

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM



TO: Photovoice Participants

Plain Language Statement

Date: 05.02.2026

Full Project Title: Young People's Perspectives on Commercial and Economic Determinants of Health: A National Photovoice Study

Principal Researcher: Dr Melissa Kennedy (Deakin University)

Associate Researcher(s):

Prof. Kathryn Backholer (Deakin University), Prof. Gary Sacks (Deakin University), Dr Kate Lycett (Deakin University), Angelica Ojinnaka-Psillakis (Deakin University), Planning Saw (Deakin University), Amie Furlong (Future Healthy Countdown), Kevin Kapeke (VicHealth), Cham Kim (Future Healthy Countdown), Sarah Lake (ARACY), Adam Valvasori (ARACY).

Invitation to participate in a research study

1. What is the study about?

This study explores how young people aged 16-25 experience commercial and economic influences on their health and wellbeing. We're interested in understanding how things like:

- **Commercial influences:** e.g. marketing, branding, social media, retail environments
- **Economic conditions:** e.g. employment, physical location and access to services

...affect your physical health, mental health, and social wellbeing in your daily life.

In simpler terms: This study looks at how the things around you—like the products you see, the prices of everyday items, and how easy or hard it is to access what you need—can affect your health and wellbeing.

For example, this could include things like how food and drink are advertised, what's available in local shops, how social media promotes certain lifestyles, or how money, housing, and jobs affect your choices.

This connects with ARACY's Nest Framework, which describes health and wellbeing in simple terms—feeling safe, connected, supported, and having the basics you need to grow and participate in your community.

The study uses **Photovoice** - an exciting research method where you become the photographer and storyteller! You'll take photos of things in your everyday environment that show these influences, then discuss your experiences through interviews and workshops with other young people and researchers.

2. Has this study received funding?

This study is funded by Deakin University, ARACY and VicHealth.

3. Do I have to participate?

Being part of this study is **completely voluntary**. If you want to be part of the study, we ask that you read the information below carefully and ask us any questions.

You can read the information below and decide at the end if you want to participate. If you decide not to participate, this won't affect your relationship with Deakin University, the researchers, or ARACY.

4. Who is being invited to participate? How were my contact details obtained?

Young people aged 16-25 are invited to participate. An Expression of Interest email and form was circulated to ARACY's Young & Wise Network. Your contact details were only obtained if you are registered on this network and provided us your contact details via this project's Expression of Interest form. Your contact details were not provided from ARACY.

Understanding Consent Requirements

For participants aged 16-17 years:

- Both you AND your parent/guardian must provide consent for you to participate
- You'll both provide consent electronically through return email
- During the Induction Workshop, we'll confirm that you understand the study and feel comfortable participating
- Your photos and reflections will NOT be shared with your parents unless there's a safety concern requiring us to do so

For participants aged 18-25 years:

- You can provide consent independently without parental involvement

English language requirement:

- All study materials, workshops, and interviews are conducted in English
- You should be comfortable reading, writing, and speaking in English
- If you have any concerns about language, please let us know and we can discuss support options

5. What will I be asked to do?

You are being invited to participate in 3 core activities, with the option to further participate in an analysis workshop at the end.

Activity 1: Induction Workshop

- **What:** 1-hour online workshop (approximately 30 participants).
- **What you'll do:** Learn about Photovoice methods, meet other participants, explore concepts around commercial and economic influences, get practical photography tips.
- During the workshop, we'll discuss photography risk levels, consent procedures for photographing others, and how to protect your privacy and that of others in your photos.

Activity 2: Photovoice Documentation

- **What:** Take 7 photographs over 2-3 weeks.
- **What you'll do:** Document commercial and economic influences in your everyday environment, write short reflections (40-60 words) for each photo, submit securely online.
- You will be provided with a Photovoice Participant Handout for detailed instructions on photography guidelines.
- You'll submit your photos and reflections via **Qualtrics**, a secure online survey platform.

Activity 3: Individual Interview

- **What:** 30-minute interview (audio recorded online via **Zoom** or by phone).
- **What you'll do:** Discuss your selected photos using guided questions (the SHOWED method: what you See, what's Happening, how it relates to Our lives, Why it exists, how it could Educate others, what we can Do).
- During the interview, we'll review all 7 of your photos together and you'll decide for each photo whether it can be: (1) shared publicly as-is, (2) needs modifications like blurring or cropping before sharing, or (3) should remain private and used only for analysis.

Activity 4: Participatory Member Checking Workshop (optional participation, consent for this workshop will be followed up after the interview)

- **What:** 2-hour online group workshop
- **What you'll do:** Review and validate our analysis of key themes, co-develop policy recommendations based on your insights.

6. Will I be reimbursed?

Yes! You will receive financial compensation recognising your time and expertise as a knowledge contributor at **\$30 per hour** for each research activity you complete:

- Induction workshop (1 hour)
- Individual interview (30 minutes)
- Member checking workshop (2 hours)

Payment will be made by bank transfer within 2 weeks of each completed activity.

This compensation acknowledges that you're not just a research participant - you're contributing valuable expertise and intellectual work to this project.

7. Are there any benefits from participation?

The benefits of participating include:

- **Amplifying young people's perspectives:** Contributing your voice to research that could improve policies and programs affecting young people across Australia
- **Skill development:** Learning research, photography, critical analysis, and advocacy skills through the Photovoice methodology
- **Connection:** Meeting other young people who care about these issues and want to create positive change

8. Are there any risks from participation?

We want you to know about potential risks so you can make an informed decision:

1. **Emotional distress:** Discussion on commercial and economic determinants might bring up distress related to financial pressure, employment challenges, housing stress, or other economic difficulties.
2. **Privacy considerations:** While we protect your confidentiality, participating in group activities (workshops) means other participants will hear some of your views and experiences.
3. **Potential pressure to participate:** You might feel obligated to participate due to your existing relationship with ARACY or because you've expressed interest.
4. **Photography-related risks:**

Different types of photos carry different levels of privacy risk. We've developed a 4-level risk framework to help you understand these risks:

- **Low risk:** Public shopfronts, billboards, signage, branded goods without identifiable people
- **Moderate risk:** Photos of yourself, family, or friends (requires their written consent)
- **Moderate-high risk:** Photos with strangers in the background (we'll blur or crop these)
- **High risk (prohibited):** Photos containing distressing, unsafe, or illegal material

Even if you don't photograph people directly, some photos might contain clues that could identify you or your location (like house numbers, distinctive landmarks, or personal items with your name). We'll help you identify these risks and protect your privacy by blurring, cropping, or keeping photos private as needed.

5. **Familial or social tension:** If your photos or stories involve family members or friends, this might create sensitivities or tensions in those relationships.
6. **Legal considerations:** If any photo suggests illegal activity, we are required by law to report it to relevant authorities.
7. **Technology and data security:** While we use secure platforms (**Folktale** for video expression of interest, **Qualtrics** for your EOI contact and background information and photo submission, **Zoom** for interviews), there are always small risks with online data collection.

How we'll manage these risks:

(1) Emotional support:

- You can skip any questions that make you uncomfortable
- You can pause or stop interviews/workshops at any time if you feel distressed
- We'll provide the opportunity to debrief with Sarah Lake, Policy and Engagement Officer at ARACY.
- We can provide information about support services if needed

(2) Privacy protection:

- Recordings of participant background introductions will not be made, to reduce personal information collection
- We use participant codes (not names) for data storage and pseudonyms for reporting
- You have complete control over which (if any) of your photos are used publicly
- We protect your privacy, but **confidentiality in group workshops can't be guaranteed** due to the presence of other participants in the session. Share only what you're comfortable sharing in a group.

(3) No pressure guarantee:

- Your participation is completely voluntary - there's no obligation because of your ARACY connection
- You can withdraw at any time without any negative consequences
- Deciding not to participate won't affect any current or future opportunities with ARACY or Deakin University

(4) Photography guidance:

- Comprehensive risk framework training in Induction Workshop
- Detailed Photovoice Participant Handout with examples
- Individual support if you're unsure about a photo
- Joint review during interview—you and the researcher decide together which photos can be shared

(5) Re-identification protection:

- Research team reviews all photos before any public use
- We blur, crop, or exclude photos with identifying information
- You have final say on how your photos are used

(6) Consent forms for photographing others:

- We provide consent form templates
- You obtain written consent from anyone you photograph
- You submit consent forms with your photos

If any of the questions in the interview bring up anything and you want some support, here are some services you can access:

- Lifeline - 13 11 14 - <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>
- 13 YARN -- 13 92 76 - <https://www.13yarn.org.au/>
- Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800 - <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
- 1800 Respect: National sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling service – 1800 737 732 -<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>
- MensLine – 1300 78 99 78 - confidential counselling service for Australian men - <https://mensline.org.au/>

- Beyond Blue - 1300 22 4636 - <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/national-helplines-and-websites>
- Headspace (for young people up to age 25) - <https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/>
- To find a psychologist in Australia: <https://www.psychology.org.au/Find-a-Psychologist>

If information is disclosed that suggests a risk of harm to self or others (including mandatory reporting such as child safety), we may need to share limited information with appropriate services. **Mandatory reporting and limits to confidentiality**

If you are 16-18 years of age and disclose information suggesting immediate risk of harm to yourself/others, or matters requiring legal reporting (e.g., child safety), we may need to share limited information with appropriate services.

9. What will happen to the data?

We will keep your data confidential.

- Identifying information will be accessible to designated research team members only. The broader research team will have access to de-identified data only.
- Contributions from the online Miro platform will be downloaded, de-identified, and included in the analysis.
- Photos and rewritten reflections will be coded with participant numbers, not names.

Third-party transcription:

Your interview will be audio recorded and transcribed by Zoom, a Deakin University-approved meeting and transcription tool. Audio recordings and the Zoom generated transcript will be saved onto a password protected university device within 7 days and deleted from the cloud.

Zoom's Privacy Statement can be accessed via:

<https://www.zoom.com/en/trust/privacy/privacy-statement/>

Data storage and destruction:

All data collected will be stored securely on password-protected Deakin University servers for 15 years, or 15 years after you turn 18 (whichever is longer), as required by research regulations. After this period, all data will be permanently destroyed. During the storage period, only approved research team members will have access to the data.

Your contact details (name, email) will be stored separately in a password-protected file and used only for communication during the study.

- Pseudonyms will be used for data reporting.

Deakin University's Research Data Management Procedures can be accessed here:

<https://policy.deakin.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=23>

How will the results of the study be published?

- Findings will be published in journal articles and potentially shared at exhibitions, conferences, and other outlets.

- You will be provided with a summary of the results from the research team. Copies of publications to which their data contributed can also be provided upon request.
- Your photographs may be used in research publications, conference presentations, exhibitions, or other educational and advocacy materials. However:
- Your images will only be used in de-identified form unless you provide separate written permission for an identifiable image
- You'll decide during the interview which photos can be shared and how
- Photos marked as "private" will only be used for data analysis and never shared publicly
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10. Do I have to participate?

Being part of this study is **completely voluntary**. If you want to be part of the study, we ask that you read the information below carefully and ask us any questions.

You can read the information below and decide at the end if you want to participate. If you decide not to participate, this won't affect your relationship with Deakin University, the researchers, or ARACY.

11. How do I provide consent for participating in this study? What if I change my mind?

Consent to participate will be provided through return email of the consent form. **For 16-17 year olds:** Both you and your parent/guardian will provide consent.

For 18-25 year olds: You'll provide your own consent.

What you're consenting to:

- Participating in the Induction Workshop (1 hour)
- Taking 7 photographs over 2-3 weeks and writing short reflections
- Submitting photos and reflections via Qualtrics
- Participating in an individual interview (30 minutes) to discuss your photos
- Audio recording of your interview
- Having an external transcription service securely transcribe your interview Optional: Participating in the Member Checking Workshop (2 hours)
- Optional: Audio recording of workshop participation
- Use of your de-identified photos and reflections in research outputs as agreed during the interview

If you are 16-17 years old:

- Your parent/guardian is also providing consent for your participation
- You understand your photos won't be shared with your parents unless there's a safety concern

Withdrawal timeline:

You can withdraw from the study **within one week of uploading your final photo submission**. If you choose to withdraw during this time:

- All your photos, reflections, interview recordings, and transcripts will be permanently deleted within 72 hours

- Any compensation you've already received will not be affected

After the one-week deadline:

Once data analysis begins (approximately one week after you upload your final submission), individual data cannot be withdrawn. This is because your data will be de-identified and combined with other participants' contributions in a way that makes it impossible to separate out individual data.

How to withdraw:

Contact the research team by email or return the Withdrawal of Consent form (attached) within the one-week timeframe.

Your decision whether to take part or not, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with Deakin University, ARACY, or the researchers. Any compensation you've already earned will not be affected by withdrawal.

12. How will the study be monitored?

The research team will monitor progress according to approved ethical guidelines. Dr Melissa Kennedy (Principal Researcher) will submit regular reports to Deakin's Human Research Ethics Committee about progress, data security, and compliance. If any unexpected issues arise, the ethics committee will be notified immediately and steps will be taken to address any risks.

13. Who can I contact for questions or more information about the evaluation study?

If you have any further questions with regards to this study, please contact: Dr Melissa Kennedy; email: Melissa.k@deakin.edu.au; phone: +03 9251 7283; and/or Planning Saw; email: planning.saw@deakin.edu.au

Name/Organisation	Position	Telephone	Email
Dr Melissa Kennedy, Deakin University	Principal Researcher for the study	03 9251 7283	Melissa.k@deakin.edu.au
Planning Saw	Associate Investigator	03 924 6475	Planning.saw@deakin.edu.au

14. What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

The Human Research Ethics Office, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

Please quote project number 2025/HE001020 .

Please see the <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2023>.

