

## Participant Information Sheet

### Researcher:

My name is Sarah Walker and I am the Manager, Engagement and Success, the team primarily responsible for transition programs such as Orientation Week, and community building activities to increase the connection students feel with the University, each other and the local community. My interest lies in developing further support for equity students based on research and praxis. Me and my team (including undergraduate interns brought into specific projects), in collaboration with Dr Lillian Smyth are currently in the process of some scoping research to build an evidence base of the student experience at ANU, for a range of different student groups.

There is also an opportunity to include students or junior researchers in the research team, particularly in the analysis phase. If these team members are added, a variation will be submitted to HREC. These junior team members will only have access to the de-identified transcripts.

**Project Title:** Exploring the experiences of university for students from low-SES backgrounds

### General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** This is a semi-structured individual interview that aims to explore, understand and examine the experiences of students who are within the minority at an elite institution. It is done through interviews to ensure the experience is directed by you, the interviewee, to allow you the space to tell your personal experience. We're doing this to identify barriers and challenges students experience, highlight what support is working and where we can seek to improve and advocate for students from a low-socioeconomic (low-SES) background within the University. The interviews will be conducted and recorded via Zoom, with the recordings saved directly to an ANU password protected computer. The audio recordings are then transcribed using a professional transcription service, this allows us to focus on our conversation during the interview. The interview can go forward without being recorded, it is being utilised as the default interview method to allow me to fully concentrate on our conversation but if you do not want the interview to be recorded I can take notes instead.
- **Participants:** We are inviting current ANU students who self-identify as being from a low-income/low-socioeconomic background to participate in the interviews. Information coming out of the interviews will be shared in a way to reduce the potential that individuals will be identifiable, meaning that if you are from a low-income background but do not want others to know this you are still able to participate without others being made aware of your background. It should be noted that there is always the potential that individuals can be identified from the way they speak and the stories they tell. Steps will be taken to reduce the potential for you to be individually identified but it is always a risk with interviews.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** A professional third-party transcription service will be employed to translate the audio/video recording into a transcripts at which time I will remove identifying items and then utilise the transcripts with the research team for analysis.
- Your experience may help inform support structures and practices to make positive changes for low-income students at ANU and results will also be written up in an internal report for the University, and may be published journal articles, chapters, books, and presented at professional conferences.
- There is also an opportunity to include students or junior researchers in the research team, particularly in the analysis phase. These junior team members would only have access to the de-identified transcripts. There is the possibility for using the data for future research. Participants will be able to view the final written report with the results of the study upon completion here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vstfw9owu6tes30/AAA4oOsC9DCncIUj79U-zIx0a?dl=0>

### Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Your participation in the project is **voluntary**, as is answering specific questions in the interview, and you may, without negative consequences, decline to take part or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation at any time up until the findings are prepared for the report and publication. You can also decide that you don't want your interview used for researcher/an academic paper and that you only want it used for internal reporting and considerations, this can also happen without providing an explanation at any time up until the findings are prepared for publication. If you choose to withdraw completely the recording and transcription will be deleted.
- **What does participation in the research entail?** I, Sarah, am conducting the interviews and will ask about your experience at ANU including challenges you have faced, support you have received and what information you think the University, other students and/or staff should be aware of about you, or students who are like you. You will also be asked some demographic questions such as what year of study you are in and whether you moved to Canberra for study. As this is a semi-structured interview other topics can be discussed if you choose to raise them. I may reach out to clarify something you have said with further questions once we begin reviewing the transcripts. As with the rest of this project, your participation in additional questions or conversations is voluntary and you can, without negative consequences, decline to answer additional questions or engage in a further conversation without providing an explanation.
- **Location and Duration:** The interviews will be conducted online via Zoom and is estimated to take **1 hour** to complete. I may request additional conversations in order to clarify something you have said or if something arises during the analysis.
- **Remuneration:** Students from a low-socioeconomic background who participate in an interview will receive a \$20 digital gift voucher. The voucher will be sent to your nominated email address within 7 days of your interview being conducted.
- **Risks:** Due to the sensitive nature of this study (i.e. reflecting on challenges faced and potentially difficult situations you have been in), there is a risk that you may feel distressed when reflecting on certain experiences. If the questions do raise feelings of discomfort or distress, we can pause or stop the interview at any time and you are also able to withdraw your participation. There are also support services available through ANU and elsewhere (see below), and I can discuss these with you during or after the interview if you wish as I have experience through my professional role in support students understand and access these services.  
Interviews carry a risk of individual identification due to the way individuals speak and the stories they tell. We will take a number of precautions in an attempt to prevent this from occurring including utilising a pseudonym that will only be known to me, and amending key specifics within the experience such as changing the name of your degree, the hall you live in, town you come from, etc. but it should be noted that there is still the potential you can be recognised by someone who reads a resulting publication and we must advise you to avoid defaming anyone or revealing information that you may later regret or that could put you at risk.

- **Benefits:** This study will contribute to our understanding of the experience of low-SES students at ANU and identify ways we can improve support for other low-SES students who are members of our community. The information gained through this interviews can help inform support programs funded by the Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP) to respond to changing student demographic at ANU following the direct-application process. Your experience is not intended to be utilised as stand-alone information but is part of a large program of information gathering being undertaken to inform approaches to widening participation at ANU. There is the potential that this will have a direct positive impact on your time at ANU, and we hope that this will benefit current and future students at ANU with changes made as a result of these interviews, as well as increase an understanding in the university sector about the experiences of low-income university students and the impact various elements of the university community has on these students.

### Confidentiality:

- **Confidentiality:** Interviews are non-anonymous by nature, particularly when conducted via video conference. As such, your data in this study will be **confidential**, but not anonymous. What this means is that your responses will not be linked to your name, and you will be offered the opportunity to choose a pseudonym at the start of the interview which will be utilised in all reports and papers to “identify” you. All data will remain confidential to the researchers involved in this research project, as far as the law allows. Data, including audio/video recordings, transcriptions and analysis, will be stored securely within the ANU system, with raw data, audio/video recordings and transcriptions with identifying items such as names, restricted to myself, Sarah, in a folder that only I have access to. Transcriptions would be provided to the rest of the research team once identifying items have been removed/modified, i.e. the name of residential halls changed to a different name. You will have the opportunity to review your de-identified transcript before it is provided to the research team if you wish.

### Privacy Notice:

Australian privacy law (or rules) require me to tell you how my University handles your private information, and you can ask me to give you more details of that or how you can find out what information we have about you and to fix it if it is wrong.

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at [https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP\\_010007](https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_010007) and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

### Data Storage:

- **Where:** The data will be held within ANU computer systems accessible only by the researchers. Data will continue to be stored according to ANU privacy requirements and will not be linked to participants' identifying data.
- **How long:** The data will be stored for a period of at least 5 years from the date of any publication arising from the research on ANU computers in line with the requirements of ANU and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:** At the end of the storage period, the data will be archived to allow later use without exposing you to new or additional risks. Your responses will not be linked to your identity in any way. Access will be restricted to the Manager of Engagement and

Success with whom requests can be submitted to ensure any future research is in line with the original intent of the ethics application. Later research could include a similar study involving a longitudinal comparison of the constructs examined.

### Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** For further information or queries regarding the study, please contact:

Sarah Walker, Primary Investigator  
Engagement and Success  
[Sarah.swenson@anu.edu.au](mailto:Sarah.swenson@anu.edu.au)

Or Dr Lillian Smyth, Co-investigator,  
ANU College of Health and Medicine  
[Lillian.Smyth@anu.edu.au](mailto:Lillian.Smyth@anu.edu.au)

- **Contact Details if in Distress:**

ANU counselling services

- ANU Counselling Centre (02) 6125 2442
- ANU Psychology Clinic: (02) 6125 8498

For immediate mental health support (available 24 hours, 7 days a week)

- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

If you are in an emergency situation or need immediate assistance, call emergency services on:

- 000

### Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2020/614). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager  
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee  
The Australian National University  
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427  
Email: [Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au](mailto:Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au)

WRITTEN CONSENT for Participants

*Sense of self, belonging and support options in low-SES university students at an elite institution*

I have read and understood the Information Sheet you have given me about the research project, and if I have any questions or concerns, I understand that I have been provided with the researcher and research supervisor's email address.

I agree to participate in the project for internal reports.

YES  NO

I agree to participate in the project for research purposes.

YES  NO

I agree for my interview to be recorded via Zoom and transcribed by a professional third-party transcription service.

YES  NO

Signature:.....

Date:.....