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TASMANIA

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Tasmania in a pandemic: understanding and learning from the COVID-19 experience

A University of Tasmania social research project will document Tasmania's experience of COVID-19, gathering evidence to help inform how the State responds to and moves beyond the pandemic.

The Tasmania Project, led by Professor Libby Lester, will look into how we are adjusting and adapting to COVID-19 amid decisions of enormous social, political and economic significance being made in circumstances that we have not encountered before.

Professor Lester said a focus on Tasmania was important because of its unique situation. Our island status, older average age and poorer health means Tasmania may experience COVID-19, and the recovery phase, differently from other States.

"A deep understanding of our place and its people is our primary concern in this project," Professor Lester said. "The best response to the COVID-19 crisis will be one based on data that describes people's real-life experience. We aim to gain a deep insight into Tasmanians' experience over the coming months and years and to assist the State in emerging stronger and more resilient," Professor Lester said.

"We think it is important to learn how Tasmanians are adjusting in their everyday lives and to give them a voice in how the State responds and how we emerge from it and shape our future beyond COVID-19.

"How has life changed for you? What do you need? What messages have impact for you? What do you miss? What are you looking forward to?"

The project is seeking the input of 2,000 Tasmanian residents through surveys and interviews. The research team will also collect stories, images, video, audio diaries and other contributions. All data to come out of the project will remain anonymous, and any individual contributions will only be published with consent.

"Study participants can be involved in as little or as much of the research as they choose, and can withdraw at any time," Professor Lester said.

Data will be made available to government, business and community service providers to help with decision-making in the social, economic, public health and cultural policy areas.

If you would like to be part of The Tasmania Project please contact:
utas.edu.au/Tasmania-project; 6226 7542.

If you are in government, business or are a community service provider and are interested in finding out how you can engage with this study, please contact either:
Ruth.Steel@utas.edu.au or Libby.Lester@utas.edu.au

Professor Libby Lester is the Director of the Institute for Social Change in the College of Arts, Law and Education at the University of Tasmania.

To interview Professor Lester via Zoom, please contact Peter Cochrane, Communications Office, Peter.Cochrane@utas.edu.au; 0429 336 328.

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