

## Student Information Statement

### The Impact of Outdoor Youth Programs on Positive Adolescent Development

**HREC Project Number:** 1443180.1

**Principal Researcher:** Paul Dudgeon, University of Melbourne

**Other Researchers:** Nick Allen, Ian Williams, Lauren Rose, Craig Olsson, George Patton, Benjamin Farinazzo, David Strickland, David Petherick, Philip Wheatley, Andrew McGuckian, Brendan Smith, and Ben Lovell

Dear Student,

We would like to invite you to take part in a new research project being run by the University of Melbourne. The project is being offered through Rosebud Secondary College to all Year 9 students (in 2016). This information sheet tells you all about the project and what is involved.

#### **What is an Information Statement?**

This information sheet helps you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read it carefully. You can ask questions about anything in it. You can talk about the project with your family or friends. Taking part is voluntary. If you don't want to take part, you don't have to. You can drop out of the project at any time. Once you have understood what the project is about, please ask your parents to complete the Medical and Consent forms (printed on YELLOW paper) and return them to your teacher at school.

#### **What is the research project about?**

This study is about building wellbeing and strengthening valuable life skills by giving young people key experiences in the outdoors. We want to find out if these experiences can help develop qualities such as confidence, resilience, responsibility, and leadership. We know that these qualities are important to leading a full and successful life. To describe this another way, we know that eating well and exercising regularly helps develop good *physical* health; in this project we want to find out whether our program can be used to develop good *emotional* health and wellbeing.

Taking part in this project involves going on a week-long outdoor camp for free. We will be working with young people in a series of small groups (up to 12 students in each group).

We will also ask you to complete several online surveys. Information from the surveys will help us learn more about young people's experiences in the outdoors and assist us in developing new programs for young people in the future.

#### **Who are the researchers?**

This project is being run by the University of Melbourne, through the Outdoor Youth Programs Research Alliance (OYPRA). We are an Australian research group and Dr Paul Dudgeon is the main researcher, along with a number of other key staff. He is based at the University of Melbourne. Whether you choose to take part in the study or not will have no effect on your relationship with the University of Melbourne or with any members of the Outdoor Youth Programs Research Alliance. This project is funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant.

#### **What will I be asked to do?**

If you decide to participate, you will get to go on a week-long, outdoor camping program for free. The camp will be held in Term 1 (2016) at an accredited campsite in or near one of Victoria's national parks. The camp will run across 7 days during school term. This will mean you will miss 5 days of school. During the program you will be involved in a range of activities, including games, group discussions and outdoor activities. The outdoor activities may include bushwalking, mountain bike riding, canoeing, ropes course and overnight camping. You do not need to have any special experience to take part in the program, and for most activities you can choose how much you want to be involved. All activities will be run by qualified instructors. Teachers and other students from your

school will also be at the camp. More information about the camp can be found on the project website at: <http://outdoorsvictoria.org.au/2016camp/>

Login using the password "Rosebud2016" You can find links to further information about the following:

- Venue
- Accommodation
- Catering & Food
- Student Equipment & Gear
- Adventure Activities
- Risk Management (e.g. emergency contacts; communications; program supports)
- Medical Forms

As well as going on camp, we will ask you to complete an online survey on five occasions (twice before you go to camp, and three times after you return). The surveys take about 30 minutes to complete and will be spread over several weeks before camp, and up to 6 months after camp. The information we gather in the surveys will help us to find out whether experiences on camp can help build wellbeing and resilience.

The online survey includes questions on:

- demographics (e.g. age, gender, family structure, parent education)
- health behaviour (e.g. nutrition, physical activity, and screen-time)
- mental strengths and difficulties (e.g. resilience, wellbeing; depressed mood, and aggression)
- relationships with schools, friends and teachers
- relationships with nature
- reflections on camp experiences

The surveys are confidential, which means only members of the research team will see your answers. Surveys will be completed at school, and members of the research team will be at school during these times. We may also invite you to participate in reflective discussions (approx. 1 hr) about your camp experiences at six-month follow-up; information from these discussions will be recorded.

With your parent's consent, we will also ask your school to provide information on attendance records, teacher observations and academic performance as part of this project. This extra information will help us build a more complete picture of student experiences and the effects of camp.

### **What are the possible risks and benefits?**

By participating in this program you will be involved in some outdoor activities. These activities might include bushwalking, mountain bike riding, canoeing, high ropes and overnight camping. As with any physical activity there is always a possibility of being hurt or injured. We aim to minimise the chance of this by: having strict rules and guidelines about safety; having qualified people running the activities; only using good quality equipment; having staff with first aid training on all trips. Your safety and wellbeing is treated as a priority on all our programs. When run safely, these outdoor activities actually have a lower risk of leading to injury than many regular sports such as football, basketball, hockey and soccer. With the activities we do, you will always have the choice about how much you want to get involved. We call this 'challenge by choice'.

As well as doing outdoor activities, you will be involved in group discussions and filling out some surveys. We understand sometimes it can be hard for people to answer personal questions. There is a possibility that you may become unhappy or distressed by some of the questions that are asked in the survey. We have done our best to make sure that the questions will not cause you to feel upset. If you do feel upset at any stage (either during surveying or on camp), you can talk to your teacher. You are also free to stop the survey at any time.

### **Psychological Sciences**

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There are many potential benefits for you by taking part in this project. By taking part you may: enjoy new activities; find out about new places to visit in Victoria; have fun; make new friends; get opportunities for leadership and responsibility; develop new skills; improve your mental and emotional health; gain greater self-awareness, confidence and independence. We hope you enjoy being part of our program.

There are also a number of broader benefits of the project. We hope to use the information we get from this project to learn more about ways of building good mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people. We would like to understand more about the types of experiences that can help young people develop skills to meet the challenges of being a teenager. This information will help guide schools and health professionals in developing further programs and approaches to support young people in the future.

#### **How will confidentiality be protected?**

The information we collect for this study will be kept confidential (subject to legal limitations). We will store study information in a password-protected database. Only members of the research team have direct access to the database. All other information collected about students will be stored in locked filing cabinets or on password-protected computers. People taking part in the study can ask to access information we hold about them. Data is kept until participants are 25 years old, and then it is destroyed. Results of the study will be summarised in various forms. A summary will be available from the project website ([www.oypra.org.au](http://www.oypra.org.au)). You will not be identified in any study reports, nor will your school be named in any public reports. If we write or talk about the results of the project, or produce educational manuals or videos, we will not use your name to protect your privacy. Grouped data from the study may also be published in academic journals. No individual information will be identified.

#### **What if I want to withdraw from the Research?**

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You can drop out at any time and withdraw any unprocessed data previously provided. You can go to school as normal during the week of the camp if you do not want to participate in this research project.

#### **Where can I get further information?**

If you would like more information, please contact the Study Coordinator, Dr. Lauren Rose on (03) 9035 7700, or [lauren.rose@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:lauren.rose@unimelb.edu.au). Alternatively, you can contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Paul Dudgeon on [dudgeon@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dudgeon@unimelb.edu.au)

This research has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Number: 1443180.1), and by the Victorian Department of Education and Training (Project ID: 2014 002549) If you have any concerns about this project please contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne (Tel: 8344 2073; Fax: 9347 6739).

#### **What do I do next?**

If you would like to take part in the project, please ask your parents to read and sign the yellow Medical and Consent forms provided and return them to your school.