



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research Title: Ecomakers Workshops

Purpose of the research

Welcome to *Ecomakers* – a research project conducted by researchers at the University of Wollongong (UOW). This document provides you with information on the project.

Ecomakers is a research project funded by UOW's Global Challenges Keystone program. With its parent project, *Future Makers*, this research explores how community connections can be facilitated by making activities through knowledge sharing and hands-on learning.

Ecomakers offers a series of public workshops delivered at UOW Makerspace with the aim to extend the makerspace philosophy to foster making and thinking guided by environmental sustainability principles.

The workshops will profile several key future-focused approaches to sustainable making including the use of upcycled and biodegradable materials, and employment of contemporary craft and slow textile techniques combined with low-energy hand-made electronics. The workshops are designed to bring together tacit and abstract knowledges with the view to expand environmental sustainability solutions.

Researchers

Dr Jo Law, School of the Arts, English and Media, UOW, jol@uow.edu.au

Dr Agnieszka Golda, School of the Arts, English and Media, UOW, agolda@uow.edu.au

Method and demands on participants

If you would like to participate, you can sign up for a 3-hour workshop (with the option to sign up for additional 2 workshops). Each workshop will focus on creating one artifact: a felted mushroom, hyperbolic crochet, and a fabric speaker using needle-felting, crochet, and embroidery respectively, combined with soft circuits, e-textiles, and sewable electronics.

The workshops will be facilitated by researchers, who will provide hands-on instructions. You will be provided with the materials free of charge. Detailed information on the techniques and materials will be made available on the project website prior to the session.

The sessions will also incorporate discussions between artists and scientists on a range of scientific and artistic concepts such as the ecological role of fungus, patterns found in nature, and the circular economy.

We hope to recruit participants from a range of backgrounds. You do not need to have any existing craft skills or knowledge in electronics – simply an interest in making, working in makerspaces, and/or the themes explored in these workshops.

If you agree to be involved, you will be asked to provide your consent to:

1. complete 1 coded survey when you sign up plus 1 after each workshop;
2. be recorded on video during the workshop.

These coded surveys will be in the form of an anonymous questionnaire (they will be coded but will not identify you by name unless you wish to do so). The aim is to find out your experiences of the workshops and your views on environmental sustainability solutions discussed. It is estimated that each questionnaire will require a maximum of 10 minutes to complete. The analysed data including answers, feedback, and comments from these surveys will be included in published journal articles and conference paper presentations.

Video recordings of the workshops will focus on capturing a general overview of the sessions, featuring discussions and interactions between the participants and the facilitators, rather than on individuals. Participants in the recordings will not be identified by names. The audiovisual recordings of each workshop will be used for the purpose of documentation and evaluation. Footage may also be used for the promotion of the project and UOW Makerspace.

Once you sign up for an *Ecomakers* workshop, you will also be invited to participate in an additional post-project video interview (with a maximum duration of 30 minutes). The primary purpose of the post-project video interview is to gather more in-depth information about your experience of the workshops. While you will be identified by name in the interviews, you will not be asked to disclose specific personal information. Verbatim quotes may be extracted from the recordings and used in journal publications and/or conference presentations. Footage from the audiovisual recordings may also be used for the promotion of the project and UOW Makerspace. If your image appears in a written publication or a video, you will be notified once the presentation/ publication is completed.

It is not envisaged that any of the data obtained will contain sensitive private information. Your contact information will be used solely for the purpose of the project and will not be distributed or shared outside this project. Only the researchers have access to project information and collected data. All data relating to the project will be kept in secured storage at UOW for the duration of the project plus 5 years.

You may discontinue participation in the workshops at any time. Please notify us via email: jol@uow.edu.au or agolda@uow.edu.au

If you wish to discontinue your participation and have all your survey results removed, please inform us in writing within 1 month after the last workshop you attended.

If you consented to have a video interview and consequently decided to withdraw, you can inform us in writing within 1 month after the interview.

Possible risks, inconveniences, and discomforts

We do not foresee any risks for participants of *Ecomakers*. The time commitment expected includes:

- 3 hour for every workshop you signed up for (you can sign up for a maximum of 3 workshops)
- 1 x 10-minute questionnaire after you sign up
- 1 x 10-minute questionnaire after each workshop you signed up for

- an optional 20-minute video interview
- additional time to complete paperwork such as consent forms

Declining the invitation to participate in *Ecomakers* or deciding to withdraw your participation at any point during the research process will not adversely affect your relationship with UOW.

All workshops will comply with UOW Workplace, Safety, and Health Standards. Safety inductions on the use of materials and tools will be provided at the commencement of each workshop. Workshop discussions will also be facilitated with ground rules founded on respect.

Funding and benefits of the research

Ecomakers workshops are funded by UOW Global Challenge Program through its parent project *Future Makers*.

This research has potential benefits for the participants in gaining new skills and knowledge, expanding learning in areas of interest in the arts, sciences, and environmental sustainability, and connecting with a local community of like-minded people.

It is expected that the wider community can also benefit from this research in network building and connection of conventionally separate groups e.g. artists and scientists, citizens and experts. The research's reflection on the role of making and manufacturing in the local community will also help inform how the community manages the changing demographics and economies of Wollongong and the Illawarra.

We anticipate that our research will benefit our field in the development of creative education strategies, contributing new knowledge on makerspaces as spaces of learning and sharing, informing their functions and role in the broader community, and expanding makerspace philosophy to include creative and craft-based techniques guided by environmental sustainability principles.

Ethics review and complaints

This study has been reviewed by the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Wollongong (Reference: 2021/127). If you have any concerns or complaints about the way this research is conducted you can contact the Ethics Manager on (02) 4221 4457 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

If you would like to participate please contact Dr Jo Law using the contact details above to arrange an interview time. Thank you for your interest in this study.