

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



**“NAS has given me the opportunity to work with a diverse group of people I wouldn't have otherwise. A lot of my role has been about bringing people to consensus.”**

Glenn Newell  
Senior Manager, Technical Support  
Office of the PVC SEH  
[nas.rmit.edu.au](http://nas.rmit.edu.au)



**Even pre-NAS, Glenn Newell has been working hard to make sure that staff and students are able to work and study in a fantastic environment.**

As a Senior Manager at the Technical Support Office, Glenn Newell is all too familiar with the hardships of construction. The large scale of the NAS Project has seen a rise in the number of issues experienced by the staff and students in the central research facilities; Glenn deals with all of them.

"I oversee all of the technical support and all of the laboratories we have. We have 500 laboratories and about 150 staff...facilities like the micro-nano research facility, the microscopy centre and the advanced manufacturing precinct, [have] all the managers report through to me."

Glenn has been working alongside NAS since the very beginning, pre-2014, noting that it is just as busy back then as it is now. The consolidation works involved a lot of planning and Glenn says his role changed from that of a school manager, to a liaison.

"My early involvement was around defining what was required of the school moving forward. My main involvement at that point was clearing out the space. We had about \$50 million worth of laboratory redevelopment that had to be done."

More recently, the renovations have demanded that Glenn be just as attentive. Delicate atomic microscopes in the microscopy centre have had to be moved to make sure the project got underway.

"We are trying to operate atomic microscopes in a building site, so there's been a lot of work around making sure that can happen. We've also been trying to work with NAS through staff impacts and things like that, because people are still working in building 10 level 7, for example, so they are heavily impacted."

Glenn is very conscious of the impact a construction site can have on staff and students in a live campus. Throughout the project, he's become a conduit between schools and various other departments to make sure that the project goes ahead as smoothly as possible. Glenn's vigilant in terms of the student

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experience on campus and is adamant, that as a university, we should be doing the best we can to provide for students who, in some cases, will study over the lifespan of their degree in a construction zone.

"Students have a very tight timeframe on what they can do and when they can do it, so if you lose a class, that's close to 10% of the student's contact for their course that you have to try and readdress somehow. A lot of our delivery is in science and engineering so if you can't use gas in a classroom and therefore that class is unable to run, that has a heavy impact."

As someone with a background in building, Glenn is used to the dust, noise and disruptions of a construction site. He's conscious of the fact that academics may be used to a much quieter workplace and that a live building site may hinder their ability to work productively.

"I was in building for 20 years before I came to RMIT... NAS has allowed me to be in a situation where I could see the perspective of the builders, see the perspective of the project managers and see the perspective of the clients."

Personally I'm used to it and therefore it's a little bit difficult for me at times, because I don't necessarily immediately see the impact it's having on someone who has never worked in this environment before...I'm used to working in that environment and I don't notice it. It doesn't mean that the person I'm working with isn't being heavily impacted. It's been a little bit of a learning curve for me."

Glenn is thorough in his duties when dealing with issues and complaints; he needs to know all sides of the story to make sure he can help out the best way he can. He believes that everyone's point of view is valid and it's worth listening to, ensuring that people can come to happy medium.

"I've had to get people around the table all onto the same page. I think I've been in meetings where I've been arguing for Property Services, I've been arguing for the NAS people or I've been arguing for the schools. At points in time I've had to argue for everyone, which has also meant I've had to argue against everyone. Like I said, a lot of my role has been about bringing people to consensus."