

Information Letter

Informal Volunteering – Volunteers

Project title: Connecting communities: Engaging informal volunteers in local contexts

Background

You are invited to take part in this research project, 'Connecting communities: Engaging informal volunteers in local contexts' because you are a volunteer. The research project aims to chart informal volunteering's character and contribution in a pilot study through Chorus Locals.

Aim of the Study

This study aims to chart informal volunteering's character and contribution in a pilot study through Chorus Locals.

Volunteering WA defines volunteering as 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain'. Volunteering includes both:

- Formal volunteering where someone volunteers with an organisation, association, club, corporation or government, and
- Informal volunteering where an individual is not associated with another entity but still gives time for the common good of the community.

This pilot study will explore three broad research questions:

1. What is the nature and extent of informal and formal volunteering in local communities?
2. What is informal volunteering's potential relationship with more formal volunteering activities and volunteer involving organisations?
3. Which practices, platforms and people facilitate informal volunteering in a local community, and what are the practice and policy implications?

Who is undertaking the research?

This research is being undertaken by Murdoch University, who is partnering with Chorus for the pilot study. The research leads are Dr Jo-Anne Kestel, Dr Anne Peachey, Associate Professor Megan Paull, and Dr Moira Watson (Adjunct), all from the Murdoch Business School.

DECLARATION: Please be aware Dr Megan Paull is a research committee member at Volunteering WA with an extensive record of research in the field and Volunteering WA and the research team have put in place protocols to ensure any conflict of interest is declared and managed. Please also be aware that Dr Moira Watson (adjunct at Murdoch) is a board member at Chorus, and the research team at Murdoch and Chorus have set up data collection to ensure that participation in data collection for this research is managed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity for participants. Dr Watson will only have access to deidentified data.

What Does Your Participation Involve?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey. The online survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. This survey will assess how you engage in volunteering. Some participants may elect to put their name forward to be interviewed. Interviews will explore the motivations and approaches to volunteering. Individual interviews will be conducted online (Teams or

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

Your privacy

Possible Benefits

Possible Risks

Page 2

**Data retention:**

All data and study records will be stored securely in a dedicated folder in the MU shared drive for the project. During the study. Following completion, all study information will be held in a secure archive at Murdoch University for seven years for use in later research if required, after which electronic data will be deleted and hard copy records destroyed using Murdoch University's confidential disposal system.

Survey responses will be held in the online Qualtrics platform and then exported to a statistics program for analysis. The qualitative interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Any information identifying you will be removed during transcription. Immediately after each interview the audio recording will be uploaded to the secure, password-protected Murdoch University server identified only via numerical code. The audio recorder will be secured in a locked drawer until the audio recording has been transcribed, after which the audio recording will be erased from the recorder. Transcripts will be identified only with a numerical code. A master list linking the numerical code to participant details will be stored securely and separately from the de-identified transcripts. Exemplar quotes drawn from qualitative data and provided to support emergent themes will be identified only with a code.

Questions

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Dr Jo-Anne Kestel on ph 9360 6041 or Dr Megan Paull on ph 9360 6040. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you.

Once we have analysed the information from this study, the final report will include an Executive Summary which will be available from the VWA website. A one-page summary will be available via VWA and Chorus websites.

We would like to thank you in advance for your assistance with this research project. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to provide consent by clicking on the consent button at the start of the online survey agreeing that you:

- Understand what you have read
 - Consent to take part in the research project outlined in this Information Sheet
- Please make sure you read all the way to the end before clicking on the link below.

https://murdochuni.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eER6RSxMUSEK6rQ

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2025/145). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics & Integrity on Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail human.ethics@murdoch.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.