

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: How politicians evaluate public opinion

Researchers: Our research team is based at the Australian National University, led by Dr Marija Taflaga (ANU), Professor Patrick Dumont (ANU), and Professor Annika Werner (Southampton). We are political scientists that either teach in, or are affiliated with, the School of Politics and International Relations in the College of Arts and Social Sciences. Our team is part of a European Research Council funded international project, investigating Australian politicians' attitudes to public opinion. Our team is one of 15 national teams working together to understand how politicians evaluate public opinion.

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** The goal of this project is to understand how politicians understand public opinion and whether politicians' ideas about representation match voters' ideas. We want to understand this in the Australian context, and to see how Australia compares with our partner investigator countries overseas. In order to do so, the project includes two components: a survey of public opinion and qualitative interviews related to the survey.
- **Participants:** You have been selected as an elected politician in an Australian Parliament. Our goal is to interview 100 participants.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** Information from these interviews will be used for education and academic purposes (including for publication and conference presentations). All published findings will be posted on the research university webpages of the research team and the project's international webpage. These websites are publicly available. If you request it, we will notify you when research outputs are published and where they may be obtained.
- **Project Funding:** The study is financed by the European Research Council through the Advanced ERC grant (POLEVPOP, grant 101018105) awarded to Prof. Dr. Stefaan Walgrave from the University of Antwerp. Professor Walgrave is the overall project lead.

Participant Involvement:

- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Participation in this project is entirely voluntary. Participants may withdraw consent, participation, and previously supplied data at any time up until the data has been processed without needing to provide an explanation and without penalty. Within the research, you may also decline to be involved or decline to answer any question. If you withdraw, the data you have provided prior to processing will be destroyed and not used. In the context of the processing of personal data referred to in this form, you have the right at all times to view your personal data and to have any incorrect and/or incomplete personal data relating to yourself corrected at any time. You may also request that we temporarily not further process your personal data (except in a number of legally determined cases) until we have verified the accuracy of your personal data. You also have the right to request that we transfer a copy of your personal data to yourself and/or directly to another institution or person of your choice in a format that allows easy transfer of this personal data.
- If you no longer allow the research team to process your personal data, you can also request that your personal data be permanently deleted. Instead of erasing, you can alternatively request that your data remain stored but are not processed further (except in certain legally defined cases).
- To exercise the above rights, you can contact Marija Taflaga (marija.taflaga@anu.edu.au). If you have given your permission, but change your mind afterwards, you will always be able to withdraw your

permission by reporting this to Marija Taflaga (marija.taflaga@anu.edu.au), without having to give a reason. We will not continue to use your personal data and will destroy it.

- **What does participation in the research entail?** If you agree to participate we will be asking you about aspects of your day to day work as an MP and your views on a range of public policy issues. The interview format consists of mostly structured questions, with some semi-structured questions. All of your structured questions will be recorded using a survey instrument on a specially purchased laptop/iPad. Your answers to interview questions will be recorded manually in a notebook, or if you consent, recorded for transcription. Should you choose to be recorded we will provide you with a record of the interview upon request. You will be able to nominate at any time how you wish to be identified (either via alphanumeric or no attribution). You can change your mind at any time until the time of publication. Should we quote directly from your interview, we will contact you to ensure that you have been quoted accurately.
- **Location and Duration:** Interviews are expected to last between 30 minutes and 1 hour and will be conducted face to face at a venue of your choosing or via Zoom, Teams or the telephone.
- **Risks:** The research carries minimal risk, although you may feel uncomfortable or distressed if you have had negative experiences related to the questions asked. There is also a risk that despite our efforts to keep your identity confidential, you may be identified through your responses. We advise that you do not make any statements that you believe could cause a social or professional harm to you or others.
- **Benefits:** You may benefit as a result of this interview through increased understanding of how your colleagues as a group understand public opinion and make policy and political decisions. This research will contribute to a broader understanding of how politicians try to represent their communities and create policy.

Confidentiality:

- As this project is funded by the European Research Council, we must comply with both European and Australian privacy, confidentiality, and data protection regulations. Where one set of rules is more strict, we must adopt the stricter rule. However, confidentiality can only be assured as far as those laws allow.
- The data that we collect are not anonymous. The reason is that to answer some of our research questions we need to link your answers to other information about what you do as a politician (e.g. your committee memberships). We follow an extensive procedure (that is in line with General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679) to safeguard the confidentiality of your answers.
- Your personal data will always be processed under the responsibility of the project's leads, Dr Marija Taflaga, Professor Patrick Dumont, and Professor Annika Werner.
- Right after the data collection, we will pseudonymize all data. This means that the working dataset (used for the analysis) does *not* contain your personal data (e.g. your name). It only contains an identification code, that can only be used for specific research purposes (e.g. to link new data), by researchers from the University of Antwerp working on the project. For the comparative component of this study, we will transfer *only* the pseudonymized dataset to our partner researchers, both from within and outside the European Union (EU). Everyone working on this project is required to sign a data protection agreement compliant with EU regulations.
- More specifically, to achieve the purposes described in this form, the following persons will have access to your personal data:
 - Access to personal data: Dr Marija Taflaga, Dr Richard Reid, Professor Patrick Dumont, and Professor Annika Werner, and, newly hired staff who will sign a confidentiality agreement.

- Access to pseudonymized data: international research team.
- If academic journals require us to publish our data for replication purposes, we will only publish a fully de-identified version of the dataset. This dataset will not contain any information based on which you could be identified.

Privacy Notice:

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Data Storage:

- **Where:** All data files will be saved on a password-protected computer or hard drive and/or notebooks that will be stored in a filing cabinet under lock and key at the Australian National University.
- **How long:** Interview data will be stored for up to 10 years beyond the time of publication. Only the de-identified dataset will be kept after this date and stored at the Australian Data Archive based at the ANU for future reference.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** If you have any future concerns you may contact Dr Marija Taflaga by email at marija.taflaga@anu.edu.au or on +61 02 6125 5492.

Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2022/408). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia
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