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As a current HDR student at the University of Sydney you are invited to participate in very special, three-phase study aimed at giving HDR students a stronger voice directly into the decision-making centres of academic governance.

DIRECT VOICE
Building stronger networks for stronger university cultures.

By being a part of this three-phase study, you will be given the opportunity to have your voice heard directly in one of the key the decision-making committees of the University. You will be invited to give immediate feedback on current decisions that directly impact HDR students. You will also be given opportunity to express your opinions about the University of Sydney culture and community, as part of the on-going creation of this University.

This study consists of three parts.

- **Phase 1 - Baseline questionnaire.** Designed to listen to how HDR students feel about the university culture and their academic environment.
- **Phase 2 - DIRECT VOICE feedback events.** A pilot project run in four feedback events from July-October 2017. Give your direct feedback on current issues under discussion in the University Executive that directly affect HDR students.
- **Phase 3 - Change questionnaire.** Conducted after all four DIRECT VOICE events are finalised, to listen to how you feel about this level of inclusion of your voice and opinions.

Registration for this study will close on 15th June 2017.

After this date, no further participants will be admitted to this end-end study.

Participants in this study will be given the opportunity to express their views on potential changes that directly impact the HDR experience such as proposed changes to HDR processes, scholarships, grants, and review processes. Responses will be de-identified and aggregated and the results will be communicated directly into the University Executive Committee that makes these decisions. This Committee will take the student feedback into consideration when discussing decisions to be made. This is not direct democracy but rather direct representation of your opinion.

In Phase 2 – DIRECT VOICE, the first feedback event you will ask for your opinion on proposed changes to the Postgraduate Support Scheme (PRSS).

You must take part in all three phases of the study for your opinions and feedback to be included in the final analysis. You also need to participate in at least two of the four phase 2 - **Direct Voice** feedback events

to be included in the overall study; of course, you may choose to engage in all four feedback events if you wish! Phase 3 *Change*, is where you can express your opinion on how valuable you think stronger student voice and consultation is.

What will the study involve for me?

Each online questionnaire should take you about 10-15 minutes to complete; unless you choose to provide extra comments in the optional feedback boxes at the end of each section, in which case it may take a little longer.

The *Phase 1 - Baseline* and *Phase 3 - Change* questionnaires are aimed at hearing your opinions on;

- Your inclusion into the decision-making processes at the university that affect you;
- Your participation in the creation of your academic environment;
- Your feelings about the shared culture of values (as stated in the Strategic Plan)
- Your connection with the University Community.

The *Phase 2 - DIRECT VOICE* pilot project, run in four parts

This middle phase of the study is being run in collaboration with the University Executive – Research & Education Committee (UE-RE). This will consist of four feedback events; run from July to October 2017. You will be asked your opinion about key issues currently under discussion in this University Executive Committee. The Committee will submit questions to the Researcher about topics such as changes to scholarships, review process, thesis submission processes, or other issues that directly impact your experience as a HDR student. The researcher will in turn code and distribute these questions to the study participants. This is your chance to tell the people in the decision-making areas what you think and what you want to see happen. Each feedback should take less than 10 minutes of your time and you only need to do that twice over the four events (although you may engage in all four if you wish). The aggregated feedback of the student voices will then be fed back to the UE-RE committee for consideration when they are making their decisions.

To know more about this study or to read a full participant's information sheet, head over to DirectVoice.info Participation in this research study is voluntary and anonymous.

To register in the study by taking Phase 1 – Baseline questionnaire, please head to:

DirectVoice.Sydney

Or you may scan this QR code with your smartphone. You can download a QR reader for free from Google Play Store or Apple App store if you don't already have one.



This study forms part of the research for a Masters of Arts by Research thesis being conducted in the department of Media and Communications at the University of Sydney. Feedback on the study will be published on the MECO website in the form of *one-page lay summary*, at the conclusion of the study.

Kind regards,

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With the support and endorsement of the University Executive – Research and Education Committee of the University of Sydney.