Submission regarding the restructure of the Research School of the Humanities and the Arts

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I am in full support of a restructure within the RSHA and am primarily concerned within my submission with the integration of iHuG within other schools, particularly within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology (SOAA). From my position as a postdoctoral research fellow within the SOAA the current RSHA structure is problematic and I would welcome restructuring in this area in the form of an integration of the visual anthropology and heritage and museums staff members within the SOAA.

When I undertook my PhD at the ANU from 2004-2008 there was an exceptionally strong base of staff available to assist with visual components within an anthropology-based PhD thesis. I appreciated the structure of the former Centre for Cross-Cultural Research where I would often attend seminars and seek advice from staff, such as Pip Deveson, Kim McKenzie, Katie Hayne and David and Judith MacDougall. I would also seek advice from Gary Kildea in the Ethnographic Film Unit in what was then RSPAS. Many masters and doctoral students benefitted greatly from the expert advice of these staff and would not have been able to incorporate visual media within their theses without such assistance. Where I was based, within the SOAA, there were no facilities or staff available to provide support in ethnographic filmmaking or the practical use of digital media. Many of the staff positions mentioned above have now ceased to exist, or were not renewed, which has been to the detriment of recent postgraduate students.

The Digital Humanities Hub is no longer cohesive, as the CCR was, as there are two divided facets: digital humanities studies, which would be more appropriately aligned with the proposed School of Language and Literature; while the visual culture research element is more aligned with the SOAA, particularly visual anthropology. The only person now available to continue to teach and assist students within the Digital Humanities Hub in relation to visual media is Pip Deveson. I have taught courses within the Visual Culture Research program and inevitably have spent much of my time within the Digital Humanities Hub teaching classes or attending seminars but I am
situated within the SOAA and my office is located across the other side of the university.

My submission is in agreement with the proposals made by Melinda Hinkson. From a PhD student and now a postdoctoral research fellow perspective, I would appreciate the following recommendations to be seriously considered:

1). The Centre for Visual Anthropology has already been established within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology. It would be beneficial if this Centre was not just a virtual presence on the Internet but functioned in actuality. The Centre could function to bring staff and students under a single building with rooms for teaching, seminars, and to house both staff and students with a focus on visual culture research, as well as practical facilities for workshops and an accompanying editing suite.

2). The A D Hope Building, currently housing staff within the SOAA, is full to capacity. Research-based staff members, such as myself, are currently sharing offices due to lack of space and there is the constant threat that this office space will be lost, as priority is given to full-time teaching staff. The staff within the Digital Humanities Hub will inevitably be relocated elsewhere in the course of the restructure and due to the current state of the demountable building. It would make sense for research and teaching staff that are aligned with filmmaking, visual anthropology and visual culture research within the SOAA to be located together within a building that is purpose built (or designed), one that is capable of really assisting students and staff to produce good quality films and multimedia projects in a collegial atmosphere.