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**Principal's Information Statement for the Research Project:  
*Early Engagement: Tertiary Success – Sustainability meets Statistics & STEM***

You are 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 our NESA-endorsed teacher workshop and project-based learning activity to assess their potential to assist teachers and 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?***

Your school has 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 school's staff and students being invited to participate, you will need to complete and return the 'Principal Consent Form for the Research Project', acknowledging that you will:

- inform your staff and students about the research, which involves completing online anonymous surveys (each of approximately 8 minutes' duration) surrounding perceptions, attitudes and knowledge concerning Statistics, Environmental Sciences and Sustainability, and STEM;
- disseminate participant information statements and consent forms (supplied by the research team) to teachers, Aboriginal Education Officers/Workers/Assistants and students (and their parents/guardians), and invite students and their parents to consider completing if they wish to participate in the research;
- disseminate a link to each of the online surveys (provided by the research team) to teachers and ask they allow students who have provided the teacher a completed and authorised consent form to complete the surveys in July and September (we recommend a particular part of the class time is set aside for this activity, and that teachers use the survey process and research itself as a part of student learning about data collection and research, but we leave the details to the teacher's discretion).

***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 teachers and students will be anonymous. If you do decide to participate, you 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).

***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 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.

You will 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 understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, 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.

If you would like to participate, please complete and return the 'Principal Consent Form for the Research Project' to [Latha.Lewis@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Latha.Lewis@newcastle.edu.au). Latha (Project Officer) will then contact you to indicate receipt and provide consent and information statements for students, information for teachers and survey links.

### ***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