



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

Cannabis experiences in the ACT post legalisation

Chief Investigator: Professor Alison Ritter

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

1. What is the research study about?

You are invited to take part in this study. The study aims to explore the experiences of people who use and grow cannabis in the ACT since the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018 came into effect on 31st of January 2020. This includes understanding how practices of cannabis use and growing cannabis may have changed since the introduction of the new legislation; and views about models such as cannabis social clubs.

2. Who is conducting this research?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers: Professor Alison Ritter, Dr Kari Lancaster, Professor Matthew Kearnes, Dr Richard Mellor, Liz Barrett and Dr Laura McLauchlan at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). **Research Funder:** This research is being funded by an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Project grant.

3. Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria for participants taking part in interviews are:

- Having consumed and/or grown cannabis in the last 12 months
- Living in the ACT
- Being over the age of 18 years
- English speaking and being willing and able to give informed consent
- Able and willing to provide the research team with photos or drawings of cannabis growing practices, either over the phone or email, or in-person.

4. Do I have to take part in this research study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the study at any stage.

If you decide you want to take part in the research study, you will be asked to:

- Read the information carefully (ask questions if necessary);
- Give written consent by signing the consent sheet and returning it to the researcher or providing verbal consent to participate on the day of the interview (if you are not able to return a signed copy of this form either via email or in-person);
- Be involved in an initial in-depth semi-structured interview (either virtually or in-person, depending on your choice);
- Be involved in a second interview that uses visual prompts to discuss cannabis growing practices.

5. What does participation in this research require, and are there any risks involved?

The first interview will focus on your experiences and perspectives on cannabis, including growing and purchasing practices, and your perceptions about how the laws may have impacted both on



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cannabis use and cannabis growing practices. We will also explore communal models for cannabis growing.

For the second interview you will be asked to provide the research team with photos or drawings of cannabis plants and/or growing practices before the interview. These can be provided via phone, email, or brought to the interview on the day if you are doing an in-person interview. We will give you instructions before the second interview. In the interview we will discuss how the photos and/or drawings matter to you and what they say about growing practices. We will also explore how you make sense of these practices in the context of the laws in the ACT.

You do not need to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering.

The interviews will take place either digitally, using Microsoft Teams or Zoom or, if possible, in-person (at a place convenient for you), and will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

With your permission the research team would like to audio record the interviews using a digital recording device. If you do not wish to be recorded but you would like to participate you can advise the research team and written notes will be taken. With your permission the research team would also like to keep a record of the deidentified photos and/or drawings for the analysis. They will be stored in a secure UNSW server, and they will be stored in a way where it is not possible to link the photos or drawings back to you. We might also publish the photos or drawings within journal articles, or in public presentations (such as conferences), but only with your permission. You do not have to agree to share photographs or drawings for these purposes in order to participate in the research, this is optional.

We also invite you to pass on the details of the study to anyone in your network who has consumed or grown cannabis in the past 12-months, and resides in the ACT and is 18 years and over. If you agree, we will forward you a flyer via the email address you provided.

Reimbursement: You will receive a \$40 Coles Myer voucher for your participation in each interview.

Potential risks: Use of cannabis or growing cannabis plants beyond the allowable limits in the ACT is an offence. We may be required by subpoena or search warrant to disclose records from the study. However, if that occurs we will not be able to provide any identifying information about you or the interview content because we are anonymising all the interviews. We will destroy the audio recording after it has been transcribed and checked, such that no voice recognition software can be employed to identify an individual from voice after the transcripts have been made and checked by the researcher. The transcripts will be de-identified including permanent removal of any names used, any organisational references or any other potentially identifying details. The visual data will be de-identified by blurring any identifiable features within the photographs or drawings (e.g., faces of people, written names or addresses) using digital photo editing software; and removing any meta-data associated with a photo so it cannot be connected to you.

Any contact details you provide us will be filed and stored electronically in a password protected electronic location separate from the transcripts. There will be no ability by the researchers or any other third party to link the consent forms with the data. There is no potential for the information collected in the research to be used to prosecute you for criminal activity.



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6. What will happen to information about me?

By returning a signed consent form or giving verbal consent on the day of the interview, you consent to the research team collecting and using information about you for the research study.

The research team will store the data collected from you for this research project for a minimum of 7 years after the completion of the research.

Any information we collect from you will be stored and presented in research publications in a way that will not identify you. Your name, or any identifying details will not be stored with the interview data and hence is not able to be used in any publications arising from this work.

Information collected from you in an electronic format stored on a UNSW password protected OneDrive is only accessible to the approved research investigators.

Audio recordings and visual images will be stored on a UNSW password protected OneDrive only accessible to the approved research investigators until such time as they have been transcribed, then they will be destroyed. The interviews will be made available to a professional transcription service, after a confidentiality agreement has been signed by the transcriber.

The information you provide is personal information for the purposes of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW). You have the right of access to personal information held about you by the University, the right to request correction and amendment of it, and the right to make a complaint about a breach of the Information Protection Principles as contained in the PPIP Act. Further information on how the University protects personal information is available in the [UNSW Privacy Management Plan](#).

7. How and when will I find out what the results of the research study are?

The research team intend to publish and report the results of the research. All information will be published in a way that will not identify you. If you would like to receive a copy of the results you can let the research team know by inserting your email address in the consent form. If you are doing an interview over Zoom or Microsoft Teams, you can verbally declare on the day of the interview if you would like to receive a copy of the results via email. We will only use these details to send you the results of the research.

8. What if I want to withdraw from the research study?

If you do consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time. You can request that the research team withdraw any identifying information by completing the 'Withdrawal of Consent Form' which is provided at the end of this document or you can ring the research team and tell them you no longer want to participate. Upon collection of the interview and visual images, identifiers will be removed, and the research team will not be able to link your identity to individual responses, therefore interview data and images after their collection cannot be removed.

9. What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the research study?

If you have a complaint regarding any aspect of the study or the way it is being conducted, please contact the UNSW Human Ethics Coordinator:



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Complaints Contact

Position	UNSW Human Research Ethics Coordinator
Telephone	+ 61 2 9385 6222
Email	humanethics@unsw.edu.au
HC Reference Number	HC200911

10. What should I do if I have further questions about my involvement in the research study?

The person you may need to contact will depend on the nature of your query. If you require further information regarding this study or if you have any problems which may be related to your involvement in the study, you can contact the following member/s of the research team:

Research Team Contact Details

Name	Richard Mellor
Position	Research fellow
Telephone	(02) 9065 8349
Email	richard.mellor@unsw.edu.au

Chief Investigator

Name	Professor Alison Ritter
Position	Director, Drug Policy Modelling Program NHMRC Senior Research Fellow
Telephone	(02) 9385 0236
Email	alison.ritter@unsw.edu.au



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Consent Form – Participant providing own consent

Declaration by the participant

- I understand I am being asked to provide consent to participate in this research study;
- I have read the Participant Information Sheet, or someone has read it to me in a language that I understand;
- I understand the purposes, study tasks and risks of the research described in the study;
- I understand that the research team will audio record the interviews; I agree to be recorded for this purpose.
- I provide my consent for the information collected about me to be used for the purpose of this research study only.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received;
- I freely agree to participate in this research study as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study and withdrawal will not affect my relationship with any of the named organisations and/or research team members;

- I am happy to provide my email address **only** for the purposes of:
 - Receiving a \$40 Coles e-voucher for each interview I participate in
 - Passing on study details to others who may be interested
 - Receiving a copy of the study findings
 - To be contacted about studies that might arise in the future

If yes, Email Address: _____

Consent for use of images in publication

- I am willing for images supplied by me to be anonymously included in future publications
- I do not consent for any images supplied by me to be included in any form of publication

Participant Signature

Name of Participant (please print)	
Signature of Research Participant	
Date	

Declaration by Researcher*

- I have given a verbal explanation of the research study; its study activities and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Researcher Signature*

Name of Researcher (please print)	
Signature of Researcher	
Date	



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Form for Withdrawal of Participation

I wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in this research study described above and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** affect my relationship with The University of New South Wales.

- I am withdrawing my consent and I would like any identifiable information collected about me which I have provided for the purpose of this research study withdrawn.
- I recognise that my interview data cannot be withdrawn as it has been anonymised.

Participant Name

Name of Participant (please type)	
Date	

The section for Withdrawal of Participation should be forwarded to:

CI Name:	Professor Alison Ritter
Email:	alison.ritter@unsw.edu.au
Phone:	(02) 9385 0236
Postal Address:	Social Policy Research Centre University of New South Wales Sydney, NSW 2052

