



INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

HREC Project Number: 18563

Research Project Title: Heat Outcome Trial (HOT) Text – Randomised Controlled Trial

Chief Investigator: Professor Enrico Coiera, Director, Centre for Health Informatics

You are invited to take part in a **text-messaging intervention designed to support Australians during extreme heat events, including heatwaves**. You have been invited because you responded to the email advertisement and were identified as eligible through the screening survey.

What is an Information and Consent Form?

This Participant Information and Consent Form tells you about the research project, and what is involved. Before you decide whether you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is occurring and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Taking part in the project is up to you

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. It will not affect your relationship with Macquarie University.

Signing the form

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to indicate your consent at the beginning of the survey by clicking on '**I agree, start questionnaire**'. By indicating your consent you are telling us that you:

- Understand what you have read
- Consent to take part in the research project
- Consent to the use of your personal and health information as described.

Please download a copy of this Participant Information and Consent Form to keep.

1. What is the purpose of this research?

People are at higher risk of illness during extreme heat days. The aim of this study is to test the effectiveness of a new tailored text messaging system. The messaging system will provide critical information about the health risks of extreme heat.

During the trial, we will look for changes in health symptoms, the adoption of behaviours that minimise risks on extreme heat days, and the degree to which people need to use health services due to a heat event.

2. What does participation in this research involve?

In this trial, 5,566 Australians will be randomly assigned to either a control or an intervention group. Each group will receive one of two types of text messaging (intervention or standard care) two days before a predicted extreme heat event in their location. To maintain the integrity of the study, we cannot disclose which group you have been assigned to.

If you decide to take part in this randomised controlled trial, you need to indicate your consent at the beginning of the baseline survey to confirm that you understand and agree to be part of the study.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria: You have already completed the screening survey, and based on your responses, you are eligible to participate in the study.

If you agree to participate, we are asking you to:

1. Complete an online baseline survey (15 minutes)

The survey will be about you and your basic details (e.g. name, contact details, gender), heat symptoms (e.g. dizziness), medical history (e.g. any illnesses you have), your visit to a doctor or healthcare service, heat health risks (e.g. living situation, or whether you have air conditioning at home), and how you feel about the risks of heat on your health. The surveys will be administered via MQ University's secure REDCap platform.

2. Receive a text message during a heatwave in the heatwave season (Oct 2026 – Mar 2027)

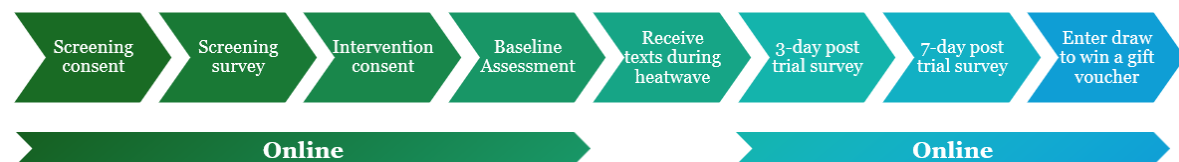
Four text messages will be delivered: One preparation message after study commencement, one ahead of predicted heatwave events (if forecast), followed by one at the start of the heatwave, and one after the heatwave is over. The text messages provide information on actions you can take to protect yourself from the heat. Heatwave predictions will be determined using the Bureau of Meteorology's Heatwave Warning Service. Messages will be sent from the **0481076748** number and may include an option to receive additional messages if you choose to engage. You will receive an enrolment confirmation message once you complete the baseline survey.

Please note that you should always follow messages you receive from your healthcare provider or government agencies if they conflict with the study message. There will also be a technical helpline to support you during the trial period.

3. Complete online follow-up surveys on days 3 and 7 post-heatwaves (1-minute and 5-minute surveys respectively)

Three days after the heatwave, for which you received the text message, you will receive an email with a link to the first survey which asks about your heat symptoms and any visits to a doctor or healthcare provider. On day 7, you will receive a second email with a link to the 7-day post-heatwave survey, asking about the intervention's design, usability, and acceptability. The surveys will be administered via MQ University's secure REDCap platform. You will also receive a text message reminder referring you to the survey emails. **Please note that** no links for surveys or intervention messages will be sent via text to protect you from fraud. If you receive any links via text, please note that they are not from us, and you should not click on them.

The flow diagram below provides a brief overview of the steps involved in participating in the intervention.



Study participation flow

A sub-group of participants will randomly be invited to participate in a follow-up study. This study is an online focus group interview to discuss participants' experiences with their participation in the intervention. Participation in focus group interviews is voluntary, and you will be provided with participant information before you indicate your interest. Those who complete the online interview will receive \$50 e-gift voucher as a token of our appreciation.

3. 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. 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 Macquarie University.

4. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research. We hope that your participation will benefit the health and wellbeing of adults in the future by designing an intervention to address their needs.

Upon completing the intervention, you can enter a draw for a chance to win one of three gift vouchers valued at \$200, \$150, or \$100.

5. What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?

You may feel uncomfortable answering questions about your health condition. However, you will be able to complete surveys in privacy, privately hosted through a secure platform. Alternatively, you can save the link for a survey and get back to it when you are comfortable.

Text messages are automatically constructed, so there is a small risk that the advice does not meet your particular needs. You are advised to consider your own specific circumstances (e.g., if you are indoors in air conditioning, you may not need to take the same immediate actions as someone working outdoors). Before taking any significant measures, confirm with additional sources, including official reliable sources and family and friends.

If you encounter major harm because of your participation in the research project, please tell a member of the research team or contact emergency services on 000.

If you become upset or distressed because of your participation in the research project, you can also contact a technical support member of the research team, and they will provide you with assistance or a list of free support services (such as Lifeline or Befrienders). Lifeline (telephone 13 11 14; lifeline.org.au) is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention. Befrienders Worldwide (befrienders.org) is an international service where members and trained volunteers around the world provide confidential support to people in emotional crisis or distress.

6. What if I withdraw from this research project?

Even if you consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the project, please notify a member of the research team before you withdraw. You can do this by phone or email. A member of the research team will inform you if there are any special requirements linked to withdrawing. If you decide to withdraw, you will be asked to complete and sign a 'Withdrawal of Consent' form. A copy of the Withdrawal of Consent form is provided at the bottom of this document for your information.

If you decide to leave the research project, the researchers will not collect additional personal information from you, although personal information already collected will be retained to ensure that the results of the research project can be measured properly and to comply with the law. You should be aware that data collected up to the time you withdraw will form part of the research project results. If you do not want your data to be included, you must tell the researchers when you withdraw from the research project.

7. What will happen to information about me?

By clicking the 'I agree, start questionnaire' button at the beginning of the baseline survey, you consent to the research team collecting and using personal information about you for the

research project. Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential.

Storage of information

We will store your information at Macquarie University, with your electronic information securely stored on a password-protected drive. The research team involved in this project may access your identifiable information. Your information will only be used for the purpose of this research project, and it will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law. The information collected for this research will be retained for 15 years after the publication of the research results.

Right to access information

In accordance with relevant Australian and/or NSW 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 research team member named at the end of this document if you would like to access your information. However, once the data is de-identified, it will no longer be possible to provide you with access to your information.

Confidentiality

Any information obtained for the purpose of this research project that can identify you will be treated as confidential and securely stored. The information collected will be de-identified after the intervention completion. All potentially identifying information (such as names) will be removed and replaced with a unique code.

Publicising results

For the wider community to benefit from the research, we plan to publish and/or present the results of this research project 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.

8. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being conducted by:

- Professor Enrico Coiera, Macquarie University
- Dr Hania Rahimi Ardabili, Macquarie University
- Professor Farah Magrabi, Macquarie University
- Kalissa Brooke-Cowden, Macquarie University
- Anastasia Chan, Macquarie University
- Satya Vedantam, Macquarie University

The research is being funded by Macquarie University.

Financial benefits that might arise from the conduct of the research

Macquarie University may benefit financially from this research project if, for example, the project assists Macquarie University in any commercial enterprise. You will not benefit financially from your involvement in this research project even if, for example, knowledge acquired from your information proves to be of commercial value to Macquarie University.

In addition, if knowledge acquired through this research leads to discoveries that are of commercial value to Macquarie University, the researchers or their institutions, there will be no financial benefit to you or your family from these discoveries.

9. Who has reviewed the research project?

The ethical aspects of this research project have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at Macquarie University.

10. Further information and who to contact

Research contacts: If you want any further information concerning this project or if you have any problems which may be related to your involvement in the project, you can contact the following people.

Name	Role	Email	Phone
Kalissa Brooke-Cowden (NSW)	Research coordinator	kalissa.brooke-cowden@mq.edu.au	+ 61 2 9850 6051
Hania Rahimi-Ardabili (NSW)	Lead investigator and research coordinator	hania.rahimiardabili@mq.edu.au	+61 2 9850 9419
Anastasia Chan (NSW)	Research coordinator	anastasia.chan@mq.edu.au	+ 61 2 9850 1635
Enrico Coiera (NSW)	Chief investigator	enrico.coiera@mq.edu.au	+61 2 9850 2403

Complaints contact: If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone: (02) 9850 7854; email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Declaration by Participant

I have read the Participant Information Statement

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. Withdrawal will not affect my relationship with any of the named organisations and/or research team members.

I understand that I received a copy of this document via email to keep.

☐ I want to receive a summary of the findings of the study on the completion of the project

Participants Name

Date

I agree, start questionnaire

Withdrawal of Consent

I wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in the research proposal described above and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** affect my relationship with Macquarie University, or any organisation named in this study or research team members.

Please select either:

- ☐ I am withdrawing my consent, I would like any personal information collected about me which I have provided for the purpose of this research study withdrawn.

OR

- ☐ I am withdrawing my consent to participate in further components of this research and provide my permission for the research team to retain and/or use information collected about me which I have provided for the purpose of this research.

Participant Name

Name of Participant (please type)	
Date	

The section for Withdrawal of Participation should be forwarded to:

Name:	Hania Rahimi-Ardabili
Email:	Hania.rahimiardabili@mq.edu.au
Phone:	(02) 9850 9419
Postal Address:	Level 6, 75 Talavera Road Macquarie University NSW 2109