

# Wonderland Shire Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form

## For *Our Culture, Many Different Stories* Project Participants

This form tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part in this evaluation process. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part.

Please read this information, or listen carefully if it is being read out or explained to you. You're welcome to ask questions about anything that isn't clear or you want to know more about. Before deciding whether or not to take part, you might want to take the time to talk about it with a family member or friend.

### 1. What does my participation involve?

You are invited to take part in the *Our Culture* project evaluation because you are involved in the project. Your contact details were obtained from the project facilitator at the Cultural Centre who invited us to evaluate the project.

The research process involves talking about what it is like for participants in the *Our Culture* project. These discussions will take place at three different times: before the project starts; towards the end of the process, and after it is all over. The discussions will be facilitated by community leaders and the research team. The research team will also observe the project as it happens and make notes of what occurs under the guidance and direction of the community leaders. The findings of the project will be reported back to leaders involved in the project through the Centre and then to you, and after that will be published in a report or academic journal article.

### 2. What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to understand (evaluate) what people experience as they work together to create this project. We particularly want to find out if being part of such a project makes any difference to your sense of belonging to culture and sense of connection with each other and community. The findings of this research will become a public document intended to make a significant contribution to knowledge of outcomes of cultural activities and engagement. You won't be personally identified unless you want to (see point 10 below).

### 3. Other relevant information about the research project

The evaluation team are members of Wonderland Shire staff supported by researchers from the Great Southern University. All rights and ownership of the data collected belong to the local leaders and members of the community through the Centre.

A priority will be made to establish a culturally and socially safe space for the research process. A 'safe space to speak' protocol will be established with participants at the beginning of all sessions, with all participants needing to agree to the protocol if they are to take part in the group discussion. The protocol will include listening and responding respectfully to others' ideas and feelings, and keeping information shared in that discussion within the group.

There are no costs associated with participating in this research project, nor will you be paid. However, you may be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses associated with the research project visit.

## **5 Do I have to take part in this research project?**

Participation in any research project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage.

If you take part in the discussions, you are free to stop participating at any stage or to decide not to answer any 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, but they won't be identified as yours.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the researchers or with the university or the Project Facilitators and community leaders.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to sign the consent section. By signing it you are telling us that you:

- Understand what you have read (or had explained to you)
- Consent to take part in the research project

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information and Consent Form to keep. You will be asked to sign two copies; one copy is for you to keep and the other is for the Research team.

Jenny Lockhart (j.lockhart@wonderland.gov.au) can provide an extra copy if you need one.

## **6 What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The project is expected to contribute to knowledge about what difference it makes to people in Wonderland Shire communities to be involved in cultural activities. If you contribute to this project, you might understand more about your own experience. The project will also help researchers find ways to understand the value of cultural participation for community members in Wonderland Shire. Having a documented formal evaluation of such a project may support Wonderland to undertake effective project planning and to have project evaluation evidence to help secure funding in the future.

## **7 What are the risks and disadvantages of taking part?**

While we do not expect that you will experience discomfort or harm during this project, it is possible that unexpected issues may arise. If this is the case, you will be encouraged to take a break from the session, avoid any question that you do not wish to address or you're your participation for that session or altogether. If become upset or distressed through participation in the research project, members of the research team will provide referral to a trained local counsellor where you might seek support.

## **8 What if I withdraw from this research project?**

If you do consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the project, please notify a member of the research team or the Our Culture Project Facilitator. You can ask for any information you have contributed to be taken out of the project data, providing we can identify your contribution.

## **9 What happens when the research project ends?**

The data collected will be used to inform the Shire's planning processes. There may be written reports using the material as well. Project participants, particularly community leaders and the

Centre staff will be invited to comment on the final draft of publications for approval prior to publication. All participants will be provided with a copy of written publications produced as a result of this research.

## **How is the research project being conducted?**

### **10 What will happen to information about me?**

By signing the consent form you consent to the research team collecting and using information from you for the research project. Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential. The option to publish or withhold names will be discussed with you and consent forms will be used to document your decision regarding identification. You may prefer to be identified in the important matters relating to your culture being explored in this research, or choose not to be identified.

Results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of academic forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except with your permission. Therefore, publications arising from this research may or may not include participants' names or identifying information depending on the decisions you make in this respect.

In accordance with relevant Australian and/or Victorian privacy and other relevant laws, you have the right to request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the research team. You also have the right to request that any information with which you disagree be corrected. Please inform the research team member named at the end of this document if you would like to access your information.

Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is protect you or others from harm, (2) if specifically allowed by law, (3) you provide the researchers with written permission. Any information obtained for the purpose of this research project that can identify you will be treated as confidential and securely stored in password-protected computer documents and a secure RMIT server. This server can only be accessed by invitation and is secured with password protection. The files will be accessible to the research team only.

### **11 Who is organising and funding this evaluation?**

Wonderland Shire is funding this evaluation as part of its project cycle, to understand how its activities impact residents and other participants.

### **12 Further information and who to contact**

If you want any further information concerning this project, you can contact Jenny Lockhart, Project Co-ordinator ([j.lockhart@wonderland.gov.au](mailto:j.lockhart@wonderland.gov.au)) or 09 4444 5555.

### **14 Complaints**

Should you have any concerns or questions about this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the staff member listed in this document, then you may contact:

Stephen Short, Community Development Manager, Wonderland Shire on 09 4444 5556

# Consent Form

**Title** Our Culture, Many Different Stories  
**Project Co-ordinator** Jenny Lockhart

## **Acknowledgement by Participant**

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research described in the project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to participate in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project without affecting my relationship with RMIT.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

Name of Participant (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Declaration by Wonderland evaluation team†**

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project, its procedures and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Name of team member† \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

† An appropriately qualified member of the research team must provide the explanation of, and information concerning, the research project.

Note: All parties signing the consent section must date their own signature.