

**Walk With Evaluation Report**

2018

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## Background

Gateway Family Services commissioned this evaluation study as part of a NSW Office of Emergency Management Community Resilience Innovation Program (CRIP) Grant for the development and pilot of an on line learning resource initially named Step by Step. Prior to pilot workshops for the resource it was renamed Walk With by Gateway Family Services to better reflect the process of walking along with individuals, families and communities during recovery from disasters.

During 2018 a series of pilot workshops (n=7) were held in regional and peri-urban communities to test the resource with staff and volunteers in the family and community sector. This qualitative evaluation was designed and implemented alongside the workshop roll out.

Objectives of the Walk With program informed the evaluation design and focus. These are;

- To increase capacity of broad based family and community services to rapidly respond to natural/built disasters through provision of personalised support for people directly affected by disaster;
- To equip family and community based services to adapt solution focused approaches to noticing and supporting resilience in people affected by disaster;
- To equip family and community based services to embed disaster response into their service action plans;
- To develop a training package that will enable replication of the Step by Step model of disaster response and resilience and its adaptation to local community context;
- To support communities to understand the broad principles of psychosocial support in a resilience framework.

An initial brief literature review was undertaken for the evaluation with a focus on psycho social support and the role of community organisations in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. This further contributed to evaluation parameters.

## Literature

While emergency management has largely been co-ordinated and organised by proscribed agencies including State Emergency Services, Rural Fire Service in concert with state or federal government departments, the development in Australia of a shared responsibility approach (Australian Red Cross 2009, 2013) has led to the involvement of a broader range of organisations.

Attention to the range of formal and informal networks, groups and organisations at a local level in natural disaster planning response and recovery, is emerging in practice (Council of Australian

Governments (COAG), 2011). A small but growing body of research is developing alongside this change in Australia along with a similar trend internationally (Parr 1998; Murphy 2007; Aldrich 2012; Akama and Chaplin 2013; Howard, Blakemore and Bevis 2015).

A recognition by emergency services that they do not have the person power or reach possible to be sole responders in a natural disaster, and the role played by community members in the first days post event, is changing the premise and direction of natural disaster planning, response and recovery. Community development approaches are increasingly shaping planning as is a recognition that community engagement is key in building community capacity and resilience. (Alston 2013; Australian Red Cross 2013; Akama and Chaplin 2013)

The post bushfire experiences in Victoria and the Blue Mountains have highlighted the critical role played by non-government organisations including family support services and neighbourhood centres at all stages in natural disaster planning cycles. (Alston 2013; Deloitte 2013). Natural disasters impact disproportionately on those who experience disadvantage in communities and people at risk through health, disability or age related challenges. In this context services which support such groups are often first responders during a natural disaster although they have not been included in formal emergency responses. Recent research has highlights the potentially deadly intersection of poverty and social isolation which is often experienced by those who use community services. (Howard, Agllias, Bevis and Blakemore 2018) The critical role the community sector can play in terms of knowledge and support for groups experiencing this intersection is slowly being recognised but requires further attention. Resources such as Walk With, have the potential to provide accessible and practical skills, knowledge and strategies for community organisations to include disaster planning as part of their core business.

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### **Evaluation aims, objectives, method and rationale**

This evaluation assessed the relevance and usability of the Walk With resource to local community partners at four sites. It also examined the impact of Walk With on participants' capacity and willingness to engage in collaborative disaster planning, and to integrate new disaster resilience practices.

The University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee granted approval for the evaluation research.

#### *Evaluation questions:*

- Were the training resources relevant and usable to the program participants?
- Did the training increase participants' capacity, willingness and confidence to instigate a Walk With process quickly in the case of disaster?
- In what ways does the program affect participants' openness to working in in the area of disaster recovery and resilience with different partners?
- Are there changes in collaborations or relationships amongst organisations after the training?
- Did the training and orientation to Walk With increase participant's knowledge of principles of psychosocial support in disaster recovery?

The method developed for the evaluation was qualitative, comprising pre and post components completed on either side of the workshops held to demonstrate and provide orientation to the Walk With resource. Two key considerations in the evaluation design were:

1. How did participants experience and utilise the Walk With material?
2. What, if any, action or behaviour change resulted from the workshop and working through the Walk With material post workshop participation.

### **Pre Workshop Evaluation**

Before each of the seven workshops participants were asked to participate in a focus group discussion about experiences, responses, observations and reflections on natural disasters either professionally or personally in the past. Focus group discussions also included analysis by workshop participants about:

- the role of community organisations in preparedness, response and recovery from natural disasters,
- relationships and co-ordination between agencies and communities at a local level,
- what worked well as well as challenges for the psycho-social recovery of communities post disaster,
- Collaboration at all stage of disaster planning.

Participation in the focus groups was voluntary and not contingent on participation in the workshop. Separate written consent was obtained as part of a University of Sydney Human Ethics approval process.

Focus groups were one hour duration each and a total of seven focus groups were undertaken.

### **Post Workshop Evaluation**

Focus groups participants were invited to participate in a follow up phone interview two months after the workshop to discuss feedback on the Walk With material, how they had used it, and any action taken in relation to disaster preparedness they had undertaken since the workshop and access to the Walk With resource. Participants provided written consent for both pre and post components of the evaluation at the focus group but were also emailed prior to the interview to check they were still willing to participate in the follow up component.

Interviews were conducted by phone and Skype and ranged in length from 20 minutes to one hour.

### **Evaluation Locations**

Focus groups were held at each of the workshop locations – seven focus groups in all across four locations. Where two workshops were conducted at a location (one for front line workers and one for managers), a focus group was completed for each workshop. (This included Lismore and Tamworth

and Newcastle). In Tahmoor one workshop and focus group was conducted comprising both managers and front line workers.

## Evaluation Participants

A total of 49 people participated in focus groups

| Location  | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------|------|--------|-------|
| Lismore   | 5    | 17     | 22    |
| Tamworth  | 1    | 12     | 13    |
| Newcastle | 1    | 7      | 8     |
| Tahmoor   | 2    | 4      | 6     |

Slightly more front line workers (55%) participated in the evaluation compared with managers (45%). As per the demographic characteristics of the community sector most participants were women (n=40) with a total of nine men taking part.

Organisations, which participated in the evaluation included family support services, disability services, local government, neighbourhood and community centres, health, Red Cross, youth services and housing services.

A total of 49 people participated in evaluation focus groups with 22 taking part in follow up interviews. One important note here is that 25% (n=12) of those who attended a focus group were no longer employed in the same role or organisation at the time of the follow up interview and were not able to be contacted. This was more noticeably the case in the community still in the process of recovering from a recent disaster. Taking this into account, 60% of those who participated in focus groups also participated in a follow up interview 2-3 months following attendance at the Walk With workshop.

## Findings

### Pre Workshop Experience

Focus group discussions revealed a diverse range of experience amongst participants in terms of both professional and personal impacts of natural disasters. In one location the community was in the midst of the recovery process post a recent significant disaster and this impacted on both the perspective of participants in terms of how the Walk With resource might be useful, and also in relation to capacity within organisations to engage practically with planning and preparedness as a focus. One participant from this community reflected:

*This would be great to use before the next time a flood comes. When we went through it at the workshop, most of us were still scrambling to get things back on track with people we work with.* Interview participant.

Two locations had experienced significant disasters within the previous three years and were able to provide detailed accounts of how community sector organisations had participated in response and recovery efforts, and also the substantial challenges which had been experienced in relation to roles, decision making and inclusion of community groups and organisations in formal emergency responses. This reflection by one participant is indicative of these experiences:

*I remember people were coming out of the woodwork for help a long time after the crisis. We were doing out everyday work and dealing with this as well without anyone really acknowledging the extra pressure.* Interview participant.

In one location, natural disaster had not been experienced in over a decade, and here two thirds of focus group participants had no direct personal or professional experience in natural disaster response or recovery. As one focus group participant observed:

*I don't think we have really thought about how this would impact on kids and families. It has been so long since the last flood but it is a great wake up call for us to be aware.* Focus group participant.

In all of the focus groups, participants were asked to think about professional and personal networks they might draw on in an emergency. For the majority of participants across locations and groups, there was a gap between formal and informal networks in which they participated, and for almost a third of participants, thinking through how these networks might be mobilised during a disaster was described as a new process. Unsurprisingly, in the location where disaster was most recently experienced this gap was smaller but was still present. While all of those who participated in focus groups reported the importance of community organisations in supporting those experiencing hardship during and after a disaster, practical strategies for ensuring this process would be well connected to formal emergency responses was uneven. In the location which had not experienced a disaster in some time, participants reported that little or no formal arrangements were either in place or widely known by community sector organisations with regard to disaster response and recovery. For others spontaneous collaboration had taken place and worked well and this was seen as a strength of community and community sector responses.

In the locations where disaster was more recently experienced, participants reported that much of the response and recovery effort by community organisations had taken place without clarity about overall

plans or co-ordination across agencies. In these locations, participants described a range of frustrations with regard to clarifying community organisations roles and gaining recognition and inclusion in emergency response processes.

Overall, pre workshop evaluation data points to:

- a strong desire by community organisations to be included in natural disaster planning at all stages
- uneven knowledge and practice experience in delivering psycho-social support in a natural disaster context.
- The need for networks, support and engagement already undertaken well in community organisations to be intentionally adapted to natural disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

Pre workshop information highlighted the significant level of good will amongst community organisations but clear gaps in some areas with regard to formalised networks, intentional planning and practical capacity building for workers, volunteers and communities.

### **Ease of Use**

Participants found the Walk With resource easy to use overall once they were provided with access and described the overall structure as accessible and use friendly. Some participants questioned whether the separation of front line and management components of the resource were helpful. This group (n=9) reported a preference for information to be provided across management and front line foci rather than separated. This, however, did not impact on their assessment in terms of ease of use.

Some observations about using the resource were:

*I had some trouble initially getting access but once that was fixed I found it easy to navigate. It made sense to me and I enjoyed the videos a lot.* Interview participant.

*It was really user friendly and had some great information which reminded me that I know more about disaster recovery than I realised.* Interview participant.

*It was really helpful and easy to use. I would have like the worker an manager sections to be more integrated but overall I got a lot out of it.* Interview participant.

### **Relevance**

All interview participants described the Walk With resource as relevant to their work and their thinking about how to support and work with families, children and communities in the context of natural disaster. Participants described the information, presentation style and approach to be well pitched and aimed effectively for the audience of both workers and volunteers in community sector

organisations. In terms of workshops introducing the resource, a number of participants suggested that opportunities to interact with and try out the resource during the workshop would be a good addition to any future training. Once participants had a chance to experience the resource, they reported that the relevance for them increased significantly. Indicative comments here are:

*I can see how we could use this as training for volunteers. I think it is great and provides us with fantastic material to work with.* Interview participant.

*The resource is great in helping me think about how the work I do can be adapted to disasters. It makes sense but I just hadn't joined those dots before.* Interview participant.

## Design

Over three quarters of interviewees described the design of Walk With as engaging, easy to navigate and well structured. Imagery and colours were praised by most interviewees as was the aesthetic and practical experience of using the resource.

The video components and bookshelf section with additional resources were experienced by participants as most helpful in terms of understanding the role of community sector organisations. Half of those interviewed found the course structure of the resource helped them navigate the information, while a further third preferred to dip in and out of the resource to access relevant information when they needed it.

Observations from those interviewed included:

*It was beautiful and in spite of the focus on disasters I felt like the design encouraged calm and building confidence rather than panic.* Interview participant.

*I really liked the quality of the resource. Often we get training material which is practical but not well produced. They really took notice of the quality in production which was great.* Interview participant.

## Applicability

Interestingly, while all evaluation participants described Walk With as a resource which was practical and useful for those in the community sector to plan regarding disasters, two thirds of those interviewed reported still working through how they would use the resource in the future. Some evaluation participants described the importance of Walk With as a training tool and envisioned community organisations being able to use it to train volunteers and new employees. There was less certainty about the practical processes required to ensure this was enacted in a timely and broad based way. This finding is connected to access, which is discussed below. One comment here summarises this dilemma well:

*I think the Walk With material is great. I am just still thinking through how I can make the most of it. It would be great if it was available widely and we could work on some plans for using it within our organisation together.* Interview participant

### Action/Behaviour Change

Only a quarter of those interviewed for the evaluation reported that they had taken action or planned to change their approach to disaster preparedness as a result of attending the workshop and working through Walk With. Participants attributed this to time and to challenges in developing an achievable action plan for themselves and their organisation. Interview discussions revealed that for many participants, the idea that they and their organisation had a key role to play in preparation, response and recovery from disaster, was new and was going to take time to develop. Reflecting on the evaluation process, longer timeframes and follow up support may assist in providing processes and structure for action. As one participant reflected:

*In one way it seems like a long time since the workshop but now we are having this conversation I realise I have only just started to get the wheels turning with developing new networks for disaster planning.* Interview participant.

For those who did report action, key activities were

- connecting with local government and other agencies to clarify and develop the role of their organisation in disaster planning,
- starting an internal discussion to plan a more formalised response to local disaster preparedness.
- introducing discussion of psycho social recovery from disasters into interagency and other network meetings
- including consideration of disaster impacts in direct work with families and communities through conversations and information provided as part of general service delivery.

For the group who reported taking action, the process was either just starting or working on initiative or processes they had already started. They describe the Walk With resource as useful in helping them structure their thinking. They also described how the process of connecting with the Walk With resource had been a catalyst for their planning.

### Access

Most interview participants expressed a strong preference for the Walk With resource to be made widely available to community organisations as well as a concern regarding how this might happen. A number of participants suggested that the resource be made available free online and promoted through peak bodies and networks such as LCSA, NCOSS and ACOSS. Overall participants were not

in favour of a fee for service or subscription model for distributing the resource as they felt organisations would not be willing or in some cases able to find funds to pay for access. Other suggestions regarding access included hosting the resource on the Office of Emergency Management website or making it available via a You Tube channel focused on disaster planning.

The question of access to the resource was seen as a priority for evaluation participants, with nearly half reporting that availability and promotion were the key challenges in terms of uptake. Indicative reflections included:

*I think it is really important that as many people as possible can access and use the resource. The information is so important and spreading that s far as possible would make a big difference.*

Interview participant.

*Maybe making sure it is available to all community services in NSW would be a first step. Using existing networks and peak bodies could work here.*

Interview participant.

*Put it on the web and use social media to promote it, Because people will want to use it at different times, access and availability are important. It has to be free and I need to access it when I need it.*

Interview participant.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Overall the evaluation found that the Walk With resource provides a relevant, practical and user friendly training and support program for community organisations in disaster planning. Three key recommendations can be made on the basis of data gathered and analysed:

1. Further work is required to equip and support community organisations in disaster planning and Walk With is well placed to play a key role in contributing to such support.
2. Walk With should be made available to community organisations without a pay wall or restricted access if the resource is to fulfill its potential in supporting community sector collaboration and capacity building in disaster planning.
3. Alongside access to the Walk With resource, broader processes and supports for clarifying and enhancing the role of community organisations in disaster preparedness, response and recovery must be a priority in formal disaster planning and policy.

## Appendix

### Focus Group Questions

Focus group questions (Please note that these are indicative questions. Some questions will not be asked depending on previous responses from participants regarding involvement in disaster planning):

1. Describe how, if at all, you are currently involved in disaster planning, response and recovery. (What, if any, psychosocial support does your organisation provide during disaster response and recovery?)
2. How important is it for your organisation to be involved in disaster planning, response and recovery?
3. Where have you learned about disaster planning response and recovery? Where do you find information?
4. What has been most useful for you in developing your knowledge of disaster planning response and recovery?
5. Does your organisation currently have a disaster plan? (probe for inclusions and detail)
6. Which agencies have you worked with in relation to natural disasters?
7. What have you noticed changes for your clients overall during the response and recovery stages of the natural disaster planning cycle?
8. Does your support for clients change during these times? (How?)
9. How, if at all, is the work done by your organisation during disaster response and recovery recognised as part of the formal emergency response and recovery processes? (Possible probe: if this work was well recognised what would have changed?)
10. How do community organisations such as family support and neighbourhood centres work now with each other, and with emergency services in relation to disasters in your community.
11. How would you like to change the ways in which local organisations work together in disaster planning?
12. What are some of the ways in which family support services and neighbourhood centres can play a more significant role in disaster planning, response and recovery.
13. What are some of the resources community services such as neighbourhood centres and family support services need to become more involved in natural disaster planning, response and recovery.
14. How would you like to see local networks of services, community organisations and groups work together in relation to disasters in the future?
15. How can your organisation strengthen its role in disaster planning now?
16. What are some of the practical ideas you have for building the role and capacity of family support services in disaster planning, response and recovery?
17. Is there anything we haven't discussed which you would like to raise?

The post-training focus group will use the same discussion questions but focus on change experienced and reflected on by participants.

### Phone interview questions

1. Tell me about what has changed (if anything) in your work or the work of your organisation as a result of the Walk With training you attended recently.
2. Can you describe what you learned (if anything) that you have been able to put into practice?

3. Thinking about your networks and those of your organisation in the context of disaster planning, what kinds of changes, (if any) have you noticed in either the quality or size of those networks since the training.
4. What, if any, planning activities in relation to disasters, have you or your organisation started as a result of the Walk With training?
5. In terms of the resources and material used in the Walk With training, what has been most useful for you in practice?
6. What, if anything has changed in relation to who you collaborate with since the training?
7. What if anything has changed in relation to how you collaborate or the focus for collaboration since the training?
8. Thinking now about the future, what (if any) changes are planned in your own work or the work of the organisation in relation to disasters and their impacts as a result of the training?
9. Was there anything else you would like to add?

### Network Mapping

Research participants will be asked to draw a map of their current individual and organisational networks in terms of

- I. general work,
- II. disaster planning, response and recovery (if they are involved in this work)
- III. potential networks in disaster planning, response and recovery (who they see as potential collaborators)

Participants will be asked to note both the strength and reach of their networks.

Researchers, prior to the training program, will collect individual network maps. Network maps will be identified at this time but de-identified using codes prior to analysis. Two months after the training participants will be invited to draw another set of networks aligning with the three focus areas for the first set noting any changes they have seen. Participants will email networks maps to researchers.

Once the pre and post network maps have been collected, they will be de-identified, coded and a comparative analysis will be undertaken regarding any changes identified by participants as well as those observed by researchers between the pre and post maps.



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## **Step by Step Program Evaluation Research**

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

#### **(1) What is this study about?**

You are invited to take part in a research study evaluating the Step by Step Program. The research will examine how the Program makes a difference for workers in local agencies in collaborative disaster planning and implementing new disaster resilience practices. Step by Step aims to build on the strengths of local community based agencies in natural disaster planning. The evaluation research will provide important information about how the program works and any improvements, which can be made to increase program effectiveness in achieving this aim.

Objectives of Step by Step program are:

- To increase capacity of broad based family and community services to rapidly respond to natural/built disasters through provision of personalised support for people directly affected by disaster;
- To equip family and community based services to adapt solution focused approaches to noticing and supporting resilience in people affected by disaster;
- To equip family and community based services to embed disaster response into their service action plans;
- To develop a training package that will enable replication of the Step by Step model of disaster response and resilience and its adaptation to local community context;
- To support communities to understand the broad principles of psychosocial support in a resilience framework.

You have been invited to participate in this study as you are employed by one of the local agencies participating in the Program and you have agreed to undertake Step by Step training. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

#### **(2) Who is running the study?**

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- Associate Professor Amanda Howard, Social Work and Policy Studies University of Sydney
- Dr Milena Heinsch, University of Newcastle

This study is being funded by Gateway Family Services via a Community Resilience Innovation Program (CRIP) Grant through the NSW Office of Emergency Management.

**(3) What will the study involve for me?**

You will be asked to participate in a focus group just prior to participating in the Step by Step Program Workshop, and a follow up phone interview two months after completing the Program.

The focus group will take place in the morning on the day you will attend the Step by Step Program Workshop, in the same location, and will take one hour. During the focus group you will be asked to participate in a guided discussion and also complete a simple network mapping exercise. The discussion will be audio recorded and later de identified and transcribed by a professional transcription service for analysis by researchers. The network map you complete will be copied with one copy retained by researchers and the original returned to you for reference. The network map will include the names of organisations you currently work with in relation to disaster planning but will not include the names of individuals. Only researchers named on this information statement will be in attendance at the focus group.

Two months following your completion of the Step by Step Program you will be asked to participate in a phone interview lasting up to 45 minutes. The phone interview will take place at a time convenient to you and is completely voluntary. The phone interview will focus on what has happened since the Program for you and your workplace in relation to collaborative disaster planning. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service before being de identified for analysis by researchers.

Copies of focus group and interview questions can be provided to you prior to participation on request.

You will be able to review your phone interview transcript and make changes before it is analysed, however, you will not be able to review and change the focus group transcript as individual speakers will not be identified by name so your specific contribution will not be identified. Nothing which identifies you will be included in the research report or any publications which result from the research.

Both focus groups and interview will take place during paid work hours.

On completion of the research you will receive a summary report outlining research findings. This can be emailed or posted to you using the details you provide on the Participant Consent Form.

**(4) How much of my time will the study take?**

Participating in this study will take up to one hour for the focus group and 45 minutes for the telephone interview. The total time for participation is one hour 45 minutes.

**(5) Who can take part in the study?**

You can participate in this study if you are participating in the Step by Step Program running in your community.

**(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney or with Gateway Family Services.

Your employer supports participation in the research as part of the evaluation of the Step by Step Program but your participation is confidential and there are no consequences for you should you choose not to participate in the research.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by speaking to one of the researchers before or during the focus group, prior to or during the phone interview, or by emailing Amanda Howard at the email provided on this form. There are no consequences for you or your agency should you decide to withdraw

You are free to stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview.

If you take part in a focus group, you are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw your individual comments from our records once the group has started, as it is a group discussion.

If you decide to withdraw from the study, we will not collect any more information from you. Any information that we have already collected via focus group discussion, however, will be kept in our study records and may be included in the study results.

**(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?**

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

Should you experience any distress as a result of participating in the research, please use the attached list of contacts where you can access support and referral to counselling. All numbers offer free support and referral.

**(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?**

Participation in this study has potential benefits to you and to your organisation as the information you and others provide will contribute to better disaster planning and collaborative response and recovery in the context of your role and that of your organisation. Community based organisations often play a vital role in disaster management at all stages, but research on this role and how it can be better recognised is relatively new. Participating in this study will assist in building on this emerging research knowledge and will also provide you and your organisation with practical research evidence to utilise in disaster planning.

**(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?**

Focus group discussions and phone interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service. Only researchers named on this Statement will have access to data from the study. Audio recordings and soft copy de identified transcripts will be stored for a period of 5 years in password protected secure files on the Chief Investigator's computer at the University of Sydney. All hard copy transcripts will be de identified and stored in a locked filing cabinet for a period of 5 years. After 5 years, audio recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

**(10) Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study, however, only people who participate in the Step by Step Program can participate in the research.

**(11) What if I would like further information about the study?**

When you have read this information, Amanda Howard will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Amanda Howard *at* [amanda.howard@sydney.edu.au](mailto:amanda.howard@sydney.edu.au) or on 0293514091.

**(12) Will I be told the results of the study?**

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the participant consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a summary report of research findings. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

**(13) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?**

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176

- **Email:** [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au)
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)



**Social Work & Policy Studies. Sydney  
School of Education & Social Work**

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**CHIEF INVESTIGATOR: Associate Professor Amanda Howard**

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Email: [amanda.howard@sydney.edu.au](mailto:amanda.howard@sydney.edu.au)  
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

Step by Step Program Evaluation Research

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

I, ..... [PRINT NAME], agree to take part in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
- I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.

- The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I do not have to take part. My decision whether to be in the study will not affect my relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney or Gateway Family Services now or in the future.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I understand that I may stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, and that unless I indicate otherwise any recordings will then be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study. I also understand that I may refuse to answer any questions I don't wish to answer.
- I understand that I may leave the focus group at any time if I do not wish to continue. I also understand that it will not be possible to withdraw my comments once the group has started as it is a group discussion.
- I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
- I understand that the results of this study may be published, and that publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me.
- I understand that I am consenting to participation in a focus group, network mapping exercise and phone interview. I understand that I can withdraw from any of these activities at any time.

I consent to participate in:

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • <b>Focus group and network mapping</b>                 | YES |
| NO   |     |
| • <b>Follow up phone interview</b>                       | YES |
| NO   |     |
| • <b>Audio-recording<br/>(focus group and interview)</b> | YES |
| NO   |     |
| <b>I would like to review my interview transcripts</b>   | YES |
| NO   |     |

**I would like to receive feedback about the overall results of this study** YES  
NO

If you answered **YES**, please indicate your preferred form of feedback and address:

Postal: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
**Signature**

.....  
**PRINT name**

.....  
**Date**