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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: AN INVESTIGATION OF SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES ACROSS RELIGIOUS AND NON-RELIGIOUS GROUPS

STAFF SUPERVISOR: DR. LISA MILNE

STUDENT RESEARCHERS: MR. YIORGO SGOURAKIS AND MISS KARLEE SOUTH

COURSE: POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PSYCHOLOGY

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a project that is being undertaken as part of a requirement for our postgraduate studies in psychology. The purpose of the project is to investigate spirituality and spiritual experiences amongst religious and non-religious communities. You have been asked to participate in the current study as we are interested in gathering information about spiritual experiences from people who are either practicing Buddhists or who identify with the secular/non-religious population.

Participation in the study requires you to complete a series of questionnaires that will be given to you by the researcher. The questionnaires will contain a range of questions regarding your spiritual beliefs, experiences, and ideas that you have about yourself. Most questionnaires are in survey form, with only a few questions requiring written answers. How long it takes for a participant to work through the questionnaires depends on them. Though it would be expected that completion of the questionnaires would take no longer 45 minutes.

You will be asked to return the questionnaires in the sealed envelope to either the nominated staff member, if you have been contacted on the basis or membership of your organisation, or return the questionnaires to the researcher using the stamped addressed enveloped provided.

There are minimal risks involved with your participation within this study. However, should participating in the research in some way cause you any distress, please contact your local GP. To find a psychologist in your local area contact the Australian Psychological Society referral service though www.psychology.org.au or telephone 8662 3300.

Your participation in the current study has the potential to contribute to further understanding of the concept of spirituality in the field of psychology. Spirituality is a concept that is already thought to be associated with many physical and psychological benefits. However, it is a concept that at least in the field of psychology remains relatively unexplored. We believe that to further understand the

dynamics of spirituality increases psychologists' ability to promote and render its benefits for individuals, and understand its role within the wider community.

Participation in the current study is voluntary, and you can choose not to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. The researcher will require neither reasons nor justification for such an action. However, as the information being collected is completely anonymous, once the questionnaires have been submitted, the documents will not be retrievable by participants.

Any information collected by the researchers regarding any participant is kept completely confidential. No participant's names will be retained or linked with any data. Confidentiality is ensured both during participation within the study, and in any report or publication that arises from it. The data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify the participant in any way.

If you have any questions about the project before or after participating, please contact the Staff Supervisor, Dr Lisa Milne on telephone number 03 9953 3114 in the School of Psychology, St Patrick's Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, FITZROY 3065.

Before commencing, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the project. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your participation and the project in general after the completing the experiment.

The current study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Student researchers or Staff supervisor has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Unit.

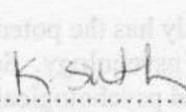
**Chair, HREC
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
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Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065
Tel: 03 9953 3158
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Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You as the participant will be informed of the outcome

If you are willing to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the accompanying consent forms. Retain one copy for yourself and return the other copy to the Student researcher. Your support for the research project will be most appreciated.


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Dr Lisa Milne
Principal Investigator/Supervisor


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Yiorgo Sgourakis
Student Researcher


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Karlee South
Student Researcher