Thank you for your interest in this research being conducted by PhD student Alison Ollerenshaw, under the supervision of Dr Angela Murphy, Prof Suzanne McLaren, and Assoc Prof Helen Thompson from Federation University Australia. We are conducting research examining the services offered at business incubators, such as networking, mediation and training, and their relationship to the positive psychological development of tenants within incubators. This research is partially supported by funds from the City of Melton and the Western Business Accelerator and Centre for Excellence.

As a ‘tenant’ in a business incubator (or similar facility) we wish to invite you to participate in this research. Participation involves completing an online survey which takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. (Interviews are also being conducted for this research and participation is completely voluntary). The survey questions ask about you and your business, and about the type and location of your incubator, and the range of services offered. It also asks questions about the importance of these services to you and your business. Positive psychological development will then be measured through a series of statements that require you to rate your perceived attributes to hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism that comprise psychological capital.

Should you agree to complete the survey, click on the link provided in the email. Upon completing the survey you will then be invited to participate in an interview. If you agree to participate in an interview, you will be asked to supply a name and email address to enable the researchers to contact you about the interview. Your responses will remain anonymous and your email address will be removed from your survey responses, and participant codes will be used to match data between the survey and/or interview responses to ensure confidentiality. All data collected through the survey will be aggregated and survey data will be non-identifiable.

Interviews for this research will be conducted via telephone or by using internet and mobile devices using applications such as Skype and Whatsapp. The student researcher will conduct all interviews and will ask questions to assist in understanding the range of services available to tenants at incubators and the uptake of these services in relation to the tenancy experience. The questions will examine the availability and contribution of the supports offered to tenants and how they may assist in supporting psychological capital.
Should you agree to participate in an interview for this research, the schedule of questions will be provided to you in advance. Interviews will take approximately one hour.

During the interview, hand-written or typed notes will be made by the researcher and the interview will be audio recorded. All information collected, including notes/audio recordings, will be treated confidentially and will only be used to identify the main themes of the interview; they will not be used to identify individuals. The named researchers are the only people who will have access to these notes/recordings. The researchers may use participants’ quotes and comments from the surveys and interviews to support their research findings. These may be presented in reports and publications that are publicly accessible. All participant comments used for such purposes will have all potential identifiers removed to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality.

Survey and interview data will not include any information that can be used to identify individual participants. Although the number of interviews is small \((n = 50)\) your comments will not affect your privacy/anonymity. This is because all information provided by you will be de-identified prior to analysis and, furthermore, interviews will be conducted with tenants at incubators around the world providing an additional layer of anonymity to data findings.

The information you share will be used for this PhD research with data used for the preparation of the thesis, and research papers for publication, conference papers and presentations, and industry-based stories for general publication. The research findings will provide important insights for the incubator industry and for incubator management in guiding the provision of support services that facilitate both tenants’ business growth as well as psychological development.

All named researchers for this study have extensive experience in conducting research and abiding by the ethical principles in conducting this research. This project has received approval from the Federation University Australia’s Human Research Ethics Committee (project number: A17-110).

All research data for this study will be retained, securely, for a minimum of five years. Thereafter it be destroyed in accordance with the Institutional requirements for data security.

Although this research comprises two studies, you may choose to participate in none, one or both studies. Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free at any time up until and while completing the survey and interview to withdraw your participation, without explanation. There are no consequences for withdrawing from this research. However, if you wish to withdraw from this study after information has been aggregated - it is then unable to be individually identified - so from this point it is not possible to withdraw your information/data. You may also choose not to respond to all questions in the interview/survey, just answer the questions you are comfortable with.
Plain Language Information Statement

Please note that participation in this research is in no way associated with the incubator nor will feedback be provided to the manager about participation or non-participation in the study.

If you choose to participate in this research, your consent is assumed through the completion and submission of the survey and in the provision of your first name and email contact in relation to participation in study 2. For participation in the interview, please review the consent form provided and either (a) sign the form and return it to the student researcher prior to commencement of the interview, or (b) provide verbal consent to the researcher prior to commencing the interview. Your verbal consent will be recorded and documented by the researcher.

It is unlikely that you will experience any distress when completing the survey or by participating in the interview. However, in the unlikely event that you are concerned about what has been asked we advise that you follow the protocols for accessing professional support through your incubator, or contact a medical health practitioner. For incubator tenants located in Australia you may wish to access the Beyond Blue information line (1300 224 636), Lifeline (131 114) or the Mental Health Advice Line (Ph. 1300 280 737) for expert advice, support and information to deal with personal challenges and stress.

For further details about this research, please contact Dr Angela Murphy aa.murphy@federation.edu.au (T: +61 3 5327 6198) or Alison Ollerenshaw: a.ollerenshaw@federation.edu.au (T: + 61 3 5327 6201).

Further details about this research are also available by contacting Prof Suzanne McLaren: s.mclaren@federation.edu.au or Assoc Prof Helen Thompson: h.thompson@federation.edu.au

A YouTube video briefly outlining the research and inviting tenants to participate is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOpyQidO5Qo

If you have any questions, or you would like further information regarding the project titled The relationship between business incubator services and the psychological capital of tenants, please contact the Principal Researcher (Dr Angela Murphy, Principal Researcher) at the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation

EMAIL: aa.murphy@federation.edu.au
PH: +61 3 5327 6198

Should you (i.e. the participant) have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research project, please contact the Federation University Ethics Officers, Research Services, Federation University Australia, P O Box 663 Mt Helen Vic 3353 or Northways Rd, Churchill Vic 3842.

Telephone: (03) 5327 9765, (03) 5122 6446
Email: research.ethics@federation.edu.au

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