

## Participant Information Sheet

**Research Title: Impact of COVID-19 on Men and Women's Career Progression**

### Researcher(s):

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Thank you for your organisations executive teams' interest in participating in this research project. Please read the following information about the project so that you can decide whether you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have about your involvement in the project.

If you decide to participate in this research, please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to stop at any time, and you would not need to give any explanation for your decision to stop participating. If you choose to stop participating, your data will not be used in the research.

Whether the interview is held face to face or via Zoom, each nominated focus group participant will be sent via email a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form to sign prior to the interview taking place. The signed Consent Form should be returned to Dr Terry Fitzsimmons at [t.fitzsimmons@business.uq.edu.au](mailto:t.fitzsimmons@business.uq.edu.au) and you will be sent a PDF copy of the Consent to keep.

Your decision as to whether you take part, or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the University of Queensland.

### What is this Research About?

This research project aims to understand how work - paid employment and unpaid work - and home life has changed and continues to change due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Australia and how this has impacted upon workplace gender equality.

In particular, we are interested in understanding how men and women are managing their broad range of responsibilities, navigating new ways of working and continuing to provide care within their families across different industry sectors in Australia. The aim is to understand the issues and challenges faced during this period to inform research, policy and

industry insights as well as the road to recovery. The industry sectors we are examining are derived from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's breakdown of the Australian economy and are listed in the following Table. Below.

<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>
<b>Education and Training</b>
<b>Retail Trade</b>
<b>Financial and Insurance Services</b>
<b>Accommodation and Food Services</b>
<b>Other Services</b>
<b>Arts and Recreation Services</b>
<b>Administrative and Support Services</b>
<b>Professional Scientific and Technical Services</b>
<b>Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services</b>
<b>Information, Media and Telecommunications Services</b>
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>
<b>Agriculture Forestry and Fishing</b>
<b>Transport, Postal and Warehousing</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>
<b>Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services</b>
<b>Public Administration and Safety</b>
<b>Construction</b>
<b>Mining</b>

Table 1. WGEA Industry Sector Categories

## **What are You Asking Us to Do?**

If you and members of your executive team agree to participate in the focus group interview, the researchers will organise a time (and medium) for the conduct of the focus group. The focus group interview will be audio recorded using a portable digital device if face to face or, as is most likely, audio recorded via Zoom if interviews are conducted via this platform. Focus group interviews will run for approximately 60 minutes. However, if you have information that you want to convey and this takes longer than 60 minutes, then we will extend the interview time to accommodate this.

The questions we wish to explore with your executive team are attached.

In responding to the attached questions during the focus group session, we ask the executive group to identify 2-5 people in their organisation with broad industry/sector

perspectives on these questions to participate in the focus group. We will limit focus group size to 5 to ensure all participants have an opportunity to convey responses to the questions posed.

If your organisation represents women from across multiple sectors identified in Table 1, we may need to discuss with you the undertaking of more than one focus group session to ensure perspectives from each sector are captured. Additionally, regardless of whether we need more than one focus group, you may feel that involving individual members of your organisation, who are not currently on your executive team, will benefit the research we are undertaking and so we invite you to invite them to also participate in the focus group/s

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

You will be able to provide information about the opportunities and challenges associated with the changing nature of work and lives due to COVID-19/Coronavirus. These insights will be vitally important to discussions surrounding gender equality, the provision of unpaid care in Australia and the distribution of domestic labour in Australian homes as well as in formulating recommendations to business and government as Australia emerges from the pandemic.

### **What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?**

Australian Government responses to COVID-19 through lock-downs and social distancing has been noted as being responsible for heightened levels of stress, anxiety and insecurity for most Australians. Because the research explores topics that may be the cause or be contributing to the cause of these factors there may be a risk of increased psychological discomfort.

To address the risk identified above, interviewers will check in during the interview with the focus group members to ensure that they are comfortable in continuing their participation. If any of your team are experiencing any discomfort we will ask whether they would like to discontinue the interview.

### **What will happen to the information about the Focus Group Participants?**

All information collected about you will remain confidential.

The data in the form of digital recordings and transcripts taken from these will be stored in a secure environment at the University of Queensland and access to the data will be restricted to the members of the listed research team. Only members of the research team outlined above will have access to the data. Once all publications from the project are completed the data will be deleted.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published in a report as well as academic journal articles and presented in a variety of forms, including conferences. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that individual executive team members and your organisation cannot be identified, except with your expressed permission.

### **What will happen if we decide to withdraw?**

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research anytime without needing to provide any explanation, and you would not receive any penalty or bias as a result of your withdrawal. Should you decide to withdraw, all the information collected from/about you will be destroyed and will not be used in the research.

### **Can We hear about the results of this research?**

A summary of the major findings will be provided to all participants who opt to receive this information via a link to the report which can be found at <https://www.agec.org.au/resources/>

A written report and presentation will also be given to the AGECC and its various member organisations on the findings and recommendations.

### **Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?**

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Whilst you are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher contactable on [t.fitzsimmons@business.uq.edu.au](mailto:t.fitzsimmons@business.uq.edu.au) if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Coordinator on +617 3365 3924 / +617 3443 1656 or email [humanethics@research.uq.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@research.uq.edu.au)

This research Ethics ID number: 2021/HE002076