

# Plain Language Statement

School of Bioscience, Faculty of Science



## ***Project: Evaluating Analytic Reasoning Survey***

**Project Supervisor:** Ashley Barnett

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### **Associated Researchers:**

- Associate Professor Meredith McKague, Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences
- Andrew Wang, Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences.

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## **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following provides you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

## **What is this research about?**

It is designed to help us learn about two questions:

1. What do people think it would be like to work as an intelligence analyst?
2. How do people think about evaluating arguments?

## **Am I eligible to participate?**

Participants need to be

1. Australian
2. Over the age of 18
3. Fluent in English

## **What will I be asked to do?**

Should you agree to participate you will be asked to complete a survey that includes the following sections: 1) some basic demographic questions (such as age, gender, level of education, your experience with analysing arguments), 2) a set of brief-answer questions about what you think intelligence analysts do, 3) a set of four intelligence arguments that we will ask you to evaluate in terms of the strength (quality) of the arguments; 4) a set of multiple-choice and brief-answer questions to help us understand how you approach evaluating arguments.

The arguments you will be asked to evaluate relate to real-world national security topics such as of 9/11, The War in Iraq, and poisoning. But we are interested in your views, so please don't look up any additional views about these topics while doing this exercise. These topics may be distressing to some people, and participants can of course stop at any time.

We anticipate that the entire survey should take approximately 1.5 hours to complete. Though many people will be able to complete it in less time.

### ***Optional Follow-up Webinar***

At the end of the survey you will be provided with a link and details for attending an optional follow-up webinar on the [date] where we will discuss the results and talk about some of the common questions that people asked in the survey. It will also cover a couple of the structured analytic techniques that Ash Barnett teaches in training courses for intelligence agencies. The webinar will run for an hour. If you would like to attend, please record the details provided at the end of the survey, as the survey doesn't record your personal details or any means of contacting you to send you this information later.

### **Prize draw**

Participants will have the option to go into the draw to win 1 of 5 \$50 GiftPay vouchers. At the end of the survey you will be provided with a link to another survey to provide your email address. It will be impossible to connect your email address to your responses in the study, but you don't have to enter the prize draw if you don't want to.

### **Anonymous**

Your responses will be anonymous. There is no way that we can connect your response to you. We use a survey program called Qualtrics, and you can find out more about how they collect anonymous data here. ([link](#)).

### **Your views**

What we are really interested in is how you think about things. So please provide your own views and don't look up the views of others when answering the questions. You won't receive a score or anything like that so there is no reason to look for additional information.

### **Data storage**

The data will be stored in secure files on University of Melbourne computers accessible only by the researchers named on this form. Once we have the data to ensure it is free from any potentially identifying information, we will also publish the anonymised data on the Open Science Framework. This is considered best-practice in contemporary research because it allows other researchers to check the validity of the claims we make about the data.

### **What are the possible benefits?**

We hope this research will be useful for designing training courses for intelligence analysts and techniques for evaluating analytic arguments.

### **What are the possible risks?**

The data is anonymous, so there are no risks to your privacy. The content of the arguments you will be asked to evaluate relate to real-world events, such as the 9-11 terror attacks, the war in Iraq, and poisoning, which may be distressing for some people.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time. However, as the data collection is anonymous, we won't be able to remove your responses after you have responded to a question.

### **Will I hear about the results of this project?**

After completing the survey, you will receive a link to attend an optional online information session where we will talk about some of the themes that come out of the survey. And when papers are published to report our findings, we will share them on this webpage. [link]

### **Where can I get further information?**

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the project supervisor, Ashley Barnett at [Barnett.a@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:Barnett.a@unimelb.edu.au).

### **Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?**

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne (Project ID: 29496). If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 1376 or Email: [research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au). All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence, please provide the name of the research team and/or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.