



INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

You are invited 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

We are interested to learn about your experience taking part in The Whitten Project. We're interested in whether it helped you to be involved and what changes it made to your life 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. Your responses will help us to understand what helps young people get involved in their community and what they get out of it. The project is funded and run by Victoria University separate to the Western Bulldogs, but the researchers will combine everyone's responses and then write a report to the Bulldogs about what they find.

What is involved?

You will be asked to take part in a 20 minute survey on paper after a Whitten Project workshop. Whether or not you fill in the survey is entirely voluntary and you are free to stop the survey at any time without it affecting your participation in the Whitten Project. **If you decide not to participate then you can just hand in a blank survey.** You can also choose not to finish the survey at that time and mail it to us later. This is not a test and we simply want to know what you think. You won't need to tell anyone at Whitten if you participated or not, and you would never need to show anyone your answers or the options you select in the survey.

We will ask you to complete the survey three times: in the first part of the program, in the last week of the program, and six months after you have finished it (about March the next year). We want to know about how you change over time.

What will I gain from participating in this study?

You will have the chance to make a difference to what is being done to improve resilience and community involvement for young people like yourself in your community. You will have the chance to provide important feedback to make any needed changes to the workshops for future participants. We hope to work out some of our community's strengths in helping young people succeed. You may find the research interesting and learn a bit about how researchers learn about issues affecting young people. In addition, you will receive a movie ticket as a thank-you for participating.

What will happen to the information I give to the researchers?

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.

What if I say something I don't want anyone else finding out about?

Your individual surveys will be kept private by the researchers. All surveys will be kept locked up. We will have your name so we can match up the three surveys you complete, 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 you about any personal details like your address, date of birth, school name or religion. The confidentiality of your responses is important to us because the survey is designed to improve things for young people.



What happens in the survey?

The questions might ask you 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 your age and your ethnic background so we know more about all the people who answered the survey and about the community. Some questions will be about things you do, or ways that you feel. To help you with the survey, one of the project team will be available to answer questions, but, owing to the confidentiality of the survey, they will not be able to read your responses. There are also instructions in the survey.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

We don't think anything bad will come of being involved. However, some questions ask about how you are feeling or relationships you have or skills you may or may not have. Sometimes people can be upset thinking about these things. So, if you are upset, we have a number of things that you can do:

- You can stop completing the survey straight away.
- You can speak to the researchers – we would always want you to tell us if you are upset. Some of our researchers are psychologists and so may know people who can help. Also, we want to make sure that everyone is treated well on the project, so want you to tell us if something is upsetting.
- You can call Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- You can call Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24 hours, 7 days a week)
- You can “chat” with eHeadspace: www.eheadspace.org.au
- You can speak to psychologist Gavin Ivey, who is a staff member at VU but is not involved in this project. He can talk to you and provide other referral options. His phone number is 9919 2138 and his email is 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?

This project is coordinated by Victoria University. The VU researchers include Laurie Chapin, Carolyn Deans, and student researchers.

Our research website is:

www.vu.edu.au/youth-research

You can find out more about our research projects there.

We can answer any questions you might have and can be contacted on:

Dr Carolyn Deans: 9919 2334 or email Carolyn.Deans@vu.edu.au

Dr Laurie Chapin: 9919 2355 or email Laurie.Chapin@vu.edu.au

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

.....
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.