PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

Always, Usually, Sometimes: Poverty Over Time in Australia
Phase 1.0
Led by Dr Yuvisthi Naidoo

1. **What is the study about?**
You are invited to take part in this study. The study aims to explore how poverty is experienced by those living it. It will follow the experiences of a group of people for multiple years to understand their experiences and how they change over time. This research is planned to run until 2031.

2. **Who is conducting this research?**
The study is being carried out by the following researchers at the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) and the Centre for Social Research in Health (CSRH) at UNSW Sydney:

- Dr Yuvisthi Naidoo (lead investigator, SPRC)
- Dr Mia Harrison (co-investigator, CSRH)
- Dr Megan Blaxland (co-investigator, SPRC)
- Sci Prof Carla Treloar (co-investigator, CSRH)

The research is being funded as part of a partnership between ACOSS (the Australian Council of Social Service) and UNSW Sydney to research poverty and inequality and advocate for change. The partnership is backed by non-government-organisation partners: 54 reasons (part of Save the Children Australia Group), Jesuit Social Services, Life Without Barriers, cohealth (a Victorian community health service), Mission Australia, The Smith Family and Settlement Services International; along with philanthropist John Mitchell and Australian Communities Foundation subfund the David Morawetz Social Justice Fund.

3. **Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**
Before you decide to participate in this research study, we need to ensure that it is ok for you to take part. The research study is looking to recruit people who meet the following criteria:
   - Are currently living in Australia;
   - Are aged 18 years or older;
   - Are willing to participate in future online interviews and invited photo sharing activities until the conclusion of the study (estimated 2031);
   - Have experienced poverty, disadvantage, or tough times* within the last 5 years. *(*see section 4 for more detail)*

People are not able to take part in the study if:
   - They do not meet the above criteria.

4. **What does "experienced poverty, disadvantage, or tough times" mean?**
This study is interested in hearing from people with different experiences. If you consent to participating in this study, you will be invited to undergo a brief initial screening process to confirm that you are eligible. You might be eligible to participate if you identify with one of the following descriptions of poverty, disadvantage, or tough times:
   - Finding it hard to make ends meet;
   - Struggling to cover the cost of essential items and services, like food, medication, or heating/cooling;
   - Constantly having to choose between things you need but can't afford.

For example, you might have:

- Received, applied for, or considered applying for Centrelink payments;
- Received food or other basic items through a charity or community program;
- Regularly missed rent or mortgage payments;
- Been unemployed without other income or sufficient savings to support yourself, even for a short time;
- Been homeless or worried about becoming homeless.

You might also have experiences that are not listed above. If you identify as having experienced poverty, disadvantage, or tough times at any point within the last 5 years in a way not described above, you will have the opportunity to explain this during the initial screening. You can also contact a member of the research team if you have any questions (see section 11 for contact details).

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

Participation in this research 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);
- Sign and return the consent form if you decide to participate in the study;
- Keep a copy of this form.

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

If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete the following research procedures.

Screening: An initial screening questionnaire asking about your personal circumstances, including your age, your recent experiences with work or unemployment, where you live and your housing situation, and your experiences with social security systems. This will help the research team determine if you are eligible to take part in this study. You will also be asked some other questions about yourself, including your gender, cultural background, the languages you speak at home, and whether you live with a disability. This will help the research team ensure that this study includes participants with different experiences and backgrounds.

Completing the screening questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes. The screening questionnaire will be administered to you as a Word document, which will be emailed to you by a member of the research team. If you prefer, you will also be able to organise a time to complete the screening via a video call with a member of the research team. If the screening questionnaire shows that you meet the criteria for inclusion, a member of the research team will be in contact with you to organise a time for your Phase 1 interview. If the screening questionnaire shows that you cannot be in the research project, you will be notified via email and your personal information will be securely deleted.

Interviews: We will invite you to participate in 3 interviews. We will contact you in 2026, 2028 and 2030 to ask if you want to do an interview. We will talk to you via Microsoft Teams or by phone. Each interview

will take about an hour. If you agree, we would like to video record the interview, but you can ask for audio recording only if you prefer.

Photo invitations: We will ask you to take a photograph of something specific in your everyday life to share with us, for example, an item of clothing or a meal. Photographs can be taken by whatever device you have access to, such a phone or digital camera. You will also be asked to explain your photograph in a few sentences. You will be asked to respond to photo invitations once every 6 months between interview phases, for a total of 6 occasions. Each photo invitation should take less than 15 minutes to complete. A member of the research team will contact you via email for each photo invitation with a new question/prompt and a link to an online form where you can submit your photograph and explanation. If you are unable to submit through the online form, you will be given the option to share via email.

Confirming consent: Each time we invite you to take part in an interview or share a photo, you will be sent a new Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, which will look similar to this document. These will remind you what the study is about and what is involved by participating. These will also include additional details about the specific phase of the study you are consenting to participate in. You will be asked to read, sign, and return these consent forms before participating in each phase (for a total of 9 occasions during a time period of 4–5 years).

Additional Costs and Reimbursement: There are no costs to you associated with participating in this research. If you choose to participate in this phase of the study (Phase 1 interview) you will receive a AUD$50 prepaid EFTPOS card to reimburse you for your time during the interview. Prepaid EFTPOS cards can be used anywhere that accepts EFTPOS. You will receive an additional AUD$50 card for each interview that you complete during this study (up to 3 total). You will also receive an additional AUD$20 card for each photo invitation you participate in during this study (up to 6 total) to reimburse you for your time in taking and sharing a photograph with the research team.

Psychological Distress: You may feel that some of the questions we ask during the Phase 1 interview 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 this interview or any future phases of the research project, the research team will be able to arrange for counselling or other appropriate support. Alternatively, numbers for free contactable support services are included at section 12. Any counselling or support will be provided by qualified staff who are not members of the research team. This counselling will be provided free of charge.

7. What will happen to information about me?

By signing the consent form, you consent to the research team collecting and using information about you for the research study. This includes your response to the initial screening questionnaire, video and/or audio recordings of interviews and interview transcripts, photographs you share in response to photo invitations and their explanations, and any communication you have with the research team throughout the research study, such as email correspondence.

- The research team will store the data collected from you for this research project for a minimum of 5 years after the publication of the research results or the conclusion of the full study, whichever is longer.

- The information about you will be stored in a non-identifiable format where your identity will be unknown.
- Your contact and screening information and all consent forms you sign to participate in the research will be stored separately from all de-identified information we collect from you during the research. These can only be relinked by the approved research investigators using a unique code.
- Information collected from you in an electronic format will be stored on a UNSW password protected OneDrive only accessible to the approved research investigators. Audio-only files from interview recordings will be made available to a professional transcription service using secure file transferring processes. Recordings will only be made available after a confidentiality agreement has been signed.

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**.

8. 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 at the end of this consent form.

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

If you do consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time. You can do so 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. Your decision not to participate or to withdraw from the study will not affect your relationship with UNSW Sydney or any of the organisations involved in this research. If you decide to leave the research study, the researchers will not collect additional information from you. You can request that any identifiable information about you be withdrawn from the research project.

10. 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:

Complaints Contact

Position	UNSW Human Research Ethics Coordinator
Telephone	+ 61 2 9385 6222
Email	humanethics@unsw.edu.au
HC Reference Number	**iRECS9901**

11. 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 research team:

Research Team Contact Details

Telephone	+61 2 9348 8415
Email	AUSpoverty@unsw.edu.au

If you would like to speak with the Lead Investigator, please contact the following person:

Lead Investigator

Name	Dr Yuvisthi Naidoo
Position	Lead Investigator
Telephone	+61 2 9385 7840
Email	ynaidoo@unsw.edu.au

12. Support Services Contact Details

If at any stage during the study, you become distressed or require additional support from someone not involved in the research please call:

Organisation	Lifeline
Telephone	13 11 14
Services	Lifeline is a free and confidential one-to-one support service for anyone feeling overwhelmed, distressed or having difficulty staying safe. It is accessible 24/7.
Web	www.lifeline.org.au

Organisation	NSW Mental Health Line
Telephone	1800 011 511
Services	NSW Mental Health Line is a free service staffed by mental health professionals that links people with NSW Health mental health services
Web	https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/mental-health-line.aspx

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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 video 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 understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep;
- ☐ I understand that the results of the research will be made available in publications, presentations, and other research outputs;
- ☐ I have provided details below for how I would like be contacted and reimbursed for participating in this study and provided alternate contacts *(see next page)*.

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	

+An appropriately qualified member of the research team must provide the explanation of, and information concerning the research study.
Note: All parties signing the consent section must date their own signature.

For information only

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Contact details and reimbursement

Please provide your details in the table below:

Full Name:	
Primary email Address:	
Alternate email address (recommended):	
Phone Number:	
Preferred method for receiving reimbursement for participation in Phase 1 Interview ***(select only one)***:	☐ Digital EFTPOS card sent to primary email address. ☐ Physical EFTPOS card sent to this mailing address:
Would you like to receive a copy of the study results via email?	Yes / No

This study is planned to run until 2031. To ensure we can keep in contact with you for the duration of the study, we ask that you provide names and email addresses for **two additional points of contact**, such as family members, friends, or support service representatives. We will only reach out to these contacts if we are unable to contact you directly about your future participation in this study (e.g., if you do not respond to either our email or follow up email about a future phase of this study and we cannot reach you by phone).

We will **not** disclose the nature the study or your involvement to your nominated contacts. They will only receive a brief statement that reads:

> *"Dear [contact name]. We are trying to contact [your name] regarding their participation in research conducted by UNSW. [Your name] previously provided us with your information as a back-up contact. We would appreciate if you let [your name] know that we have emailed you and pass on our contact information."*

ALTERNATE CONTACT 1:

Full name:
Email address:

ALTERNATE CONTACT 2:

Full name:
Email address:

For information only

Form for Withdrawal of Participation

I wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in this research study described above, including all future interviews and photo invitations associated with this research study. I understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** affect my relationship with The University of New South Wales or any of the people or organisations involved in the research.

I would like any identifiable information collected about me which I have provided for the purpose of this research study withdrawn. I understand that any information that is not identifiable or has already been published cannot be withdrawn from the research.

Participant Name

Name of Participant (please type)	
Date	

To withdraw from the study completely, this document with the completed Withdrawal of Participation form should be emailed to Dr Yuvisthi Naidoo at ynaidoo@unsw.edu.au

For information only