

## Farming Families Wellbeing and Bereavement – Participant Information Sheet

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study exploring the ways in which Australian farming families experience and respond to the traumatic loss of someone close to them, and how this impacts upon their lives. To do so, we invite adult members of farming families who have experienced bereavement as a result of external causes (suicide, accidental death, homicide, or a death by unknown cause or intent) to share their experiences. We understand that this is an emotional and intensely personal experience. We would very much appreciate your assistance in sharing your experiences with the aim of developing community-informed responses and assistance for those bereaved in the future. Any information you choose to share will be highly valued. Your experience is unique and very important.

This project forms part of Alison Kennedy's PhD research at The University of New England, and is under the supervision of Associate Professor Myfanwy Maple (UNE), Dr Kathy McKay (UNE) and Associate Professor Susan Brumby (UNE/National Centre for Farmer Health).

**HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED:** As part of the Farming Families Wellbeing and Bereavement study, we invite you to first fill out a questionnaire of the "tick or select the box" type that is about how you feel now, about your childhood, some recent events in your life, your experience of loss and bereavement and about how you deal with unpleasant things that happen to you. This should take you around 45 minutes. You can either do this online or you can be sent a paper version of the survey. You will then be invited to share, in greater detail, your experience of loss and bereavement. This will be in the form of an in-depth conversation via email, telephone or, if travel distance permits, face-to-face. You will be free to choose the format that you are most comfortable with. The face-to-face or telephone conversation format would take about 2 hours of your time at a location suitable to you. These conversations will be audio recorded to assist with data accuracy. The email conversation would involve your response to approximately 10 emails over an 8-10 week period (less if you write very detailed emails). Phone contact will also be made half way through the email conversation to check how you are finding the process.

*"This CRN project is supported by the  
Department of Industry, Innovation, Science,  
Research and Tertiary Education"*

Some of the questions in this research ask about personal matters and loss. Although these questions are not designed to cause significant psychological or emotional stress, you will be reflecting upon events in your life that may be upsetting. If you feel that these questions will cause you considerable psychological or emotional stress, you might consider not participating in this research. You will be provided with information about available support services should you feel you need them following the interview. Should you indicate you are distressed at any stage throughout the research, the Principal supervisor (Dr Myfanwy Maple) will make contact to assist you with your support requirements.

**CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY:** We would like to assure you that any information you share will remain confidential at all times and your identity will be kept anonymous. While the information you share may be included in scientific publications, you will never be identified in any way.

**PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY:** Your involvement in this study is voluntary and we respect your right to withdraw at any time. You may discontinue your participation at any time and do not need to provide any explanation. Should you withdraw from the study, all information provided to the research team will be destroyed.

**STORAGE OF INFORMATION:** Any information you choose to share in this study will be securely stored so as to maintain confidentiality. Hard copies will be kept in a locked cabinet in the research office. Electronic data will be kept on a password-protected computer. Only the research team will have access to the information. All of the information collected in this research will be kept at the University of New England for a minimum of five years after successful completion of this research as is required by the National Health and Medical Research Council, after which relevant computer files will be deleted and hard copy materials will be destroyed or shredded.

**RESEARCH PROCESS:** The aim of this research is primarily to inform the student's PhD thesis. The de-identified results of the research will be presented at conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals.

**ETHICS:** This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE13-047. Valid to 13/06/2014).

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS: Should you have any questions about taking part in this study, please contact Alison Kennedy on (03) 5551 8587 or 0499 752 130, email [akenne31@myune.edu.au](mailto:akenne31@myune.edu.au) or contact any of the other members of the research team:

Associate Professor Myfanwy Maple: 02 6773 3661 or email: [mmapple2@une.edu.au](mailto:mmapple2@une.edu.au)

Dr Kathy McKay: 02 6773 3443 or email: [kmckay8@une.edu.au](mailto:kmckay8@une.edu.au)

Associate Professor Susan Brumby: 03 5551 8460 or email: [susan.brumby@wdhs.net](mailto:susan.brumby@wdhs.net)

COMPLAINTS: Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer:

Research Services  
University of New England  
Armidale, NSW 2351  
Tel: (02) 6773 3449 Fax: (02) 6773 3543  
Email: [ethics@une.edu.au](mailto:ethics@une.edu.au)

FEEDBACK OF RESULTS: The outcomes of this study will be reported to the media and made publically available on the Collaborative Research Network webpage at the University of New England and the National Centre for Farmer Health webpage.

**If, after reading this Participant Information Sheet or sharing your experiences through any stage of this study, you feel distressed, we urge you to contact your GP or local community health centre or alternatively call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467 for counseling support.**