

**Coping with change: An analysis of the subjective meaning  
of enforced workplace rationalisation within rural New South Wales'  
public health agencies**

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## Glossary of terms and abbreviations

AHS	Area Health Service
CADA	Computer Assisted Data Analysis Program
CCAG	Community Consultation Advisory Group
GSAHS	Greater Southern Area Health Service
GWAHS	Greater Western Area Health Service
HCCC	Health Care Complaints Commission
HNEAHS	Hunter New England Area Health Service
HT	Health Technology
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption
ICE	Institute of Clinical Excellence
IPART	Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
IT	Information technology
MHS	Macarthur Health Service
NEAHS	New England Area Health Service
NHS	National Health System
NSW	New South Wales
UK	United Kingdom
UNE	University of New England
VCRM	Voice Centred Relational Method

Italics are used to depict the quotations of interviewed participants and questionnaire respondents

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## Abstract

This is a study of the impact of enforced change upon staff working in a range of positions within rural area health services in New South Wales, Australia between 2004 and 2007. The thesis explores the emotional impact of the changes for staff from their perspective and that of their broader communities. The enforced changes occurred following a series of reviews of New South Wales Department of Health conducted over a twenty four month period commencing in 2002. The four chapters that present the data from the interviewed participants and questionnaire respondents provide detailed evidence of the impact of the change and the emotional trauma experienced by participants. This trauma is fundamentally the result of poor communication processes that permeates all aspects of enforced workplace change. Kemper's Power Status Theory of Emotions is used to explain how emotional trauma affects the power and status of employees within the workplace and their broader social and environmental context including relationships with family and peers.

The study was conducted using a sequential mixed method design (Qual > Quan) (Creswell, 2003, p.213) also known as a sequential exploratory design (Creswell, 2007) using individual, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire to gather the data. A critical position was employed throughout the data analysis (Grbich, 2007). The data collected throughout the interview phase was analysed drawing on Brown and Gilligan's (1992) Voice Centred Relational Method (VCRM) of data analysis. The use of a 'Voice Centred' data analysis method for this research is different from many other research analysis methods and was specifically chosen for this study as it allowed me to immerse myself in the conversations I had with each participant so I could listen to, and hear the way in which they told their story from a range of perspectives. This method of data analysis coupled with the use of poetry, nostalgic reminiscence, and Theodore Kemper's Power-Status Theory of Emotions allowed me to understand the emotional response of those involved in enforced organisational change. This novel analytical approach enabled me to use a range of strategies to examine and probe the data that described the way people responded to enforced change in the workplace and to understand why the changes had a significant impact on their broader social and community networks.

**Declaration of authorship**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature.....Date.....

**Professional editorial support**

Professional editing for the thesis was limited to grammar and style according to the Australian Standard for Editing Practice (ASEP)–Standard D-Language and illustrations and Standard E-Completeness and Consistency. This did not alter or improve the content or the conceptual organisation of the thesis. The editorial assistance was provided by Mr David Alston–member of the South Australian Society of Editors. A fee was paid for this service.

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