



## **INFORMATION TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

We are inviting your child to take part in a research project called:

### **Benefits of community involvement for adolescents and young adults: How resilience is built.**

It is run by staff and student researchers from Victoria University.

#### **Project explanation**

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We are interested to learn about the experience of the participants in The Whitten Project. We're interested in whether it benefits them to be involved and what changes it makes to their lives in different areas. Some of these areas are things that The Whitten Project workshops were about, such as community involvement and leadership, mental health and wellbeing. Our project has a resilience focus and therefore we are interested in mechanisms through which children benefit from projects, rather than about their difficulties, although we are interested in their wellbeing and general feedback. The project is funded and run by Victoria University separate to the Western Bulldogs, but the researchers will provide a report to the Bulldogs about what they find.

#### **What is involved?**

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Your child will be asked to take part in a 20 minute survey on paper after a Whitten Project workshop. Whether or not they fill in the survey is entirely voluntary and they are free to stop the survey at any time. **If they decide not to participate – but don't want to let their friends know – they can just hand in a blank survey.** Then can also choose not to finish the survey at that time and mail it to us later. The staff members at Whitten will not know whether your child participated or not.

We will ask those who give consent to complete the survey three times: in the first part of the program, in the last week of the program, and six months after completion (about March the next year). We are interested in any lasting change the program makes in people's lives.

#### **What will my child gain from participating in this study?**

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We tell participants that they have the chance to make a difference to what is being done to improve resilience and community involvement for young people. We write a report to the Whitten Project staff with recommendations based on the survey, so they will have the chance to provide feedback to make any needed changes to the workshops for future participants. We also tell them they may find the research interesting and learn a bit about how researchers learn about issues affecting young people. In addition, they will receive a movie ticket as a thank-you for participating.

#### **What will happen to the information? Is my child's information private?**

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The researchers will combine all of the survey answers to determine trends in our community. We report information about the group's responses, not individuals', in our research reports and presentations. We are going to give a report to the Whitten Project organisers about this group data. We never use anyone's name in our reports.

The individual surveys will be kept private by the researchers. All surveys will be kept locked up. We do ask for the participant's names so we can match up the three surveys, but at the end of the last survey those details will be kept securely locked until the end of the study – then they will be erased. We will not ask any personal details like address, date of birth, school name or religion.



### **What happens in the survey?**

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The questions might ask them to rate something on a scale from one to five, with one being very bad and five being very good, or it might be a simple yes/no answer. Some of the questions will also ask information like age and ethnic background. Some questions will be about things the participants do (in and out of the program), or ways that they feel. We don't ask any questions about illegal or illicit activity. One of the project team will be available to answer questions during the survey time, but, owing to the confidentiality of the survey, they will not be able to read any responses.

### **What are the potential risks of participating in this project?**

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We don't think anything bad will come of being involved. However, some questions ask about feelings, relationships, or skills. Sometimes people can be upset thinking about these things. If participants are upset, we offer them the following options:

- They can stop completing the survey straight away.
- They can speak to the researchers – we would always want them to tell us if you are upset. Some of our researchers are psychologists and so may know people who can help.
- They can call Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- They can call Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- They can "chat" with eHeadspace: [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au)
- They can speak to psychologist Gavin Ivey, who is a staff member at VU but is not involved in this project. He can provide other referral options. His phone number is 9919 2138 and his email is [gavin.ivey@vu.edu.au](mailto:gavin.ivey@vu.edu.au). He will tell us someone called him but won't tell us who it was.

### **Who is conducting the study?**

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This project is coordinated by Victoria University. The VU Chief Investigators are Laurie Chapin and Carolyn Deans, and we have a student researcher working with us.

Our research website is:

[www.vu.edu.au/youth-research](http://www.vu.edu.au/youth-research)

We are happy to answer any questions the parents or guardians – or the participants – might have and can be contacted via our website or on:

Dr Carolyn Deans: 9919 2334 or email [Carolyn.Deans@vu.edu.au](mailto:Carolyn.Deans@vu.edu.au)

Dr Laurie Chapin: 9919 2355 or email [Laurie.Chapin@vu.edu.au](mailto:Laurie.Chapin@vu.edu.au)

Mr Rob Bonett (student researcher): [robert.bonett@vu.edu.au](mailto:robert.bonett@vu.edu.au)

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Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001 or phone (03) 9919 4781.