

# Participant Information Sheet

# Project Title: Smart Start – Preloading and a Safe Night Out

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| **Principle Researchers:** |
| Associate Professor Grant DevillyGriffith Health Institute & School of Applied Psychology,Griffith University, Mt Gravatt CampusPhone: (07) 3735 3309Email: g.devilly@griffith.edu.au | Senior Sergeant CoreyInner West Patrol GroupNorth Brisbane DistrictQueensland Police ServicePh 07 3212 4540Email: Allen.CoreyM@police.qld.gov.au |
| **Research Assistant:** |
| Kathleen BrownGriffith Health Institute & School of Applied Psychology,Griffith University, Mt Gravatt CampusEmail: research@smartstartqld.com.au |  |

**Participation is Voluntary**

If you are reading this information sheet, then chances are that you were invited to take part in this research project. Please read this Participation Information carefully. Feel free to ask any questions about any information in the document via email to research@smartstartqld.com.au

Participation in this research project was and is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to do so. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage and have any data obtained from you removed from our records. As this research is completely anonymous, we can only remove your data if you email us with your participant ID (on the back of the business card we would have given you) and the day and approximate time we interviewed you.

**Purpose and Background**

In this study we are engaging people as they enter popular night spots (such as in Brisbane’s CBD, the Valley and West End), arrive at popular transport spots (e.g., Roma Street Station, King George Square) or leave for the night from central accommodation (e.g., hotels in Charlotte Street). We question them regarding issues of preloading with alcohol, mixing energy drinks with alcohol (MEDA), and the use of illicit drugs. We will also ask people to voluntarily take a breath-test for alcohol and, in some cases, a mouth-swab for drugs. You can complete the questionnaire without taking an alcohol or drug test.

Preloading is defined as drinking, or taking illicit drugs, before entering licensed night-time entertainment venues. Currently there is research to suggest that by participating in preloading activities, including MEDA, people are more susceptible to physical, psychological, and emotional harm as their night-out progresses. Research indicates that people suffer greater physical injuries, take more risks, suffer more black-outs, and overall report more negative consequences than if they hadn’t preloaded. The main reasons espoused for these increased negative consequences are the high blood alcohol content (BAC) of people as they continue to drink throughout the night. However, people drink before they go out for a variety of reasons and we wish to look into these reasons.

The published research that has been carried out on this topic so far, however, has only been conducted in the USA and UK. As their licensing and night-time entertainment practices differ somewhat from entertainment districts in Australia, it is important to establish whether the effects found in those studies hold true in Queensland. By gathering this information we will be able to enhance awareness surrounding the issues raised above and implement changes in policy regarding alcohol sales and guidelines and policing of entertainment areas. In this study we also aim to increase personal safety and create stronger community bonds with the police who patrol the city centres. To this end we will also be asking about risky or antisocial behaviours you have experienced and whether police were available.

Another goal we have in this study is investigating the presence of Muscle Dysmorphia in people who enter the entertainment districts at these popular transport and accommodation spots. Muscle Dysmorphia is usually associated with an intense preoccupation and dissatisfaction with one’s physique and the idea that one is not strong or muscular enough. Recent research has shown that Muscle Dysmorphia is linked to increased alcohol consumption, and is predominantly common in young adolescent males. Therefore, we wish to see whether this is the case in people who enter the entertainment districts on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

This research will be eventually written-up for a project report and for a published article and may also form the basis of a student’s postgraduate thesis (e.g., Honours, Masters, or PhD thesis).

**Possible Benefits**

We hope the knowledge gained from this study will assist in reducing harm and the provision of better facilities for people attending entertainment precincts, and the development of more effective and community responsive policing practices. However, we do not envisage any personal benefits you may experience yourself, over and above having the experience of being a research participant.

**Possible Risks**

This research is completely anonymous and we do not foresee any personal risks attached to taking part.

**Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information**

All participants will initially be identified by a research number so that you can withdraw consent at a later date. We will have the email addresses available to send you the research results – but, as stated, these will not be tied to the data. All questionnaires will be kept in a locked cabinet at Griffith University or held on a server in an anonymous fashion (as we took no identifying information from you).

**Further Information or Any Problems**

If any of the material in the questionnaires or the alcohol or drug testing raised any issues of concern for you, you are welcome to discuss them with the researchers. Likewise, if you require further information or have questions about the project, feel free to contact us.

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If participants have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project, they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 07 3735 4106 or email at research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

**Contact Numbers for Assistance (should you require any):**

 Queensland Health's Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) 24 hour Information Service: 1800 177 833; http://www.health.qld.gov.au/atod/

 Lifeline: 13 11 14

 Australian Psychological Society (for referral): 1800 333 497