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**Parent/Guardian Information Statement for the Research Project:  
*Early Engagement: Tertiary Success – Sustainability meets Statistics & STEM***

Your child is invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being conducted by A/Prof Peter Howley from the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences/Statistics, The University of Newcastle, and project team\*. This project has been funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training.

***Why is the research being done?***

The purpose of the research is to evaluate a project-based learning activity to assess its potential to assist students in low SES, remote and rural areas engage with Environmental Science and Sustainability, Statistics and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

***Who can participate in the research?***

You have been selected to participate because of your geographical location and our intent to provide equitable teaching and learning experiences and knowledge nationally.

***What would you be asked to do?***

If you agree to your child's participation:

- we ask you to complete, with your child, the consent form and have your child return it to their teacher;
- your child will then complete two 8-minute online (anonymous) student surveys in each of July and September, assessing his/her perceptions, attitudes and knowledge concerning Statistics, Environmental Sciences and Sustainability, and STEM. The surveys will be administered by your teacher, most likely during a class.

***What choice do you have?***

Participation in this research is entirely your choice and there will be no impairment to students, teachers or schools for choosing not to participate. Only those people who give their informed consent will be able to participate. All responses from students will be anonymous.

If you do decide to consent to your child participating, you or your child may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.

***How much time will it take?***

The surveys should take about 8 minutes to complete on each of the two occasions (July and September) at a time determined by your child's teacher.

***What are the risks and benefits of participating?***

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this research. You may or may not directly benefit from your child taking part in this research and there will be no payment for taking part.

The benefits include connection with tertiary/industry professionals and academics, and supporting the development of new engaging and educational activities and approaches for students and teachers in remote, rural and low SES areas nationally.

***How will your privacy be protected?***

The questionnaire is anonymous. A unique code will be generated by the participant which may be later used to link the July and September surveys and/or to identify a submission should a participant wish to later have their submission removed.

***How will the information collected be used?***

The collected data and analysis will inform the aims of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program Project and may be presented in journal publications, reports and at conferences or similar fora. Non-identifiable anonymous data may also be shared with other parties to encourage scholarly scrutiny and to contribute to further research and public knowledge, or as required by law.

Your Principal may be provided a summary report across all NSW participants following the project's conclusion, which is 31 Dec 2017.

***What do you need to do to participate?***

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you and your child understand its contents before you consent to his/her participation. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, please discuss any concerns with either your teacher, principal or Aboriginal Education Officer/Worker/Assist and/or contact the Project Officer via [Latha.Lewis@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Latha.Lewis@newcastle.edu.au) or (02) 4985 4169, or Chief Investigator A/Prof Peter Howley (02) 4921 5518.

If you would like your child to participate, please complete the 'Student Consent Form for the Research Project' with your child and ask them to return it to his/her teacher.

If you are consenting on behalf of a child or young person and they can understand what is being asked of them, please discuss the project with them before making a decision. Where a parent/guardian consents to their child or young person participating, the final decision will rest with the child / young person.

***Further information***

If you would like further information please contact the Project Officer via [Latha.Lewis@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Latha.Lewis@newcastle.edu.au) or (02) 4985 4169, or Chief Investigator A/Prof Peter Howley (02) 4921 5518.

We really appreciate your time and thank you for considering this invitation to support education research.



A/Prof Peter Howley  
Associate Professor of Statistics, The University of Newcastle

***Complaints about this research***

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2017-0090.

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Services, NIER Precinct, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 4921 6333, email [Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au).

**\*Project Team:**

- A/Prof Peter Howley, Statistics Discipline, The University of Newcastle
- Professor Tim Roberts: Director of Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment, The University of Newcastle
- A/Prof Maree Gruppetta: Indigenous Education and Research, Wollotuka Institute, The University of Newcastle
- Latha Lewis Project Officer, The University of Newcastle