



Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form

Esports Supporters – Secondary school

Title	Establishing Esports Value
Chief Investigator/Senior Supervisor	Dr. Emma Witkowski

What does my participation involve?

The study in which you are being asked to participate is a research project being undertaken by Dr. Witkowski on esports practices. The study will involve comprehensive primary research of esports ecosystems, from grassroots to professional play, exploring high performance esports practices at the individual, interdependent, and institutional levels, the audiences and fandoms that surround these practices looking at the networked, and the technical specifics that support the cultivation of esports practices and audiences.

Your participation will involve your experiences and practices in supporting esports as a practice.

The project is being supervised by Dr Emma Witkowski.

The project has been approved by the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee.

1 Introduction

You are invited to take part in this research project, which is called *Establishing Esports Value*. You have been invited because of your experiences in supporting or involvement in various forms of institutionalised esports practices with teams, leagues or events. In the event that you are not approached in person and invited to respond to this research via an online forum or questionnaire (announced on relevant esports pages such as a Facebook esports event profile, Twitter, or Twitch event streams), the information sheet and consent form will be available and clearly linked on Dr. Witkowski's website [emmawitkowski.com under "Current Research"].

This Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about. Before deciding whether or not to take part, you might want to talk about it with a relative or friend.

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to sign the consent section. By signing it you are telling us that you:

- Understand what you have read
- Consent to take part in the research project

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information and Consent Form to keep or alternatively it is available at emmawitkowski.com.

2 What is the purpose of this research?

Currently, little research has been conducted on esports in Australia, a region of rapid institutional expansion across commercial and public networked competitive gaming scenes. Most available studies are market/industry reports which promote predominantly generalised, quantitative data insights on the visible industry at large. This study explores how parents, teachers and educational faculty members experience and understand esports in the secondary school setting. The study aims to provide specificity around this sector of esports within educational institutions, and hear from those involved on the everyday experiences and concerns surrounding its current state and practices.

- Researcher participants will be focusing upon the experiences and practices surrounding esports as players, industry members, supporters, and fans.
- The fieldwork methods include interviews, survey responses, participant observation, and observations.
- The study will follow the ramp up of esports becoming a professional media sports industry, a nationally recognised sport, and institutionalised practice (including the educational sector), and potentially an Olympic event in 2024.

Where the research project is investigator-initiated:

This research has been initiated by the researcher, Dr. Emma Witkowski.

Where the research project is funded by a grant:

This research has been partially funded by Essendon Football Club.

3 What does participation in this research involve?

If you choose to participate in this study, please review the form and agree verbally, via email, or sign the consent form prior to the start of your research involvement. Your participation includes the following:

Interviews (participant not identified, no filming/photography of facial features)

You will be asked to participate in either an informal or semi-structured interview with the researcher in relation to your role in the esports ecosystem (e.g. as an esports supporter or fan).

As a semi-structured interview, there will be several guiding questions on esports support practices, but other following questions may also be asked as issues of relevance are identified.

- You are at liberty not to answer any questions that are raised during the interview.
- You are at liberty to end and withdraw from the interview at any time and, if you choose, to have any information given destroyed and not used in the project.
- The interviews are being conducted anonymously. While you may be asked to provide demographic data, you will not be identified personally in the analysis or reporting of the research findings unless requesting otherwise.

Interviews (participant identified, with audio, video or photographic recording)

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview with the researcher in relation to the topic of their research. As a semi-structured interview, there will be several guiding questions, but other following questions may also be asked as issues of relevance are identified.

You may choose to not answer any questions that are raised during the interview. As a part of this project, you will be photographed, or recorded using audio or video recording. Any images used in research publications will be de-identified (pixelated) on publication unless requesting otherwise.

- You are at liberty not to answer any questions that are raised during the interview.
- You are at liberty to end and withdraw from the interview at any time and, if you choose, to have any information given destroyed and not used in the project.
- The interviews are being conducted anonymously (unless requesting otherwise). While you may be asked to provide demographic data, you will not be identified personally in the analysis or reporting of the research findings unless requesting otherwise.

Observation with participants' knowledge

You are being asked to participate in a research project that involves the observation of your support and/or audience involvement around esports. As a part of this project, you will be photographed, or recorded using audio or video recording. Any images used in research publications will be de-identified (pixelated) on publication unless requesting otherwise.

4 Other relevant information about the research project

- Approximately 100 participants will take part in this study, including esports teams, event organisers, team owners, administrators, game developers, esports supporters and fans.
- RMIT and Essendon Football Club are involved in the economic support of this research.

5 Do I have to take part in this research project?

Participation in any research project is voluntary. If you do not wish 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 project at any stage.

If you do decide to take part, you will be given this Participant Information and Consent Form to sign and you will be given a copy to keep. Alternatively, you may agree to take part in this research by giving verbal consent or agreeing to consent via email on agreeing with the information provided.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the researchers or with RMIT University.

For non-identifiable questionnaire

Submitting your completed questionnaire is an indication of your consent to participate in the study. You can withdraw your responses any time before you have submitted the questionnaire. Once you have submitted it, your responses cannot be withdrawn because they are non-identifiable and therefore we will not be able to tell which one is yours.

Interview

You may stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and information you have provided will not be included in the study

results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview.

6 What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research; however, you may appreciate contributing to knowledge. Possible benefits may include increased knowledge of the esports industry and fandoms in the public and private sector, and the research may make a beneficial contribution to scholarly and industry knowledge, both local and international. The study will inform the researcher's future professional practice and research.

There is no payment for participation in this research.

7 What are the risks and disadvantages of taking part?

The research has been evaluated as low risk, and given the topic of study, it is not anticipated that there will be any unpleasant or invasive questions asked.

Psychological distress

You may feel that some of the questions we ask are stressful or upsetting. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go to the next question, or you may stop immediately. If you become upset or distressed as a result of your participation in the research project, members of the research team will be able to discuss appropriate support for you.

Topics of a sensitive nature

Topic of a sensitive nature will be treated confidentially and anonymised. If you are concerned about any of the questions or your responses, or if you find participation in the project distressing, you should contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Emma Witkowski, as soon as convenient. Dr Witkowski will discuss your concerns with you confidentially and suggest appropriate follow-up and support services, if necessary.

There are no risks associated with non-participation.

Online questionnaire

This project will use an external site to create and collect data collected in a survey format (Google Forms). If you agree to participate in this survey, the responses you provide will be stored on their host server. No personal information will be collected in the survey, so none will be stored as data. Once we have completed our data collection and analysis, we will import the data to the RMIT server where it will be stored securely for five year. The data on the host server will then be deleted and expunged.

8 What if I withdraw from this research project?

If you do consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the project, please notify the Chief Investigator, Dr Emma Witkowski, as soon as convenient. You have the right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, providing it can be reliably identified. Please note that if a participant withdraws part-way through a research project, some data collected or published to that point may not be able to be deleted.

9 What happens when the research project ends?

On conclusion of the study, participants with contact details will be informed about the results of the research. The study and publications will be made publicly available through Dr Emma Witkowski's website emmawitkowski.com. The study publications will be approximately available from 2019 and until the research project is completed in 2021.

How is the research project being conducted?

10 What will happen to information about me?

10 What will happen to information about me?

By signing the consent form you consent to Dr. Emma Witkowski collecting and using information from you for the research project. Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential unless requested otherwise. The research data will be kept on a private database maintained solely by the Chief Investigator. At the end of the study, all research data will be destroyed except for data labelled as historically important public data (esports and the Olympics), which has been given consent for extended public data use.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except with your express permission. Confidentiality will be maintained by pixelating images, providing pseudonyms on direct citations, and generalising any identifiable affiliations.

When participants' information is identifiable or re-identifiable include the following:
In accordance with relevant Australian and/or Victorian privacy and other relevant laws, you have the right to request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the research team. You also have the right to request that any information with which you disagree be corrected. Please inform the Dr. Emma Witkowski if you would like to access your information.

Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is to protect you or others from harm, (2) if specifically allowed by law, (3) you provide the researchers with written permission. Any information obtained for the purpose of this research project and for the future research (esports and the Olympics) described that can identify you will be treated as confidential and securely stored.

11 Who is organising and funding the research?

Organising and funding research

This research project is being conducted by Dr. Emma Witkowski.

RMIT and Essendon Football Club are involved in the financial support of this research.

12 Who has reviewed the research project?

All research in Australia involving humans is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). This research project has been approved by the RMIT University HREC.

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007). This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

13 Further information and who to contact

If you want any further information concerning this project, you can contact the researcher on 03 9925 4756 or any of the following people:

Research contact person

Name	Dr. Emma Witkowski
Position	Chief investigator / Senior supervisor
Telephone	03 9925 4756
Email	emma.witkowski@rmit.edu.au

14 Complaints

Should you have any concerns or questions about this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers listed in this document, then you may contact:

Reviewing HREC name	RMIT University
HREC Secretary	Peter Burke
Telephone	03 9925 2251
Email	human.ethics@rmit.edu.au
Mailing address	Research Ethics Co-ordinator Research Integrity Governance and Systems RMIT University GPO Box 2476 MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Consent Form

Title
Chief Investigator/Senior Supervisor

Establishing Esports Value
Dr. Emma Witkowski

Acknowledgement by Participant

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research described in the project.

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 project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project without affecting my relationship with RMIT.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

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

Declaration by Researcher[†]

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project, its procedures and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Name of Researcher [†] (please print) _____
Signature _____ Date _____

[†] An appropriately qualified member of the research team must provide the explanation of, and information concerning, the research project.

Note: All parties signing the consent section must date their own signature.