Information Sheet – sample

Insert details at [ ]. Blue text provides guidance.
Do not include shading or blue text in your submission.

(Letterhead of the School/Faculty/Unit)
(if collaborating with outside researchers
letterhead or current logo for their organisation/institution)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(Title of research must be the same as the Consent Form)

(Researchers
Chief Investigator name, qualifications and identify if a student and the course)
(Project Supervisor/s name/s positions School/Division/Unit
School / Faculty / Organisation]
[

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study on ...

The study is being conducted by [names of researchers] from the [School/Division/Unit at the Charles Sturt University.
If the research team is made up of several members, their names and affiliations may be listed under ***Researchers*** at the top of the document. If a student this must be included along with the course studied.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

1. What is the purpose of this study?
[in simple language state the aims of the project and why you consider it worth doing]. If appropriate put the research into context in relation to other research on the topic, eg *Previous research has shown that …*

2. Why have I been invited to participate in this study?

[State who is being invited to participate, *ie* the category or group, and how they have been identified to receive the invitation].

Eg *We are seeking males aged 18-40 years to participate in this research. Your name was selected at random from the Electoral Role*.

If applicable, include information on who should not, or cannot, participate, *ie* identify the exclusion criteria, eg *If you are not currently in a management position then unfortunately you are not eligible to participate.* OR *People who are claustrophobic should not participate as the research procedures require participants to be in a small confined space.* OR *If you are taking medications for … then unfortunately you cannot participate.*

3. What does this study involve?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to [using simple language give a clear and explicit explanation of what participants will be asked to do or what will be done to them].

This should:

- Identify all procedures, examinations, medications, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, observations, etc and where and when they will take place and whether interviews etc will be recorded (audio or video).
- Explain what information you will be obtaining from or about the participant. If access to participants' records, *eg* medical records, is being sought, state what information will be extracted (explicit consent is required).
- Identify who will have contact with the participants to conduct the research procedures, eg perform tests or conduct interviews, focus groups etc. For specialist procedures, provide advice on the qualifications or expertise of the investigator performing the procedure.
- Where a participant has the option of participating in one, or more than one, component of a project, this must be made clear with a statement like, *If you choose to participate by returning the questionnaire, you are not obligated to agree to an interview*.
- Make it clear which aspects, if any, of the project are experimental.

4. Are there risks and benefits to me in taking part in this study?

[Provide an objective description of the known and potential risks/discomforts and benefits.]

Any benefits to the participants should be identified, but not exaggerated. If there is no reasonable chance of a benefit then this needs to be stated, eg *There will be no benefit to you in participating in this research;* or *We cannot promise you any benefit from participating in this research*.

This section should deal with benefits to the individual participant, not general benefits such as those for future generations, society, or the advancement of knowledge.

Any risks to participants should be identified and if an injury occurs what procedures are in place to assist participants and who will pay for any treatment required.

5. How is this study being paid for?

[If the research is funded by an external body state the organisation and whether the organisation will have any input in the research results].

6. Will taking part in this study (or travelling to) cost me anything, and will I be paid?

If there is to be any reimbursement or payments to participants, provide details. Include how and when participants will be paid and what happens if they withdraw part way through the study.

7. What if I don't want to take part in this study?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, is your decision and will not disadvantage you.

If you do decide to participate, [or, *If you do consent to your child participating*] you [or, *you or your child*] may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and have the option of withdrawing any data, which identifies you.
This is not relevant for one-off anonymous contact with participants, *eg* anonymous questionnaires.

8. What if I participate and want to withdraw later?

For projects where the data is identifiable, or re-identifiable, participants who withdraw should have the option of withdrawing their data, however in some cases, such as focus group discussions, this is not possible.

10. How will my confidentiality be protected?

[State how the research data will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how long it will be retained.]

Eg, *Any information collected by the researchers which might identify you will be stored securely and only accessed by the researchers unless you consent otherwise, except as required by law.* There are limits on

assurances of confidentiality as law may subpoena research data/records. If no identifying information is to be collected, eg anonymous questionnaires, then the statement could be *The questionnaire is anonymous and it will not be possible to identify you from your answers.*

Data will be retained for at least 5 years at [state where – for research conducted by University staff at least a copy of the data used for analysis is to be held at the Charles Sturt University.]

If data are identifiable, how will confidentiality be ensured, eg replacing names with numerical codes. When will identifiers be permanently removed?

Information which might identify participants is not to be disclosed without their prior consent. This is particularly important for interview, oral history, focus group, imagery or performance data, where individuals might be quoted or directly or indirectly identified. Explicit consent is required in this case and participants must be able to sight the intended use of their material before granting Consent.

Focus Group Discussions. Focus group participants should be requested to maintain the confidentiality of the group discussion and not divulge the specific content to outside parties.

Illegal behaviour. If there is a possibility that participants could report incidences of criminal behaviour during their participation, eg in a survey or during an interview, there should be a warning in the Information Statement that if they give specific details about an incident (eg date, place, perpetrators), the researcher may be obliged to report the information to the Police.

11. What will happen to the information that I give you?

[Explain how and where the data will be reported or presented], eg *in papers in scientific journals; in a thesis to be submitted for Ms X's degree; at a public exhibition. Please note that in some circumstances participants may agree to be identified or their comments accredited to them.*

[Explain what information about the participants will be reported], eg *Individual participants will not be identified in any reports arising from the project.*

Audio and Video taping. If audio or video taping is to be used include whether participants will be given an opportunity to review the recording eg *You will be able to review the recording to edit or erase your contribution.* Where audio tapes are to be transcribed, it should extend to *recording and/or transcripts.*

[Explain what feedback will be available to participants about the results of the study.]

12. What should I do if I want to discuss this study further before I decide?

If you would like further information please contact [name and contact details of a person(s) from whom potential participants can obtain further information about the project]. At least one contact must be the Chief Investigator or Project Supervisor, only work contact details to be used for CSU staff or for students a mobile phone number to be listed. Avoid using home and personal email addresses. For research with international collaborators or to be conducted overseas an international contact number to be included.

13. 'Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?'

NOTE: Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee (for minimal risk projects list the Faculty that approved the research) has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Executive Officer:

The Executive Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee

Tel: (02) 6338 4628
Email: ethics@csu.edu.au

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

Thank you for considering this invitation.
This information sheet is for you to keep.