

Health Innovation and Transformation Centre

PROJECT TITLE:	The Healthy Regions InterVENTion (THRIVE) Program: Population Survey
PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:	Professor Shane Thomas
OTHER/STUDENT RESEARCHERS:	Professor Colette Browning, Professor Fadi Charchar, Professor Britt Klein, Dr Priscilla Prestes, Dr Huy Nguyen, Dr Amanda Young, Dr Samuel Zhang, Ms Abby Warner, Ms Lauren Barrot, Ms Naomi Norris, Mr Leo Bell, Ms Lisa Fiddes, Ms Lauren Salajan, Mr Lochie Timms-McLean, Mr Fitalew Admasu, Dr Arinola Akinnibosun

We'd like to invite you to participate in a study we are conducting to learn more about target regions in rural Victoria. These regions are served by the East Grampians Health Service, Ballarat Community Health, Latrobe Community Health Service and Silver Chain Group, all of which have shown their support for this research project. This research will bring the community together to develop new ways to promote health and prevent disease. You must be 18 years of age or older, able to understand English, able to give informed consent, and able to attend the nominated location (onsite or online) of the study activity.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research is led by Federation University Australia and is funded by the Regional Research Collaboration Program from the Australia Commonwealth Government. Study findings will be used to better understand the community, including its interest to be kept informed about or upcoming THRIVE research activities. Findings may be reported in scientific and academic journals. The study has received ethical approval from Federation University Human Research Ethics Committee (Reference Number: 2023-173).

What does this study involve?

Participation in this study involves answering questions as part of a survey. Prior to completing the survey, you will be asked to register for a Participant ID. This will involve providing us with a name and contact information and then confirming your account with an email that we will send to you. Your registration information will be stored securely in the THRIVE website's password-protected database, which is only accessible to approved THRIVE team members and Federation University's [CeRDI](#) IT Team. Your name and contact information will be stored separately from any other data that you may provide as part of our research activities.

The survey will include questions about your background, health-related behaviours, physical and mental health and any assistance you might receive. You may consider some questions personal and/or private. It is up to you whether you are comfortable answering them or not. If you feel like you do not want to answer a question at any stage, please skip that and as many questions as you wish. Importantly, if you feel like you no longer would like to answer any questions, you can skip to the end to record the questions already answered or close your web browser to withdraw altogether. We anticipate that the survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

You can do the survey in one of three different ways – **whatever is the most convenient for you:**

1. online, or
2. over the phone (with the assistance of a trained interviewer), or

3. answering a paper form that we will send you and which will include a reply-paid envelope. At the end of the survey there will be a section asking if you're interested in being kept informed about our other THRIVE research activities. If you are, select yes, and someone from the research team will contact you at a later time. You will also be asked if you wish to go in the draw to win one of twenty-four **\$100** gift cards that we will give to people who complete the survey using any of the three completion methods.

We hope to engage with the community broadly as the more people who participate in this survey, the more we know about your community.

- If you are completing this study via telephone, we will ask you to provide your verbal consent to participating in this study at the start of the telephone call.
- If you would like to participate via completion of a hard-copy paper and pencil survey version, we ask you to complete the informed consent form and return this to us in the second envelope provided. This way you keep your personal information separate from your health survey data.
- Alternatively, if you are completing this online, please select the 'YES' option when asked if you consent to participate in this study.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary.

If after learning more about the research you choose not to participate, no explanation is required. If you start and then decide you don't want to finish, you can stop at any time. If you don't want to answer a particular question or questions, that is ok, just skip over them. If you get tired of doing the survey and would like to finish it later, that will be an option too. There will be the opportunity for you to review your responses at the end of the survey. If you would like to change your answers or withdraw from the study before confirming your final responses, you are completely free to do so. Whatever you decide to do, it will have no impact on your current or future relationship with Federation University or your healthcare provider.

What will happen to my results?

Your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected to the fullest possible legal extent; however, this is subject to legal limitations (e.g., subpoena, freedom of information claim, or mandatory reporting in some professions).

Your de-identified data may be used for a research project in the future such as being re-analysed or added to other chronic health data to answer other research questions. Any other person, apart from the current researchers, gaining access to the data, will only be supplied with non-identified data for a legitimate research purpose that has appropriate ethical clearance (e.g., data use for a future thesis).

Data will be stored securely for a minimum of five years. As the data are analysed without any identifiable information, and as publications will report findings based on group data, individual participants will not be identifiable. If you decide to withdraw from the study after your data has

been aggregated and processed that is completely fine. However, it will not be possible to remove non-identifiable data, as we will not know what data is yours.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You might receive indirect benefits from participating in this study as we might use the results to advise the service providers mentioned above about the general needs of its community.

Are there any risks from participating?

We do not anticipate that there will be any serious risks or disadvantages to you from participating in this study. However, we recognise that some people might find answering some questions in the survey stressful. If you experience any form of distress and/or feel like you need support, please contact Lifeline (13 11 14) or Beyond Blue (1300 22 46 36).

Remember, you can withdraw at any time, and you should do so if you experience distress.

How do I participate?

If you wish to participate in this study, after reading this Plain Language Information Statement, you will be asked to answer the survey in one of the following ways:

- 1) Online – via our secure SurveyMonkey page: please click the “*I understand and agree with the above-mentioned conditions*” checkbox and you will be directed to the survey questions.
- 2) Over the phone – you can send us an email to THRIVRecruitment@Federation.edu.au or call one of the project study research fellows, Dr Priscilla Prestes +61 3 5327 6670, with your preferred contact number and availability.
- 3) Hard copy survey – you can send us an email to THRIVRecruitment@Federation.edu.au or call one of the project study research fellows, Dr Priscilla Prestes +61 3 5327 6670, with your postal address and we will send you a hard copy of the survey with two prepaid envelopes (one for the return of the survey and one for the return of your details should you wish to stay informed about our future research activities and/or wish to go in the draw to win one of twenty-four \$100 gift cards).

If you have any questions, or you would like further information regarding the project titled “The Healthy Regions InterVENTion (THRIVE) Program: Population Survey”, please contact the Principal Researcher, *Professor Shane Thomas* of the Health Innovation and Transformation Centre:

EMAIL: sa.thomas@federation.edu.au

PH: +61 3 5327 6781

Should you (i.e. the participant) have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research project, please contact the Coordinator – Research Ethics, Research Services, Federation University Australia,
P O Box 663 Mt Helen Vic 3353
Telephone: (03) 5327 9765
Email: research.ethics@federation.edu.au

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