

Participant Information Sheet**Date that data collection will start:**

19 September 2025

Project Title**Intimate Partner Violence Mock Jury Study****An invitation**

Kia ora,

You are invited to participate in a research study about the impact of different forms of intimate partner violence expert testimony, and judges' family violence directions on jurors' decision making. The study is being conducted by Rachel Smith from the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Other research team members include Professor Denise Wilson, AUT, Associate Professor Dianne Wepa, AUT and Professor Julia Tolmie, University of Auckland. The study is being carried out as a requirement for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

What is the purpose of this research?

The study looks at the impact of different forms of intimate partner violence expert testimony, and judges' family violence directions on jurors' assessments of whether Pākehā and Māori female victim-survivors charged with killing male abusive partners were acting reasonably in self-defence. This is important as often victim-survivors who have endured abuse struggle to have their experiences of victimisation understood in these types of criminal trials. Misconceptions about their experiences of intimate partner violence can contribute to unfair outcomes.

The study is focused on whether expert testimony based on up-to-date understandings of intimate partner violence can equip juries to better assess whether victim-survivors using lethal force against their abusive partners were acting reasonably in self-defence. The study will also test whether judicial family violence jury directions can be a way of equipping juries to better assess victim-survivors' circumstances. Some of the mock trials will not include expert testimony or judges' family violence directions; this is to help test the effectiveness of these two forms of information.

Approximately 80 adult community members from the Auckland region are expected to take part. The findings of this research will be used for academic publications and presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have received this Information Sheet, as you responded to the participant recruitment advertisement. This study utilises the Ministry of Justice jury service eligibility criteria.

Adults registered on the electoral roll (General Electoral Roll or Māori Electoral Roll) who live within 45 km of the Auckland District Court are invited to participate.

The following people are ineligible:

- a Member of Parliament, the Governor-General, a judge, a community magistrate or a visiting justice
- a member of the Parole Board, a barrister or solicitor with a current practising certificate
- a Justice of the Peace who hears cases in the District Court
- employees of the Department of Corrections, New Zealand Police or the Ministry of Justice
- A person with an intellectual disability
- People sentenced to imprisonment for life, three years or more, or preventive detention
- People in the last five years, sentenced to imprisonment for three months or more or to home detention for three months or more.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Once you have read through this information sheet, if you are interested in proceeding, please email rachel.smith@aut.ac.nz. The next step is signing the study consent forms.

If you have questions, please contact Rachel Smith by email or phone. I am happy to answer your queries (my full contact details are at the end of this form).

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice). You can withdraw from the study at any time by informing the researcher. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then information collected up until your withdrawal from the study will continue to be used and included in the study to protect its quality.

What will my participation involve?

Your participation will involve completing a 20-minute online questionnaire about your understanding of victim-survivors' experiences of intimate partner violence and agency responses. Once you have completed the questionnaire, you will be randomly assigned to one of eight mock juries, made up of eight to ten mock jurors. I will then provide you with a time and date to attend a half-day mock trial held at the AUT City Campus.

On the day of the mock trial, a full oral briefing on the process will be provided. An opportunity to withdraw will be offered to all participants.

At the mock trial, you will be given written questions at different points and asked to privately speak out loud your thoughts about what you have heard (other participants will not be able to hear what you are saying). These points include before and after the provision of expert testimony or judicial family violence jury directions, and pre- and post-jury deliberation. The questions will focus on your thoughts on whether the defendant has a strong case for reasonable self-defence; what you were thinking when you heard the expert's testimony; whether the jury directions challenged or confirmed your beliefs about family violence; and what you think the verdict should be. Your thoughts will be audio-recorded.

At the end of the trial, you will be asked to engage in a 60-minute jury deliberation to decide the outcome of the case. These jury deliberations will be audio recorded, and there will also be an audio-visual recording.

There will be the offer of breaks and refreshments during the mock trial. A debriefing at the end of the mock trial will be given to mock jurors.

What are the benefits?

By sharing your experiences, you will contribute to advancing knowledge that will be used to educate the family violence and legal sectors about what forms of expert testimony are relevant in these cases. The study may also, depending on the outcome, provide some drive for reform of the law in order to develop family violence jury directions.

Additionally, by participating, you will contribute to broader societal benefits by potentially diminishing stereotypes, reducing discrimination, and promoting just outcomes for prosecuted victim-survivors in intimate partner homicide cases.

What are the costs?

There are no direct costs other than your time. The online questionnaire will require a commitment of approximately 20 minutes to complete. The pre- and post-mock trial briefings and the mock jury trial will take approximately four hours. Parking at the AUT City Campus will be paid for. A \$50 koha will be provided in recognition of your participation.

Will the results of the study be published?

The results of this research will be published in a Doctoral thesis. This thesis will be available to the general public through the AUT library. Results may be published in peer-reviewed academic journals. Results will also be presented at conferences or seminars to wider professional and academic communities. The information you share is confidential. You will not be identifiable in any publication.

What are the discomforts and risks?

The mock trial is about a woman charged with the murder of her abusive partner, who is seeking to raise self-defence. The trial will address her experiences of abuse. The facts of the case are a compilation from typical scenarios, and do not directly map onto any particular identifiable case. These facts may connect to experiences of violence in your life or in the lives of people who matter to you. The jury deliberation may expose people to different interpretations about the facts of the case, which could cause you to feel a level of discomfort. An observer, a member of the Taupa Waiora Māori Research Centre, will be present in the jury deliberation room to ensure your well-being and that respectful deliberation is occurring. The observer will be given directions on when to 'step in' and when mock jurors should be left to resolve issues amongst themselves.

As part of the debriefing at the end of the mock trial, you will be given the details of family violence services and helplines.

Should you feel any form of distress, AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call (09) 921 9292.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What will happen to information about me?

The data collected from you is re-identifiable (coded). The identifiable information collected includes your name, date of birth, demographic data, voice, and image recording as part of the collective jury deliberations.

You will be assigned a unique participant number, which will be used to code your data. The primary researcher, Rachel Smith will keep the list linking the unique participant number(code) with your name, so that you can be identified by your coded data if needed.

The data will be kept on an AUT confidential drive for six years. Once the audio files have been transcribed and checked for accuracy, they will be confidently destroyed so you cannot be identified. Similarly, once the audio-visual recordings have been reviewed, they will also be confidently destroyed so you cannot be identified. The audio-visual recording will only be used to consider nonverbal cues, such as mock juror interaction dynamics and body language. The audio-visual recording will complement the analysis of the jury deliberation transcripts; they will not be used for any other purposes. Digital copies of the transcripts will be password-protected and kept on an AUT confidential drive. Only the research team will have access to the identifiable and coded information.

You are being asked to provide consent for the use of their coded data for this project only. No identifiable information will be disclosed outside of the study.

By signing the consent form, you are agreeing to the use of your information as stated in this Information Sheet.

Māori data sovereignty

Māori data sovereignty is about protecting information or knowledge that is about (or comes from) Māori people. In this study, Māori data sovereignty principles help safeguard the data by guiding the respectful collection and management of data, and ensuring that the analysis, interpretation, and reporting of data are used to achieve equitable outcomes for all people in Aotearoa. The data is sensitive. It is restricted and will not be available for use by other researchers. This supports the avoidance of the potential for harm.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

We will offer you two weeks to think about your participation.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

A two-page summary of the research will be shared with you at the end of the study if you indicate this on your Consent Form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Denise Wilson, denise.wilson@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7392.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Who do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Forms for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Rachel Smith, rachel.smith@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7447.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Professor Denise Wilson, denise.wilson@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7392.

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 9 September 2025, AUTC
Reference number 25/208.**