

---

**Project Melanotan: A Study on Injectable Tanning.**  
**Stephanie Raymond (Sociology PhD), School of Social Science**  
**The University of Queensland, Australia.**

---

You are invited to take part in a research project undertaken by a School of Social Science doctoral candidate at The University of Queensland. This Participant Information Sheet contains detailed information about the project, which will enable you to make an informed decision on whether you wish to participate.

**Purpose and Background:**

Living in a subtropical climate, many Australians are known to embrace outdoor lifestyles. Popular pursuits such as beach-going, surfing and camping inevitably involve sun exposure, contributing to the perception that a tanned complexion is a 'natural' consequence of the Australian way of life. Historically, deliberate sun tanning was ubiquitous in the 50s and 60s, consistent with views that the practice was linked to beauty, wealth, health, and vitality. Some of these views prevail (at least, partly) today. Sun smart programs, however, now emphasise the dangers of sun exposure. In recent years, the use of a synthetic injectable melanocyte stimulating hormone ( $\alpha$ MSH) (widely referred to and available as Melanotan I and II) has become increasingly mainstream, yet there is very little qualitative research examining individual experiences of 'Melanotanning'.

This research aims to better understand experiences of those who use Melanotan from a sociological perspective. Rather than taking a critical stance, this project seeks to engage with melanotanners' perspectives on a number of topics related to the product: experiences of melanotan cycling; opinions regarding its safety, administration, and the public image of Melanotan in context of medical and public health messages on tan technology; as well as the tanned appearance and sun exposure. Insights into the use of Melanotan will further enable research into tanning as a social construct, and help to achieve a deeper appreciation of how Melanotanners navigate the practice in terms of its desirability, methods used to obtain a tan, and perceived benefits and risks of tanning. Further, the research aims to inspect complexities and challenges arising from dissonant views on tanning, and how Australian residents negotiate conflicting constructions of the tan.

**Participants:**

This research is seeking adult (over 18 years of age) volunteers through the online hub *melanotanforum.com* who are Australian residents who have also used Melanotan. Members of this forum are of particular interest for two reasons. First, members are likely aware of, and able to talk about the social desirability of sun tanning as well as the risks of UV exposure. Second, members will be in a position to discuss the role that Melanotan plays in responding to public health messages that position the tan as an unhealthy practice. Snowball sampling – where the researcher asks volunteers to pass on her contact details to others who may potentially interested in participating in the study – will also be employed.

**What participation involves:**

The research will involve participation in either an interview or focus group. Interview participation will consist of a single one-hour face-to-face, telephone or Skype semi-structured conversation. Face-to-face interviews will be facilitated in the Greater Brisbane City area, at a location convenient to the participant such as a café, university tutorial room or private residence. Focus group participation will consist of a single face-to-face, telephone or Skype focus group discussion session (60-90 minutes long) conducted at a convenient time nominated by the researcher. Face-to-face focus groups will be held at UQ St. Lucia campus. With permission, interviews and focus group will be audio-recorded. During the interviews and focus groups, participants will be asked about their views and experiences of using Melanotan in a non-confronting environment. Light refreshments will be provided for focus group attendees and each participant will be reimbursed for their time in the form of a \$30 gift voucher (Face-to-face participants will receive a gift voucher at the time of participation. Telephone and Skype participants will be asked to nominate a store from an eligible list at the time of participation and emailed a gift voucher). On completion of the project, the 'de-identified' data will be stored safely in a locked filing cabinet at UQ.

---

---

### **Participation is Voluntary:**

Participation is voluntary and you are not obliged to take part. If you decide to participate and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage and your data will not be used. The researcher will be available to answer any questions you have about the project and to provide further information. Once you are fully informed about the nature of the research and your involvement, we will ask you to indicate your agreement to participate by reading/listening to the Informed Consent Form and signing (physically or digitally) the form.

### **Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information:**

All information collected from you during the course of the research project is strictly confidential. Your name and other identifying information will be removed from all documentation. You can be assured that you will be anonymous throughout the analysis process and in all subsequent documentation and publications emerging from the study. However, you should be aware that anything you disclose during the focus groups will be heard by the other participants. Anything you disclose 'off the record' will not be used and the audio recorder will be switched off upon request. You are invited to discuss this further with the researcher to ensure you are aware of and comfortable with these provisions. As a focus group participant, you will be asked to sign a confidentiality clause that requires you not repeat information about other participants obtained during the focus group.

### **Risk of Participating:**

It has been calculated that the risks of participating in this research are minimal. If, however, you feel any distress as a result of participating, the interview can be paused or stopped at any time. Please also feel free to discuss any issues with the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and/or a University ethics officer.

### **Ethical Guidelines:**

This study adheres to the guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland. While you are free to discuss participation with the research team, you may also contact the Chair of the School of Social Science Ethics Committee if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study.

Dr Robin Fitzgerald  
Ethics Officer, Research Committee  
School of Social Science  
The University of Queensland  
Tel: 3365 2287  
E: [r.fitzgerald1@uq.edu.au](mailto:r.fitzgerald1@uq.edu.au)

Michael Tse  
Human Ethics Officer  
Research & Training Division  
The University of Queensland  
Tel: 3365 3924  
E: [humanethics@research.uq.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@research.uq.edu.au)

### **Results of Project:**

Final results of the study will be published in the candidate's PhD Thesis, journal articles and via melanotanforum.com. Upon request, results of the study can be summarised and sent to you at various stages of the research process. You are welcome to contact the researchers and ask questions at any point in the study.

### **Further Information:**

If you require further information or have any questions you may contact the researcher/supervisor as follows:

Stephanie Raymond (Sociology PhD candidate)  
School of Social Science  
The University of Queensland  
Brisbane  
Queensland 4702  
Telephone: (+61) 0408 985 454  
E: [s.raymond1@uq.edu.au](mailto:s.raymond1@uq.edu.au)

Dr Rebecca Olson (Supervisor)  
School of Social Science  
The University of Queensland  
Brisbane  
Queensland 4702  
Telephone: (+61 7) 336 53493  
E: [r.olson@uq.edu.au](mailto:r.olson@uq.edu.au)

---

**Project Melanotan: A Study on Injectable Tanning.**  
**Stephanie Raymond (Sociology PhD candidate), School of Social Science**  
**The University of Queensland**

Please sign this form and return to the researcher if you agree with all statements below.

**Consent to participate in the research**

- I have read and I understand the participant information sheet.
- I freely agree to participate in this project according to the conditions in the information sheet.
- I agree to the interview/focus group discussion being audio recorded.
- I agree to maintain the confidentiality of other focus group members (if participating in focus group discussions) and will not disclose any information provided by others to those outside of the focus group.
- I agree that the risks of participating in this research creates are minor and pose no immediate threats beyond those encountered in everyday life.
- I understand that every effort will be made to protect my identity in this research. The researcher and I have discussed my confidentiality requirements and I am satisfied that appropriate strategies will be used to reduce the likelihood of others being able to identify me in the final report or any subsequent publications and presentations.
- I am aware that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that I will receive a \$30 gift card for my participation, either to be given to me at the conclusion of my participation in a focus group discussion or interview, or emailed to my nominated email address.

Participant's Name (printed) .....

Signature .....

Date .....

If you wish to receive a report summarising the outcomes of this research project, please provide your email address here: .....