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## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER

**PROJECT TITLE: The New Zealand Principals Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Surveys**

**APPLICATION NUMBER Deakin University research: 2019-341**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Professor Phil Riley**

**ASSOCIATE INVESTIGATORS:** Associate Professor Mohamed Abdelrazek; Dr Jerry Lai; Dr Christopher McAvaney; Dr Aimee Maxwell; Dr Mark Rahimi; Dr Ben Arnold; Dr Lisa Vinnicombe.

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

***What is the project about?***

*The New Zealand Principals Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey* is a confidential survey, independent of all employer groups, professional associations and unions. It has three main objectives. Firstly, you will be able to track your job-related personal health and wellbeing over time, with an individualised report returned automatically upon completion each year. Secondly, global results will build a longitudinal picture of the state of health and wellbeing for schoolteachers nationally. Third, these trends will be provided to policy makers in annual “State of the Nation” reports about the real, but often hidden, costs and benefits of initiatives such as the introduction of a national curriculum and changes to national testing and accountability requirements.

***What will I be asked to do?***

Participation involves completing a confidential on-line survey. The kinds of questions we will ask cover areas such as your working conditions in detail, quality of life information, school of employment, work satisfaction, workplace discrimination, medication use, frequency of alcohol consumption and other personal information such as diet and exercise. Most of the questions are compulsory, so you cannot choose to answer only some of the questions. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary. It is up to you whether you choose to participate. Neither the research team, nor NZEI TRR or NZ PPTA, will know if you choose not to participate in this research. Once you have read this information you will be asked to supply a personal email address and create a password so that your information remains confidential. You can then complete the survey.

We will ask you to nominate an alternative contact. This person will only be contacted by us if we lose contact with you in follow up communication – e.g. a bounce-back email, or no response to the follow up survey invitation email for two weeks. We will simply inform the alternative contact that we have lost touch with you and would like to re-establish communication. We will not disclose whether or not you have participated in the research.

Your results can be accessed immediately through a secure, password protected, website once you have completed answering the questions. We will contact you again each year following completion of the initial survey for an annual update of your status. During the initial survey we will ask you for the contact details of a

close friend or relative whom we can contact if, for some reason we are unable to contact you. You can rest assured that no information about you will be given to this person. They are simply an alternative contact should your details change, and we lose touch with you.

If you agree to participate you will be asked to participate again for two follow up years for participants who begin in 2020, one follow up if you begin in 2021 and no follow up if you begin in 2022, unless the project is extended. If so, we will ask you for more follow up participation, noting that you can withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

***How much time will the project take?***

The survey takes about 1 hour to complete the first time you complete it. You can complete it over multiple sessions, by logging back in with the secure password sent to you by the system when you agree to participate. Follow up annual surveys will take about 40 minutes to complete.

***Who is undertaking the project?***

This project is being conducted by Deakin University's strategic research centre *Research for Educational Impact REDI*, under the direction of Professor Phil Riley: B Ed (Primary), University of Melbourne; B Arts (Psychology Honours), Deakin University; Certificate IV in Professional Psychology Practice, Psychologist Registration Board of Victoria; Certificate IV Relationship and Marital Therapy, The Cairnmillar Institute; PhD, La Trobe University. He is a registered psychologist with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and has expertise in running largescale data collections, including the first 8 administrations of the equivalent Principal Surveys in Australia, and all administrations of the principal surveys in both New Zealand (3) and Ireland (2). Through this work Phil has established networks and goodwill from school principals, governmental agencies, and Organization Partners that are crucial to the success of the research program.

***Who is funding the project?***

The research of primary teachers and primary principals is fully funded by the New Zealand Educational Institute Te Rui Roa (NZEI TRR).

The research of secondary principals and area school leaders is fully funded by the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Te Wehengarua (NZ PPTA)

***Why is the collection of this data reasonably necessary?***

The increasing complexity and workload demands of school teachers are impacting on their health and wellbeing. This research seeks to establish what works to improve schoolteachers' wellbeing and address national strategic objectives in health through rapid mobilization of excellent applied research that has the potential to reverse the declining wellbeing of New Zealand's schoolteachers. This is the first comprehensive, systematic and rigorous study undertaken to assess the comparative impact of policy interventions on issues such as stress, burnout and retention. Sophisticated statistical analysis of the data will map policy interventions to changes in motivation and wellbeing as value added, natural experiments. The overall aim of this project is to conduct a longitudinal study monitoring schoolteachers' health and wellbeing annually.

The objectives of the project are;

1. Assess and evaluate strategies to improve school teachers' mental health and wellbeing across New Zealand.
2. Undertake a longitudinal study to test the effects of psychosocial processes (e.g., motivation, need satisfaction, self concept) on key outcomes (e.g. burnout, stress, conflict, retention, job satisfaction) and protective factors that mitigate these problems for the retention of new and long serving school principals.
3. Identify critical organisational characteristics (e.g. culture/climate, managerial style) evident in the most successful schools (controlling for school characteristics) that can serve as a blueprint for autonomy, competence, and collaborative, supportive leadership.

4. Juxtapose perceptions of new and long serving teachers in order to provide a basis for making the position more attractive.
5. Adapt, validate and extend existing psychometrically sound measures and test their psychometric properties to create an innovative suite of robust measures to assess psychosocial drivers of successful schoolteachers to enrich and drive international research in this critical field.
6. Evaluate the success of recent and current policy interventions introduced to address the mental health and wellbeing of schoolteachers by the Ministry of Education, thereby contributing significant new knowledge and a model paradigm to the international research literature.
7. Propose and explicate novel, potentially more effective programs and/or policy changes and provide a baseline against which future research can measure their effectiveness.

By clarifying these issues, evaluating the effects of policy interventions, and offering novel and methodologically sound evidence based approaches, we hope to improve the capacity of schoolteachers and their schools to serve the community, elucidate the psychosocial drivers that seed success and wellbeing, build New Zealand's human capital, and enrich and advance the international research agenda in relation to theory, research, and practice.

There will be survey questions asked about Covid-19 and the effects of the changes on your work practices.

***Where will your data be collected from?***

The data collected will be your responses to an on-line survey.

**Most of the questions are compulsory, so you cannot choose to answer only some of the questions.**

***Where will your data be stored?***

Data that can identify you, such as your name or email address (identifiable data) in electronic form, will be kept in locked, restricted access files only accessible by the research team. Securing data in a password protected secured drive will safeguard against the misuse or unauthorised access of the data.

***How will your data be used?***

Your de-identified data will be perpetually retained for use by the research team to compare New Zealand teachers' data with, for example, Australian teachers and New Zealand land, Irish and Australian school principals, other groups of educators as they enter the research program. This use of the data will be extremely useful for determining the drivers of wellbeing in the education workforce around the world and distinguish between country/region specific drivers and universal/profession drivers of wellbeing. In the future we plan to consolidate all the differing country datasets into a single, completely deidentified database, and make this available to researchers under protocols established by the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC). At this point all individual identifiable data will be permanently removed, and you will not be able to have your data removed from the database.

***What are the benefits of the research project?***

There are immediate expected benefits of the project to you. Upon completion of survey, you are provided with automatically generated, interactive feedback via a password protected secure website. This will provide you with an instant health and wellbeing check-up tailored to your specific work context. This will allow you to make important decisions about your future health and wellbeing based on the evidence that you provide by comparing it to both the general population, and school principals' average results.

Further, by correlating changes in health and wellbeing with imposed and voluntarily adopted changes to education policies and procedures more accurate evaluations of the impact on teachers, and by implication students, can be provided to these parties.

***Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?***

Some of the questions asked are of a personal nature. Should participation cause you any distress you may wish to seek individual help, such as counselling support.

The project websites contain contact details of all agencies that can provide help to you:

<https://www.teacherhealthandwellbeing.org/index.php>

<https://www.principalhealth.org/nz/info.php>

Simply click on the country map icon, then the “Find Support Services” tab, to access links to each agency. The contact information is updated annually.

Alternatively, Professor Riley can arrange individual assistance. Please note that this may involve some cost to you, for instance if you are referred to a service provider, such as a psychologist, who charges fees for their service. He can be contacted via email [Phil.riley@deakin.edu.au](mailto:Phil.riley@deakin.edu.au) or on (+613) 9244 6105.

You may be contacted by Phil Riley if your responses indicate that you may require extra support. This communication will arrive via email at your private email address that we ask you to supply at the commencement of the survey.

As a registered psychologist with the *Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency* Professor Riley is bound to act at all times within the guidelines of the psychologists’ *Code of Ethics*. Therefore, if you disclose an immediate and specified risk of harm to an identifiable person or persons that can be averted only by disclosing information you have supplied, this information will be immediately passed on to the closest local agent legally responsible for the protection of the individual and/or general public.

***Can I withdraw from the study?***

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are not under any obligation to participate. If you agree to participate, you can amend your responses or withdraw from the study at any time without adverse consequences. You may choose to participate in some or all of the surveys. You should also be aware that you are able to withdraw from participation at any time and have all your information removed from the project, by informing us in writing up to one month before the publication of the annual report of principal health and wellbeing. Annual reports are presented to the funding group at the end of each year for release in the following year. Therefore, you will have approximately one month following data collection each year to amend your data or withdraw from the survey. Please send your request to the help desk: [enquiries@principalhealth.org](mailto:enquiries@principalhealth.org)

***Will anyone else know the results of the project?***

No one, other than the researchers listed in this document will have access to your individual results. A report of the aggregated results may be submitted for publication, such as in an academic journal, book or conference proceeding, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. An annual report of the survey will be posted each year on <https://www.principalhealth.org/nz/info.php>

Aggregated results will be used to brief

- Research Funding Partners: NZEI TRR **or the** NZ PPTA on their relevant research outcomes
- Other employer bodies such as Catholic Education Offices, Dioceses and other affiliated employer groups.

***Will I be able to find out the results of the project?***

You may be able to download a free .pdf copy of the report from <https://www.principalhealth.org/nz/info.php>. The report contains only aggregated, de-identified data, so will not identify any participant.

***Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?***

You can contact the Chief Investigator, Phil Riley (details below)

***Who do I contact if I wish to correct my data?***

You can contact the Chief Investigator, Phil Riley (details below) to have your data removed

***What if I have a complaint or any concerns?***

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: +613 9251 7129, [research-ethics@deakin.edu.au](mailto:research-ethics@deakin.edu.au)  
Please quote project number **2019-341**

***I want to participate! How do I sign up?***

If you decide you would like to participate and that you have sufficient information to make this decision, please click on the "[I agree to participate](#)" link button.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Phil Riley**

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W [www.teacherhealthandwellbeing.org](http://www.teacherhealthandwellbeing.org)

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