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Information Statement for the Research Project:
Morning Tea Talks: A perinatal support initiative
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You are invited to take part in the research project above which is being conducted by Dr Jane Rich and Professor Deb Loxton from the College of Health, Medicine & Wellbeing at the University of Newcastle.

Why is the research being done?

This project, funded by a Hunter Medical Research Institute philanthropic donation, aims to address the gap in support for women's maternal health and wellbeing. Entering motherhood can sometimes be an overwhelming time in a woman's life, and the right support can make all the difference. The Morning Tea Talks program is designed to support and empower women in the perinatal period. We aim to empower women and support the development of social support networks during the perinatal period. We expect this will lead to higher levels of wellbeing, increased confidence in parenting, and reduced feelings of isolation.

Who can participate in the research?

Women aged over 17 who attend the Young Parents College, who are currently pregnant or who have had a baby (up to three years ago) and can communicate in English are invited to participate in this research program.

What would you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to:

- **Complete an initial consent form and pre-program survey**. The consent form will include your name, contact details, and confirm you agree to participate. You can choose to complete the survey anonymously. If you include identifying information, survey responses will be de-identified.

- **Join our Mothers Group Morning Tea Talks, weekly for seven interactive, face-to-face group sessions**. These 30-minute sessions will take place at the Young Parents College on Tuesdays, 11:30am-12pm from 28th July to 8th September 2026. These sessions will cover a range of topics focused on empowerment in motherhood, including practical tools and strategies. The sessions will be facilitated by an experienced team. Morning tea will be provided at each session.

- **Complete a post-program survey** after the final session, including a quality-of-life survey. This survey will ask questions about your experiences of the sessions and help us understand any changes or impacts from the program. You can choose to complete the survey anonymously. If you include identifying information, your responses will be de-identified.

- **Receive reimbursement** in the form of two $50 GiftPay gift cards—one after completing the pre-program survey and one after completing the post-program survey.

Sessions will include topics concerned with family and relationships, networks and support, and physical and emotional wellness. Some sessions may include guest speakers to cover topics like physiotherapy and nutrition. As a participant, you will help to tailor the sessions to suit your needs and interests.

What choice do you have?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who voluntarily give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you.

If you would like to attend campus during the time of the sessions but you do not wish to participate in the sessions, the College staff will provide alternative activities for you.
If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason and have the option of withdrawing your data up until data has been permanently de-identified.

How much time will it take?

Each group will run for approximately 30 minutes (x7). Pre and post program surveys will be completed during session 1 and session 7. Each survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

***What are the risks and benefits of participating*?**

Minimal risks are anticipated. It is possible that some sessions may bring up feelings of discomfort or mild distress. However, care and support will be available to minimise any such distress. Referral pathways and emergency support lines will be available in the unlikely case that these will be required, including:

- Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA): Phone 1300 726 306, website www.panda.org.au/
- Mental Health Line: Phone 1800 011 511 (connect to local perinatal health services)
- Hunter Women's Centre; Phone (02) 49682511 Email admin@hwc.org.au
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- 1800RESPECT

Benefits may include increased knowledge and self-efficacy, empowerment, as well as increased social support. Direct benefits to participants will include a $50 GiftPay gift card distributed after completion of each survey (total of 2 $50 gift cards) as reimbursement for your time and travel costs.

How will your privacy be protected?

Paper surveys will be provided to participants. Survey responses will be entered and stored in the research database application, REDcap. REDcap Privacy and Security information is available here: REDcap Privacy Information.

All data will be stored securely in password-protected files on the University's secure server.
Data will be retained for five years following publication and then securely destroyed (digital files deleted, hard copies shredded).

Your data will be assigned a unique participant ID, and identifying details (if provided) will be stored separately from your survey responses. Some data may be re-identifiable by the research team for the purpose of linking your responses across different parts of the study (e.g., surveys over time). Only authorised members of the research team will have access to this linking information.

Once data collection is complete, identifying information (if provided) will be removed or destroyed, and all data will be reported in a de-identified form. Identifying details will not appear in any reports or publications. Participant confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study.

No personal information will be provided to health professionals or other parties without participant consent, unless required by law (e.g. risk of harm disclosure).

Some College staff members will be aware of your participation status, however, they should not influence your decision to participate or not participate in this research. Some College staff members may also be present during components of the group sessions to fulfill their duty of care obligations for students on campus, and their role at the College. College staff will be available to you if you need their support, however, they will not contribute to the session content or discussions. Any information shared during sessions will remain confidential, and College staff will be expected to respect the privacy of participants and not share personal information, except where required by their duty of care or mandatory reporting obligations.

Your peers contributing to the group will also be aware of your participation. Please make sure that you uphold the confidentiality of others in the group and any personal information they share in the sessions.

How will the information collected be used?

The information collected will be used to improve the program for future groups to ensure Morning Tea Talks provides appropriate support for the development of social support networks during the perinatal period.

Study findings may be disseminated through:
- Internal reports to program partners and funders.
- Academic conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications.
- Community or professional presentations summarising the outcomes.

Results will be reported in aggregate form, ensuring that no individual participant can be identified. Participants who express interest may receive a brief summary of the overall findings once the project is complete.

Non-identifiable data may also be shared with other parties to encourage scientific scrutiny, and to contribute to further research and public knowledge.

***What do you need to do to participate*?**

Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, contact the research team via email: cwhr@newcastle.edu.au, or discuss your queries with a College staff member. Alternatively, you can ask the research team questions in person prior to session 1. You may also like to discuss your involvement with someone such as: a partner, family member, or healthcare provider.

Further information

If you would like further information, please contact Professor Deb Loxton at cwhr@newcastle.edu.au

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Professor Deborah Loxton

Prof Deb Loxton

Chief Investigator

Complaints about this research

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2025-0333.

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an

independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research & Innovation Services, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 4921 6333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.