

Evaluation of the **IAST** *plus* Project

First Interim Evaluation Report

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The Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies

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Our gratitude goes to all survey respondents who reflected on the aims and objectives of the scheme and their expectations of it, and especially to those who communicated their thoughts in the survey. This report would not be complete without their views and input.

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The research team

Dr Isabelle Bartkowiak-Théron is the coordinator of Police Studies at the University of Tasmania, and a senior researcher at the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies. Having worked with youth at risk in France, Isabelle became known in Australia for having managed the Youth Pilot Project of the Australian National University-Victoria Police Nexus Policing ARC linkage from 2004 until 2006. She also ran the two-year evaluation of the School-Liaison Police and the first stage of the Mental Health Intervention Teams evaluation in New South Wales, for the New South Wales Police Force, from 2007 until 2009. Isabelle specialises in the qualitative and quantitative study of policing and policing services targeting vulnerable populations (e.g., young people, refugees, Aboriginal community members) and is in regular contact with representatives of these vulnerable populations. She contextualises data according to information gathered from the field and relevant literature. She is used to handling confidential information gathered by government and non-government organisations as well as sensitive information garnered from police data gathering systems. Her work in partnership with a number of government and non-government agencies has contributed to her being contracted in 2011 on a Proceeds of Crime Funding scheme to evaluate a restorative conferencing project in the area of Albury (NSW), an initiative run and monitored by Albury Family Youth that targeted young recidivist offenders. Isabelle also evaluated the Tasmania Early Intervention Pilot Program for the Department of Police and Emergency Services, and the Mental Health Diversion List for the Hobart Magistrates Court. She is the co-editor (with Nicole Asquith) of *Policing Vulnerability* (Federation Press, 2012). She is a member of several research governance and community engagement committees throughout Australia, and sits on the Australian Crime Prevention Council as an executive member for Tasmania. She is an Advisory Board member for the Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health, and an editorial board member of the *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice*.

Associate Professor Roberta Julian was appointed to the position of Director, Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies, in July 2003. Prior to this, she was a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Tasmania where she had been involved in teaching, research and administration for over 20 years. Roberta has an established record of scholarship within the discipline of sociology including a strong track record in applied social research. She has an international reputation based on her research exploring migrant and refugee populations. Roberta conducted research on the resettlement of Hmong refugees from Laos for over ten years and published book chapters and journal articles on

Hmong identity and Hmong women in *Race, Gender and Class*, *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* and *Women's Studies International Forum*. Her community-based research interests have now been extended to include issues surrounding other 'at-risk' populations such as young offenders. Roberta has been Chief Investigator for evaluations of projects managed by Tasmania Police, including: the U-Turn Program, a young recidivist car theft offender program; Project Currawong, a series of adventure programs aimed at challenging young people and providing pathways into community participation; the Risk Assessment Screening Tool (RAST) used in family violence incidents. In 2004 she was awarded a three-year Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant to examine issues surrounding community policing and refugee settlement in Tasmania. In 2006-7, she was one of three Chief Investigators (with Dr Clarissa Hughes and Inspector Matthew Richman) awarded almost \$0.5 million to conduct the first Australian trial of an innovative alcohol misuse prevention approach known as 'Social Norms'. Roberta is currently the lead Chief Investigator in a five-year Australian Research Council Linkage Grant with Victoria Police, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the National Institute of Forensic Science (NIFS) that began in 2009 (awarded almost \$1 million). This project is examining the effectiveness of forensic science in the criminal justice system with a focus on police investigations and court outcomes. Roberta is a member of the Board of Studies of the Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM), an Associate Investigator with the Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security (CEPS), a member of the Editorial Board for the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, a past President of The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) and a current member of the Committee of Management of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology.

Dr. Sally Kelty is an applied psychologist with a background in project development within health and criminal justice agencies. She has worked in research project design and evaluation in Human Resources in private industry, in university research centres and in government departments. Her program development and evaluation work includes the development and evaluation of prison-based rehabilitation programs for domestic violence, substance use and generalist offending programs for men and women; independent community living programs for adults with cognitive impairments; and the development of psychological test batteries in recruitment and criminal justice settings. Sally has worked on several health-related projects including the management of a three-year longitudinal study exploring the experiences and outcomes for 160 high-risk adolescent mothers and their children, and also headed up the adolescent program within an environmental health promotion research centre exploring inter-agency and private industry collaborations in designing and evaluating safer and healthier urban residential spaces for adolescents which would reduce delinquency and obesity. Sally joined TILES in July 2009 as a Research Fellow working on a five-year project mapping the

effective use of forensic science and forensic evidence by policing and legal agencies in criminal investigations and court outcomes. In this project, Sally works with several police jurisdictions and has completed several applied projects including identifying the key attributes of Australia's top-performing crime scene examiners. More recently, she has been the lead program developer for a recruitment strategy and career advancement program for forensic scientists within police agencies. Sally was the Chief Investigator on a National Institute of Forensic Science project exploring 'The Interfaces between Science, Medicine and Law Enforcement' which examined inter-justice-agency communication and working relationships between four professions/professional groups (law enforcement, forensic medicine and health, forensic science, and law). The final report detailed the different forms of inter-agency steering groups and working groups currently operating across Australia, how and why they meet and the benefits and pitfall of current arrangements. The seven recommendations included mapping out more effective inter-agency collaborations and information sharing; the recommendations are currently being developed for implementation. Sally is the president of the Tasmanian Branch of the Association of Psychiatry, Psychology and Law.

Loene Howes [MA, MTeach, BSocSci(Psych)(Hons)] is a PhD candidate and Research Assistant at the University of Tasmania in the School of Social Sciences and School of Medicine (Psychology). Prior to commencing at UTAS, Loene was a high school teacher for 14 years. During that time, she was a Year Advisor for a cohort of approximately 120 students for a period of five years. This role gave her some first-hand experience of participating in a multi-agency approach to support young people. Loene has participated in previous evaluation research within her capacity as a research assistant at TILES. Her research interests include career decision-making, communication in the context of police intelligence and investigative interviews, and the communication of expert evidence in the criminal justice system.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADS	Alcohol and Drug Services
CP	Child Protection Services
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DoE	Department of Education
DPEM	Department of Police and Emergency Management
IAST	Inter-Agency Support Teams
IAST+	Inter-Agency Support Teams + (pilot project)
NGO	Non-government organisation
OfC	Office for Children
TILES	Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies
UTas	University of Tasmania
YJ	Youth Justice

Summary

This document is a first (six month) interim report, as part of the two-year evaluation of the 'IAST+: Three Approaches to Case Coordination' pilot project (IAST+). This evaluation was commissioned by the Office for Children, Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in 2013. It will conclude in December 2015 (date for dissemination of the final report). The aims of the research are to examine inter-agency collaborative processes, with a long-term goal to better understand and build collaborative practice.

The IAST+ recognises that inter-agency collaboration is essential to deliver services to at risk young people and their families effectively. The precept of the scheme is to encourage multiple services to collaborate in responding to issues relating to the care of children and young people, while testing new means of collaboration and information sharing, and designing better performance management tools or avenues. The IAST+ project focuses on three different approaches to collaboration in the locations of Glenorchy, Launceston and Devonport. The specific aims of the evaluation, as well as a background and descriptive of the IAST+ are found in **Chapter 1** of this report.

Chapter 2 explores stakeholders' attitudes towards and feedback about state-wide inter-agency support teams (IASTs), and analyses the blended views of all IASTs stakeholders, namely: the DPEM, DHHS, the DoE, local government and the OfC. Responses to a state-wide survey showed strong overall support and appreciation of the initiative, with high levels of confidence (75%) throughout agencies in the collaborative process, despite 57% of respondents admitting that they have encountered internal and external obstacles to agency cooperation. With between 10 and 20 cases discussed per monthly meeting (mostly), 72% survey participants thought at risk families were well identified. Sixty-three percent (63%) of respondents thought the IAST has a high impact on families, with 76% confidence in the referral and assessment process. Overall, 83% of survey respondents thought that the IAST is a valuable initiative, and 90% think positively in their agency's support for the scheme. Confidence in the initiative's mechanisms is also demonstrated in 83% positive responses relating to the quality of the information sharing process, despite 71% respondents thinking that resource allocation for actual problem solving is insufficient.

Chapter 3 looks deeper into the meaning and workings of inter-agency collaboration. Our preliminary fieldwork indicates that there is currently no clear consensus as to what the IASTs are for, should be doing and why. The purpose of the collaborative process also seems confusing for IASTs monthly meeting attendees, as their responses about IASTs' aims and objectives diverge according to respondents' (siloed) professional core-businesses and personal views of the scheme.

Chapter 4 offers a quick discussion of results obtained to date, with subsequent preliminary recommendations about the IAST+ scheme. It also provides an overview of future research steps. This evaluation takes place amidst exciting times ahead for the IAST themselves, as well as for governmental collaborative processes. The internal review of the IASTs (by the DPEM), constant requests for service rationalisation and the election of a new state government in Tasmania constitute a stimulating platform for constructive changes in service delivery. A demonstration of competence and effectiveness in collaborative endeavours will be looked upon favourably by hierarchies.

Taking this state of flux into consideration, preliminary results obtained for this interim report allowed the research team to advance some cautious recommendations for the scheme. Many respondents insisted on the need to invite more agencies to monthly meetings, especially NGOs, who hold a somewhat large responsibility in looking after at risk young people and their families. Confusion as to whether NGOs could be invited at all seemed to stem from the phrasing of IAST business rules. Given that practice shows NGOs already partaking in meetings at some IAST locations, we suggest that some clarification is brought about this issue and communicated to meeting chairs and participants.

Divergence in opinions as to what the IAST is for, and what it does, suggest that there could be more consensus as to the aims and objectives of the IASTs across stakeholders. We suggest that chairs systematically state IAST goals before a meeting starts, as a way to streamline stakeholders expectations and familiarise new comers with the scheme's intentions.

Participants regretted agency non-attendance to monthly meetings, and strongly suggested ways to assert agency representation to monthly meetings (e.g.: technological communications), as well as organisational incentives for participation (e.g.: IAST membership becoming part of a job description). We recommend that these ideas find consideration, especially for regional IAST sites.

Whilst the idea of an early intervention framework for the scheme was generally well received, there was some confusion as to what was implied by such a framework (from a criminological point of view, or based on the age of the child). It is therefore important to bring some clarity as to what kind of early intervention is considered as an umbrella for such a scheme.

In order to ascertain agency cohesion and bring about a spirit of inter-agency partnership, we recommend the reiteration of the 2013 workshop, on a chosen topic (participating to stakeholders' professional development). The theme of inter-agency collaboration and partnership was suggested as a possible theme.

Further reports will consolidate recommendations about the scheme and will look at collaborative processes and effectiveness into further detail.

Chapter 1 – Background: The Tasmanian Inter-Agency support Teams

The IAST initiative

Inter-Agency Support Teams (IASTs) take their roots from the 2002 ‘Kids in Mind Tasmania’, which aimed at raising awareness of ‘the needs of children of parents with mental illness’ (DPEM, 2011, 7). At the core of the initiative was the intention to increase inter-agency collaboration and networks by way of improved communication. In 2006, a total of 18 IASTs spanned Tasmania, under the lead of the Department of Police and Emergency Management (DPEM). There were 23 IASTs in Tasmania at the end of 2011.

The core focus of IASTs is that of children and young people who experience or are at risk of experiencing a combination of circumstances (including mental illness, disengagement from school, homelessness, and family violence) or displaying marginal behaviour (alcohol or drug use and offending). IASTs invite a number of agencies (depending on the local availability of services) to jointly discuss each case and ‘work collaboratively towards developing and monitoring multi-agency responses to support these children, young people and their families (DPEM, 2001, 8). IAST membership includes a range of government and sometimes non-government organisations, mostly: the DPEM, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Department of Education (DoE), Youth Justice (YJ), Alcohol and Drug Services (Ads), and Housing Tasmania.

It is important to note that the scope and focus of the IASTs have changed throughout the life span of the project. There was a pronounced shift from considering young people whose parents were living with a mental illness (specifically ‘support children, young people and their families with multiple and complex problems’ – IAST Business Rules, 2007) to supporting the needs of young offenders or young people at risk of offending (DPEM, 2001, 8).

IAST aims and outcomes are as follows (DPEM, 2011, 9):

For children, young people and their families:

- *a reduction in behaviours that place children and young people at risk of coming into contact with the youth justice system*
- *an enhancement in the protective factors that assist children and young people to make positive choices about changing their behaviour, and*
- *more coordinated support for children, young people and their families.*

For communities:

- *engendering a sense of community ownership of, and involvement in, issues that affect the well-being of children, young people and their families, and*
- *a reduction in the degree and extent of youth offending and antisocial behaviour in Tasmanian communities.*

For participating agencies:

- *better communication between participating Agencies, leading to more effective support and less duplication of effort, and*
- *an increased capacity for early intervention and prevention.*

A review of the IAST was undertaken by the DPEM in 2010-2011. The review spanned several areas of importance for government agencies and non-government agencies, and of notable significance for the articulation of collaborative governance mechanisms across agencies. These areas of significance were: leadership, resourcing, evaluation, inter-agency trust and accountability, and rationalisation. The review, spanning a two-year (24 month) period, also recommended consideration of several issues. These recommendations related to the nature and core business of the lead agency for the IAST, the commitment of partnering agencies, governance frameworks, the development of an early intervention collaborative framework, a review of business rules to take into account the new circumstances of the scheme, and a scientific process and impact review of the scheme. The latter recommendation triggered this current evaluation research project.

THE IAST+ Pilot Program

The 'IAST+: Three Approaches to case Coordination' (IAST+) works from the premise that inter-agency cooperation and collaboration is essential to effectively deliver services to at risk young people and their families. The IAST+ is an initiative hosted by DHHS, under the auspices of the Office for Children (OfC), using the existing Inter-Agency Support Team (IAST) system as a starting point. It considers how 'agencies can best be supported to work together to intervene earlier to achieve better outcomes for children and young people identified at risk' (OfC, 2013, 7). Like the IAST, the precept of the IAST is to encourage multiple services to collaborate in responding to issues relating to the care of children and young people, while testing new means of collaboration and information sharing, and designing better performance management tools or avenues. The IAST+ project essentially focuses on three different approaches to collaboration, in three different sites throughout Tasmania: Glenorchy, Launceston and Devonport.

The 'self-directed' pilot is hosted by the Glenorchy IAST. IAST stakeholders are provided with ongoing external support (by way of professional development, invitees, workshops, etc) to look at ways to work more effectively. The Launceston pilot, also known as the 'Cc-located' or the 'directed model', is

provided with an additional resource of DHHS health practitioners, who assess families' needs and recommend specific interventions based on these assessments. The 'Existing Model' is based in Devonport, where the IAST stakeholders are supported by existing mechanisms, and act as a control site (OfC, 2013).

The IAST+ management team consists of three permanent positions at the Office for Children, who ensure the administration of the scheme, communication with hierarchy and act as a contact point for the research team. These three key personnel also act in coordination with the IAST management team from the DPEM.

Evaluation

Research purpose and objectives

The purpose of this research is to 'create, implement and finalise an evaluation methodology for a case planning and coordination trial project'. The IAST+ trial project specifically targets vulnerable children and their families. As per prior consultation with the Office for Children, this evaluation adopts an interactive evaluation research design. It has been agreed that the TILES research team will consult on the design of evaluation tools, assist the IAST+ project team in administering these evaluation tools, and regularly report to the project team.

It has also been agreed that the IAST+ project team will be in charge of the logistics of administering these tools, and that on a three monthly basis, all completed evaluation documentation will be submitted to the research team for analysis.

This evaluation will be based on primary data and document analysis, with the main evaluation tools consisting of interviews, surveys, and the regular (three-monthly) analysis of organisational information provided by the IAST+ project team (e.g., number of cases managed, committee meeting minutes, exit surveys, self-assessment surveys; see Research Tools below for a full list of evaluation tools).

The aims of the evaluation are to:

1. identify and describe the mechanisms or processes which enhance and support inter-agency collaboration for the purposes of integrated case planning and service delivery
2. evaluate the effectiveness of mechanisms and processes which enhance and support inter-agency collaboration for the purposes of integrated case planning and service delivery

3. determine the value of integrated case planning to children, young people and families from both client and agency perspectives
4. collate, and determine the relative efficacy of, the range of mechanisms and processes which enhance and support inter-agency collaboration.

Through the set up of this methodology, the IAST+ project team at the Office for Children is hoping to identify better ways for agencies to collaborate in the identification of 'at-risk families' and the subsequent delivery of appropriate services to these families. A previous evaluation (DPEM, 2012) indicated that further research was needed to (among other, more logistical issues)

1. gauge the level of support participating agencies can commit to for the continuation of the IAST, and
2. investigate the outcomes of the IAST Program and determine whether the IASTs are making a difference to the lives of children, young and their families with complex needs.

The involvement of UTAs in the evaluation of the IAST+ is intended to provide the project team with the tools to achieve some of these goals.

Research tools

Interviews

The research team will interview the persons who are in charge of the IAST+ pilot project (implemented in three project sites), as well as those in charge of the IAST project as a whole throughout Tasmania. The interviews, conducted on an individual basis, are intended to identify the various issues that need exploring through the tools UTAS will develop later on.

The in-depth 'background' interviews of the management team (one individual interview for each team member) allow for the clear identification and documentation of project aims and objectives, and for an initial 'mapping' of processes in the three designated trial sites (Devonport, Launceston and Glenorchy). They highlight expectations for the scheme, set up all deliverables for the evaluation (in addition to those highlighted in this quotation), and guide the design of the various evaluation tools (particularly the surveys) described below. These interviews also inform the creation of qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators (KPIs) for the whole project.

Surveys

Surveys will be used during several phases of this research. They will be made available via the internet to all current members of IASTs across Tasmania (approximately 80 professionals from government agencies, in their professional capacity):

1. once for all IASTs, at the beginning of the research, and
2. at the beginning and the end of the research for members of the IAST+ pilot (in the three sites of Devonport, Glenorchy and Launceston).

All IAST members are known publicly through their participation in IAST teams. The targeted selection of survey respondents allows us to 'locate 'excellent' participants to obtain [rich] data and ... sampling technique must be targeted and efficient' (Charmaz, quoted in Flick 2009). Surveying all IAST members allows for: the exploration and full documentation of related processes and tools used by agencies when assessing cases; and the documentation of problems (identified by stakeholders themselves), solutions to problems, and successes in collaborative processes.

The first background 'attitudinal survey' was intended to capture attitudinal data from all 20 IAST stakeholders across Tasmania that are not part of the trial project. This survey establishes a benchmark in relation to existing (or otherwise) collaborative processes, the efficacy of IASTs to date and expectation or 'hopes' for new collaborative models. This 'one off' survey was administered online. 'Stakeholders' include representatives of agencies sitting on local IAST committees (e.g.: Tasmania Police, ADS, DHHS, Education, etc). Membership depends on local sites. It was hoped that from these 20 IAST sites across Tasmania, 60 such surveys would be completed.

The second (exit) survey only concerns stakeholders in the three trial sites (Devonport, Launceston and Glenorchy). It will capture data and will establish a benchmark in relation to existing (or otherwise) collaborative processes, the efficacy of IAST+ to date and expectations or 'hopes' for new collaborative models, especially since the inception of the IAST+ scheme. This (approx. 10 min.) survey will be administered online at the end of the allocated two-year period.

'Day-to-day' tracking tools

In light of these surveys and of the in-depth interview with the project team, the research team has designed (or is in the process of designing), in consultation with the project team, a set of three 'day-to-day' tracking tools for the project. To ease the process and avoid 'research participation fatigue', these tools will serve not only as evaluation tools but also as administrative tools for the project:

1. IAST+ committee meeting minutes. The project team provided us with a set of de-identified minutes from a previous committee meeting. In consultation with the project team, the

researchers will design a more efficient format for minute taking. The new form will aim to allow: better identification of cases and of their underpinning factors (mental health, abuse, drug addiction, alcohol issues, etc), better identification of lead agencies in case management, better information sharing across agencies, clear identification of collaborative mechanisms and better monitoring of cases. Discussions will be had as to whether this minute taking can be done electronically, with Excel software embedded in project documentation.

2. An 'adverse or noticeable event' documentation tool. It may happen that the project team or committee members have knowledge of an adverse event or get some 'good news' relating to a case managed. Examples include appreciation expressed by a client, or a mistake in case management which caused a client to decide for an immediate exit from the programme. The proposed one-page tracking document will allow for documentation and analysis of these events.
3. Stakeholder self-assessment survey. At the request of the project team, the research team designed a short 'self-assessment survey' for all stakeholders to fill in at the end of each committee meeting. This anonymous five minute survey (identified by site only) will allow for some reflection as to whether the meeting was well run, and whether collaborative mechanisms were clearly outlined for all cases discussed. It will also enable the identification of possible obstacles to collaboration or good case management. It will allow members to 'vent' possible frustration or praise proceedings. To encourage participation, a raffle of a \$30 Coles, Woolworths or Plants Plus voucher will be drawn every six months.

Further to initial discussions with the Office for Children project team, and in view of developing an impact evaluation, the research team had intended to design a 'client satisfaction survey', to be available online or as a hard copy for all clients exiting the IAST+ project. This survey was to be made available in all three trial sites in paper form, with prepaid return envelopes. However, the IASTs run an 'entry' and 'exit' survey already, available on the forms clients have to sign to enter and exit the IAST program. It was therefore decided not to run any additional survey, to avoid research 'fatigue' on the part of clients, and rather include these surveys (de-identified by the management team) as part of our overall desktop analysis of data (see Phase 2, below).

After consultation with the project team, it was agreed that other than the in-depth interview of the project team, the researchers would not administer these research tools. The administration of all surveys will be done by project team members, as a member of the project team always attends

committee meetings. This was agreed upon with cost reduction in mind, and to avoid redundancy in evaluation processes.

Research timeline

Phase One (June 2013 – 30th September 2013)

The first phase of this evaluation focuses on the in-depth interviews of the project team, followed by the design, development and administration of all evaluation tools, in consultation with the project team.

Phase Two (1st October 2013 – September 2015)

This stage of the research consists of the research team **reporting on a three-monthly basis** to the project team, following the compilation and delivery of all data obtained by the project team over the said three months. The project team will deliver nine sets of minutes (one for each month for each of the three trial sites), all self-assessment surveys filled in by stakeholders, and any event documentation filled in during those three months. A member of the research team will collect these documents from the Office for Children. The research team will proceed with a document analysis, and provide a verbal report to the project team at the Office for Children.

Depending on circumstances and on the dynamics of the project and upon consultation with the project team, evaluation tools may be slightly modified to allow better data entry, to cater for unplanned logistics, or improve data gathering/sharing.

The research team will visit all three sites during Phase Two, to familiarise committee members with the research team and ask any questions they may have. These visits will occur during committee meetings, and will allow for an ad-hoc, independent observation of proceedings.

During this stage, the research team will also compile

1. **a first interim report** (six months after all evaluation tools go live; approx. delivery date June 2014), followed by
2. **a full literature review and**
3. **a second interim report** (approx. delivery date November-December 2014)

Phase Three (September 2015 – December 2015)

The third phase addresses the impact of the IAST+ initiative, and addresses the issue of collaborative processes holistically. Researchers will examine statistical data (provided by the project team) as well

as data collected from the exit survey, and data contained in the exit interview of the project team.

This final analysis considers all data relating to:

1. All committee minutes completed since October 2013
2. All adverse or noticeable event documentation filled in since October 2013
3. All self-assessment surveys
4. All client exit surveys
5. An 'exit survey' administered to all IAST+ trial site stakeholders
6. The exit interview of the project team
7. All project statistics obtained by the Office for Children.

Subsequently, the team will draft a final report for the project team, and assist the project team in drafting their internal report.

Chapter 2 – Stakeholders’ feedback and attitudes towards the scheme

This chapter presents responses received to the first (background) survey, and analyses the attitudes of stakeholders towards the IAST scheme. The survey was put online and made available to IAST stakeholders and meeting attendees from October 2013 until February 2014. It consisted of 27 quantitative (mostly Likert-scale) and qualitative (open-ended) questions. Sixty-one responses to the survey were received, meeting the response target set. Survey answers are related to the background interviews conducted with the IAST+ project team and the IAST management team.

Stakeholder participation in the scheme

The survey of all IASTs in Tasmania indicates that a variety of agencies participate in meetings, with the Department of Health and Human Services (38%), the Department of Education (33%) and the Department of Police and Emergency Services (21% – essentially Tasmania Police) contributing the bulk of participants (Figure 1).

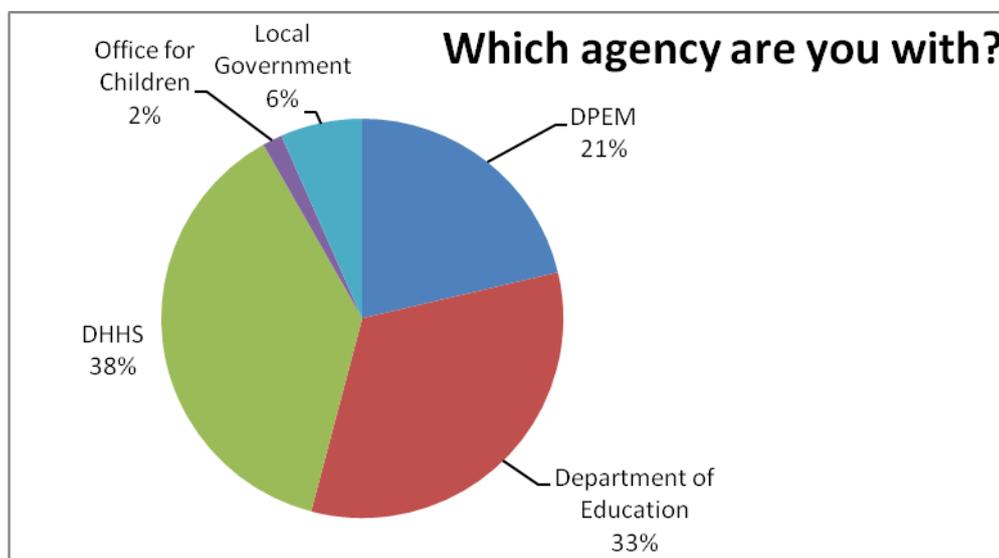


Figure 1 – IAST agency participation

However, many survey respondents indicated in their answer to the subsequent open-ended questions, that there was a need to invite others to take part in case discussion, not only for the purpose of information sharing, but also to contribute to problem-solving. Non-government agencies were cited in survey responses as those most needed around the table. The consistent attendance of

Gateway Services¹ (for those IASTs not working with them already) was particularly flagged as something to consider. This invitation of additional agencies to the discussions was often mentioned as areas where IASTs could be improved upon, and their absence deemed an obstacle to good collaboration. The phrasing of some responses indicated some kind of institutional obstacle to the inclusion of non-government agencies to the process. Below is a selection of these responses.

Allowing a representative of Gateways Services (who are bound by confidentiality under the current MOU) to attend.

Engagement of NGOs in IAST. These NGOs directly work with the clients.

More involvement of non-government agencies that are involved with young people.

I think NGOs need somehow to be included in the conversation as they are often supporting the young person.

Include relevant non-government agencies (such as Gateway) to provide a more holistic means of tapping into resources.

Ability to engage NGOs in IATs.

Also the refusal of allowing NGOs to attend the meetings, especially when they are providing family support and know the families well [is an obstacle to collaboration]. This restricts the knowledge and resources of the family and their supports and limits the ability to identify what works, what doesn't and what could be implemented.

Of all stakeholders attending meetings, 75% always attend meetings, with 25% attending 'sometimes' (none of the survey respondents chose to answer 'never' – Figure 2). Note that out of all 46 respondents who 'always' go to meetings, all thought that IASTs worked well or very well, and only 2 thought that IAST did 'not work well at all', 3 thought that it did 'not work well', and 3 skipped the question.

¹ Gateway Services was created in 2009, and established across four sites throughout the state. The purpose of Gateway Services is to 'ensure that vulnerable children, young people and their families are effectively linked into relevant services' and 'establish productive relationships with key local services and professionals, to support a more integrated and coordinated approach to intake into Family Support Services'. (DHHS, 2009:10. See http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/disability/gateway_services).

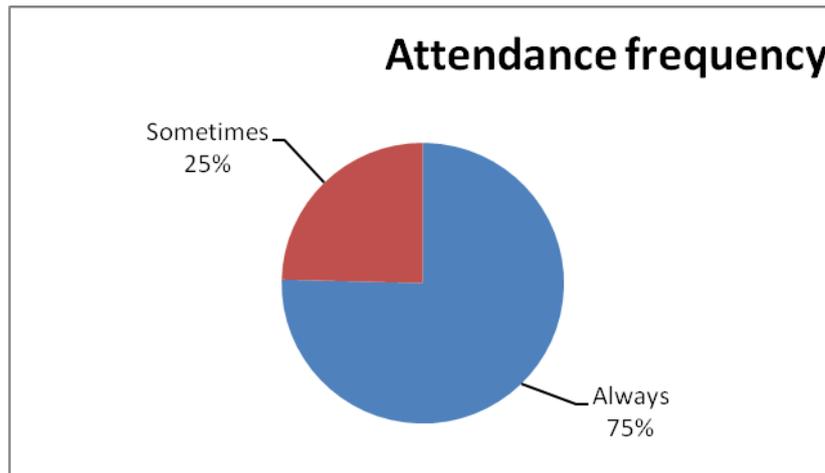


Figure 2 – IAST attendance frequency

Perception of collaboration

This subsection considers the issue of collaboration from a structural point of view (levels of collaboration as expressed by survey respondents). In light of the complexity of this issue, Chapter 3 unpacks the topic of stakeholders’ understanding and purpose in further detail.

The exploration of levels of agency cooperation in IASTs illustrated high levels of confidence in the collaboration process, with 75% of respondents thinking collaboration is ‘achieved well’ or ‘very well’. Of all responses received to this question ($n = 56$; 5 respondents skipped this question), 13% expressing a disappointment or uncertainty as to the success of the collaborative processes (9% ‘not well’; 4% ‘not well at all’; 2% ‘I don’t know’).



Figure 3 – How well collaboration is achieved

Fifty-five survey respondents answered the question about obstacles to collaboration (six respondents skipped this question). Opinions are split in relation to obstacles to collaboration, with 53% of respondents indicating they have encountered some problems with collaboration, and 47% more positive about collaborative processes (Figure 4). Respondents further indicated that obstacles are of two kinds.

Internal obstacles (within one's own agency) consist of: commitment to other agency core business ($n = 2$), which occasionally prevents a person from attending a meeting; lack of resources ($n = 2$); a lack of knowledge about IAST processes ($n = 1$); cases not meeting thresholds for participation² ($n = 3$); services being short staffed ($n = 2$); or dealing with other agencies' inability to or partial ability to share information ($n = 2$).

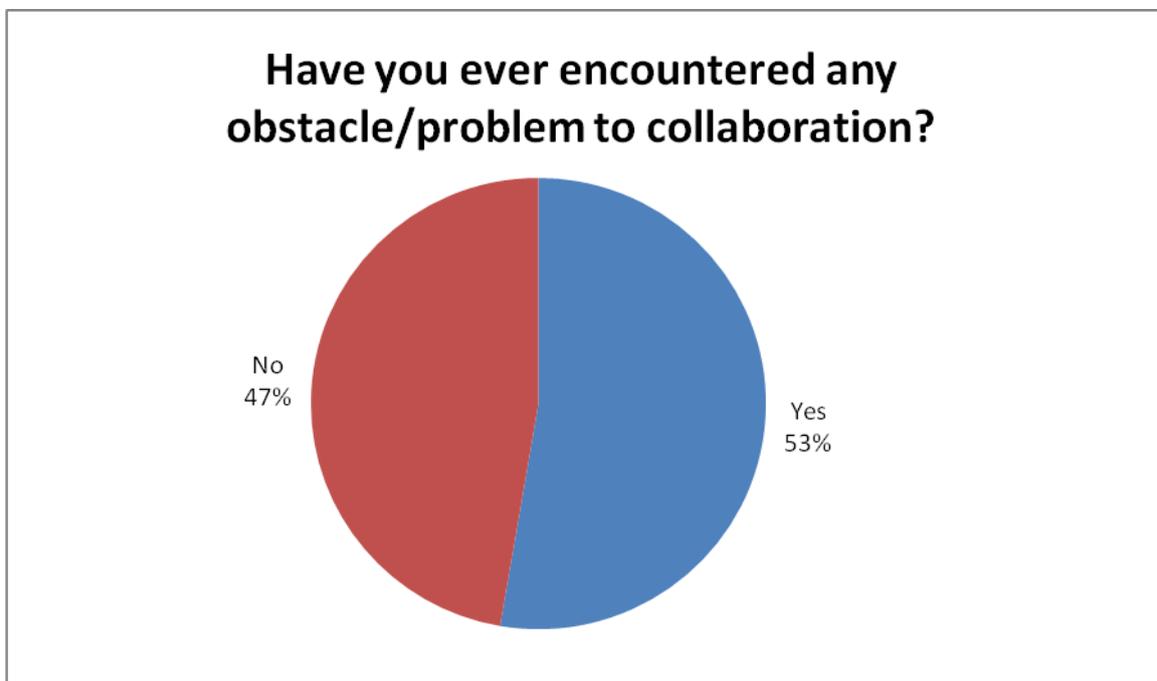


Figure 4 - Obstacles or problems to collaboration

External obstacles (outside one's own agency) consist, on the other hand, of: a lack of clarity about intentions and sometimes agencies' roles in the process ($n = 3$); lack of understanding of other agencies to understand risk assessment exercises ($n = 2$); lack of funding or resources ($n = 4$), wrong expectations about agencies' remit (also labelled a lack of organisational awareness, $n = 3$); lack of transportation (with distance being a problem or importance for regional IASTs); legislative boundaries regarding information exchange ($n = 2$); and current IAST policy and the absence of a central point for

² These answers essentially came from Child Protection Services and other specialised health workers. Respondents indicated that cases need to reach a specific assessment threshold for Child Protection Services to intervene. Children not placed on orders were said to be eligible for therapeutic interventions.

coordination ($n = 2$). Several respondents were frustrated that no agency would take the lead to undertake specific actions ($n = 3$), and that there were too many discussions and not enough actions or decisions taken during meetings ($n = 3$). However, the recurrent concern was that of ‘relevant’ agencies not attending meetings consistently ($n = 12$).

Once again, the non-participation of NGOs in meetings was flagged as a problem to good collaborative processes:

NGO's working with clients/families were not allowed to attend meetings which meant that we did not have the information needed where we could report to the IAST members. Even if all IAST members agreed on an outcome, there were obstacles in making a final decision, therefore nothing got done, and a decision was delayed until next meeting.

However, the bulk of responses to this question highlight as an obstacle the lack of a central ‘command’ or agency taking the role of allocating responsibilities and action items to agencies (or their representatives), as well as a need for meeting participants to be more aware of the legal foundations underpinning IAST processes, and of child protection frameworks (as well as risk assessment protocols).

Case allocation

Most IASTs (88%) discuss between 10 and 20 cases per meeting, with fewer teams discussing up to 50 cases per meeting session (10% of respondents indicated their groups discussed up to 30 cases, 2% reported discussing 50 cases or more – Figure 5).

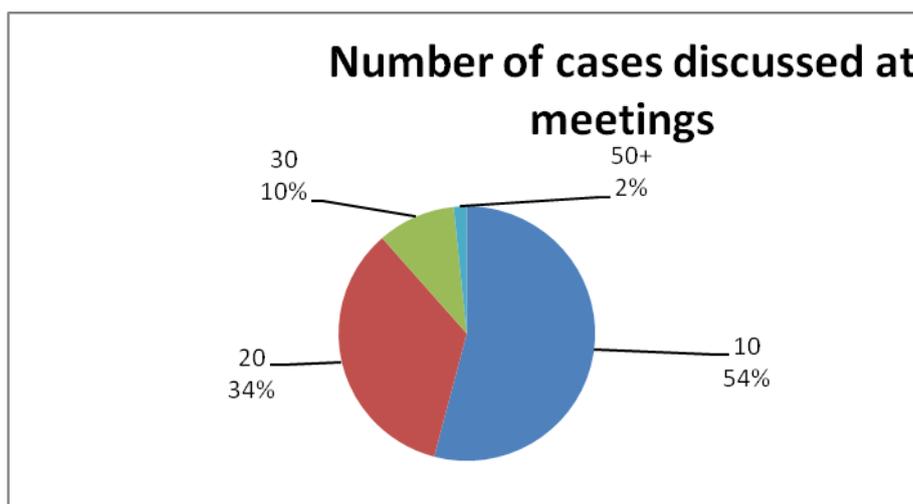


Figure 5 – Number of cases discussed during IAST meetings

The discussion of large case numbers does not seem to be an impediment to the good identification of at-risk families though, with 71.7% of respondents confident in the IAST risk identification and referral process (Figure 6).

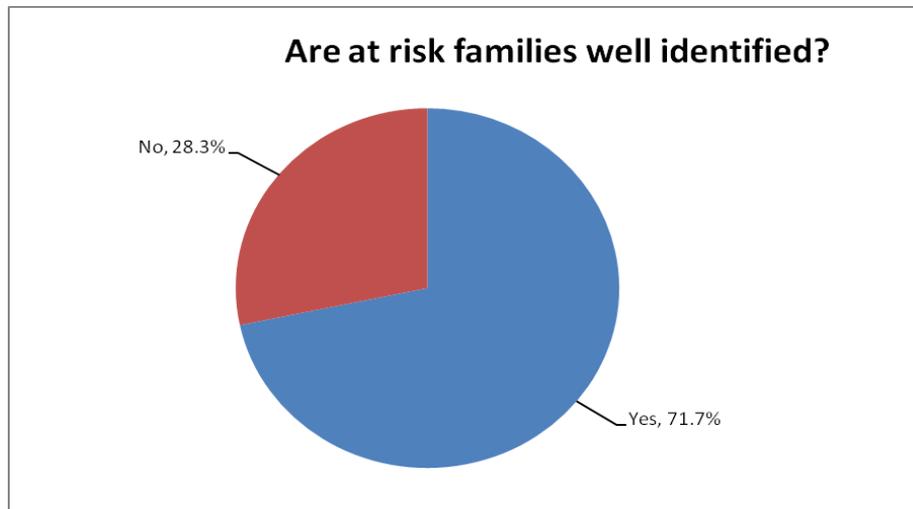


Figure 6 – Identification of at-risk families

Impact on young people and their families

While most survey respondents thought IASTs have a high to very high impact on their target groups (63.1% - Fig. 7), 32.6% of respondents were more cautious about the possible influence of the scheme on young people and their families.

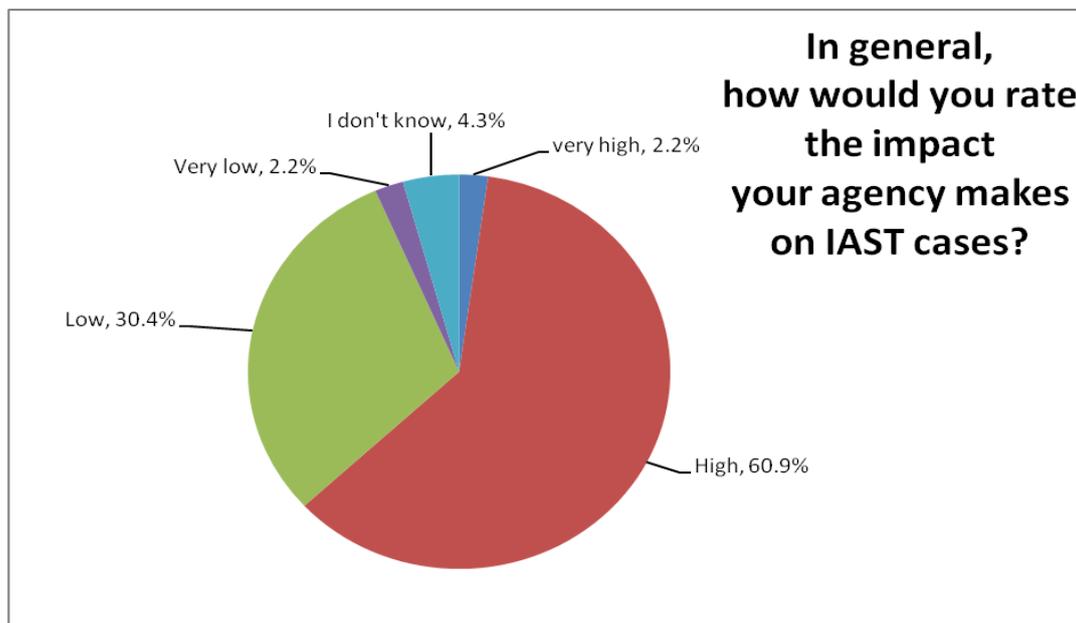


Figure 7 – Impact on cases

Most of the IASTs' success, according to responses, seems to rest in their capacity to meet families' needs when they are identified holistically (which, according to Figure 8, IASTs seem to do well):

The IAST has demonstrated effectiveness in getting the needs of families met timely in most cases.

If all agencies have worked together, the impact is great.

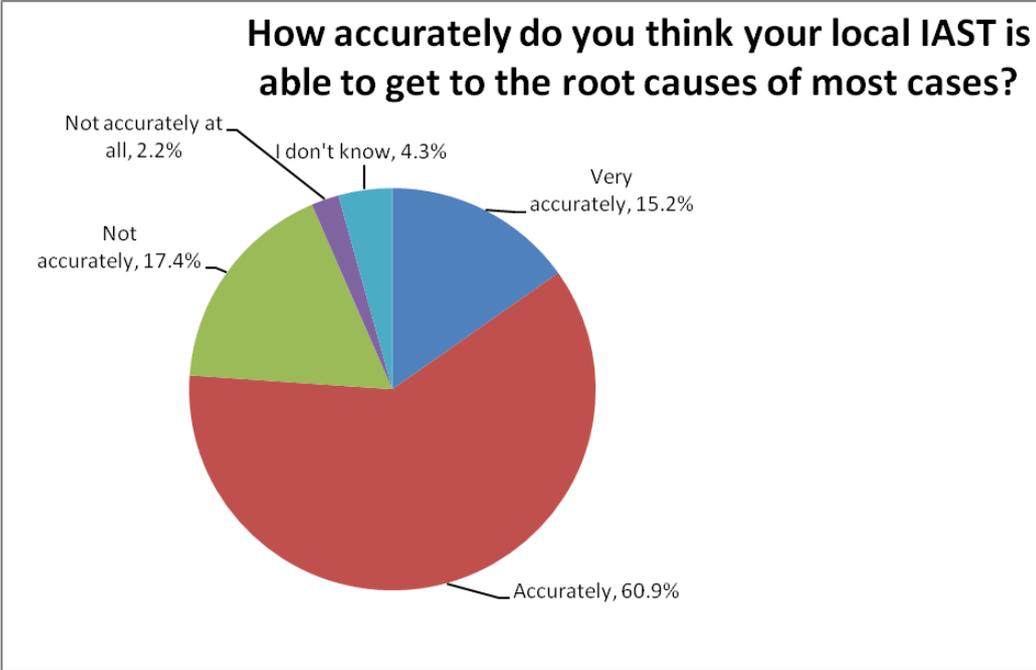


Figure 8 – Accuracy in root cause identification

For some though, the impact of IAST may not be visible enough for families and agencies to actually comment on it.

Of the 15 respondents who indicated their mixed feelings about the scheme, 12 provided a specific answer as to why they thought the IAST did not have a strong impact on young people’s circumstances. A sample of these responses is as follows:

Very limited. Most families (and even many services) don’t know what the IAST is or what it does. Children are often referred and discussions are still being had about the family years later with little to no feedback being given to the family. Families do not see the IAST as a resource, rather, those who are aware of it think it is more about information sharing or ‘checking up’ on them.

The success of the support from IAST varies depending on if the young person is caught early enough and if the family is also engaging. The impact on the family is less. They are often not engaged and the IAST lacks taking a holistic approach to supporting the family as part of the process.

Hit and miss. I have not seen significant positive impact.

Little impact due to generational issues of drug and alcohol usage, theft and mental health.

I don’t think they care what the IAST does.

Impact may not be as effective as we would like. Problems are ingrained and often it seems that little progress is made because agencies do not necessarily have the authority to do what is necessary.

I am not optimistic it has any impact. Young people often have better relationships with early intervention police.

Agency support for the scheme

A large majority of respondents support the scheme, with 83% of respondents thinking that the initiative is valuable (Figure 9), and 90% of respondents thinking their agency was 'supportive' or 'very supportive' of the IAST (Figure 10). Nine percent of respondents did not think the initiative was valuable, and 8% of respondents thought their agency did not support the scheme.

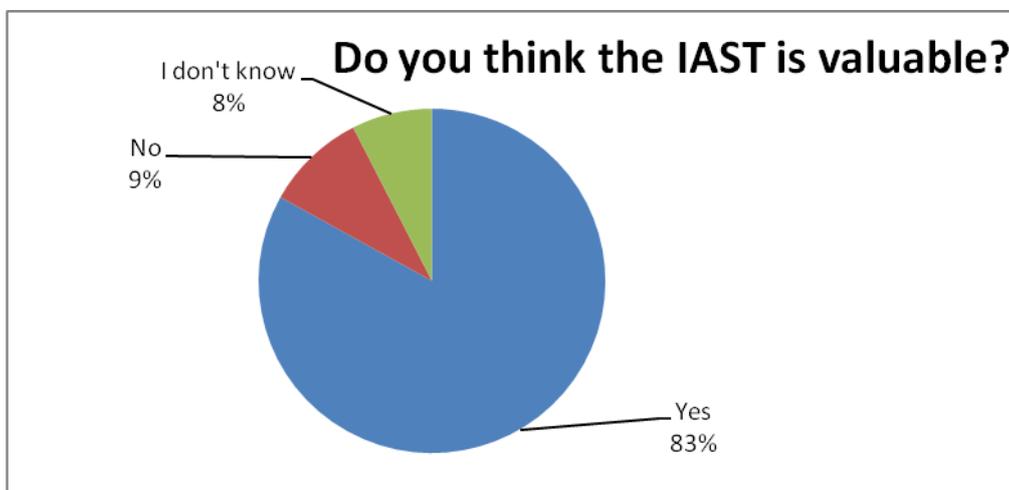


Figure 9 – Perceived value of the scheme

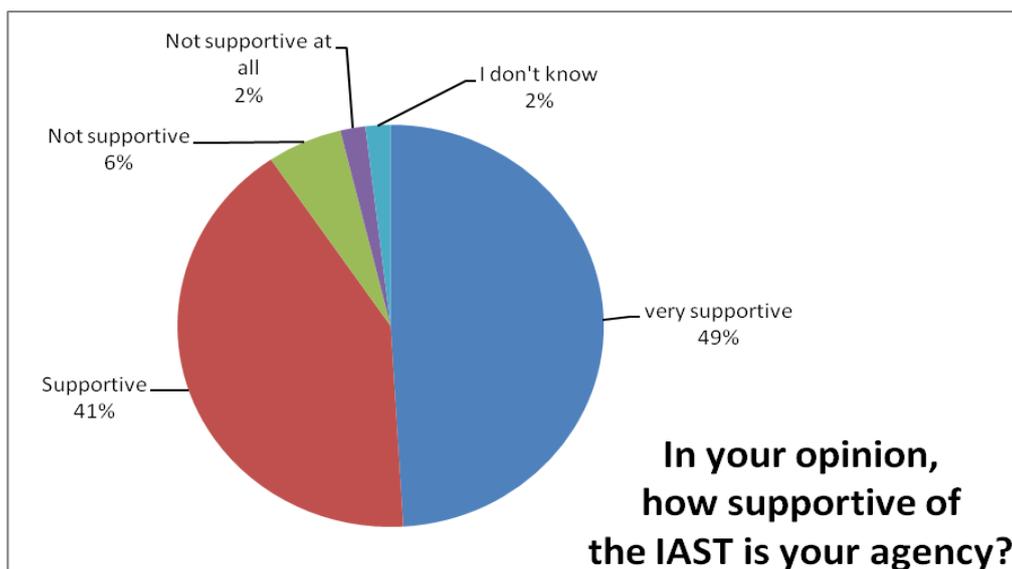


Figure 10 – Agency support for the scheme

A majority of respondents thought that agency cooperation and 'simply' getting together to discuss cases was valuable in itself, in that the meetings allow each person in attendance to get a clearer understanding of one another's responsibility about a case. Several respondents also insisted on the fact that IASTs not only help avoid duplication and redundancy in processes or service delivery, but also help consolidate agencies' roles and responsibility around children and their families.

Shared information and resource means clearer directions in what can be achieved for the young person and less duplication.

Most of the children identified on the list are some of the most at risk youth in the area. Any conversation and information sharing which may assist any of the organisations interested in helping them is of value.

To cross check that the individual young person isn't being over-serviced (same support from different departments) or under supported, departments assuming support is being provided elsewhere.

Different agencies aware of what one another are doing in relation to same case.

It is a time efficient way to network with the various agencies who are working with the most vulnerable young people in our community. The meeting fosters a shared sense of responsibility and a sense of accountability to the group as well as the child.

A greater depth of understanding is gained by each agency from the input of the others, enabling a truly personalised plan for each case to be developed and implemented, with everyone having clarity of their own role in achieving positive outcomes for the student.

Some indicated however that the value of an IAST emanates from the proper chairing of meetings. If chaired appropriately, agencies' roles are clear, and a commitment to achieving change for the families is visible in the meeting. Others pointed out the fact that IASTs are one of the rare forums allowing agencies to come together to holistically develop a picture of families and of their needs. As such, it needed to be celebrated as a tool for knowledge and for reaching a greater depth of understanding for each case.

The IAST provides the only opportunity to ensure that services have a complete "view" of the young person and their situation. Collaborating enables tailoring of services and allows an understanding of the "service shopping" that some youth/families engage in.

One of the very few consistent mechanisms of collaboration available to this cohort at a local level.

One respondent who thought more negatively of the scheme offered the following comments:

[the IAST is not valuable] in its current form. There seems to be a lot of information sharing but very little strategy building and forward planning. The language used in relation to young people and their families is often derogatory and hopeless rather than solutions focussed. More time is spent lamenting the lack of resources than brainstorming possible interventions.

Two respondents had a more mitigated approach, and indicated that:

There appears to be a varied result with no key actions or outcome identified for the family or young people.

It has changed over the years into a forum that does not achieve much at all.

Information sharing

Figure 11 illustrates the fact that there is little consistency in how the information is shared after meetings. A majority of agency representatives who have attended a meeting distribute meeting minutes (56%), or send information by email (32%). Fewer respondents choose to formally report during an internal agency meeting (6%) or informal conversations with colleagues (4%), and even fewer formally allocate responsibility to colleagues (2%). This lack of uniformity asks the question of how knowledge of particular cases is retained and how accuracy of information is maintained from one meeting to another. Despite this lack of consistency, though, survey respondents thought that information was 'well' or 'very well' shared across agencies (85% - Figure 12). Eleven percent (11%) of respondents were more negative in their assessment of the information sharing process.

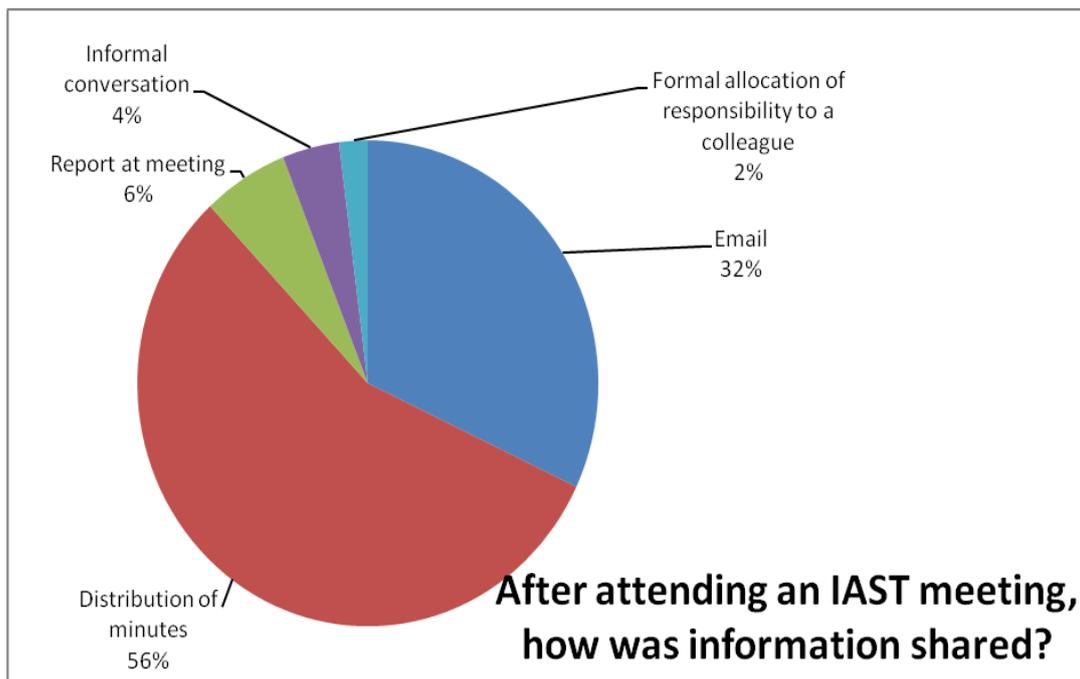


Figure 11 – Agency information sharing

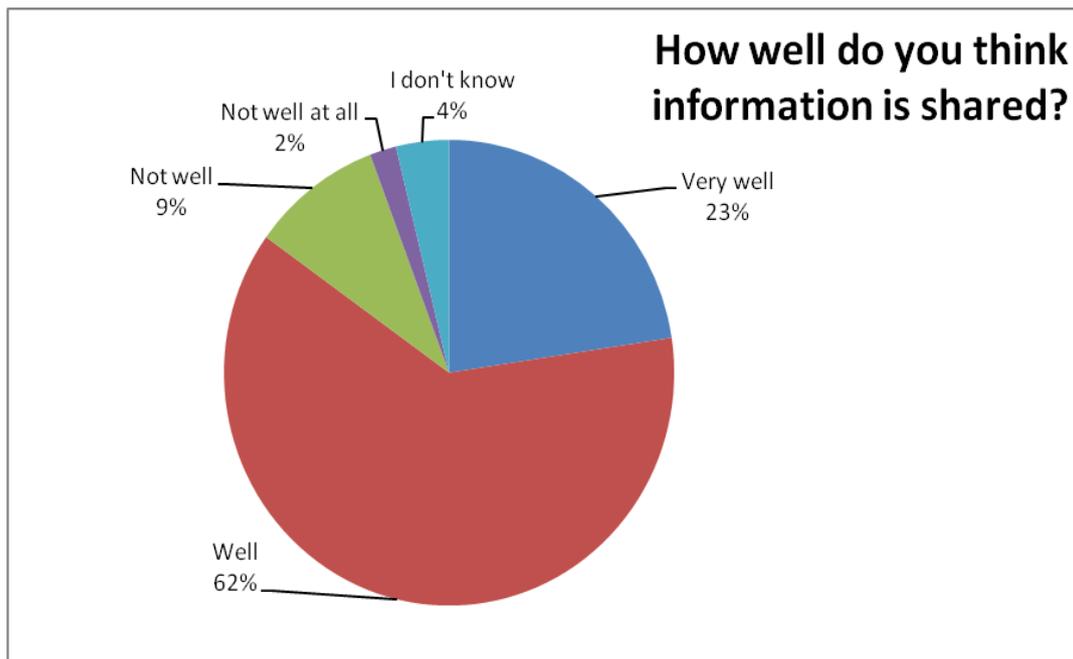


Figure 12 – Efficiency at information sharing

Possible improvement of the scheme

One of the questions asked in the survey related to possible ways to improve on IAST processes and outcomes. Respondents were requested to provide two ideas that they thought could improve the scheme. About three quarters of respondents ($n = 46$) provided responses to this question. The most notable suggestion associated with any possible improvement was that of regular meeting attendance and membership (15 respondents raised this as a possible area for improvement). This particular point was split in two by respondents, who thought that:

- it was important that agencies maintain a monthly presence at meetings, and that
- agency representatives should not rotate, in order to maintain organisational and case knowledge.

Some respondents went as far as suggesting that services and agencies prioritise IAST membership, representation and attendance to ensure that knowledge is safely shared, and that new members are thoroughly briefed about IAST processes and cases before they attend meetings for the first time. They indicated that IASTs needed:

Consistency in having the same members from different agencies attending on a regular basis.

Attendance of all agencies all the time.

Respondents called for more action to be taken by IASTs, although the teams' remit remaining that of information sharing. There was some frustration expressed in relation to information sharing being

insufficient as a sphere of activity, with an outcome-based approach to be included in IAST policies and guidelines, as well as supervision and monitoring of cases. Respondents thought that:

IAST should be developed back to developing strategies/interventions/actions for families rather than sharing information.

There should be better management of transferral processes (and feedback).

We have addressed, in an earlier part of this report, respondents' wishes for NGOs and other non-statutory agencies or services to be invited to participate to IAST discussions. This emerged as a prominent request in the answers provided to this question. Some respondents suggested that IASTs'

Business rules be changed to invite key community service providers to the table: Gateway and Supported Youth/TYSS.

The question of resources was a particular area of interest for respondents. They suggested a variety of ways IAST could be improved upon. The issue of resources committed to meetings was raised again here (Figure 13).

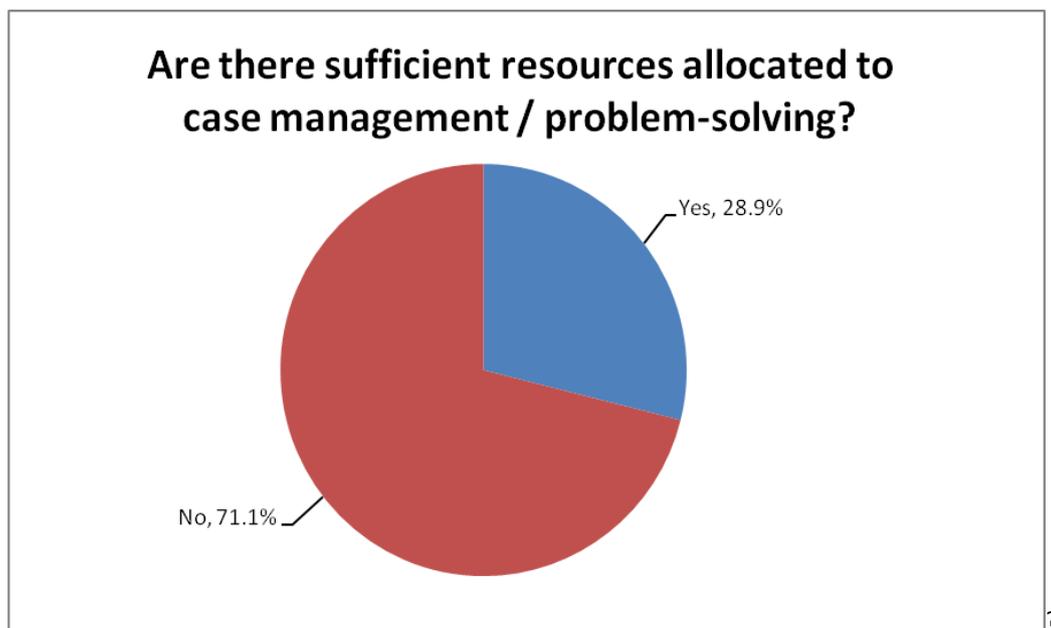


Figure 13 – Sufficient allocation of resources for problem-solving

Some respondents described their difficulty in committing to meetings that last long hours, when they only have one or two cases scheduled on the IAST meeting agenda for that day (or cases that they can deal with considering their core business. For example, schools sometimes only have two young persons mentioned on the IAST meeting list. Others have mentioned the problem of distance between remote areas and service or agency headquarters as another problem. To address these particular problems, some respondents suggested the idea of running meetings by video conference, and

indicated that such a technological component to IAST could ensure better participation of agencies in monthly meetings.

Many of the respondents supported the adoption of an early intervention framework, with many thinking that “it should have happened yesterday” or that IASTs were already working along the lines of an early intervention idea. Of the 51 respondents who provided comments to this survey item, six felt lukewarm at the idea of an early intervention framework, in stating that such a move would require additional agency resources, policies, and assurances that other children would not miss out on services. Others approached the issue with caution:

In principle, I support this notion. However, there needs to be clear guidelines and boundaries regarding the roles and expectations for stakeholders, legislative and policy support and a realistic understanding of the support service and available resources in regional areas. All stakeholders must provide consistent information when dealing with clients and support from families themselves is crucial.

In principle, I would support this idea. In practice, I would be concerned that those young people who require "late intervention" would lose access to support.

I find it problematic, as most of the clients are teenagers, which it could be argued means the intervention is not early. It would be beneficial to include CHAPS, Early Childhood Intervention Services, to capture younger children and their families with the IAST framework.

This is fundamental for this area - but the scarcity of services and the limited options are extremely difficult to manage and, unless catered for, the West Coast youth will continue to be negatively impacted.

Yes and no - the lists for IAST could become quite extensive as the need for early intervention is quite significant. The current model requires a number of the key partners to work together (ie DoE, Youth Justice, Police)

The IAST is more a discussion panel rather than a panel of people that undertakes direct early intervention work with families.

There would still need to be some intervention for students who do not show that level of behaviour prior to their teenage years.

Positive feedback on this issue was as follows:

More appropriate - CPS and YJ can collaborate more with the people who are already in the system. Perhaps once these agencies are involved, beyond scope of early intervention.

This is a positive idea and works well with the framework of many other services. However, there is concern that it will restrict work with families with issues chronic in nature.

A good cost saving initiative; potentially saving resources in the long run. Many of the clients of IAST have a history of trauma, the sooner these clients are identified and helped the better.

An early intervention framework partners with DOE's vision.

Appropriate and in line with the original aims and objectives of IASTs.

I am fully supportive as I feel that to the best of our ability this is the approach taken by the IAST that I am involved with.

I think that this would be a beneficial framework as quite often planning/intervention by the IAST is seen as intervention that occurs too late as the young person is already ingrained in offending/non-education or the Child Protection system, making it difficult to provide successful intervention or strategies to assist the child/young person.

Chapter 3 – Inter-agency collaboration: IAST purpose and processes

The collaboration and cooperation of agencies and services in sharing information and delivering services to at-risk youth and families is the crux of IASTs. As indicated in the IAST Business rules (2007, 4 and 5):

IASTs provide a forum in which participating agencies responsible for delivering services in a particular community can devise the most appropriate support strategies for referred children and young people in a coordinated, timely and effective manner. (...) The IASTs provide a forum in which State Government agencies and local councils can identify children and young people in the target client group, jointly develop practical support strategies and then monitor the effectiveness of these strategies.

The questions relating to purpose and collaborative processes proved to be the most complex ones for respondents. The analysis of responses demonstrates that there is no clear consensus of what IASTs are for, should be doing and why. The exact purpose of the collaborative process also seems confusing, as aims diverge according to respondents' (siloed) professional core businesses and personal views of the scheme. The research team has chosen to unpack respondents' questions in the following two-fold manner: views about purpose and views about collaboration.

Views about IAST purpose

The question 'what is your understanding of the IAST purpose?' received 53 mixed responses. Many respondents thought that the core-business of IAST revolves around early intervention and case management, networking or information sharing, and assistance to families. The specific purpose of monthly meetings was also stated as that of identifying cases, families' needs and the subsequent strategies to deliver possible positive outcomes for clients. However, while a large number of responses identified 'collaboration' and 'information sharing' as the purpose of IASTs ($n = 23$; 43%), many of these responses did not capture the complexity of the definitional purpose as stated in IAST Business Rules, nor did they provide any consensus as to what the IASTs are supposed to deliver³. In fairness to respondents, the purpose of IASTs is complicated in itself, and even managers of IAST and IAST+ initiatives provided intricate answers to this question when they were interviewed by the research team. Their answers also bring different points of view about processes and outcomes.

³ This lack of complexity, however, might have been impacted by the research process itself and respondents not wishing to provide complex responses (for the sake of clarity) or willing to respond to the survey as quickly as possible.

In its purest form, the intention is to provide better opportunities for young people who are in situations where an older sibling has actually come into strife and so the focus of this project is to pick up the younger siblings of children who have already been identified by the IAST... So there is a child within the family who is coming to the attention of police or plating lots and lots of truant... So let's look at this family as to how we can support and provide better possible outcomes for those young people that are following behind so that they don't necessarily follow into the footsteps of older siblings. (Interview #1)

The IAST is an inter-agency support team which is set up to assist in coordinating services where there are young people who have been identified as being at risk of progressing further into the service system, and are having problems that are going to escalate. The idea of the IAST was they were built on the premise that early on, numbers of agencies were dealing with the same child often, and that if they could coordinate their activities earlier, they would be able to better respond to the young people concerned. (Interview #2)

The IAST+ is in my view, about understanding that a new way of working which is a collaborative effort towards a mutually set goal, and everybody benefits from achieving a mutually set goal. (Interview #3)

It's a coordinated approach to supporting somebody. And rather than all agencies doing their own thing, and not knowing what anyone else is doing, it's a way of getting everybody around the table who have different strengths, and different knowledge, and different skills, and trying to come up with a coordinated way to support a young person and their family. (Interview #4)

One survey respondent indicated that they 'did not have an understanding of the IAST purpose'. Four respondents however provided intricate responses that, combined together, provide a close match to IAST intended aims:

The purpose of the IAST is for services to work collaboratively, efficiently and effectively to bring about positive change for the family and community. (Answer #3)

To achieve coordinated case management of young people who are identified as being 'at risk' by bringing together relevant government agencies involved with those young people and their families and removing barriers to their safety; education, health and wellbeing, and positive engagement with the community. To reduce the potential for the 'revolving door syndrome' in relation to young offenders. (Answer #34)

IAST provide a forum in which participating agencies responsible for delivering services in a particular community can devise the most appropriate support strategies for referred children and young people in a coordinated, timely and effective manner. (Answer #40)

To plan interventions/strategies for young people at risk in the community. To assist and guide them away from the youth justice system, to engage in quality education, to prevent entering the child protection system, to reduce drug and alcohol use and anti-social behaviours in the community. (Answer #52)

Answers also revolved around the notion of 'support' to agencies already dealing with youths, or directly providing support to young people and families:

To support at risk and usually disassociated youth and their families and divert them from at risk behaviour or circumstances and improve their lives and their prospects for the future.

To support young offenders, or those at risk of harmful behaviour to successfully transition through their teens.

To support young offenders so they are less likely to re-offend and escalate the level of crime.

Amongst all responses, some ($n = 10$; 19% of responses provided) stated the purpose of IASTs as being one of direct action or support for young people and their families, or that of the promotion of education, health and wellbeing. Here are a few examples of statements asserting the 'direct' role of IAST on youths:

To work with the families to address areas of concern (e.g., truancy, etc).

To case manage high risk children and to assist the child on the right path. Also to assist their families.

Some discrepancies are also apparent in respondents' understanding of what IAST are meant to achieve. While some respondents indicated that the main outcome should be that of collaboration and/or information sharing ($n = 23$; 43% of responses provided), others thought that the scheme had main outcomes of service provision, case management and early intervention.

Views about collaboration

The topic of collaboration is a profoundly confusing theme for survey participants. Several survey questions related directly or indirectly to the issue of collaboration and to what the IAST is intended to achieve. First, the research team asked the respondents how they would define 'collaboration' in the context of the IAST. Responses to this question indicate that IAST stakeholders or meeting participants have vastly diverging understandings of 'collaboration', how it is meant to work and what it is intended to achieve.

Of all 56 responses received to this question, 21 respondents mentioned information sharing as the foremost intention of the IAST. There is more consensus though about the purpose of collaboration being 'working together' or 'working with others' ($n = 24$) on youth issues (with only 4 respondents responding 'working together' and 'information sharing'). The outcome of this joint work however shows significant discrepancies in what people think collaboration *is for*. For one respondent, the meetings in particular served as a way to identify which agencies and what skills were needed to address particular cases.

IAST allows identification of professionals with a vested interdependent interest, different expertise and information access to meet and constructively explore issues, creating a springboard for effective change.

Table 1 presents an exhaustive list of what respondents thought was the purpose of this collaboration.

Some respondents expressed some frustration as to the collaborative process, in the way that collaborative processes were not clear during meetings or made explicit in any form, and in the fact that information sharing should not be an outcome in itself (i.e., that more direct action should be undertaken by teams).

Collaboration = working together to assist young people...In the context of IAST, more a sharing of information with no real clear direction of how to work together.

Table 1 – Purpose of collaboration in the context of IAST

Purpose of collaboration in the context of IAST		
Working together to identify:	Working together to directly work with young people and their families and:	Working together to maintain transparency in that IAST meetings allow to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for future work with youth • Agency resources • Support for young people • Young people in need • Problem-solving pathways • Information regarding specific young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist young people • Support young people and their families • Facilitate decision-making and the implementation of decisions • Deter young people from the criminal justice system • Empower families • Plan family involvement • Plan for early intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain honest communication between agencies • Check up on processes, redundancies and gaps • ‘Touch base’ • Reach positive / best possible outcome • Support each other • Get ongoing feedback

Again, one of the critical points of good collaboration was stated as that of regular meeting attendance by agencies. Any absence, or absence of written feedback in the absence of an agency representative, was labelled a process failure by survey respondents. The proper chairing of meetings and a clear opening statement or reminder of what the collaborative process is meant to achieve was also expressed as a factor contributing to good agency cooperation.

Sometimes the same agencies are the ones contributing to the meetings. It is good to discuss the cases but action is most important. The meetings fail when key agencies continue to miss meetings.

The success of an IAST requires open and honest communication between agency representatives about the level of service that is being offered and is able to be offered. My experience has been that there is great collaboration between those who attend the meetings and that collaboration leads to the ability to provide better co-ordinated services.

Varies between IASTs - some function better than others and work well together to address the complex needs of the young people and their families. Others feel more like a waste of time as they have a "ticking the box" feel to them.

One respondent strongly felt that collaboration was failing, though.

Ineffective. There is no joined up response as agencies default essentially to Child Protection for the answer. Early intervention teams from police have been decimated. previously a wonderful collaborative resource.

In analysing further the expectations of survey respondents to the IAST scheme itself, much divergence of opinion also emerged, with views spanning a broad scope of possible achievements.

Table 2 provides an exhaustive list of these expectations.

Table 2 – Stakeholder expectations

Expectations of the IAST		
Outcome / solution focus:	Process focus:	Service access focus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide positive change for the families • Provide feedback to parents • Keep young people outside of criminal justice system and statutory agencies • Reduce re-offending • Achieve positive change • Obtaining a “commitment from possible partners to assist disassociated at risk youth from risky behaviour” • Clear case direction for each young person • Deliver effective actions for students • Reduce current and future harm of at risk children • Faster referrals and decision-making • Ability to follow up on designated actions • Rather than just share information, take the time to make a plan and follow through • Reliability in follow-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting down to the root cause of problems • Foster good collaborative relationships between agencies • Improve cross-agency communication • Identify strategies and interventions • Understanding of partner agency core-business • Better identification of young people who could benefit from IAST • Understanding young people and their history • Continued transparency across agencies • Better ability to deal with highly transient individual • Information sharing • Acceptance of difference between agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide family access to services, support and resources • Provide education and educational/professional support outlets for young people, engage participants in learning / workplace opportunities as dictated by age • Help families re-engage with society/school • Establishing a key agency/person for the young person to engage with • Identification of resources within the community for specific cases • Prompt actions from other agencies when they commit to a course of action

Chapter 4 – Discussion, Preliminary Recommendations and Future Research Steps

Discussion of findings and preliminary recommendations

Responses obtained to the TILES survey as well as interviews run with managerial staff have allowed the research team to think of some rather immediate ways to improve efficiencies and promote the good work of IASTs across the state. We discuss these findings and provide some cautious recommendations of relevance at this stage of the evaluation.

The current political and socio-economic climate in Tasmania paves the way for exciting changes as to how the needs of vulnerable people are being addressed by government and partner agencies. A new government in place, a review of government services and possible upcoming changes to funding for the health sector are all things that IAST stakeholders should consider. An existing insistence on the ‘rationalisation’ of services seems like a good time to promote the good work IASTs are doing to coordinate services and address complex issues in the community. Any positive and sustainable change affecting families and any effective networking towards service collaboration is likely be looked upon favourably by those looking at reshuffling services across the state. This evaluation and the parallel review of IASTs run by the DPEM therefore pave the way for constructive changes in service delivery, in highlighting and increasing efficiencies, and in the crystallisation of collaborative efforts across agencies.

The research team and staff at the OfC and DPEM are working jointly towards a better understanding of collaborative processes within the IAST. Whilst the DPEM review of IAST (which naturally follows the 2010-2011 preliminary assessment of the scheme; see DPEM, 2011) does not directly affect the TILES evaluation of the IAST+, there are significant cross-pollinating elements to consider. Teams constantly update each other on changes to core businesses and processes, workshops or professional development forums run for IASTs and of any possible issue of interest for each other. Issues of rationalisation and of possible shifts towards an early intervention framework, or a change in organisational hosting of IASTs have been documented, and to some extent, have already been considered by way of survey and preliminary conversations with IAST stakeholders in this research. More work will follow during the second part of Phase Two of the TILES evaluation, with conversations to be held with Chairs of IAST+ meetings, and by way of observation of meeting dynamics. The results already obtained for this first interim report allow us to cautiously bring to light some procedural and

evaluation issues, which essentially stem from the initial interviews run with IAST+ and IAST management teams.

An initial issue of concern for survey respondents was the participation of non-government agencies in IAST meetings. There indeed seems to be some confusion about the possible invitation of NGOs and external agencies to come and attend IAST meetings. It could be that the phrasing of IAST business rules leads to confusion, or that some stakeholders think that external agencies cannot be invited to proceedings due to privacy of information legislation. It was made clear to the research team though, that there was no current obstacle to some NGOs attending whole or parts of IAST meetings, as long as they were engaged with and of relevance to problem-solving. As a matter of fact, some NGOs already participate – albeit in an ad-hoc manner – in discussions in some sites. There is value in considering the formal invitation of any agency of relevance to problem-solving and to addressing families' needs, and to formalise their possible participation by way of a memo to all IAST stakeholders. The presence of relevant agencies could subsequently be discussed during an IAST meeting.

Another issue of immediate relevance to the IAST is that of the collaborative process itself, as well as its purpose. There seems to be a need for IAST stakeholders to be reminded of the aims and vision of IASTs, and to realign everyone's expectations about the scheme, in order to avoid possible agency disappointment in the work of the teams. Furthermore, there is no strong consensus amongst IAST participants as to what collaboration means, and what it is meant to achieve. This lack of strong consensus was observed in the various ways in which the issue was defined in the survey, and in which outcomes of collaboration were described. We would advise that a specific (and simplified) definition of 'collaboration' and a clear articulation of its purpose be given to stakeholders, and regularly reiterated to stakeholders as a way to 'realign' expectations about the scheme. Meeting chairs could do this as a way to open monthly IAST meetings. This would also familiarise newcomers (such as agency representatives attending a meeting for the first time) with IAST processes and aims.

Survey respondents' expectations about the scheme reflect a persistent way of thinking about service delivery in a siloed way. A siloed approach which views participation in the scheme as sometimes inconvenient, is an obstacle to good collaboration, and a convenient way to shift potential blame to other member agencies. Possible solutions to the sometimes harmful silo culture that still permeates people's perception of the scheme would be hard to find, especially since these perceptions are driven by agencies' core businesses and current funding schemes. However, there are ways to limit the insidious consequences of siloed cultures. For example, one workshop that was run in 2013 brought together all agencies and stakeholders. It was well attended and well received by workshop

participants. A second workshop for all stakeholders could be a good way to promote a collegial and collaborative atmosphere amongst IAST participants. A possible topic of discussion and brainstorming could be that of collaborative work and silos, discussed by a panel of prominent speakers and inviting audience members into the discussion. The research team would be happy to participate in the organisation and preparation of such a workshop.

There were a number of questions relating to the IAST potential shift towards an early intervention framework. The analysis of responses to these questions and to answers conveyed during interviews highlights a discrepancy in how 'early intervention' is understood by stakeholders. Depending on their core businesses (health, community health, social services, police, education, and justice), stakeholders seemed to understand 'early intervention' from the point of view of 'crime prevention' (early intervention as primary, secondary or tertiary crime prevention) or as 'age related'. These are two very different conceptualisations that need to be made clear in the lead up to considering a shift in scheme premise. Early intervention as crime prevention is well documented in literature, and while there is an element of age in this (as it mostly applies to young people until 18), early intervention usually implies working with people before their behaviour escalates towards more entrenched forms of offending. Early intervention as 'age related', on the other hand, seemed to be understood by research participants as the involvement of agencies with young people until they become of school age, and at the very least until they enter their teenage years, but not beyond. There are therefore significant differences between these two understandings of what a shift towards an early intervention framework would encompass, and we strongly suggest that some clarification is made on this topic before any further work is done.

Future research step: literature review

This evaluation is now almost half-way into Phase Two (see Appendix A). The research team will now embark on an exhaustive literature review broaching the issues of government collaboration, collaboration evaluation and design of measurable components, service networks and collaborative services in youth and family issues, and the place of NGOs in collaborative problem-solving. This literature review will locate the work of the research team in the extant literature and will pave the way for the design of KPIs for IASTs generally. It will also prepare the final deliverables and outcomes for this research (see Appendix B). The literature review will be disseminated around mid- to late August 2014.

Future research step: changes to self-assessment form

From a procedural point of view, there will be three changes made to the ongoing 'self-assessment surveys' run at the end of each monthly IAST+ meetings. Some topics have now reached saturation (repetition of responses to the same question) and participant fatigue (participants are not responding anymore). It is therefore time to adjust these questions to address issues that are more pressing to participants or tap into other, more complex aspects of their IAST experience.

One IAST+ meeting has already been observed in one of the pilot sites. The regional sites still need to be visited and observed by the researchers, who are working on timing with the management team. Meeting chairs will also be interviewed to capture their views about the scheme and about the collaborative process generally.

Future research step: Development and validation of an inter-agency meeting analysis framework and measurement tool

Framework Overview

Information sharing presents in a number of forms. Inter-agency partnerships are now a prominent framework used as a means to try and reduce adverse events for at risk children and young people. Partnership approaches are based upon the view that no single agency alone can be responsible for the complexity of managing community safety and reducing crime. Whilst it is important for agencies to remain within professional boundaries and areas of responsibilities, it has been argued that being aware of the various expertise of other agencies provides for fruitful cross-pollination of resources and ideas (Bartkowiak-Théron, 2011). Understanding the key elements of how inter-agency partnerships can be more effective is a vital step in reducing risk for children and young people.

Inter-agency collaboration is defined as "...a high intensity relationship between two or more parties that results in the production of something joined and new" (McDonald & Rosier, 2011, 1). McDonald and Rosier continue to state that although the terms are often used interchangeably, cooperation between agencies is not collaboration. Collaboration involves interdependence among agencies and a higher level of commitment to information sharing. Despite the higher involvement between agencies in collaborated responses to a given issue, collaboration does not mean integration where professional boundaries are blurred or where practitioners' objectivity and independence are undermined (Moore & Skinner, 2010). Most agencies across Australia who work with children are increasingly expected to work collaboratively. Collaboration can be successful and rewarding, although

dues to the intensive nature and challenge of adding more tasks to the working day these increased demands on already 'busy' personnel can lead to collaboration fatigue (Price-Robertson, 2012).

Key elements of successful inter-agency collaborations

Recent reviews of inter-agency partnerships from Australasia, the UK and the US in family violence initiatives (Mulroney, 2003), in parole and community justice initiatives (Jannetta & Lachman, 2011), and evidence from Child Death Reviews in the UK (Sidebotham, 2012) and Australia (Winkworth & White, 2011) have noted the elements needed for partnerships to success. Collectively, when these reviews were analysed by us five key elements emerged. These are:

1. A joint known purpose for the group (all members of the group are committed, know the purpose of the group and have clearly defined roles/responsibilities);
2. Motivation of group leaders (a clearly defined, well-trained group leader);
3. Organisational support (staff have the resources to fulfil their roles/responsibilities);
4. Value to the organisation (firm commitment from the organisation, especially senior managers, to ongoing partnerships and to implementing any changes, as evidenced by signed MOUs); and
5. Clear dissemination of information and decisions made in the groups.

Development of an inter-agency meeting analysis tool for use in the IAST+ evaluation

In order to assess the success of the current inter-agency meetings of the IAST+ groups in three locations (Devonport, Launceston and Glenorchy) it was decided that a meeting analysis tool would be developed. The tool will take the form of an observation checklist for completion by meeting observer/analysts. It will be underpinned by current empirical knowledge and theory in effective group process (Baron & Kerr, 2011), effective teamwork patterns (West, 2012), social-psychological processes and organisational sociology (Schneider, Gruman, & Coutts, 2012) and organisational management (Mullins, 2013).

Elements of the Inter-agency Meeting Analysis Tool (IA-MAT) will include:

- Dynamics of meeting facilitation led by the team leader or chair;
- Age/gender/occupation/responsivity of meeting participants;
- Deep or surface structure of the meeting discussions;
- Future or past focus of the material discussed;
- Characteristics of group decision-making;
- Mapping the direction of dialogue;
- Levels of participation and group-think;
- Meeting management qualities; and
- Analysis of the five key elements of successful inter-agency collaborations presented above

This tool will be developed and trialled from July to October 2014

Future research step: ongoing interactive evaluation

The research team will continue to collaborate with IAST+ and IAST management teams to establish what documentation is needed to effectively gauge the scheme as to both its collaborative processes and its impact on families and young people. The IAST management has already initiated conversations with stakeholders as to how some IAST data could be sent to the research team for a final desktop evaluation of outcomes.

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APPENDIX A – Research Timeline

Action Items	Timeframe	Project Phases	By	Completed
Planning and scoping of evaluation	July/August 2013	Phase 1	TILES	√
Consideration of methodology and evaluation tools	August 2013	Phase 1	TILES	√
Project team Interviews	August 2013	Phase 1	TILES	√
Preparation of surveys	August 2013	Phase 1	TILES / OfC	√
Formatting of all surveys	September 2013	Phase 1	TILES	√
Administration of background survey of 20 IAST sites	Early September 2013	Phase 1	TILES / OfC	√
Administration of background survey of 3 IAST+ trial sites	Early September 2013	Phase 1	TILES / OfC	√
Design of day-to-day tracking tools	Mid-September 2013	Phase 1	TILES / OfC	√
Release and administration of day-to-day tracking tools	From October 1 st 2013	Phase 2	OfC	√
Release and administration of Client exit survey		Phase 2	TILES / OfC	N/A
Ad-hoc visit of IAST+ trial sites		Phase 2	TILES	Ongoing
Design of meeting observation		Phase 2	TILES	√

tool			(SK)	
Ongoing collection of data	From October 2013, every 3 months	Phase 2	OfC	Ongoing
Release of data to TILES for Analysis		Phase 2	OfC	Ongoing
Desktop Analysis of data, three-monthly reports		Phase 2	TILES	Verbal report 1 ✓ Verbal report 2 ✓ Interim report 1 ✓ and ongoing
Desktop Analysis of all data; preparation and delivery of final report	From late September 2015	Phase 3	TILES / OfC	TBA
Quality control and information checks of surveys	Ongoing	Phases 1, 2 & 3	TILES	Ongoing

Appendix B – Research outcomes and deliverables

OUTCOMES	SUB-AIMS	DELIVERABLES
1. Mapping of how agencies work together and how they can work together better	Mapping of chair facilitation skills (what makes a good Chair?)	Series of recommendations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting facilitation • Meeting chairing • Information sharing • Follow up on information • Process ‘invisibility’ • Needs identification and assessment • Outcome identification • Exit / retirement process for children and their families • Impact identification AND documentation • Stakeholder expectation • Project purpose(s)
	IAST+ meeting dynamics (how are meetings run, and could they be better run?)	
	Overall collaboration and responsibility allocation	
	Identification of information sharing pathways (+ what is done with this information)	
2. Impact study: how have IAST+ changed kids’ lives?	Acquiring an indication / establishing qualitative indicators of behavioural changes (for example)	Series of recommendations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current impact measures • Possible impact measures (identification of possible qualitative and/or quantitative KPIs) • ‘Hard’ and ‘soft’ measure of impact
3. Overall IAST+ SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis		Trends analysis, with extractions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration gaps • Collaboration strengths • Possible process warning • Economic argument (how many hours are saved, through agencies meeting via the IAST model)
4. The effect 1, 2 and 3 (above) have on service delivery		