

# **Enacting Entangled Practice:**

**Interagency Collaboration in Domestic and Family Violence Work**

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## **Certificate of Original Authorship**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as part of the collaborative doctoral degree and/or fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANT	Actor-Network Theory
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
AVO	Apprehended Violence Order
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CS	Community Services
CCR	Community Coordinated Response
DCS	Department of Corrective Services
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
DV	Domestic Violence
DVLO	Domestic Violence Liaison Officer
FACS	Family and Community Services
FLO	Family Law Order
FVS	Family Violence Service
FRS	Family Referral Service
HRO	High Risk Offender
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
LIW	Learning in and for Interagency Working
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MPA	Multi-Partner Agreement
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
NSWPF	New South Wales Police Force
OIC	Officer-in-Charge
PINOP	Person in Need of Protection
POI	Person of Interest
P&P	Probation and Parole
SAH	Safe-at-Home
TIS	Telephone Interpreter Service
WDVCAS	Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service
YHS	Youth Health Service

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## Abstract

This study contributes to the field of domestic and family violence (DFV) research. It also adds to practice-based research within scholarship on professional practices. Specifically, it examines the complexities of working together when diverse practitioners collaborate, across organisational and disciplinary boundaries, to address the 'wicked' problem of DFV.

Much of the existing literature treats interagency collaboration uncritically, assuming it is inherently worthwhile, regardless of the outcomes. There has been limited research attention focused on the enactment in practice of interagency work, and on the effects of these enactments in relation to the victim/survivors. This research employs an innovative methodology, combining key conceptual resources of actor-network theory with new material feminist thinking. This approach enables three significant moves. First, it shifts understandings of collaboration away from a continuum approach and towards a conceptualisation of interagency work as enacted by dynamic networks. Second, it directs attention away from the factors that are deemed critical for success and focuses instead on the range of 'actors' that are involved in the doing of this work, paying heed not only to the practitioners, but also to the various objects that matter in their collaborative work. Third, it approaches the question of effectiveness by tracing the effects of enactments of interagency work.

This ethnographic study of practice examines an integrated DFV initiative in one local area, in outer metropolitan Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. It unravels entanglements of people and things, meanings and matter, discourses and technology, and knits them back together again. The investigation shows how the various practices that make up 'working together' shape each other, producing material effects for the victim/survivors.

A key outcome of this research is a new conceptualisation of interagency DFV work as two distinctive, yet entangled, modes of working together that co-exist in the textured fabric of service provision. 'Multiple practices', involve

practitioners with separate foci for action. 'Practice multiple' involves practitioners working together with a singular victim-centred focus. It is argued that responses are only properly 'integrated' when 'practice multiple' occurs, that is, when victim/survivors' interests are integrated into practice. This conceptualisation accommodates complexity and acknowledges that interagency work unfolds in an imperfect world, riddled with tensions and ambivalences. The conclusions have important implications for interagency DFV practice and policy, as well as for collaborative professional practice and learning generally.