You are invited to participate in a research project investigating how employees in small to medium businesses feel about their work environment.

What is the purpose of this research?
Research has shown that the way you feel about your work environment has an important effect on your health. However, much of this research has been conducted in corporate and government settings and little is known about employees working in smaller organisations.

This research aims to identify challenges faced by employees working in small-medium businesses, to better understand how they maintain their wellbeing in the face of these challenges, and explore the best ways to help this sector create or maintain a positive work environment.

Who is invited to participate?
Employees of small to medium businesses who have a manager participating in the research.

What will you be asked to do?
If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete 5 assessments over 3 years. Each assessment will take about 20 minutes and involves completing a questionnaire that asks you about things such as how you are feeling and how satisfied you are with various aspects of your work environment. The surveys can be completed securely online, or alternatively can be mailed to you at your preferred address and returned in a reply paid envelope directly to the research team.

Each time the survey is conducted, all those who respond will have the opportunity to go in a prize draw to win a $500 Coles Group & Myer Voucher.

Even though your manager has notified you about this study, your manager will not have any knowledge of whether you participate or not, or what your survey responses are. We will assign your surveys with a manager code so we can keep track of work group members working under the same manager. Based on de-identified information summarised at the team level only, your manager may elect to receive a brief report outlining priority areas and recommended strategies for enhancing wellbeing and performance in your team. You, or your specific survey responses will never be included in this report and as a participant in the study you will also have access to this report if desired.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without having to explain why, and you can also withdraw any information you have supplied.

How will your personal information be treated?
All information obtained in this study will be used for research purposes only. It will remain confidential and be stored securely either electronically or in a locked filing cabinet, with access only by authorised research team members. The online survey will be hosted by the web-based Timba survey program, and the data collected will be stored on a secure web-based server run by the Salesforce company*. Once we have completed our data collection, we will import the data we collect to the University of Tasmania server where it will be stored for a period of 5 years and only be accessible to the research team. All survey data will be destroyed or deleted 5 years after the research is published. No information identifying individual participants will be used in publications arising from the research.

* for more information on data security see http://www.salesforce.com/uk/platform/service-delivery/security/.

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What do you get out of being involved?
Your participation in the research will improve knowledge about the best ways to support employees in smaller businesses in relation to creating a positive work environment. Your manager will also be encouraged to make changes to your work environment, designed to be beneficial to the wellbeing of the team of employees working there.

At the conclusion of the study a report on the results will be available on the researcher investigator’s website http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/business/mgmt/pagedetails.asp?personId=2911.
Who to contact
To sign up for the study please visit www.businessinmind.edu.au/signup and have your manager’s participation ID on hand when registering. Alternatively, email or telephone us on (03) 6226 2713 or business.in.mind@utas.edu.au and we will further assist you with registration. You can also contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Angela Martin, on (03) 6226 2713 or by email: Angela.Martin@utas.edu.au.

Concerns or complaints
This research has received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network. If you have any concerns of an ethical nature or complaints about the manner in which the project is conducted, you may contact the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or human.ethics@utas.edu.au.