



UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA

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Park runners needed for research

Millions of people enjoy exercising in parkrun events, but are there more benefits to the community program than just fitness?

School of Social Sciences researchers at the University of Tasmania are looking for volunteers to take part in a project to look further into this fitness trend to find out what social connection and benefits it offers.

Parkrun gives people the opportunity to go to a local park or other green space each Saturday morning, to exercise with other community members.

It began in the UK in 2004 with 13 runners, and now boasts around 3.5 million global participants (more than half a million in Australia).

“Coinciding with the growth of parkrun has been a decline in membership rates of sporting clubs and rising levels of involvement in traditionally individual physical activities such as going to the gym or jogging alone,” Sociology PhD student and project lead Zack Dwyer said.

“These trends reflect broader arguments that society is becoming increasingly 'individualised', leading to loneliness and a lack of meaningful connections.

“But as these traditional social spaces decline, parkrun has grown which may indicate that it is becoming a means of combating these trends.”

The research project also aims to see who is accessing parkrun in Tasmania.

“Part of the parkrun mission statement is to access disadvantaged groups, so we are asking whether these groups in Tasmania are participating and what impact they feel parkrun has had on their health and well-being.”

Participants are needed for phase one of the research which involves a 10-minute online survey which can be accessed at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NY6JSLW> or through the Facebook page parkrun Tasmania Study: Motivations and Outcomes.

Gift cards will be distributed randomly to participants who complete the survey.

In phase two researchers will be conducting interviews with people who are interested in chatting more about their parkrun experience.

For more details go to the survey or contact: zdwyer@utas.edu.au

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Information released by:

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