



Community Chats – Focus Groups

Making Communities Inclusive: Inclusive community planning for people with disabilities in regional areas.

QUT Ethics Approval Number: 1900000898

Researcher

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Why is the study being conducted?

The purpose of this research project is to identify how we can better plan communities to be more inclusive of people of all ages with disabilities in regional areas. This project will be occurring over three years expecting to be completed end of 2023. This project is funded by the Australian Research Council under DE190101512 - ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA).

The first stage of the research is to find out **what makes an inclusive community?**

Researcher Dr Lisa Stafford from QUT is working with local communities and its members to help answer this question. These communities include Clarence City Council and the Greater Hobart area in Tasmania.

In this first stage we are interested in hearing from people ages 9 years and older with or without disabilities (inc. people with chronic health and mental health needs), family members, local council staff, non-government organisations, or people in the community.

This information sheet is about being involved in **Community Chats (focus groups)**.

What does participation involve?

You will be asked to be involved in Community Chats, which is a type of research focus group to share your experiences and thoughts about what makes a community inclusive, and your ideas to make communities more inclusive, including how they are planned and designed.

In a focus group interview, there will be up to 20 people including yourself being asked to share your experiences and ideas. The focus groups will be facilitated by Lisa the lead researcher.

What is involved in Community Chat (focus groups)?

- The Community Chats will consist of up to 20 people from similar group membership/affiliation or geographical town. Numbers may vary depending on interest and changing covid-restrictions.
- The community chats will take about 2 hours.

- The community chats may involve small group and larger group conversations. During this chat you may write sticky notes, make comments on butchers' paper, or draw ideas. What is created during the chat will be copied/uploaded by the researcher.
- Assistant facilitators will also be present to help – they will sign confidentiality agreements.
- They will occur face to face but may need to be via a zoom – a video call depending on Covid requirements at the time.
- The chats will be audio recorded, so we can review it later with all the other participant interviews to find out the meaning and experience of inclusive communities. With a video call like zoom, only audio recording will be undertaken.
- An artist will be present to visually record the group ideas shared. The artist will be drawing pictures of key concepts and actions being shared. The artist will sign a confidentiality agreement.

Food - refreshments will be provided for participants at the Community Chats. This will be in accordance with Covid safe practices.

Preregistration essential

Only people who have pre-registered for the community chats can participate in the community chats. Pre-registration includes completing a research consent form, registering for a specific community chat location, and outlining any specific needs to aid participation. We will re-confirm consent at the start of the community chats, you will be asked by the researcher to confirm whether you wish to be involved in the focus group (providing your consent), to ensure you are aware of what is being asked of you and if you are still prepared to participate.

Preparing for the Community Chats

To help you talk about what makes a community inclusive in the community chats you can write down some ideas to below questions or you can bring along photos that shows:

- *What makes communities inclusive?* This could include places you like to go, activities you like doing, services that helps, specific projects of spaces, infrastructure etc. It could also about showing the strengths of the local community now.
- *What you would change or add to make community more inclusive for people of all ages, all disabilities/illness?* This could include images of spaces you cannot go to now, or images of areas that currently don't work or don't help bring people together; or, lack of infrastructure or green spaces, lack of footpath connectivity for mobility. Or you could bring examples of good places you have found elsewhere that you would like to have here, and/or improve the look or feel of a place.

If bringing photos /pictures with you, please ensure they do not have any people's faces in it for privacy purposes.

Voluntary Involvement

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can stop participating (withdraw) without comment or penalty at any stage of the activity. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact on your current or future relationship with the research team and their universities.

What are the possible benefits for me if I take part?

It is expected that participation in this research project will not directly benefit you.

However, the outcomes of the research may provide future benefit by helping to inform and advocate for better planning practices and processes to make communities more inclusive in regional areas.

Participants will be emailed a link to the research finding updates as they become available on the project website and will be emailed a summary of findings once the project is finished.

What are the possible risks for me if I take part?

There are some minimal risks associated with your participation in this research project. These include:

The **risk of emotional discomfort**, which may occur should you choose to share an experience of exclusion that was distressing. There is no requirement to disclose distressing situations. We ask you to only reveal what you are comfortable revealing.

There is also the **risk of social discomfort** due to sharing experiences with other people in a group. There is no requirement to share information you are not comfortable with. We ask you to only share what you are comfortable sharing. There is also no requirement to be in a community chat, you can choose to just have a 1:1 interview. <https://www.planninginclusivecommunities.com/get-involved>

While we do not expect you to take photos in preparation for the community chats. If you do, there are things to consider as there is a **risk of physical discomfort or risk of physical injury** as a result of being preoccupied. To avoid this, we ask you to adopt the following strategies:

- To go around your community in your usual manner i.e. not do anything you are not accustomed to doing.
- Be always aware of the environment, be aware of hazards and take your time as required.
- Properly protect yourself from weather conditions (heat or cold), and ensure you have water.
- Only do this activity if comfortable doing so – there are other ways to participate with less impact, for example the questionnaire or storyboard. Go to the project website for more information about ways to get involved:
<https://www.planninginclusivecommunities.com/get-involved>
- Take a person with you if you need help.
- Take a phone with you to call if you need help or injury yourself.

If you do experience discomfort or distress because of your participation in the research you can contact **Lifeline** who provides access to online, phone or face-to-face support, by calling **13 11 14** for 24-hour telephone crisis support.

If you are a young person aged under 25, you can also call the **Kids Helpline** on **1800 551 800**.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

The focus group data will be stored in coded form without names or identifiable features. The recording will be transcribed further eliminating any identifying aspects.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the data you provide cannot be traced back to you in reports, publications, and other forms of presentations. For example, we will only include the relevant part of a quote, we will not use any names, or names will be changed, and/or details such as dates and specific circumstances will be excluded. Nevertheless, while unlikely, it is possible that

if you are quoted directly your identity may become known. As such it is important to only talk about what you are comfortable revealing.

The audio recording and the transcript, which will not be identifiable, will be stored securely as per the QUT Management of research data policy.

Given the importance of this research, the information you provide (without any identifying information) will be stored long term so that it may be used for future research by the research team, or other researchers investigating related areas of research. Your consent forms will be stored securely and destroyed after 15 years.

How do I give my consent to participate?

We invite you to complete the online registration/ consent form to confirm your agreement to participate in this research. We can support you to complete the form on the phone if online is not possible – please email inclusivecommunities@qut.edu.au or phone 07 3138 4595.

We encourage you to ask any questions or speak to someone you know well before deciding to participate. If you are under 18 years, you will need your parent/guardian consent for you to participate in this research. We will re-confirm consent with you at the time of the group interview.

Future Use of Information

The consent to participate includes non-identifiable data provided being made available for research with related aims in the future. Only non-identifiable data will be used in future research.

What if I have questions about the research project?

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact: Dr Lisa Stafford phone: 07 3138 4595 or email lisa.stafford@qut.edu.au

You can also find further information about the project at <https://www.planninginclusivecommunities.com/>

What if I have a concern or complaint regarding the conduct of the research project?

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. If you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team on 07 3138 5123 or email humanethics@qut.edu.au.

To access the Registration and Consent Form

Click here: https://qutc.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_02LRb0Em6t16IPY



Or scan the QR code [_____](#)

Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.