



Australian Government  
Department of Defence



## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET – ADF Family Members Focus Group**

<b>Title</b>	<i>The Wellness Action Through Checking Health Project</i>	
<b>Short title</b>	<i>The WATCH project</i>	
<b>Protocol number</b>	277-20	
<b>Project Sponsor</b>	<i>Department of Defence</i>	
<b>Principal Investigators</b>	<i>Dr Lisa Dell</i>	<i>(03) 9035 5599</i>
	<i>Professor David Forbes</i>	<i>(03) 9035 5599</i>
	<i>Professor Meaghan O'Donnell</i>	<i>(03) 9035 5599</i>
	<i>Professor Alexander McFarlane</i>	<i>(03) 9035 5599</i>
	<i>Dr Kim Jones</i>	<i>(03) 9035 5599</i>
	<i>Dr Ellie Lawrence-Wood</i>	<i>(03) 9035 5599</i>
	<i>Ms Nicole Sadler</i>	<i>(03) 9035 5599</i>
	<i>Ms Helen Benassi</i>	<i>(02) 6192 7263</i>
	<i>Ms Carolina Casetta</i>	<i>(02) 6132 7989</i>

We would like to invite you to take part in the families focus group component of the WATCH Project. This Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form tells you about this component of the research. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the focus group. Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary; there is no obligation to take part in the focus group. If you choose not to participate there will be no detriment to your family member's career or future health care.

If you want to take part in the focus group, you will be asked to provide electronic consent by ticking the relevant checkbox.

You will be able to download and keep a copy of this Participant Information and Consent Form.

### **Brief description of the project**

The WATCH Project is about finding ways that Defence health processes can be bolstered to better manage ADF members experiencing changes in their mental health, and how Defence can better support ADF members manage their own mental health. This families component of the WATCH Project is about understanding the perspectives and experiences of family members of current ADF members.

We are interested in talking to you about your experiences with supporting your family member in maintaining their mental health and wellbeing. We are particularly interested in what you might do and what resources you might use if you start noticing changes in your family member; such as changes in their sleep, relationships or everyday coping.

We will also be talking to ADF members about how they manage their own mental health and to health professionals to get a better understanding of how they identify and deal with these changes in ADF members they see in their practice.

### **What does participation involve?**

We would like to invite you to take part in a focus group on a voluntary basis. We will contact you to organise a time for the focus group and provide you other relevant information about the project. You will be able to ask any questions you may have about the project during this conversation or at any other time.

As part of the focus group, you will be asked at least six questions, which should take approximately one hour of your time. You will be asked questions about how you notice early changes in your family member's mental health symptoms, support options, whether you have provided help or guidance in the past, and whether changes in your family member's mental health has or would impact you.

When participating in the focus group, you will not be required to share your name or the name of your family member with other members of the focus group if you prefer. If you choose to remain anonymous to other participants during the focus group you will be given the opportunity to participate under an alias (a randomly selected first name) for the purposes of being able to identify your data for removal should you wish to withdraw after the focus group and before data is de-identified.

### **Potential Benefits for You and Wider Community**

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from attending this focus group. However, this research has been designed to inform how Defence health processes can be bolstered to better manage ADF members experiencing changes in their mental health. This research has also been designed to inform how Defence can better support ADF members proactively manage their own mental health. This research will indicate the extent to which families are aware of resources available to them to support their ADF member with changes in their mental health. This research may also identify resources that are currently not available, but that may be useful to ADF family members. Ultimately, better management of these changes in mental health can contribute to a reduction in the impact of disorder and improved outcomes in work, home and social life.

### **Risks of participating**

It is possible that you may experience some distress or discomfort when participating in the focus group. This is because the focus group contains questions about your experiences with your family member's health issues, their social supports, and how you manage or have been impacted by your family member's health problems in the past. If you feel upset or stressed during the focus group please let the facilitator know.

You have the right to pause or stop your participation in the focus group at any time. You will also have time at the end of the focus group to debrief with the researcher and ask any questions you might have.

### **Privacy and confidentiality**

The data from this project (including audio-recordings, high-level transcripts) will be stored electronically and securely at the University of Melbourne. Only Investigators and researchers from Phoenix Australia working on this project will have access to the data.

Conversations between participants during the focus groups are confidential and must not be shared outside of the focus group. All information will be treated in strict confidence as far as allowed by law, except if you talk about hurting yourself or someone else, or if you disclose abuse or neglect of a child, or yourself. Then we might need to tell someone to keep you or other people safe.

Focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed. The data obtained from this project will be retained for a minimum of five years following the publication of research findings. We will retain and destroy your data in accordance with Disposal Standard of the Public Record Office Victoria (PROS) 10/13. These guidelines state that data will be destroyed on the computers which were used to store and process the data and also in system backups.

At no point will your personal information be shared with Defence or any other third party, including your family member's Defence health service providers. The exception to this is if we become concerned that you are at risk of hurting yourself or someone else, or if you disclose that you or a child is at risk of abuse or neglect. In this case, we may need to tell someone to keep you or other people safe. Defence will only be provided with reports and communications which contain aggregated data, and will include some direct quotes from participants (discussed further under dissemination of research findings).

### **Withdrawal from the research**

You may withdraw from the project at any time with no detriment to your family member's career or future health care. You are under no obligation to complete the focus group once you have started it. You are also permitted to request that data you provide be excluded from analyses by contacting the Principal Investigator and request a withdrawal of data, up until data is prepared for publication.

If you complete the focus group and, you are able to withdraw from the research and have your data excluded from analyses by contacting Dr Lisa Dell on (02) 9035 5599. All data, including any notes that have been taken during focus group, will not be used in analyses.

However, once data has been prepared for analysis and publication, we are unable to remove your data from analyses and reporting as we will not be able to determine what data specifically relates to you.

### **Other relevant human research ethics considerations**

The ethical aspects of this research project have been approved by the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (DDVA HREC).

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

### **Guidelines for Volunteers**

You have been provided a copy DDVA HREC Guidelines for Volunteers, which is also available at [http://www.defence.gov.au/health/hrec/docs/Guidelines\\_for\\_Volunteers.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/health/hrec/docs/Guidelines_for_Volunteers.pdf).

### **Dissemination of research findings**

You will be provided a copy of the research findings by the Principal Investigator upon your request.

The results of this research project will be disseminated over a number of Department of Defence platforms (including Service Newspaper articles, Spotlights, factsheets etc), to reach ADF members, and Defence personnel involved in health policy, programs and service delivery, and to ADF family members via Defence Open Arms, Phoenix Australia, Defence Families Australia (DFA) and other Defence communications. This data will also be reported in academic journals, research conferences and on the Phoenix Australia website.

In any of the above communications, publications and/or presentations, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified. We may use quotes you provide, however, we will not attribute those quotes to you and we will select quotes that will not identify you. We will record and transcribe your focus group at a high level, which means that while we may transcribe certain quotes word for word from you, we will usually write rough notes about the key themes you are raising in response to the questions.

### **Concerns or complaints**

Should you have any complaints or concerns about the manner in which this project is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Dr Lisa Dell on (03) 9035 5599 or you may prefer to contact the DDVA HREC:

Telephone: (02) 6192 7821

Email: [ddva.hrec@defence.gov.au](mailto:ddva.hrec@defence.gov.au)

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research is being conducted by Phoenix Australia – Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health and will be funded by the Department of Defence.

Phoenix Australia will receive a payment from the Department of Defence for undertaking this research project.

No member of the research team will receive a personal financial benefit from your involvement in this research project (other than their ordinary wages).

### **For questions, problems or concerns, please contact the following:**

#### **The Project Team**

Phoenix Australia: Centre for Posttraumatic Stress Studies

Phone: (03) 9035 5599.

Email: [phoenix-research@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:phoenix-research@unimelb.edu.au)

Principal Investigator: Dr Lisa Dell

University of Melbourne

Phone: (03) 9035 5599.

Email: [lisa.dell@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:lisa.dell@unimelb.edu.au)

### **Resources and contacts**

If you find involvement in the focus group distressing any way you can talk to someone about it.

### **ADF All Hours Support Line**

Call 1800 628 036 for the ADF All-Hours Support Line

This is a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week confidential telephone support service for current ADF members including reservists and families (Outside Australia call +61 2 9425 3878)

### **Defence Family Helpline**

Call 1800 624 608 for 24 hour support for Defence families, and is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

### **Open Arms Veterans and Families Counselling**

Call 1800 011 046, [www.openarms.gov.au](http://www.openarms.gov.au)

Open Arms provides free and confidential counselling, group programs and suicide prevention training to anyone who has served at least one day in the ADF, and their families.

### **Lifeline**

13 11 14 for 24 hour telephone counselling services.

### **1800 RESPECT**

Call 1800 737 732, <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

1800 respect is a 24-hour phone support service for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

### **Relationships Australia**

Call 1300 364 277, <https://www.relationships.org.au/>

Relationships Australia provides relationship support services for individuals, families and communities.

### **Beyond Blue**

Call 1300 22 4636, <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Beyond blue is available 24/7 for phone based support and online chat from 1pm to 12am. The beyond Blue team will listen, provide information and advice, and point you in the right direction so you can seek further support.

### **Mensline Australia**

Call 1300 78 99 78, <https://mensline.org.au/>

Mensline Australia is a telephone and online counselling service offering support for Australian men anywhere, anytime.

### **ADF Health and Wellbeing Portal 'Fighting Fit'**

[www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being](http://www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being)

The ADF Health and Wellbeing Portal provides ADF members and their families with a single point of access to a wide range of information on health, mental health and rehabilitation support and services, both within Defence and from other government and community organisations. This includes the fact sheets and advice referred to directly below.

### **Fact Sheets**

[www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/services-support-fightingfit/fact-sheets](http://www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/services-support-fightingfit/fact-sheets)

On the ADF Health and Wellbeing Portal, there are fact sheets on a range of health and wellbeing topics available for your reference, and include information on where to find help and support. This includes fact sheets on sleep, anxiety, depression and posttraumatic stress. For advice specific on fitness and nutrition, please see the following link [www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/fitness-nutrition](http://www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/fitness-nutrition)



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**



## **CONSENT FORM**

**Title** The Wellness Action Through Checking Health Project  
**Short title** The WATCH project  
**Protocol number** 277-20.

I, ..... give my consent to participate in the WATCH focus group on the following basis:

I have had explained to me the aims of the focus group and the entire research project, how it will be conducted and my role in it.

I understand:

- the risks involved as described in the Participant Information Sheet
- there is no obligation to take part in the focus group.
- if I choose not to participate there will be no detriment to my family member's career or future health care
- I am free to withdraw at any time with no detriment to my family member's career or future health care (data can only be withdrawn prior to the data being prepared for publication)
- My focus group will be audio recorded and transcribed at a high level, except for quotes that will be 'word for word'.

I am cooperating in this project on condition that:

- the information I provide will be kept confidential
- the information will be used only for this project and projects that are closely related to this original project/in the same general area of research
- the research results will be made available to me at my request and any published reports of this project will preserve my anonymity
- I have been provided a copy of to the 'Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (DDVA HREC) Guidelines for Volunteers'.

### **Consent will be provided electronically**

Should you have any complaints or concerns about the manner in which this project is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the researchers in person, or you may prefer to contact the Executive Officer, DDVA HREC on (02) 6192 7821 or [ddva.hrec@defence.gov.au](mailto:ddva.hrec@defence.gov.au)