



# MEDIA RELEASE



DATE: MONDAY 11 OCTOBER 2010  
ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Keeping the mental health of Business in Mind

*Business in Mind*, a unique research project based at UTAS which focuses on mental health in the small to medium enterprise (SME) sector, will be launched in Hobart **today** (October 11) and in Launceston on October 12, to coincide with Mental Health Week.

The *Business in Mind* project, which is co-funded by *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*, Workcover Tasmania and an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant, also has the support of the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The project will provide participants with an innovative DVD and Resource Kit, which helps SME owners and managers:

- recognise the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety in themselves and their employees
- manage mental health issues in the workplace
- learn skills that could help prevent depression such as stress management, positive relationships, balancing work with other parts of life and building resilience.

The DVD features interviews with mental health and business experts and a range of SME owners/managers discussing the mental health challenges they have faced in their businesses, either their own or those of their employees.

Dr Angela Martin, senior lecturer in the University of Tasmania's School of Management and project leader, said those who own or manage SMEs can be at risk of developing depression.

"Working long hours and dealing with financial stress pose significant risks to mental health," she said.

Dr Martin said the project was developed because although the impact of depression in the workplace is huge, almost half the SME workforce has little or no access to work-based psychological support.

Dr Martin will be launching *Business in Mind* with the assistance of Robert Wallace, CEO of the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She aims to recruit hundreds of business owners or managers to the research project.

"We want to distribute and evaluate the BIM DVD and Resource Kit within the business community and find out more about what this sector needs in regards to psychological support."

*beyondblue* Deputy CEO, Ms Clare Shann, said this project aligns closely with *beyondblue*'s aims of raising community awareness of depression and anxiety, reducing the associated stigma, and focusing on prevention, early intervention and targeted research.

"SMEs are a difficult-to-access part of the business community. By educating managers about common mental health problems, we hope to equip them with the skills to identify depression and anxiety, and promote safe, healthy working environments," she said.

Ms Shann said *beyondblue* will promote the findings of this research project to SME's nationally.

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