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**Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI), Federation University Australia
PLIS to accompany online survey: State-wide Integrated Flora and Fauna Teams (SWIFFT):
expanding engagement by community with Victoria's biodiversity**

PROJECT TITLE:	State Wide Integrated Flora and Fauna Teams (SWIFFT): Expanding engagement by community with Victoria's biodiversity
PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:	Robert Milne
OTHER RESEARCHERS:	Dr Birgita Hansen, Dr Angela Murphy, Alison Ollerenshaw, Nick Bradsworth, Dr Peter Dahlhaus

State Wide Integrated Flora and Fauna Teams (SWIFFT) network is an initiative supported by the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI) at Federation University Australia and the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to advance citizen science by facilitating awareness and knowledge sharing in relation to biodiversity conservation and threatened species for South Eastern Victoria.

CeRDI has received funding from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust to redevelop the SWIFFT website for improved access, content and community engagement by incorporating the latest advances in technology and innovation. This will enable users of the site to access complex data sets at a single point of entry.

Research is being undertaken with representatives from SWIFFT partner organisations and other stakeholder organisations and community groups about the current website functionality and accessibility, seeking feedback about the website redevelopment, and how it can better engage the community around biodiversity conservation. The findings will be then be used to inform the website redevelopment ensuring that SWIFFT continues to offer individuals, community members, conservation managers and representatives from the research community and industry with easy access to information about threatened species and communities, and biodiversity conservation.

Rob Milne, together with research colleagues at Federation University Australia (Dr Birgita Hansen, Dr Angela Murphy, Alison Ollerenshaw, Nick Bradsworth, Assoc Prof Peter Dahlhaus), is undertaking this research to examine preliminary issues around access, quality, and usability to the SWIFFT website and to explore options and opportunities for further development.

As a representative of a partner organisation associated with SWIFFT, or as a member of a community and/or industry organisation, or as a recipient on a mailing list with contacts to key stakeholder organisations we are contacting you to invite you to participate in this research. We ask you to share your insights about the SWIFFT website by participating in a short online survey. This survey may be re-administered after website changes have been undertaken.

This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and the information you share will provide important insights about the website. The survey will ask questions eliciting information about

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the current SWIFFT website, its benefits and limitations, including its functionality, content and usability. Insights about how the website can be improved so that it can further support biodiversity conservation and engagement within the community will also be explored through survey questions.

This research will provide important insights into the application of the website and will play a key role in improving the website to ensure that it continues to be useful and effective in the future, through the adoption of new technologies. The data will also be used by the project team to prepare academic journal articles and conference papers to inform national and international knowledge. The collated data may also be shared via a report to the SWIFFT project partners and the funding organisation.

All information you provide will be treated confidentially and will only be used to identify the main themes and insights drawn out relating to SWIFFT. No information collected through the online survey will be used to identify individuals. The researchers are the only people who will have access to this information at any time following data collection and analysis.

All data collected for this research will be stored securely, and data will be destroyed after a minimum period of five years.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and your confidentiality will be maintained at all times. You are free at any time up until and when completing the survey to withdraw your participation in this research, without explanation. There are no consequences to withdrawing from the research. You may also choose not to respond to all questions in the survey - just answer the questions you are comfortable with.

This project has received approval from Federation University Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: 17-144).

Consent to participate in this research will be assumed when you complete and submit the survey.

It is extremely unlikely that you will experience any distress as a result of questions asked in this online survey however, in the unlikely event that you are concerned with any of the questions included in the online survey, or with the research project itself, we advise that you contact Lifeline on telephone 13 11 14.

For further details about this research, or participating in this research, please contact Robert Milne, Telephone: (03) 5327 9488.

If you have any questions, or you would like further information regarding the project **State Wide Integrated Flora and Fauna Teams (SWIFFT): expanding engagement by community with Victoria's biodiversity** please contact the Principal Researcher **Robert Milne**, Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI); **PH: (03) 5327 9488**; **EMAIL: r.milne@federation.edu.au**

Should you (i.e. the participant) have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research project, please contact Federation University Australia's Ethics Officer, Research Services, Federation University Australia, PO Box 663, Mt Helen VIC 3353. Telephone: (03) 5327 9765, Email: research.ethics@federation.edu.au
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