

College of Arts

ACY3005 Communication Professional Practice

PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM GUIDE

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PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT DOCUMENTATION

Return to Partnerships Coordinator (Alison Whan) prior to the placement commencing:

1. **Learning in the Workplace and Community (LiWC) Contract**
Complete with your host supervisor the LiWC Activities in Section 2.

Ensure that the document is signed, dated and returned to Alison Whan ASAP following this initial meeting to activate VU's insurance coverage.

Partnerships Coordinator will scan / email final version to all parties, along with electronic copies of the following evaluation forms for completion at the conclusion of the placement.

PLEASE NOTE: Placements need to be approved by the Partnerships Coordinator and Unit Coordinator **prior** to commencement. Placements undertaken without formal University approval will not be deemed appropriate for this unit of study.

Return the following to the Partnerships Coordinator following completion of your placement:

2. **Student Placement Assessment Report** (*Supervisor to complete*)
This enables the supervisor to evaluate your performance.
Please note this also forms part of your Assessment 3 Placement Details.
Refer to the ACY3005 Unit Guide for details, including submission requirements.
3. **Student Placement Evaluation Report** (*Student to complete*)
This gives you the opportunity to evaluate the organisational setting for future students.
The information provided is uploaded to the School's database, and your feedback is used to review and improve the Professional Placement Program.
Please note this also forms part of your Assessment 3 Placement Details.
Refer to the ACY3005 Unit Guide for details, including submission requirements.

ABOUT THE PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Undertaking a professional placement is an opportunity for you to put into practice the skills and knowledge you have gained throughout your degree in a professional setting. The host supervisor may reasonably expect you to be work ready, meaning you can be assigned a reasonable level of responsibility, take initiative and at times self-manage, as would be expected of a graduate recruit.

You are expected to undertake a professional placement of 15 days or equivalent (approximately 110 hours) under the supervision of a qualified and experienced industry professional. Students negotiate with employers the timing and format of the placement, eg. 5 days x 3 weeks; 3 days x 5 weeks or 1 day x 15 weeks.

In an effort to support your strategic, conceptual and initiative skills, you are expected to source your own professional placement, and one that matches your expertise and interests. This will assist you to be job ready graduates and develop skills in job seeking. The Partnerships Coordinator is available to assist you throughout this process and the Unit Coordinator is able to support with coaching and mentoring (refer page 3 Unit Guide for available times).

Any placement opportunities that arise will be advertised via your student email (please check this regularly or ensure it is auto forwarded to a personal email account).

A database with organisations where students have undertaken placements in previous years is managed by the Partnerships Coordinator. This is expanded each year through the information that you and employers provide on the LiWC evaluation forms which are returned to the Partnerships Coordinator at the completion of your placement. Therefore, it is important that you provide constructive feedback when completing these evaluation forms (these evaluation forms are also required as part of your Assessment 3 Placement Details, refer page 13 of the ACY3005 Unit Guide).

Assessment

LiWC documentation (contract / evaluations) form part of your assessment for ACY3005 Communication Professional Practice (refer page 13 of the ACY3005 Unit Guide). While these documents need to be returned to the Partnerships Coordinator, they must also be submitted to the ACY3005 Unit Coordinator. Therefore, please ensure you keep copies of all documents for both purposes.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

To be eligible for RPL for the placement component ONLY of this unit, the learning must fit the course criteria, and should normally have been undertaken within the past 12 months. Students are still required to undertake all placement related assessment tasks outlined in the ACY3005 Unit Guide to successfully fulfil this unit's overall requirements. If you believe you are eligible for RPL please contact the Unit Coordinator, Sally Webster, to discuss further.

HOW TO FIND YOUR PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENT

The following details some tips on providing a suitable professional placement. Sourcing placements will also be discussed in class.

- Have the introductory letter outlining your areas of interest and skills, and your Curriculum Vitae / Resume ready to email upon request.
- Ensure that your introductory letter and resume are error free, (spelling and grammatical errors are likely to deter an employer from considering your application).
- Don't hold off on applying for placement opportunities thinking that the best ones will be advertised later – placement opportunities are circulated as they arise.
- Call the organisation and ask for the most appropriate person to speak with regarding a University student undertaking a 15 day professional placement with them.
- When contacting organisations it is important that you check that it is a convenient time for them to speak with you, always offer to call back if they can give you a more suitable time. (If they are too busy to talk, they may feel pressured to deal with you right then and there, making it easier for them just to reject you).
- Give them a brief overview of the placement requirements (familiarise yourself with this Guide and the Unit Guide before you call). Offer to email them some additional information. If they are interested in hosting you, send them a copy of the course letter, your introductory letter, Curriculum Vitae / Resume and a copy of the LiWC Contract (which outlines everyone's responsibilities).
- Follow up with a phone call 3-4 days after you have sent the email. eg. *"I was just wondering whether you have had a chance to consider the information that I sent you recently?"*
- If you say you are going to do something, whether it is to make a phone call or send an email, make sure that you do so at your earliest convenience.
- If they agree to host your professional placement, then you need to arrange an initial meeting with the Host Supervisor, to enable the completion of the placement contract and to confirm the particulars of the placement, dates/days/times etc.
- Always try to be flexible when arranging to meet with organisation representatives, as well as throughout the negotiation of placement times and days.
- Don't delay in applying for placement opportunities that are advertised if they interest you. Selection of students varies depending on the organisation's preferences. At times students are chosen on a first come first serve basis, other times selection is via submission of Curriculum Vitae / Resume or an interview process. So have everything ready to go!
- Don't be discouraged if you don't have all of the attributes requested in the advertisement, as placements are to be a LEARNING experience for you. Staff at host organisations are expected to spend some of their time training you.
- If you accept an offer of a professional placement and are then not able to fulfil this commitment, or need to postpone the opportunity for any reason – you MUST advise the Partnerships Coordinator, the Unit Coordinator, and the Organisation ASAP to inform everyone concerned. Remember, your professional placement is for a unit of study and you are being assessed. Not informing all the parties of changes to your placement can impact upon your grades.

It is in your best interest to complete the LiWC Contract together with your host supervisor as then it can act as the agreement for the professional placement experience. If there are some activities that the organisation undertakes that you would like to gain some experience in, then you should negotiate to have it included on the contract.

Submit the signed LiWC Contract to the Partnerships Coordinator, alison.whan@vu.edu.au as soon as it has been completed. The contract will be scanned and emailed to all parties, along with an electronic version of the evaluation forms for you and the supervisor to return at the completion of the placement. Once this has been undertaken by the Partnerships Coordinator it is formal approval that your placement has been approved. Placements undertaken without formal University approval will not be deemed appropriate for this unit of study.

CAREER RESOURCES

VU offers all students support and advice in career development and career planning. These services are free, so this is a wonderful opportunity and all students are encouraged to take advantage of these services and resources offered by Student Career Development. More details are available at: <http://www.vu.edu.au/facilities-and-services/career-and-employment-services> and https://careers.vu.edu.au/Content/Students_and_Graduates.chpx

By registering on [WorkWizard https://careers.vu.edu.au/Content/](https://careers.vu.edu.au/Content/) you will receive weekly e-job updates. These include information on:

- career related workshop/seminars
- information about Graduate Programs
- Government and Career Employment Expos
- Student Leadership Opportunities
- Access to Industry Mentors
- full-time/part-time/casual employment opportunities
- Learning in the Workplace opportunities

All students are encouraged to access Student Career Development for guidance in:

- writing a resume
- covering letters
- job applications / addressing selection criteria
- interview skills

These documents form part of your Assessment 1 Professional Portfolio (refer page 11 ACY3005 Unit Guide), therefore it is recommended to take every opportunity for guidance, feedback on your work.

To book an individual session with a careers professional visit:

https://careers.vu.edu.au/Content/Students_and_Graduates/Job_Applications/Resumes.chpx

For feedback/suggestions on your Curriculum Vitae / Resume and introduction letter, email your drafts to careers@vu.edu.au

WHAT THE HOST ORGANISATION CAN EXPECT OF YOU...

There are a range of benefits for undertaking a professional placement. These include, but not limited to:

- Valuable industry experience prior to graduating to enable you to build up your Curriculum Vitae.
- Increase your employability, (*students are sometimes offered ongoing positions*).
- Apply skills/knowledge learnt throughout the degree to real life situations.
- Gain better focus within your chosen vocation (*placements sometimes result in students deciding to take different avenues, or discover their preferences within the industry*).
- Make industry contacts / networking (*75% of jobs are filled through contacts - not advertising*).
- Learn new skills / industry programs.
- Produce work for your employment portfolio (*always make sure you get a copy of any work that you produce to be able to showcase to any of your future employers*).
- Gain better industry understanding / adapt to culture of that type of organisation.
- Give you confidence in your own abilities and skills.
- Learn negotiation skills, eg. *negotiate placement days/times/duties with your host supervisor*.

The benefits to the Host Organisation include:

- Near-graduate to support the operations of their business.
- Students bring new perspectives / creative ideas / latest research / best practices / tricks of the trade.
- Opportunity to try out employees before they hire into ongoing positions.
- Build relationship with local university.

WHAT THE HOST ORGANISATION CAN EXPECT OF YOU...

Due to the benefits gained from undertaking a professional placement you are advised to treat the placement as if you are a new member of staff and:

- Be punctual.
- Conform to the dress code of the organisation.
- Advise the organisation if you are unable to attend in the time specified.
- Be professional in your attitude, ie. complete work to deadlines; show drafts of your work; ask for feedback and assistance as required.
- Adapt your approach to the style of the organisation.
- Show enthusiasm and initiative even if you consider the task boring. Mundane duties are part of every job.
- Be flexible and adaptive.
- Provide ongoing feedback to the host supervisor about how you are progressing in the placement, and address any concerns you have early otherwise they can escalate.

Make yourself an asset to the organisation

- Make an impact while you're there for the 15 days. A number of students have made such a great impression that they have been employed following their placement.
- Think about ways that you can assist the organisation during any downtime you have, for eg. consider what on-line research you could undertake to support their business operations.
- What could you do to make their workplace more efficient?
- Consider how could you improve the operations of the business if it belonged to you?
- What have you learnt throughout your degree that would assist this business? Why not share this information with them.
- Share the latest tricks of the trade.
- 75% of jobs are attained through networking, if you make a good impression you could end up with a job there, or be recommended by them to someone else in the field who is looking to employ....these possibilities are out there!.

In return we encourage the host organisation to support you with the following:

- Undertaking an induction into the organisation, which includes Occupational Health and Safety awareness (OH&S).
- Undertake the role as described and outlined by the Host Organisation in the LiWC contract.
- Be included as part of the team.
- Be given appropriate and relevant tasks which will be used, in total or in part, by the organisation.
- Be provided with assistance when required.
- Be provided guidance in completing tasks in the style, culture of the organisation.
- Be given an understanding of the scope, codes of conduct and values of the organisation.
- That consideration will be shown for you as a beginner in your professional field.
- Receive ongoing feedback from the host supervisor about your performance.
- And that any issues arising are dealt with efficiently and appropriately.

ENCOUNTERING A PROBLEM DURING PLACEMENT?

If at any time you feel that you are in danger in any way, you need to remove yourself immediately from the organisation, contact the Partnerships Coordinator, Alison Whan on 9919 8745 or the Unit Coordinator, Sally Webster, on 9919 2835.

You can use your placement as an opportunity to practice dealing with issues that might arise in a normal working environment. Addressing issues can be difficult, though the opportunity may assist you in gaining confidence should you encounter similar experiences in your future employment.

Some tips for dealing with some issues that could arise...

Please remember that there will always be a degree of boring, mundane duties in all work places. Within reason, this is a normal part of being employed and is *not* considered sufficient reason to discontinue a professional placement without addressing the issue.

Raise any issues you are experiencing as soon as is appropriate with your host supervisor (*if able*). When addressing an issue, always try to suggest some possible solutions (*try to be part of the solution and not just the problem*).

If the issue is related to being given **irrelevant tasks** to do, eg. make tea/coffee, photocopying/filing for extensive periods, then you should refer your supervisor back to the LiWC Contract that outlines the experience that you *both* agreed upon, and question whether that experience is still available, and if it is not, explain that you will need to seek out an alternate opportunity to enable you to fulfil your unit requirements.

You should be well prepared when you approach your supervisor, and have some suggestions of how you might be able to assist their organisation while fulfilling your own requirements. Suggestions might be: consider some on-line research that you could undertake for them; think about some tasks that you could do related to your course that could assist their core business function; tasks you could do to make their working environment more efficient; outline the types of activities you have undertaken, and the skills you have acquired throughout your course that they may be able to utilise more effectively.

If you are being asked to do **work that is too difficult**, or you are not being sufficiently guided or trained, then you need to discuss this with your host supervisor, explain to them what *you* need in order for you to complete the required tasks, what training or additional support you need, or ongoing feedback to ensure that you are completing the work to the organisation's satisfaction.

If you have addressed the issue and feel that there is no noticeable improvement in the situation, then you should contact the Partnerships Coordinator or Unit Coordinator to discuss the best course of action.

Remember that placements are to be mutually beneficial for both the organisation and you.

Learning in the Workplace and Community Contract

NOTE: Student & Host need to complete Section 2 together. Please sign & return LiWC Contract to Alison Whan Partnerships Coordinator, PRIOR to the commencement of the placement. Only placements with formal University approval will be deemed acceptable for this unit of study, ACY3005 Communication Professional Practice.

This contract agreement sets out the terms on which Victoria University will place the Student with the Host Organisation for the purpose of the Student undertaking the learning in the workplace described in Section 2.

Please note this placement is for work experience purposes only. While it is understood that students will contribute to productive work, the focus is on educational outcomes for the student in all tasks they undertake. The educational outcomes to be gained from this placement should be outlined in Section 2 of this document.

Please note that national legal guidelines govern what constitutes an educational placement and host organisations are responsible for ensuring that they meet these requirements. For further information please refer to the attached information sheet produced by the Fair Work Ombudsman.

SECTION 1

HOST SUPERVISOR TO COMPLETE:

Organisation Name:		
Address: (location of placement)		
Contact Person / Supervisor:		
Position / Qualifications held:		
Telephone Numbers	<i>Business:</i>	<i>Mobile:</i>
Facsimile:		
Email Address:		
Website:		
<i>I hereby agree to abide by the conditions set out in Section 3 of this Contract Agreement:</i>		
SIGNED for and on behalf of the HOST ORGANISATION	Signature:	Date:

STUDENT TO COMPLETE:

Last Name:		
Given Name:		
Address:		
Emergency Contact Person:		
Emergency Contact Phone:		
Enrolled Course:		
Course Coordinator:		
Telephone Number:	<i>Home phone:</i>	<i>Mobile:</i>
Email Address:		
<i>I hereby agree to abide by the conditions set out in Section 2 of this Contract Agreement:</i>		
SIGNED by the STUDENT	Signature:	Date:

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE TO COMPLETE:

Organisation Name:	College of Arts Victoria University	
Postal Address:	PO Box 14428, Melbourne City Mail Centre, MELBOURNE VIC 8001	
Contact Person:	Alison Whan	
Title:	Partnerships Coordinator	
Telephone Numbers	<i>Business:</i> 03 9919 8745	<i>Mobile:</i> 0478 313 662
Facsimile:	03 9919 2699	
Email Address:	alison.whan@vu.edu.au	
<i>I hereby agree to abide by the conditions set out in Section 4 of this Contract Agreement:</i>		
SIGNED for and on behalf of the UNIVERSITY	Signature:	Date:

SECTION 2
HOST AND STUDENT TO COMPLETE TOGETHER TO FORM AN AGREEMENT

PARTICULARS OF THIS LEARNING IN THE WORKPLACE ACTIVITY		
Dates of LiWC activity:	Commencement date:	Exp. completion date:
Hours of Standard Work Day:	Start time:	Finish time:
<p>The following section is an Agreement between the Organisation Supervisor and the Student, and should be completed with both parties present. This Agreement is to ensure that both parties understand the expectations of the placement and to ensure that it provides a valid learning experience for the student. A clear outline of the expected educational benefits of the placement ensures that the internship meets standards defined by Fair Work Australia.</p> <p><i>The student and host have agreed that the student will be involved in the following tasks:</i></p>		
<p><i>It is anticipated that the following educational and professional outcomes will be achieved, based on the above list of tasks:</i></p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 		

2. THE STUDENT AGREES TO:

- a. read and comply with the information provided in this Memorandum of Understanding by signing and returning this contract to the University **PRIOR** to the commencement of the LiWC experience, which will activate coverage by the **University's Insurance Policy**;
- b. behave in a professional manner, including being punctual, attending on all agreed days for the duration of the contract, behaving professionally, not disclosing any confidential information of the Host Organisation, dressing appropriately and performing tasks satisfactorily;
- c. work in accordance with the policies, procedures, directions and requirements of the Host Organisation (including, without limitation, those relating to occupational health and safety, equal opportunity, confidentiality and information privacy);
- d. advise the Host Organisation if the Student suffers from any medical condition or disability that may affect his/her work performance;
- e. comply with the statutes, policies and procedures of the University (including, without limitation, the Learning in the Workplace Policy & Procedures and the procedures relating to occupational health and safety, equal opportunity);
- f. maintain communication with the University and the workplace supervisor(s);
- g. be available and prepared to discuss relevant issues when visited or contacted by the University, complete relevant LiWC evaluation documentation and submit to the University at the completion of the LiWC experience;
- h. address any issues/concerns that arise with the workplace supervisor in order to resolve them, referring any unresolvable issues on to the University;
- i. immediately advise the Host Organisation and the University of any accident or incident in the workplace; and
- j. at the completion of the activity return to the Host Organisation all its property or equipment including security cards, computer disks, documents and records and all copies of such material in the possession or control of the Student.

3. THE HOST ORGANISATION AGREES TO:

- a. read and comply with the information provided in this Contract Agreement by signing and returning it to the University **PRIOR** to the commencement of the LiWC experience, which will activate coverage by the **University's Insurance Policy**;
- b. provide and maintain a safe workplace environment, free from discrimination/harassment, with appropriate occupational health & safety and equal opportunity safeguards in place;
- c. provide proper supervision of the Student by a suitably trained supervisor;
- d. continuously provide constructive and supportive performance feedback to the student throughout the workplace experience;
- e. meet with the student for a reasonable amount of time each day in order to brief, debrief, and provide any training / guidance and feedback necessary for him/her to satisfactorily undertake assigned tasks;
- f. provide a learning environment with adequate opportunities for the Student to meet the learning objectives of his/her learning in the workplace experience;
- g. provide an appropriate orientation to the Host Organisation, its work culture, policies and procedures;
- h. comply with, and ensure that its personnel comply with all relevant Commonwealth and State legislation, regulations, rules, codes of practice and Australian Standards, including, without limitation those relating to OH&S to ensure that the Student is not exposed to any uncontrollable or inadequately controlled hazards or risks;
- i. address any issues or concerns that arise in relation to the Student in order to resolve them with the Student in the first instance, referring any unresolvable issues to the University at earliest convenience;
- j. immediately advise the University of any accident or incident that occurs in the workplace;
- k. allow visits by the University to monitor and assess the Student's progress; and
- l. complete and return the student evaluation documentation and a written reference to the University at the completion of the LiWC experience.

4. THE UNIVERSITY AGREES TO:

- a. ensure the tasks and activities which are proposed to be undertaken in the workplace by the Student are relevant, appropriate and consistent with the maturity, academic background and year level of the Student;
- b. use best endeavours to ensure there are opportunities for the Student to meet the learning objectives of the workplace experience;
- c. monitor and assess the Student's progress;
- d. provide constructive and supportive feedback to the Student;
- e. liaise with the workplace supervisor responsible for the Student if any issues arise; and
- f. act promptly to address any concerns about the safety and suitability of the workplace and well-being of the Student.

5. TERMINATION

This agreement may be terminated at any time by the University, the Student or the Host Organisation on the provision of 2 weeks written notice to the other parties.

6. VARIATION

This agreement may be varied by written agreement between the University, the Host Organisation and the Student.

7. DISSATISFACTION PROCESS

Process for dealing with dissatisfaction in a professional placement setting

The placement should '**NOT**' be discontinued until the following process has been completed, unless there is an Occupational Health and Safety risk.

- a. Any issues encountered during a placement should be raised with the party concerned in the work environment, in order to find a resolution in the first instance.
- b. If the issue is found to be unresolvable, the issue should then be raised with the Partnerships Coordinator, advising any action taken to date.
- c. The Partnerships Coordinator will then contact the other party in order to gain an understanding of the issue from their perspective.
- d. The Partnerships Coordinator will liaise with the Unit Co-ordinator, and if deemed necessary, a meeting will be arranged for all parties to discuss the issues and explore possible resolutions.
- e. In the situation where a meeting is not deemed necessary, the Partnership and Unit Coordinators will discuss the issue/s and offer some possible solutions.
- f. All parties will be kept informed throughout the process.

COLLEGE OF ARTS

STUDENT PLACEMENT EVALUATION REPORT

This evaluation report forms part of the formal assessment of ACY3005. Student to complete and return to: alison.whan@vu.edu.au and to submit as per assignment requirements (refer p13 Unit Guide).

Student:	Semester:	Year:
Course or Major specialisation:		
Host Organisation:		

Take this opportunity to reflect on your placement experience and provide some feedback about your learning. Your feedback is used to assist with the suitability of this placement for future VU students.

Please tick the appropriate box	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My workplace induction was informative					
I was provided with appropriate supervision and guidance					
My supervisor spent sufficient time with me					
Staff took time to explain/show me how to do things					
I was provided with the opportunity to meet the agreed learning objectives (refer LIWC contract)					
Staff were friendly and made me feel comfortable					
My questions were answered in ways that made sense					
If I had a problem or concern I was able to talk to someone about it and resolve it					
I was given ongoing, helpful feedback					
The placement was relevant to my studies					
I have a better understanding of the industry as a result of the placement					
I learnt new skills on the placement					
My studies properly prepared me for the placement					
I would recommend this placement to future students					
I was able to undertake a variety of tasks					

List the main activities undertaken while on placement, and rate their usefulness in relation to your chosen career:

Main activities undertaken	Very Useful	Useful	Not Sure	Not Useful	approx % of time

List five of the most interesting/valuable/surprising aspects of the placement/industry

What were the least interesting/valuable/surprising aspects of the placement/industry?

List five new things that you learnt during the placement

How valuable did you find the placement experience for preparing you for entering the workplace?

--

How do you think the Professional Placement Program could be improved for future students?

--

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

COLLEGE of ARTS

SUPERVISOR'S ASSESSMENT REPORT

Student's name:	Course:
Supervisor's name:	Date:
Organisation name:	

Can you please take a few moments to complete this brief report based on your experience supervising the abovementioned VU student.

The evaluation of the student:

No.	Please mark the appropriate box with an X	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Applicable	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The student behaved in a professional manner (punctual, appearance)					
2	The student exhibited a good attitude towards staff					
3	The student exhibited a good attitude towards the tasks allocated					
4	The student fitted in with the culture of the organisation					
5	The student was able to follow instructions					
6	The student was able to ask questions and seek clarification on tasks					
7	If the student experienced problems, he/she was able to raise the issue in order to seek a resolution					
8	The student was accepting of constructive feedback and prepared to explore alternative options					
9	The student demonstrated creativity					
10	The student showed initiative					
11	The student attended as required					
12	The student's studies properly prepared them for the placement with your organisation					

The self-evaluation of your organisation:

13	The student was provided with the opportunity to meet the agreed learning objectives (refer signed LIWC contract)					
14	I was able to meet with the student for a reasonable amount of time					
15	The student was given the opportunity to undertake a variety of tasks					
16	The student was provided with a legitimate learning opportunity					

Please expand of any of your above responses here:

No.	

Can you please summarise the experience of having this student in the workplace with you?	
Can you suggest any improvements to the current Professional Placement Program or process?	
Total number of days student attended:	
Would you be prepared to host another VU student?	
If so, when is the best time of the year to make contact with you?	
Please indicate your preferred method of communication in relation to this program?	Email
	Phone
	Business letter
	Meeting in person
Are there any final comments that you would like to make about any aspect of the student or the placement program?	

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Alison Whan
 College of Arts Partnerships Coordinator
 03 9919 8745
alison.whan@vu.edu.au
 PO Box 14428, Melbourne City MC,
 Melbourne Vic 8001