

## **Australian Child Health and Air Pollution Study**

### **INFORMATION STATEMENT**

#### For Parents (or Guardians)

Your child is invited to take part in a research study about air quality and respiratory health in schoolchildren aged 7-12 years. This study has the approval of the University of Queensland Ethics Committee, the Department of Education, the Department of Environment and your child's school principal. A total of 3,200 children from 60 schools from across Australia are being invited to participate.

#### **What is the study about?**

The aim of this study is to give us a better understanding of the effect of air pollution on breathing problems, asthma and allergies in children. By taking part you and your child will be helping us to address an important public health issue. The results of the tests will be provided to you on the day your child is tested. These results provide information but may not have immediate benefit for you or your child. The success of the study depends on the participation of as many children as possible. Information is also available at <http://www.woolcock.org.au/achaps.htm>

#### **Who is carrying out the study?**

The study is being conducted by Professor Gail Williams (University of Queensland), Professor Rod Simpson (University of the Sunshine Coast), Associate Professor Guy Marks, (Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, Sydney), and Associate Professor Bin Jalaludin (University of New South Wales). The study has been funded by the Australian Research Council and the Environment Protection and Heritage Council.

#### **What is involved?**

If you allow your child to participate in the study, he/she will be tested at school. Prior to our visit we will ask you to complete a questionnaire that asks about your child's health and home environment. Your child will return this questionnaire to school in a sealed envelope prior to the day of testing. The following tests, which will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes of class time to complete, will be performed:

**Simple breathing tests** – We will measure your child’s breathing capacity before and after taking two puffs of Ventolin™. This is a puffer commonly used by people with asthma to open the airways. Some children may experience mild palpitations (that is, be aware of their heartbeat) after taking Ventolin. This effect wears off fairly quickly. In a second test we will ask your child to breathe out into a bag and we will then measure a substance in that breath.

If your child normally takes Seretide, Symbicort, Serevent, Oxis, Ventolin or Bricanyl, we will ask him or her to omit the morning dose on the day of the breathing test. We will test your child early on the day of testing and he/she can take his/her usual medication after the test. Most children will not experience any symptoms due to this delay in taking medication. If your child does experience wheezing or chest tight he/she can take Ventolin or Bricanyl as needed. We will need to wait four hours after taking this medication to do the breathing test.

**Allergy tests** – 10 small droplets are placed on the forearm and the skin is lightly scratched through the droplet. If your child is allergic an itchy bump, similar to a mosquito bite, will appear – this normally disappears completely within 30 to 60 minutes. We will apply cream to help stop the itching if necessary.

Examples of the testing procedures are available at our website [www.woolcock.org.au/achaps.htm](http://www.woolcock.org.au/achaps.htm). Some children will be asked to take part in a further study following the testing day. This will involve doing simple breathing tests and answering a few questions about their breathing and daily activities each day for one month. Children will be provided with an electronic diary device for measuring breathing capacity and recording the responses to the questions. We will provide instructions and a demonstration of the use of this home monitoring device.

### **Participation and confidentiality**

Your child’s participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child does not have to take part in this study and, even if you and your child do agree, you can change your mind at any time without penalty.

We will give you a summary of the asthma and allergy test results and we would be happy to discuss these results with you and/or your child’s doctor, at your request. A report on the overall study findings will be sent to schools in late 2008 and will be available for parents on our website.

All information will be kept private. It will be stored in a secure locked room at the University of Queensland and on password protected computer files. A report of the survey may be published in medical journals, but individuals will not be identified in any report.

### **For further information**

If you have any questions feel free to contact Project Manager at any time on 1300 889 618 (cost of a local call). This copy of the information statement and the coloured copy of the consent form is for you to keep.

**This study has been approved by the medical research ethics committee of the University of Queensland in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council’s guidelines. You are of course, free to discuss your participation in this study with project staff (contactable on 1300 889 618). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Officer on 07 3365 3924.**