Assessing Progress in the Roof over our Heads Venture

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Progress Report

Assessing Progress in the *Roof over our Heads* Venture

*Southern Cross University*

Prepared for the Head of School, SASS

Professor Mike Evans

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Prepared by Louise Horstmanshof (Project officer) and Angela Coco (Coordinator) and the *Roof over our Heads* Researchers; Rebecca Coyle, Yvonne Hartman, Sandy Darab, Grayson Cooke, Moya Costello and Janie Conway-Herron.
Executive Summary

This report furnishes a progress evaluation of the cross-disciplinary Roof over our Heads venture initiated in the School of Arts and Social Sciences (SASS) in 2010. The venture was suggested by Assoc. Prof. Rebecca Coyle as a means of building upon Social Science research being undertaken in the School by Doctors Sandy Darab and Yvonne Hartman. Researchers from the Media Program, Dr Grayson Cooke and Assoc. Prof. Coyle, and Arts, Doctors Moya Costello and Janie Conway-Herron put forth project proposals which were incrementally developed throughout 2011.

Roof over our Heads (henceforward Roof) aimed to develop research to address issues relating to ideas of ‘home’ and issues of ‘homelessness’ by incorporating basic, practice-led and community-engaged research approaches which also involved students and integrated with SASS curricula. Dr Angela Coco coordinated the process but was not a researcher in the area herself. This first time experiment with such a wide-ranging, ambitious cross-disciplinary initiative in SASS came with its challenges. Most notably these were issues quite familiar in the cross-disciplinary literature: understanding the philosophies, methods and assumptions of disciplines other than one’s own; working out what it feels like to ‘work together’, difficulties in facilitating and learning boundary spanning communications.

Findings reveal that participants possessed different concepts regarding the model of cross-disciplinary research that was envisioned. This affected expectations about just how and what level of sharing between disciplines was appropriate and their perception of the need for meetings. In spite of this, researchers felt that coordination of the different projects was effective in keeping up momentum, understanding the ‘logic’ of what needed to be done, and helping people see how they could design a project to fit under the Roof umbrella and articulate in some way with other disciplines. Participants expressed overall enthusiasm for the venture and a willingness to continue to engage with it. Roof is still developing as individuals and the school face disciplinary, capacity and structural barriers to cross-disciplinary research.

In view of the increasing emphasis on cross-disciplinary and cross-sector research, SASS should build on the success of this venture and not lose the momentum. This evaluation therefore recommends that:

a. a coordinator with cross-disciplinary experience and leadership abilities be appointed to ensure the ongoingness of the venture
b. as a matter of urgency, SASS convene a workshop to clarify expectations and decide whether participants wish to pursue a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approach. This would also mean identifying and committing to the necessary meetings and dialogues the chosen approach would involve.
c. a professional symposium/workshop be conducted, perhaps as part of the SASS guest symposium series, into ‘Ethics: differences in disciplinary uses, requirements and understandings and consequences of using sensitive information’. Any publication from such a symposium also would be a good contribution to the cross-disciplinarity literature.
d. the coordinator facilitate a structured process, perhaps ‘speedstorming’ to help researchers further identify points at which they can most effectively share knowledge and expertise.
e. seed funding be continued until capacity is built for successful grant applications.
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Southern Cross University

Introduction
This document reports on the progress of the Roof over our Heads initiative, a cross-disciplinary research and community engagement venture in The School of Arts and Social Sciences (SASS) at Southern Cross University (SCU). The purpose of this report is to advise on the development of partnerships and to assess the extent to which all participants’ goals are being met. Importantly, we were keen to gauge the development and learning provided by this initiative and gain insight into the participants’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the coordination processes adopted to keep the different elements of the venture on track.

Professor Mike Evans enabled this progress assessment by providing a small but valuable amount of funding to employ a project researcher. Dr Angela Coco with researcher Dr Louise Horstmanhof applied for and were granted ethics approval from the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee (ECN-12-007) for this research.

Background
Roof over our Heads was initiated in the School of Arts and Social Sciences in 2010. The idea and title for Roof over our Heads was put forward by Rebecca Coyle, in July and Angela Coco agreed to coordinate activities. The suggestion was for researchers in different programs to develop research projects that would address issues related to homelessness. Coordination began with face-to-face discussion with coordinators of each SASS program; Social Sciences, Media, Arts/Cultural Studies, Music and Visual Arts, to gauge interest and ideas for possible research projects. Meetings were held in which researchers put canvassed their ideas for projects and possible collaborations and sharing of skills sets suggested. Social scientists, who were already researching in the area presented their research and findings from their literature reviews from which other programs could build ideas.

Four programs, Social Sciences, Media, Creative Writing and Arts put forward and pursued related projects which collectively addressed ideas about ‘home’ and issues related to ‘homelessness’. Overall, the venture included basic research, creative outputs, student centred learning and research, and community consultation and collaboration. The four projects are described briefly below.

‘Single, older women and housing in the Northern Rivers of NSW’ by Sandy Darab and Yvonne Hartman aims to contribute to an evidence base that will assist in the prevention of chronic homelessness of the target group by; gaining an understanding of the target group’s housing histories, identifying the interaction between the target group’s housing histories and other factors such as relationships, income, health and subjective experience, and contributing to the relevant policy development process by adding to the body of available knowledge.

The second proposal was ‘The HOME project’ a collaboration between Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA) and Media Studies with Grayson Cooke, Rebecca Coyle and Media students. This project involved students and community representatives in the creation and conduct of practice-based research. The Project aimed to raise awareness of issues around homelessness through a
range of creative explorations and stories that can inform services and assistance for individuals affected by homelessness in the Northern Rivers – as well as other regional areas. Members of the public were invited to visit a ‘film set’ in a shop-front in downtown Lismore, and tell their stories. They were asked to reflect on the notion of ‘home’ and ‘my address’, either in verbal form, or through physical interaction with objects provided on set. These reflections were filmed and edited, and, with permissions, exhibited at the SCU Gallery in November 2011. This activity was the first stage of the three-year HOME Project planned as a creative research partnership between NORPA and SASS. At the presentation researchers sought expressions of interest from attendees who would like to play a further role in the HOME Project as a member of our Reference and Support Group.

‘Students writing home’ was the name for the Creative Writing programme’s initiative led by Moya Costello and Janie Conway-Herron. Their aim is to engage students in writing on the theme of homelessness in the writing practice units in the Creative Writing program. Progressively over 2 years they will gather suitable student works for the production of a themed anthology by 20012/2013. This Project incorporates teaching elements to develop professional writing, editing and publishing skills as well as skills of reflection and critical thinking with students.

Finally, Janie Conway-Herron’s project entitled, ‘Writing and Advocacy: Enabling voice’ is scheduled to begin at the end of 2012 as participants become available through connections with the Hartman and Darab project. The aim is to run a series of workshops designed to help a group of women at risk of becoming homeless to tell/write stories about their experiences. It is expected that this will facilitate collective sharing of experiences to realise they are not alone and to develop stories to a publishable standard in order to publish in an anthology.

However, once projects were identified around the end of 2010, except for the HOME project, further progress was slow. In May 2011, a meeting was held to determine needs to progress the identified research projects. Funds were made available according to need and served to accelerate research activity. It was decided to run events for National Homeless Persons Week (NHPW), 1-7 August. Two events were planned; i) the student-centred community engaged work on the HOME project described above, and ii) a Women and Housing community forum. A launch presaging the events for NHPW was held on 19 June. Both events were advertised widely and highly successful in attracting a large and diverse representation of the populace and service providers and reported in several places in the media.

**Cross-Disciplinary and Cross-Sector Partnerships**

Increasingly, governments worldwide are promoting cross-disciplinary and cross-sector partnerships as they are seen as being able to produce more effective ways of addressing complex social problems like homelessness (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). Cross-disciplinary approaches are variously referred to as, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary depending on the ways in which the collaboration is conducted. Jacob identifies the taxonomy provided by Rosenfield as the most widely accepted guide (Jacob, 2008). Multidisciplinarity refers to arrangements in which researchers work independently and in parallel on the same problem but from their different disciplinary perspectives. When researchers adopt an interdisciplinary approach they still work independently on a common problem but use their particular disciplinary skills to develop new knowledge and report their work in a discipline by discipline order. Transdisciplinarity involves a closer collaboration to achieve conceptual frameworks that are shared that draw together different disciplinary theories, concepts and methods (Rosenfield, 1992, p. 1351).

Regardless of approach, cross-disciplinary work runs up against communicative and structural barriers (Patford, 2012). These are compounded when academic disciplines aim to work together as well as engage with community groups and involve student learning. Structural barriers include
differences in status and control, university requirements relating to ethical clearances and formalised agreements where community groups work as collaborators. Culturally, participants bring with them different norms, values and traditions related to their area of expertise, whether as a practitioner, academic or academic practitioner. A lack of knowledge and ‘self-serving stereotypes’ of other disciplines also tend to inhibit productive communications (Patford, 2012, p. 76). Understanding these differences and overcoming the communicative difficulties they present have been the focus of other research.

A prominent requirement for a collaboration to be successful is that a sufficient amount of time be allocated prior to the development of the cross-disciplinary endeavour to establish ‘seams of complementarity’ (Jeffrey, 2003, p. 557). The concept refers to a notion that participants need to identify points of synergy regarding skills, theoretical perspectives, substantive foci and methods through which they can envision a shared project. While social networking and brainstorming have been the traditional ways such synergies are believed to develop, Joyce, Jennings, Hey, Gross, and Kallil (2010) advocate a more structured and deliberative approach which they call ‘speedstorming’. In a manner reflecting the popular ‘speed-dating’ technique, participants are brought together face-to-face and in a series of short (3-5 minute) pairwise interactions to discuss ideas and record them around a particular topic. Such a process also allows personality types to be discovered as some are less inclined to use group dialogue as part of their research activities.

Werner, Voce, Openshaw and Simons (2002) dismiss the personality type issue in saying that people need individual accomplishment but this is also facilitated by group participation and support, even if ‘rugged individualists’ deny the latter. However, success depends as much on the personalities involved as on a shared vocabulary (Jeffrey, 2003). We suggest that in practice, personality differences should be taken into account in deciding which approach, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary is most likely to work best. This decision needs to be agreed upon very early, most appropriately as the ‘seams of complementarity’ and potential partners and projects are being discussed. A key object of early preparatory discussions and the most important factor in the success of partnerships is the development of trust, particularly between researchers and community groups (Ferman & Hill, 2004) but also amongst researchers who are often competing for the same scant resources and facing the structural issues described above.

The different approaches to cross-disciplinary collaborations involve different levels of and commitment to communication and dialogue. Key to the success of the early communications lies in the development of a shared understanding of the collaboration. This is best achieved in face-to-face meetings facilitated by an experienced leader. Committed and motivated leaders are also essential to the ongoing momentum and successful outcome of collaboration (Hastad & Tymeson, 1997, p. 49). In transdisciplinary ventures particularly, leaders who are experienced in cross-disciplinary collaboration can offer ‘continuity of experience’, rather than necessarily continuity of knowledge. Continuity of experience is a latent potential of individuals ‘in a form that defies transfer’ which contributes to the success of boundary spanning communications (Jeffrey, 2003, p. 559).

Rationale and Methodology

Cross-disciplinary and community engaged partnerships are relatively recent and much is yet to be learned regarding the ways people communicate across their different disciplinary and sectoral boundaries. It is therefore necessary to monitor the development of a partnership and assess the extent to which all participants’ goals are being met. To gather information on the above, researchers and other members of SASS were invited to participate in focus groups or to undertake individual interviews. Interviewees provided insights into their own processes and milestones and into the processes and milestones of the venture as a whole. In all, five focus groups of 2 people.

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each and 3 individual interviews were conducted. The Roof coordinator compiled a reflective diary of the process and her observations also contribute to the analysis in this report.

The aims of the progress assessment were to:

a. Evaluate the progress thus far by gathering the perceptions from the participants
b. Assess the extent to which participants’ goals are being met
c. Identify the issues of cross-disciplinary and community engaged partnerships in respect of this project
d. Gather insights for future cross-disciplinary collaborations

Participants were informed that the purpose of the focus group or interview was to assess the progress made thus far and to learn from the collective wisdom of participants. Information Sheets were provided via email and Consent Forms were signed at the times of interviews (Copies in Appendix A). A list of prompt questions was compiled to elicit responses for the above aims, for example: What has this meant for you? How do you view your involvement in this venture? What has stretched you? In which ways? How was the Roof venture organized? How did that work? (The list of prompt questions can be found in Appendix B). Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts, feelings, and responses to the venture.

All focus groups and interviews were conducted by Dr Louise Horstmanshof and were recorded with the permission of the participants. Interviews were conducted at venues convenient to the participants, both on the SCU Lismore campus and at NORPA. Transcript notes from all focus groups and interviews were circulated to participants for their feedback and approval. In addition, two emails were received in response to the invitation to respond from sections of SASS that had been unable to conduct research projects in this stage of the Venture. All participation was voluntary and all were able to withdraw from this assessment at any stage.

Findings

Overall, participants felt that to date, working under the umbrella Roof over our Heads has been a worthwhile experience. They noted the beginnings of a shared discourse around research in the School of Arts and Social Sciences. Those projects that involved students indicated that they were able to mobilise significant and relevant learning experiences that were aligned with existing curricula and provided work-related learning. For instance, Media students wrote media releases for the NHPW launch and events. From community members’ perspectives, the Roof venture provided a means of engaging meaningfully with the University and its teaching activities. The main ideas that emerged from participants’ interviews revolved around four of the interview questions: what the venture meant to them; what they found most memorable; the things that stretched or challenged them the most; and their perceptions of the coordination of projects.

The Meaning of the Roof over our Heads venture

For most participants there was a general sense that this was a positive venture with opportunities and benefits for SASS; it was a ‘parsimonious initiative with positive results for the researchers and for the school more generally’. It helped to get ‘people working together across disciplines, developing a sense of a research culture’. For others, it meant ‘a long term project with a broad national benefit’ with people from different discipline areas working together. There appears to be a difference in perceptions between those researchers who experienced the collaboration as a capacity building exercise and those who were focussed on developing a national strategy.

What was memorable

The most memorable and enduring feature for participants is an overall feeling of generosity of spirit and engagement with the central issue ‘homelessness’. Key to this perception was that ‘our new
Head of School was immediately generous in giving finance. I was astounded and grateful'. This funding made the staging of events for National Homeless Persons Week possible and it was through those events that people could witness the outcomes of collaboration. There was evidence of community awareness raising and advocacy: ‘the media presentation – I just thought it was such a wonderful sensitive insightful way of validating and affirming, anybody was just welcome to come and talk'; cross-disciplinary collaboration, ‘the women’s housing forum in Lismore – we had a student from creative writing who read a poem and another who read at the launch. And that’s fabulous’, and; engaging all sectors in intellectual debate, ‘the forum. I was impressed that the room was full of women who were actively engaged with the urgency and importance of the issue’. Though small steps, such memories have provided a fertile ground and perhaps some openness to developing further connections and more ambitious collaborations across SASS disciplines.

Stretches and Challenges
Reflecting observations in the wide array of cross-disciplinary literature, there was overall sense of the challenges of working across disciplines where there are different philosophies and practices. One person, alluding to the fact that the topic of ‘homelessness’ involves vulnerable groups, observed, ‘every group has a particular way of working and this project is particularly sensitive’. Participants revealed that they were not certain of what it should feel like to work together and how to fit working on Roof projects with other day to day issues and duties; it meant, ‘weighing up of academic freedom and independence with the need to meet and work together’. Another reflected, ‘it was uncertain and took a long time for the civic project to emerge … it felt a bit muddy for us. I don’t really know what it means to have a whole of school project, because it didn’t feel like the whole of school was involved’. Collaborating with other disciplines seems to have been a new experience for many participants and the comments here also support the idea that there were perhaps different ideas of what cross-disciplinary collaboration should involve.

Organisation
Most references to organisation focussed on activities of the venture coordinator. The coordinator was seen to have held the venture together by organising meetings, maintaining enthusiasm and understanding how to progress events, ‘she really pursued it and organised the meetings and brought us together. She kept the momentum going. ... She was like the glue, keeping it together’. ‘She saw the logic of what you have to do and when’. This was facilitated in ways that were believed to help people work out how they could be part of the initiative as well as manage their other day-to-day tasks: ‘she came and sat down and spoke to us and I actually saw how we could work within the framework’; and, ‘persistence in that organised way and the patience as well. So you could see how it could be done, you could play a part without having to detract from the other things you are doing’. It would seem in the initial stages of the Roof venture that the coordinator performed one-on-one connecting activities that other research indicates might have been managed in more deliberative and structured ways. However, in knowing the ‘logic of what you have to do and when’ and ‘maintaining momentum’, the coordinator demonstrated important skills and experience reported in the literature as necessary to a successful cross-collaboration.

Discussion and evaluation of Progress
In this section we discuss Progress in terms of the main objectives of this evaluation. Information from other questions in the interviews is used and the state of progress of the Roof over our Heads venture is discussed. Threads from the ‘Findings’ section will be incorporated as well as insights from the cross-disciplinary literature.
a. Evaluate the progress thus far by gathering the perceptions from the participants

While some researchers in the Social Sciences were some way down the track with their project having collected data and transcribing interviews, one other researcher was still contemplating involvement and considering the scope of the theme, ‘homelessness’, as it did not fall directly into their area of research in the strictest sense. For the researchers from Creative Writing, although they were satisfied by the opportunities the venture had provided for two students, they were yet to start their research involvement in the project. The Media Project provided outstanding learning and real world experiences for the students who were enrolled in the Media Project unit as it was linked into the collaboration with NORPA.

b. Assess the extent to which participants goals are being met

To the degree that participants we hoping for research grants, their goals have not been met. However, the Social Science and Media researchers are mostly likely to generate a publication from their work at this stage. Both Creative Writing and Media are disappointed that they were not able to have access to the data and/or participants from the Social Science research due to the vulnerability of the group, the sensitivity of the situation and the ethics requirements. From a whole of initiative point of view, it would help to plan collaborations early, identify ethical issues and find ways of clarifying them and coordinating ethical clearance efforts to avoid duplication of effort.

It is early to assess the achievement of some goals, particularly as it is just over one year since the beginning of supported engagement with the topic. Researchers need to establish a track record in the area of ‘homelessness’ prior to attempting to apply for grants. Further, for developing researchers there are few established academics at SCU who could partner on grant applications in the area of ‘homelessness’. Publications are planned, and underway for researchers in Social Science and Media. For example, Associate Professor Rebecca Coyle and Dr Grayson Cooke have an article under review with Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement.

Learning to work together is a key communicative task for cross-disciplinary collaborations (Pennington, 2008). However, the idea for Roof over our Heads was not collectively generated and initiating the idea meant firstly ‘selling’ it to representatives of each SASS program. All were open to the idea, but only 3 programs ultimately participated. Thus, the coordinator understood the early part of the initiative as a developmental and capacity building stage. It was a means of encouraging people to find synergies with other disciplines and gain some sense of what it might mean to work together in a cross-disciplinary way. This goal has been met.

c. Identify the issues of cross-disciplinary and community engaged partnerships in respect of this project

Most of the researchers, while supportive of the notion of cross-disciplinary and community engaged partnerships, did not feel that they were involved in a truly whole of school and community project. It was ‘many little projects brought together by a theme’, rather than an integrated project. This indicates that the nature of the venture was one of multidisciplinarity, while many would appear to have liked a transdisciplinary approach. Each of the 3 models of cross-disciplinarity involves a different level and intensity of and commitment to dialogue. Participants had different ideas about the value of meetings between various projects, for instance those who found requests to attend venture meetings ‘annoying’ likely will not be keen on a transdisciplinarity. It is timely that Roof participants discuss and agree on the cross-disciplinary approach they wish to pursue.

It is perhaps not feasible or even desirable that the ‘whole of school’ be involved as researchers, though those not participating could be expected to be the supporters and cheerleaders for those actively involved. Though Visual Arts and Contemporary Music have not participated to date, those programs did offer excellent ideas at the first consultative stage, and the venture was always, and is still open to them and others coming on board with new projects.
d. **Gather insights for future cross-disciplinary collaborations**

This initiative began in 2010 when there existed very clear disciplinary, spatial and communicative boundaries between the five disciplinary programs in SASS. Indications are that the school has moved some way in cross-disciplinary communications. However as yet, not all researchers are at the stage of developing successful cross-disciplinary research collaborations nor is the school at a point structurally where there is the capacity to develop the kind of transdisciplinary project that many may desire. For some programs, there was insufficient lead in time to complete or re-arrange other teaching and research responsibilities to plan and accommodate a new research/teaching/community engagement project while those who did participate still had to manage these issues. Time is important in a variety of ways.

The kinds of projects that researchers in different disciplines might design march to different rhythms. For instance, Creative Writing began their project in 2011 but due to the fact that it involves gathering quality student writings for an anthology, it will take 2 years for the research to produce the planned outcome. But in the meantime, small outputs like the poems that opened the Women and Housing Forum, provided moments for cross-disciplinary engagement. Such moments cannot be identified without ongoing comings-together between different projects. Planning an event for National Homeless Persons Week provided a means for what were essentially separate projects to present a united SASS presence in engagement with the community as well as market the School’s capabilities.

Significant sticking points in attempts to mesh ‘seams of complementarity’ were varying perceptions about intellectual property and related ethical issues. These varied from concerns about appropriation and exploitation to disappointment that others would not ‘share’ their knowledge and expertise. From another point of view, existing expertise was not recognised or welcomed. In regard to differences in dealing with ethics, the cross-disciplinary model designed by Aagaard-Hansen, Johansen & Riis (2004) may prove useful.

There appears to be sufficient good will and energy to build on this first foray into a SASS, cross-disciplinary and community engaged collaboration. Relatively small amounts of money provided at appropriate moments has had an enabling effect and helped foster good will. Through little learnings and developing awareness, SASS has laid foundations for building upon the first stage of the *Roof over our Heads* initiative and perhaps for embarking on new cross-disciplinary projects in the future.

**Recommendations**

*Roof over our Head* is a first sortie into the development of a cross-disciplinary collaborative research culture in the School of Arts and Social Sciences (and the university). In view of the increasing emphasis on cross-disciplinary and cross-sector research, SASS should build on the success of this venture and not to lose the momentum. This evaluation recommends that:

a. a coordinator with cross-disciplinary experience and leadership abilities be appointed to ensure the ongoingness of the venture

b. as a matter of urgency, SASS convene a workshop to clarify expectations and decide whether participants wish to pursue a *multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary* approach. This would also mean identifying and committing to the necessary meetings and dialogues the chosen approach would involve.

c. a professional symposium/workshop be conducted, perhaps as part of the SASS guest symposium series, into ‘Ethics: differences in disciplinary uses, requirements and understandings and consequences of using sensitive information’. Any publication from such a symposium would be a good contribution to the cross-disciplinarity literature.
d. the coordinator facilitate a structured process, perhaps ‘speedstorming’ to help researchers further identify points at which they can most effectively share knowledge, and expertise.

e. seed funding be continued until capacity is built for successful grant applications.
References


Assessing progress in the Roof over our Heads venture.

Increasingly, governments worldwide are promoting cross-disciplinary and cross-sector partnerships as they are seen as being able to produce more effective ways of addressing complex social problems like homelessness. Southern Cross University supports this agenda, most recently focusing on community engaged research. In line with this goal, The School of Arts and Social Sciences initiated the cross-disciplinary Roof over our Heads venture at the end of 2010 and has engaged NORPA as a partner in the process in 2011.

Cross-disciplinary and community engaged partnerships are relatively recent and much is yet to be learned regarding the ways people communicate across their different disciplinary and sectoral boundaries. It is therefore necessary to monitor the development of a partnership and assess the extent to which all participants’ goals are being met.

We invite you to participate in a focus group interview of about 40 minutes duration. You will be asked to reflect on development and learning in the Roof over our Heads venture and comment on the effectiveness of coordination processes so far. The information will be valuable for informing the next stages of Roof as well as for identifying strengths for future cross-disciplinary collaborations between SASS and the broader community.

The focus groups will be identified by Research Project:

- Focus group 1: Sandy Darab and Yvonne Hartman
- Focus group 2: Rebecca Coyle, Grayson Cooke, Delia O’Hara, Julian Louis and/or HOME project coordinator from NORPA
- Focus group 3: Moya Costello and Janie Conway-Herron
- Focus group 4: Volunteers from outside the project

You also have the option to undertake an individual interview.

It is not anticipated that you will encounter any risks beyond those of your normal day-to-day work life. However, you should be aware that while names and identifying information will not be included in any recording of data, you may be able to be identified through the information you provide due to your participation in the Project being assessed and/or your membership of SASS.

If you agree to talk with us we would like to record the interview with your consent. All participants will receive copies of notes from interviews for their comment and/or correction.

A Report of the assessment listing all the Roof over our Heads participants as authors will be prepared and circulated to interviewees prior to finalisation. The Report will be tabled at SASS
School Board in May 2012. Angela Coco and Louise Horstmanshof, the researchers conducting this evaluation, intend to use the information you provide for producing publications regarding leadership and developmental issues in cross-disciplinary research. Data from the assessment will be stored in NVivo on the SCU NVivo Server and available for all researchers in the Roof venture who may then use it for their own publications.

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The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Approval Number is ECN-12-007.

Complaints about the ethical conduct of this research should be addressed in writing to the following:

Ethics Complaints Officer
HREC
Southern Cross University
PO Box 157
Lismore, NSW, 2480
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au

All complaints are investigated fully and according to due process under the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and this University. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and you will be informed of the outcome.
CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: Assessing progress in the Roof over our Heads venture

I agree to take part in the Southern Cross University research project specified above. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand the information provided about the purpose, methods, demands, risks, inconveniences and possible outcomes of this research. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary. Yes ☐ No ☐

I can choose not to participate in part or all of this research at any time, without consequence. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that, as I am part of a collaborative project others may be able to identify me through the information I provide. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that neither my name nor any identifying information will be disclosed or published. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that all information gathered in this research is confidential beyond the members of the Roof over our Heads venture.

It is kept securely and confidentially for 7 years at Southern Cross University. Yes ☐ No ☐

I give permission for the de-identified information provided by me to be used in publications by any members of the Roof over our Heads venture as listed on the project Information Sheet. Yes ☐ No ☐

I am aware that I can contact the Supervisor or other researchers at any time with any questions. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that the ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee. (ECN-12-007) Yes ☐ No ☐

If I have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research, I understand that I can contact the SCU Ethics Complaints Officer. All inquiries are confidential and should be in writing, in the first instance, to the following:

   Ethics Complaints Office
   Southern Cross University
   PO Box 157
   Lismore  NSW  2480
   Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au
Thank you for your attendance and participation here today. You have been invited to participate in this focus group because of your participation in a community based venture known as the Roof Over Our Heads. We are interested in your thoughts, feelings and responses to this project. The purpose of the focus group is to assess the progress made thus far and to learn from the collective wisdom.

What has this meant for you? How do you view your involvement in this venture?

What was most memorable about it? What were the standout moments?

What has stretched you? In which ways?

Looking at then and now, what about this process has affected you most? In which ways?

How was the Roof venture organized? How did that work?

What are the implications of this venture?

What are the lessons to be learnt? For you? More broadly?

Anything else you think is important to add?