the same organisation and/or recommendations from those who were already ‘recruited’ (example – field notes – personal memo – ‘Why don’t you ask [Participant] – I’m sure they’re doing it tough – they’re certainly doing paucity management’.). Following their initial interest and consent, they were sent documentation that related to information about the research, the initial Research Question to be explored, and all details relating to ethical research practice as well as consent forms to sign.
3.5.1 Information about the participants and their agencies

In this thesis, the participants’ names are replaced with pseudonyms. The first column of the following Table 3.5.1 identifies each manager and their participation in the research activities. It also gives demographic information including participants’ work area, experience in community welfare, qualifications, and type of agency:

Table 3.5.1: Demographic information for 15 community welfare managers from the Central West of New South Wales (NSW)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager ID, participation (yes*, no+) in research activities</th>
<th>Work area</th>
<th>Experience in community welfare: 10 years or more</th>
<th>Qualifications: welfare profession-specific, other</th>
<th>Agency set-up, type of organization, and service specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LM1*** Lyn</td>
<td>Lithgow</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In-progress</td>
<td>Community A, Faith-based - Anglican, families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KM1*** Kate</td>
<td>Kelso</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Govt/Community C, children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM1*** Bell</td>
<td>Bathurst</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Community A, Faith-based - Anglican, families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM2*** Belinda</td>
<td>Bathurst</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not known, Yes - other</td>
<td>Community C, individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM1*** Lynelle</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Community A, Faith-based - Anglican, families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM2*** Barry</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not known, Yes - other</td>
<td>Community A, Faith-based - Catholic, families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM1*** Mary</td>
<td>Mudgee</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>In-progress</td>
<td>Community A, Faith-based - Anglican, families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM2*** Prue</td>
<td>Mudgee</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>In-progress, Yes – other</td>
<td>Charity, children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM1*** Julie</td>
<td>Dubbo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, in-progress</td>
<td>Community C, individuals and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM2*** Basil</td>
<td>Dubbo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, in-progress</td>
<td>Community A, Faith-based - Uniting Church, children and young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM3*** Elizabeth</td>
<td>Dubbo</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Community C, Faith-based - Anglican, families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM1*** Jerry</td>
<td>Coonabarrabran</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Govt/Community A, individuals and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM1*** Mave</td>
<td>Parkes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Community C, Faith-based - Anglican, families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM2*** Lyndall</td>
<td>Parkes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Govt/Community C, aged care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM1*** Joan</td>
<td>Forbes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not known, Yes - other</td>
<td>Community A, Faith-based - Catholic, individuals and families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: The names given to the Participants are not their real names – they are pseudonyms.

The participants were sourced from a wide geographical area in the central west of New South Wales. Their community welfare context is not necessarily ‘typical’ for each of the managers and deviations occur at the point of organisation type, organisation size,
agency set up, management structure, type and frequency of service, and community focus. Consenting managers were accessed from a database set up by the partnership (ACWA and UWS) that planned and conducted a series of leadership and management fora and workshops in the Central West of NSW in 2001/2002. The benefits of this process meant that all the managers who participated in the series were known to have concerns for what was happening to their sector as a result of government discourse about certain issues such as partnerships, business collaborations, and funding. They had come together willingly, to try to find ways to improve their practice despite many initial misgivings about the capacity of the series to assist. In attending the series, there was no doubt that the intention was there, as well as three things that would provide the impetus for change, including “… the first is motivation. The second one is motivation. The third one is motivation” (Maehr and Meyer 1997: 372).

An original idea in recruiting participants was to source them from only non-government organisations because the uniqueness of community welfare had always seemed to be best showcased through people from the above type of organisation, displaying a collective identity whereby “… through identification and ‘cocreation’ of a story, the storyteller and reader/listener create a ‘we’ involving some effective bond and a sense of solidarity: told and retold, ‘my story’ becomes ‘our story’” (Davis 2002: 19). The involvement of managers in this research would come from those who were ‘close-to-the-ground’ with communities, possibly as part of grassroots agencies doing emancipatory work through a multitude of services and advocacy to the people. However, with the inclusion of one of the participants from a combined government department agency, a broader inclusion of organisations would then come from a) the community welfare sector, b) the third sector, and c) from nonprofit organisations.

Nine managers came from agencies that delivered similar family-type services. Six of the participants were involved in a kind of compact, or chapter; their affiliation was two-fold, as part of the same organisation, peak body, and within the same central western geographical area. This latter interesting point about the compact is not pursued in detail as part of this research, but the managers certainly spoke of being excited about
this innovative collaboration. These managers were all female – in fact just two out of all the fifteen managers were male – and worked between two to four days per week in their agencies, delivering family support services that included child support, life-skills training, assistance with accommodation and living expenses, and legal support. The gendering of roles is a definite consideration but also not a main research focus here; the extent and level to which modus operandi is determined by the opus operatum of managers and vice versa, plus all the accompanying phenomena, is the main interest. Choosing these particular managers to be participants of the research was bound to show some thought-provoking differences in service delivery because some of the roles called for direct, reactive management, while others seemed to be built on ongoing case-management practices.

Ten of the managers were affiliated with organisations from three different religious denominations, another three operated from strong ideological bases other than ‘community’, and the last two had a very committed though broad, community focus. The previous accumulated experience between the fifteen managers was extensive, with eight having deliberately moved from government jobs, especially from the Department of Community Services, but not necessarily from management positions. Placement of the managers in their geographical areas presents another level of complexity that was welcomed for this research project.

Sections 3.4 and 3.5 presented information about the participants of this research coming from a broad rural area within the central west regions of NSW; where they were placed geographically, the institution affiliations in which they were involved, and the type of agency that determined their community welfare services delivery. The main points from these sections is to note the potential diversity of practice for each of the fifteen managers based on their workplaces, but also through a sense of the vastness and ‘ruralness’ of their environment. This information is invaluable for its relevance in beginning to answer the Research Question, particularly in relation to organisation structure and workplace affiliations.
3.6 Collecting the data

The in-the-field collection of data covered an intensive ten months and began in August 2003 and finished in May 2004 (see Table 3.6 below). The overall participation in research activities and the collection of data can be summarised as follows: individual interviews were conducted over a period of three months from August to October 2003, either in the manager’s office face-to-face or over the telephone, and in one case the interview moved from the office to the local coffee shop; focus groups were conducted in Mudgee and Bathurst in November 2003 and February 2004, to allow individuals easier ‘central’ access, and follow up consultative dialogue was conducted over a period of three months from March to May 2004.

Table 3.6: Tracking the collection of data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for conducting the interviews:</td>
<td>Conducting the interviews in the following order:</td>
<td>Second Focus Group Discussion:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- post information to participants</td>
<td>- Kelso</td>
<td>- Bathurst: Kelso, Lithgow, Bathurst, Bathurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- gain formal consent</td>
<td>- Lithgow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- telephone to set the scene for the research and to set up interview times</td>
<td>- Orange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- email further information and interview schedule to participants</td>
<td>- Orange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Parkes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dubbo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mudgee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mudgee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dubbo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Dubbo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Bathurst</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Bathurst</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Coonabarabran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Parkes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Forbes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Focus Group Discussion:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow up dialogue in the following order:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mudgee: Dubbo, Mudgee, Mudgee, Coonabarabran, Dubbo</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Dubbo (DM1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Dubbo (DM2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Parkes (PM2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Mudgee (MM2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Mudgee (MM1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Kelso (KM1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Forbes (FM1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Bathurst (BM1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Bathurst (BM2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Kelso (KM1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Dubbo (DM2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6.1 Considerations for data collection

There were fundamentally two considerations relating to this aspect of the research project: *confining the study* through *engaging the participants*, and the *timeframe*. From a procedural perspective, coordinating activities across a vast geographical area from which to access participants, as well as the possible unavailability when the managers just could not be present at certain times, would affect the data gathering procedure. There had been evidence of this happening during the series of leadership and management fora already mentioned previously; conducted in the Central West of NSW by the University of Western Sydney and the Australian Children’s Welfare Association in 2002. Four of these had been planned but the fourth had to be cancelled because too many of the managers were over committed in trying to complete funding applications at the time.

There were key considerations that unfolded in the initial ethics application and research proposal processes (see Appendix 3-2: Ethics Application) including, certain guidelines that were used, similar to the use of terms of reference formulated to guide behaviour and activity in any project. That is, the guidelines informed the way that the research was to be conducted in the following way:

*Integrity*

There is no doubt that rural Australia is in crisis (see for example Alston, 2005a). In the environment where this research is placed, the effect of research into the concept of *paucity management*, where managers and leaders in community welfare organisations may be confined to operating within very tight budgetary and service frameworks, could expose sensitive issues to do with service delivery and ethical practice within the sector. To preserve the integrity of the fieldwork data, participants were given the option of reviewing the documenting of their narratives, and adding clarification if they deemed it necessary.
Respect for persons
The choice of participants was confined to only those whose names had been previously entered on a voluntary, community research database in the central west area of New South Wales, and who replied to an invitation to be part of the research. Responses came from Lithgow, Kelso, Bathurst, Orange, Parkes, Forbes, Mudgee, Dubbo, and Coonabarabran. Participants were free to withdraw at any time during the research process, and in one case, participation was markedly reduced because of work pressures. Participation was voluntary, and at no time was the identity of informants revealed to any person outside of the data collection environment. All data was transcribed and formally documented in a way that removed all and any identifying features, and only pseudonyms are used as a way to identify participants.

Beneficence
The research set out to provide community welfare organisations with comparative, narrative studies that would include insights into the lived experience of managers operating within the confines of paucity management. Further, in highlighting behaviours and actions on the part of those managers, the research would also give further understanding of what it means to operate within a paucity management model.

Justice
In contemplating the efficacy of the research, the use of managers’ stories would provide a voice of validation for their actions in the face of ever-diminishing resource operations. As human service providers in a community welfare sector that is undergoing immense changes in terms of accountability to governments, questions of ethical practice, as well as ongoing scrutiny of funding arrangements, community welfare agency managers would be given the opportunity to have their views expressed and represented fairly throughout this research project.

Data collection began from the start of the project and entailed listening to people in the field and taking notes, researching the literature and taking more notes, and after the first year of taking notes and reading all that was available about paucity management in the
community welfare sector, the sense of direction for the research was set, including the where, the why, and the how.

A fairly standard procedure in setting up the face-to-face interviews was followed; first sending out at least one week prior to the interviews an email copy of the list of questions for the individual interviews and then taking along new copies for each of the participants. These interviews were conducted always at times that were convenient to the participants; sometimes this revolved around the need to keep court support times free for them, or if the agency opened only at certain times of the day, or had specific activities designated for different times and therefore one hour interviews were not always convenient. The phenomenon of time was a particular concern. Four of the managers operated on a minimal part-time basis, with one especially stretched to accommodate the process because her work was to be conducted ‘officially’ within thirteen hours only per week. The tentativeness at first in trying not to encroach on people’s time was palpable. It was difficult to remain impartial to the way that a researcher presence impacted service delivery even for that seemingly short time of the interviews and it was very noticeable that compared to other research projects where the interviewees have usually pre-prepared with sometimes scribbled notes against the list of questions provided, not one of the fifteen managers in this case had done that. Furthermore, not one of them had the list of questions in front of them from the original email or seemed to have taken the time to read what had been sent to them.

In regard to the actual interviewing methods used to gain managers’ stories, the very aspects of what determines the type of interview undertaken, are the same ones that also raise questions for concern about potential limitations of the research. That is, there is a certain understanding of what it means to conduct focused/semi-structured interviewing which in this research is also in-depth because of more than one encounter between participants and researcher. An outcome from the communication considerations flagged in sub-Section 3.1.2, the more conversational style of the interviewing process that was used instead of a usual interrogative style adopted for more structured research processes, has both advantages and disadvantages. First of all, there is a more egalitarian
concept of roles between the managers and researcher rather than the imbalance of power associated with more structured approaches (Minichiello et al 1991: 93), but there was still some degree of structure to the encounters with the managers. For example, the interviews began with an interview guide that was structured around a list of particular topics, and the focus group discussions were driven by the bracketed out metaphors from those first interviews. To a certain degree, the conversational style allowed the encounters to be more flexible in what was said and how, and this can sometimes impact staying true to the ethnographic context of the managers. However, the issues and topics remained consistent for all the encounters and the potential limitations inherent in ‘wandering off’ the topic were minimised.

In the second phase of the research (refer further on to Table 3.8, page 117) focus groups provided the springboard for further stories to be revealed. These groups operated on both inclusive and peripheral grounds of similarity that related to: ideology, work environment, work geography, collective networking possibilities, and professional practice. What I hoped to achieve with this phase of activities was akin to managers as part of ‘communities of practice’ (Mleck, Wagner and Childs 2003) bringing their discussions with me on the periphery of activity into the center of another kind of subjectivity – as part of conducting conversation as experiential learning. Individual experiences could be, and were, validated, confirmed, affirmed but also shared in common acknowledgements that were not necessarily the same but similar.

Consultative discussions did not occur with every participant, but in the third phase of the research, nine of the fourteen managers had follow-up interactions with me that involved questioning, clarification, and expansion of ideas, through the media of individual telephone calls, face-to-face situations, or email communication. On two separate occasions, following the focus group discussions, two of the managers offered to write something formal to add to the thesis (example – field notes – consultations – ‘Do you want me to write you something’? – Belinda). In hindsight, the offer highlights two ongoing considerations, the nexus of which indicates a certain tension within the research: being protective of the work to the point of not wanting to be sidetracked from
explicating certain aspects of data other than that generated by the guiding questions alone during the actual research activities; having a clear theoretical frame that had the potential to both include and exclude ‘voice’, and this idea brings the ‘tension’ more to light whereby frameworks can both include and exclude, hear or silence.

There are a couple of caveats to the information on participation in the research: two of the managers (Julie from Dubbo, and Lyndall from Parkes) had participated in previous community welfare focus group discussions in which this researcher was involved, but which were only indirectly related to this research project. This point is mentioned only in the context of being aware of their experience and likely response to some of the issues raised in the directed part of the focus group research activity. Most of the ‘follow-up interviews’ were very brief because this would be in fact at least the third or fourth contact time with the participants. Each of the participants were involved in at least two phone conversations, and not necessarily conducted in the linear fashion that was timetabled in the research activities, that is, some of these two conversations occurred prior to the focus group discussions, but as in the case of Elizabeth from Dubbo, although these carried a wealth of ‘unspoken’ information, they were quite brief (less than ten minutes) so they have been ‘amalgamated’ together as one. In addition, each of the participants received at least two email communications; to flag their interest and to let them know what the research was about, and to re-engage their interest and send through to them, electronic copies of the information flyer, letter to the organisation explaining the research, invitation to participate in the research, and an informed consent form.

After managers’ interviews were audio-taped, the recordings were transcribed and read and re-read together with the rich notes that were taken at the time of the interviews, until the most significant information was retained, brought to the fore, and ‘bracketed out’. Some points that were unclear were checked back with participants, either individually, or collectively, in the follow-up focus groups. On at least four occasions email was used to elicit further clarification from the participants. Discussions continued with the one participant who was part of a government-subsidised agency for the express
purpose of gleaning expansive knowledge based on that manager’s previous extensive experience, working in both government, and non-government community welfare agencies, as well as a continuing presence on at least two volunteer agency management committees in the community.

One of the considerations for data collection was to be aware that this research is not without biases; it has been achieved through a personal, subjective engagement not just by the researcher with the participants, but also by the participants with each other. This is formal social research, looking to find patterns of behaviour in the work of community welfare managers, and so in terms of the authenticity of the research (Kenny 1999: pp. 256-258), there was always going to be dual control over the whole process. The dual control relates to the role of principal researcher and that of the managers as research participants. In fact we were all participants but the concept of ‘dual control’ offers an interesting layer to the limitations of this research, which came from the availability, and access to the participants; approaching fifteen managers across a vast geographical area was always going to pose some logistical and timetabling concerns. Authentic research “accept(s) the authenticity of the lives of those people who are being researched, and ensure(s) that they are able to express their views in their terms of reference” (Kenny 1999: 256), but herein is another potential limitation for consideration of data collection. The ‘terms of reference’ were mine, manifested through the direction of the research, the Research Question and focus, and the initial trigger questions to inform the narrative-collection process. These concerns became limitations because of the potential to inadvertently ‘guide’ or ‘influence’ the outcome of the interviews. This potential dilemma points again to caution about behaviour and activities during the study.

Coming to the end of Section 3.6, some of the limitations in the data collection process have been noted and considered, including: access to participants over a 12-month period, timing of interviews based on the availability of the managers, biases relating to researcher subjectivity in the data collection activities, and the level of control exhibited from both researcher and participants, through interviewing and discussion techniques.
Part two has developed the research grounding and motivation by establishing the data collection methods, as well as the all-important research instrument in Section 3.3. Section 3.4 highlighted the three main research activities: individual interviews, focus group discussions, and consultations, from which data was collected. Sections 3.5 and 3.6 presented an explication of the practical information and tasks associated with the participants. In referring back to the guiding questions-as-prompts in the research instrument (see sub-Section 3.3.1), the first guiding question in the research instrument relates to What are the main characteristics of the present structure of your organisation that allows you to define how you must deliver service? That is, how accountable to them are you? All these questions have the potential to engage participants in revealing stories that describe their experience as defined in the Research Question, and its relation to paucity management.
PART THREE: DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

In Part three, the main ideas about data analysis for this research are set out to indicate that the multistage process included multi-level and multi-faceted inquiry, and began as part of the data collection methods related to this research. That is, information contained in Table 3.9 could have been posited at the beginning of Section 3.8, but the complex phenomenographic analysis process is crucial for understanding the multiple layers that evolve from handling the data. Analysis can be seen to be both formative and summative, in keeping with the phenomenographic approach. That is, the research process accommodated analysis techniques throughout the different stages and activities, and these also had a cumulative effect on the outcomes, particularly through the use of an analytical framework of awareness of variation in the managers’ experiences.

The information here is set out to show that a logical progression was conducted from collating and organising narrative description, to coding of data under bracketed out themes, and the positing of further in-depth analysis using metaphors and theory reduction methods. I also posit two frameworks that were used in the process; they ‘inter-leave’ each other, with one used to inform the other, and that latter, to inform the research outcomes. But first, the levels of analyses are explored below.

3.7 Levels of analyses

The following information builds on the work presented previously and especially in Chapter 2 Literature Review (see pp. 24 and 28). That is, inquiry in this research attempted to accommodate analyses on three levels including, the macro, mezzo and micro levels. There are two points that are very important for understanding my approach to the analysis task. In the first place, the research process needed to avoid being trapped in a deterministic orientation of focusing just on organisation
characteristics, but to acknowledge at the outset that this research would be an empirical and applied study of managers’ activities in situated contexts. In the second place, this approach was seen to compliment the phenomenographic approach involving multiple ways of making meaning from the given situation of resource poverty that informed the research.

There are limitations in adopting several theoretical lenses, as part of the multiple ways of meaning making that could have the potential to complicate rather than explicate. For example, two social theorists of our time, Pierre Bourdieu (1990, 1991, 1977) and Anthony Giddens (1984, 1990), have been useful in informing the ontological and epistemological foundations of my understanding of ‘structure’, but also the reciprocal effect of the individual on structure. The use of these two theorists raises a potentially unhelpful binary, or interesting juxtaposition, depending on one’s point of view, because where the first has been known for his privileging of empirical research, in the case of Giddens’ work there has been endless critique of its suitability in being applied to empirical work that relates primarily to definitions of agency and structure (Gregson 1989: pp 185-214).

The inquiry started with the level of experience, which is the micro level of inquiry that recognises the different ways in which people experience, understand, conceptualise, and make sense of differing phenomena in their world of work. The phenomenographic paradigm (after Marton 1981) also includes the idea of variation, that is, “variation between qualitatively different ways of seeing, experiencing, and understanding the same phenomena” (Marton 1999: 3). While Marton establishes that the difference lies with people in the process of action, and action-reflection, it is the researcher “who senses (this) variation” (brackets inserted).

There were several significant stages of the data analysis process to inform the levels of analyses. The first two stages coincided with data collection activities. In the first instance, interview data was used to start to organise categories of description. Rich metaphorical expressions were extrapolated from the raw data to give an overall
description of the managers’ work and to tease out any variation that could be fielded at the focus group discussions. At the same time, themes from both the interviews and group discussions were formalised into categories of description as experience. A secondary stage of analysis explored the way that managers experienced professional practice within each of the categories of description. Then, a third stage of analysis which then progressed into an initial interpretation phase, explored the relationship between what happened within those categories, compared to working conditions and managerial responsibilities as a domain of paucity management. Initially, this third stage covered micro and mezzo levels of variation in experience that related to organisational activity as professional practice.

The above observations led in the end, to a necessarily rigorous inquiry in order to utilise an effective ‘analytical variation of experience framework’ to establish validity and reliability. The intent of the research was to try not only to avoid “simplistic theorizing of complex phenomena” (Slappendale 1996), but also engagement that could become convoluted. The research could contribute towards validation of ‘paucity management’ as not just an analytical concept (Wagner et al, 2000: 43; Wagner and Spence, 2003), but also as part of a legitimate theory that could be applied to management practices, only if the analysis remained both pragmatic and epistemologically sound in its process and stayed consistent in the use of the analytical framework that was constructed.

In Section 3.7, the levels of analyses are posited as significant stages that coincide with the data collection processes, which is typical of phenomenographic methodology. The reason for the protracted process of analyses is to arrive at variation in experience yes, but ultimately, a category of description that provides an overall conception of phenomenon, through the essence of an overall experience of a phenomenon, is a more applicable outcome. When the Research Question asks what are models of paucity management, dimensions of variation in experience are important, but so too are the elements that we can see are the same for managers, to then inform us of a consistently defined model of paucity management.
3.8 The data analysis process

The prefacing of the phenomenographic approach to this research is integral to the data analysis process because it deliberately applies several layers of understanding to the relationship of experience to phenomena (Cope 2002: 306, accessed [online] 07.01.08). For example, in extending the above Section 3.7, levels of analyses are summarised as proceeding through: content analysis, theories of paucity management, and then further analysis through new theory application. Content analysis processes included information from interviews and stories being developed into categories of description, and metaphoric analysis that ‘fed’ ideas into focus group discussions as well as further contribution to the categories. Theories of paucity management provided the vehicle for relationship building between aspects of the Wagner and Spence domain of ‘working conditions and managerial responsibilities’ plus the categories of description, and finally, other theories relating to work structures, activity, and human behaviour were considered for their efficacy in providing additional layers to the analysis process.

The consideration of ‘efficacy’ has been raised already (see sub-Section 3.2.3). The matter of truth telling is based not just on the technique of how the information is extrapolated from the participants, but also in the interpretation of the information; the way the information is analysed and interpreted is a recurring concern regarding limitations of the research, and in relation to the interpretive process. There were also limitations regarding the equal ratio of participation from the participants. The sense of possible intrusion – of ‘wasting’ others’ time – almost derailed the research at the very outset. Any reticence however, was quickly brushed aside by one manager in particular who noted that if something needed to known, then ‘just ring ’em up and ask them – we’re all in this together – we all want to know what’s going on – it’s the only way we’re going to improve our practice’ (example – field notes – interviews). Fifteen participants is not a large sample, and this limitation caused me to wrestle with the implications for my own ethical practice as a rigorous and authentic researcher. ‘Truth-
in-research’ does not have the same sombre ring to it as ‘truth-in-sentencing’, but it is a much-vaunted exercise and I was very aware that fellow researchers could ignore my findings if the data collection process had been compromised or minimised in some way, or where there had been no critique on my part of that limitation (Alston and Bowles 2003: 291).

Following on from the above, for example, could I claim legitimately, that the four categories of description that were eventually bracketed out would capture sufficiently all that the managers were trying to convey? In order to achieve meaningful outcomes in an adequate, valid and reliable manner, reference back to Marton’s (1992: 253) original, working concept became invaluable. His idea that phenomenography is a research approach for describing the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which a phenomenon is experienced meant that no matter how ‘directed’ the questions or responses to the managers would be, either individually or collectively, there remained a focus on a similar context for them all, and so collecting variation data that was relevant and manageable was achievable. Therefore, the data collection and data analysis processes were achieved through contextualisation (Hägerstrand 1984) whereby inquiry approached the managers’ world of work “as a series of associations and entanglements in time-space … to explicate those interlacings as the central moment of their interpretations and explanations” (Gregory 1981, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: 110). That is, the processes in this research were inextricably intertwined.

The following Table 3.8 indicates the way that data was utilised from the different phases of the research process, that is, the iterative process progressed through the descriptive phase, then to an exploratory phase that was enhanced by a phase of understanding and meaning, and finally into a prediction phase (Wadsworth 1997, Sarantakos 1998, Alston and Bowles 2003). An outline of activities in some of the phases of research extends from sub-Section 3.6.1, and particularly at page 108, in processes of exposing, sharing and validating ideas and experiences.
Table 3.8: The Iterative Process of Purposeful Research (aspects of the data collection & analyses phases)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Phase:</strong></td>
<td>Participants provide stories relating to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The participants relate to several generalised themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stories provide the initial dimension that is characterised by ‘thick description’ of management practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research tool/s, methods:</strong></td>
<td>Interview guide, heuristic questioning; coding and themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploration Phase:</strong></td>
<td>Focus groups that describe and explore further ideas and issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research tool/s, methods:</strong></td>
<td>Metaphors; categories and sub-categories are starting to evolve but are still in ‘draft’ form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding and Meaning Phase:</strong></td>
<td>Consultations that discuss and define processes/models, plus reference to identified ‘appropriate’ theories and/or concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research tool/s, methods:</strong></td>
<td>Categories of description are refined and finalised; the use of Wagner et al’s domain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergent Phase:</strong></td>
<td>Interpretation under certain conditions, and particularly in reference to further theoretical constructs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.8 offers a summary of some of the main activities within different phases of the research process. Throughout the process there was ‘explanation’ which differed from the conventional research phase that is used to show causal elements in a given situation. At every stage, there was also ‘analysis’ and before that, critical reflection to check the journey on which I had started. The phases are placed in a state of movement and progression as indicated in the diagram below (Diagram 3.8). The diagram reiterates the process of iteration in research, with an added ‘loop of engagement’ that emphasises the nexus between exploration and understanding, which is similar to a dynamic production, and synthesis of knowledge.
Different theories (for example management and leadership ideas) and conceptual frameworks (for example Wagner’s paucity management) informed the whole process even through the descriptive, narrative and collection phase. Theoretical considerations provided a useful background on which to layer activities. Relevant codes and categories for analysis of the data were established, but the process was not as systematic as was first conceived. Strauss and Corbin (1998, cited in Alston and Bowles 1998: 211) have indicated a paradigm that proved to be useful for coding, based on the recognition of factors such as: conditions; interacting among actors; strategies and tactics; and consequences. Some of these items were employed in the coding process, and are elaborated by Alston and Bowles (1998: 211) in the following way:

**Conditions** become easy to recognise when the researcher looks for cues in words such as ‘because’, ‘since’ and ‘as’. Similarly consequences can be revealed by the phrases such as ‘because of that’, ‘the result was’ and ‘in consequence’. Strategies and tactics are usually easy to discover and observe, and the interactions among actors consist of all other interactions that are not strategies or tactics.
3.8.1 Bracketing the data

A phenomenographic approach to the research accommodates a multistage process to data analysis not unlike a grounded theory approach (Richardson 1999). In the descriptive process, taped interviews were transcribed and managed in ways that relate to ‘first-level coding’ and ‘second-level coding’. In explaining the application of these levels of coding, the following brief explanation of the phenomenographic intent is outlined:

- First-level coding is an integral part of data reduction whereby the process of estimating and isolating relevant themes and categories begins. This process can generally relate to a single word or concept, or groups of words that ‘reduce’ the data into manageable forms.
- Second-level coding further brackets out more central themes that are relevant to the original research purpose.

It was acknowledged by this researcher, right at the outset of the interviewing process that creating rapport with the participants by referring to questions that were used not as ‘questions’ really, but as prompts and sites for shared opportunities to tell stories, would elicit a rich stream of “authentic subjective experience” (Silverman 2001: 90). Those initial ‘questions’ could be invaluable in creating the grounds for the first-level coding. Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) argue that the earlier choices the researcher makes about the particular research context, research questions, a conceptual framework or data collection methods are a form of “anticipatory data reduction”. They go on to say, “design decisions permit and support later analysis; they prefigure your analytic moves” (Miles and Huberman 1994: 16).

In this research however, decisions were not final because the data reduction process, involving initial inductive and deductive methods of managing and analysing the participants’ information, was a dynamic and fluid process that produced relevant tangents of emphasis. For example, in the exploratory phase, metaphorical language was
extrapolated to build on the thick description that the data had revealed in the initial coding process (a summary of the raw data, categorised in a table format, appears in Appendix 3-3). Further memo-ing was used in an exercise associated with the metaphorical language, to try to embed them into another level of coding, not unlike the “selective coding” to which Alston and Bowles (2003: 214) refer in their research methodology as the emergence of more dominant themes. The metaphors were also taken to the focus groups, as ‘springboard’ sub-categories to the overall discussion of paucity management.

In any management situation there is the inferred place of **style** and **strategy**, in order to get things done, or to suggest ways of doing things, and this focus appeared as a further relevant and important tool for categorising data (the role of ‘strategising’ as part of paucity management is clarified in Chapter 2 Literature Review). So, the data was further bracketed and coded under the following categories/themes to indicate the level and extent of strategising that each manager undertook to engage with these phenomena:

1. Ethical and effective/professional practice (including relationship and importance to ideology) – democratisation and relationship-building
2. Response to non-government structure (structural constraints)
3. Accountability and governance – including response to **financialisation** and bureaucracy
4. The innovation role – partnerships and collaborations – communities of practice – leadership and management.

In validation of the data analysis journey inferred here, Morse et al (2002: 15) write, “As the research unfolds, the process may not be linear. Data may demand to be treated differently so that the question may have to be changed or methods modified. Sampling plans may be expanded or change course altogether”. It could be seen that the managers themselves, in the way they shared their information, assisted the process implicitly. In speaking about managing the delivery of their human service, they became engaged in a verbal consideration of that experience through a “situated production of understanding”
(Brown and Duguid 1991: 45) by responding to the coherence of heuristic questions that ‘fed’ into the final chosen categories. In borrowing further from the ideas of Brown and Duguid, it was as if the managers were resolving through narration, the connection between questions about their possible practice and the experience of practice itself.

Finally then, in accordance with accepted phenomenographic methods of analysis, whereby several stages may proceed “naming the categories to emphasize their essence” (Sjöström and Dahlgren 2002: 341), the following categories of description were used to organise the description of the data:

1. **Category 1**: Professional practice is experienced as ethical practice (as well as ideologically and ethically bound)
2. **Category 2**: Professional practice is experienced as responding to work within structural constraints (for example, time, resource-poor environment)
3. **Category 3**: Professional practice is experienced as responding to governance and accountability regimes
4. **Category 4**: Professional practice is experienced as innovative practice (or for example – field notes – personal memos, ‘creative practice’).

Each of the above categories can be viewed as sub fields and these became the unit of analysis (after Salamon et al 2000: 10). I proceed here to explain how I arrived at the above categories; what I used and some examples and quotes from the participants to illustrate what I tried to do. I then expand on the individual categories of description.

### 3.8.2 Categories of description – pivotal component of analysis

Cope (2002: 2) surmises about using a phenomenographic approach to data analysis, that,

… the data analysis method should be described; the researcher should account for the process used to control and check interpretations made throughout the analysis process; the results should be presented in a way which permits
Several main phenomena were identified as recurring concepts that could be used as categories within which to group data, and accordingly, questions for the semi-structured interviews (refer back to sub-Section 3.3.1) were designed to facilitate more precise information relevant to four categories. The four categories of description that I eventually identified through a protracted process of thematisation, encapsulated some of the main topics that inform a community welfare manager’s practice such as: leadership in the third sector; community welfare management; resource interdependency and paucity management; financialisation and microeconomic reform; and democratisation for capacity building (see Appendix 3-3 Category of description – Professional practice is experienced as responding to work within structural constraints, to note the initial way that data was bracketed to indicate relevance to this category).

In accepting this type of methodology, my role as researcher is to accept the qualitatively different ways that managers think about a particular phenomenon and note these as categories of description. For example, when a manager says ‘yes, there is a push for commercial partnerships, and these will happen – together with contracting and sub-contracting (example – field notes – interviews), I had to make a decision about where that experience fits into which category of description. In this case, I placed it under category 4: professional practice is experienced as innovative [and creative] practice. When I looked at a collective of statements from five of the managers, and compared the similar and different foci coming through in this category, I see that three from six appear to experience professional practice at this level, through ‘partnerships and joint practice’, and the other two managers’ experience revolves around ‘leadership’.

Example – field notes – initial documentation relating to category of description [practice as being innovative and creative]
- ‘Yes, there is a push for commercial partnerships, and these will happen – together with contracting and sub-contracting’.
- ‘Partnerships are part of the political rhetoric – if people want contracts with us – we are looking for quality assurance above power structures’.
- ‘Leadership is centralised and this is one way that managers are overcoming lack of resources’.
- ‘We are aligned with UO – auspicing money – that is tied to joint tendering in the region. UO is the auspicing member of the partnership’.
- ‘We’re in the process of setting up a specific central west forum for […] whereby UO would be the auspicing member’.
(UO = unidentified organisation; […] = unidentified agency)

In the above way, the category of description was constructed through an interpretation of the managers’ conceptions (Bowden 1995).

The analysis process would move to a leaner match of data in the categories, compared to the vast array of topics that followed the original research proposal, including: causality analysis and structuration theory; constellations of practice; democratisation and community education; effect of environment on organisation affiliation; effective and ethical practice; effects of globalised financialism on NPOs (nonprofit organisations); geography of practice and spatial analysis; exploration versus exploitation; neoliberal and microeconomic reform – the rural equation; not-for-profit as a means to an end; paucity management through partnership; peak bodies and structural influence on NPOs; resource dependency versus resource interdependency; traditional management models and paucity management, and leadership and management issues within a paucity environment.

Each of the categories of description was deliberately prefaced with the words ‘professional practice is experienced as …’, and the reason for this is not in any way meant to be complicated; the words have come from the original explanation from Wagner et al in their research concerning paucity management, that the latter concept is typified by managers who operate ethically and professionally in conditions of resource poverty. The term ‘professional’ is used for the sake of consistency between this current research and that of Wagner et al.
3.8.3 Narratives into categories of description

Narratives are, and could only be, the primary source of establishing models of paucity management; they are the primary mode of analysis to determine and ‘feed’ the categories of description. Narratives are the stories of validity and relevance about the individual work that these managers do, but also there are several writers like Fine (2002: pp. 236-237) for example, who note that, “when colleagues see the world together, they are likely to share the same understandings of that world”. The managers’ stories are what will help this research clarify management models that will be of interest to at least the rest of the community welfare sector.

The process of interaction with the managers was clear: hear what they said, look at similarities, look at variance, highlight areas of interest but also isolate themes of validity that would describe what it is they do. In this sense, narratives have a temporal, productive quality, that is, they have an internal logic that makes sense to each of the managers as narrators, because they “relate events in a temporal, causal sequence” (Denzin 1989: 37). However, by using the questions outlined as prompts, the managers became engaged in “a human attempt to progress to a solution, clarification, or unravelling of an incomplete situation” (Polkinghorne 1995: 7). Furthermore, as Richardson (1990: 118) states, “narrative is both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation”, and in this way, a broader awareness of understanding phenomena is conveyed through the managers’ responses.

The ideas embedded in the above points are that narrative then is made up of two defining qualities: “an internal structure that arranges the sequence of events in temporal order, and thematic organisation, the evaluative aspect of narrative that conveys the meaning the storyteller attaches to the event” (Glover 2004: 49). But how does this relate to the data analysis process in this research? The answer lies in the phenomenographic process that attempts to locate ultimately, the collective awareness of phenomena, but herein lies a potential struggle – how far to accept the primacy of the individual narrative to inform the outcome of variation compared to the role as researcher to determine how that variation would look through predetermined categories.
of description. Through this process, the connection of the content of the narratives to the final outcome of determining models of paucity management cannot be denied (Richardson 1990), and again, the empirical work of Marton (1992) provides reassurance that there are a limited number of ways that different individuals can make qualitative conceptions about the same phenomena.

Stories about work practices can be as expansive as the time taken to tell them, but they can also be rich in focus when the right prompts are used to draw out the information. They do not necessarily have to be the ‘correct’ line of encouragement but more often than not, what was asked of these participants seemed to strike a lucky chord of recognition and provided generative responses.

3.8.4 Metaphors contribute to categories of description

Metaphor usage is one aspect of the language of this community welfare domain, and indicates how domains may be reworded as part of social and political scrutiny and struggles (Fairclough 1992: 77, Marston 1992: 355). The use of metaphors is acknowledged as one of the rhetorical devices evident in the managers’ narratives (Glover 2004: 50). They certainly embellished the picture of the managers’ work practices, and were used as a complimentary aspect of the phenomenographic approach, as a mode of analysis, but in particular, to drive the focus group discussions.

It appears that from the interviews, community welfare work is ‘peppered’ with the use of *small metaphor* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Phrases such as ‘… crack the nut …’, and ‘… before my dance card is full …’ (examples – field notes – interviews) are at once both evocative and absurd (Barnes 2000, in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: 500). However, the examples indicate that meaning is created and re-created in an “interactive approach” (Barnes 2000). For example, these and other metaphors were offered for discussion at the focus group gatherings, and further clarification of their meaning, plus more metaphors resulted. The context to which we can ‘hang’ metaphors is important, particularly for the purpose of expanding description to the relevant category. In recognising the wealth of experience reflected through the text of metaphors then in
some small way, the world of the community welfare manager is being recognised (Smith and Katz 1993).

From an interpretive perspective, the social reality of the managers’ work practice is also socially constructed through proximity and engagement with other ‘learners’ (Berger and Luckmann 1967). In this way, the full situation of inquiry allowed for interpretation to occur about the community welfare domain of social action (Denzin 2001: pp. 85-97; Hall and McGinty 2002: 304), through a consideration of metaphor usage. The purpose of this type of analysis was not unlike the use of proximity analysis (Weber 1990) to note the co-occurrence and relationship of concepts to everyone involved. The activity allowed certain license to be taken regarding inferences that could be made regarding certain phenomena and their likely impact on community welfare managers of human service delivery and I felt that presenting data in the way that I did, would be judged to be credible and trustworthy, or otherwise, as long as it was rigorous and accessible.

3.8.5 Theory as tools-of-analysis in the analytical framework of variation in experience

As indicated earlier, narratives and metaphors are part of the fabric that keeps the awareness framework together, and culminated in additions to categories of description. There is also a strong place for theory in the framework. The purpose of devising an analytical framework was to be systematic and reliable in ways to view the data and ultimately to understand models of paucity management. For the framework, Wagner’s information about paucity management, and the domain of ‘working conditions and managerial responsibilities’, constitute one plane, and was used as the main underpinning theory as tool-of-analysis. Wagner’s domain is part of comments particularly about the micro and mezzo levels of inquiry that were identified in the analytical framework that was devised by Wagner and Spence (2003: 46). As mentioned in Chapter 1, their studies highlighted five domains of management practice to form a useful core for understanding the emerging concept of paucity management, but the domain that is of particular interest to this research, and as a pivotal tool for analysis, is the one noted above. Wagner’s domain offers a unique contextual approach.
to use in the analytical framework, so I looked at ways whereby her ideas could be supported through what the managers said, and then mapped aspects of that domain to the analytical framework as they applied to one or all the different categories of description.

As suggested previously, the research privileged the sense of individual managers’ experience, but this did not mean that analysis could not and should not occur. Just as important to the research process was the relationship that I, as the researcher, had to the data, that is, “describing the researcher’s scholarly knowledge of a phenomenon is a means of providing a reader with the context within which the analysis took place” (Cope 2002). I am indebted to the work of Chris Cope (2002 [online], 2004), and in particular, to the influence of his later work, ‘Ensuring validity and reliability in phenomenographic research using the analytical framework of a structure of awareness’. My own motivation in thinking about a framework of a structure of awareness is that it ensures I check constantly to the validity and reliability of the phenomenographic process. In the end, the layer of analysis that I brought to the research, and which arose from the triangulation of data through face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and then personal consultations, was used to bring depth to the variation in experience of the managers in question.

Knowledge of experience, and not just a definition of something, became a focus of the analytical stages. That is, it is the essence of experience of phenomena that this study was after, not what the conception of the phenomena was about. A bird for example, is not just a ‘bird’ if it is described and analysed from the point of view of its colour, or its feathers, or its flight dynamics; using these frames of reference helps give a more relevant and appropriate picture of a bird. From the variation in experience framework, an evaluation of the data, particularly at the micro level of inquiry, would be reported using categories of description, with the following relationship and criteria set out in Table 3.8.5:
Table 3.8.5: Example: At the micro level, variation in experience of professional practice contributing to possible paucity management model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of description</th>
<th>Relationship to: ‘working conditions &amp; managerial responsibilities’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #1</td>
<td>Criteria to consider:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was the experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Exactly the same?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Similar?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Consistent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #2</td>
<td>What style of management did the manager exercise in implementing their model of management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was it a ‘model of paucity management’?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first stages of using the above framework, the data was categorised in a way to describe the managers’ experience of certain phenomena identified through initial questioning about their practice. I could not tell them what their experience was; it was *a priori* for the world to see, but I could start to understand their world better, through interpreting their experience of phenomena and linking that experience to criteria from Wagner’s domain.

However, additional analytical developments are presented in Chapter 5, in reference to further interpretation of the data through expanding the above analytical variation in experience framework in Table 3.8.5, to accommodate a *structure of awareness of variation in experience framework* (in particular refer to Table 5.2, and Diagram 5.2.1). The latter process allows for additional considerations to be included: the inclusion of three theoretical layers and not just the one; the amalgamation and simultaneous presentation of data against phenomenographic references to different awareness levels, and the positing of dimension of variation (DoV) ideas about practice to stimulate interpretation of the makeup of paucity management models and styles of management used across three organisational levels (*micro, mezzo*, and *macro*). The structured phenomenographic approach allowed the study of how managers’ understanding of the experience of phenomena related to the ways they approached them, and is best
described through a pragmatic use of a structure of awareness to establish variation in
the way that experience is conceived (Cope 2002). That is, “A way of experiencing is
thus discernible as containing both a ‘what’ and a ‘how’ aspect” (Sandberg 1997). As
Marton (1993: 10) wrote:

Awareness has a particular structure also as far as the theme is concerned. The
theme appears to the subject in a certain way; it is seen from a particular point
of view. The specific experience (or conceptions) of a theme – or of an object …
can be defined in terms of the way in which it is delimited from, and related to, a
context in the way its component parts are delimited from, and related to each
other, and to the whole.

The above quote concludes Section 3.8 with reference to one of the main ideas behind
phenomenographic methodology. That is, awareness of variation in experience is one of
those ideas, as well as the understanding that conception of a phenomenon is realised
through describing the essence of the experience, and not the phenomenon itself. Other
ideas relate to the main analytical outcome referred to as categories of description,
which contain that essence. The relationship of categories of description to working
conditions and managerial responsibilities as a paucity management domain, is set out in
Table 3.8.5, to note the way that the managers’ conception of the domain is realised
through the essence of their experience with characteristics and criteria from that
domain.

Part three has been informative in making links about specific analyses phases and
techniques, to the overriding influence of the phenomenographic approach. By stating
the multistage analytical process, information in Sections 3.7 and 3.8 stayed consistent
with the complex, multi-layered expectation of analysis within phenomenographic
methodology, including: stories of experience from interviews used to construct the
categories of description, metaphorical expressions from the interviews used to inform
the focus group discussions and also added to categories of description, and the two
relationship levels of theoretical alignment to the categories of description. The first and
main theoretical relationship refers to paucity management theory as espoused in the
‘working conditions and managerial responsibilities’ domain, and the second is
anticipated as part of an emergent phase (refer back to Table 3.8) for further in-depth
analysis/ interpretation, to extend the analytical framework from *variations in experience*, to a *structure of awareness of variation in experience framework* (further developments are given in Chapters 4 and 5).
3.9 Conclusion

The research appears to be manageable, feasible, relevant and useful for developing further understanding of models of paucity management. The task is made easier by the use of the phenomenographic approach to inform the containment of the research (Williams, Tutty and Grinnell 1995). In this chapter, the primacy of gaining access to the perspective of the community welfare managers has been emphasised throughout. There is a logical trail indicated to uphold the validity and reliability of following a phenomenographic methodology, but there is also immense value in adopting a complex though disciplined approach in the use of methods to elicit thick description of participants’ work practices in order to answer the Research Question. For example, semi-structured, but focused interviews that are also in-depth in nature are an integral part of the probing interpretive researcher’s paradigm. The choice of methods that were used for the research goes to the very heart of practical and theoretical concerns, and relates to my view as a researcher of how social reality is constructed. That is, the way that social situations are realised and best exploited, goes to the why of choices made in this study. Positioning oneself ontologically and epistemologically, will generate a specific methodology, and this chapter not only offers a model of what reality is, or the different ways of establishing what can be accepted as ‘real’, but also the different strategies for collecting data, as well as the different ways of validating and justifying the data relevant to the managers’ truth and reality.

The strategies that were chosen are intended to contribute to both the research as an exploratory study, and one of establishing understanding and meaning about managers’ work in the third sector. The study is also one that is intent on achieving an outcome that will add to the development of theory-building and/or establishing further question building. For example, in respect to the way that managers implement possible models of paucity management, if managers are faced with certain conditions around resource implication, will the results affect the use of particular styles of management? The
answer to that question will evolve from the relationships of aspects of an awareness of managers’ experiences of certain phenomena.

In Chapter 4 – Data presentation, the journey towards a better understanding of paucity management comes alive through stories and metaphorical expressions, and the promise of further glimpses of community welfare models of work.
4.0 Introduction

Reflecting the analytic methods, data is presented within this chapter to correspond to the levels of analysis and initial interpretation stage. Because the managers responded to guided questioning, all content from the transcriptions and notes from their interviews and focus group discussions is addressed in this chapter. That is, nothing was left out. Raw data is presented in three parts within this Chapter 4, representing information from interview data, focus group data, and descriptions of work into categories of description. The presentation processes signify a strong, grounded connection with the data in line with the phenomenographic approach. Managers’ comments are reported in the following sections both within and at the end of paragraphs, in order to augment summary statements. It was very important for me to note that although I used specific dialogue from individual managers, in the focus group discussions, I started to privilege these not just as individual reactions only, but as part of a collective conversation whereby the opinions and ideas from individuals are validated and accepted by all those present at the time. I made a conscious decision here, that in telling the story of the managers’ stories, to bring the managers’ words to the fore, that is, I am not just making summaries of what they say but in many cases I ‘led’ with what they say. This kind of engagement with the managers’ dialogue follows consistent phenomenographic practice whereby ‘utterances’ in the first instance, hold just as significant possibilities for edification, as do large tracts of quotes.

There are three parts to this chapter: Part one presents data from the initial individual and follow-up consultative interviews, Part two reports data from the focus group discussions, and Part three describes the collective experience of managers, through categories of description. A reading of the chapter should result in at least two levels of understanding. First, one of the significant outcomes of the raw data presentation is to note feedback from the collective communities of practice-as-focus groups.
(Mlcek, Wagner and Childs 2003), as well as from individual consultations, being explored through an emphasis on rich metaphor. Secondly, there are glimpses of definite management models evolving from this first order analysis, and while these reflect a sometimes cavalier description of their approach to work, the reality is they probably say more about the deep savoir faire – the ability to do and say the right thing at the right time - of the managers to know exactly what to do, practised over a long period of time.
PART ONE: INTERVIEW DATA - INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATION AND ROLES ON SERVICE DELIVERY

In this first part, I present data from the individual interviews, including a summary from one of the consultative follow-up encounters. Information from the managers is taken from answering those questions-as-prompts shown in sub-Section 3.3.1 – Developing the research instrument (page 96). In the following 4.1.1 sub-Section, the managers respond to questions about the impacts of organisational characteristics on choice, and in 4.1.2 data corresponds with what they had to say about potential contributions and drawbacks to work output. Sub-section 4.1.3 gives further information about other ways the managers would choose to do their work based on managing to meet the needs of their communities.

With the use of follow-up consultations I wanted managers to give me some indication of the significance of their models of management and what they thought the future direction ought to be in their community welfare work. I continue my in-depth research process in the way I report data under one of the more vivid metaphors that came from the follow-up individual consultations. Sub-Section 4.1.4 – Dance card is nearly all full, uses metaphorical expression for maintaining awareness that unless specific action is taken to manage time, to stay true to historical aspirations, to be flexible with changing roles, to address personality politics, and to being opportunistic, then reaching the ‘end of the community welfare game’ becomes problematic.

4.1 Individual ‘voices’ about community welfare work

The stories that came from each of the managers appeared to be influenced by their surroundings. However, their physical place of work was not just informed by the geographical aspects of their situations, but also in the created spaces between different levels of practice, that is, the horizontal and vertical levels of engagement (Crofts and Begg 2005: 341). In this research, the privileging of several different
types of engagement was based on features of place and organisation, including: at Kelso, full-time modern facilities and central accessible position; at Lithgow, part-time resource-poor facilities but with main-road access; at Bathurst, two different agencies with full-time efficient and specific services positioned central to the town; at Orange, full-time support from volunteers that allowed for deployment from rented premises out into the wider community; at Parkes, full-time modern facilities that housed several complementary services; at Forbes, relocated modernised shop-front premises positioned centrally in the town; at Mudgee, two different services housed across the road from each other, in renovated premises at the entry to the town; and at Dubbo, three different services dotted around the perimeter of the town, representing three different levels of availability, accessible premises and levels of resources (see also page 93, Table 3.5 – Demographic information for 15 community welfare managers from the Central West of New South Wales [NSW]).

4.1.1 Impacts of organisation characteristics on choice

The ideas that came from the managers in considering questions that related to the influence of organisation structure, and other considerations, on choosing how to deliver service related to aspects of: the philosophy and core principles of their organisations to ground the direction of their services; the place and significance of their services within the community to overcome competing priorities in order to ensure positive outcomes for those in need, and reference to the use of business plans as ways to focus their service delivery. Certain organisation initiatives drove service delivery. For six managers (Lyn, Bell, Mary, Lynelle, Maeve, Elizabeth) their service delivery was ‘built on the government initiative of families first’ so this kind of factor overlaid not only the direction of their business plans but their driving philosophy as well. They referred several times to the notion of ‘early intervention’, as well as ‘servicing the needs of the community’, so these appeared to be mantra that defined the way in which they chose to work.

The majority of the managers worked within an organisational structure that included volunteer management committees to oversee the overall governance aspects of their service delivery. Managers varied in their response to these arrangements, from feeling ‘safe’, ‘mentored’, and ‘supported’ to being allowed to autonomously get on
with delivering the service to the communities’ expectations. Quite specifically, the management committees ‘provide the structure to responsibly deal with what or who comes in the door’ (Bell). Choice became palpable; their part in the management committees’ role extended to the effort they used to recruit the kind of people with whom they wanted to work and therefore the extent to which they would allow this aspect of organizational structure to impact their own management responsibilities. At least half of the managers who admitted to having to work alongside such committees were active in seeking out those community members whom they wanted and several of these came from other community welfare services in the same community or from the next geographical township. For at least one of the managers, potential members were ‘hand-picked’ to serve on her committee (Lynelle). Other choices reflected reciprocal arrangements to populate committees; Kate sat on both the committees for Bell and Belinda, Julie and Basil reciprocated on their respective committees, Basil also reciprocated with Prue, while Jerry sat jointly with Prue on another one.

Organisations appeared to foster the above arrangements that allowed managers to share resources to overcome governance issues, as well as time to explore funding sources, and keep updated where government policies and procedures were concerned. In this regard, as one of the managers clarified, these practices of determining just who could be on their management committees were part of the ‘planning for service delivery … it was strategic planning … just as a business plan was part of strategic planning’ (Lynelle). Despite their experience in having the total confidence of those committee members however, there was no doubt in the managers’ minds that they were ‘totally accountable’ (Maev, Belinda, Basil, Julie) to their management committees. They responded to this ‘structural constraint’ by: keeping their members up-to-date with what they were doing; seeking assistance in some cases with forging partnerships; canvassing advice regarding possible funding options, and in two cases actually providing training for their management committee members (Lynelle, Belinda).

Another significant phenomenon to influence the best solutions for service delivery was the way that managers behaved as part of, and within specific ‘tenancy conditions’ (Lynelle). For many of the managers, these conditions describe being part
of a support network not unlike a neighbourhood center, a compact, or being part of a
diocesan affiliation. For example, information neighbourhood centers throughout the
region, providing a place for four of the fifteen managers within which to situate
their services (Belinda; Maeve; Lyndall; Basil). Another four managers (Kate;
Lynelle; Jerry; Elizabeth) coexisted in a relationship that was supported through
shared premises and/ or financial support. Three managers practiced within the
boundaries of a diocesan network (Prue; Joan; Barry), and two more were an
integral part of other strongly religious/ ideological affiliation/ arrangements (Basil;
Prue). Three of the fifteen managers (Lyn; Bell; Joan) were specific about aspects of
their practice being linked to others through management structure. These structures
were different from that imposed by a peak body/ organization, but managers saw
being part of these arrangements as relating to ways of accommodating, validating,
and negotiating time and space with other service providers so that ‘care needed to
happen not to lose a sense of individual service identity, but also to retain the core
philosophy of the compact of being non-judgemental’ (Belinda).

Choice was determined through influences like history, place-in-community, culture,
and geographical environment. In choosing to pool resources such as sharing
premises, several managers were responding to the notion that ‘community-based
management was no longer practical or an effective model … (it was an) …
outmoded form of management’ (Lyndall – researcher words in brackets) and
therefore recognised the ‘need to share resources’ (Lyndall, Bell). This recognition
paradoxically, appeared to create a sense of equality, that is, a ‘feeling of equality
comes from needing to share’ (Lyndall).

4.1.2 Potential contributions and drawbacks to work output

Data collected in response to questions and themes relating to contributions,
drawbacks and vulnerabilities are continued under ‘structural impacts’. I like the idea
of prefacing these options in each of the next two sub-Sections (4.1.2.1 and 4.1.2.2),
because they maintain not only the focus around the original research question (what
are models of paucity management, and how does the structure and affiliations of
organisations within the non-profit community welfare sector, impact the use of
those models?), but also provide answers to the questions-as-prompts during the individual interview process (see page 91 for these prompts).

4.1.2.1 Structural impacts on work output: roles as potential contributions

The service role was seen primarily by the managers as the opportunity to raise awareness of their service in the community. They used umbrella statements relating to community such as ‘we are about strengthening the community’ (Kate), and some that are about setting an example like, ‘what we are, is a model … modelling for other clients … in a feminist organisation’ (Mary), while others were more explicitly tagged with values that were mandated in different ways, for example, through the words of their CEO, or the organisation’s constitution:

*I think the organisation is defined by its constitution. And its constitution includes its aims and directions and its philosophies and they are quite broad and they basically specify the need to provide services to those most disadvantaged in the community – socially, emotionally, financially – not so much geographically, and to provide support for families and children. Because the principles are so broad I actually have been able to develop almost any service that can help anybody who is disadvantaged in any way, and is consistent with what the organisation is for (Julie).*

This sense of ‘philosophy’ was spoken about by nearly all the managers and referred mainly as the idea of ‘core principles’ that drive what they do. For agencies that were held together by being part of positive tenancy arrangements, there was talk of being ‘passionate about retaining the core philosophy’, of being ‘non-judgemental’, and ‘not taking the part of compulsion’ (Belinda). Contrastingly, there were several managers who noted the ‘huge philosophical differences’ (Basil) between themselves and other members of their organisation that resulted in poor communication channels.

The managers based their service role on the fundamental approach to community welfare practice on being both flexible and responsive to demand, even if the need was ‘to do things cheaply … on the cheap’ (Maeve), and were constantly challenged to maintain a ‘professional service’ that was there ‘to meet the needs of the community’ (Belinda). In one other example, one of the managers whose service did receive comparatively generous and ongoing government subsidy, but who also
depended heavily on the use of volunteers found that she needed to constantly check the way she *utilised* this support (experience) without *using* people.

One of the ways that the service role was questioned and identified was through the way that funding was sought. In at least four cases managers expressed aspects of their role as being ‘fearful’ and ‘scary’, and these were all related to uncertainty about adequate funding.

As with several other aspects of their work practices, the managers relied on relationships to a degree, to facilitate the acquisition of funding, either through links with someone in a government department, or gaining knowledge about funding for specific projects from other community welfare workers. That is, when they were able to access this information, partly because of the ever-changing nature of relationships with government departments whereby the ‘changing of the guard’ syndrome meant that people were always ‘coming and going’ and instability was a constant occurrence (*Kate*). There was little doubt that the service role was typified by ‘isolation’. Whether this concept arose because of a sense of not much networking happening, or unavailability/ inaccessibility of people in ‘Head Office’, or even to receiving little feedback from their organisation about what they were doing, the strategy for isolation was repeatedly nominated as ‘resilience’; one had to have this attribute to work in this industry. There was consistent comment about the need to get on with the job. But from a practical point of view, there was also the need to have skills such as prioritisation, issues management, being outcomes-focused, meeting challenges, clarifying direction and purpose, constructing timeframes, and being involved in ‘hands-on practice’.

However, going back to the notion of the philosophy of the service organisation defining the work that managers do in their service role, in order to determine whether this service happens, the agencies need to have adequate and appropriate funding. The following words capture this fundamental understanding that the managers have regarding the effect on how the service role will be realised,

> Very specifically it’s the funding agreement that we are tied to, the work we do – we do it because we are funded to do it. We’ve got government contact, government funding, within that paradigm is what we are funded for and
occasionally you have to think well this is really what the funding is for. The [...] program which we run in many ways is a very flexible, responsive to community needs, type of program. We can put anything in but then at another level you actually have to think no, is this really what the program is about? Or, if it is really interesting and I really want to do it, how can I rationalise it and bring it in? (Prue).

Some communication revolved around the use of partnerships as a ‘structural direction’ to government-preferred ways of working. The managers were not explicitly opposed to partnerships per se, or even working in them, but they did express how what they did ‘with governments was not partnerships’, and that ‘working with DoCS [for example] was not really a partnership’. However, they saw that they partnerships happened in other ways, for example ‘positive partnerships through the use of casual staff to support other projects’. Quite often for managers the defining constraint regarding partnering with others was that people ‘do not have the expertise (Kate). Therefore, it was better to try some things first and then work from that point to see if others could be included.

The innovation role was embraced by over half the managers, in relation to what they saw they did over greater geographical areas to cover, with less time, less funding, and less people resources. The innovation role also seemed to manifest itself through the same deep concern for wanting to get things done for the community and individuals, and this understanding resulted in unusual but quite common ways of working, not necessarily ‘in partnership’, but in collaborations with others. An interesting illustration, with pragmatic outcomes, comes from this manager,

... once again I speak of the [...] and it’s interesting how some people have really quite clumsy mechanical ideas of what constitutes community development. ... there goes the Department of Housing – they won’t talk to you because you’re not an incorporated organisation ... you and I go to the Department of Housing and they give me the house ‘cause I am an incorporated organisation, so I can give it to you ... you’ve now got your house ... (Basil).

There were other quite different approaches to innovative practice that indicate the variety of management practices overall. Some of the managers appeared to demonstrate innovation through reference to ‘capacity building’ in their areas and part of this concept was acknowledged through having links with tertiary institutions.
That is, five of the managers (Lynelle, Julie, Basil, Belinda, Kate) indicated their relationship with TAFE NSW, Charles Sturt University and University of Western Sydney, Australia, as being beneficial to their roles in helping to maintain ‘exciting things happening’ in their communities. In other circumstances, managers remained quietly creative where only a few realised what they did. This practice related mostly to participation in informal partnerships, similar to the one above from Basil 2003, and ones that ‘should be written down’ but are not, and are sometimes hard to acknowledge openly. The following thoughts give a clear picture of what is meant by these last points.

… I could go on forever about the things we’ve done … at the last committee meeting one of the members said ‘M you need to sell yourselves, you know you’re doing all these wonderful things but you’re not selling it. It should be written down and it should go into your association’. You know, and I think that’s one thing that non-government organisations are not good at … they’re not good at selling themselves … they’re not good at promoting out there about what they do … and I think part of that is fear that if they do that, then how are they going to cope with the extra referrals that are going to come in, because they are restrained with their resources? … (Maeve).

The advocacy role provided some interesting, contrasting feedback from the participants, from seeing the role as a ‘challenging experience’ that ‘in the past advocacy became a policing role’ (Basil) to one that is an essential part of the managers’ engagement with community members. Three of the managers (Lynelle, Kate, Belinda) were clear that their work did not involve advocacy; two saying they saw their capacity to take on an advisory position, and the other manager adamant that what she did was case management and not advocacy. With the former two managers this position appeared to have evolved from a personal strategy to take care they did not become a ‘workaholic’ or develop ‘burnout’, with one even stating that she needed to ‘protect myself from the crisis mode’ (Kate).

So, the advocacy role could be seen to be determined through the level and degree to which managers themselves understood the concept of advocacy in light of what they did in a community welfare context, as well as their ability to maintain a sense of well-being and protection in the face of the demands of advocacy.
The expressive and leadership development role was nominated by at least four of the managers as relating to ‘common sense’ and ‘having the right personality’ or ‘attitude, attitude’. It appeared to be manifested through luck, or an innate sense of ‘rightness’ rather than by design. In these cases, there seemed also to be little consultative processes with other workers. For example, one of the manager’s words articulates much of the feeling and practices to do with policy direction and adherence:

Prue ... everyone is referred to the staff policies on the intranet, then whenever something comes up – we try and refer them to what the policies are – we are meant to be quite familiar with all of this and I am always saying have a look on the intranet. Things like recently I had to pull out the stuff on stress – I have to be familiar with what’s there.

Susan M: What sort of stuff is in there?

Prue ... It’s huge and pretty boring. I was given it the first day I started and I just said forget it, I am not reading this - I’ll look at it as things come up. I am probably one of those people where luckily my common sense usually fits in with whatever the policies are. Often I have already said something to the worker and then it’s just a matter of going back and checking what the policy is.

However, there were other insightful expressions of an effective leadership role that made use of the strengths of people around the managers. Managers went out of their way to specifically do things that appeared to provide a defining quality to their practice, in spite of, or because of, a paucity environment. For example, at least four managers (Julie; Belinda; Maeve; Jerry) chose consciously to ensure open and transparent communication with their staff, by inviting them to express opinions on planning and direction of the service.

Another manager related her philosophical stance in terms of the clear communication she built with her management committee.

There are two people on our committee who I know never blocked anything at the final gate it’s all clear and I use the good people to support my ideas and those good people are aware as I am of potential of the dividend if you like (Julie 2003).

The community building and democratisation role caused some consternation on the part of at least four of the managers (Bell, Basil, Maeve, Joan), with one manager
being quite explicit about how this should not be part of the community welfare manager’s work. Overall, meeting the needs of the community and being actively involved in community building were seen as two completely different activities. All the managers saw this as a specialized part of their overall work but for at least one of the managers, this was a part of their practice that required specialized skills they did not necessarily possess, and was ‘really the role of governments’ (Bell). Another manager wondered if this part of the manager’s role related to ‘a whole new ballgame’ whereby they ‘shouldn’t really be having to do [that] along with everything else, except it does run together … it does fit with what we do’ (Maeve 2003). There appeared to be a dichotomy about whether this role was a positive or a drawback for the managers. More than anything however, this aspect of the role was seen to have ‘pragmatic benefits particularly for disadvantaged communities’ (Basil). The role was seen to be positive and achievable through ongoing community networking, but with several caveats attached; this works better for those managers who have a long history living in the area, the willingness of managers to be involved in extraneous activities, the presence of real joy and passion in doing something to further the democratisation process, and the investment of time to enable the success of this role.

4.1.2.2 Structural impacts on work output: potential drawbacks/ vulnerabilities

The incidence of particularism and paternalism within practice was acknowledged by most of the managers, that is, they knew these practices existed but not necessarily in their agencies. If there was any sort of particularism, then people in need in the community seemed to be the driving universal factor regarding work in this sector. However, there was an element of ‘stretching the rules’ of organisations where managers in actual fact gave advice and help to people who were not normally covered by their agencies’ services. I am thinking here of the manager who distributed monetary funds in a rather non-arbitrary way, admitting that ‘we’re not supposed to, but we do … they all know we’ve got money available to give out and we do until we run out …’ (Mary). In fact the latter example illustrates a response to a kind of ‘paternalism’ demonstrated by the organisation as a whole. The terms most commonly used by the managers in this regard related to what ‘head office’ would do or how ‘bureaucracy’ determined service delivery.
One of the managers made reference to how ‘paternalism and democratisation can be linked together’. In considering this idea, empowerment was referred to as something that could be achieved through socialization and ‘truly listening to what people want’ (Prue, Belinda); about indicating respect for the choices that people made. But again, many of the managers admitted to not having half the time to engage in any of these practices. Other managers called for the need to be cautious when likening the incidence of paternalism to becoming ‘over involved in peoples’ lives’, that is, ‘being the big mother’ and getting caught up in the lives of community members too much (Kate).

In regard to excessive amateurism or professionalism, there was no doubt that one could never have enough of professionalism but amateurism was identified as something that ‘had to be avoided at all costs’ (Julie). Included in this latter observation was also the awareness to discourage volunteers who were more of a ‘hindrance to the agency rather than a help’, and similarly there were some managers who unashamedly canvassed for particular people within their community to be part of their management committees. As pointed out earlier, in two separate towns, there were managers (a total of six of the managers involved) who were co-opted to each other’s committees.

The idea of resource insufficiency resulted in two different, but correlated and comparative, kinds of examples. Almost every manager spoke of the ‘strong resolve’ needed in order to counteract this drawback and there are some feel-good stories that come from the data, for example, in the way that people will stay on to work in an agency in which conditions are not always ideal.

… We feel well resourced because of the way we work together. We have a combination of well-resourced programs however the bulk of services here are disgustingly under resourced but people tell me that they would rather work here with the constraints of the funding restrictions and part-timers and stuff like that … the environment here is so much better … so they are saying … incredible resilience … some of the people that work in this place here have been atrociously mistreated, sadly mistreated some of them … (Julie 2003).
Similarly, many of the managers admitted to using volunteers, and in fact could not field half their services without their support. Managers were wary of how they employed all staff, especially volunteers, to cover tasks, and there was a definite acknowledgement that while some managers’ own boundaries of their use of volunteers was sometimes blurred, ‘volunteering is a value adding activity, not a core activity, and those people who bring in volunteers to do certain things are really stretching resources’ (Belinda).

The notion of paucity management was accepted by the managers and linked to the presence of resource insufficiency that was in large part, a ‘reflection of the situation of being in rural and remote areas’ (Maeve). In relation to this phenomenon, there was a genuine concern of all the managers about the level and extent to which they could maintain sustainability. For some, this was affected by ‘legal constraints’ (Julie), and the need to be accountable in practical ways so that they did not become ‘vulnerable’ (Bell). For others, their main focus revolved around not becoming ‘stuck in a rut’ (Bell) because funding increases had not happened in a long while and service development to meet the ever-increasing needs of the community was also at a standstill. One of the managers expressed the consistent view of several of the others, that in reference to this and other phenomena, there was a need to develop a different mindset in the way aspects of work could be viewed, that is, a ‘need to look at the bigger picture’ and to understand that for example, ‘a dollar spent is not necessarily a dollar lost’ (Belinda).

The accountability gap surfaced on a number of different levels: on the personal level, at the level of community, and via broad political influences such as government policies, insurance, workplace relations, staff relations, industrial relations, and occupation, health and safety issues. On a personal level managers had a very clear sense of what they were supposed to be doing and why and it seemed to be more about the ‘challenge of the work’ (Basil) to give great satisfaction, rather than thinking too much about how to be accountable. However, without exception, all managers expressed their accountability to management committees, government departments, or the organisation – mainly in how money was spent. Several managers expressed having ‘a lot of autonomy’ (Bell, Belinda, Prue) in their roles, and more so in being quite explicit about what it was they did, for example, ‘…
officially I manage. I manage because I’m the one who does staff discipline. I’m the one who does staff appraisal. I’m the one who does the forward projection in the program, and I’m basically the one who does how many hours the project can be for’ (Belinda). The managers generally agreed on their right and ability to hold delegation about certain matters that did not need to be taken to committees, departments or the organisation. In this regard, there was continued reference to the presence of ‘trust’ being able to close the accountability gap. Interestingly, while their work is paramount to meeting the needs of the community this sentiment did not seem to manifest as meaning being accountable to community members.

The accountability of the managers appeared to be either increased or decreased depending on whether they came to these positions with a certain type of experience gained from working elsewhere. That is, at least half the managers alluded to their past work experience in a government department – either the Department of Community Services (DoCS) or local government offices – and credited this experience with ‘providing the structure and a process policy’ to work (Bell) as well as a ‘broader picture understanding’ (Belinda). These same managers advocated the practice of maintaining some kind of ‘paper trail’ (Kate, Bell, Elizabeth) to ensure that everything they did was in some way documented and again, so they could avoid exposing themselves to ‘vulnerabilities’.

4.1.3 Managing to meet the needs of the community

Here is where the managers had the choice to add to previous information they had given. They spoke about: structure (‘need for deadlines … otherwise there is meandering’ – Kate) being a good thing to give an indication of where they were with their work as well as providing a useful ‘cushioning’ effect to enable them to get on with their job; the primacy (‘the driving idea’ – Prue) of going where the need was most wanted in the community (compared to ‘meeting the needs of the community’ – Elizabeth); having professional boundaries (several noted the importance of looking back to the historical beginnings of their service to see how those boundaries and standards had changed); the need to be up-to-date with management literature to inform the way they implemented change in their service delivery, and seeking out relationships amongst each other as well as some of the
business community, that would favour resource sharing. Several times they admitted to trying to manage too much with fewer resources and taking on extra work (for example, Mary seemed always to be saying ‘but that’s extra’), and this had much to do with their own style of management that had evolved from doing community welfare service delivery over a number of years and in several different community contexts.

I have written about interviewing Mary who, through her words and behaviour, identified the paradox of being constantly interrupted during the ‘main work’ of delivering a community welfare service but needing to give attention to those other situations otherwise the service could not be delivered (see Milcek 2005: 305). During that interview with Mary, there was a steady stream of people coming to her door or ringing her, either from the other office (at the time it appeared as if she held the only filing cabinet in the building), or from the local courthouse where only an hour before my arrival, a young girl at risk had been involved in a family drama. Mary told me about how she had been given the manager’s job in the first place and her following narrative echoes the kinds of things about which the other managers spoke, including passion, commitment, but also a limitation identified by some as well – lack of administration skills and experience.

*I must admit to you that I didn’t want the job … I’m going to tell you that … because I love working with the clients, I love working with the families. I get on very well with the families … I see them come from really dysfunctional into completely looking after themselves, and I love that – that’s my thing. But when they put the applications out – they had about 14 applications I think - and no one had any welfare experience so naturally they came back to me and said look you’ve got to do the job, so what could I do? And G. was leaving so I took on the job and I must admit – administration (shakes head) … I’m a good organizer don’t get me wrong, I can organize things really well, but when it comes to administration … but when I come to do administration (again, shakes head). I’ve got the qualifications, but not the qualifications. How can you follow that? … I feel I can handle it, but I don’t have the qualifications that take years of experience to get. My experience has been working with the families.*

Several other managers had no such feelings of inadequacy about their skills and experience in the administration area, and two (Prue, Basil) were confident that while others ‘did paucity management’, they could not claim to do so. Paucity management for them was likened to ‘doing it tough’ and not about ‘juggling and
balancing priorities’, because management overall was seen to be a juggle (Prue). They saw that they were limited by what they could do, through their role. There were situations that involved no choice at all, for example taking on the role of leadership, of advocacy, of maintaining relationships to be more resourceful and to be aware that paucity management does exist but ‘compared to clients, and some other services, yes, we are much better off’ (Prue). Both of these managers saw a main part of their role being that of a ‘facilitator’, of democratisation (Prue), of getting people to ‘step outside one’s comfort zone’ (Basil), and of actually making bureaucracy work (Basil).

These were not the only managers who relished challenge in their work, and the words from Basil about his experience gives an indication of this, as well as the response to one kind of management/structural ‘constraint’ – adjusting to working with management, and in turn being managed.

… my three previous supervisors in the public service were three really strong women and I went from that to working for a man who … it’s very interesting, at my interview, the then CEO said ‘what do you need from a manager – your manager, to work effectively? I think I said that they should be really directive and she looked at the bloke who is now my boss and she said ‘that will never be written on your gravestone will it’? I went from this sequence of three strong women managing me over the space of 20 years to this really … I push against this guy and it’s all give, nothing pushes back very hard. Only now and then, then pow! … from behind the trench.

This is the same manager who also admitted that ‘ironically, we work from a church-based agency, and democracy and community are two words that don’t fit comfortably in the same sentence’.

Overall, however, there was a unanimous, though quiet, acknowledgement that their community welfare service delivery operated in a paucity management environment. As mentioned before, this acknowledgement took the form of admitting to having less faith about continuity and more about whether things would be completed in the most appropriate way.
4.3.1 Dance card is nearly all full

The biggest impact on managers’ work practice related to the issues around time; little time, no time, and ‘compromised’ time. More than anything, managers accepted that what they were particularly skilled at doing was practical, hands-on practice. Several alluded to the notion of ‘dancing around doing things’. They were happy to discuss what they did, but they were not about to wait for people to come to them because their ‘dance card is nearly all full’. They recognised the degree to which they needed to be accountable to management committees, their immediate supervisors, and directors in their organizations, but they were also extraordinarily busy trying to stay action-focused so they did not end up being just reactive. They also collaborated with community members to get the best possible programs up and running even if they had been started from ‘tried and true’ templates or where a program had been rationalized to fit a particular funding model. Managers also acknowledged that their model of management reflected, and was determined by the community in which they worked. This happened despite there being several agencies delivering the ‘same’ or ‘similar’ services. As one manager remarked, ‘I think all family support services are different because they reflect the community they work in’. There is the knowledge amongst the managers that what they provide is determined according to what other services are available in their area.

Following on from the above, work practice needs to be informed by the historical factors that affect how each of the agencies services its community. For example, ‘like’ organisations delivering the same or similar services, have similar philosophies and provide the same core service, but it was recognized that each community had its own predominant issues, so in the end, the service would be different. Some would have more families with drug and alcohol abuse issues, whereas other more isolated areas – ‘further west’ – would field services to meet the needs of more Aboriginal families. This difference was recognised as both an advantage and a disadvantage particularly where in some cases, resources permitting, being different was good because response to community needs can be quick and effective. Isolation in service provision was seen as the disadvantage. The manager who gave the most feedback in respect to the above had the following to say, ‘I hope this makes sense as it is the ramblings of a brain affected by heat-wave conditions and no sleep’ (Bell).
Several of the managers acknowledged the way their own roles had changed over time particularly through the way they contributed and maintained alliances and contact with their voluntary advisory committees and peak organisations. They recognised that other areas within their organisations and/or associations had also gone through changes. Mostly, they saw their committees, and organisations overall, as buffers ‘against the outside’, to allow them to deliver the kind of services they felt most equipped to do. That is, managers saw their committees as ‘legal entities’ and not necessarily as management committees in the true sense of the concept, but as a presence to allow the manager greater freedom to work with their teams to provide specific approaches and necessary services. In one case, the manager reiterated and expanded her previous comments about her committee as being a ‘brick wall that is supportive [and] challenging [but also providing] security, sounding board and backstop’ (Joan). Another of the managers gives a good indication of the changing face of community welfare work:

… the professionalism of the service has increased dramatically … I think there was some past history there … um, when we were first auspiced … we thought we were just a poor group … but I think that over time, with the association becoming a strong body for us, it has lifted our mission and profile … the information coming through from the peak body is good … the peak body has changed its structure too and they seem to be doing well now and we’re getting some good stuff, some good contact from them from time to time … they are providing an avenue for us … they are now providing the opportunity for us so we can formalize our stuff … (Maeve).

Paradoxically, the above change also comes with some managers acknowledging that freedom as sometimes leading to ‘operating in isolation’. This latter concern can escalate when budget implications regarding staffing and funding, come to the fore.

However, no matter how small the amount of funding gained from government departments, managers remained ‘excited’ and ‘passionate’ about the prospects of what they could do with it. For example, an amount of $2,000 could help to mount a six-week life skills program for single mothers, and a $4,000 grant could give a small agency ‘a new computer – which is great – and internet access on ADSL for twelve months, plus a new laser printer’. Any improvements in technology were a bonus for the managers who, for too long, had coped with slow technology or systems that kept breaking down. Although the acquisition of adequate funding to achieve the
implementation of community programs appeared to be a paramount concern of these managers, ‘happiness’ was measured in the way that technology was fast and accessible. One of the managers spoke of an ongoing problem with a photocopier and the time needed to take it back to the nearest regional township (approximately one and a half hours drive away) to have it repaired and serviced. Others spoke of needing adequate transport to enable quicker and easier access to families in remote and isolated areas. Hardly any of their tasks appeared to be straightforward and were identified with different layers of ‘realities’.

One of the ways that ‘isolation’ and ‘restraints’ was raised was through the expansion of their ability to take on a democratisation role for communities. In some cases, this was an overwhelming venture and not readily embraced. While all managers appeared to be passionate about delivering community welfare services to their communities, this was seen to be core activity and somehow probably different to creating democratic opportunities for community members. As one manager reiterated, ‘… what legitimacy do we have to represent the community? We do not have the resources … not our role to properly consult with the community’ (Bell).

And yet, in another fashion, the practice of partnerships was recognised as the way to go in the future, despite being ‘government rhetoric’, but was currently done at a minimal level, again because of time constraints mainly, and with people they had known over a number of years and through several funding and programming ventures. There was a concerted effort to combine the knowledge and expertise within similar service activities, with agencies from the same organization although in quite different rural areas, between managers who were passionate about a specific service provision, between managers who held a historical relationship brought from previous employment, and between managers who worked well with the style of the other. This style of working was not necessarily the same management model, or from the same service provision type, but one that was seen to be ‘complimentary’. All the partnerships spoken about between the managers were mostly of an informal, yet highly strategic nature, and built on a legacy of trust, and the right kind of personality. However, there were two managers who admitted to actively seeking partnerships and aligning this practice with strategic management. In these cases, the partnerships were used in the planning stages for service delivery, and formalized
through articles of memoranda. In another two situations, managers referred to the ‘partnerships with volunteers’ they exercised as a useful way to conduct their services and as a way of countering the dogma of ‘doing more with less’.

There were several references to the notion of ‘personality politics’ (Kay, Lyn). Managers came together, almost involuntarily, on the strength of a particular cause, telephone call, or direct intervention from a government department wanting to pursue a particular policy and to give funding to a program that would be successful in a particular community. In reference to the latter, there were managers who were acknowledged as the ones who would probably achieve more useful and achievable outcomes than others. To some degree, these managers with something of a ‘proven nature’ could afford to apply for funding of a more substantial amount than would otherwise be the case in a resource poor environment. These same managers acknowledged the existence of ‘paucity management’ but they did not do this, others in the central western regions of NSW did.

Their areas of work encompasses sometimes vast expanses of travel that saw managers being pragmatic about the use of volunteers in outlying places, as well as the use of teams of staff members to go out to particular areas on a regular weekly or twice-weekly basis. One manager perpetrated her organisation’s expectations of people working over these vast geographical distances, in a minimal amount of time and with limited resources. Not only did she have to monitor programs five hours away from her agency quarters, but she also set up fairly autonomous similar situations for team leaders to work in this same fashion.

Further aspects of staff management of interest related to the way that staff development and training were conducted. This was an important concern for these managers; that their workers remain updated with information about not only their own agency’s strategic direction (the internal environment), but also what was happening on the external horizon. The managers themselves were all community welfare experienced and most were either formally qualified or in the process of gaining formal tertiary qualifications in community services. However, only two were formally qualified in formal management training so there were some gaps in their knowledge regarding workplace relations, occupational health and safety
requirements, and general employment insurance. Every manager relied on having access to efficient computer technology to be able to take advantage of the numerous, ongoing communications from their peak organisation, their own organisation, and from other managers in the area. They were being constantly ‘bombarded’ with new information. There was an informal network of training opportunities set up by two of the managers to share with other managers and their staff, in relation to some things already noted, plus being updated on the latest reporting and funding government requirements. These training sessions were free to the agencies, had been strategic programming moves by those particular managers to include training in their specifications, and were offered to other community welfare workers in the region.

Overall, the managers talked about their management role being one of searching out opportunities; of being ‘opportunistic’. That is, being flexible to know when something could be salvaged from a situation that would at first look impossible or improbable. It was about seeking opportunities to extend their services into other areas in order to uphold their original service brief. An illustration is the manager who had been providing child-minding facilities for single Mums who, in turn, had been accessing that service to enable them to attend a local gym facility. The local gym was on the point of closure, the child-minding service would no longer be needed and so the manager ‘… took over the whole gym thing – keeps the Mums healthy, we can go on providing child-minding services, and everyone’s happy …’ (Mary).
PART TWO: METAPHORS BUILD A RICHER UNDERSTANDING ABOUT COMMUNITY WELFARE MANAGEMENT

Part two builds from the individual to the collective voice about service delivery. In the following section, metaphorical expressions provide an evocative backdrop to showcase ideas about the managers’ work including, the influence of bureaucracy, empowerment of individuals, issues around funding, supportive environments that are also isolating situations, and feelings of being ‘bombarded’.

4.2 A collective ‘voice’ about service delivery practice

When ten of the managers participated in the focus group discussions, they reinforced the metaphorical language used in their sector. Their acceptance of this way of describing their service delivery was very palpable. As can be seen from this part of the process, analysis was well on the way; even before the categories of description had been formulated, I recognised the importance of the metaphorical expressions from the managers to give a richer description and focus to the condition of their work. The reason for this recognition of such expressions is to acknowledge the currency of ideas being expressed through evocative language about the common experience of work. That is, there is ‘shared meaning’ about behaviour and activities to enact community work, within the stories of community welfare service delivery sub-culture.

Key issues identified through metaphorical expressions

The raw process of sharing key issues and the significance of metaphors, to the managers, to explain aspects of their practice, included simply extrapolating metaphors from the individual interviews. I wrote these up on A3 sheets of paper and shared them between the managers at each of the focus group meetings, for further comment. These metaphors coincided with specific issues to which the managers referred, for example, communication within the organisation, engagement with
bureaucracy, service delivery to the communities, the management role, and impacts on work practice.

The following list of key issues about work experience is captured ungrouped, in concepts and phenomena identified by the managers, most of which is in metaphorical language (examples – field notes – interviews 2003). It should be noted that for every item listed, at least five managers (close to one third) came up with the same or very similar notions.

resilience …                      ... volunteer management committee …
support tools …                  ... clarifying direction and purpose ...
now gone …                      ... changing of the guard ...
tell the story again …           ... ideal world ...
don’t match …                   ... supposed to have ...
does not marry that well …       ... better to try, then work from there ...
policing role …                 ... be careful …
I could be paternalistic - the big mother …
protect myself from the crisis mode …  ... I do work in isolation …
not a lot of networking …
a lot of people would say there is resource insufficiency …
hierarchical structures …        ... capacity building albeit with
Christian overtones …           ... distance …
out here …                       ... decision-making on-the-spot …
autonomous to an extent …         ... you have to maintain relationships ...
constrained by policies and rules …   ... auspicing role …
attempting advocacy …            ... philosophical and geographical
differences …                  ... same frustrating structure is the thing that also gives the degree of autonomy and
freedom …                       ... ethical practice …
breaking down the barriers …     ... bureaucratic – pragmatic ...
resource insufficiency …         ... people need to think outside the
square …                        ... the environment is there to have a go
peak organization – valuable …   ... microeconomic reform and policies
government rhetoric …            ...
partnerships – we don’t do partnerships …  ... competitive tendering …

The following list of metaphors captures an interesting layer to the description of the community welfare sector. This kind of descriptive language appeared to be very much a part of the managers’ working environment (examples – field notes – interviews 2003).
The following data is presented through the selection of some of their more astute metaphors.

### 4.2.1 Continuum to endgame

One manager (Basil) spoke this metaphor and it is indicative of the universality of responses from the managers that their comments reflect the notion of being part of a process of just getting the job done, as with the idea of then being part of a ‘continuum to endgame’. There was agreement that ‘good programs seem to be secondary to political imperatives’ and at times what they did was like ‘flying by the seat of our pants’. But there was a sense of not giving up and of working through to get solutions. Managers saw this achieved through being innovative and creative because government seemed more intent on looking for time-limited interventions where delivery of programs was concerned. That is, ‘it was not a bad thing to think of different ways to put something together to get it done’. It was also about being proactive in response to situations that seemed to be indicative of a combative management environment at times. Three managers from different areas of the central west region of New South Wales, indicated this aspect of their practice, that is, ‘I feel part of a bombardment zone at times’, ‘it’s a real bombardment zone out there’, and ‘at times working as part of a bombardment zone’ (Kate, Lyn, Basil). I expand on the way that managers saw their strategies to counter this ‘zone’ as being better achieved through commonsense engagement on different relational levels of their daily work continuum, in the following Chapter 5 Reporting the Findings.

In talking about getting to the ‘endgame’, managers saw that good programs could be used as a ‘template’ for others. Several of the managers indicated they had used past, successful ones for further funding applications and focus for what they wanted to do in their areas. Although there was recognition of luck being involved in their
practices, for example ‘managers do think lucky’, for some, working in this way made it easier for managers to remain optimistic about their chances to gain greater feedback from departmental staff and ultimately to ‘sell’ their ideas to relevant ministers.

4.2.2 Hub of the wheel

There was no doubt that the managers saw their work within their agencies as being a facilitator to keep things going; at the ‘hub of the wheel’. More than that however, there was an undeniable recognition that what they did was a ‘privilege’ whereby they had access to different kinds of people, opportunities to work on several interesting programs to benefit different community groups, and interestingly, ‘you never quite know what you’ll end up with’. The managers also worked in an environment of uncertainty in which they did not always know with whom they would be working, that is, the ‘changing of the guard’ was a constant reality, and people were ‘coming and going’ all the time.

From both focus groups, they all agreed that it was necessary to be aware of core people in different departments and areas who could assist with the success of their programs, for example people from the then Department of Family and Community Services (DfaCS) and the Department of Community Services (DoCS). They talked of different approaches to working with each of those main players; working with DoCS had a ‘slightly antagonistic air about it’, with the constant ‘game of handball’, while DfaCS was seen to be more of a ‘bureaucracy’ about which managers needed to be more ‘politically savvy’.

Within the ‘constraints’ of working with their management committees, one of which included a constant turnover of participants, most of the managers felt a certain degree of ‘freedom’ in that they were both protected by their committees when they needed to be, and allowed to pursue their own goals as long as regular reporting occurred back to the committees. In this respect, managers expressed being answerable in every way to their committees but because management from the ‘frontline is a totally different ballgame’, having to work with committees was more so as ‘part of a work team’.
4.2.3 Juggling the nuts and bolts

All the managers ‘juggled’ and ‘balanced’ their work within their paucity environment by adopting different and adaptive strategies that were informed by the presence of skills, people resources, partnership arrangements, funding, and creative or innovative practice. Some actually saw this as happening within a framework of ‘being accountable’, and they did so within the confines of their organisation structure and the way they chose to deliver their services. Some of this accountability comes from trying to pursue those programs for which individual managers have a passion, and about which they try to gain credibility with managers who are absent or distant in time and place. Sometimes this causes some issues, for example in the following dialogue,

… the definition of service delivery is in part constrained by the range of accountability methods I have to my employer, through my immediate supervisor, around financial tracking, around behaviour of staff, and around how services are delivered to communities that have idiosyncratic characters … here obviously a large issue of effectively a white church-based children’s welfare agency delivering services to Aboriginal communities. I’ve swung a little against the tide initially because donnybrooks [immediate supervisor] … around significant issues he thinks I am being a melodramatic … (Basil - my [bracketed] explanation).

4.2.4 Shop-front bureaucracy

For Basil, Bureaucracy was ‘shop-front bureaucracy … you could take it or leave it’. And most managers agreed that it was there for the engagement or not, but it could not be ignored. Managers referred to this point, in relation to how bureaucracy could be used to achieve certain things as I mentioned earlier, by either being ‘politically astute’ (Prue) or being good at playing a ‘game of handball’ (Maeve). For example, there was similar talk about ‘not biting the hand that feeds you’ (Mary), and about the need for managers to give support where and when it was needed, and do the same when it was offered to them. Again, this was seen as just being practical and realistic.

Even when the questions were raised about what it meant to be a bureaucrat, and perhaps the concept had a ‘dirty word’ connotation to it, overall the idea of working
with ‘bureaucrats’ was that they were the ‘middle man’ and would facilitate things to happen. One of the managers in the first focus group discussion made the interesting observation that was supported by the others,

... bureaucratic process is around meeting the needs of the largest number of people – it doesn’t necessarily have a price tag on it but it correlates with the programs that receive the most funding, the programs that employ the most staff, and staff equals work (Julie).

4.2.5 Caring environment … flow and not stagnate

The managers who participated in the second focus group discussion alluded to ‘embracing work practice diversity’ (Bell, Belinda, Kate, Lyn). They expressed this in terms of having a greater ‘fluency and comfort’ in the way of working with people on-the-ground, compared to those who manage from afar in their organisations. In a caring environment where they see themselves as the main conduit for help to those in need in the community, the managers recognized that the same ethnic communities may be quite different communities based on their geographical placement – ‘even if just down the road’ – and therefore would require quite different approaches to service delivery. There appeared to be consensus on what it is to manage utilising a resource allocation model of management and this was mainly limited to the ‘dollar’, whereas a more effective model was one that had ‘diversity’ at its heart. In order to ‘flow and not stagnate’, a more effective management model was equal to ‘different ways of working’, and one that delivered ‘sustainability and quality’. The managers recognised that in this case, different community welfare skills would be needed in this kind of diversity context.

One of several phenomena identified by the managers to illustrate their work practices in these types of situations was the notion of a ‘chalk and cheese’ strategy to cater to the different needs of the communities. This kind of diversity management of services was typical of one kind of auspicing arrangement model used by two of the managers, but was different to another type used by another manager who admitted that her program was run along the lines of ‘normative behaviour’. The most common management practice referred to was the ‘community-based management model’ that approached service delivery through a caring focus on community need and in particular, that responded to what was needed. In the first
focus group discussion, the participants linked the idea of a community-based management model to including a possible definition of paucity management (Basil, Prue, Mary, Julie, Jerry).

### 4.2.6 Empowering the individual

A recurring paradox was revealed by the majority of the managers, exemplified best through Bell’s observations, in terms of the frustration they felt with the sense of ‘being all things to all people’, particularly when related to community engagement, that is, in being ‘the one to hold the reins’, or going back to the community building and democratisation role. Although this latter role was widely seen as an important and an integral part of their brief not just as community welfare managers, but workers in the community generally, several managers felt they just did not have the skills to do this ‘government role’, or indeed the time.

While this point certainly related to the way that service delivery achieved outcomes whereby individuals were ‘given a voice’ in the community, there was also the strong case of worker empowerment. This was a facet of ‘staff management’ that several of the managers raised about their management model; they encouraged their staff to take a lead, to be proud of what they did for the community, the agency, and for each other. In the second focus group discussion, the managers all agreed on the positive and sometimes ‘uplifting’ support they had been shown by members of their management committees to document and take some of their creative ideas not just back to the organization, but to their peak organisations and to the broader community as well. This kind of support gave the managers a great sense of achievement.

### 4.2.7 Remote and isolated

There were specific words that managers used to relate their understanding about the existence of paucity management, and ‘isolation’ was used several times in most of the interviews. As stated previously, without exception all managers agreed with the existence of paucity management in their profession. This was acknowledged through several being aware of Wagner’s (2000) previous work on the topic, but there were others who had heard of the concept but did not know what it actually
meant. During the first focus group discussion (November 2003), conversation started out by identifying paucity management as being ‘evocative of a poor cousin in the bush’. When Wagner’s explanation was given to them, again in the focus group discussions, not only did they agree but then openly wondered if they themselves at times operated that way. It was interesting to note again, that while some denied they operated under conditions of paucity management, they were open in identifying those in the community welfare sector who did.

When discussions turned to the remoteness of being in a rural environment, in both groups, the tone of the conversation became quite heated when their situations were compared to what happens in urban areas. In the first focus group, support came from four of the managers in response to the fifth expressing very strongly that ‘metropolitan shits with rural and regional areas’ (Julie). Their frustration is not just related to a perception of trying to manage with fewer resources, but as a matter of focus and validity. Managers feel that the ‘metro focus can be frustrating’; ‘city folk have little idea of what goes on in the bush’ and these managers’ own programs actually cost more to set up (Lyn). This is partly related to the tyranny of distance and that flexibility happens as a necessity resulting from this kind of remoteness.

Being remote leads to enormous infrastructure issues with constraints that relate to legal implications and which managers have to find ways to overcome. Some of those implications came from human resources awards, insurance, and ‘the real costs behind OH&S’. But ‘being sorry for ourselves’ was not an accepted refrain because this only served to contribute to perpetrating a ‘victim mentality’. Several managers from both focus groups supported the notion of combating the remoteness and isolation, by doing ‘different stuff with different survival skills in different quantities’.

4.2.8 Brick wall that is supportive and challenging

Managers referred to assistance they received from their organisations and other members or services within the community as being both ‘supportive’ and ‘challenging’. It became clear in the focus group discussions that definite leaders were directing the conversation; they appeared to be both more senior in their
experience, as well as more vocal, but in a nurturing, mentoring way. In terms of responding to the core ethics of the organisation and therefore the agency work, for the second focus group participants, part of the challenge was about ‘ditching projects to maintain the core, base faith’, which meant ‘dealing with conflicts first even though looking for specific funding’. In terms of leadership to maintain the most effective interactions, it was about being ‘rat-cunning’, and it was about trying to retain highly skilled people in the face of responsibilities that had ‘grown tenfold’. In terms of networking and collaboration, the idea of partnerships presented a particular challenge especially where there was a general recognition that these types of arrangements required specialised skills.

Overall, the main challenge with many of the issues facing manager practices was related to money. In the second focus group discussion, the following comment was raised, ‘it cracks me up when I hear about strategic partnership work, with people who don’t have money’ (Belinda). There was general agreement about constantly having ‘to fight for realistic core funding’, and yet once the ‘brick wall’ was overcome, and more funding was gained, there were also more reports to do, more service plans to complete, more quarterly reports to submit, and more activity reports to generate. More than a question of accountability, the managers saw this as a process of control.

The managers’ collective voice provided one overarching idea that remained long after the focus group discussions ended and that was the realisation they all appeared to relish the challenge of their work, they welcomed the open dialogue, and identified a will to make good ideas come to fruition.
PART THREE: THE ‘VOICE’ OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Part three has two sections that relate to how good ideas happen: because of the need to focus on ‘achieving the endgame’ (Section 4.3), and because of attention to revisiting the experience of professional practice (Section 4.4). That is, the will to achieve positive outcomes is manifested through recognition of all the phenomena that can influence work in both a positive and negative fashion.

In Section 4.4, work experience is focused as professional practice across four categories of description. The intention is to refine the findings to try to establish understanding about ethical practice, about practice bounded by structure, about practice influenced by certain regimes, and about practice being innovative and creative. However, Section 4.3 is offered as a ‘precursor’ to reading Section 4.4, because the former links all the above ideas through one professional practice example.

4.3 Achieving the endgame

Issues raised through the previous data examples are starting to emerge into useful areas of focus, for example, what is professional practice, what is ethical practice, what is creative and innovative practice, and what is practice bounded by structural constraints? The managers shared both broad and specific ideas about the above phenomena, as well as how work was completed to ‘achieve the endgame’, and these ideas are encapsulated nicely in the following words:

**Julie:** I think the organisation is defined by its constitution. And its constitution includes its aims and directions and its philosophies and they are quite broad and they basically specify the need to provide services to those most disadvantaged in the community – socially, emotionally, financially – not so much geographically – and to provide support for families and children. Because the principles are so broad I actually have been able to develop almost any service that can help anybody who is disadvantaged in any way and is consistent with what the organisation is for. The organisation structure around the constitution is that of a voluntary management
committee being responsible for details of how the service is run. So even though I am employed as the manager and day-to-day responsibilities in nearly everything, the management committee is legally the responsible entity for ensuring funding agreements. We have major long term current funding agreements for services ... do you want to know?

**Susan M:** Whatever you think underpins your job.

**Julie:** The voluntary management committee is legally responsible for ensuring this organisation is run ethically and appropriately. The constitution supports a wide range of work areas and me as manager – suits me brilliantly. I like this organisation; I am allowed to develop things that are identified through a wide range of resources that are needed in the community. The organisation had some tough times in the past when parts of the management committee didn’t trust the manager and the manager did not trust some of the staff. The staff didn’t trust the manager or members of the management committee. And the whole place stagnated and didn’t develop for some time. I think that’s the guts of it.

*Julie’s* dialogue is typical of the overall connections made within the other managers’ stories and this section set out to give an example of what appears to be integrated practice. That is, the links made between the categories of description phenomena are indicated implicitly to suggest a more holistic, rather than discrete, engagement with the practice-context. The ideas of ethical practice, organisation and regime structure, creative, and innovative practice espoused through *Julie’s* words, serve as a precursor to reading Section 4.4. With the above thoughts in mind, the following section ‘unconnects’ those links in order to obtain a clearer understanding of experience by focusing professional practice under certain categories.
4.4 A ‘voice’ of experience in categories of description

Categories of description describe managers’ experiences of phenomena in relation to their work activity. I cannot substitute my own interpretation of what that experience could be, but I can participate in “conversation as experiential learning” (Baker et al 2002) to gain a better understanding of what that experience could look like. Each of the following categories identifies experience as ‘professional practice’ in order to privilege the findings from research conducted by Wagner et al (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005) at the ‘domain level’. Domains are constellations of relations and meaning (Cheers, Darracott and Lonne 2005, Pickles 1985) that allow us to make connections with what we do to what others know and practice. That is, actions are not necessarily ‘new’ but happen, in many cases intuitively, in response to what is going on around us, as part of who we are and what we have become and this is what the findings are now starting to demonstrate.

In further reporting of the findings, I visited again some of the aspects of dialogue that started to give me a collective image of the managers’ work practices. In the iterative process of gaining knowledge about something, this next section indicates how the research process during the research-in-the-field stage then contained and focused into categories of description and related these to the experiences of the managers about certain phenomena. These accounts fell into experiences of practice as:

- **Ethical practice** – determining practice that was ethical, comments that were made about ideology, and effective and professional practice, was also taken into account.
- **Bounded by structure** – suggesting the idea of structure was not confined just to the opus operatum of organisations; canonical ways of doing things, but also to the environmental and social effects of such things as time, space, distance and legitimacy, on the moment of production.
- **Influenced by certain regimes** – responding to issues relating to governance, accountability, and financialisation, for example.
- **Being innovative and creative** – including the ability to self-organise, being flexible, reflexive and interpretative.

In the above process I well and truly utilised methods to arrive at more saturated results akin to Ausubel’s (1963, 1978) general-to-detail sequence strategy that proposes progressive differentiation of more general and inclusive anchoring ideas, and also Gagne’s (1985, 1987, 1988) hierarchy of learning that prescribes a parts-to-whole, bottom-up sequence, in which the most elementary parts from a broader base are revealed first, and then followed by progressively more complex combinations of the parts.

**4.4.1 Category 1: Professional practice is experienced as ethical practice**

Examples of ethical practice were played out within ideological and ethical boundaries. The category (or notion) of ethical and effective professional practice was primarily explained through the way that managers reinforced the juxtaposition of their organisation’s ideology together with their own values demonstrated in their daily practice, and which related to working in the human services industry. Some of these values were inherent in terms and phrases that came from an organisation’s constitution or through the direction of a CEO, for example:

*Our CEO put in place a process of positioning the services we provide whereby all middle managers across the agencies have been divided into five teams to look at key work areas … so that any further work undertaken by the agency will be in accordance with evaluation that indicates its vulnerability and outcomes for the children and young people who experience this … it was a very catchy thing that the CEO did to get all the agencies’ staff together to plan finally on how to get from being more reactive than active, to get active. I got the distinct impression watching how this was done that the intent was to get active and stay active so that we don’t have to become reactive (Basil).*

The managers based their fundamental approach to community welfare practice on being both flexible and responsive to demand, but there were constant tensions over the way that services were delivered through sometimes cost-cutting measures that saw an inappropriate use of volunteers in several work practice examples. As Belinda noted,
Several managers don’t even know what their own staff roles are, or should be, so it doesn’t surprise me that they blur the boundaries of where to place volunteers or in fact how to treat them ….

Therefore ethical practice that was also effective and professional was highlighted in the dilemma of being constantly concerned with trying to balance the overuse of volunteers with the needs of the community to have services that relied to a large extent for their success, on the help of those volunteers.

Without volunteers this service would not run … there is a fine line we walk between utilisation and use … there is a thin line between the two but a vast difference (Lyndall – participant emphasis).

In another quite different use of volunteers, professional practice was manifested through ‘formal’ utilisation of experienced and qualified volunteers as the mainstay of a program of service delivery. In the case of one manager, her practice was, in her own words, “not the norm” and involved case management of 80 families by herself, four part-time workers and “twelve skilled volunteers”. In order to maintain the level of professionalism of “the only non-government organisation that provides support services to this number of families” this same manager also played a proactive role in choosing who she wanted to be on her management committee.

One of the ways that ethical practice was questioned was through engagement with funding arrangements. These engagements were closely tied to the way that some of the managers commented on the practice of others and reinforced their own purpose, and that of their organisation. For example, the following input from one manager offers insight into how others are perceived:

Where funding submissions have become quite competitive, I can’t think of specific examples but quite frankly it’s been up to the government department who puts up that funding and they already know who is going to get it – I can’t say because of libel, but I do know where that happened in two specific situations with a significant amount of money – one close to $100,000 and the other close to $200,000 where that has happened. One of the philosophies we have here at …and we had talked about it at our planning day at the beginning of the year, is ‘when is too big, too big’ – because we want to retain the communication and we would prefer to retain all of the services within the one building – because there are other services where we are aware of, where they have ended up being split up into four buildings around the towns and you lose the sense of identity of the organisation, so that’s a
philosophy we work with now – where we don’t see the big picture so much, we would rather have a small focus and deliver well than be fraying at the edges (Belinda).

This sense of ‘philosophy’ was spoken about by nearly all the managers and referred mainly as the idea of ‘core principles’. For agencies that were held together by being part of a strong conglomerate, there was talk of being “passionate about retaining the core philosophy”, of being “non-judgemental”, and “not taking the part of compulsion” (Belinda). The philosophical influence on ethical decision-making appeared also to extend from the personal philosophy of the managers. One manager appeared to make a moral stance in contrasting the way that governments engaged in ‘just rhetoric’, to the practice of empowering individuals, that is, “we are upfront in that we operate along principles of subsidiarity whereby power decisions are made at the lowest level” (Barry).

Another manager related this philosophical sense in terms of the clear lines of communication she worked hard to build with other members of her staff.

In my early stages I put a lot of effort into re-establishing a lot of trust between the committee and the staff … the staff no longer have the anxiety over the committee making decisions over poor information. When we have staff meetings I tell them what I am cooking up and why. I also let them know what issues are on the agenda with the committee. I have just noticed an amazing lack of anxiety which allows people to concentrate on doing their jobs well and being free to make contributions on an area not necessarily their own, which gives the team a real wealth of information and resources that it didn’t have before – it wasn’t actualised (Julie).

However, in contrast to the philosophical gaze, or in spite of it, an awareness of economics did drive some of the ethical decision-making of these managers. Professional practice along fiscal lines was accentuated through decisions about funding were not made unless ‘the pot was at least $100,000’ (Basil, Prue). All managers noted ethical dilemmas in their professional practice. Some of this was through overt admissions, such as needing to draw a fine line where the use of volunteers was concerned, and some were hinted at, such as the manager relaying how he and his immediate manager were like ‘chalk and cheese’, communicated rarely face-to-face and were in constant disagreements about many aspects of the service delivery. This manager went so far as to say that “people who don’t
communicate face-to-face tend(s) to become a liability” (Basil), and raised the question of manager responsibility in ensuring that clear communication is established in order to progress along consistent lines of ethical and professional work practice.

4.4.2 Category 2: Professional practice is experienced as bounded by structure

For many of these managers their work was all about responding to work within structural constraints, and defined by the various capacities of their particular agencies. Examples of structural constraints related to time, resource-poor environment, sharing of resources, and building relationships. The response to ‘structure’ was manifested through the way that managers saw their role in relation to their organisation, their peak organisation/ body, and other influences such as time, place, history, community, and culture. But what were the specifics of the defining response to illustrate such a manifestation?

Without exception, the phenomenon of “ruralness” (“… of being rural” – Joan) was one of the main deciding factors, in the potential to both perceive a situation, and also to project a certain line of strategy that would have a positive effect on circumstances. Rarely was a situation (example) predictable, but called for enormous flexibility and spontaneity. There is an acknowledgement amongst human service workers in rural and remote areas that while a “cohesive atmosphere can be developed through drawing on people in an informed way” (Lyndall), nevertheless there is “isolation and huge questions around access and affordability” (Joan). At the time of interviewing this manager, her service was involved in developing and delivering programs to help rural communities deal with the crippling consequences of the drought. There were obvious pluses in being able to reach out to those affected “in the moment”, which was likened to “the plus of paucity management” (Joan) and one that was “not always a negative process” (Lyndall).

Another significant phenomenon that relates to structure has already been documented, and refers to the way that managers behaved as part of a physical entity, for example a support network not unlike a neighbourhood center, or being part of a diocesan affiliation. In this way of pooling resources, managers were responding to
change, that is, they appeared to look outside the conventional community management models of delivering services. And because of these arrangements or in spite of them perhaps, different levels of autonomy were alluded to. Only two (Lyn; Bell) of the fifteen managers mentioned their role to be fairly ‘autonomous’, however, they were part of the same peak body affiliation, which was also shared by four of the others. The ideas of autonomy were implicit in the way managers circumnavigated the topic of ‘structural constraints’ as perhaps being imposed by their organisation, to note that while their management committees and collaborations within centers certainly advised and supported, the managers themselves were the ones who did make those decisions pertaining to hands-on service delivery. As one manager explained, ‘each year, you can get flavours of direction’ (Bell), but these varied in strength depending on the makeup of those committees, as well as other issues to hand. One notable example comes to mind in relation to encounters with funding bodies:

… you have to be very aware … services would have to be aware of the pressures that funding bodies are putting on them in a short period of time. Say no (laugh), no, we can’t do that we have to do this first and if they aren’t happy with that, then maybe we don’t do that at all (Maeve).

Generally however, sharing of resources was done on an ad-hoc basis, with some managers acknowledging the usefulness of ‘sharing through partnerships’, but as something that ‘we have to do more of in the future’. Barriers to working more with partnerships ranged from a sense that this was driven by government rhetoric; an activity reserved for ‘the big boys at the other end of town’, to the way that ‘partnerships lock people in’, ‘are time-consuming’, and really need the support and commitment from managers’ organizations to make them happen (Belinda).

Through the timetabling of work, organisations had the ability to influence opportunities for the managers. At least two of the managers did not address the need to share, and one in particular (Elizabeth) gave the impression of being totally overwhelmed and busy doing the work of providing a service on minimal hourly allocation (she worked 13 hours as a manager in a role that could have used at least two people, and one of the roles acknowledged by others in the community as one of the ‘poorest situations of any service … that is paucity management’ – Julie). She
had ‘no time to think of anything else’ and to different degrees, this same sentiment of working within time constraints was echoed by several of the other managers.

4.4.3 Category 3: Professional practice is experienced as influenced by certain regimes

Responding to accountability and governance regimes were expressed time and again by all the managers, as affecting them to varying degrees. This aspect of their work practice did not just include filling in forms or reporting back to departments, which is so typical of this kind of work in the current market-driven climate. They were also implicit in the idea of having ‘a brief’ to do this particular thing, or cover that particular thing so that intervention in communities happened at the right times and not when ‘band-aiding’ was required. There were also big hurdles to overcome in how people were recruited from the community for management committees, for volunteers, for ethnicity-specific help, and/ or for professional staff to work in an agency. Would these be the right people, suitable for the undertaking? For example, even the practice of ‘hand-picking’ people to be on a management committee has connotations for the manager needing to control how certain situations are controlled and monitored.

In particular, they highlighted the extra responsibility placed on managers to develop ‘resilience’ (Lyn, Kate) in an environment that placed much pressure on managers to be accountable for their work, particularly in the area of funding submissions. For example, without exception all managers alluded to the themes of ‘accountability and governance’, in the way that methods employed by managers are the result of ‘complex funding and resource issues’ (Julie, Basil, Elizabeth). And so, governance calls for greater degrees of creativity. During the first focus group meeting one of the participants relayed part of a discussion he had experienced with a Department of Ageing, Disability and Housing Commission (DADHC) consultant, regarding ‘community work’, by indicating ‘… it stopped a long time ago … long-term planning or direct action is inappropriate in the industry. We are under-resourced – we now only deal with emergency situations. The closest we come to ‘community work’, is lobbying for funding submissions and even then it’s not a consolidation process with the people involved’ (Focus Group 1 – December 2003). As another
source of funding for these managers, DADHC appears to follow the same line of thinking by some DoCS workers that ‘we don’t have partnerships … that may be the policy and direction, but we don’t do them’. When managers think that they become involved in ‘partnerships’ with government departments, they are closely monitored and subject to quality management review processes that focus on transparency of activity.

How to work with government entities came with the terrain of being a manager and knowing who had power and how to use this knowledge. For example, there was acknowledgement of issues that related to working with an organisation such as DoCS but on the whole it was also agreed that people in this department could achieve more things because they ‘have the power and the authority of the Act behind them’ (Bell). There appeared to be a majority, collective agreement with the words of one of the managers that although working within the ‘sometimes constraints of government departments’ (Bell), actually gave some much-needed structure and guidance to work activities. More specifically, ‘working with DoCS provides structure in regard to processes and policies … they have a policies advantage and they give confidence in areas such as industrial relations, knowledge about communities, structures, processes, and a broader picture of things … ’ (Bell).

Therefore, managers do experience that working with people in these government departments is part of a facilitation process to enable them to acquire funds, but the issues around lack of resources extend further a-field than that contained in the immediate world of these community welfare managers.

All managers looked to their peak organisations to keep them updated with new reporting regimes, some even checking back to gain advice on how paperwork should be completed. At least four managers (Basil, Belinda, Lynelle, Mary) saw that it was imperative for their staff to have access to training on how to be transparent and rigorous in their reporting, while another three (Julie, Prue, Joan) were overwhelmed by parts of the processes to do with open communication/ accountability and funding submissions. One manager was involved in updating her skills (Prue) as far as accountability regarding staff employment conditions, while another (Belinda) actually wrote and delivered training to other agencies, free of
charge. Most of the managers supported and admitted to operating within reasonable ‘economies of scale’ whereby decisions were made about the extent of the funding they would apply for, based on the time the submissions would take, the level and type of service they delivered, and the resources available to complete the submissions, reporting criteria, and implementation of successfully funded programs.

The response to accountability and governance regimes appeared to be governed by the evolution of their organisation’s structure, in terms of being part of either a centralised, or decentralised system. Managers actually noted this difference, such as, ‘we are a centralised organisation and therefore there are specific requirements on how we should do things …’ (Barry). In this way, ‘from afar’, managers were guided by the strong line taken by directors of their organisations, for example, in expansion and development work (Mary), and also in the positioning of agencies to undertake specific types of service delivery (Basil). These practices all helped the managers to be involved in the intent of their organisation, to be accountable for what they did, to not be ‘more reactive than active – to get active and stay active’ (Basil).

4.4.4 Category 4: Professional practice is experienced as being innovative and creative

“Can’t we have a better name than paucity? What about a creative model – a resourceful model with less resources”? (Joan). This was said by one of the managers who also admitted to being very open to new ways of managing. Her practice was exemplified by the way she embraced models of change whereby managing resources could be achieved collaboratively and through team-based exercises. The practice was an innovative direction particularly as it had to be suitably positioned in an otherwise diocesan management paradigm that was built traditionally on hierarchical structures. Her attention to wanting to try new things shows one of the facets of innovative practice – leadership. Her experience of innovative practice was by no means a singular one; overall the managers acknowledged that what they did was an indicative response to their particular situations. Managers exercised their role of leadership in various ways, including

♦ Working outside the ‘norm’ – acknowledging the opus operatum of doing things according to the canonical rules of organisations (the product of culture),
but also privileging their *modus operandi* to doing things better, their way (the *operation* of culture)

♦ Standing up to government departments to say ‘no’ to preferred policy direction

♦ Persevering with difficult situations that hold several anomalies in possible directions in order to achieve suitable outcomes

♦ Politicising their practice through many and varied ways of resistance to the status quo of organisations and government.

The above points are just *some* of the ways in which managers demonstrated innovation, and none more so than when work practice can impinge, again, on access to funding but in a different way this time, because it now becomes critical to the *well-being* of communities. These practices ranged from the ‘small’ engagements whereby actions could take on huge ramifications, such as changing the type of service delivered so that funding would stay *with* the community albeit in another guise, to ‘bigger’ involvements that included planning consciously to meet government guidelines in whatever way necessary to achieve a productive outcome. I am thinking here of the manager who conveyed how “the department of housing they won’t talk to you because you’re not an incorporated organisation … you and I go to the department of housing and they give me the house ’cause I am an incorporated organisation … I can give it to you … you got your house” (*Basil*). Managers appeared to ‘play this game of leadership’ all the time.

Another way that managers experienced professional practice as one of innovation was through the ideas they generated to *be* creative about their practice, but these were not so easily acknowledged. For example, managers needed encouragement to see that what they did *was* in fact special and would benefit managers in other areas of community welfare delivery. I am thinking here of the manager who had to be told time and again by her management committee that her ideas would benefit many others in the sector, if only she could ‘put them out there’. All managers appeared to be creative in how they completed their work, whether through the use of volunteers, engaging in multiplex (multifunctional) partnerships with external colleagues who were also friends, or planning strategic use of hours that never seemed to be enough to cover delivering services to their communities.
There are also the managers who felt their practice was innovative in the way they ‘protected their staff from stress’ through the structures they put in place to access clients, or how they included staff in having input to discussions about ways to be creative. So they created spaces of opportunity in response ‘to the moment’, and from which to try and make a difference ultimately, for community members.
4.5 Conclusion

The data presented in this chapter brings clarity to recurring themes, issues and ideas of community welfare practice that are embedded within the previous sections of this chapter, for example, operating times, service types, expectations for funding, expectations for partnerships and collaborations, auspicing and general ‘stewardship’ arrangements, and models of management. During contact with the managers, it became clear that they see their work as being defined by both constraints and purposeful actions. Certain constraints included aspects already listed as well as through a shortage of skills, and a lack of resources, but the main one was overwhelmingly concerned with the issue of ‘time’: lack of time to undergo proper training; lack of time to cover all the geographical areas; lack of time to put in comprehensive funding submissions and lack of time to cover all the service’s bases.

Although some managers admitted to a certain degree of freedom in what they do, they also have concerns about what they can do in the limited time they have available, as well as sometimes operating in isolation. They are not saying necessarily, that their work represents autonomous management, but in most of the comments, they are very clear about what their work entails. They need to be philosophical and practical, expansive thinkers, responsible for funding, provide leadership directions, be ‘the boss’, facilitator, the mediator, the story-teller and the re-story-teller, change agent, and provide initiative.

All the managers contributed a wealth of metaphorical language to describe their workplaces, and management activities within those places. As well, they referred to ‘complexity’ in ways that identified the multiple dimensions and differentiations of their practice. When I look back over the data, I am starting to get a picture of these managers’ work practices that constantly happen along a continuum of flexibility, pragmatic decision-making, juggling priorities, innovations and creativity, all done with a hefty dose of optimism and feelings of privilege.
In this chapter, several layers of data presentation, analysis and initial interpretation phases have been embedded in the multi-stage processes inherent in phenomenography. The following Chapter 5 – Theory-driven Interpretation, uses theory in a structure of awareness of variation framework to extend the interpretation process, understanding and definition, of the kinds of models of paucity management that the managers use and swap around everyday. And in keeping to part of the aim of the research project, hopefully the style of management used to ‘swap around everyday’ will be exposed further.
5.0 Introduction

In reflecting further the analytic methods, the thesis shows how the first order analysis process changed from a scrutiny of the raw data to findings that have moved across three levels of analysis. This chapter has three parts that arose from documenting information into *categories of description* as posted in the previous Chapter 4. In order to progress the data through a typical multistage process reminiscent of the phenomenographic approach to research, there were aspects of the study that became obvious whereby the initial variation of experience framework constructed from Wagner’s domain (see Chapter 3, section 3.8.5, page 131), to establish an interesting analysis of working conditions and managerial responsibilities, could in fact limit the handling of the data to only a descriptive outcome. That is, there appeared to be more ideas evolving from the data, which would benefit from the application of a multi-level interpretation framework to the categories of description.

A new framework that represented a structure of awareness of variation in experience of phenomena was changed several times through deleting, re-inserting, editing out or adding more information until it was ‘manageable’. This process became extremely important for the inclusion of aspects of Giddens’ Structuration Theory (1984) and the extent of time-space distanciation for the managers, as well as the incidence of self-organisation and the kind of emergent activity that defined practice, found in chaos/complexity considerations from the work of Gleick (1987), and Lewin (2001). The framework appears to be a complex one, much more so it seems than trying to discern the ‘blueness of a cup’ (see sub-Section 5.1.1), or the simplistic placement of *paucity management* within just one theoretical context. However, using a framework such as this new development is meant to be more multifunctional, with the levels of interpretation relating to an awareness of variation
in work practices, reported using narrative explication under each sub-section, but also in ‘relationship tables’ as defined in Section 5.2.

Throughout Part one I acknowledge the manager’s stories to highlight my third order analysis, by comparing them with the findings from Wagner et al in relation to ‘working conditions and managerial responsibilities’. Because potential models had started to evolve at the end of each of the categories of description in Chapter 4, I am now trying to build an awareness of a collective model, or models, of paucity management. In Parts two and three of this Chapter 5, models of work are summarised and presented through the use of further theoretical tools that add to the paucity management interpretation in Part one: aspects of Giddens Structuration Theory, and ideas from Gleick’s, and Lewin’s Complexity/Chaos Theories.

Regarding Section 5.5 in Part four, the Reader is given the following information relating to the ‘relationship tables’. The original aims of the research were not only to develop further knowledge and understanding of models of paucity management, but also to try and determine the style of management employed by the managers. These tables relate to models of paucity management in reference to three organisational levels, micro, mezzo and macro, and are presented more as a ‘unifying’ instrument about the awareness of dimensions of variation (DoV) across the three organisational levels. As part of this interpretation phase, DoV offers a hint of the style of management that the managers adopt. At the micro level the model appears to be one of anomalies regarding types of efficient practice, structuring work to make the most of time constraints, and a good deal of facilitating in order to achieve optimum task management. A review of the model at the mezzo level indicates one that involves pragmatic decision-making, planned and spontaneous attention to social relations, and the beginnings of reframing activity to demonstrate innovation and creativity. In the third relationship table, the macro level model of work includes reference to external influences that determine the kinds of role that managers take.

At the end of the chapter, key findings show that all managers utilise models of management which acknowledge the existence of both a resource poor environment, and instances of paucity management, even though several did not feel the two ideas necessarily co-existed. That is, while there was an acknowledgement of the concept
‘paucity management’, there was an overall impression of discomfort that it could be used as a negative label of what they do, rather than as a strategic management option. Resource insufficiency was identified through a combination of lack of funds, time, limited opportunities to network, and despite the support of governments, departments and organisations, work that could be lonely and isolated. The key findings provide the pivotal outcome of the analysis and interpretation process, indeed the whole research project, and provide valuable focal points for discussion in the following Chapter 6 – Discussion.
PART ONE: DISTINCTIVE ACTIVITY IN RELATION TO PAUCITY MANAGEMENT THEORY

Part one identifies the analytic relationship between paucity management theory and the categories of description. In Section 5.1 a comparison is made between the work of Wagner and Spence in regards to working conditions and managerial responsibilities, and the links, if any, with what the managers are saying in their stories. Comparative analysis is conducted based on criteria that were fielded back in sub-Section 3.8.5, about whether the relationship of ideas was exactly the same, similar, different or consistent.

In sub-Section 5.1.1 the notion of more variational ideas happening in the data other than the relationship to the work of Wagner and Spence, is expanded to flag an awareness framework that now includes aspects of Giddens’ Structuration Theory, and the Chaos/Complexity Theories of Gleick, and Lewin.

5.1 Relationship of paucity management theory to categories of description

The ‘working conditions and managerial responsibility’ domain from Wagner and Spence is mentioned first for its contribution to the categories of description. During the process of formulating the categories, I anticipated that if I took a cross section of say eight things the managers said about a particular category of description for example, then in bracketing their statements further, I might be able to see that four of the eight were concerned with ‘service type’ in some particular way, two were concerned broadly with ‘administration and planning’, and two might be concerned with ‘partnerships, networking or collaboration’ (that is, specifically or inferred). Based on comments about this particular domain, I am confident that the three main bracketed out ideas/ descriptions would then give a relevant summary of the variation of experience about certain phenomena (that is, as indicated in the category of description). I needed to complete this kind of analysis for each of the bracketed
out ideas that came from each of the already themed categories, in order to make justifiable correlations to Wagner’s domain.

To recap, in sub-Section 3.8.5 in Chapter 3 - Methodology, the relationship of the categories of description to the working domain was posed. Description within those categories can be attributed partly to the implicit consideration of the data to the criteria presented in Table 3.8.5.

Table 3.8.5: Example: At the micro level, variation in experience of professional practice contributing to possible paucity management model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of description</th>
<th>Relationship to: ‘working conditions &amp; managerial responsibilities’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #1</td>
<td>Criteria to consider:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was the experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Exactly the same?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Similar?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Consistent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #2</td>
<td>What style of management did the manager exercise in implementing their model of management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was it a ‘model of paucity management’?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section considers the above relationship from two angles: Do the categories of description convey a narrative about community welfare service delivery that indicates the professional experience of managers is exactly the same, similar, different, or consistent [A]? And, do the categories of description convey a narrative about working conditions and managerial responsibilities that is exactly the same, similar, different, or consistent with Wagner’s domain characteristics [B]?

[A]: Overall, the managers displayed a consistent approach to their work. Although they did not deliberately try to ‘buck the system’, they engaged in one of two main strategies: they were either highly proactive in trying to find solutions ‘in the moment’, or they ‘sat’ on problems and kept coming back to them sometimes over a long period of time until a favourable outcome was achieved. Two examples come to mind, and they are from the same manager in Mudgee who always felt that a free legal aid service offered through her agency would be of huge benefit to those clients who otherwise had to travel to Dubbo or Lithgow to access legal help, and who also plotted and planned ways of letting her Diocese know how she was not happy about
their sudden exclusion of another staff member to attend regional meetings. In the first instance, she was supported emotionally by other colleagues in the community but also warned that such a service would not eventuate, or work. She used the experience in her postgraduate degree program as a formal project example that she planned, resourced and eventually implemented, after two years. At the time of conducting this research, she was still working out how to be diplomatic but firm, in the way she would approach her Diocese to gain a favourable outcome for her staff member. A stalemate had been reached after nearly nine months of agitating.

What style of management did the manager exercise in implementing their model of management? Further discussion will be given over to this question in the next part of the thesis but for now an observation is made that in many ways the managers all appeared to be fairly ‘hardened’. One reason could be that at least nine of them had worked previously in the Department of Community Services, and so they had experienced the anomalies in practice there that seem to go with an environment that is constantly under siege. Because of that experience, they had come to their current work determined to reach those who were most disadvantaged. And although they did appear determined, they all also showed a vulnerable side that came through in the manner in which they shared their stories at both the interviews and in the focus group discussions. During the interviews for example, one of the managers took me out of his workplace in Dubbo, to the café around the corner where we continued to talk. That place was his ‘escape’ from the rigors of the day, and the staff there knew him well. If I expected him to be relaxed and therefore all-revealing in that atmosphere, then I was to be both disappointed and enlightened. Disappointed because in fact he jumped from one topic to another without any seeming logical flow to his story but at that time it was also enlightening for the way his behaviour was revealing and consistent with several of the managers’ actions in displaying a degree of uncertainty. In Parkes, another manager took me into the meeting room for our interview, down what seemed to be a warren of corridors, so that we would not be disturbed in her office. Still another in Mudgee kept apologising for the piles of files on her floor and the fact that there was only the one lockable cabinet in her office that was being constantly accessed by others in the building.
There was almost a ‘watch-dog’ approach to how their information was to be shared, which leads one to surmise that although the managers have practice-wisdom honed from years of experience, and they appear to respond effortlessly to adverse situations, sometimes their behaviour and actions suggest practice that is being constantly observed, scrutinised, assessed, and evaluated. *Was it a ‘model of paucity management’?* While ever there are situations where managers behave in ways to minimise the perceived limitations of their work environment, whether from feelings of just being ‘watched’, they exercise a kind of paucity management model, and this is a question that is explored further in the next Part three of the chapter.

[B]: The commentary picks up on the relationship between the main characteristics from the ‘working conditions and managerial responsibilities’ domain [a] (Wagner and Spence 2003: pp. 50 and 51, Wagner and Mlcek 2005: pp. 95 and 96), and the work described from this research, in categories of description [b].

### Use of volunteers

| a. The general resource poverty of the sector is most obvious in working conditions for paid staff and the number of volunteers used to supplement the workforce. |
| Organisational practices surrounding these issues were manifold and some of them were in clear tension with professional standards and ethical practice. |
| b. There are similarities here to the use of volunteers. However managers are more aware of how their help should be utilised and try to implement ways in which they are used more effectively. For the three managers from Dubbo, the use of volunteers was problematic; they recognised the lack of skills in most and generally moved to accommodate volunteers in ‘light’ administrative duties only. For the managers from Orange, Parkes and Forbes, the practice appeared to sway from being intentional and deliberate, to strategic and selective, because the cache of experienced volunteers, who were knowledgeable about community welfare services, seemed greater. The use of volunteers in at least three of the work situations (Coonabarrabran, Orange, Parkes) appeared to be borderline ‘overuse’.* |
## Professionalisation of the sector

**a.** The overall professionalisation of the sector is low, and the work often stressful.

**b.** The work being stressful is consistent with the managers’ stories. However, the increased attention to becoming more professional in the sector gives a slightly different angle to the managers here who are starting to acquire useful skills, knowledge and understanding of how they can best deal with issues to do with their role. The situation is still not ideal, but increased access to relevant education courses has made this possible. All the managers had either completed professional qualifications, or were undertaking formal studies. One of the managers had just completed a TAFE diploma in community services, and five others were either completing or continuing their postgraduate degree studies in community welfare services through UWS and CSU. At least four others already had university degrees.

## Trade off

**a.** It appears that a trade off was taking place between material working conditions such as income, caseloads, working hours and the quality of the working environment.

**b.** This condition appears to be exactly the same for all the managers of this research. Managers expressed being tired and sometimes exhausted by their workloads; they juggled hours and became creative in how to provide services seemingly through a combination of being in the ‘right place at the right time’, and ‘on a whim and a prayer’.

## ‘Impoverishment’

**a.** In some organisations, impoverished working conditions were seen as a test of worker’s commitment. Willingness to self-exploit for the greater good, the needy client or heavenly rewards was occasionally implied as a qualification for community work.

**b.** There appear to be similarities with at least two of the managers’ situations (Dubbo, Lithgow) where they are trying to deliver a full complement of services on part-time hours. Others observed one of the situations as ‘definitely doing paucity management’. This behaviour may relate to the personality of the managers identified, as this trait was noted in
several of the stories. It is unclear whether managers here have ‘willingness to self-exploit’, but they do speak about being proud and resilient, and having passion for the work. They actually appear to be more pragmatic particularly in the way they both recruit each other onto their own management committees, or use their committees as useful support for what they do.

**Understanding and implementing regulations and standards**

| a. Problematic in this context (long-term organisational performance) was the lack of knowledge by 50 per cent of managers in the implementation of occupational health and safety legislation and associated practices. |
| b. There are still similarities to the current managers’ practice. However, they have become more aware of their responsibilities since Wagner’s studies. They are more proactive in becoming trained, and having staff trained, in how to implement the law in these areas. Over 60 per cent of the managers had undergone such training, and five of them had developed this awareness through formal university degree programs. The biggest concern from these managers was the implementation of workplace relations to do with wages, holiday pay and conditions. |

**‘Balancing act’**

| a. Managing the balancing act between the often-contradictory interests of clients, workers, managers and funding bodies is a core requirement of paucity management. Strategies that have the potential to enhance job satisfaction without resource implications are the most commonly used approach for this difficult management task. |
| b. These ideas are consistent with the current research findings. Responding to governance and accountability regimes was a core consideration for these managers and figured extensively in their stories. The ‘watchfulness’ implied in the above [A] section appears to engender however, more creative and innovative solutions to potential resource-poor situations. |

Overall, the research findings indicate that there are more similarities and consistent stories about working conditions and managerial responsibilities, than there are differences or being exactly the same, to the findings from the Wagner and Spence research that was conducted between 1999 and 2003. However, there are ‘more
things going on’ with the findings that are not wholly served by the interpretive use of paucity management theory alone. There can be no denying that at times the managers’ work appeared to be ‘mechanical’, such as undertaking repetitive daily routines connected to their service delivery, and where managers went through the motions of just getting on and serving their communities. But the experiences of management phenomena revealed multiple layers that overlapped the micro, mezzo and macro levels of engagement, and further interpretation was warranted. That is, in keeping to recommended phenomenographic practice, specificity was not necessarily the order of the day where an awareness of variation is more important.

In the following sub-section, I take the analytical variation of experience framework, and initial interpretation through a process that would allow the data to be enhanced through further interpretation that would add to paucity management theory.

5.1.1 Incorporating other levels to the interpretive framework

A further aspect to the interpretation framework comes from a place of awareness that more was happening in the managers’ world than first appeared, and the use of a ‘simple’ analysis process would not do justice to the data. That is, I could not do justice to the data collected if I did not approach it from the angles I pose in section 5.2. For me, constructing this framework has been a deliberate choice in reminding me of the possibilities of the multistage phenomenographic research methodology. In the end, the analysis framework has been re-designed to display the findings in a way that would incorporate several planes and levels of inquiry in order to gain a broader understanding of the community welfare managers’ work.

The theoretical underpinnings of the framework provide the schematic link I wanted to make between managerial responsibilities, working conditions, routinisation of practice across space and time, and emergent management styles including the ability to self-organise in situations of complexity. Community welfare practice was always going to be identified as having certain complexities based on the dynamic relationship of phenomena in the paucity environment, and the further interpretation of findings would begin to identify the level and extent to which this was the case.
An additional reading of the analysis framework indicates three interpretation levels
and I refer to these as planes. The different planes of my structure align to certain,
specific theoretical considerations: Wagner’s theory as already noted, Giddens’
Structuration Theory and in particular the notion of time-space distanciation, and the
application of chaos/ complexity themes to generate patterns of emergence and self-
organisation in work.

My inspiration for constructing this framework came from the need to reassess and
align two things: the multi layers exposed within the data, and the multi-stage
phenomenographic approach to analysis. The latter’s use upholds one of the guiding
principles of an approach that Marton (1981: 178) refers to as an “insider view” or
second order research (and here the distinction is made to first order research of
phenomenological studies) to describe the variation between conceptions. Marton
(1997: 4) maintains that describing the variation between conceptions is the most
powerful instrument for analysing phenomenographic data, “Once we have data
collected about people’s ways of experiencing certain phenomena that which varies
can be discerned. Variation is the object of research, at the same time it is the main
vehicle of research”. The analytical framework relies first on the data being ‘themed’
under the appropriate categories of description and then on the application of an
awareness of variation to the examples.

Cope (2002: 5, accessed [online] 15.11.07) used the words of Runesson (1999) to
illustrate how “a discerned aspect of a phenomenon can then be considered as a
dimension of variation (DoV) of the phenomenon with a particular value within the
potential variation”, that is a phenomenon consisting of dimensions of variation:

_How do I learn to experience the object in front of me as an old, big, blue
non-transparent teacup? The answer is: by experiencing a variation in
certain respects. To be able to discern those aspects of the cup I must relate
them to potential dimensions of variation. The “blue” of the cup for instance,
refers to a value in the dimension of colours. In order to be able to discern
the blue colour, I must previously have experienced other colours, like red,
green, white, etc. and in order to experience it as a non-transparent cup, I
must have seen the tea cups made of glass, for example. The way the cup is
experienced, the meaning I assign the object, is a function of the dimensions
of variation through which it can be seen. To be able to see what is the case I
must be able to see what is not the case._
In the next two parts of the chapter, the application of an awareness of variation in experience is presented through further theoretical interpretation, to support this new development in the multistage analytical process.
PART TWO: ASPECTS OF STRUCTURATION IN THE INTERPRETATION FRAMEWORK

Part two revisits the analytical framework in order to incorporate new levels of theoretical interpretation. Aspects of Giddens’ Structuration Theory have been selected to show the links between individual human actions and organisational structures. Firstly however, there needed to be some grounding in how aspects of Giddens’, Gleick’s, and Lewin’s work could be incorporated into the thesis. Reference begins with the inclusion of paucity management theory posed by Wagner and Spence.

In Section 5.2 an outline of the analytic framework of variation in experience is provided in table format, through attention to the criteria, relationships, and theoretical planes of interpretation. The application of the different planes in the interpretation process is then revealed in Section 5.3 and continued into Part three at Section 5.4.

5.2 Revisiting the analytic framework of variation in experience

What then would be a further appropriate framework of interpretation to use? I have already included aspects of Wagner’s work to inform the categories of description (refer back to section 5.1), but using the ideas from Giddens, Gleick and Lewin, would provide alignment to structuration processes in the community welfare sector, and the application of chaos/complexity notions about service delivery work. Their inclusion in a revised framework of variation in experience presented in section 5.1, with criteria sourced from sub-Section 3.8.5, would become part of the ‘scholarly makeup’ to establish relationships from the data. The ‘driver’ to identify these relationships came from a structure of awareness of variation framework (see Diagram 5.2.1 in the next sub-section), which was used to extend the interpretation vehicle for the research. Including a dimension of variation (DoV) factor to the
interpretation process would also provide a basis upon which to make conclusions about the style of management used by the managers.

However, in then trying to reproduce the ‘simultaneity’ of presenting multiple layers at the one time, the above level of awareness needed to be transposed in a more accessible, transferable, and usable way. So from the structure of awareness of variation in experience, further interpretation of the data at different inquiry levels – that is, micro, mezzo and macro - would be reported using tables to represent the relationship and outcomes from criteria indicated in the following table example (Table 5.2):

### Table 5.2: Example: At the micro level, structure of awareness of variation in experience of professional practice contributing to possible paucity management model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of description</th>
<th>Relationship A – working conditions &amp; managerial responsibilities</th>
<th>Relationship B – span of time-space distanciation</th>
<th>Relationship C – extent and level of self-organisation and emergence</th>
<th>Dimension of variation (DoV) &amp; type of emergent behaviour (strategies &amp; style)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of description #1</strong></td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the experience</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the time-space span greater, smaller, non-existent, based on ‘work scripts’ that supplied either ‘authoritative’ or ‘allocative’ resourcing?</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the behaviour</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: What style of management did the manager exercise in implementing their model of management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of description #2</strong></td>
<td>- Exactly the same?</td>
<td>- reactionary</td>
<td>- spontaneous?</td>
<td>Was it a ‘model of paucity management’?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of description #3</strong></td>
<td>- Similar?</td>
<td>- transactive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of description #4</strong></td>
<td>- Different?</td>
<td>- planned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Consistent?</td>
<td>- entrepreneurial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In column three, the ‘work scripts’ were aligned to those from the organisation, agency/manager, government, management committee, or peak organisation. The shaded fifth column was used to pose initial awareness of emerging styles of management and then further elaborated in the next Chapter 6 – Discussion. Having these ideas here, as an outcome of a revised framework, was an indication of where I hoped to end up.
5.2.1 ‘Planes’ of the structure of awareness of variation

The revised interpretation framework has been established at 5.2, but where did that analytical structure come from? In fact this framework supports an embedded ‘other’ structure – structure of awareness of variation framework. I give an outline here of the different ‘planes’ of the framework which began as a response to incorporate the structure of awareness of phenomena that Marton and Booth (1997) used in their studies, and which they based on the field of consciousness work of Gurwitsch (1964, cited in Cope 2002, accessed [online] 15.11.07). Diagram 5.2.1 (taken from research notes - memo) was created in a moment of ‘epiphany’ about how the ideas from the above authors’ work, could possibly work for handling the data in this research.

Diagram 5.2.1: Example: diagram of the development of the interpretation framework of a structure of awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First – levels of awareness</th>
<th>Thematic field</th>
<th>Themes (categories of description, and aspects of a phenomenon)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second – overlapping levels of awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Margin</th>
<th>Thematic field</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External horizon</td>
<td>Internal horizon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Third – ‘planes’ of the analytic framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gleick’s Chaos Theory, Lewin’s Complexity Theory – emergence and self-organisation factors</th>
<th>Giddens’ time-space distanciation category of Structuration Theory</th>
<th>Wagner’s domain of ‘working conditions and managerial responsibility’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Fourth – levels of inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro level of enquiry</th>
<th>Mezzo level of enquiry</th>
<th>Micro level of enquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My understanding of the diagram is to indicate that in the first part there are three overlapping levels of awareness: the margin, the thematic field and the theme, which are indicated through graduated shadings that appear to flow one into the other. The external horizon reaches across both the margin and thematic field as indicated by the direction of the arrows and similarly, the internal horizon is indicated to cover the theme. Cope (2002) suggests the following explanation for a similar structure of awareness,
When contemplating some phenomenon in the world … an individual’s awareness is likely to consist of aspects of phenomenon triggered by the context. These aspects will be simultaneously present in awareness and are known collectively as the thematic field…. Out of all the aspects making up the thematic field, a number of related aspects of the phenomenon will emerge and become the focus of awareness.

The related aspects are what I perceive to be the themes of awareness, or categories of description. Important for the way that I have ‘overlaid’ the theoretical planes to this framework is that there will be interesting things about the managers’ particular world and context that are not necessarily connected to experiencing a specific phenomenon, that is, they will not fall into the specific category of description, but they will nevertheless trigger other kinds of awareness that have an impact on reading the whole situation of managers’ work. These seemingly non-related aspects of the managers’ context make up the margin of awareness. I am thinking here of when a manager might be speaking about experiencing a particular phenomenon, say ‘professional practice is experienced as work within structural constraints’ but on the margins of my awareness, I pick up an awareness of a possible ethical dilemma, and one that may have broader systemic implications on a global level.

In the diagram above I indicate the external and internal horizons that appear to draw together the components of the second part of the framework. Martin and Booth (1997) describe the internal horizon as one that consists of aspects of a phenomenon (for example, manager’s work practices = what is the experience of professional practice and how is this manifested within structural constraints?) that is simultaneously present in a theme of awareness (for example, category of description = ‘professional practice is experienced as work within structural constraints’). The relationship is very important to this ‘new’ theoretical interpretation framework, between those aspects (for example, ‘use of volunteers’, ‘utilising volunteers for the survival of service’) and also between the aspects and the phenomenon as a whole (for example, manager’s work practices as indicated by professional practice within structural constraints).

As the Reader moves into the next Sections (5.3 and 5.4) that deal with the application of the theoretical framework, accepting the relationship espoused in the
last paragraph is critical to understanding further the links that can be made to expanding the interpretation of data from additional theoretical lenses.
5.3 Application of the interpretation framework using structuration processes

In this section, the use of Giddens’ time-space distanciation concept as part of the interpretation framework was seen as a chance to cast a sociological gaze on the research but still continuing the contextual approach of the Wagner and Spence domain. The reliability and validity of this approach is that it intersects with specific ideas contained in Giddens’ *Structuration Theory* (1984) about social integration and system integration, and particularly the enactment of time and space in work practices (social life). I considered the following quote to give meaning to these ideas:

*Anthony Giddens (1984) sought to show how direct face-to-face interaction with those co-present in time and/or space (‘social integration’) is wired to systems of mediated interaction with those who are absent in time and/or space (‘system integration’) through the continuous ‘binding’ of time and space into the conduct of social life* (Gregory 1981, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: 111).

Wagner and Spence’s domain seem to me to make Giddens’ concepts a little more explicit; they are complimentary, or even two sides of the same coin.

5.3.1 Structuration Theory

For the purpose of this research, Structuration Theory “seeks to elucidate the intersections between knowledgeable and capable human agents and the wider social systems and structures in which they are implicated” (Gregory 2000, in Johnstone et al [eds.] 2000: 278). That is, fundamentally the theory points to social processes (intersections of communication, power, and sanctioning) that are adopted by organisations in their approach to manage people. In a reciprocal way, people’s actions also determine the approaches that organisations will take. Aspects of Giddens’ Structuration Theory (1984, 1990) straddle inquiry on both mezzo and macro levels and the key, for example, to play in the macro-system and mezzo-system, is flexibility and articulation. Structures are articulated through interaction between each organisation and their agencies, they are articulated by people in an interplay of rule-governed, practice-fulfilling situations and through these
interactions there are continuing changes and negotiations taking place. As Giddens (1984: 17) writes about ‘structuration’,

... social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have ‘structures’ but rather exhibit ‘structural properties’ and ... structure exists, as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human beings ... The most deeply embedded structural properties, implicated in the reproduction of social totalities, I call structural principles. The practices that have the greatest time-space extension within such totalities can be referred to as institutions.

The ‘intersections’ within Structuration Theory include three fundamental concepts: 

reflexivity and the level and extent to which people use skills to produce and reproduce social life; recursiveness whereby social life moves forward under conditions that are not always understood or intentional, and regionalisation in which social life continues through interactions that happen both routinely between people who are co-present in time and/or space, but also about “relations that reach beyond the here and now” (Gregory 2000: 799).

The following Figure 5.3.1: An application of time-space relations [using Structuration Theory] (summarised and adapted from the work of Gregory 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: 799) presents as a road map to explore facets of community welfare service delivery. Giddens’ work provides an interpretive link to the notion of ‘practice bounded by structure’ that figured as a category of description identified as one of the themes from the data. Practice is always bounded by structure of some kind and the presence or absence of people who make decisions is fascinating for the influence in helping to define practice, for example, ‘our Director decides what service we do – she makes the policy decision’ (example – field notes – interviews). In reference to the following Figure 6.3.1, I deliberately noted the Director with a capital D as a way to illustrate possibly, the aspect of time-space distanciation (Giddens 1979, 1981, 1984, 1985).
From the above diagram, *regionalisation* takes a central place to also indicate the possible affiliation of community welfare services to a particular organisation and its ability to manage people through certain social processes, such as rules, and regulations determined by a combination of institutional ideology and government policies. *Societal integration* in the diagram is the reciprocal ‘dance’ of influences on systems and by systems to influence the makeup of society. The *contextuality* focus relates to the impact possibly on what is happening at the community welfare service agency level, and this impact in turn provides the operation of day-to-day routines. *Time-space distanciation* and *time-space routinisation* involve conditions and processes in which community welfare workers can reflect on their behaviour and activities in order to influence the structure of society. Even from their sub-culture level, they can either reproduce the current organisational and agency practices, or change them.
Time-space distanciation also refers to the *lag of time* from one location space to another (and this lag could be either great or small), and could impact different perspectives on environment, resources, communication, and other aspects of delivery such as the characteristics of communities. The phenomenon is similar to the ‘closeness to and distance from’, the relational contact and communications work of Kuhnle and Selle (1990: 173). These points are some of the considerations on which to hang the epistemic existence of phenomena that impact a resource-poor environment.

Implicit in the above diagram is the ever-increasing ‘colonisation’ of the lifeworld through the rationalisation of systems (Habermas 1987). This idea of colonisation is contained in the regionalisation dimension of time-space routinisation that presents another means to articulate the way that social life is channelled into and out of the site of community welfare service delivery. The result can be a potentially volatile one, and is offset by the monitoring and modification processes exhibited by the managers, and inherent in the *reflexivity* behind structuration (Giddens 1990: pp. 38-39). I have alluded to this aspect in other places in the thesis, and the impact of structure on practice, manifested through the different social relationships that engage the managers is given useful clarification from Giddens’ words (1984: 83):

> Social systems only exist in and through the continuity of social practices, fading away in time. But some of the structural properties are best characterised as ‘position-practice’ relations. Social positions are constituted structurally as specific intersections of signification, domination and legitimation, which relates to the typification of agents.

**5.3.2 Using the structuration ‘plane’ in the interpretation process**

*So how would I use aspects of the structuration concept in my interpretation framework to the managers’ stories?* In looking at managers’ experience at a micro level, I needed to become aware of what was being ‘said’ at the mezzo and macro levels and ‘map’ accordingly. This is where my awareness of activity at the margin, within the thematic field, and within the themes of practice became useful (refer back to Diagram 5.2.1). The research data suggests that Giddens’ time-space distanciation is implicit in relations in the rural community welfare sector, particularly in the idea
of ‘systems of mediated interaction’ that could be applied to anything and anyone in the context of service delivery. Eversole (2003: 83) for example, notes that

> Community energy does not negate the need for higher-level support … the answer to economic problems is found neither at the ‘top’ nor at the ‘bottom’ but in the combinations of resources, open dialogue, and the will to make good ideas happen.

A relevant example from the data that relates to the above ideas comes from the managers recounting in their stories to past work experiences mostly working in DoCS. Now for Giddens, structures can be contextualised as memory traces (refer back to 5.3.1), and for the community welfare managers their experiences can act as either regulating factors or enabling resources to be drawn upon recursively. The way in which they reconstitute the experience of working with government departments, for example, may be based on the knowledge of influential institutional practices in providing *allocative resources* through exercising *authoritative resourcing*. That is, resources have both an allocative and authoritative quality built across time and space; all concepts being principles of structuration, and the best example to use in the context of community service delivery is when government departments have authority over managers (people) in allocating funding (material goods). From the data, the time-space extension between managers and their past work experiences appeared to have both a fairly immediate place in some of the managers’ lives (Bathurst, Kelso, Dubbo), or a long period of time for others (Dubbo, Mudgee, Lithgow, Orange, Parkes, Forbes). Overall, the time-space distanciation between the submission for, and allocation of funding, appeared to be greater for these rurally placed managers.

Further suitable time-space considerations ranged from the bureaucracy of the organisations themselves based in different geographical places, to other agencies that existed together in the same area. Mediation also evolved from the *modus operandi* of agencies attempting to counteract organisational on-site rules and regulations and practice behaviour, to the formal influence of government departments that operated out of areas and spaces removed from the actual agencies of service delivery. One specific example arose in the almost dichotomous situation
between partnerships being advocated through government discourse but the managers seeing this notion as being just another example of government rhetoric. The indication of time-space distanciation surfaces when trying to decide whether to operationalise partnerships in a triad relationship, for example, between the rural manager in the agency receiving implementation policy guidelines from the national office of the organisation in another area that is an urban town, which in turn bases its practice on the policy direction of a government that is the main player in the ‘mediated system’.

An aspect of structuration relates to the idea of managers being in direct face-to-face interaction with those people co-present in time and/or space, and especially to the purpose and extent of their interaction on the ground (at the coal-face) with community clients/customers of their services who live in the same area. These concepts about structuration have a reputation for either making a lot of sense (particularly to social theorists), or no sense at all to those of us who do not normally operate from this standpoint, or who see his theories as being unwieldy from a methodological stance (see for example Archer 1990), but for me on first reading Giddens’ work and particularly through the application of others, I felt an instant instinctual ‘pull’ that the work would suit my own research. In another example, contrasting ideas whereby ‘we are area-wide and not necessarily town-wide’ and ‘we are not flexible here in our work – we expect people to work for the mission/ethos of the organisation’ (examples – field notes – interviews), created so many questions in my mind about how and why managers conducted their daily activities.

Finally, and in reference back to sub-Section 5.3.1, aspects of Giddens’ Structuration Theory straddle the relationship that the managers have with the hybrid government organisation particularly in terms of flexibility and articulation. Structures are articulated through interaction between each organisation and their agencies, they are articulated by people in an interplay of rule-governed, practice-fulfilling situations and through these interactions there are continuing changes and negotiations taking place. The managers together with the funding departments/bodies, complete competitive tendering and applications for funding in a constant cycle of negotiating criteria, changing criteria, addressing criteria, and reporting on criteria.
PART THREE: INTERPRETING WORK EXPERIENCES THROUGH CHAOS AND COMPLEXITY THEORY

Part three of Chapter 5 extends the theoretical interpretation framework with the inclusion of work about Chaos Theory from Gleick (1988), and ideas about complexity from Lewin (1999). Section 5.4 clarifies for the Reader the important idea that ‘chaos’ is not just about randomness and uncontrolled, out-of-control behaviour and activity, and ‘complexity’ does not just call for adaptability and flexibility. Chaos/complexity situations are inherent within dynamical contexts that are akin to those in community welfare service delivery, and require much more proactive planning and seeking actions than would first appear. The data actually infers these kinds of actions and the theoretical interpretation in the next section draws out some clear examples.

5.4 Application of the interpretation framework using aspects of chaos/complexity

In this section, aspects of Chaos Theory and Complexity Theory (chaos/complexity) are explained for their relevant use in interpreting community welfare managers’ activities and behaviour. The third aspect of the theoretical plane of my framework became relevant through its relation to emergence and self-organisation, and in a way, to how the managers could re-invent themselves. The question may be asked, well so what? In reply I would answer that chaos/complexity is better posed as an analytical category like that of Wagner’s concept ‘paucity management’, and like the other two theoretical stances in my framework, it is concerned with the patterns of behaviour, so it is ideal in forming part of the analytical framework for this research. It provides a way for further understanding the complex trialectic of ‘absence’, ‘presence’ and ‘co-presence’ that is implicit in the resource-poor situations of community welfare managers’ practice.
5.4.1 Chaos/ Complexity Theories

Chaos Theory originates from the mathematical term ‘chaos’ that refers to “relationships between variables which show no order” (Johnston 2000, cited in Johnston et al. [eds.] 2000: 75). Meteorologists in the 1960s and 1970s, used the concept of chaos to interpret patterns of activity in weather, and this latter idea of activity is the one that is of interest to this research. In such patterns, linear systems are said to be straightforward, fluid and mechanical, while nonlinear systems start to include relationships of phenomena that get more complicated. Ideas from the science of Complexity (Lewin 1999) indicate that most people think of chaos as being random, but in nonlinear dynamical systems, this is not the case. The concept is seen as a subset of complexity, which in turn is concerned with “structure and order” (Lewin 1999: 10).

This research is actually interested in the “way through disorder” (Gleick 1988: 3). In regard to social situations, behaviour has the potential to be repeated but never really replicated exactly across all like situations because of the different components at work, and at different times. Chaos/complexity helps to identify that these situations work to certain patterns, albeit “with disturbances. An orderly disorder” (Gleick 1988: 15). That is, the fundamental elements of repetition and predictability that come from chaos/complexity are important considerations for interpreting characteristics of social situations.

There are two examples to help understand chaos/complexity phenomena at work. The first relates to the way that the splash and rippling effect of patterns eventually stabilises when a stone is thrown into a large pool of water. For a period of time, the pattern is uniform in its concentricity, until it becomes erratic or random, and then morphs into another consistent pattern. The nonlinearity in producing the rippling effect (heaviness of the stone, velocity of the throw, depth of the water) could affect either the stabilisation of the pattern, or the disruption of it. The chaos part happens somewhere around the random stage, and the complexity part happens somewhere before the morphing stage. That is, from total randomness on one side, to total order on the other side, and complexity happens somewhere in between. The second example of chaos/complexity at work relates to speculation about chaos in one of the most dynamical human systems – the heart – and the incidence of periodic and
nonperiodic activity. Taken from Gleick (1988: 280), “the normal cardiac regime is periodic, but there are many nonperiodic pathologies (like ventricular fibrillation) which lead to the steady state of death”. It is this combination of periodic, nonperiodic, and steadiness of behaviour and activity that has further relevance to interpretation of the research data.

5.4.2 Using the ‘planes’ of chaos/complexity in the interpretation process
Chaos/complexity is situated for me in this research, at the margin of awareness, in just the faint idea for me at an initial reading of the interview data, that one of the ways that managers are able to define what they do is by stating what they do not do, or by comparing their practices to what other services or agencies may do or not do. The explanations are not always straightforward, and neither are they the same for ‘like’ agencies; they are complex through variation and yet are still ‘visible’. The link is made to how knowledge itself is appropriated on several different levels, including the cognitive and intuitive levels. For example, Lewin (2001: 14) suggested that “there is tremendous scope for confusion over terms, like chaos and complexity”, but intuitively, I was just as interested in complex systems that produced order, so I was comfortable in revisiting the notion of chaos/complexity to give further understanding to the nonlinearity of community welfare work. That is, services do not happen along a ‘straight line’. Quite often they are compromised in several different ways and managers need to seek out patterns of behaviour that result in the most appropriate outcomes for communities.

Nonlinearity in community welfare services delivery means that the act of ‘playing the game’ can in fact result in ways of changing the rules. For example, when other phenomena are introduced to a seemingly ‘simple’ situation, outcomes may have to be achieved through appropriating and changing canonical ways of doing things. When a community welfare manager is offered information about the probability of needing to think about partnerships as a useful model of service delivery, the ‘linearity’ of their practice is hardly affected. However, when the same manager is ‘bombarded’ with even more information from peak organisations trying to implement government purchaser/provider models, and the message behind the information has a suggestion of more mandatory actions required, initial erratic or
random behaviour may be the consequence of too much nonlinearity in that situation. Until the manager’s understanding of options and choices is stabilised, or rules and regulations changed in some way, patterns of behaviour oscillate, as in any dynamical system, between randomness and order.

Ideas from chaos/complexity tell us that not all ‘complex’ activity leads to adaptability (Lewin 1999: 15). In fact, complex situations that also have the potential to become “turbulent” can lead to inactivity and to behaviour being subjugated through feelings of becoming overwhelmed. In complex systems, the trick is not to isolate individual components to try to know what is really going on in a situation, because conflicts of understanding are bound to occur. Intuition is sometimes the only real guiding way of thinking about problems and, as Gleick (1987: 185) writes, “in the end, to understand you have to change gears. You have to reassemble how you conceive of the important things that are going on”. Two possibilities arise from Gleick’s statement: one relates to my reading of a manager’s situation from the data, and two indicates the ‘reading’ of a situation by the manager herself. So, from my structure of awareness of the variation in experience of structure as a constraint on these managers, I note that yes, managers are aware of the boundaries of their reality in terms of their allegiance to their organisations. But, in ‘changing gears’, they do not just adapt when they come up against problems or issues of delivery, they are “pattern seekers” for the purpose of introducing order (Lewin 1999: 16). There are useful examples throughout the study that highlight the seeking and changing gears phenomenon.

The manager from Mudgee, who faced a change in the type of service delivered on already targeted funding, used her relationship with the local high school headmaster to ascertain the changing needs within the community. Why did she go to him and not take at face value the marked response of families with high school children, to her original intention of setting up an under-five care program with targeted funding? From what was ‘not stated’, but there at the margin of awareness, was the need of the manager to deliberately seek out a valid and possibly influential community member to support her changes to the funded program. There were other dimensions impacting that transaction including, the funding already being available for a designated clientele, the visits to that outlying community happening only on at
least a fortnightly basis, a captive though unexpected audience, and a manager being on-site in that community where she would not normally be. In line with chaos/complexity the manager restored order from seeming ‘chaos’.

In coming to the end of Part three, the Reader is asked to be aware that underlying all the actions that indicate instances of time-space distanciation, or chaos/complexity elements, quite often depends on the manner and extent to which managers draw upon resources to enact and sustain professional practice. In the next part of the chapter, the managers’ style of management is highlighted through summarising activity and levels of engagement.
PART FOUR: STYLES OF MANAGEMENT EVOLVE FROM DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION IN PRACTICE

Styles of management can originate from at least scientific management, psychological, philosophical, behavioural, or social and cultural origins, and help to determine the kind of strategies that are implemented by managers (Robbins et al 2000). A managerial style could see a manager focused on the bottom line, or attending to accountability issues. A pragmatic style will have a manager making the right decisions to get the job done in order to achieve the most favourable outcomes. A seeking style of management will find a manager balancing activity between coping and adjusting in order to achieve quality outcomes. Adopting a mentoring style sees the manager being concerned with the wellbeing of workers, their training issues, and the kinds of tasks they undertake. And still further, an inclusive style means that a manager will do all they can to develop open and transparent communication with their workers.

Culturally, a ‘Japanese-management style’ is concerned with quality assurance, and sub-culturally, a community welfare service style of management is generally associated with a ‘caring’ orientation. Of course all the above styles of management are not wholly definitive of how practice is enacted, and they have the potential to be noted in a ‘surface level labelling’ manner that belies the more probable reality that managers adopt different styles throughout the course of a given day depending on the situation at hand. But in looking to address the aim of the research, this part of the chapter proceeds with the acknowledgement that there is still merit in the following question: which style is best, or consistently adopted in enacting paucity management?

In this last part of the chapter, the Reader is taken through a unifying Section (5.5) that highlights the importance of simultaneity in viewing dynamical systems such as community welfare service delivery. Then, an amalgamating Section (5.6), presents information simultaneously, in relationship tables that refer to an amalgamation of the theory-driven interpretations in relation to the categories of description, and
include the sensitising concept of dimensions of variation (DoV) to give an indication of styles of management used. The idea is taken from Blumer (1969, cited in Bulmer [ed.] 1984: 243) that sensitising concepts are not meant to be definitive, but instead provide a direction for what to see from what is possible.

5.5 ‘Unifying’ variational levels of organisational and paucity management practice

Each aspect of my theoretical framework has the potential to create variation in the managers’ experiences of something (the phenomena). With this framework I could start my awareness from any aspect. When managers *told* what they did, I gained awareness of their experiences through the use of my analytical framework of a structure of awareness of variation of experience. I ‘tagged’ some of what they said in response to trigger questions, into some kind of themes (later as appropriate categories of description). That was an initial reaction and simultaneously, I chose an aspect of what they said to explore something else to which I could relate, perhaps at a later stage, to further themes, the thematic field, or the margin of my awareness.

The value of what they said is the thing that will be magnified in terms of how their stories are reconciled by clear actions.

I could see that aspects of the ‘planes’ in my awareness framework (refer to subsection 5.2.1) became then an integral part to the whole analysis/interpretation process. I scrutinised those developments when looking at managers’ experience through the relationships and correlation of factors revealed by analysing criteria from my variation of experience framework (refer back to Table 5.2), and for the purpose of interpreting particular kinds of practice or style of management.

The following diagram (Diagram 5.5: The effect of embedding factors from one framework to another) shows how I superimposed parts of my *awareness of variation* framework onto my *variation of experience* one, to show the effect of embedding the ‘other’ in a kind of dense connection not unlike a complex, dynamical system.
### Diagram 5.5: The effect of embedding factors from one framework to another

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of description</th>
<th>Relationship A – working conditions &amp; managerial responsibilities</th>
<th>Relationship B – span of time-space distanciation</th>
<th>Relationship C – extent and level of self-organisation and emergence</th>
<th>Degree of variation (DoV) &amp; type of emergent behaviour (strategies &amp; style)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEMES</strong></td>
<td><strong>THEMATIC FIELD</strong></td>
<td><strong>MARGIN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Mezzo</td>
<td>Macro</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category of description #1</strong></td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the experience</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the time-space span greater, smaller, non-existent, based on ‘work scripts’ that supplied either ‘authoritative’ or ‘allocative’ resourcing?</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the behaviour</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: What style of management did the manager exercise in implementing their model of management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #2</td>
<td>- Exactly the same?</td>
<td>- reactionary</td>
<td>- spontaneous?</td>
<td>- Was it a ‘model of paucity management’?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #3</td>
<td>- Similar?</td>
<td>- transactive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #4</td>
<td>- Different?</td>
<td>- planned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Consistent?</td>
<td>- entrepreneurial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following Booth and Hultén (2003: pp. 69-70), there are three essential terms that I had in the back of my mind as I approached further interpretation of the managers’ situations – variation, discernment, and simultaneity. The ultimate variation occurs when

… things are seen in distinctly new ways when a dimension of variation opens around a phenomenon or aspect of phenomenon that once was taken-for-granted. “Discernment” is the act of seeing this no-longer-taken-for-granted phenomenon or aspect of phenomenon in a new light. “Simultaneity” – seeing both the once-taken-for-granted and the no-longer-taken-for-granted – is demanded for the dimension of variation to open.

As mentioned previously, dimension of variation (DoV) relates to the different aspects of experiencing a particular phenomenon. Contributing factors to the DoV are the values of the experience and the perceived relationship between aspects of the external and internal horizon of my framework. The overall ‘phenomenon’ is the managers’ work practices that relate to paucity management, and in particular whether these could be deemed to be models of paucity management.
When I applied what I saw as the contextual approach lens of the Wagner and Spence domain to the managers’ different experiences, I was skimming off the ‘discernment plane’. For example, when this was related to managers’ experience as innovative practice, I could see that there were several things going on in each of the parts of awareness of the phenomenon of innovative practice. This occurred particularly when I fielded accompanying manager’s dialogue about this same kind of experience and then I started to sift through what the manager was actually saying about their experiences.

When I applied my understanding of the sociological gaze of Giddens’ time-space distanciation to the managers’ same experience, I found some interesting developments that related to the influence of more of the aspects from the thematic field and margin of awareness – the impact of those individuals co-present in time and space to those who were absent – and I was both discerning and noticing other things, simultaneously.

Then, when I applied what I felt to be the transformative arm of aspects of emergence and self-organisation from chaos/complexity theories to the manager’s experience as innovative practice, I arrived at another interesting dimension of variation; at a level of conception mapping that gave an interesting depth of understanding to juxtapositions of ideas in time and space, but again, this was all done in a process of ‘simultaneity’

The point I am trying to convey here about the application of an analytical framework that is multi-faceted, albeit seemingly theoretically dense, is that its use remained true for every manager’s experiences across three levels of inquiry; micro, mezzo and macro, and to questions that related to three planes of awareness: what did it look like in the internal horizon [the theme], what did it look like in the ‘middle zone’ [the thematic field], and what did it look like on the external horizon [margin]? These questions provided a pivotal focus for drawing together all the threads of interpretation.
5.6 Amalgamating interpretation levels about work practices and management styles

Variation in practice experience is now captured as a more collective experience, interpreted through the different organisational levels – micro, mezzo and macro – into tables set out in the next sub-sections, and using the following criteria that was presented in Section 5.2:

**Table 5.2: Example:** At the micro level, *structure of awareness of variation in experience* of professional practice contributing to possible paucity management model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of description</th>
<th>Relationship A – working conditions &amp; managerial responsibilities</th>
<th>Relationship B – span of time-space distanciation</th>
<th>Relationship C – extent and level of self-organisation and emergence</th>
<th>Degree of variation (DoV) &amp; type of emergent behaviour (strategies &amp; style)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #1</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the experience - Exactly the same? - Similar? - Different? - Consistent?</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the time-space span greater, smaller, non-existent, based on 'work scripts' that supplied either 'authoritative' or 'allocative' resourcing?</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: Was the behaviour - reactionary - transactive - planned - entrepreuneral - spontaneous?</td>
<td>Criteria to consider: What style of management did the manager exercise in implementing their model of management? Was it a 'model of paucity management'?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following three relationship tables should be read in reference to the criteria presented above, as well as through the lens of each of the relationships (A, B, & C) as they are applied to the broad amalgamation of the categories of description. The fifth column indicates the extent and level to which models of management are influenced by variation of experience, as well as the style and strategies of the managers.
5.6.1 Levels of interpretation table - experience at the micro level

Table 5.6.1: Micro level structure of awareness of variation in experience of professional practice contributing to possible paucity management model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of description</th>
<th>Relationship A – working conditions &amp; managerial responsibilities</th>
<th>Relationship B – span of time-space distanciation</th>
<th>Relationship C – extent and level of self-organisation and emergence</th>
<th>Dimension of variation (DoV) &amp; type of emergent behaviour (strategies &amp; style)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #1: professional experience as ethical practice</td>
<td>Managers straddled ethical boundaries in order to get the job done, including use of volunteers, and the way funding was attained. Different situations saw managers working staff and themselves beyond their roles and responsibilities in order to get the job done. They did this through innovative practice that was not so different from each other and related consistently to decision-making based on being opportunistic, flexible, pragmatic &amp; decisive.</td>
<td>Relationships with the hybrid government organisation allowed managers to be pragmatic and outcomes-focused. Despite some anomalies, the fact that several of the managers had worked for government departments before made it ‘easier’ for them ‘to play the game’, and the time-space span between knowing what and knowing how was to a certain extent, lessened because of that.</td>
<td>Managers’ work appeared to be defined by both constraints and purposeful action. Self-organisation was spontaneous and entrepreneurial to override barriers of government and organisational scripts, processes and procedures. Contrastingly however, managers’ activities appeared also to be subsumed into routines that are structured by mediating artifacts.</td>
<td>Managers are driven by what they do; they spoke of passion, needing to be ruthless sometimes, needing to be focused and balanced but prepared to ‘buck the system’ when needed. They also expressed vulnerability in having a lack of knowledge in some areas, welcoming the safety of working with a committee, or as part of a group of other services, that they could trust. DoV is not so great amongst the managers, and produces paucity management models that are practical because they are task-focused. The vigilant style used results in strategic and creative outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Category of description #2: professional experience as bounded by structure |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Category of description #3: professional experience as influenced by certain regimes |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Category of description #4: professional experience as being innovative and creative |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|

In summary, through my interpretation framework I am aware that managers’ practice is highlighted at the contextual level through an acknowledgement of contrasts, notably,
Through doing more with less
From listening not to just rhetoric, but practising consciously individual decision-making
Considering the distinction between ‘use’ and ‘utilise’
Registering the place of organisational philosophy compared to personal philosophy
Critiquing one’s own, and other’s, approach to funding sources, that is, being ‘non-judgemental’ but also aware of the differences in the way other organizations operationalised core principles.

Managers at this level are opportunistic, flexible but pragmatic, and increasingly decisive. Because ‘time’ was the greatest lack of resource “across all tasks and activities”, they needed to be adaptive and intuitive as well. It was about prioritising and thinking about the processes involved in problem solving whereby “in the end … you have to change gears. You have to reassemble how you conceive of the important things that are going on”. Their responses also indicated a concern about the ‘uniqueness of isolation”; being a unique service was about being different which also led to feelings of being in isolation from other providers. Travelling large distances was certainly a characteristic of their work even when “travelling is too awful sometimes to contemplate”. However, the main constraint came from the level and extent to which they knew and understood their role as community welfare workers and that, more than anything, appeared to come from the personification of having ‘resilience’ and being ‘privileged’.

At the micro-level, the core work of the managers included facilitating successful outcomes some of which were done automatically as fundamental to practice but with adjustments made along the way. The paucity management model at this level is one that emphasises the task-management role of the managers and their style of management was one of being vigilant. There is no conventional term for the ‘watchfulness’ behind this style; the latter actually allows for creative and innovative engagement. At a more fundamental level however, indications suggest that the conditioning of years of practice in having to ‘leave paper trails’ if only for the sake
of having a clear conscience about matters, was an endemic part of these managers’ work practice.

5.6.2 Levels of interpretation table – experience at the mezzo level

Table 5.6.2: Mezzo level structure of awareness of variation in experience of professional practice contributing to possible paucity management model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of description</th>
<th>Relationship A – working conditions &amp; managerial responsibilities</th>
<th>Relationship B – span of time-space distanciation</th>
<th>Relationship C – extent and level of self-organisation and emergence</th>
<th>Dimension of variation (DoV) &amp; type of emergent behaviour (strategies &amp; style)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #1: professional experience as ethical practice</td>
<td>Managers worked consistently in a ‘bombardment zone’ that meant engaging on different relational levels. Their responsibilities covered communication with self, organisation, other organisations in the third sector, peak organisations, government departments, and community members.</td>
<td>Working with hybrid government organisations created a greater time-space span at this level because of lack of proximity; of managers being rural-centred and government departments being urban-centred. Managers were in a constant state of interruption and so engaged in and employed multiple survival tactics.</td>
<td>Particular sets of managers reacted spontaneously to come together in order to apply for funding, or collaborate on a particular project. This happened almost on ‘auto-pilot’ mode, and was entrepreneurial as well as pragmatic. The practice was more reactionary than planned, and built strongly on trust.</td>
<td>Managers applied the ‘rules of the game’ at every different level of interaction, which meant they were both transactive and reactive. However, they negotiated around the organisational opus operatum, to allow for a certain degree of modus operandi, in order to act on those aspects that are key to the situation at hand. The DoV in practice was very small across all the managers. At this level they used mostly a contingency model of paucity management and employed a seeking coping style, to address the potential limiting situations of relationship building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #2: professional experience as bounded by structure</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Category of description #3: professional experience as influenced by certain regimes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #4: professional experience as being innovative and creative</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

At this mezzo level, managers created stability in their service delivery by sometimes compromising their position in order to remain sustainable or enable funding to continue. That is, they ‘stretched’ the use of volunteers and paid staff to achieve
formal delivery of service delivery programs, sometimes outside the realm of good human resources practice. They also participated in pragmatic decision-making ‘on-the-spot’ where agendas were sometimes changed in order not to lose funds.

At the mezzo level there is little doubt that social relations are developed through the many and varied *spatialisations* of both spontaneous and planned activity some of which included ways of reporting and completing funding submissions and in other ways, by mirroring the core activities of peak organisations: information seeking and dissemination; coordination and networking activities.

And although the picture of innovative practice at this level is a somewhat ambiguous one, including a large degree of reticence and sometimes skepticism about ‘joining the big boys in town’, what is most interesting here, is the *reframing* of activity to be not just about working with ‘poor resources’ – paucity management – but about being ‘creative in daily operations’, ‘flexible in ways of acquiring funding’ and ‘innovative in the big strategic management situations’. These examples of activity were fairly consistent for all the managers and therefore the DoV was fairly small. In their practice, the ‘creativity’ mentioned here is a little different to the kind found at the micro level (which is more ‘street-wise’), and overall the more *seeking* style of management employed relates to the use of coping and adjusting mechanisms in order to engage in a *contingency* model of paucity management.
Table 5.6.3: *Macro level structure of awareness of variation in experience of professional practice contributing to possible paucity management model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of description</th>
<th>Relationship A – working conditions &amp; managerial responsibilities</th>
<th>Relationship B – span of time-space distanciation</th>
<th>Relationship C – extent and level of self-organisation and emergence</th>
<th>Dimension of variation (DoV) &amp; type of emergent behaviour (strategies &amp; style)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #1: professional experience as ethical practice</td>
<td>Roles include a lot more monitoring and control of processes to comply with governance and legislative requirements. Managers seek the assistance of their peak organisations in particular to give them guidance about the above issues. They also rely heavily on their management committees to give them both autonomy and support.</td>
<td>The time-space span is smaller because the managers need to be, and are, much more knowledgeable about the role of governments and influence of peak organisations to affect their service delivery. Managers respond to risk management where people come and go in government departments resulting in inevitable instability.</td>
<td>Managers are concerned with the 'bigger picture'. They need to find ways to invest and plan for training of their staff and for themselves. The environment is much more scrutinised and regulated. They need to think carefully of networks and relationships with others; to be entrepreneurial and innovative. At the same time, managers can be 'opportunistic' about sustaining their original work. Networking and forming relationships at the micro level have implications for global styles of working, which was not the same as being part of the same management model, or service delivery type; these styles were complimentary.</td>
<td>Managers are more expansive, knowledgeable, accountable, and yet more 'free' to do what they need to as they are supported by management committees (e.g.). Resilience counteracts resource insufficiency and creates a supportive work environment. The DoV presents as slightly different across the managers based on available resourcing, knowledge and know-how. Overall they adopt either a supportive and inclusive style of management, or a somewhat reactive style. Both styles figure in a paucity management model that is overlaid with notions of feeling privileged and having resilience to work for the community. In the face of coping with a 'changing of the guard' syndrome, managers need the right personality to get things done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of description #2: professional experience as bounded by structure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Category of description #3: professional experience as influenced by certain regimes</td>
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</table>

There are similarities here to the mezzo level of organisational activity in that the macro level is best exemplified through the consideration of roles and relationships with others. For example, the commentary above introduced the role and influence of peak organisations and it seems that managers facilitated the process of interaction with peak organisations, and more knowledgeable others, to enable them to know
what to do in terms of accountability and governance at a higher, more global level. However, managers also try to maintain stability in their service delivery despite external influences. That is, the managers’ state of service equilibrium is never guaranteed because their working environment, like many others, is complex and yields endless possibilities. Their work is ‘kick-started’ from the outside; influenced by government policy, third sector ideology and direction, and organisational philosophy and practices.

On the margins of awareness, there are practices that appear to be of a political nature – ‘hinted at’ – and out of the control of the managers, such as the way that funding decisions are sometimes pre-determined. The general resource poverty of the community welfare sector is most obvious in working conditions for paid staff and the number of volunteers used to supplement the workforce. There appear to be organisational practices surrounding these issues that are manifold and some of them were in clear tension with professional standards and ethical practice.

Managers appear to wrestle constantly with ethical dilemmas. The influence of organisation ideology and ethical boundaries happen at the margins of practice as much as within the fields of practice; they are both ‘present’ and ‘absent’, and are implicated in every moment of action. What is sanctioned as professional practice for these managers is legitimated through a combination of norms of behaviour and moral ‘rules of the game’, that is they will ‘make use of the volunteers, but draw the line at just using them’, as well as being ‘fully accountable despite having a lot of autonomy’.

In response to their rural environment, managers appear to share resources in a strategic response to their conditions of work. Where resources cannot be shared, or if there are none to share, managers just ‘get on with it’. This appears to be part of the cultural makeup of being a community welfare worker. For example, they acted out behaviours that were expected of them and inadvertently planned for them, but they also extinguished sometimes, the patterns of their organisation, through choice and action. Managers wrestled constantly with trying to reconcile what they did at the coalface, with the directions of their organisations, peak bodies, and government.
Furthermore, managers were aware of the boundaries of their reality in terms of their allegiance to their organisations. They were vocal about structural impacts such as time, resources, being part of a rural environment, and trying to work to the pressures and direction of their organisation. The main constraint however, came from the level and extent to which they personified their role as community welfare workers through ‘resilience’ and ‘privelege’.

So, through a meta-analysis of what is going on at the macro level, it appears that managers are told where they should be going, but not necessarily how they should get there. The DoV in their practice presents a different picture to the other organisational levels. Many situations at this level are out of the control of the manager and their style of management can range from being supportive and inclusive to what is going on around them, and follow through with a proactive paucity management model, but then there are others that adopt a reactive style. Actions through this kind of style can manifest in avoidance behaviours. And because a proactive model of management is probably more needed than a non-proactive one to stay abreast of all the changes that impact community welfare services, those managers that do adopt avoidance tactics actually engage in a more pronounced paucity management model.

In leaving this section, an amalgamation of management styles and models of behaviour and activity, are starting to provide a useful picture of the variety certainly, but mainly the similarity in the managers’ models of paucity management. That is, the DoV presents as fairly small and with very little differences between the managers. The idea behind presenting information simultaneously in the above two sections, relates to both process and cognition: from the phenomenographic approach to interpretation, the DoV around practices and style of management allowed another way of ‘seeing’ the characteristics of the managers’ work (refer back to Section 5.5), and the added way of seeing through the DoV and relationship tables, has done much to contributing further to understanding models of paucity management.
5.7 Conclusion – key findings

The ten key findings from the data identify the following distinctive activity in relation to paucity management situations, and they are set out to show how they also ‘lead’ other interesting and significant findings from the project:

1. Managers appeared to use a type of paucity management model that addressed the limiting situations of work in a ‘bombardment zone’.
   i. Managers work in a ‘bombardment zone’ – they are in a constant state of interruption - that leads them to respond in a range of different ways; engaging in and employing multiple survival tactics.
   ii. Commonsense engagement on different relational levels was one of the strategies used to counter the ‘bombardment zone’.

2. The community-based management model of caring and responding to community need was defined as a paucity management model.
   i. Managers encourage and implement worker empowerment through a management model that encourages leadership and pride.

3. The manifestation of ‘difference’ as a matter of survival was a defining condition of community welfare work in rural regions.
   i. Managers’ work was defined by both constraints and purposeful actions and the extent of both appeared to influence the type of paucity management model enacted.
   ii. Paucity management evokes comparison with a ‘poor cousin in the bush’ metaphor but also a reflection of the reality of community welfare work.
   iii. Flexibility in management happens as a necessity resulting from remoteness and, for example, the tyranny of distance.
   iv. The managers’ ruralness has an impact on their work.
4. Paucity management was determined by the kind of community in which welfare workers were involved.
   i. Management committees created a buffer against the outside world and allowed managers the freedom to continue to provide specific and necessary services to the community, via the approaches they wanted to use.
   ii. As part of strategic planning, managers had a determining impact on who participated on their management committees.

5. In respect to working with the government hybrid organisation, the time-space span between knowing what and knowing how was minimised because of past experiences working within government departments that made ‘playing the game’ easier.
   i. Paucity management allows for a style of working with other service provision types that is seen to be complementary.
   ii. At the mezzo level of organisational activity, and in respect to working with hybrid government organisations, the time-space span was greater where there was a lack of proximity; of managers being rural-centred and government departments being urban-centred.
   iii. Self-organisation was spontaneous and entrepreneurial to override barriers of government and organisational scripts, processes and procedures.
   iv. In the face of coping with a ‘changing of the guard’ syndrome that was typical of working with governments, managers needed to have the right personality, as well as the right person to get things done.

6. Managers’ activities are subsumed into routines that are structured by mediating artefacts.
   i. Paucity management addresses tasks that are never really straightforward but identified with different layers of realities.
ii. Having informed networks of training opportunities was a characteristic and reality of paucity management.

7. Managers expressed vulnerability in some areas and welcomed the safety of working with a committee, or part of a group of other services that they could trust.
   i. Resilience counteracts resource insufficiency through a paucity management model that creates supportive work environments.
   ii. More than juggling and balancing priorities, paucity management was likened to ‘doing it tough’.

8. Managers reacted spontaneously to come together – almost on ‘auto-pilot’ – in order to apply for funding or collaborate on a particular project, and this practice was more reactionary than planned, but built strongly on trust.
   i. As part of their role, managers appear to come together almost involuntarily, but matching personality types is a powerful impetus, both politically and pragmatically.

9. Managers applied the ‘rules of the game’ at every different level of interaction, which meant they were both transactive and reactive.
   i. Managers negotiated around their organisational opus operatum, to allow for a certain degree of modus operandi, and this appeared to be for strategic reasons of sustainability.
   ii. Managers were focused and balanced but also prepared to ‘buck the system’ when needed.
   iii. Managers straddled ethical boundaries in order to get the job done and this included the use, and sometimes ‘overuse’ of volunteers.

10. At the macro level, the paucity management model is overlaid with notions of feeling privileged and having resilience to work for the community.
i. Managers worked staff and themselves beyond their roles and responsibilities in order to get the job done, and through innovative practice that related consistently to decision-making based on being opportunistic, flexible, pragmatic and decisive.

Already the findings show that managers seek opportunities to demonstrate implicitly that their model of management is flexible, creative and innovative, despite several constraints. Like all managers in any organisation, these community welfare managers deal with several different roles and levels of management and their role in the actual agency – at the interface with staff and clients – can become overshadowed by a myriad of internal and external factors. Their management styles appear to operate from a balance of using informality, collaborations, team-based approaches, and hierarchical decision-making in order to get things done. Some of this style comes through in response to certain phenomena. There was a mixed reaction about the level of support from their organisations. Where some had a clear notion of how their work was delivered following the organisation’s vision and mission, there were also others who showed exasperation about those who were ‘out of touch’ with what was going on at the community level. There was some talk about management decision-making being either centralised or decentralised but the main impression gained was that work proceeded regardless of any hierarchical boundaries. Yes, on occasion, their management style was ‘a little hierarchical’, but there were also many informal discussions about the need to develop responsibility and trust without such barriers.

In any case, operating from a centralised or decentralised model appeared to take a back seat where the notion of service delivery to the community reigned supreme. Despite an ‘air of apology’ about some of the things they said, the managers denied it was hard work, because they were just responding to community needs. It was about ‘making do’ and for at least half of the participants it was also about ‘privileged work’. In at least four cases, managers expressed aspects of their work as being ‘overwhelming’ however, there was also a sense of pride that for those who felt they did not do paucity management, their work was innovative and creative – these were terms they preferred to use.
They have concerns for how busy people have become, and for each other’s practice. Those who seemed to have more experience mentored others in their vicinity to try to draw from them opinions on certain topics, or to validate what they were doing. [‘Oh, I didn’t know I was a manager’, said one. ‘Of course you are’, said another, ‘you do exactly the same stuff we do – what did you think you are’? ‘I thought I was just a supervisor’, was the reply (Jerry and Prue, focus group discussion, 2003)].

I am proceeding nicely along my journey, through interpretation and now onto the pathway of discussion, that is, what are the managers really saying and what would be the outcome for current and future community welfare practice for these managers? In the following Chapter 6: Discussion, I explore this question but for now, in recapping the outcomes from this chapter, it is significant that: managers do practice paucity management; managers do utilise reflexive practices to engage in practical outcomes for their communities; managers do exercise uniqueness in their practice despite the universality of a resource poor environment; managers do engage in this uniqueness through the different ways they approach the relational levels implicitly and explicitly identified within the ‘bombardment zone’; managers do straddle the boundaries of accountability and responsibility through a ‘commonsense’ approach to service delivery; managers do strategise to enable effective service delivery, by including useful others in their practices, and managers do ‘come at’ their work with a combination of reaction and at times, inadequacy, that result in some very expansive interpolations between abstract processes and situational demands.

For these managers learning operates alongside passion and privilege. Where chaos/complexity allows for the simultaneous presence of randomness and determinism, so it seems that the community welfare managers employ adaptive strategies in their service delivery but they never lose sight of what they are gaining from the experience. Through my structure of awareness of variation in experience, I notice that in this process, they utilise decision-making techniques to solve problems that require a combination of logic and commonsense engagement. For example, they make decisions in incremental steps that do not necessarily give total commitment to every aspect of situations, but nevertheless, give good outcomes for communities.
As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the above key findings are presented as triggers of information upon which to construct a more rounded picture about managers’ activities. Moving into the next chapter, the key findings give more depth and understanding to the nature and experience of community welfare work. In the next chapter I revisit some of the key findings to enhance the discussion process but also to make connections to past knowledge(s) so that facets of the managers’ stories can be linked into the broader community welfare service narrative about working conditions. In this way, practice is ‘re-ordered’ to allow interesting strategies to be noted as they are used to transverse the boundary issues of rural practice, particularly in relation to adjustment in different contexts. That is, the managers demonstrate qualities that respond strategically to different relational situations in order to manage the ethical/professional nexus.
6.0 Introduction – building understanding of paucity management

The research has generated findings that i) define clearer models of community welfare management that respond to paucity conditions, and ii) determine the efficacy and experience of using models of paucity management to engage with both a changing resource environment and the structural purpose of human services organisations. There is an overall indication that the delivery of community welfare services is impacted by phenomena originating from activity that can be problematised from several different angles, including political, economical, cultural, and social characteristics. With these concepts in mind, this chapter makes connections to past experiences, moves to a discussion of the managers’ current experiences, and then expands ideas into a possible future status quo concerning community welfare work. In revisiting the research findings at Section 6.2, the chapter also highlights more form to the managers’ work in terms of how strategies are identified and executed. In this way, logical choice is made possible through the binding of time and space over the conditions of work, but is also “intertwine(d) and interact(ed) in all manner of promiscuous combinations” (Thrift 1996: 24, researcher additions in brackets). The notion of ordering comes to mind here, which is

… not something fixed but a mobile process full of uncertainty, heterogeneity and contradiction. Just as the process of social ordering creates positions of uncertainty, so those positions of uncertainty are implicated in processes of ordering and re-ordering. Ordering and disordering go together, as do centers and margins, in ways that are tangled, uncertain and topologically complex (Hetherington 1997: 7).

The metaphorical expression of ‘building understanding’ provides an ongoing, timeless quality that sits well with the phenomenographic characteristic of the use of
interpretative schema to determine the relation between human experience content and context. And so, ‘unravelling community service delivery’, in order to ‘reframe community welfare management activity’ provides a logical discussion frame for this chapter.
PART ONE: UNRAVELLING COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICE DELIVERY

In this first part I bring *my* voice to the fore and *discuss* ideas in order to give further dimension to the managers’ models and styles of management. That is, I speculate, wonder, ascertain, reflect, divulge ideas, and make links to other ideas. I want to take up the above combined theme in Section 6.0, of order, re-order, breaking down, readjustment, reconstruction and realignment as they relate to strategy and style because this is where I want to go in order to understand further, models of paucity management. Section 6.1 reveals an awareness of *chameleon qualities* that appear to characterise the managers’ behaviour and actions, based on knowledge and links to past research into community welfare services.

In Section 6.2, unravelling community welfare services is intended to produce further insight to the managers’ work, and this is done through making more links but this time to the key findings; as variations across time and space that show how managers are coping, how managers’ practice is characterised by chaos/complexity at the margin of awareness, and how effective time-space relations appear to be dependent on those who are co-present in time and space. Each of the sub-Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2, and including all the sub-Sections in 6.2.3, are supported by specific key findings that are flagged at the beginning of each section. The key findings are not nominated in the order they appear on pages 219-222, but are presented as part of the dialogue within the sub-sections.

### 6.1 Making connections to past knowledge (s)

There are definite similarities between what my research has revealed and what others have seen and know already. That is, over the years, Wagner has extended the notion of paucity management from being just a conceptual framework to one that is definitely a pragmatic indication of strategy enactment. The main concern posed by Wagner and Spence (2003: 50) in reference to ‘working conditions and managerial responsibilities’ is that the general resource poverty of the community welfare sector is most obvious in the
working conditions for paid staff and the number of volunteers used to supplement the work force. Findings from this research therefore, are not the first time to which an overuse of volunteers has been alluded (see key finding 9iii, page 221) probably because of the difficulties in terms of attracting staff who are both qualified and professional, as well as able and willing to provide sustained service over sometimes impossible odds. Before even the talk of inadequate funding is raised, there is the ever presence of unreasonable time frames, isolation of rural communities compared to urban networks, and lack of ongoing training for skills development.

Critics such as Lyons (2000) and Alston (2005) highlight the level of disempowerment prevalent in the use and delivery of community welfare services. As one example, community welfare managers continue to refer poignantly to what is happening in the sector, with references for example to how large organisations such as Mission Australia no longer lead the way in highlighting the plight of community welfare service delivery. In this research, there were managers who felt that similar large organisations had lost their way and were out of touch with what was really going on at ground level. Because some of the small to medium organisations in this area had limited funding, they were overworked and needed more workers. Through the managers’ words I interpreted feelings present about bigger organisations still being needed to ‘show the way’ despite a marketisation regime of user-pay principles (Alston 2005: 278).

The reference to ‘Mission Australia’ being viewed in the context of some kind of absent responsibility gives an interesting layer to the discourse on partnerships and networking; one of the strategies posed by Wagner as a way of offsetting paucity. Wagner and Mlcek (2003) echoed the work of others (Carsen and Kerr 2003, Edwards and Onyx 2003, Tett et al 2003) by giving some indication of the level and extent to which collaborations and partnerships had taken on changed appearances despite the community sector having a long history of their use and usefulness. Public sector welfare reforms were acknowledged as one of the main factors in a new dimension of partnerships being required and no doubt larger organisations such as Mission Australia have to be very careful about how they position themselves in the marketplace; just like every other
player, they are vying for the government dollar and sustainability. Like many of the peak organisations for community welfare services as well, they have become part of the government’s juggernaut promoting a contract culture, and are probably experiencing a loss of political voice as well as a greatly reduced ability to undertake effective lobbying and advocacy work (Melville 2003, accessed [online] 24.11.07).

Several other writers, including Darcy (2002: 32) have referred to the managerialist approach to delivering community services as being problematic because of management discourse ‘killing participation’ under the weight of market reform. In previous work, links have been made to the analogy of being on the battlefield when describing community welfare work (see Mlcek 2005b: pp. 304-307), and the managers themselves highlighted those same feelings, quite often through vivid metaphorical language (refer back to sub-Section 3.8.4); references were made to feeling bombarded, inundated by numerous directives, and management language about goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes. By mentioning situations in which they felt in the presence of a ‘brick wall’, or ‘a nut that won’t crack’, I compare the work of Wagner and Spence (2003: 130) who pose the idea that the strategy of participation is highly manifested in networking, partnerships, and collaborative practice, but note that in relation to the previous battlefield analogy, “participation can be a double-edged sword” (Darcy 2002: 36). And while networking can be a means to coordinate complexity it can also be “a double-edged sword” (Keast and Brown 2002: 444).

So, is the managers’ work dangerous? Are they like soldiers going out everyday to do ‘battle’ for their communities? Quite often they do; certainly their peak organisations have had to withstand “a political and government assault” (Melville 2003, accessed [online] 24.11.07), but I suspect the answer is more to do with the “fragmented practice” (Ife 2002: 230) of the community welfare worker that cautions a readiness to try to classify specialist roles to each one. Managers, for example, have a leadership role as well, and “through managing leadership the community welfare managers constantly ask questions … about their own expertise, their validity as a service deliverer, and their ability to help communities” (Mlcek 2005b: 305). They do this in spite of “working in a
state of siege through constant interruptions” (Mlcek 2005b: 307). The ‘reordering’ of competencies by managers in this research, to deal with new types of collaborations, is part of the inundation factor that relates to the changing appearances of relational levels alluded to in their ‘bombardment zone’. Their reality represents a microcosm of challenges similar to those faced by ‘absent others’, and particularly in a rural situation that “is in crisis” (Alston 2005: 281).

Some aspects of the local level activity of the managers’ situations signified is now a little different to other studies I have consulted. For example, Earles (1999: pp. 43-56) seems to indicate that the value of localism arises from “notions of popular control” (page 43), and a “preferred” stance regarding place, the nature of the work, organisational structure and the “relationship model” (page 44). On the other hand, Barraket (2001: pp. 111-122) nominates a community-based food co-operative in her two-year action research study, as a site whereby the “role of local level activity” (page 112) takes on a “special field of collective action” constituting “social movement” (page 112). The limit-situations of community welfare work are explored in a later section of the following chapter (sub-Section 7.2.2) to acknowledge again, the complexity of the findings on this point. I flag here, that the limit-acts in which the managers engage to transcend initial lack of opportunity into some form of victory, require chameleon qualities of presence through showing and camouflage. The following Table 6.1 offers a snapshot of factors that help promote these qualities and indicates how managers oscillate, at least metaphysically, between dual demands (Derrida 1974):
Table 6.1: Factors that contribute to *chameleon qualities* in community welfare managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Showing</th>
<th>Camouflage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>From committees</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>… the persistent encouragement of members of community welfare committees for managers to advertise and market their innovative practice.</td>
<td>… the efforts of community welfare management committees to shield and allow managers to get on with their work.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Within the community</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>… the advocacy implicit in service delivery to promote empowerment and self-promotion.</td>
<td>… the overuse of volunteers to conduct the bulk of some aspects of service delivery.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interacting with hybrid organisations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>… the past experience working with government departments flags a potential overt relationship.</td>
<td>… the ability to only act when called upon, or when required to submit for funding as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishing partnerships</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>… the enticement of joining the ‘big boys in town’, to enact reciprocal relationships of service to the community.</td>
<td>… the activities of auto-management to allow managers to come together on a spontaneous level rather than planned and extrovert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working with colleagues</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>… actively encouraging and supporting fellow workers to be creative in their service delivery and training opportunities.</td>
<td>… quietly allowing colleagues to get on with the job in order to engender an autonomous presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working within the organisation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>… having the courage and determination to work within the modus operandi laid out by the organisation.</td>
<td>… having the courage and determination to adopt a non-intrusive opus operatum approach to achieve ‘quiet’ but strong outcomes.</td>
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</table>

The information in the above Table 6.1 has not been identified before in other literature to hand about paucity management, and describes what the managers do when they are up front with their actions (*showing*), and when they step back from presenting an ongoing overt presence (*camouflage*). For example, where one manager may have been comfortable with consciously ‘joining the big boys in town’ to network for funds or other support such as requesting free transport, another manager responded to opportunities that came from spontaneous, ‘quiet’ interaction, usually with another welfare service manager whom she trusted. These factors relate to the re-ordering of actions to suit the managers’ circumstances.
6.2 Findings – variations across time and space

Without adopting the specificity of Cope (2002), the findings contribute factors to the DoV through the values of the experiences and the perceived relationship between aspects of the external and internal horizon surrounding service delivery. To recap, the overall ‘phenomenon’ is the managers’ work practice that relates to paucity management and in particular their style of management to enact models of paucity management. That is, what is it that community welfare managers do? This overall phenomenon is ‘fed’ by related phenomena, that is, what is it that managers do, when they are experiencing innovative practice (for example), work bounded by structural constraints, ethical practice, and governance and accountability responsibilities?

The managers acknowledged the presence of paucity management and despite all the variations of experience and activity to offset a resource poor environment, there is one residing factor in all the models of management they exercise – they are coping. They ‘get around’ things as part of the mantle of cope-ability compared to capability, or capacity. There is legitimate management activity involving “thinking at the margin” regarding resource deployment (Young 2004, cited in Cooney 2006: 144), and there is no doubt about the need to “continuously adapt, redesign, and reinvent” as part of an increasingly “complex and competitive world” (Jaskyte and Kisieliene 2006: 133). The key findings re-presented in Table 6.2, illustrate activity that responds to such a world. That is, there are numerous historical and traditional patterns by which individuals make sense of their world through the ways that they think, feel and react, within context (Hofstede 1991).
Table 6.2: Revisiting key findings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY FINDINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Managers appeared to use a type of paucity management model that addressed the limiting situations in a ‘bombardment zone’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>#2 The community-based management model of caring and responding to community need was defined as a paucity management model.</td>
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<tr>
<td>#3 The manifestation of ‘difference’ as a matter of survival was a defining condition of community welfare work in rural regions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>#4 Paucity management was determined by the kind of community in which welfare workers were involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 In respect to working with the government hybrid organisation, the time-space span between knowing what and knowing how, was minimised because of past experiences working within government departments that made ‘playing the game’ easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 Managers activities are subsumed into routines that are structured by mediating artifacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7 Managers expressed vulnerability in some areas and welcomed the safety of working with a committee, or part of a group of other services that they could trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8 Managers reacted spontaneously to come together – almost on ‘auto-pilot’ – in order to apply for funding or collaborate on particular projects, and this practice was more reactionary than planned, but built strongly on trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9 Managers applied the ‘rules of the game’ at every different level of interaction, which meant they were both transactive and reactive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10 At the macro level the paucity management model is overlaid with notions of feeling privileged and having resilience to work for the community.</td>
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From a cultural perspective, community welfare managers’ behaviour reflects their values and affects achievement in a predominantly ‘cultural model of management’ that is identified in a further reading of the key findings. Where it is impossible to homogenise culture, the findings recognise behaviour and activity that has evolved from a co-production of different discourses relating to the political, economic and social dimensions of culture that serve to add more dimension to the way community welfare managers work.

6.2.1 Ways of seeing - ‘black box’, connectedness, and co-presence
This sub-section is supported by key findings 6 and 9 that suggest: managers’ activities are subsumed into routines that are structured by mediating artefacts; and, apply the ‘rules of the game’ at every different level of interaction, which means they were both transactive and reactive.

The connection to the ‘black box’ idea is made again, whereby according to McDonald (1999a: 12), using this analogy seems to typify the ‘opaqueness’ of what is happening in
the community welfare sector. When I use my own research process as a comparative analogy to the managers’ experience, a different understanding of the black box comes to the fore, that is, how it is used in an air travel tracking system. Far from being dark or opaque, the black box is a deep and complex device that captures details of what is going on, holds a myriad of potential answers but in fact reflects the truth of a given situation. While having an awareness of these intricacies can help identify variation in the experiences of the managers [as noted in 6.2], this does not mean that the overall situation is ‘different’ for each of them. When the planes of an activity awareness framework are superimposed with theoretical models of community welfare work, they actually overlap and, in human geographical terms, they also connect. Cheers (2004) points out that there are many valid ways of knowing, but crucially these can relate to the level of engagement with the dominant discourse, and possible competing agendas.

The above ‘connectedness’ is played out in another way. Brown and Duguid (1991) refer to Bourdieu’s distinction between modus operandi and opus operatum as being the difference between how tasks undertaken over time can look to someone who is working on them through many contingencies, unresolved options, and dilemmas – the modus operandi - and the way that the finished tasks look in hindsight (opus operatum). The usefulness of Bourdieu’s analogy about the use and worth of different kinds of maps to explain the difference between the two kinds of activities is worth recounting here to make sense not just of these managers’ activities and behaviour, but mine also, as researcher looking in from the outside. An organisation or government department ‘map’ can give directions about how to go about doing things but as Brown and Duguid (1991: 42) indicate,

*The map, though potentially useful, by itself provides little insight into how ad hoc decisions presented by changing conditions can be resolved (and, of course, each resolved decision changes the conditions once more). As a journey becomes more complex, the map increasingly conceals what is actually needed to make the journey. Thick description, by contrast, ascends from the abstraction to the concrete circumstances of actual practice, connecting the map and the mapped.*
In another vein, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) offer insights into how organisations enact work practices, for example, through ways in which they typify isomorphism, or degrees to which they respond homogeneically to “market competition, niche change, and fitness measures” (page 150). The managers of this research project follow loosely, the formal blueprint for work in relation to contextuality, but actually appear to be not so strictly monitored, and in fact respond better in situations that allow a “wide range of informal work processes to emerge” (Cooney 2006: 145). That is, despite the advent of a more formal task-oriented, accountability and governance regime, the majority of the managers actually respect the conditions of their task environment through engaging in a great deal of “behind-the-scenes” activity (Cooney 2006: 145). My understanding of their response is that they get on and do what is expected to the best of their ability and this kind of application can be both transparent and opaque depending on the situation.

6.2.2 Rationalising skills to inform practice and manage ethically

This sub-section is best supported through those findings that integrate ideas of ‘interaction’, ‘coming together’, and ‘making choices’. Aspects of key findings 4, 5, 8, and 10, suggest that: management committees created a buffer against the outside world and allowed managers the freedom to continue to provide specific and necessary services to the community, via the approaches they wanted to use; managers exercised a large degree of choice in what they did based on their experience; as part of their role, managers appear to come together almost involuntarily, but matching personality types is one powerful impetus, both politically and pragmatically, and, at the macro level, the paucity management model is overlaid with notions of feeling privileged and having resilience to work for the community.

The collaborative model was implicit in the way that several of the managers worked and this was almost entirely guided in the first instance, by the relationship they identified with their management committees. This factor became clear at about the ninth interview when one of the managers was explicit in the way this relationship, rather than being a hindrance and constraint, was actually liberating and gave her much freedom to do what she wanted to do. Another way of looking at the notion of collaborative participation is
through an understanding of the principles of the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD, Vygotsky 1997). Principles of ZPD surfaced initially through the use of focus groups as communities of practice, and it simply reinforces the idea that people contribute to each other’s development through a combination of capabilities and accessibility of opportunity, partly as a result of an individual’s positioning within the ‘zone of proximal development’. Being on the periphery of other’s practice (Mlcek, Wagner and Childs 2003) is an important contribution to maintaining not only a sense of identity, but also some pragmatic direction for ways to continue work.

The above experiences could have come from a combination of passion, idealism and/or just plain survival instinct that has developed over the years through several persistent negative themes about community services in general (see Fine 1995: pp. 143-161). Also influential must be the questions that come from the competing discourses of what it means to be a ‘professional’ and what it means to be a ‘manager’. The significant point about professionalism is that it has ideological connotations that operate at the macro level but also “as a control mechanism of individual practitioners at the micro level” (Evetts 2003: 24). Additionally, “professionalism is being used as an ideology and a discourse to convince, cajole and persuade employees, practitioners and other workers to behave and perform in ways which the organisation or the institution deem to be appropriate, effective and efficient” (Evetts 2003: 31). And so for these community welfare managers, talking to each other, hearing about what others are doing, sharing information, is all part of confirming identity and more besides. In the above ideas about professionalism, the ever increasing ‘colonisation’ of the lifeworld through the rationalisation of systems (Habermas 1987) is a potentially volatile one, and is off-set by reflexive practices inherent in Giddens Structuration Theory (refer back to Section 5.3).

On the whole, the managers displayed a high level of reflexivity, in comparison to reactive management that involves a more immediate, spontaneous, though more often ‘knee-jerk’ reaction. Where once the latter case appeared to typify their practices/actions, in actual fact the managers exercise a large degree of choice in what they do. The defining point about their activities is that because of their experience, this choice is
made very quickly and with implicit skill – the skill has been honed over many years of experience. Within the “structural domain” of working, Cheers et al (2005: 242) liken this practice to the flexibility of workers to be able to “contextualise their work practices to the local situation and circumstances”. Compare this idea to what several managers spoke of; workers (and managers) may not necessarily be highly, formally qualified in this sector, but they are very experienced. From the situation of one manager choosing to protect herself by not engaging in advocacy activities, to the manager who chooses not to become involved in a communication ‘stoush’ with his supervisor, which would probably make his life a lot better, but both choose not to go down that pathway. They are both highly experienced in issues management, having progressed from a DoCS background, but they are interested in the ‘endgame’ and they choose reflexively what their engagement will be. There is no doubt they have the capacity to become otherwise involved in both those situations but their energies are best served where they can exercise will.

I want to continue along this vein for a little longer, especially when I re-introduce the topics of accountability and responsibility. The two concepts are realised quite differently to these managers because they have different ramifications for practice. At first I could not ‘put my finger on’ why it was that I felt uneasy about accepting unproblematically the idea that community welfare workers practice under enormous ‘accountability constraints’ and this aspect of their work would ‘weigh’ them down. Apart from some interesting vignettes about trying to meet reporting deadlines in the more isolated areas, this was not a recurring case with the majority of the managers. It may be that the essence of just ‘getting on with it’, overrides the ‘spectre’ of accountability. What I realise is that the more people are checked and rechecked, the less accountable they actually become. It is almost a cancelling out process; accountability is minimised and reduced.

This is a good time to bring in another layer of understanding about what is happening in the above summation and that is how accepting this ‘taken-for-granted world’ indicates a phenomenological logic for understanding the lifeworld (Lefebvre 1991, Ley 1977) as
a site of both resistance and “an authentic mundanity that has remained untouched by the corрозions of capitalist modernity” (Gregory 2000, cited in R J Johnston et al [eds.] 2000). Much of the experience of the managers will happen from a background of a taken-for-granted work environment, that includes the unique character of community welfare work itself, working in situations of resource poverty and all that invokes, and the difficulty of managing under a micro-economic reform agenda that constantly dissolves, duplicates and replicates new structures at an alarming rate. An awareness of the implications for the managers’ work is that these themes and phenomena allow for the blurring of boundaries between external and internal horizons for the managers. No longer are the experiences of phenomena confined to just the immediate ‘space’ of the managers, but start to shift to include a simultaneous awareness of the way experience is no-longer-taken-for granted but altered to accommodate what is happening beyond the themes, through to the margins of awareness.

A non-phenomenological way of clarifying these managers’ everyday work practices is that they find ways, either implicitly or explicitly, to counteract and ‘resist’ the intrusions of more formal and institutionalised renditions of influence, through the use of a range of informal tactics (de Certeau 1984). Gregory (2000: 820) indicates that the philosophy of de Certeau, and the phenomenological approach of Ley give a better understanding of what happens in the taken-for-granted world by “accentuating the creativity (rather than passivity) that inheres within everyday life and the supposedly taken-for-granted world, and in this way the concept is given a distinctly subversive cast”. I deliberately italicise the word ‘creativity’ because this is exactly what some of the managers indicate they do, rather than paucity management. It is almost as if in the inevitability of both the environment and abstract space/ presence of economic reform and neoliberal politics impacting the way the managers deliver their services, they refuse to be ‘subverted’. For most of the managers, their creativity, innovative and passionately privileged practice negates becoming overwhelmed by those constellations of power – removed in time, place, and space, that is, abstractions – that do otherwise have the potential to influence the production and re-production of the lifeworld.
Using analogies to increase awareness of work practices in a rural setting

In this sub-section, findings that relate to the mediating influences of work routines and being ‘rural’ and therefore ‘different’, are never far from a discussion that can only ever at best, touch on the diversity of community welfare services in the managers’ rural environment. The key findings 1, 2, 3, 7, and 10, suggest that: managers working in a ‘bombardment zone’, and in a constant state of interruption, respond in a range of different ways: engaging in and employing multiple survival tactics; using a community-based model of caring and responsiveness that is defined as a paucity management model; recognising ‘difference’ as a matter of survival and a defining condition of community welfare work in rural regions; applying resilience to counteract insufficiency through a paucity management model that creates supportive work environments, and working staff and themselves beyond their roles and responsibilities in order to get the job done. Their innovative practice related consistently to decision-making based on being opportunistic, flexible, pragmatic and decisive.

‘Rural’ “has been variously defined in relation to stereotypes, demographic factors and socio-cultural characteristics” (Dunn 1989, in Munn and Munn 2003: 22), and these factors are all defining qualities that point to not just the type of service offered, but the type of rural community-as-service users. How is difference manifested in rural community welfare service delivery? Perhaps an indication of how creativity evolves could provide some answers. Jaskyte and Kisieliene (2006: 134) note that a “risk-taking personality and a creative problem-solving style” can be linked to creativity. Creativity is explicit in the ‘black box’ activity recounted in the following story:

**Example – field notes – notes relating to background of the experience:** Mary had been successful in gaining approval and funding to field a program for ‘under 5s’, in an outlying area from the center of town. This particular community is small, marginalized because of several factors including low socio-economic status, and resource poor in terms of access to community welfare services. For example, visits from Mary’s agency are restricted to once per fortnight, when two workers go out for a half-day. A meeting of the community members was called, the purpose advertised, and Mary went along with her two co-workers to help set up the program; to register interested parents and under-5 year old children, in order to get the program started as soon as possible. To the agency’s astonishment most of the children and families that turned up for the community meeting related to 12 years and over. Mary was in a bit of a dilemma but no
more than what was unusual; the funding was specifically targeted for families with children under 5 years, and she could lose it, so what to do? A quick visit was made to the local high school where the Principal confirmed the need for after-school programs for this cohort of older children, so, not to miss an opportunity, this was the kind of program that was started instead, with the funds available.

The manager had a clear connectedness with what needed to happen. The situation is cloudy only on one level, but the end result is not complicated; slightly complex yes, but achievable. The black box aspect to the above story only reinforces the notion that activity at the interface of daily work is sometimes not ‘seen’ but still exists in response to aspects of time-space distanciation in order to achieve useful outcomes. This much is already known but links can also be made to the taken-for-granted world (de Certeau 1984) of the welfare manager whereby institutionalised power is quietly resisted.

6.2.3.1 ‘Being privileged’ to work as a community welfare worker

The first focus group discussion was conducted on the wide front verandah of one of the agencies. I sat with six of the managers and ate cream cake and drank coffee while we watched the sleepy little town pass us by. I remember feeling quite surreal at the time, and certainly the nostalgia hit me again when I reread my notes about this occasion. I had rushed over endless hills and curves and then passed long stretches of vineyards to get to the place. It was as though I had been transported back to the county environment of To Kill a Mockingbird – “Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it” (Lee 1960: 11). I knew I could be ‘there’ when the conversation turned to expressions of being ‘privileged’ to working within their communities, doing the kind of work they did. Metaphor usage is one aspect of the language of this community welfare domain, and indicates how domains may be reworded as part of social and political scrutiny and struggles (Fairclough 1992: 77, Marston 1992: 355). All the managers contributed a wealth of metaphorical language to describe their workplaces, and management activities within those places. As well, they referred to ‘complexity’ in ways that identified the multiple dimensions and differentiations of their practice.
The concept of ‘being privileged’ was used several times, and is a somewhat elusive construct, similar to that of ‘being autonomous’. ‘Privilege’ seems to be a given part of community welfare work, and ‘being autonomous’ exercises the right of ‘being as manager’. I combine these with another statement made by one of the managers, ‘principles of subsidiarity’, to illustrate the elasticity of community welfare work in accommodating different ideas of power, performance, and effectiveness. I wondered at the time whether in admitting to feelings of privilege, the managers were voicing the link between job satisfaction and the intrinsic aspects of community welfare work, as well as somehow trying to validate their worthiness and therefore effectiveness, in being a welfare worker (Wagner, Spence and Burnstein 2001). Being able to define their positions in such ways is also acknowledging the power they have over their own and others’ situations. For example, the practice of principles of subsidiarity was used to illustrate the way that an organisation looked to local agencies to make their own decisions, and yes, subsidiarity is “the principle that a central authority has a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level” (Brown 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: 804). But in several cases where ‘local’ managers were further down the pecking order, situated away from the centralised body in both space and time, they were being denied the most useful decision-making of all, and that was to do with having the autonomy to expend resources in ways they wanted to suit their communities.

The reality of community welfare situations is that in structures of ‘centralised’ control, there is very little decision-making autonomy (Munn and Munn 2003: 23) and yet the managers in this research created their own spaces for this to occur. Because even more of a reality, is the acknowledged “essential skills” (page 24) of the community welfare manager including,

♦ The ability to work with limited resources
♦ Functioning effectively with minimal supervision
♦ Understanding the effect of rural decline on communities
♦ Effectively using a wide range of practice approaches to meet a variety of community needs.
It is as if the plight of *being* a community welfare worker gives license to define the parameters of work and intervention, *in spite of* the preferred machinations of organisations.

In noting the above points, I am aware of a ‘back verandah’ practice amongst the managers whereby “much pondering and reflection has taken place” (Munn and Munn 2003: 29). It is there in a range of informal and relationship-building situations as well as inferred individual direction-taking because of ‘faceless’ entities, namely: *I can get a house because I am incorporated then I give it to you because you are not; there is a lot of stuff I don’t take to the committee because I feel I should have delegation; we have the two new ministries to contend with even though ‘they are not with the plot’, and being the team leader is about ‘being the chain that keeps everything together’*. Engaging in the complexity of human activity means that almost all the managers are also engaged in adaptive strategies particularly when complex adaptive networks emerge.

### 6.2.3.2 Chaos and complexity in the ‘bombardment zone’

In this sub-section, I have at the forefront of the discussion, the key findings relating to work in the bombardment zone and particularly as they relate to the impact of structure on practice. Wagner, Spence and van Reyk (2000: 40) had already noted that community welfare workers in their study indicated that ‘time’ was the greatest lack of resource “across all tasks and activities”. Three years later, together with all the other impacts on their work, my research shows that time was always going to be a crucial factor in the way they delivered their services. But did it really hold the same critical place for these managers as indicated in Wagner et al’s research? The managers certainly felt ‘hard-done-by’ in terms of lack of time to the point even where one even ‘lost sleep over it’, but for several it was about putting in place structures to allow for their staff to be able to cope with whatever came through their doors. Their responses also indicated a concern about the ‘uniqueness of isolation’; being a unique service was about being different which also led interestingly to feelings of being in isolation from other providers.
I have spoken about the emergence of the ‘bombardment zone’ in the managers’ practice, and I see this as a part of the managers’ ‘social system’ that happens almost in graphic practice. Several managers referred specifically to notions of being or feeling ‘bombarded’ and in further activities, alluded to being bombarded by constant interruptions. I wrote about this aspect of practice, that is paucity management addresses the limit-situations of community welfare work (see Mlcek 2005b: pp. 304-307), and I used the visual representation of the individual manager ‘negotiating’ a way through the ‘bombardment zone’. The inundation of new and increasing information to do with government policies and practice, peak organisations’ recommendations, organisations’ directions and guidelines, and further information from colleagues in the field, add to the complexity of managers’ practice.

The notion of survival goes well with the idea of the bombardment zone because they give a picture of experience that is ‘constantly bombarded by many interruptions’ impacting on work practices. There are issues to do with trying to be a leader and manager as well as working with local communities to promote democratisation and empowerment. The two areas are not necessarily complimentary. … They also need time to reflect on what it means to be part of a community-based organization, and by definition therefore, the Third Sector. They are constantly being asked to be receptive to the idea of the bigger picture and not to lose sight of the global aspects of, and influence on, their work. Most importantly they are aware that governmental policy and implementation of policy transposes everything they do. In navigating the bombardment zone, there are constant issues that arise from accountability, governance, funding, and operations practices (Mlcek 2005b: pp. 306 and 307).

Part of their survival toolkit was their engagement in innovative practice every day. Innovation is generally viewed as being both disruptive and a necessary part of change (see again Brown and Duguid 1991). It can also be seen as an imposition to the espoused ways of doing things within a workplace. There were many times during the course of a day however, when the managers within this research would engage in actual practice that was not canonical, that was non-canonical and at times improvisational, but with a hint of innovation to get the job done. Without acknowledging their practice of innovation and creativity, they were using an interpretive gaze to constantly revise their reaction to the environment in which they were being constantly tested. The previously mentioned ‘work arounds’ (Brown and Duguid 1991: 41), have been used by
ethnographers in the past, to describe the valuable practice of organisational members in exhibiting non-canonical practices to be successful and productive. The previously identified manager that changed her delivery program to suit a different clientele almost ‘on the spot’ did not see her work as innovative but it demonstrated a high level of leadership through a dogged gut feeling and instinct that this change would be right for the community.

As an aspect of work within the bombardment zone, I want to problematise the notion of what it means to ‘feel equality’, in order to offer another layer of awareness of variation in the managers’ work experience. For example, given the similarity in rural environmental conditions and placement, does ‘equality’ come from ‘ruralness’? That is, are we seeing in the above findings, that ‘equality’ (“feeling of equality”) comes from a lifeworld informed by the dialectic of being rural (“ruralness”)? In response to their rural environment, managers appear to share resources as part of a strategic awareness of how structure can both nurture and neuter activity. Where resources cannot be shared, or if there are none to share, managers just ‘get on with it’. I started out thinking this happens at the interface between choice and rationality; of reflexive action. But more and more I also see that it is part of the taken-for-granted makeup of the community welfare worker that gives rise to cultural constraints on behaviour.

Structuration Theory however, tells us that the latter kind of constraint does not completely determine human action, that is, I am a community welfare worker and therefore this is what I do. Rather, conditions of work – environment or the organisation itself – “set bounds on rationality by restricting the opportunities and alternatives we perceive and, thereby, increase the probability of certain types of behaviour” (Barley and Tolbert 1997: 93). I wondered when the managers stated or implied their autonomy, that in actual fact, they were merely acting out those behaviours that were expected of them and inadvertently planned for them. Perfect rationality and completely bounded rationality were not always within these community welfare managers’ toolbox, but given a sense of determination, they can modify and sometimes extinguish some of the patterns of their organisation, through choice and action. This is the dilemma I saw those
managers face in a constant wrestling of trying to reconcile what they did at the
collage, with the directions of their organisations, peak bodies, and government. The
dilemma was compounded by the situation of all those factors being both co-present and
absent in both time and space.

Although managers are aware of the boundaries of their activity and their allegiance to
their organisation, they still make a ‘noise’. They are vocal about structural impacts such
as time, resources, being part of a rural environment, and trying to work to the pressures
and direction of their organisation. The main constraint however, comes from the level
and extent to which they know and understand their role as community welfare workers
and this, more than anything, appears to come from the personification of ‘resilience’
and ‘privilege’. In this way, managers exercise one of the outcomes of working in a
complex system – being more than just flexible; being *adaptive at seeking new patterns
of behaviour* (refer back to sub-Section 5.4.2).

Within their world of work, it seems that skills in facilitating successful outcomes are a
necessary part of the managers’ world of work, with engagement on different relational
levels indicating a kind of activity whereby *facilitation* moves from being just a
reflexive response to one that holds *enabling* prospects. Here, I am wondering if this can
be seen to be an attempted counterbalance to the acknowledgement by Wagner and
Spence (2003: 50) of the stressful work undertaken within the sector, and that
“managing the balancing act between the often contradictory interests of clients,
workers, managers and funding bodies is a core requirement of paucity management”
(page 51). The ‘core’ component of work is done automatically as fundamental practice,
but there are still adjustments to be made along the way.

### 6.2.3.3 Engaging with hybrid government departments

In this sub-section, findings that related to past and present practices of knowing how to
play the game as far as interaction with government departments was concerned are
integrated into the discussion. In particular, key finding 5 suggests that, in respect to
working with the government hybrid organisation, the time-space span between knowing
what and knowing how was minimised because of past experiences working within government departments that made ‘playing the game’ easier.

Already I am starting to be aware of models of management that should include indications of the following: philosophy; issues; community; resilience; reflexivity; privileged work; commonsense; feelings of fear and being scared; resource and under-resourced, and paucity management practices. Responsibility is another consideration because these models are also sites for the locus of responsibility to lay squarely with the managers. But I say this latter point with only a subtle emphasis because I am also aware of some of the limitations inherent in the managers’ practices, mostly in the name of sustainability, and oft times in response to feelings of vulnerability during dealings with government departments. I am reminded of a seemingly unlikely connection to the work of Habermas (1984) and his idea of the ‘ideal speech situation’, but through a link I make to so-called strategic (read ‘surface’) direction. Essentially the concept refers to a situation in which all participants have an orientation to what is really going on and how their actions can impact on, and be impacted by, aspects of the wider environment. For a healthy climate of ideal speech situations to occur, or in other words, purposeful communicative action leading to communicative competence, community welfare managers ought to be committed to a certain degree of rationality about their existence. Autonomy and responsibility will not be achieved where reality is not embraced and propositional attitude is privileged over performative attitude. Otherwise, “communication pathologies” can happen when there is a mismatch of intentions in service delivery situations.

Communication pathologies can be conceived of as the result of confusion between actions orientated to reaching understanding and actions orientated to success. In situations of concealed strategic action, at least one of the parties behaves with an orientation to success, but leaves others to believe that all presuppositions of communicative action are satisfied (Habermas 1984: 332).

The problem is not just one of ‘mismatched intentions’ however, for example community welfare managers interacting with hybrid government departments, or managers denying that what they do appears to be paucity management, but “a
characteristic of society in late-capitalism” whereby organisations (and even agencies) “become subject to a rationalising process to justify their continued existence” and whereby “instrumental and strategic forms of justification have become dominant as part of demythologization, mechanisation of production and bureaucratization” (Gosling 2000: pp. 296-297). Community welfare managers are ‘hostages’ to the progressively hybrid government organisation, not necessarily from intent, but as part of a natural evolvement whereby work activity is formalised in ways that force people to become accountable for what they do. There is a binary however that exists in these processes because where at once the managers are constrained to being accountable, the emergent situation of governance is also more likely to engender new ways of doing things ever more innovatively.

The response of managers to the governance and accountability guidelines of the new ‘hybrid’ manifestation of government departments provides a useful analytical tool to give further definition to their models of paucity management, that is, in relation to the level and extent of the individual manager’s experience with public/community enterprise. As an example of innovative and change management practices the stringent governance regime coming from the government hybrid organisations could in fact create and support community welfare managers as “facilitators of social change or servants of the State” (Kerr and Savelsberg 2001: 22). Certainly the increased levels of accountability, reporting time-lines, performance-based funding allocations, refocusing on specific services, and pressures to enact new and innovative management models come from engagement with activities typical of the hybrid organisations (Brown and Waterhouse 2003, Maddock 2002). But Brown and Waterhouse (2003: 230) ask, “Is a hybrid model a better alternative for public sector agencies?” as a response to the increased pressure over the last two decades to be more transparent and accountable.

The significance of the above question, and the reaction to public sector agencies cloning private sector managerial practices, is that these changes have an enormous impact on “regional economic and social development” (Brown and Waterhouse 2003: 230). There are further questions that allude to the paradox of the situation however,
including the notion that where ‘private sector creep’ of managerial practice in the community sector is now a given and has directed the latter’s current profile, “a hybrid model of ‘new public management’ delivers more favourable outcomes than a model focused on cost reduction and private sector prejudice for the bottom line” (page 230)? Therefore, models of paucity management have the capability to reframe social activities in an era of hybridisation that has seen changes in the historical configuration of community welfare provision within a market economy that can neither be divorced from power structures in relationships with government departments, nor subsumed in the marketisation of welfare.

The sense of ‘negotiated order’ surfaces in a paucity management model that is also at the very least, pragmatic. Here, I have to take care that I do not confuse just at the point of clarification. I have stated before that another manager feels she is using a particular model of management that is pragmatic because she uses volunteers for the bulk of her service delivery work, and this is definitely at the level of how to manage a resource poor environment. I make the claim that it also refers to how to manage within such an environment. The manager has at least 80 families to service – how does she do it? Interestingly, she was one of three managers who felt that what they did was not paucity management, but her kind of strategising belies these feelings. She does not have the full-time or part-time paid staff to cover this work, so professionally experienced volunteers are available and their service is utilised. This manager is alert to the ethical dilemma of using unpaid workers to cover the workload; she rosters them evenly and fairly across the families in need.

*How does the above activity relate to the hybrid government organisation?* To my mind, government departments have an expectation that the community welfare service is happening – if it saves them money and other resources, well and good. If it is happening under the wing of increased volunteer participation, then reporting mechanisms are put in place to capture that information. This manager felt confident in the reports she gave to the Department of Community Services (DoCS) and yet it was not paucity management to her. However, interpreting these activities from a mezzo and
macro level of analysis tells me that they are definitely paucity management practices and her style is probably a combination of being *creative, expansive, and pragmatic*.

Section 6.2 revisits some of the critical aspects of the findings in order to unravel the main characteristics of community welfare services delivery that relate to utilising chameleon qualities of management, and the different ways of ‘seeing’ the managers’ engagement. That is, they negotiate order within a bombardment zone through activities that are neither always ‘seen’ nor always non-transparent, but inferred in every aspect of regional economic and social development.
PART TWO: REFRAMING COMMUNITY WELFARE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

In Part two, two main ideas are explored to start re framing community welfare activity. The discussion has evolved from aspects of the key findings to bring further clarity to managers’ work, but I now want to extend that discussion to laying some further foundations for the development of community welfare services management, and consideration of emerging models of management such as ‘auto-management’.

6.3 Developing community welfare services management

The cognitive development of the managers is taking place with the social support of others, as part of ongoing interaction that is fashioned by cultural and historical biases. Development in context, together with different constructs, provides stability (Wozniak and Fischer 1993). The link is made back to sub-Section 6.2.2 whereby collaborative practice can represent opportunities so that community welfare managers in their ethnographic context engage in a scaffolding process of development (Bruner 1982, Vygotsky 1978). From a social constructionist perspective, what the managers experience and do is not located simply or entirely with that manager, but “in the individual-in-social-interaction” (Rohmann 2000: 364). A comparison can be made to the situatedness of the learner and whether an inference can be made that the managers are also socially situated as ‘learners’ of their environment. That is, from an interpretive perspective, the social reality of their work practices is socially constructed through proximity and engagement with other learners (Berger and Luckman 1967). In this way, the full situation of inquiry allows for different and valid interpretations to occur about developing community services through a community welfare domain of social action (Denzin 2001: pp. 85-97, Hall and McGinty 2002: 304). In whatever aspect of practice the managers engage, they appear to also be involved in social action.
Crucial to the above idea is the notion of interaction in and about shared experience as well as an acknowledgement that although their community of practice is constantly buffeted by changes, the managers’ sense of identity is rooted in a shared understanding of what it entails to be a part of their domain (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002: 31). The characteristics of this picture however, are not so easy to define; communities of practice imply a ‘feel good’ order and yet in the case of the managers from this research, there is also a subtle indication of ‘disorder’. All these points and the surrounding discussion add to a further understanding of paucity management, as well as an acknowledgement of the almost cyclical development of practice within community welfare services delivery.

Looking again at the key findings in Table 6.1, they all point to working conditions and managerial responsibilities that respond more, to cultural and social, or cultural and political influences rather than an economical focus. However, emerging models of paucity management appear to incorporate several levels of influence, and the economic focus is situated implicitly in different types of engagement.
In this section, key findings that relate to ways of collaborating and coming together are integrated into the following discussion. At the mezzo level of enquiry, the picture of innovative practice is a somewhat ambiguous one despite the potential for diversity and innovation to occur in the almost daily practices of relationships between community organisations (Wagner and Mlcek 2005: 90). Similarly, the almost ‘promiscuous’ nature of some of the relationship building to involve multiple critical members in successful funding arrangements has been noted here and in previous studies, particularly in relation to the sharing of resources (Edwards and Onyx 2003: 99, Wagner and Mlcek 2005). However, there is still a large degree of reticence and sometimes skepticism about venturing too far from the immediate context, so that work gets done regardless of the joining up with other parties, and more in keeping with the philosophy of working closely with community members who need their service.

The interesting point here however, is the reframing of activity being not just about working with poor resources – paucity management – but about being creative in daily operations; flexible in ways of acquiring funding and innovative in the big strategic management situations. There is an idea that the community welfare managers operationalised the coordination of all those aspects of their innovative practice possibly through the lens of a “triadic personality” (Earles 1999: 51). Giddens (1979, 1981, 1984, 1985) would refer to this kind of reframing as the response of knowledgeable actors to realign what they do with “the wider social systems and structures in which they are implicated” (Gregory 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000). In this way, managers’ activities are never just individual pragmatic reactions but ones that are overlaid with conceptual spaces of passion and desire, frustration and resilience, know-what and know-how.

A spontaneous coming together to affect relationships to the level of strategic outcome was an important research outcome. The notion of strategy, or the business of strategy
implementation, should be fundamental to managers and can be used to define styles of management (Buttery and Richter 2001). But, how can the unique nature and quality of a type of management that started to surface through this research be described, particularly in relation to the way several of the community welfare managers ‘partnered’ with their colleagues? How can the blend of reaction and spontaneity that typifies these unions, be captured? They are almost like ‘flashes in the pan’; ‘couplings’ that happen at the end of a phone conversation, or walking out the door at a collective meeting about something else. The simultaneous decision made by two managers to ‘get together’ in a spontaneous action to work on something together can best be described as auto-management.

Certain regimes have impacts on the way that managers operate; one of the more interesting ones relates to working within a framework of trust, which is a defining condition and central feature of modernity (Baert 1998: 107). The findings define the characteristics of practice to include trust as the premise for engagement with aspects of both the internal and external environments. ‘Auto-management’ is a new concept that has been created out of this research to explain another way of doing collaborations and partnerships, and which can be aptly directed to the practices of several of the managers. The idea has been taken from political comment about the war-torn situation in Palestine, and how people engage in ‘auto-diplomacy’ to keep the channels of communication alive and committed. This activity happens almost ‘behind closed doors’, without the fanfare of governments and press releases, and relates to the quiet activity of committed individuals to exact a favourable outcome for their people, despite adversity. The process that surfaced through the analysis of this aspect of managers’ work practices appears to be based on trust, admiration and respect for the individuals involved in the communication, and a genuine care for others that helps to address and counter the colonisation of the lifeworld by abstract systems of compliance and ‘power’. With auto-management the power is taken back by the individual managers; they create their own proactive response to the sometimes-encroaching boundaries of technical knowledge or minimalist transactional situations.
This idea of how the managers ‘manage’ their partnerships and collaborations, extends also the notion of reflexive modernisation (Beck 1992); a “combination of the availability of reflexive critiques … and an increasing individualization …” (Thrift 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: 719) that is manifested through managerial decision-making based on knowledgeable choices. Again, this is where the notion of ‘resilience’ imprints the managers’ world whereby they are able to act on the intuition of trusting individuals to bring similar moral and ethical values to professional practice in achieving useful and beneficial partnership ‘arrangements’. These are co-operative solutions (Barraket 2001b: x) in which nothing is written down on many occasions. A phone call is made, an initial phatic communication link is established (Mlcek and Barber 2005a) – very much like auto-diplomacy – and the business of collaborative community welfare service delivery, continues.

The above points refer to management behaviour whose premise is not to counter deficit, but to add to good work already being done or contemplated and is triggered by an idea for a new way of delivering services, a new type of program, or an innovative solution to applying for funds, for example, ‘hey, how ‘bout we do this,’ or ‘shall you and I go into this together’, or ‘hey, you and I should work on this’, or ‘hey, why don’t we have a go and put in an application for this’? These are partnerships triggered by a ‘neat idea’ and yet built on the formidable strength of trust. One person starts and the other follows suit. As long as the momentum and motivation are there, just like international auto diplomacy, more than having capacity and capability, people are committed to working together while ever there is a purpose for perpetuity; they each have the will wherever there is encouragement from others.

In respect to auto-management gaining a foothold in a resource-poor environment, a final consideration must come from the ideas of Gleick (1987: 169) who indicates that complex systems have “endless possibilities” and can “never settle reliably into an equilibrium with average long-term behaviour”. He is referring to climate conditions but these community welfare managers also work in situations that are ‘kick-started’ from the outside; their pendulum of activity can swing from one equilibrium to another, from
showing to camouflage, whereby “hiding within a particular system could be more than one stable solution” (page 169).

At the end of this section, there is confirmation of the way that examples of management are enacted in sometimes-spontaneous situations. These situations provide opportunities for collaboration and are triggered by different phenomena including trust relationships, the legacy of practice-experience, and external influences. The above practice of auto-management provides relevant innovative and creative practice in developing further community welfare services management, and along with chameleon qualities of management, is an important outcome to this study on community welfare services development.
6.5 Conclusion

In trying to learn more about paucity management and the style of management used by community welfare managers, there is little doubt that the key findings have provided some useful fodder for discussion particularly from what is known already about paucity management, to what could be envisaged or even expanded to indicate how managers do things through their styles of management. Interestingly, the models of paucity management exhibited by the managers of my research become clearer because of what is left out, rather than what is the same necessarily to previous research into paucity management. Further understanding lies somewhere between.

I am almost at the end of my journey, continuing to traverse backwards and forwards, seeking answers, exploring questions. For example, what do all of these ideas mean for current and future community welfare practice in terms of style and models of management? Can certain predictions be made about the presence and description of models of paucity management? As already mentioned, for these managers learning operates alongside passion and privilege, so any model of management will be characterised by manifestations of these ideas. With auto-management they continue to explore possibilities through modified trial and error to manage situations of barriers and opportunities that could otherwise get ‘lost’, or out of control. It is not overly dramatic I believe, to suggest that in this way, they manage risk. Again, I can relate this to the firm sense of purpose exhibited by the manager who used funding for a different allocated program. She moved with caution, by approaching the local high school, but at the same time she was determined to arrive at a solution. In one way this manager, like all the others, could be acting out her own ontology and this may very well relate to the notion of subjective intervention to influence and change structures. That is, structures are there in order to be changed.

In the following final chapter, the idea of models of paucity management as spatialisations in context gives further understanding to what those models encompass.
That is, they encompass the *style of management* to determine the kinds of strategies that could be used depending on the situation. In this respect, the premise of paucity management models is no different from the use of other management models and the chapter summarises the extent to which the relationship between manager agency and the structural impacts of organisation, determines how managers will ‘do’ paucity management.
Chapter 7 – Conclusion

7.0 Introduction

At the end of this thesis, the following question has to be asked, *has a better understanding now emerged of the presence and use of models of paucity management to accommodate structural and affiliation constraints within community welfare organisations?* Analysis of data presented in Chapter 4, and interpretation expanded in Chapter 5 suggest not only the presence of paucity management, but also the use of similar models to counter resource poverty situations. Here, I go back to my original Research Question posed in section 1.2 (page 6), *what are models of paucity management and how does the structure and affiliations of organisations within the non-profit community welfare sector, affect the implementation of such models?* That is, *how do the structural constraints of organisations impact the implementation of these models?* I wanted to add to previous research on the topic, about what these models could look like. In particular, *are these models of management utilised to enable useful engagement in an era of hybridisation?* Additionally, *could outcomes of the research add relevant and appropriate management models that could be applied to all sectors, first, second, and third, or public, private, and community?*

Engagement in answers to the above questions began in Chapter 5, and now I want to round off the discussion by laying a foundation for what the answers could include, in relation to current and future community welfare practice for these managers. Fundamentally, management models are always underpinned by the *style* adopted by managers, so, there is a certain relevance in being able to recognise the style of management in determining the kinds of activities that managers will undertake. There is at least one kind of model and it has several configurations of *style, strategies and*
influences to match the complex nature of the context of community welfare service delivery.

In this last chapter, I take up three main ideas to extend the reframing of community welfare activity, whereby strategies are further focused to overcome resource insufficiency and achieve models of paucity management that are spatialities. I have come from a discussion of aspects of the key findings in Chapter 6, to now: reflect on concepts and theories that have informed a better understanding of paucity management (Section 7.1); showcase models of paucity management through the notion of spatialisations in context (Section 7.2) that show the way of doing things (style), the how (strategy), the why (influence), and the what (model), and indicate considerations for the future of community welfare services. All key findings are addressed in Section 7.2, about the extent to which they confirm, support, or add to paucity management theory, and particularly to the working conditions and managerial responsibilities’ domain from Wagner and Spence (refer back to Section 5.1).
7.1 Reflections on conceptual and theoretical frameworks to inform an understanding of paucity management

I think I must be a magpie at heart. Like that bird, I collect things and keep them forever. I chose to consider my research from the point of view that I wanted primarily to gain insight from managers’ stories. I also wanted the ideas of relevant others to inform further, my understanding of models of paucity management in the community welfare sector that came from the past, present and future. I had not intended to take a grounded theory approach to this project but I knew that a grounded approach to analysing the information shared by the participants would be the only valid outcome. I deliberately chose a phenomenographic approach to allow me to adopt a pluralist gaze that would gather together different theoretical perspectives to inform my journey. In the first instance, I am referring to the work of others to inform my research project, and secondly, to those choices I made through the epistemological stance that I took. In the end, I had to include a multi-level theoretical gaze to the interpretation framework, to maximise understanding of the essence of the managers’ experience of phenomena in a resource-poor environment.

I am referring of course to key influencing discourses, including: Wagner and Spence (2002, 2003) about their community welfare management domain, aspects of Giddens’ Structuration Theory (1981, 1984), and different facets from the separate Chaos and Complexity Theories of Gleick (1987, 1988, 1993) and Lewin (1993, 2001 2nd edn.). I did not pretend to include all aspects of these theories and categorisations of their work to build my research, and particularly the interpretation framework. That would have been a task too cumbersome for this research project, and even for this ‘determined magpie’. But in identifying that direction, there is an acknowledgement of three main dynamics that were worth pursuing: work activities at the coal face of delivery; the consideration that ‘time and space’ issues could add another level of understanding about managers’ work, and the extent and level to which managers manifested
‘emergence’ and ‘self-organisation’ as a result of working with limited and shrinking resources.

All research about work practices has the potential to reveal outcomes that are complex. It seemed to me that the social functionalism implicit in some of Wagner’s work extends the juxtaposition of phenomenology and functionalism inherent in Giddens’ work. Moreover, these ideas extend to how people engage with organisations and vice versa, as well as with relevant ‘others’. For the managers, there is some bearing on how models of management in the community welfare sector evolve to embed structural considerations surrounding organisations into some kind of format with which they could identify. The nature of community welfare work in this research, is revealed through an awareness of variation in the complexity of a community welfare manager’s role as it applied to the interrelatedness of phenomena as well as emergence through self-organisation (McMillan 2002, 2004). In essence, the degrees to which the manager’s capabilities allowed spontaneous self-organisation could contribute to an acknowledgement that ‘the whole is greater than the sum of its parts’, and therefore identified more suitably as having complexity rather than just being complex (Anderson and McMillan 2003). So, where theory is a means of conceptualising the ‘real’ world, chaos/complexity provided a transformative contribution to my mental framework, for its apprehension of reality in the context of the community welfare managers’ world of work. That is, while chaos/complexity gives a global perspective not just about the condition of work in the managers’ agencies, but in the overall community welfare sector, the third sector, and civil society as a whole, they do this through coherence and practical adequacy (Johnston 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000: 826).

This research has confirmed, supported, and added to past research relating to paucity management. For example, from a scrutiny of Wagner’s work, it appears that the impact of paucity management domain practices is informative; from a scrutiny of Giddens’ work, aspects of time-space distanciation looked to be profound for bringing a layer of credibility to understanding the effects of individual-to-organisation relationships as well as revealing the distanciation of government policy as it tries to infiltrate community
welfare work, particularly in a rural region, whilst ideas of systems and environment that are identified by particular kinds of chaos/complexity interrelatedness provide an emergent quality to current work practices. From a multi-theoretical gaze, community welfare management models are developed through the overriding paradoxes of trying to work within a system of complexity; not struggling to manage over things but managing within the unmanageable, not battling to organise the totality but organising within the unorganisable, and not simply knowing things but knowing of the unknowable (Flood 1999: 3). Community welfare management provides dynamic considerations for future work practices.

The outcomes from this study confirm the findings from Wagner and Spence about the incidence of paucity management in community welfare services to allow managers to engage in balancing and trading-off strategies, in order to overcome tensions and anomalies within their practice-context (refer back to Section 5.1). However, this research also adds to the theory of paucity management particularly in regard to the ‘work arounds’ in which managers engage to affect commonsense solutions for communities, that are pragmatic yes, but in many cases, innovative.

The following sections extend the links and comparisons between this study and what was already known about paucity management from Wagner’s work. The sections also look at what the research has discovered about the intricacies of practice by incorporating the importance of viewing community welfare work from a contextual approach that gives rise to interesting new layers of management engagement.
7.2 Models of paucity management in the community welfare services sector – ‘spatialisations’ in context

So, *what do we have so far in the way of models of paucity management?* The models of paucity management as extrapolated from the practices of these managers are summarised in Table 7.2: Models of Paucity Management – spatialisations in context. They signify management models in a *taken-for-granted* world in which seemingly ‘mundane’ activities are constant spaces in time, even of potential resistance. The spatialisations show the *way* of doing things, the *how*, the *why*, and the *what*. One such model of paucity management could be that when a manager demonstrates a spontaneous style in seeking funding partnerships, the strategy could be realised through an act of auto-management that is not planned necessarily, and the reasons for doing things that way are more complex than simple, but they include the ability to exercise a certain symbolic influence in perpetrating and maintaining significant and trustful relationships. This model of paucity management is an important outcome from the empirical research that has not been explicitly detailed previously in literature on community welfare services.

Wagner and Spence refer to the idea of managerial role and responsibilities incorporating ‘balancing’ (refer back to Section 5.1), but in reference to Table 6.2: Revisiting key findings, the **key finding #8 adds** to paucity management theory by indicating that *Managers reacted spontaneously to come together – almost on ‘auto-pilot’ – in order to apply for funding or collaborate on particular projects, and this practice was more reactionary than planned, but built strongly on trust*. 
Table 7.2: Models of Paucity Management – spatialisations in context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>style</th>
<th>strategy</th>
<th>influence</th>
<th>model</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>work processes</td>
<td>systems</td>
<td>Paucity Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>decision-making</td>
<td>hybridity</td>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansive</td>
<td>dilemma- reasoning</td>
<td>complexity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>disseminating information</td>
<td>complexity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling</td>
<td>innovative practice</td>
<td>symbolic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous and emergent</td>
<td>auto-management</td>
<td>constructionism</td>
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From interpretation of the data, *spatialisation* is an integral aspect of the *contextual approach* to the community welfare and third sector ‘world of work’ because it offers a configuration by which to portray possible models of work particularly in the context of the impact of spatial hybridity to change the nature of work, organisation and management across domestic local space and organisational space (Halford 2005). I am confident that at the very least, models of paucity management are spatial realities that impact several relational levels in a resource-poor environment. In reference to Table 6.2, the key finding #9 adds to paucity management theory about the work of managers, through noting that ‘Managers applied the ‘rules of the game’ at every different level of interaction, which meant they were both transactive and reactive’. Contrastingly, there is no mention of management relational levels of engagement in the Wagner and Spence ideas of paucity management.

Ideas of ‘context’ and ‘contextual approach’ provide a useful platform for interpreting how associations and relations of co-existence in time and space help to define the community welfare managers’ world of work actions, and models of management realise this through three environmental systems levels: the micro level, the mezzo level, and the macro level. However, although there are specific aspects that overlay the definition of activity at each of those levels, this research has revealed explicitly that there is also extension into the other levels. For example, the government hybrid organisation was identified as being a probable force to indicate the choice and response
considered by community welfare managers. From this research, the **key finding #5** adds to paucity management theory by establishing that ‘*In respect to working with the government hybrid organisation, the time-space span between knowing what and knowing how, was minimised because of past experiences working within government departments that made ‘playing the game’ easier*.’

In reference to the above finding, while Wagner and Spence link ‘a willingness to self-exploit for the greater good, the needy client and heavenly rewards’ as a qualification for doing community work, that was not necessarily the affirmation case for the managers from *this* study. The confluence highlighted in **key finding #10** that, ‘*At the macro level the paucity management model is overlaid with notions of feeling privileged and having resilience to work for the community*, is aligned more to the suggestions from Green and Mason (2002: 42) of a more sophisticated and specialist application especially within small rural communities.

It would be extremely limiting to think that the hybrid organisation occurred only in the government departments with whom the community welfare sector had contact; the practices demonstrated in such situations have, in all probability, a reciprocal nature to them whereby ‘both sides of the coin’ operate from the same influence of continually evolving micro-economic activities in all sectors. With this understanding, all three levels are implicated, and therefore I see that a model of paucity management will be a juxtaposition of both a systems model of management and an expansive model of management. In borrowing again the ideas of Giddens to explain first what I mean here, “direct face-to-face interaction with those co-present in time and/or space (‘social integration’) is wired to systems of mediated interaction with those who are absent in time and/or space (‘system integration’) through the continuous ‘binding’ of time and space into the conduct of social life” (Gregory 2000, cited in Johnston et al [eds.] 2000:111). However, while this is certainly what is happening for the managers at the level of systems, expansiveness here comes from quite specific expansive strategies or activities that do not include ‘broader’ boundaries, but ‘expansive’ in how to look at doing something differently. For example, instead of looking at an issue in service
delivery as just another problem, it may be viewed instead as a dilemma that can be overcome with reason and choice. These strategies unleash energy at the local/individual level but do not necessarily transgress to outer levels. Again, the study supports previous research into paucity management, but also reveals individuality of choice based on knowledge about options.

Community welfare managers’ activities make up work that is continually being colonised by abstract spaces of complexity in the form of all-sector managerialist agendas and government rhetoric on partnerships and business models of welfare service delivery. Key finding #6, where ‘Managers activities are subsumed into routines that are structured by mediating artefacts’, confirms paucity management ideas about working to structured boundaries of organisations and government regimes, but the research also adds empirical evidence of how community welfare managers employ routinisation to counteract tensions between “social mission and commercial goals” (Cooney 2006: 144). Furthermore, the research supports neo-institutional literature about isomorphism in the community welfare services sector whereby regulatory agencies have the tendency to “create certain accepted norms … that structure organizational behaviour” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 148). When managers travel long distances to report on the progress of programs, for example, they are not necessarily acting ‘outside the norm’, but reinforce accepted strategies to affect sustained engagement.

Models of paucity management incorporate both regionalised and routinised behaviours to their activities which in some small way evolve from ‘principles of subsidiarity’ that I interpret differently from one of the managers who related this concept in his interview. The notion of subsidiarity as a guiding principle of management is not without political undertones regarding the transference of power and identity formation that impacts the welfare managers’ roles at the local level. That is, where a belief in subsidiarity interprets practice as being democratic and incorporating collective decision-making, in fact the real nature of these principles revolves around regional decision-making and activity being conducted where there is little or no local capacity or capabilities. When such a situation is perceived to be the case, organisations will often move to centralise
practice to the disempowerment of local entities. In response, **key finding #7** acknowledges from the study how ‘Managers expressed vulnerability in some areas and welcomed the safety of working with a committee, or part of a group of other services that they could trust’, in order to offset isolation and perceptions of exclusion. The incidence of subsidiarity surfacing in this study, or aspects of the phenomena, is realised on the basis of providing positive economic outcomes for nonprofit organisations, and supports the work of Lyons (2001: 221) who writes about the discomfort and non-recognition generated by the governmental threat that the market is more integral to governance and organisation, than to the “rich pluralism” (Phillips 2006: 60) inherent in nonprofit advocacy entities. Melville (2003) holds similar ideas, and extends thoughts about disempowerment to encompass the changing roles of community sector peak bodies in a neo-liberal policy environment.

From the above Table 7.2 we can see there are changing dynamics - relating to capacity and capability - inherent in the style of management used by the managers at their local level. Being **creative, pragmatic, expansive, inclusive, enabling, and spontaneous** comes as part of a relational model of management, as well as an ethical alertness and flexibility that all the managers demonstrated in varying degrees to counteract the limit-situations of community service delivery.

### 7.2.1 A relational model of management

There is little doubt that social relations are developed through the many and varied spatialisations of both spontaneous and planned activity (Sayer 1985, Ullman 1980). In seeking to clarify this latter idea, through the ways of reporting and funding submission requirements of their work, managers have a relationship with their peak organisations that reinforces “… information dissemination, coordination and networking activities” (Melville 2001: 98). For the role of peak bodies to foster and support the role of the manager, through governance and accountability regimes, their activities are encapsulated in the following definition from the Industry Commission (1995: 181),

*Peak bodies are representative bodies that provide information and dissemination services, membership support, coordination, advocacy and*
representation, and research and policy development for their members and other interested parties. This role may not include direct service delivery (but may involve grant support, sponsorship and auspicing of other organisations) to deliver services.

Melville (1999: 27) added to this point by suggesting that the role of the peak body in the last fifteen years or so of ‘competitive tendering’ in the sector, has now changed “to include tasks such as monitoring industry and service delivery standards and/or training”. From this study, it seems that managers facilitate the process of interaction with peak organisations to enable them to know what to do in terms of accountability and governance at a higher, more global level.

Throughout their engagement with the different relational levels, the managers’ practice accentuated by accountability and governance regimes? My structure of awareness indicated that yes, they are, at all levels; micro, mezzo, and macro, but they continue on with their work in spite of that confinement. At the micro relational level, it is the unifying task-management role of the managers that indicates how at the root of all complex systems lie a few simple rules (Lewin 2001); the conditioning of years of practice in having to ‘leave paper trails’ if only for the sake of having a clear conscience about matters, is an endemic part of these managers’ work practice. In other ways, accountability and governance happens ‘out there’, away from the face-to-face realities of work; part of the determinant for the managers is not what they do, but that they have legitimacy to represent the community and therefore they can. In reference to the above points, key finding #2 identifies one of the ways in which managers’ behaviour is manifested, whereby ‘The community-based management model of caring and responding to community need was defined as a paucity management model’. So this finding adds more to paucity management practices of professionalisation within the sector, compared to the ideas from Wagner and Spence (refer again to Section 5.2).

Community welfare managers’ practice from this research, incorporates some of the strategies espoused in the five domains of paucity management practices revealed in the Wagner and Spence research, including:
• Networking and inter-organisational collaboration
• Intra-organisational collaboration and pooling of competence
• Service Delivery Focus
• Working conditions and managerial responsibilities
• Relationships between workers, paid management and the governing body.

The domain I chose to use in my analytical structure of awareness of variation framework - working conditions and managerial responsibilities – is manifested through the different manager’s context, and supports key finding #4, that ‘Paucity management was determined by the kind of community in which welfare workers were involved’. This idea of contextuality is supported by the ‘practice domains’ from Cheers, Darracott and Lonne (2005), and Martinez-Brawley (2002). Furthermore, working conditions and managerial responsibilities are realised by the various spatialisations inherent in a community welfare world and the models of management that ‘defy the odds’ and come from those social activities and/or entanglements, to engage in paucity management (Crofts and Begg 2005: 336). In regards to this focus, of particular interest has been the way that managers generally, make sense of their working lives through “engagement at the micro-level in day-to-day activities, through practical and ideological choices via the inter-organisational mezzo-level of engagement, and at the macro-level through engagement that is impacted by the broader political and social agendas” (Milcek, Wagner and Childs 2003: 3). That is, managers’ activities are subsumed into routines that are structured by mediating artefacts such as policy documents, governance guidelines, and reporting mechanisms, the discourse of individual organisations as well as government discourse, and so are highly context-dependent.

The association of managers with particular regimes are never without the fundamental tensions of contemporary capitalism and involve the application of “boundary judgements” (Flood 2002: 6) to deal with emerging dilemmas. I am referring here to the evolvement of reasoning and ethical considerations in the face of a changing landscape that is typified by micro-economic reform and neoliberal politics of government that help to produce the hybrid structure in organisations. All the strategies utilised by the
managers in *doing* paucity management, for example, ‘collaboration’, ‘partnerships’, ‘joint funding’, ‘advocacy’, and ‘auspicing’, must be interpreted in light of the fact that government rhetoric advocates the utility and value of ‘contracting out’ and ‘competitive tendering’. That is, partnerships have a potential fiscal outcome, but the managers of this research are still to privilege those types of arrangement over more prevalent ones that build social relationships of shared community welfare services experience.

The above strategies are played out, against a backdrop of *rural contextuality* that is an important consideration but also a dichotomous one; there is evidence to show that the community welfare sector in this rural context is both a highly routinised one, as well as a fairly regionalised one that tends to counter-balance the assumption that societies are always homogeneous, unified systems (Giddens 1984: 376). As noted in my research, the points of similarities weigh equally against the points of dissimilarities and have an impact on managerial responsibilities. Regardless of the nature of the context however, this rural context-as-structure is seen by several authors as being both constraining and also enabling in that it allows for human activity to have a defining influence in both time and place (see for example Baert 1998, Bhaskar 1989, Bourdieu 1990, Giddens 1984), and this phenomenon has been confirmed by the managers themselves, particularly in relation to the availability and utilisation of time. The research *adds* further insights into enabling beliefs of paucity management activities, particularly through the **key finding #3**, whereby ‘The manifestation of ‘difference’ as a matter of survival was a defining condition of community welfare work in rural regions’.

There are many instances where community welfare practice occurs in the workplace through a socio-cultural context that cannot be ignored. From this research, the managers’ ruralness and especially their ‘community welfare ruralness’, depicts a certain ‘cultural model’ of structural constraint to the extent that “culture informs people about what is desirable and to be aimed at … [and] the very fact that they operate within a social structure implies various opportunities and constraints” (Baert 1998: 57). All these factors do not necessarily *lead to*, but compound a paucity environment. Therefore, while managers are not necessarily ‘ahead of the game’, their formidable past, work
experience (usually from being in government departments), enables them to ‘play the game’. Cultural ‘lag’ then, or more appropriately socio-cultural lag, is an important consideration in the interpretation phase of this research because it provides one way of understanding the situation of community welfare managers’ ability to negotiate through their complex resource-poor environments. It is a way of knowing how experience in other contexts takes some time to impact new and evolving situations – the ‘lag’ is made up by different managers depending on what they ‘knew then’ to what they ‘know now’. By looking through a cultural model theory lens (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992, Holland and Quinn 1987), and overlaying this gaze with aspects of symbolic constructionism, we are presented with an idea of activity being mediated in a social version of "schema theory", whereby people make sense of their experiences by applying largely tacit theories of knowledge in workplaces or cultural models that have been constructed through joint activity, inter-actively (Lektorsky 1999: 110).

These cultural models are sometimes incomplete, and not always logically consistent like the actions demonstrated by the manager who went to a community intending to deliver a programme funded for under-5 year-olds and ended up delivering one instead for high school children. These models actually appear to allow managers to ‘catch up’; to make up the lag. They are often simplified and represent prototypical arguments, images, ‘storylines’, or metaphorical elaborations that are sometimes shared within the cultural or social group typified by what it means to be ‘rural’, ‘privileged’ and ‘community welfare’, to explain why and how things happen as they do and what they mean. In the case of the community welfare managers, these models could be seen to represent ‘models of community practice’ which are embedded not just in heads, but in social practices, and texts, to guide action, inform judgments of self and others, and shape ways of talking and participating (after Gee 1999). The example comes to mind here of the manager who had to be reminded in one of the focus groups, that what she did was manager’s work.

The above points lead to yet more important considerations for fielding models of paucity management, and go some way to offering answers to the second part of my
main Research Question, that is … and how do the structural constraints of organisations impact such models? This is where ideas about structuration play a useful part in my interpretation of what is being done by managers to engage in paucity management or more specifically how paucity management is ‘played out’. That is, the ideas give a clue to the different manifestations of the autonomy of human agency being both a part of, and apart from, structure because the two, structure and agency, exist interdependently but also distinctly. As clarified by Jackson (1999: 548),

In traditional social theory, as well as neoclassical economics, structure merely restricts or moulds agents, so that agency/structure relation is in opposition. In structuration theory, structures can play an enabling role: people’s capabilities depend on their social surroundings. Structures may at times constrain agents, but it is pivotal to the enhancement of their powers and the development of culture.

The above quote points to the dialectical interplay that the managers themselves revealed when they spoke of the level of their autonomy in their work. Formal organisational structure is there in the words of managers when they speak of direction, directors, organisation mission, and philosophical ideal. It is also there in other insidious entanglements that highlight the vulnerabilities and isolation of community welfare work. Wagner and Spence note that community work is often stressful (refer back to Section 5.2), and this research supports the notion that community welfare managers’ activities are exercised in a paucity environment. But the research also adds to the idea that such activities do not indicate necessarily an opposition to structure per se, but are brought together in a ‘duality of structure’ (Giddens 1984). In my analysis I emphasised the part that managers appeared to be ‘enablers’ in order to influence stability around them and this idea fits well with the notion that models of paucity management use influential structures, such as those inherent in peak organisations or agency management committees, to effect paucity management.

7.2.2 Models of paucity management that are ethical and professional
Ethical and professional practice relates to the choices that managers make to emphasise the social mediation of human activity between agents, or between agents and
environment/structure (Wheelahan 2004: pp. 253-260). However, this is only part of a complex understanding of the way that managers can make decisions based on a reflexive, autonomous self who is both purposive (having the capacity to choose whether to do something or not), and purposeful (setting out to do something and finding the capabilities to complete whatever that action will take). But it is also one in which subtle ‘coercion’ can add another dynamic to the dialectic of ethical decision-making. For example, where ethical decision-making in funding matters can draw managers into ‘grey’ areas between what, and whose choice, decisions may be made based on balancing what is important to the manager in terms of being achievable, compared to the extent by which practical activity could be so bound up in “relations with material culture” (Wheelahan 2004: 255), that managers feel coerced (or compelled) into committing to situations that are far bigger than they have the capabilities to handle.

In looking at the variations in Table 7.2, and going back over managers’ examples of experience, one interpretation of their practice as professional practice comes from the belief that they do not appear to mix styles and strategies. The managers overlay the need for instrumental action with their experiential behaviour. The use of models of paucity management happens in an almost sophisticated way depending as I have said on the circumstances and also on the level and extent of reflexive practice operating at the time. However, in exercising their particular model, the managers hold to a fairly conservative course. For example, from this research, they do not necessarily see the use of volunteers as being part of a ‘creative’ work process, but as part of ‘pragmatic’ decision-making. These ideas are consistent with what the literature says about volunteering but in the case of input from Wagner and Spence, the use of volunteers creates a clear tension between professional standards and ethical practice (refer back to Section 5.1).

There seems little doubt that ethical practice as part of the makeup of a model of professionalism can be both a cognitive and a cultural function, but it can also be a structuration process whereby “the tensions of preserving ideological integrity” come face to face with formal organisational and agency requirements (Barraket 2001: 111).
Time-space distanciation is a palpable condition of professional practice experienced as ethical practice. The influence of organisation ideology and ethical boundaries happen at the margins of practice as much as within the fields of practice; they are both ‘present’ and ‘absent’, and are implicated in every moment of action. However, it appears that what is sanctioned as professional practice for these managers is legitimated through norms of behaviour and moral ‘rules of the game’ that includes, for example, making use of volunteers but drawing the line at just using them.

For me, the above research outcome provides a critical acknowledgement from my structure of awareness framework – each manager either wrestles overtly with ethical dilemmas or not at all, and for those who do not, I can see some questions around sound ethical practice in what they do, but regardless, and perhaps unwittingly, they invest in social agency to maintain some kind of stability in their work. This stability comes from the need to compromise position in order to remain sustainable and enable funding to continue; it comes from the stretching of the use of volunteers and paid staff to achieve formal delivery of service delivery programs, sometimes outside the realm of good human resources practice. The results from the study support work undertaken by Onyx and Leonard (2004, 2007 [online]) into ways of building social capital through coordinated activity.

It may be that the illusive nature of what constitutes ethical practice generally is really overlaid with complexities that inform the peculiarity of community welfare service delivery. I am thinking here of the tenuous hold some managers have, on the rightful and equitable use of all workers, not just volunteers, and I am wondering also about the implied compromise that managers make to enable the continuity of their services. Through the application of Chaos and Complexity Theories, “global properties flow(ing) from aggregate behaviour of individuals” (Lewin 2001: 13) and somehow, complex systems do eventually produce stability (page 14). This idea of stability out of the peculiar type of complex landscape that is community welfare services delivery, comes from several sources in the research, not least of which is in relation to the rich metaphorical language used by all the managers. Far from being a limiting aspect to
their practice, possibly in the sometimes-tendency for metaphorical expression to render situations opaque and ‘unreadable’, their expressions have an identifying, and ‘anchoring’ affect of consistency, calm, and confluence over their situations.

From the results in the study, ethical and professional practice is manifested through attention to accountability; managers can admit to being completely accountable, especially to their management committees, but it is almost that considerations beyond this level are part of the ‘background noise’ of being a community welfare manager. I think this phenomenon is better explained through its implicit linking with the notion put forward by several of the managers, and that is commonsense. Gerber (2001: pp. 72-81) referred to his own phenomenographic research approach into the “concept of commonsense in workplace learning and experience” and the importance of ‘knowing’; “commonsense as a gut feeling … commonsense as innate ability … commonsense as knowing how … commonsense as using others … commonsense as demonstrable cognitive abilities … commonsense through personal attributes …”. This research has been invaluable in also using phenomenographic methods to expose and differentiate the kinds of commonsense applications that the managers demonstrated through their practice in the central west regions of NSW.

The above points indicate an interesting layer to managers’ experience of professional and ethical practice that is both ideologically bounded as well as ethically informed. Managers who base their fundamental approach to community welfare practice on being both flexible and responsive to demand, even if the need is ‘to do things on the cheap’, are constantly challenged to maintain a professional service. This sentiment is held by hundreds of managers in many different industries across Australia, particularly when the threat of downsizing, re-engineering, or rationalisation occurs, so why should the situation with the rural managers of this research be any different? The answer lies probably somewhere between the historical view of human services as a helping profession that continually meets the needs of disadvantaged people no matter what the cost, and the discomfort of community welfare managers seeking increasing numbers of volunteer labour because of soaring costs and a scrutiny of value. Compared to other
literature consulted, this research gives a more tangible account of the use of volunteers and in one example, through revealing an important empirical situation of paucity management whereby volunteers account for case managing some 80 families in one rural agency.

Ethical practice is also manifested through reference to the values of the managers’ organisations and is mandated in some interesting and contrasting ways. Interesting, because in two examples from the same town – in fact with similar clientele – actions were derived for one manager, by a focus built on very broad principles relating to any and all disadvantaged people, and for the other manager, the focus was very streamlined and concentrated from the outset, on strategies that dealt with being active about issues to do with young people and children. This is not to say that one manager’s actions are more motivated than those of the other manager and therefore perhaps more effective, but to note the complication of analysing and discussing ‘activity’ on the one level. The study gained from the use of phenomenography to extract meaningful layers of understanding. For example, Coupland and Crawford (2002: 1) suggest a multi-level analysis of activity, and at the level of motive, “the motive energises the activity, and arises out of a need experienced by an individual or a group of people, even a whole society”. It is difficult to say, that one manager over the other approached the mandate they had been given to provide effective human services, in a more energetic way because their focus was too broad or too narrow. Therefore, how could it be said that one manager over the other, has more of a professional focus?

The important aspects to inform answers to the above question go back to the ways that activity and agency in this study, are played out to influence professional practice, in both purposive and purposeful ways. According to Giddens (1984: 9), agency refers to the way that a person takes responsibility for his or her actions; in the self-monitoring of action. While he saw one aspect of this kind of agency as the result of the relationship between agent and surroundings, and therefore with some inferred choice, nevertheless for these managers capacity to choose whether to intervene or not on behalf of disadvantaged people, perpetrate activity or not, convene programs or not, is still
controlled to a large extent by the kind of activity designated by the agency hierarchy to maintain their initial ideological focus.

The example from the findings whereby one of the managers recounted her philosophy of openly communicating to all staff about the issues on the agenda for committee meetings, demonstrates a determination to “ensure that all (my) practices are transparent and principled” (Julie). In terms of what this could mean for a paucity management model, voluntary management committees or board members need to receive good quality information if they are to be able to manage within a legal framework, as they must, and be responsible for the workings of the service. Over the last five or six years, there have been numerous articles written, and projects undertaken about the role of the management committee to not only engender ethical decision-making, but to also generate a communicable situation where ethical practice is part of a professional, interpretive view that includes being accountable in complex ways (Wagner and Spence 2002, see also NCROSS Sector Development, accessed [online] 04.06.07). “Learning-in-working” and “the fluid evolution of learning through practice” (Brown and Duguid 1991: 41) are different names for the same continuous strategy that takes the community welfare manager from canonical rule-bound practices to non-canonical ‘work arounds’ that incorporate the challenge of engaging in opus operatum ethical practice compared to the actual modus operandi (Bourdieu 1973) of activity that has the potential to be innovative practice. Again, the importance of this study is that it has revealed ‘commonsense’ behaviour laced with chameleon management qualities and a mantle of cope-ability to enact favourable practice outcomes (refer back to Sections 6.1 and 6.2).

An outcome of this research suggests that managers are enacting. An ‘enacting’ manager (borrowed from Daft and Weick 1984) develops their interpretive view to foster innovation, but for now the relationship of transparency to ethical decision-making is one that privileges actual practice over abstract knowledge. What is the significance of this statement to the experience of ethical and professional practice that may also be influenced and bounded by ideology? To explore this question requires an imagination that sees the detail of work being actualised through practice rather than through the
acquisition of just abstract knowledge. Community welfare managers operate within an ethical frame of reference that has at its philosophical core a social justice framework that is heavily influenced by matters of people’s equity, access, participation and rights.

But it is not until the detail and transparency of what they actually do, is explored, can we assume their practice will take a particular ethical stance, or not. Brown and Duguid (1991: 41) make the interesting observations, that “formal descriptions of work … are abstracted from actual practice. They inevitably and intentionally omit the details. In a society that attaches particular value to ‘abstract knowledge’, the details of practice have come to be seen as nonessential … Abstractions detached from practice distort or obscure intricacies of that practice” (page 41). Furthermore, the term ‘work-arounds’ that relate to non-canonical practice ((page 41), has a similar connotation to Wagner’s et al (2000) idea that paucity management involves managers becoming adept at balancing the competing needs of clients, workers, managers and the organisation, as well as addressing tensions between balancing, trading off, professional standards and ethical practice. It is the intricacies of these managers’ practice then that make their attention to ethical and professional practice, unique.

This sub-section set out to refocus on the ideas identified in the study, of ethical practice being an integral facet of professionalism and how its manifestation arises within models of management, from seemingly mundane but quite complex decision-making that is unique to the community welfare services worker.

7.2.3 Paucity management addresses the limit-situations of community welfare services delivery

Key finding #1 expresses the idea that ‘Managers appeared to use a type of paucity management model that addressed the limiting situations in a ‘bombardment zone’’. Community welfare managers address the limit-situations of their work through a balance of spontaneous adjustment and conscientisation that appears to be embedded in paucity management practice (Mlcek 2005b). That is, models of paucity management allow managers to respond to their situations with limit-acts that are “directed at
negating and overcoming, rather than passively accepting, the given” (Freire 1993: 80). These ideas add more information to the paucity management theory espoused by Wagner and Spence (refer back to Section 5.2), even though they do mention the use of volunteers to supplement the workforce, as well as the notion of balancing the often-contradictory interests of clients, workers, managers, and funding bodies as a core requirement of paucity management.

I interpreted the managers’ feeling of being ‘bombarded’ and of working in the ‘bombardment zone’ in the same way that Vieira Pinto explains ‘limit-situations’ as not “the impassable boundaries where possibilities end, but the real boundaries where all possibilities begin”; they are not “the frontier which separates being from nothingness but the frontier which separates being from being more” (cited in Freire 1993: 80). The example of the manager who ‘redefined’ his auspicing role to gain a house for a community project from a government department is a good example of boundaries being stretched to accommodate new frontiers. They are not ‘clear-cut’ models of practice, but straddle different organisational theoretical constructs, from functionalist (systems) through to interpretative (symbolic constructionism) paradigms. This emergent ‘cross-model’ paradigm for delivering community welfare services fits well with the nature of paucity management. The presence of complexity gives a new interpretation to what these managers are doing in their organisations; slightly different to how Burrell and Morgan (1979: 22) indicate that such constructs could be there but should be mutually exclusive. But to me, this is all part of the new ‘negotiated order’ of delivering community welfare services.

I have used the ‘bombardment zone’ previously to denote the way that these managers negotiate opportunities along different, complex relational levels that start with the local/community level, then moves through to relationships and activities encountered with the organisation, peak body, third sector, and yet all through these levels is the constant questioning and reaffirmation of not only what it means to be a manager – the relationship with self - but also to be influenced by the government department relationship. The latter relational level transgresses across all other levels. So, depending
on what engagement is occurring at what time, will determine the kind of style and strategies used in a particular model of paucity management.

The response of managers to the governance and accountability guidelines of the new ‘hybrid’ manifestation of government departments gives further definition to their models of paucity management, that is, in relation to the level and extent of the individual manager’s experience with public/community enterprise. To work with a hybrid organisation is to utilise innovative practice by creating and supporting community welfare managers as “facilitators of social change or servants of the State” (Kerr and Savelsberg 2001: 22). Certainly the increased levels of accountability, reporting time-lines, performance-based funding allocations, refocusing on specific services, and pressures to enact new and innovative management models come from engagement with activities typical of the hybrid organisations (Brown and Waterhouse 2003, Maddock 2002). But Brown and Waterhouse (2003: 230) ask, “Is a hybrid model a better alternative for public sector agencies” That is, where ‘private sector creep’ of managerial practice into community sector work is now a given, and has helped to determine the latter’s current profile, should a hybrid model of ‘new public management’ be accepted just because there are those who believe it delivers more favourable outcomes than a model focused on cost reduction and private sector prejudice for the bottom line (Brown and Waterhouse 2003)?

I have written about how the hybrid organisation ‘collapses’ activity to accommodate market reform. Complexity does not come from ‘difficult’ or ‘chaotic’ situations but quite often from an inundation of information to try to make situations ‘simple’. Managers actually need to expand their awareness to know what is going on and how to respond to change. But very often, at the actual point of building capacity, the problem of too much information has the actual effect of decreasing not only the capacity of the managers to be able to cope in several situations, but the capability as well. Their skill levels actually need time to replenish and for them to regroup but as stated previously, time is a commodity that is in short supply. Imagine the power of ‘picnolepsy’ to bamboozle the managers’ ability to make the right choices. I have borrowed this concept
before from Sanders (1988, cited in Kress [ed.] 1988: pp. 143-144) and I use it to refer to the situation whereby the managers are inundated with information to the point of being in a constant state of interruption.

The above idea highlights the paradox of complexity whereby a situation does not become ‘chaotic’ but more complex with increased information. Just as managers appear to gain the whole picture about something, another one flashes to the fore. Government departments constantly release new micro-narratives in the form of what to do about partnerships, governance and how to do funding submissions, and these micro-narratives have the potential to inform, complicate and resolve (Virilio 1997). The resolution process for these managers becomes debatable because there is another interruption of new information, new developments, or new ways of doing things. The constant state of interruption has the effect not of increasing knowledge but of subsuming knowledge-into-action. Let me share here, what I have written previously (see Mlcek 2005b: 306) about community welfare managers’ work.

*In being reminded of the instances of interruption that result in community welfare managers reacting sometimes in despair I look to Wenger’s (1998, p. 97) words about the applicability of ‘the combination of perturbability and resilience’ as being ‘characteristic of adaptability’. Where ‘learning involves a close interaction of order and chaos’, Wenger’s line of reasoning is that the ‘continuity of an emergent structure derives not from stability but from adaptability’.*

In the context of community welfare services delivery, perturbability is translated into ‘getting on with the job’, which could result in ‘doing more with less’, and also signals a style of management that is enabling. When working with the hybrid government organisation, the community welfare services manager employs relevant strategies to address the limit-situation of working with the hybrid organisation (refer back to sub-Section 6.2.3.3).

At the outset of this research there was a realisation that different perspectives on innovation in organisational studies would reveal several contrasting debates, the richness of which would contribute to determining models of paucity management
(Burrell and Morgan 1979, Drazin 1990, Pierce and Delbecq 1977, Van de Ven et al 1988, Van de Ven et al [eds.] 1989). Three main accessible perspectives – individualist perspective, structuralist perspective, and interactive process perspective – determine the focus of the ensuing debates (Slappendel 1996: 108) but essentially in respect to the ‘innovation’ of hybridisation the third perspective is seen here as the synthesis of the first two in trying to reconcile action and structure (Giddens 1984). By observing the advent of the hybrid organisation in the public sector we start to capture what is happening in the community welfare sector. Where the former sector (seen through the individualist perspective) relates to a homogenous set of practices that have become institutionalised to try to reflect the ‘best practice’ of private organisations, the latter sector (scrutinised through a structuralist perspective) is still struggling with (or trying to maintain) a heterogeneity that makes ‘best practice’ difficult to acquire. It may well be that the responsive, innovative developments to a new type of managerialism for each sector, has proceeded right from the beginning in tangent with one another to try to produce some kind of coherence but the reasons may not be the same for each in reference to practices that improve efficiency and productivity (DiMaggio and Anheier 1990).

I want to reintroduce the idea that was posited in Chapter Two, about the links between what is happening in the community welfare services sector with what constitutes civil society. When we look to the role of governments we believe they play an integral part in the maintenance and promotion of a civil society. Onyx (1999: 3) indicates that the state continues to play a central role in economic development, but there are ‘missing links’. “… without a vibrant civil society the magic mix for sustainable development will not happen … civil society is more than the third sector; but the third sector is central to civil society”. Whether the managers engage in behaviour from a concern for ‘civil society’ or not, a by-product of their paucity management activities to accommodate a purchaser-provider model of community welfare service delivery, serves to re-enforce the evolvement of the hybrid organisation.
At the level of community democratisation, at least two of the managers questioned their ability to perform this role through their community welfare work and spoke out about how this activity should be part of the expertise role of governments. Governments, I think, believe they do this role, but at the mezzo and macro levels that help shape an “enterprise culture”, the rise of the hybrid organisation has led to market discourses invading “civil (de)centralizations” (Earles 1999 pp. 43-56). The role they take is a deterministic, cost effective one typical of a centralised purchaser of services, so that what filters down to the micro-level of the managers is a colonisation of community sector practice by private and public sector management rhetoric, to become the localised ‘providers’ of purchased services.

I leave Section 7.2 with the idea that the hybrid organisation is a functional response to the evolvement of the globalised market economy – in whatever guise – and the managers appear to adopt a systems approach – again, in whatever guise – to how they engage with the relational levels of that phenomenon. That is, they utilise an appropriate model of management to address the limit-situations of community welfare services delivery, and they do so through different applications of commonsense that tend to ‘work around’ impacting phenomena.
7.3 Situating paucity management in future work considerations

Auto management provides a ‘new look’ in how collaborations and partnerships are conducted, and possible being incorporated more in future considerations for community services delivery. The model of management incorporating auto-management is not unlike the “special form of emergence called spontaneous self-organization” (Flood 2002: 2) that is attributed to Complexity Theory. Regarding this type of management, managers self-organise spontaneously to utilise not only their instrumental skills but their experiential actions as well. Spontaneity is built on trust and the right personalities being able to work in an action area that is conceived of as a “bounded space” (Flood 2002: 6). Flood’s words echo the many layers of complexity in community welfare services delivery, and for future partnership considerations,

... bounded space ... as an action area ... the extended questions for dialogue are, ‘Who is embraced by the action area and thus benefits? Who is outside of it and does not benefit? What are the possible consequences of this? And how do we feel about that? Boundary judgements thus raise questions of an ethical nature, as well as an interest in efficiency and effectiveness. Boundaries are always subject to further debate and are thus temporary (page 7).

Auto-management is temporary, at the time, but the relationships remain long lasting over a period of time. Some of these pairs of managers have followed each other from past work experiences and like old shoes that fit better, auto-management works best in such relationships. At this concluding stage, the placement of paucity management within a legitimate management framework (refer back to Chapter 2, and in particular, Table 2.1 on page 21: Speculative placement of paucity management within a strategies framework) is no longer speculative and has expanded to include auto-management as a primary strategy, together with the following information set out in Table 7.3:
Table 7.3: Placement of paucity management within a strategies framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Models &amp; Concepts</th>
<th>Major source of Philosophical Frame</th>
<th>System Characteristics</th>
<th>Main Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paucity Management (transactional &amp; transformational leadership)</td>
<td>Ethnomethodological Approach = complex adaptive management</td>
<td>Emergence = hybrid outcome of change management but also a product of complexity. Resource poor environment / resource poverty. System = complex and adaptive, with structuralist and constructivist dimensions.</td>
<td>• Networking &amp; collaboration  • Partnerships  • Auto-management  • Co-option  • Engagement with hybrid organisations/ networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instinctive Resource Management but also Complexity Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>External and internal matching to achieve innovative outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complexity/Chaos Theory Gleick (1980s …)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lewin (1990s …)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ideas in the above table indicate again, the different permutations of models of community welfare service management that extend beyond just the functional conventions of planning, organising, leading and controlling. Now, paucity management is definitely no longer speculative. The practice of auto-management, for example, provides relevant innovative and creative practice in how paucity management addresses the future considerations of a resource-poor community welfare services environment.

While this research acknowledges the Wagner and Spence framework as a primary influence for inquiry (refer back to Section 5.1), it also utilised phenomenographic research methods that would capture a rich content base from which to begin to add to the theory of paucity management. In this study, stories were not only used to focus on the plurality of experience and variations in experience of community welfare managers, but at the same time to present a sustaining picture of the grounds of common experience and how these related to working conditions and managerial responsibility. As individuals in the social context of being part of the management discourse, the community welfare managers of this research are resourceful agents within their own particular fields of action but they also engage reflexively depending on the context and intent. But, to what extent are they controlled by, and have control over, their situations? A reading of the findings indicates that the answers lie in the way in which paucity management is implemented. Furthermore, as already indicated, strategy and style go together, and the ‘way’ of implementation incorporates these two concepts.
This study highlights the complexity of strategy for future community welfare services delivery and perhaps revisiting Chaffee’s (1985) examples of this phenomenon, could add to choices of implementation. Where ‘old’ knowledge meets ‘old/new’ intentions, a link can be made between the kinds of ‘expressive’ values that the managers make, and the ongoing corresponding use of interpretive strategies (Steane 2001: pp. 15-19). When managers are being interpretive, they are also utilising complex models of creativity whereby motivation is the critical factor in “achieving adequate strategic behaviour” (Chaffee 1985: 93). Referring to the situatedness of the managers, the reality of their interpretive model of strategy is that it is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Furthermore, Chaffee (1985: 93) sees this reality as being “defined through a process of social interchange in which perceptions are affirmed, modified, or replaced according to the apparent congruence with the perceptions of others”. But, how complex can the strategy environment be for the community welfare manager?

There are two aspects to answering the above question. Steane (2001) suggests that government departments tend to exercise adaptive strategies in order to meet the changes around them, for example through the advent of the hybrid organisation. While interpretive strategy tends to mimic linear strategy in its emphasis on dealing with the environment, there is a difference when this is applied to the community welfare managers. Because the managers’ values are expressive and not instrumental, they affect their environment “through symbolic actions and communications” that amount to interpretive strategies and are enacted within the most complex set of system levels, which is the “cultural set” (Boulding, in Chaffee 1985: 95). Interpretive strategies furthermore appear to gain emphasis and importance in the collaborations and cooperation between individuals, as well as in the sharing of values and symbolic representations. ‘Being privileged to be a community welfare worker’, is a case in point, but also the heart-felt practices of putting what it means to be a community welfare worker into the ideological frame of ‘privilege’ and ‘resilience’ has an air of longevity about it all. In 1985, Chaffee wondered if a cultural, interpretive model of strategy could incorporate both linear and adaptive strategy, and given the complex, relational levels about which I have hinted regarding the managers’ practice inside the bombardment
zone, I wonder if this is being too prescriptive and that an even greater model differentiation is more appropriate.

In respect to further future developments, the starting point must be that differences in management style and technique can and does create innovation, but also the moving dynamics of community welfare services delivery defies labelling its type of management with too much of the same practices within conventional models of management. In problematising the experience of these managers, there appears to be relevancy for application to other situations particularly in the way in which strategy implementation is undertaken. The notion of appropriate modelling of activity and behaviour – of practice – to be able to replicate ideal, as well as functional, solutions, provides the general unifying key for all community service delivery throughout Australia. There may be different degrees to which other areas, such as Western Australia and the ‘top end’ of Australia, have concentrated on significant infrastructure development to deliver particular types of community welfare services, or emphasised the relevance of lifestyle programs to develop healthy communities (Commonwealth Government 2001, accessed [online] 14.02.08, Jamieson et al 2006, accessed [online] 14.02.08). However, any limitations from the results of this study are offset by the overall evidence of the epistemic existence of paucity management to certain degrees, wherever there is resource insufficiency. Furthermore, in the central west regions of NSW, a defining aspect of difference from this research, compared to other remote community welfare services delivery situations in for example, Western Australia or the ‘top end’ part of Australia, is that managers deal with overcoming the impact of different types of resource allocation characteristics that evolve from not just working in remote areas, but working with different types of local communities that are land-locked, affected by the ravages of drought, and sit at both the beginning and the end of vast geographical service areas.

At the end of Section 7.3, this study affirms that models of paucity management have the ability to change not just the community welfare sector, but other sector practices as well, because they transgress the multiple ontologies and resulting multi-voicedness of
workers. In all likelihood these models of management are used throughout different parts of Australia wherever there is a resource poor environment but the characteristics will be different based on the types of services delivered as well as on the kinds of communities that are being included in service delivery. An exciting prospect for future research could be to use the same research instrument (refer back to sub-Section 3.3.1), and with similar phenomenographic methodologies, to conduct a longitudinal study of different remote area community welfare management styles and strategies, for example in Western Australia or in the top end of Australia, to explicate further understanding of paucity management models.
7.4 Conclusion

This study looked to answer the Research Question: What are models of paucity management, and how does the structure and affiliations of organisations within the non-profit community welfare sector, impact the use of those models? To the first part of the question - What are models of paucity management - the strategy of auto-management was explicit in one type of paucity management model. With auto-management managers continue to explore possibilities through modified trial and error to manage situations of barriers and opportunities that could otherwise get ‘lost’, or out of control. It is not overly dramatic, to suggest that in this way, they manage risk. Again, there are examples from the data that show a firm sense of purpose exhibited by the managers who particularly used funding for different allocated targeting. They move with caution, but at the same time are determined to arrive at a solution. In one way the managers, are acting out their own ontologies and this may very well relate to the notion of subjective intervention to influence and change structures. That is, structures are there in order to be changed.

In situations of resource poverty, community welfare managers employ models of paucity management to address limit-situations encountered in their daily work. Call it by another name, if appropriate and if that is what people want, paucity management is not just a definition of what managers do, but it is the concretisation of their practice. Models of paucity management are typified by variations as they relate to decision-making strategies that are part of what makes up the community welfare manager – their ‘equipment’ or ‘habitus’ – to engage effectively with resource poverty, and this is what underscores the human significance of their contextuality. The outcome leads to spatialities that allow managers to move both in and move out – like the ebb and flow of waves – as well as, remain constant. The idea of models of paucity management as spatialisations in context gives further understanding to what those models encompass. That is, they encompass the style of management to determine the kinds of strategies that could be used depending on the situation. In this respect, the premise of paucity
management models is no different from the use of other management models and the chapter summarises the extent to which the relationship between manager agency and the structural impacts of organisation, determines how managers will ‘do’ paucity management.

_Have the research findings delivered a greater understanding of models of paucity management?_ A useful answer arises through revisiting some of the ideas of the managers themselves. In terms of working practices, they use models of management that enable them to maintain stability despite ‘seeing a lot of downfalls’; that accommodate managers in exercising caution because of ‘an adherence to the mission and vision of the organisation’; that provide avenues for being ethically alert because their work can sometimes produce ‘a scary experience’; that create opportunities to be proactive and productive despite the enigma surrounding ‘typical government rhetoric’; that engage levels of activity at the micro, mezzo and macro ends of systems thinking despite being ‘constantly bombarded by many interruptions’, and that pre-empt community outcomes over personal gain because ‘by gee you get a great deal of satisfaction out of doing this work’.

There is an acknowledgement of uncertainty that this thesis can offer a further transformative or emancipatory springboard for change and improvement in the community welfare sector because there is multi-method practice and multi-level strategies employed. However, there has been a certain reassurance and invigoration in nominating a fairly non-conventional and complex ‘multi-gaze’ through which to view community welfare managers’ work. The practitioner and researcher lenses brought to this study, through the use of the phenomenographic approach to research, straddle the borderlands of four distinct, though overlapping epistemologies – adult learning and education, community work and development, the study of communication and culture, and the evolving nature of all-sector management. The trajectory of this overlap is that it allows for a sustainable social interactionist focus; a kind of multi-_voicedness_ whereby _boundaries_ are created and sustained, and where different ways of learning, knowing and doing are worked together in social cohesion. _How we know what we know_ can be deduced from the use of several different methods but if the individual’s world is
privileged as the source of meaning, then it makes sense to approach the individual to shed light on their world. Phenomenography allowed a multi-stage process to bring out the experiences of the managers.

Theory was used to help make sense of the level and extent of structural impacts on work practice. Aspects of paucity management theory from Wagner and Spence, Giddens’ Structuration Theory, and the work of Gleick and Lewin about complexity and chaos gave a sense of community welfare work that straddles boundaries, temporarily. Without that input into the interpretation framework, yet another compendium of stories would be posited that yes, have the power in and of themselves to inform, but offer just one dimension of awareness. In the central western regions of NSW, managing community welfare services delivery is not just about technical or functional excellence and commercial foresight but qualities like responsiveness, proactivity, and reaction to complex situations are every bit as important. At the end of an era of hybridisation and the bean-counting manifestations that community welfare managers need to accommodate, it will be interesting to see whether or not it will be the kind of third sector emotional intelligence they display through their stories, that will prevail.

Finally, to the last part of the main Research Question, … and how does the structure and affiliations of organisations within the nonprofit community welfare sector, impact the use of those models? The words of the managers provide much to ponder. Regarding structure and support from organisations, ‘… when it’s good it’s really good but when it’s bad …’ (statement tails away, Bell - initial interview 2003). However, regarding affiliations within organisations, these enable a degree of autonomous management; a freedom and safety net to continue to provide services to the community. Because in spite of what organisations may aspire to, or plan for, their service delivery, the community welfare managers of this research understand the nature of their clients and the environment, and so paucity management continues to be implemented regardless of the impact of phenomena to do with structure and affiliations of organisations. The nature of community welfare services may change over the years, as it has been doing since the realignments of operational provision in the mid-1980s, but this will only serve
to change the approach and style used in models of paucity management; it will not change the existence of paucity management. The evolving structures that impact community welfare agencies will not cancel out paucity management but the latter will evolve out of the utilisation of possibly different strategies. There will be new stories and different ways of doing things; space will accommodate new hybrid structures and boundaries will be colonised by different judgements and that is how it should be.

Regarding this research, there was an acknowledged complexity to the task right from the start of the project that belied the simplicity of trying to define the object of the research. What was the research about? Who were the people involved? What were the projected outcomes of the research? An initial outcome would be that information and analysis generated through engagement with the research topic, would contribute to current debate within the organisation and management fields of study. For example, could one legitimately look towards an outcome for the community welfare sector that is also relevant practice to be utilised in the private and public sector domains? As explored in the Literature Review Chapter, historically, the community welfare sector has always been at the forefront of innovative ideas to do with the way that services are managed and delivered, without the undue sacrifice to social principles of care and commitment. If ‘paucity management’ is that set of strategies used by managers to operate effectively and ethically under conditions of resource poverty (Wagner, Spence and van Reyk 2000: 43) then its viability could come from the need to invent new strategies to counteract those practices that have been adopted as a result of ‘private sector creep’ and/or old but renewed public sector strategies. One of the incentives for exploring such management and leadership techniques (including new standards of governance) within the third sector is that for a long time, leading edge performance in management, leadership and governance, came not from business or government models, but from third sector and community examples (see Stewart-Weeks 2001: 33).

In part three of Chapter 4 the words spoken by Julie (page 156) suggests that community welfare service is delivered from the strength of principles that are both broad and specific at the same time. They are words that illustrate a raw and gutsy management
style that is dynamic but also provocative and laced with a certain degree of ‘confinement’. Perhaps those are the characteristics, along with ideas about chameleon qualities that continually draw us back to scrutinising what happens in community services, and how management work practices in a community-based, paucity management model are not easily transferable to other contexts, but should not preclude further studies in this area. Again in reference to Julie, she rounded off her thoughts about her role and responsibilities with the words “… that’s the guts of it”. The managers have revealed this latter sentiment from both a metaphorical and visceral stance.

Realistically, and on a final note, when managers asked about having a ‘better name than paucity’ this statement indicated the kind of tensions – the juxtaposition of determinism and insecurity – that are part of the community welfare management role. This research supports initially the work of Wagner and Spence (2003) into their conclusions about certain strategy domains to enact paucity management, but it also indicates that while it is a ‘given’ that managers operate in an environment of resource poverty (aka ‘paucity’), however the way they engage with that situation is through their role as managers; perhaps for example through a particular model of management that is creative or pragmatic. In analysing their approach to their work, a manager can appear to think she is exercising a particular model of management that is being creative because she uses teams, while another manager feels she is using a particular model of management that is pragmatic because she uses volunteers. An awareness of variation in experience will give rise to a variation of strategies framed in different models of work. Managers engage in paucity management to address the limit-situations of their work and they do this through a particular vehicle of management model and style. A model of paucity management is at once illusive and yet contained, driven not by the nature of an organisation’s resourcefulness but by the different levels of ‘sophisticated’ experience that managers utilise to cope with a paucity environment. Such a model therefore, involves emergent properties that imply a non-static, dynamical construct.

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Appendices

Appendix 3-1: Research activities and timeframe

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Appendix 3-2: Ethics Application

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Appendix 3-3: Category of description – Professional practice is experienced as responding to work within structural constraints

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Appendix 3-1: Research activities and timeframe

The following Table 3-1: Timeline of research activities gives an indication of the process undertaken to conduct the activities in a staggered and timely fashion (there is an extended time covering the first thesis draft to include a six-month break from the whole process because of family bereavement).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research activity</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Initial readings/content analysis</td>
<td>March 2002</td>
<td>October 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participant interest</td>
<td>September 2002</td>
<td>December 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ethics application</td>
<td>November 2002</td>
<td>December 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participant consent</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>June 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Research activity #1</td>
<td>August 2003</td>
<td>October 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Research activity #2</td>
<td>November 2003</td>
<td>February 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Research activity #3</td>
<td>March 2004</td>
<td>May 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Final thesis draft (7 chapters)</td>
<td>August 2006</td>
<td>October 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The activities coincided with an iterative process of purposeful research that saw me spend approximately one year conducting content analysis; researching secondary data/literature (written and verbal texts) about different kinds of phenomena that helped to give a picture of community welfare work in the rural setting I had chosen. As stated earlier, from the very beginning, I had a clear idea of the kind of question I wanted to pursue. At the end of the first year I had successfully defended my research proposal and completed all ethics in research requirements to the University of Western Sydney. By the beginning of the second year of research the information I had used in my ethics application seemed to consolidate favourably in my mind and I was confident in the approach I wanted to take, what my methods would be, the probable participants and the research activities.
Appendix 3-2: Ethics Application

Susan H E Mlcek
PhD Research student
Phone: (02) 9678 7611

Tuesday, October 29, 2002

Kay Buckley
Human Ethics Officer
Research Services
University of Western Sydney
Location: Room 09, Building H3 Hawkesbury Campus

Dear Kay

Please find enclosed my Protocol Application for PhD research. I have included the original copy plus 17 copies of both the application and the appendices.

Regards

Susan H E Mlcek
UWS HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

PROTOCOL APPLICATION FORM

To Obtain an Ethics Clearance

**Research projects involving human participants**

- **Staff, PhD, Masters Hons candidates** see Instruction Sheet 1.
- **Bachelors Hons research degree candidates and Masters (course work) candidates** see Instruction Sheet 2.

You are reminded that your project should not commence without prior written approval

1. **Title of Project**
   (use approx. the space provided and type in 12 point font)

   Models of paucity management within the non-government community welfare sector

2. Indicate whether Staff or Student Application (please ✓) and complete the appropriate section of Question 2

2. a **Chief Investigator/s (Staff)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>UWS School</th>
<th>Contact details (Telephone, Email)</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

2. b **Associate Investigator/s (Staff)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Qualifications</th>
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2. c Chief Investigator (Student)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Contact details (Telephone, Email)</th>
<th>Research Degree being undertaken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan H. E. Mlcek</td>
<td>SASHS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.mlcek@uws.edu.au">s.mlcek@uws.edu.au</a> 9678 7611</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name of Student Supervisor: Dr. Regine Wagner
Dr. Merilyn Childs

3. Address for Correspondence *Students must provide an external mail address*

| PO Box 179 | KATOOMBA, NSW  2780 |

4. Anticipated Duration of the Project

Proposed commencement date: January 2003
Proposed completion date: December 2004

5. Funding

Is the research project the subject of an application to an internal or external grants body, or will be granted other funding support? (please ✓)  Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, Name of the funding agency

What was the outcome? Approved ☐ Pending ☐ Refused ☐

Are there any constraints placed on the release of research data by the funding body? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, provide details

6. Lay Summary of Project

Write in words a layperson would understand a brief description of the project, ie use ‘Plain English’

(Use approx. the space provided and type in 12 point font)

The research will focus on the exploration and explanation of management and leadership models within non-government, not-for-profit community welfare organizations, particularly where operations occur under conditions of ever-diminishing resources.
The actual context for research has and will necessarily change, with involvement in analyzing relevant aspects of both government and non-government welfare organizations, seen as a necessary process to balance critique. The research will also involve exploring ethical service delivery on a macro level, within the sector that incorporates community welfare organisations – the Third Sector. This sector is seen as an integral part of civil society and there are relevant factors relating to the ways that community welfare services are delivered to promote a ‘civil society’, which will be further evaluated to add another dimension to researching and establishing models of paucity management.

An initial question has been developed as a focus for investigation and determining a definition of models of paucity management: What are models of paucity management, and how does the structure and affiliations of organizations within the non-profit community welfare sector, affect the implementation of such models?

7. Scientific, Educational or Cultural Aims of Project

Refer to Guidelines Section 7. for information on details required
(use approx. the space provided and type in 12 point font)

The research is supportive of an initiative to continue collaborative work completed by the Association for Children’s Welfare Agencies (ACWA) and the Centre for Learning & Social Transformation (CLAST) of the University of Western Sydney (UWS). In particular, reference is made to work carried out by Dr Regine Wagner (UWS) and Nigel Spence. Their research began in Australia in 1999 to explore the effects of changing funding and accountability regimes on community-based organizations, as well as the introduction of private sector management strategies.

This project will support continued research into community-based organisational work practices that highlights the need to look for alternative strategies to those offered by ‘new’ private sector principles, or renewed ‘old’ public sector practices.

Put simply, ‘paucity management’ is that set of strategies used by managers to operate effectively and ethically under conditions of resource poverty. This research would explore the notion of ethical practice within the framework of paucity management, and open up further premises for study along these lines. For example, one of the aspects that informs the existence of paucity management is how community sector managers deal with pressures and opportunities. Within the present, relevant rhetoric, resource sharing through partnerships is seen as one solution to the poverty of the sector. The outlook for the continued practice of paucity management is that organisations will be involved in balancing competing needs of clients, workers, managers, and the organisation, as well as addressing tensions between balancing, trading off, professional standards and ethical practice.
8. **Value and Benefits of Project**  
Refer to *Guidelines* Section 8 for information on details required  
*(use approx. the space provided and type in 12 point font)*

The continuation of research would inform management issues in the non-government, community welfare sector. The possibility of resource sharing has been identified as one of the strategies that community organizations could adopt to alleviate pressures and enhance opportunities in their sector. All of these considerations will add valuable contacts and provide a basis for the study of paucity management.

There is growing evidence to suggest that community welfare organisations are looking to develop their own set of management strategies that are peculiar to the sector and not ‘borrowed’ from either the public or private sector. This research will enhance managers’ knowledge of how to effectively manage and lead in situations of resource paucity.

Specifically, the project will produce the following benefits:

- Managers will benefit because research will identify and inform the way that managerial practice is conducted in community welfare organisations. Strategies may be developed by managers through an analysis of other organisations’ practices to either counter ‘paucity management’, or to implement efficiencies to enhance their own work.
- Organisations will benefit, again through the identification of their own models of managerial practice. An evaluation of the way their structure and partnerships impacts on service delivery could have either a consolidating effect or one that allows the organisation to critically evaluate and review service delivery.
- The scientific community will benefit because this project will support the development of theoretical research into instances of ‘paucity management’.

9. **Details of Research Methodology/Procedures and Recruitment Procedures**  
Refer to *Guidelines* Section 9 for information on details required.  
*(use approx. the space provided and type in 12 point font)*

State simply and clearly what you are intending to do as well provide details of the research methodology to collect and analyse the data. Explain how you will recruit and interact with your participants and what you will require from them. The following questions should also be examined:

- What procedures will be used to recruit participants?
- Have you organised formal approval to access participants through an external organisation? You should provide a copy of this approval or your letter to the organisation seeking approval.
- What will participants be required to do within the research project?

9.1 **Research Questions**

An initial question has been developed as a focus for investigation and determining a definition of models of paucity management:
What are models of paucity management, and how does the structure and affiliations of organizations within the non-profit community welfare sector, affect the implementation of such models?

Participants from primarily non-government organisations, will be asked to provide narratives of their own lived experiences within situations of managing under resource poverty. A set of five subsidiary Research Questions will be used to inform the collection of this comparative narrative study:

6. In terms of acquisition of funding and service delivery, are there any specific activities that you feel are unique and innovative to your position as manager in your organization at this present time?

7. What are some significant changes in management behaviour and actions that you have witnessed since the government’s encouragement of the need for community welfare groups to seek partnership arrangements?

8. Within any community welfare partnership arrangement, who or what party is generally expected to manage the leadership factor?

9. What changing needs have led to a reassessment of the way service is being delivered in your organization?

10. How does the structure and affiliations of non-government, community welfare organizations determine the way that managers should act in their positions?

9.2 Sampling and Participant Recruitment Methods

Volunteer research participants will be recruited through their involvement in a continuing series of management and leadership forums presently being conducted in the central west and western regions of NSW. The focus will be on non-government community, welfare organisations. Network contacts will also be sought from relevant conferences and community welfare organisations that meet the following preferred criteria:

- At least four, tri-partnership arrangements made up of 12 community welfare organisations, which have been drawn from four different peak body affiliations.

Potential participants will be sent an Invitation to Participate in Research (see Appendix 1), followed by a further Information Flyer (see Appendix 2) and Informed Consent Form to participate in research activities (see Appendix 3). The study will ask participants to:

- Discuss their management and leadership practices and behaviours within the makeup and structure of their actual organisation
- Compare those practices with the appropriateness and ethical nature of behaviours that are governed and possibly constrained by the structures and affiliations created through peak body associations and community welfare partnerships.
Formal approval to participate in the research will be sought from specific managers in organisations relevant to the study, via an Informed Consent Form to participate in research activities (see Appendix 3). An Information Package will be sent to selected organisations to inform them of pending research with managers (see Appendix 4).

### Sampling and Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Sampling</th>
<th>Recruitment Sampling Method</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Managers from a selection of the following NGO (Non-government organisations) groups within the community welfare sector, plus the one specific government organisation:  
- Family Support Services (NGO)  
- Banardos – Australia (NGO)  
- Information and Neighbourhood Centres (NGO)  
- Centacare (NGO)  
- Anglicare NGO  
- Community Services Information Centres (NGO)  
- ACWA (Association of Childrens’ Welfare Association)  
- Home and Community Care (Government) | n=12 | 1. A selection will be made of those participants who have indicated a willingness to participate in further research into community welfare organisations, from previous public, management and leadership forums. Further samples will be taken from specific recommendations made by other willing participants, with selection criteria based on participation from charitable, community-based, regional/rural representation within the Central West Region of NSW.  
2. Participants will be selected from their response to an Invitation to Participate in Research letter.  
3. Following a full explanation of the extent of their likely involvement in the research program, participants will be asked to sign and date a Consent to Participate form. |

### 9.3 Data Collection

#### 9.3.1 Methodology and Data Collection Methods

The research will be an ethnographic study, using a qualitative framework that will involve a multi-method approach to data collection of participant narratives. Interview questions will be heuristic in nature, in that they will be designed to build from the answers given to previous questions. The following tools will be used as part of the research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

332
Managers from specific organisations within the community welfare sector

- Face-to-face interviews using specific subsidiary Research Questions as indicated above (n=12).
- Focus group discussions that are open-ended but are also directed by thematic statements relating to the research question (n=12).
- Consultative discussions to discuss and analyse specific problem-solving processes with the intention of refining definitions of paucity management models (n=12).

9.3.2 Research Timeline
The research will follow an iterative theory-building process involving three phases: explorative; explanation, and validation. However, validation of the theory of paucity management and the existence of paucity management models will be mainly integrated into the explanation phase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Research Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Exploration (3 months) | - Interviews  
- Collection of narratives |
| Explanation (5 months)  | - Open-ended thematic discussions  
- Focus group discussions  
- Consultative discussions |
| Validation (4 months)  | - Preliminary data evaluation  
- Group based interviews  
- Consultative discussions |

9.3.3 Data Analysis
A multi-method approach (including the use of multiple informants, data reduction, cross-case analysis using categorisation and tabulations of various aspects, informants’ review of draft narrative study reports, use of interview protocols) will be used to produce a comparative analysis of data collected through narratives, interviews and discussion groups, for the purpose of defining models of management within the community welfare sector. Documentation of all models or any model of management will include a description of practices and associated behaviours, as well as specific strategies used by managers to effect timely and ethical service delivery.

10. Participant Sample Description and Sample Size
Refer to Guidelines Section 10 for further information on details required.

You must clearly define the ‘type’ of participants, and in particular if the participants are children or young people, persons with an intellectual or mental impairment, highly dependent on medical care, persons in dependent or unequal relationships, persons from a distinct collective, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In some circumstances, involving children, it may be necessary for the researchers to have undertaken a criminal record check. You should indicate if this is required and provide a copy of the documentation.

(use approx. the space provided and type in 12 point font)
Participants
Participants will be adults (n=12, all over 18 years old). Participation in the research project will be sought from managers within primarily non-government, not-for-profit community welfare organisations from the central western regions of NSW and whose organisations may have affiliations with the following community, welfare services:

NCOSs – Council of Social Services of New South Wales
- ACWA – Association for Children’s Welfare Agencies (NGO)
- HACC – Home and Community Care (Government)
- FSSA – Family Support Services (NGO)
- Catholic Welfare Australia (NGO)
- Anglicare Australia (NGO)

11. Evaluation of Potential Harm or Risk of Harm from Research Procedures
Refer to Guidelines Section 11 for information on details required

Does the project involve any of the following research procedures? (please ✓)

a) the possibility of physical stress/distress, discomfort to the participants
   Yes ✓ No ☑
   If yes, how will the potential harm or risk of harm be addressed?

b) the possibility of psychological/mental stress/distress, discomfort
   Yes ✓ No ☑
   to the participants. If yes, how will the potential harm or risk of harm be addressed?

In the telling of their narratives, managers may experience some anxiety in terms of their uncertainty as to the levels of disclosure required. Every reassurance will be given to participants to restrict their information to addressing the research questions. The research will be designed to incorporate ethical procedures in the way that questions will be formed and answers sought.

Participants will be informed that they can discuss any issues that have arisen from their stories, with Regine Wagner (02 9678 7612). Regine Wagner will be available for debriefing if necessary. If any undue psychological or mental distress arises from their participation in the research, Regine Wagner will refer them to a counsellor.

c) deception of participants at any stage of the project
   Yes ☑ No ✓
   If yes, give details, will the participants be debriefed after the procedure?

d) the use of drugs or invasive procedures
   Yes ☑ No ✓
   For example, chemical compounds, drugs, ionising or non-ionising radiation, other biological agents, human tissue, special diets or modified foods, sensory evaluation of genetically modified food. Evidence of clearance from the University Biosafety Committee should be submitted with your application.
If yes, give details as to how any potential harm or risk of harm will be minimised:

12. **Potential Ethical Issues**
You should address each potential ethical issue as it relates to your project

(*use approx. the space provided and type in 12 point font*)

12 a. **Integrity, Respect for persons, Beneficence and Justice**
Refer to Guidelines Section 12 a for further information on details required.
You must provide a statement that demonstrates that you have considered the ethical principles of Integrity, Respect for Persons, Beneficence and Justice as it relates to your research project.

**Integrity**
Research into the concept of *paucity management*, where managers and leaders in community welfare organisations may be confined to operating within very tight budgetary and service frameworks could expose sensitive issues to do with service delivery and ethical practice within the sector. To preserve the integrity of the fieldwork data, participants will be given the option of reviewing the documenting of their narratives, and adding clarification if they deem it necessary.

**Respect for persons**
Access to participants to become involved in research will be contained to a selection from only those whose names have been previously entered on a voluntary, community research database, and who reply to an invitation to be part of the research.

Participants may withdraw freely any time, and without comment, from involvement in the research. Participation will be voluntary, and at no time will the identity of informants be revealed to any person outside of the data collection environment. All data will be transcribed and formally documented in a way that will remove all and any identifying features.

**Beneficence**
The research will provide community welfare organisations with comparative, narrative studies that will provide insights into the lived experience of managers operating within the confines of *paucity management*. Further, in highlighting behaviours and actions on the part of those managers, the research will provide a clearer understanding of what it means to operate within a paucity management model.

**Justice**
The use of a comparative study between the stories of managers will provide a voice of validation for their actions in the face of ever-diminishing resource operations. As human service providers in a community sector that is undergoing immense changes in terms of accountability to governments, questions of ethical practice, as well as new funding arrangements, organisation managers will be
given the opportunity to have their views expressed and represented fairly through this research.

12 b. Consent
You should refer to Guidelines Section 12b for information on detail required. Provide details about how you will obtain the agreement of your participants to take part in the research. Provide as attachments copies of Information Letters, Consent forms, etc. as set down in this section.

The following process will be used to gain participant consent:
1. An Invitation to Participate in Research (see Appendix 1) will be distributed in line with the details outlined in the table indicating 'Sampling and Selection', at 9.
2. Once invitees have indicated they are willing to be part of the research program, a Research Information Letter (see Appendix 2), written in Plain English, will be sent to the potential participants.
3. As part of the information letter, participants will be invited to provide Informed Consent (see Appendix 3), volunteering to be part of the research.
4. The Informed Consent will indicate clearly that participants may withdraw freely and at any time, and without comment, from involvement in the research.

12 c. Research Merit and Safety
You should refer to Guidelines Section 12c for information on details required. Your response should demonstrate the research is justifiable and is designed as to ensure that any risks to participants are balanced by the likely benefit/s to be gained. The research should be conducted or supervised only by persons with experience, qualifications and competence appropriate to the research.

Research merit will be established through the development of theory building that focuses identifying and explaining models of paucity management. Only the researcher will conduct the research project, with those managers who have given their informed consent to participate in three kinds of sample, research activities.

During the initial interviews, narrative collection, focus group discussions, Research Safety for these participants will be provided through the selection process, informed consent, and a clear indication to participants of the proposed requirements of each phase of the research. Participation will be encouraged on the basis of anonymity of narratives, the voluntary nature of participation in focus group discussions, respect for participant’s involvement in discussion and the need for anonymity when requested, the participants’ right to withdraw at any time, and the provision of appropriate and relevant feedback on any issues to do with the research program.

d. Ethical Review and Conduct of Research
Refer to Guidelines Section 12 d for information on details required.
Provide details about how the results of the research will be disseminated and to whom. You must provide details of how the data collected will be stored securely, who will have access and the disposal time line.

The data will be collected and recorded to ensure that participants’ identities are protected at all times. All data collected, including narrative studies, raw data, transcripts from interviews, and summaries from focus discussion groups, will be stored in lockable filing cabinets situated in the supervisors’ (Dr Regine Wagner and Dr Merilyn Childs) office in Building AE 103-Werrington North, of the University of Western Sydney, Penrith Campus.

Access to the data will be provided to the Directors of the Research Centre for Learning and Social Transformation, and with their approval, to research students working on aspects of research to do with paucity management, and management and leadership within community welfare organisations.

13. Privacy requirements
Refer to Guidelines Section 13 for information on details required for Questions a & b

a. Will you be accessing data held by a Commonwealth Department or Agency? Yes ☑ No

☑

b. Will you be accessing data held by a State Department or Agency? Yes ☑ No

☑

If the researcher/s answer yes to question a or b they should be aware of and agree to abide by the Privacy Principles in dealing with personal Information.

c. Does your research involve the use of existing records, which identify individuals but which are not in the public domain (eg medical or other personal records) that are held by an organisation. Yes ☑ No

☑

Provide details if you answer yes to a, b or c

14. Ethics Approval from Another Institution

Does this research require the ethics approval of another institution? If yes, give details including whether or not you have submitted an application to that institution for ethics approval.

(please ☑) Yes ☑ No ☑

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Institution/Human Ethics Committee</th>
<th>Application Approved/disapproved</th>
<th>Application Pending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15. Chief Investigator/s Declaration (Staff or Student)
I/we certify that the information given in this application is correct to the best of my/our knowledge. I/we acknowledge that I/we must notify the Committee if there is any ethically relevant variation or if the project is discontinued prematurely. I/we have read, and agree to abide by the relevant code of practice for research involving humans.

Chief Investigator Signature/s:
Signed................................................  Signed........................................ ........
Signed................................................  Date………………………………………..

16. Student Supervisor Declaration

I certify that the information given in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Supervisor’s Signature:
Signed.................................................. Date……………………………………..

Before lodging the application please complete this checklist

☑️ ✓ All questions have been answered

☑️  Chief investigator/s and if applicable Student Supervisor have signed the declaration

☑️  Supporting documentation is attached ☐ Required number of copies plus the original are attached

The Human Ethics Officer has reviewed the application  ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

☐  Staff, PhD or Masters (Hons) candidate - Application has been submitted to the UWS Human Ethics Research Committee (See Instruction Sheet 1.)

☐  Students – Bachelors (Hons) candidates, Masters (Course Work) - Application has been submitted to the UWS Human Research Ethics Student Panel (See Instruction Sheet 2.)

Application submitted..................................................(Date)  End of Application

Appendix 1 – Invitation to Participate in Research
(The Invitation to Participate in Research will be reproduced on University of Western Sydney Letterhead. All pages have the Ethics Complaint clause, plus information on page 2 about publicly accessible counselling services.)

Date

Dear Participant

Invitation to Participate in Research

My name is Susan Mlcek and I am a PhD full-time research student at the University of Western Sydney. I can be contacted via my position in the Research Centre for Learning and Social Transformation at the university, on 02 9678 7611 or s.mlcek@uws.edu.au.

I am conducting research into how people manage and lead within community welfare organisations that are operating in situations where there are ever-diminishing resources. Specifically, I want to collect information on whether managers’ practices can be analysed and documented in a written thesis, as ‘models of paucity management’ in community welfare organisations. The research will aim to develop an understanding of whether the structure and affiliations, including partnerships, of organizations within the non-profit community welfare sector, affect the implementation of such models of practice.

Your involvement
I am inviting you to participate in my research into paucity management, but you do not have to be involved. Participation is completely confidential and voluntary.

Focus of the research
I want to find out more about the following points of interest that will assist in the collection of information to produce my written thesis:

11. In terms of acquisition of funding and service delivery, are there any specific activities that are unique and innovative to community welfare managers?
12. What are some significant changes in management behaviour and actions that have been witnessed by managers since the government’s push for partnership arrangements between the different sectors?
13. What changing needs have led to a reassessment of the way service is being delivered in community welfare organizations?
14. How does the structure and affiliations of non-government, community welfare organizations determine the way that managers act in their positions?

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
What next?
This is an initial letter inviting you to participate in my research. If you are interested, and indicate that you wish to be involved, I will send you,

- An Information Flyer highlighting the research activities planned for 2003, followed by
- An Informed Consent Form for you to sign, indicating your preferred involvement in any or all of the activities.

Research activities that I plan to conduct during 2003:
- Face-to-face interviews to collect managers’ stories/narratives, and which will be conducted at a convenient location to participants.
- Focus group discussions that are open-ended and relate to my research question: What are models of paucity management and how does the structure and affiliations of non-profit community welfare organizations affect the implementation of such models?
- Consultative discussions to discuss and analyse specific problem-solving processes with the intention of refining definitions of paucity management models.

If the need arises for professional counsellors during this research, all participants will have access to Dr Keith Bennett (Phone: 02 9678 7118) or Ione Lewis (Phone: 02 9678 6264), both of whom have made themselves available for this project.

In summary
If you wish to be part of this research project, please indicate your willingness to participate, by ticking ✓ the box on page 3 and completing the details. Sign that page and mail it to me in the pre paid envelope provided, within the next two weeks.

Thank you for taking the time to read and think about becoming involved in this research.

Yours sincerely

Susan H E Mlcek

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

☐ Yes, I am interested in participating in your University of Western Sydney PhD research into models of paucity management in non-profit community welfare organisations.

Name (please print): _______________________________________
Organisation: ______________________________________________
Contact Details: _____________________________________________
Signature: ________________________________________________

If your envelope has been misplaced, the postal address for a stamped envelope is:

Susan Mlcek
School of Applied Social and Human Sciences
University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 1797
PENRITH SOUTH  DC  1797

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 2 – Information Flyer
(The Flyer will be reproduced on University of Western Sydney Letterhead. The flyer has both the Ethics Complaint clause and information about publicly accessing counselling services.)

Community Welfare Research, 2003

Re: Models of Paucity Management in non-profit, community welfare organisations – PhD Research Project, UWS

Who are the researchers in this project?
Susan Mlcek is the Chief Researcher. Supervisors are Dr Regine Wagner and Dr Merilyn Childs, all based at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean.

Who are the participants and how were they chosen?
Managers from selected non-profit community welfare organisations chosen through the researcher’s network contacts or through involvement in the ACWA/UWS Leadership and Management Forums that have been conducted during 2002, in the Central West Region of NSW.

What is ‘paucity management’, and from where does the term originate?
Dr Wagner coined the phrase ‘paucity management’ during her initial research in 1999/2000– a term used to describe the way that managers operate under conditions of ever-diminishing resources within the community welfare sector.

What is the focus of the present research project?
• Research will now look at documenting and interpreting managers’ narratives to determine the existence of paucity management and what that model of management looks like between different community welfare organisations.

You do not have to do anything now in response to this information flyer. You will be sent an Informed Consent Form within the next two weeks, listing the research activities proposed for 2003, all of which will be conducted at a convenient location to participants. It will provide an opportunity for you to choose those in which you would like to participate, including interviews, focus group discussions, and consultative discussions. If the need arises for professional counsellors during this research, all participants will have access to Dr Keith Bennett (Phone: 02 9678 7118) or Ione Lewis (Phone: 02 9678 6264), both of whom have made themselves available for this project.

Thank you for taking time to read and think about this research. If you would be interested in learning more about the project, please contact Susan Mlcek on 02 9678 7611, or s.mlcek@uws.edu.au.

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 3 – Informed Consent Form
(The Informed Consent Form and accompanying letter will be reproduced on University of Western Sydney Letterhead. All pages have the Ethics Complaint clause, plus there is information on publicly accessing counselling services on page 2.)

Date

Informed Consent to Participate in Research Activities

Dear Participant

My name is Susan Mlcek and I will be the Chief Researcher on a UWS PhD research project to document and interpret management models in community welfare organisations. You have previously indicated a willingness to participate in this research, the focus of which will be to define models of paucity management within community welfare organisations. This letter includes an Informed Consent Form for you to complete.

You are invited to make a choice of those research activities in which you want to participate, but you do not have to be involved. Your decision to do so will be completely confidential and voluntary. If you agree now to participate in research activities, into paucity management, you can withdraw at any time. Your withdrawal will be accepted without comment, and you will in no way be pressured to continue your involvement.

Research focus
Answers to the following questions will be sought as part of the research activities:

- In terms of acquisition of funding and service delivery, are there any specific activities that are unique and innovative to managers within community welfare organizations at this present time?
- What are some significant changes in management behaviour and actions, since the need for community welfare groups to seek partnerships?
- What changing needs have led to a reassessment of the way service is being delivered in community welfare organizations?
- How does the structure and affiliations of non-government organisations determine the way that managers should act in their positions?

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Research activities
Involvement in all research activities is VOLUNTARY. Participant identities will be protected. Comments made, as a result of participation in the activities, will be CONFIDENTIAL. If the need arises for professional counsellors during this research, all participants will have access to Dr Keith Bennett (Phone: 02 9678 7118) or Ione
Lewis (Phone: 02 9678 6264), both of whom have made themselves available for this project. There are three main research activities planned for 2003:

1. **Face-to-face interviews** to collect managers’ stories/narratives that will seek to provide information about the focus of research. The interviews will be taped by Susan Mlcek. Identities will be protected when the tape is typed as a transcript. The tape and transcript will be forwarded to individual participants.

2. **Focus group discussions** that are open-ended and also directed by thematic statements relating to my research question: *What are models of paucity management and how does the structure and affiliations of non-profit community welfare organizations affect the implementation of such models?* Identities will be protected when information is shared within the group and when the results are collated.

3. **Consultative discussions** to discuss and analyse specific problem-solving processes with the intention of refining definitions of paucity management models. Information and data collected during the research process will be clarified. Notes will be taken during the discussions but the identity of participants will be protected when these notes are collated.

Please indicate your willingness to participate in research activities by completing the Informed Consent Form, on the next page. Tick (✓) the appropriate box beside the three research activities listed and complete all the details. Mail the form back to me in the envelope provided, by the date indicated, or within two weeks of receiving this letter.

**Thank you for taking the time to read and think about this research.** If you require further information, please contact Susan Mlcek on 02 9678 7611, or s.mlcek@uws.edu.au

Yours sincerely

Susan H E Mlcek

**NOTE:** This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Informed Consent Form

THIS IS AN INFORMED CONSENT FORM. ‘INFORMED CONSENT’ MEANS THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF YOU. IT ALSO MEANS THAT, IF YOU AGREE TO BEING INVOLVED, YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT INVOLVEMENT MEANS.

Name: ________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________
Phone: ________________________________________________________
Email: _________________________________________________________

Today’s Date: _________________________________________________

Please tick (✓) the relevant box to indicate your consent to participate in research activities, and sign your name:

Interview:   Yes ☐  No ☐
Focus group discussions: Yes ☐  No ☐
Consultative discussions: Yes ☐  No ☐

Signed:_________________________________________

THIS IS THE END OF THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please return this Informed Consent Form in the pre paid envelope by (date). If your envelope has been misplaced, the postal address for a stamped envelope is:

Susan Mlcek
School of Applied Social and Human Sciences
University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 1797
PENRITH SOUTH DC  1797
(02) 9678 7611  s.mlcek@uws.edu.au

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 4 – Information Package
(The Information Package letter and the three accompanying copies of communication to managers will be reproduced on University of Western Sydney Letterhead. Both pages include the Ethics Complaint clause.)

Date:

Organisation:

Dear Sir/Madam

Re – Information Package about participation of managers in community welfare research

My name is Susan Mlcek and I am a PhD Researcher from the Research Centre for Learning and Social Transformation at the University of Western Sydney. I can be contacted on 02 9678 7611 or s.mlcek@uws.edu.au. My area of research is to investigate models of paucity management as they occur primarily in the non-government, non-profit community welfare sector. To provide a more comparative study, the research project will involve the collection of data from both non-government and government organizations.

This is an information package to inform you of my research through the anticipated participation of community welfare sector managers. I have made a preliminary selection of those organizations that I would like to include in my research, based on the need to consider a cross-section of diverse service delivery commitments, management structure, partnerships and denominational affiliations. The focus of the research would be to gather the narratives of some of those managers within the selected organizations and to make a comparative study to determine and clarify models of paucity management.

I have included copies of the letters that I intend to send to managers before any research begins and these give more information about the proposed research activities. The following questions may highlight more information to assist in your organization supporting manager participation in this project.

What is ‘paucity management’?

‘Paucity management’ is that set of strategies used by managers to operate effectively and ethically under conditions of resource poverty. The research will involve exploring ethical service delivery on a macro level, within the sector that incorporates community welfare organisations – the Third Sector. This sector is seen as an integral part of civil society and there are relevant factors relating to the ways that community welfare...
services are delivered to promote a ‘civil society’, which will be further evaluated to add another dimension to researching and establishing *models of paucity management*.

*How will your organisation benefit?*

This project will support continued research into community-based organisational work practices that highlights the need to look for alternative strategies to those offered by ‘new’ private sector principles, or renewed ‘old’ public sector practices. Research findings will extend organisational knowledge about the ‘naming’, through managers’ stories, of management practices within community welfare organisations in the central west region of NSW.

*What if your organisation is concerned about what managers might say?*

The identity of people and organisations involved in the research will be confidential in the draft and final thesis. Managers’ narratives will be informed by those questions that have been included in the copies provided in this information package. Approval of the methodological approach to data collection for this research project has been scrutinised by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Western Sydney and all key questions that will be asked of managers have had prior protocol approval.

If you would like to find out more about the research project please do not hesitate to contact me for further details.

Yours faithfully

Susan H E Mlcek

**NOTE:** This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officers (tel: 02 4570 1136). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 3-3: *Category of description* – Professional practice is experienced as responding to work within structural constraints

Appendix - Table 3-3: Selected response from managers regarding phenomena that inform their practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Structural constraints (including non-government characteristics)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager response</td>
<td>1. BM1 My committee … I have a supportive group at the moment, so it’s all positive … potentially it’s very good but it may not always be that way so when it’s good, it’s really good, when it’s bad … I am fully accountable to them however I have a lot of autonomy … they are happy for me to get on with things, clear it at meetings and have written reports. I’m lucky … they trust me. I think. There is a lot of stuff at the operational level that I don’t take to the committee and I feel I should have the delegation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. BM2 My title is varied – I have a varied role … I usually say I’m the coordinator, and on top of all that I am the team leader and manager. I was given the title of team leader when I came here but officially I manage. I manage because I’m the one who does staff discipline. I’m the one who does staff appraisal in the volunteer program. I’m the one who does the forward projection in the program. I’m basically the one who does how many hours the project can be for. A team leader is much less responsible. A team leader vaguely keeps things going in a kind of direction of the day-to-day basis, but I do have a manager’s role, because I do all those components of hands-on; I’m finally the one who writes the reports back to government, and I’m the one who writes the funding submissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. CM1 I have four separate Aboriginal groups – they’re in different areas and they all seem to need the same things but I can’t approach them all in the same way; they need different ways of doing things; I’m my own boss – I have three others working with me on a part-time basis; I didn’t know I was a manager;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. DM1 I am an expansive thinker in that I can see the pros and cons of partnerships; I can see the pluses in auspicing versus collaboration; I am not in isolation – I get political support; what I do stems from a quarterly needs analysis and being evidence-based; auspicing is a simple arrangement – I am always looking to ways that I can auspice certain groups; I am part of an interagency approach – I am there to auspice funds – for social groups this is simple, simple, but the practice is not widely scoped;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. DM2 The dance card is almost full; it can be a real bombardment zone out there; the man who’s my immediate manager and whose immediate performance – after three years down the track – we are still trying to work out how to communicate with each other in an easy flowing fashion. We are like chalk and cheese; I have huge philosophical differences with my manager – I find him prickly to work with and he finds me prickly to work with; we work from a church-based agency and democracy and community are two words that don’t fit comfortably in the same sentence;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. DM3 I have little time for anything – I can barely talk to you now; I’m always looking to ways to doing things quicker and better;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. FM1 We are part of a huge Dioceses. The secretariat is incredibly important. I’m trying to look at setting up structures using different models. We have to listen to our own experiences and this realization comes from dealing with smaller communities. I want to make the change from just office managers to team leaders – compare paucity management versus teams and diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. KM1</td>
<td>I need to work with a certain degree of elasticity – trying to incorporate many different contexts – training, education, partnerships; It’s an interagency model – different to the newer ones – all about working together; Management committees, staff and others can provide a refuge – this is a social setting as well; There are advantages in clarifying direction and purpose; sometimes can get too big – scary experience for community people; Issues are raised by people, but personalities change and this has an impact on whether things get done the way you would like; There is instability with changing of the guard, for example in DoCS – you find you have to tell the story again, and this falls back to the facilitator being the hub of the wheel to keep things going; Intervention now rather than bandaging in the future. ; I work in a very unique model – a community-based managed organization that has both GO and NGO – my role as facilitator/manager is to make things – the initiatives, happen, that is by setting up working parties; My role is not to do case management but to take on board a facilitator role; there is the sharing of clients so there is the linkage to other NGOs – there is the chance to share physical resources, community health programs, and training, and clients, and the collaboration does not necessarily affect funding; there is involvement of several groups and the organizations to make the program effective and successful;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. LM1</td>
<td>Feeling bombarded; time taken to put in for funding of really miniscule amounts, was enormous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. MM1</td>
<td>This is an organization that is run on a definite feminist framework; we have set rules and procedures but really it’s all a matter of commonsense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. MM2</td>
<td>Dancing around lots of things; whatever is thrown at us, we seem to bounce back – we get on with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. OM1</td>
<td>It’s about who you connect to in regard to personalities, and how passionate things happen – relationships change = people come and go – particularly in government departments; my role is do effective case management; My work is not the norm – with me as manager, one times one-day a week admin. Assistant, four part-time workers who are case managers, I also have 12 volunteers – part-time; we are the only NGO that provides support services to 80 families – all case-managed; I’m given premises and transport, plus funding from two stable sources, including DoCS; I have finite levels of funding that is based on comparing tasks and meeting needs; what we are doing is really built from the government’s family support services initiative;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. OM2</td>
<td>Bombarded by government rhetoric; we are not flexible, we expect people to work for the mission/ethos of the organization; National office wants partnerships – though this is typical government rhetoric; we’re particularly interested in contracting with employment services, though it is good business sense not to do it because then there is a loss of status re-benevolence; our director decides what services we do – she makes the policy decision; my role tends to be more administrative at times, and more mechanical; leadership is centralized and this is one way that managers overcome lack of resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. PM1</td>
<td>If I’m away (from the Centre), I’m always making sure that if I’m going to be away, the Coordinator of the Centre is here, and she can step in if the workers have any sort of a problem. Generally what we do here is in an environment of feeling comfortable to have a go. I think we’re fortunate enough here in the neighbourhood centre because it promotes that sort of environment. I think there was some past history when we first became auspiced, I mean we thought we were just a poor group – we would just stay that. But I think that over time, with the association becoming a strong body for us – you know it has lifted our mission and profile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. PM2</td>
<td>Community-based management is no longer practical or a good model. It’s an outmoded form of management. Paucity management allows us to draw in people to create a cohesive atmosphere – informal, rural, isolation, access, affordability – it’s not always a negative process. My management role is a coordinating one – HR, media promotions, liaison, OH&amp;S, accounts, what’s happening, on the cheap …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>