PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Improving gender equity in computer science and information and communication technologies (ICT)
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Anna Szorenyi
RESEARCHERS: Dr Katrina Falkner, Dr Dee Michell, Miss Shantel Thyer

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your expression of interest. You are now invited to participate in the research project described below which is investigating the gendering of students and the ICT environment.

What is the project about?
The research project aims to provide a nuanced and ‘thick’ picture of the social context in which people make career choices, how this interacts with their ongoing construction of gendered identities, and the role that information technologies play in this process.

Who is undertaking the project?
This project is being conducted by Dr Anna Szorenyi and Shantel Thyer of the University of Adelaide.

Why am I being invited to participate?
The research is to be undertaken amongst students at the University of Adelaide who received an ATAR of 70 or above. Those invited to participate meet the specific criteria in order to produce the desired outcomes of this project.

What will I be asked to do?
Participants will be asked to share their personal experiences and reflections in relation to career choices and student life. Your participation is entirely voluntary and would involve a focus group interview of approximately 60-90 minutes. This interview would take place on the University of Adelaide campus between June-August 2014. The location will be private and safe place for all participants.

In order to gain a greater knowledge of the personal experiences of the participants, the focus group interview will be recorded using a digital audio recorder. You will be asked about your personal experiences, career and study choices, and how you perceive the area of Computer Science and ICT. Participants will also be required to maintain confidentiality regarding focus group discussions, to not only protect their identity, but that of the other participants.

How much time will the project take?
Your participation in the project will take between 60-90 minutes, and you will receive a $10 Unibooks voucher for your time and contribution.
Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

The themes addressed within the focus group interviews are not intended to cause discomfort in any way, although it is recognised that discussing personal experiences may cause discomfort for some participants. Please note that if you experience discomfort at any point during the focus group interview, the discussion will be ended with and you will be provided with information regarding support services available for University of Adelaide students and the general public (such as Lifeline).

What are the benefits of the research project?

This research will allow the participant to discuss their own personal experiences, and in doing so, will potentially allow them to make a difference to the strategies implemented in order to better support students and improve gender equity in computer science and ICT. A benefit for the participant may be a greater understanding of personal decisions to pursue or not to pursue a career in this area of study. Whilst they are desirable outcomes of the project, they cannot be guaranteed.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time. Findings of the research will be circulated through publications, and if material you have contributed has already been published, it will not be possible to withdraw it from that publication. However, you may withdraw your contribution from the research data and, in that case it will not be used in any further publications.

What will happen to my information?

During the research process all transcripts, tapes and participants’ personal details and information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researchers’ offices at the University of Adelaide. All electronic transcripts will be saved on the researchers’ University computers, which are password protected.

The data produced from the focus groups will be thematically analysed and results will be published in journals in the field of gender studies and computer science. All identifiable information of the participants will be removed prior to any form of public circulation. The University will retain the project data for 5 years from the completion of the project.

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

Any questions regarding this project should be addressed to:

Dr Anna Szorenyi or Miss Shantel Thyer
Email: anna.szorenyi@adelaide.edu.au Email: shantel.thyer@student.adelaide.edu.au
Ph: 08 8313 3736
School of Gender Studies & Social Analysis

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

Attached is a form – CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION ON PROJECT AND INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – which sets out details of how to go about making a complaint if you need to do so.

Alternatively, if you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University’s policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant, then you should contact the Human Research Ethics Committee’s Secretariat on phone (08) 8313 6028 or by
email to hrec@adelaide.edu.au. Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

If you wish to participate, please sign both copies of the enclosed consent form, retain on for your own records, and return the other (scanned copy as an email attachment) to:

Shantel Thyer
Email: shantel.thyer@student.adelaide.edu.au

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anna Szorenyi and Miss Shantel Thyer