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## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

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**Title:** 'Australian Paramedic Mental Healthcare Education'

**Chief Investigator**

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**Principal Supervisor**

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My name is Robert Bear and I am a Flinders University PhD student. I am undertaking this research as part of my Doctorate. For further information, you are more than welcome to contact my principal supervisor. Her details are listed above.

**Description of the study**

This project will investigate the views and experiences of key paramedic industry stakeholders and examine the current curriculums and CPD programs available to inform future efforts to support effective mental healthcare education for the Australian pre-hospital care environment. This project is supported by Flinders University, College of Medicine and Public Health.

**Purpose of the study**

The increasing incidence of mental health presentations in paramedic practice highlights the need for appropriate mental healthcare education to support paramedics in this area. Despite efforts to introduce mental health education and training, there continues to be extensive debate and discussion surrounding the quality and effectiveness of this education within the Australian paramedic landscape. This project aims to explore the views and experiences of key stakeholders regarding this issue to inform future efforts to support effective mental healthcare education for the pre-hospital care environment. Additionally, an

analysis of the current undergraduate curriculums and in-service programs that paramedic students and professional paramedics receive respectively will be performed. This data will be cross-analysed with the stakeholder data obtained, specifically looking at the current state of mental health education design. The aim of this is that what is learnt will be used to inform the development of a set of national design recommendations for Australian paramedic mental health education.

### **Benefits of the study**

The sharing of your experiences will help to examine specifically what the important issues are with paramedic mental healthcare education in Australia beyond the well-established issue of the volume of education. Meaningful change can only be informed by a well-designed and conducted study, which seeks the considerations and input of all the relevant national stakeholder groups. It is my goal that this project and its results will have the ability to commence the discussion into the informed educational redesign of mental healthcare education within the Australian paramedic industry. With redesign and improved educational outcomes paramedic professionals and their patients who suffer mental illness and require emergency attention stand to benefit. Additionally, it is expected that with improved education paramedics will be able to reduce their risk level when caring for patients suffering mental illness through enhanced literacy, skills and competency in this field of care. It is expected that this in turn will potentially contribute to reducing the rising incidence of assault and injury paramedics are suffering in the field.

### **Participant involvement and potential risks**

If you agree to participate in the research study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a one-on-one interview with a researcher that will be audio-recorded for data transcription and analysis purposes.
- During the interview, you will be asked to respond to questions regarding your views about mental healthcare education for paramedics in Australia.

The interview will take about 60 minutes and participation is entirely voluntary. The interview may be conducted online using meeting software such as Skype, Zoom, MS Teams etc.

There is a possible risk that during the interviews sensitive topics may arise involving mental health which may have the potential to cause you emotional distress and unrest dependent upon your own professional and personal experiences. If you experience feelings of distress as a result of participation in this study, please let the interviewer or a research team member know immediately. If this occurs during the interview you will be offered the option to pause or terminate the interview.

You can also contact the following support services:

- Lifeline – 13 11 14, [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636, [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)
- Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467, [www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)
- MensLine Australia – 1300 789 978, [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)
- If you or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, phone triple zero (000)

### **Who can participate?**

To be included in this study you must meet one of the the following criteria;

- Australian Paramedic; With 24 months or greater experience

Or

- Australian Paramedic university graduate; who has had less than 12 months experience

### **Will taking part in this study (or travelling to) cost you anything, and will you be paid?**

The only cost to participate in the study will be your own time taken for the interview and your travel cost should you elect to attend in person. Attendance is not necessary as the interview may take place via phone or online if you prefer. There will be no financial reward or incentive offered or made available to participate in this research study. Participation is entirely voluntary.

### **Withdrawal Rights**

You may, without any penalty, decline to take part in this research study. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you may, without any penalty, withdraw at any time without explanation. To withdraw, please contact the Chief Investigator or you may just refuse to answer any questions during the interview. Any data collected up to the point of your withdrawal will be securely destroyed.

Your decision not to participate or to withdraw from this research study will not affect your relationship with Flinders University and its staff and students.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

Only researchers listed on this form have access to the individual information provided by you. Privacy and confidentiality will be assured at all times. The research outcomes will be presented in a thesis and may be presented at conferences, written up for publication or used for other research purposes related to this initial project. However, the privacy and confidentiality of individuals will be protected at all times. You will not be named, and your individual information will not be identifiable in any research products without your explicit consent.

No data, including identifiable, non-identifiable and de-identified datasets, will be shared or used in future research projects without your explicit consent. This can be done on the included consent form.

### **Data Storage**

The information collected may be stored securely on a password-protected computer and/or Flinders University server throughout the study. Any identifiable data will be de-identified for data storage purposes unless indicated otherwise. All data will be securely transferred to and stored at Flinders University for at least five years after the publication of the results. Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols.

### **How will I receive feedback?**

At the completion of the project if you wish to be provided with feedback on the outcomes of the study you can contact the researchers to request a summary which can be provided to you via email.

The project results will also be made available to a wider audience through presentations, publications and links on the CSU and Flinders Websites.

**What will happen with the results of this study and the information you give?**

It is intended that the results of this research project will be presented in a PhD thesis by Robert Bear for the award of, Doctor of Philosophy. In any publication and/or presentation arising from this research, all information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified. The final report or any publication will only contain de-identified data.

You will be given the opportunity to review your interview recording and transcript to edit and/or erase any contribution you may not be comfortable with to have it excluded from the study data.

**How is this study being paid for?**

There has been no funding allocated or awarded to this research study. It will be conducted by the Chief Investigator in the context of his PhD. No member of the research team will receive a personal financial benefit from your involvement in this research project (other than their ordinary salary or wages).

**Ethics Committee Approval**

The project has been approved by Flinders University's Human Research Ethics Committee (#2077).

**Queries and Concerns**

Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the research team. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office team via telephone at 08 8201 3116 or email

[human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au).

**To be involved**

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and if you accept our invitation to be involved, please sign the included Consent Form and return it to the Chief Investigator via email to [bear0043@flinders.edu.au](mailto:bear0043@flinders.edu.au) as your intention to participate. The Chief Investigator will respond to arrange a time for the interview upon receipt of your Consent Form.

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## CONSENT FORM

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### Consent Statement

- I have read and understood the information about the research, and I understand I am being asked to provide informed consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I can contact the research team if I have further questions about this research study.
- I am not aware of any condition that would prevent my participation, and I agree to participate in this project.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study and that my withdrawal will not affect my relationship with Flinders University and its staff and students.
- I understand that I can contact Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office if I have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study.
- I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information collected may be published. I understand that I will not be identified in any research products.

I further consent to:

- Participating in an interview
- Having my information audio-recorded
- My de-identified data and information being used in this project and other related projects for an extended period of time (no more than 10 years after the initial publication of the data)

**Signed:**

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**Name:**

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**Date:**

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