

Plain Language Statement & Consent Form

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Thank you for your interest in participating in this project. Here, you can find further information so you can decide if you would like to take part.

Do I have to participate?

Participation is completely voluntary. Your participation in this project or lack thereof will not have any negative impact on your employment or scholastic endeavours. You have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation. If you do so, the data you have provided will be retained, but no further data from or about you will be collected.

If I decide to participate, what will I do?

You will be asked a few simple questions about yourself on the next page. Then we will send you an email with a link to the online Polis 'conversation' about supporting researchers to use co-design and co-production methods.

On the Polis webpage, **you will be shown statements that other people have written about this issue, and you can vote either 'agree', 'disagree' or 'pass'.** You can also write a new statement if you like, which other participants can then either agree or disagree with. Your votes and comments will be anonymous.

As time goes on, **you'll be able to see a map of the opinion groups that emerge**, so you can see patterns of agreement and disagreement. The Polis online 'conversation' will stay open for two weeks, and we will email you every few days reminding you to check back in and vote on new comments, if you wish.

Once the conversation closes, the research team will analyse the results and share them in a published peer-reviewed manuscript and with institutions to inform future policies and decision-making.

What are the possible benefits?

By participating in this project, you will have the opportunity to express your views alongside other researchers to produce collective recommendations that can be used to improve the research environment in Australia.

Participating is also an opportunity to learn directly about the *Polis* platform, an innovative tool that may be of interest to many of you.

What are the possible risks?

There are no direct risks of participating in this study. You can also withdraw from the project at any moment.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

Yes. As the Polis conversation progresses, you will see a real-time map of the 'opinion landscape' on the webpage. We also aim to analyse and publish the findings in a peer-reviewed academic journal. You may obtain a copy of these results by contacting the researchers.

What will happen to information about me?

Any comments you make in Polis are anonymous, unless you choose to share information that identifies, or may identify, you. The data from the Polis conversation will be analysed and summarised in real time, so you will be able to see how the conversation is progressing.

The identifiable data you provide when you register to take part will be stored securely and password protected so that only the researchers can access it. This deidentified data will be linked with the Polis data and used for analysis. The data may also be used in research publications and potentially student theses.

You may choose to add your email address to our mailing list, allowing us to notify you of opportunities to take part in related projects after the Polis conversation is over, for example, to participate in future research and events that emerge from the findings of this process.

In any publications, data will be presented in a de-identified form. Anonymised data will be shared openly through an online repository after the completion of the project, and it may be used in future research. Identifiable data will be stored securely for a minimum of 5 years after the research is completed, and during this period you may request to access the information held about you. After this, data will be permanently deidentified.

Who is funding this project?

This project is being funded by the Researcher Development Unit at the University of Melbourne.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact Teralynn Ludwick (Teralynn.Ludwick@unimelb.edu.au)

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Office for Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence, please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project: 2023-26535.