

NEW **ACADEMIC** **STREET** **HEROES**



David: "People are passionate about their vision and what they're trying to achieve...they're prepared to put in time and energy on top of their day jobs, ensuring that this is a success."

Rowan: "It's an exciting prospect to be able to walk away from the project and say, we've had a hand in developing and working on this. "

David Beesley and Rowan Humphrey
DB: Technical Services Manager, Media and Communication
RH: Program Coordinator, Media and Communication



The brand-new Media Precinct will be a major drawcard in the new NAS build not only within the RMIT community, but broadcasting companies and universities around the world.

Rowan Humphrey and David Beesley, Program Coordinator and Technical Services Manager respectively, have put in years of extensive research and legwork to help provide students with future-ready, digital technology in the brand-new Media Precinct.

The Media Precinct will feature ground-breaking technology that will not only focus on current trends, but it will be malleable enough to carry students and graduates well into the future. David notes that the precinct will be cutting-edge, setting a high standard for other universities and broadcasters.

“We’re very much designing a facility not only for current technological requirements, but also for emerging and future requirements. We put a lot of thought into how we can create infrastructure that’s flexible and robust enough to meet our needs now and well into the future.”

Rowan and David focused a lot of their research around designing infrastructure that would enhance the teaching and learning experience. The Media Precinct will feature lots of new technology including optic fibre cabling, 4K UHD resolution screens, virtual set technologies and the ability to live stream to any university in the world, opening up a gateway to online collaboration in real-time.

Rowan and David have been on various research expeditions, with one particular trip seeing them travel to the United States for an annual conference with the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). David was pleasantly surprised to discover that Australia is well-ahead of our American colleagues.

“It reaffirmed that Australia is an early adopter of emerging technologies and we’re a long way ahead of the curve, at least, in comparison to our American counterparts. In terms of digital HD TV, we’re already there and America is still coming up with the digital spectrum for example.

Fine Tuning

“The fact that we’re now moving on to the next step 4K UHD and really embracing all of the IP streaming puts us well ahead of the United States, let alone other broadcasting companies in the country. Our positioning is fantastic. Here in Melbourne, I think we have this cultural perspective that we are behind the curve, but actually we’re quite in front.”

It hasn’t all been smooth sailing. At times the NAS Project can be stressful and individual workloads can increase to what may be considered a second full-time job. The TV and radio studios had to be relocated from Buildings 10 and 12, into Buildings 5 and 6. Rowan acknowledges the difficulties in designing and working in a live campus, noting that it can be intense and challenging.

“The difficult part of NAS is that you know that you’re acting on something that you have to get very right, or as right as you can possibly get with all of the constraints that wrap around that... We’ve had both the disadvantage of having to move once and establish, learn new systems, juggle students through that with the final product always in the back of your mind.”

Despite lots of attention to detail and hours of work, sometimes things don’t always go to plan. Both David and Rowan agree that it’s good practice to put your best foot forward and work through issues as opposed to creating unnecessary friction. Rowan says:

“You have oversights and you miss things and hope that you pick them up with good time. Sometimes you don’t pick them up with good time and the pressure of having to figure your way through that is part of it.”

Notwithstanding the extra work, time and effort the project has demanded, David and Rowan are hopeful and excited saying that new build will not only put RMIT ahead of other universities, but the precinct will be ahead of many broadcasting companies in the country.

“We have the ABC sniffing around at the moment; they are as excited as we are about the space. Particularly in terms of us being a feeder mechanism for all technical staff of the ABC. They are super excited and a little bit jealous.”