



## MWOS COVID-19 Employment Study

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### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

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| <b>HREC Project Number:</b> | 2020-0177   |
| <b>Project Title:</b>       | MWOS COVID-19 Employment Study  |
| <b>Chief Investigator:</b>  | <i>Professor Sharon K. Parker, Director of the Centre for Transformative Work Design in the Future of Work Institute at Curtin University</i> |
| <b>Student researcher:</b>  |   |
| <b>Version Number:</b>      | Version 2   |
| <b>Version Date:</b>        | 15/04/2020  |

#### **What is the Project About?**

The trend towards an ageing population is expected to continue for decades to come. The Mature Worker's in Organisations (MWOS) project aims to investigate the experiences and needs of mature and maturing workers and the organisation that employ them.

The recent outbreak of the novel COVID-19 virus has caused governments to take extraordinary measures restricting the movement of large proportions of the population. Organisations have had to rapidly respond to these continuously evolving conditions, including making decisions about staffing and work locations. We hope to learn about what experiences with staffing and actions organisation leaders are taking during this unprecedented global pandemic.

Results from this study will shed light on current work practices and will identify lessons learned and opportunities for employers and workers in the future.

We are expecting to recruit approximately 1-3 leaders per participating organisation for this project.

#### **Who is doing the Research?**

The project is being conducted by Professor Sharon Parker at the Future of Work Institute, Curtin University in Perth, WA, Australia and Professor Marian Baird AO, Professor of Gender and Employment Relations, Head of Discipline of Work and Organisational Studies, University of Sydney in Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Data collection outside of Australia will be managed by local Research Collaborators and/or Research Assistants. Our research collaborators and/or research assistants are highly professional people with research interests around the issues of workers and organisational practices.

This research project is funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) to the Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (project number CE170100005).

There will be no costs to you and you will not be paid for participating in this project.



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### **Why am I being asked to take part and what will I have to do?**

We are looking for adults employed in leadership roles.

Participants will be asked to take part in an interview/focus group that asks about how their organization is responding to changes to staffing and work resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study will take place via video conference, and will take approximately 20 minutes. There will be no cost to you for taking part in this research and you will not be paid for taking part.

We will make a digital audio recording of our discussion so we can concentrate on what you have to say and not distract ourselves with taking notes. After the interview/focus group we will make a full written copy of the recording.

### **Are there any benefits' to being in the research project?**

There may not be direct benefit to you from participating in this research. We hope the results of this research will allow us to better understand how organisations make staffing and work decisions in times of crisis.

### **Are there any risks, side-effects, discomforts or inconveniences from being in the research project?**

Apart from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or inconveniences associated with taking part in this study. However, we understand that during this time many people may be feeling overwhelmed or stressed due to COVID-19. We have collated some information on services if you would like to seek support during this time, which can be found at the end of this Information Sheet. If you do feel upset or would like to discuss any issues further, you are encouraged to contact Relationships Australia which offers counselling services, visit their website <https://www.relationshipswa.org.au/services> or call **1300 364 277**. This number will put you in touch with the nearest Relationships Australia branch to yourself. For crisis support, please contact **Lifeline on 13 11 14**. Alternatively, please contact your preferred counselling service or General Practitioner.

### **Who will have access to my information?**

The information collected in this research will be re-identifiable (coded). This means that we will collect data that can identify you, but will then remove identifying information on any data or sample and replace it with a code when we analyse the data. Only the research team have access to the code to match your name or position if it is necessary to do so. Any information we collect will be treated as confidential and used only in this project unless otherwise specified. The following people will have access to the information we collect in this research: the research team and, in the event of an audit or investigation, staff from the Curtin University Office of Research and Development.

The results of this research may be reported to participating organisations through a summary of key themes that have arisen across interviews. Any excerpts from the interviews shared with the participating organisations to illustrate main themes uncovered in the interviews will be de-identified by removing your name as well as any other identifiable information such as exact job role, department etc.



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The information we collect may also be presented at conferences or published in professional journals. You will not be identified in any results that are published or presented.

The information we collect in this study will be kept under secure conditions at Curtin University for 7 years and then it will be destroyed. All electronic data will be password-protected and any hard copy data will be locked in storage. The employing organisations will not have access to your raw interview recordings or transcripts.

### **Will you tell me the results of the research?**

If you are interested in obtaining a summary of the results please contact the researchers after six-months time.

### **Do I have to take part in the research project?**

Taking part in a research project is voluntary. It is your choice to take part or not. You do not have to agree if you do not want to. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, that is okay, you can withdraw from the project.

If you choose to leave the study we will be unable to destroy your information because it has been collected in an anonymous way.

### **What happens next and who can I contact about the research?**

Contacts: Gretchen Petery  
gigi.petery@curtin.edu.au  
08 9266 4877

Alison Williams  
alison.williams@sydney.edu.au  
02 8627 7792

If you decide to take part, your interviewer will ask for your consent by asking the question *“Do you understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of your involvement in this project and do you voluntarily consent to take part in this research project?”* By responding “yes”, you are telling us that you understand what you have read and what has been discussed and that you agree to be in the research project. Please take your time to ask any questions you have before you decide what to do. You will be given a copy of this information form to keep.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HRE2020-0177). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au).



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### Information and Supports for People during COVID-19

If you are feeling down or overwhelmed by the COVID-19 situation, please know you are not alone. This is a difficult time, and many people are feeling affected. It is more important than ever to keep in touch with the people you care about and who care about you, to keep safe, and look after your health.

- Keep in regular contact with your friends and family, even just to check in and say hi. This can be on social media, but it is also great to video chat or talk on the phone.
- **Call 000** if you are in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation. Stay on the line, speak clearly, and be ready to answer the operator's questions.
- **Lifeline** provides 24/7 crisis counselling, support groups and suicide prevention services. Call **13 11 14** or chat via [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- **Beyond Blue** provides a mental wellbeing support service, with trained counsellors who are available to talk to 24-hours a day. You can call **1800 512 348** or visit their website [CLICK HERE](#) for an online chat. Visit their specific COVID-19 website for more information via [www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)
- **Suicide Call Back Service** provides 24/7 support if you or someone you know is feeling suicidal. Call **1300 659 467** or chat via [www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)
- **MensLine Australia** provides professional counselling specialising in support for Australian men. Call **1300 78 99 78** or visit [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)
- Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other health professionals that you feel comfortable in talking with

If you would like to know some more information about COVID-19 and the current updates, it is best to always get your information from reliable and trusted sources, such as:

- [Department of Health](#) and their [COVID-19 Health Campaign](#)
- [World Health Organisation](#)

This may be a good time to find out some more information about mental health, and how you can take care of your own and others wellbeing. Here are some great resources that are being updated regularly to provide everything with as much support as possible:

- [Beyond Blue](#) – Mental health information and support during COVID-19
- [Head to Health](#) – Information about mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19
- [MindSpot](#) – 10 Tips for Coping during COVID-19



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### Information on how to help yourself when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed

(From Lifeline and Suicide Call Back Service)

Feeling down, stressed, and isolated can be overwhelming and very frightening. It can be very difficult to know what to do and how to cope, but help is available.

- Talk to someone you trust – you don't have to go through this alone. Tell them how you feel – and that you are thinking of suicide. Ask them to help you keep safe.
- If you are feeling suicidal, get help and support to stay alive – contact a helpline (listed above), your GP, a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist, a hospital emergency department, minister, teacher or anyone you trust to keep you safe.

The following is a list of things that other people have found helpful when feeling overwhelmed and they do not know how to calm down. You might find it useful to experiment with some of these ideas and keep a list of the ones you've found helpful so you can refer back to them when you need to.

- Listening to music that can improve your mood
- Having a bath
- Taking 10 slow, deep breaths
- Sitting outside or going for a short walk
- Spending time with your loved ones, or talking on the phone
- Watching a favourite movie, television program or funny videos
- Drawing/sketching/painting
- Writing or journaling
- Reconnecting with areas of your life that give you a sense of meaning e.g. spirituality, social service, your vocation, your goals
- Taking some time out to treat yourself to a small thing you ordinarily enjoy and savour it

This is a challenging time, but we will get through this together. Keep connected, take care of yourself and your loved ones.