

## **Information Statement for the Research Project:**

### **Competitive Decision-Making – The Dutch Auction Game**

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We would like to invite you to participate in the above research project. This project is being conducted by Rachel Mullard and Murray Bennett under the supervision of Dr Ami Eidels from the School of Psychology at the University of Newcastle, Callaghan campus in conjunction with researchers Marc Adam and Paul Garrett. This project will be used to fulfil the requirements of the Bachelor of Psychology for Rachel Mullard.

#### ***Why is the research being done?***

The aim of this research is to investigate the effect that social competition has on decision-making. Specifically, this project will examine the decision-making processes in speeded decision tasks performed while in competition with other participants. This research will contribute to a wider understanding of decision-making processes, in particular those processes involved in the speed-accuracy trade-off.

#### ***Who can participate in the research?***

We are seeking participants over the age of 18. We require that participants have normal or corrected normal vision with intact colour vision. Also, that you are fluent in both written and spoken English.

You should not volunteer for this study if you have: any history of or ongoing mental illness, any serious past head trauma, any current use of medications that might affect your ability to perform the computerised tasks, any history of seizures or epilepsy.

#### ***What choice do you have?***

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Only people who give their informed consent will be included in this study. If you choose to participate you can, at any time during the study withdraw without explanation and with no consequence. You will also have the option to withdraw any data you have provided.

#### ***What would you be asked to do?***

If you meet the above inclusion criteria for this study and consent to participate you will be asked to attend one or two 1-hour in-lab testing sessions. If you participate in two sessions they will be held on separate days. On arrival for the first testing session you will be asked to complete a short demographics questionnaire. Once completed the researcher will sit you in a room with a computer to complete the computer based task 'the Dutch auction game'.

In 'the Dutch auction game' participants will play a computer based task which uses a simulated Dutch auction format. In this game participants will have a fixed allocation of funds in which to purchase a set target number of items. In each trial participants will be presented with varying amounts of the target item with a set maximum starting price. Over a fixed timed trial, the price of the product will slowly reduce until either a participant purchases the product for the current displayed price or the trial times out. Responding will be done using designated response keys on the keyboard. In one testing session, this will be done in isolation. In the other session, the task will be done in the presence and in competition with other participants.

This study will take place in the cognitive lab in the Aviation building at the Callaghan Campus of the University of Newcastle.

#### ***How much time will it take?***

Participation in one session takes approximately 60 minutes. Participation in two sessions will take approximately 120 minutes in total.

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

The computerised task in this project requires prolonged periods of sitting still while maintaining high levels of concentration which may result in some mild physical discomfort and minor fatigue. To minimise these risks there will be several breaks throughout both testing sessions.

Furthermore, some participants may find the competitive phase of the study distressing due to the increased level of stress the presence of competitors may cause. To combat this every participant will be debriefed at the conclusion of the study. All participant will also be able withdraw from the study at any point without explanation or penalty with the option of removing their data.

Students who are participating as a part of the research awareness component of their undergraduate courses will be compensated with 2 SONA points per 1-hour session, 4 SONA points if you participate in two sessions. Participants not a part of this system will be reimbursed with a \$25 voucher per session.

Aside from specific reimbursements mentioned above there is no direct benefit to the individual. However, participants may benefit from gaining an understanding of the research process. For the broader scientific community, this study will contribute better understanding of the processes involved in decision making while in social contexts.

***How will your privacy be protected?***

All data collected in this study will be stored digitally on a secure server at the University of Newcastle. Only the research team which includes project supervisor Dr Ami Eidels, student researcher Rachel Mullard as well as contributing researchers Marc Adam and Paul Garrett will have access to the data. Any publications resulting from this study will use only de-identified data.

***How will the information collected be used?***

The data collected in this study will be analysed to examine the decision-making processes that occur when in the presence of social competition compared to those in isolation. You will be asked by the researcher if you would like to receive a summary of the results via email once available. Individual participants will not be identifiable in any academic work resulting from this study. Data from this project will be reported in Rachel's thesis and presented as part of the Fourth Year Conference. Data will be retained for at least five years following publication. Any information that may identify any individual participant will be recorded and stored separately from the data in a secure location at the University of Newcastle using coded reference numbers known only to the research team. Furthermore, non-identifiable data may be shared with other parties to further research or as required by law.

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

Please ensure you have read this information statement and understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you have any questions, contact the researcher.

To participate via SONA, please log on to the SONA Research Participant System website, select our study and select a session time. Once you have booked a session you will be sent a confirmation email. A reminder email will be sent to you closer to the date of your selected session time through SONA, or you will be contacted by a researcher to confirm participation. If you need to cancel or reschedule your session time this can be done through the SONA System website. However, if you need to cancel or reschedule within 24 hours of your session time, please contact Murray Bennett directly. Written consent will be recorded at the beginning of your booked session. If you experience any other problems with booking, please contact Murray Bennett ([murray.bennett@uon.edu.au](mailto:murray.bennett@uon.edu.au))

***Concerns raised by the study***

If you are concerned about your participation in this experiment, or if you are experiencing any distress in relation to this, please contact counselling services available at Newcastle University to make an appointment either at the Callaghan campus on 4921 5801, or at Ourimbah campus on 4348 4060. For assistance when the offices are closed please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.

***Further information***

If you would like further information, please contact Rachel Mullard at [Rachel.Mullard@uon.edu.au](mailto:Rachel.Mullard@uon.edu.au) or Murray Bennett at or [Murray.Bennett@uon.edu.au](mailto:Murray.Bennett@uon.edu.au)

Thank You for consideration

***Complaints about this research***

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee [H-2017-0192].

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](mailto:Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au).