

# Our Local World of Work

student investigation of northern business

## 2011 Student Handbook



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The 'our local world of work student investigation of northern business' program was originally developed collectively in 2005 by the Moreland and Southern Whittlesea Industry Education networks in an initiative to link young people and local industry. This project was coordinated by RMIT University's Youth & Community Partnerships Group with funding from the Federal Government under its Regional Partnerships Program, supported by the Northern Melbourne Area Consultative Committee.

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## Overview

In the 'Our Local World of Work student investigation of northern business program', senior secondary students work in pairs to undertake a major investigation of a local business. The investigation is based on:

- interview preparation
- preliminary research
- an interview with an employer or senior manager in their workplace
- collecting images of the business
- developing a Powerpoint profile of the business
- presenting the business profile to class peers and others

'Our Local World of Work' is an assessable project and linked to a specific school subject.

## Why?

It is undertaken to increase students' knowledge and understanding of the world of work, and specific industries, professions and vocations in their local community.

It also aims to develop interpersonal and communications skills and increase students' confidence for job seeking.

## Employer support

Employer support is usually coordinated by the Local Community Partnership (LCP), Career Connections. A cross section of business types is selected for each class.

Managers are invited to participate and the full process is explained to them, including:

- a copy of the student interview questions
- booking two hours for the interview, inclusive of a
- work place tour for students
- allowance for photos

They are told students will follow up with a draft of their work and possibly more questions.

These managers participate in the program because they want to help young people to increase their skills and have a better understanding of local employment and the world of work.

**This is the workbook of:**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

**who is conducting research under the 'Our Local World of Work' program with:**

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_

Melways Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_

Web Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes

**This has been organised by****Project Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_**Career Connections:** \_\_\_\_\_**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Stage 1: before the interview

It is important to prepare thoroughly for the 'Our Local World of Work' investigation.

Practising interviewing and preliminary research on the business is essential.

### 1.1 interview practice

#### Young employee job profile

Interviewing a young person about their job and career path is a good first step in getting ready for the larger 'Our Local World of Work' investigation.

The questions in the following section are provided as a guide to the exercise.

Your completed 'young employee' job profile can also be published in the 'Opening Doors' newsletter and new website (see web page template on your CD).



#### Other interview activities

There are a number of ways you can practise interviews in your classroom:

- The 'Twenty Questions' game – work with the class to locate an object in the room by asking as few questions as possible.
- Do you know what 'open' and 'closed' questions are? Practise them.
- The Famous Person game - design 5 questions they would like to ask a celebrity.
- Role play these interviews in front of the class.
- What makes a good interview? Watch/listen to television/radio interviews and discuss the style of a good interview. Bring in a video.

## 1.2 Telephone the employer

No less than two days before the scheduled meeting, follow up with a telephone call to the employer.

You will need to develop a script before you call.

- Introduce yourself
- Refer to the project
- Confirm your meeting time
- Ask if there any other details you need to know? (eg: arrival point and procedures at reception).
- Thank the employer 'I look forward to meeting you' on....

You may not get straight through. You will have to leave a clear message and call again later.

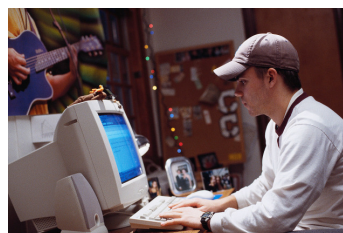
## 1.3 Research the business

You must research the organisation before you visit them.

Many businesses have a website. This provides valuable information on products and services and sometimes the organisation's history.

Ask your teacher, family and friends what they know about the business.

Complete as many of the first few interview questions as you can. This will give you a good starting point and show your interest.



## 1.4 Prepare for the day

**How do you get there?** Check the Melways, public transport timetables etc.

**What are you wearing?** Establish dress code with your teacher (most schools prefer students to wear school uniforms).

**Who's doing what?** Sort out your roles - one student will need to ask questions, the other to take notes. You might want to take turns in sharing these roles.

***Don't forget your digital camera!!***



## 1.5 student checklist

Tick **V** when you have completed

### Step One: Pre Interview

Do you understand the purpose of the project and what you have to do? ☐

Do you understand how you will be assessed? ☐

Have you been matched with a business? ☐

Have you practised interviewing skills? ☐

Have you practised your telephone skills? ☐

Have you completed some background research on the business? ☐

Have you telephoned the business manager to confirm visit time? ☐

Have you organised your travel arrangements? ☐

Do you understand the questionnaire you will be conducting? ☐

Have you organised with your partner how you will conduct the interview? ☐

Have you organised a digital camera? ☐

All ready?



See Steps 2 & 3 of student checklist over page

## Student checklist (cont)

### Step Two: During Interview

- Did you: introduce yourself and explain what the interview was for? ☐
- Dress appropriately ☐
- Conduct the interview politely and professionally ☐
- Ask permission to take photos ☐
- Have a tour of the business ☐
- Arrange follow up contact (email, telephone) ☐
- Thank the business manager/owner for his/her time and help ☐

### Step Three: Post Interview

- Check your notes to see if you have complete answers for each question ☐
- Follow up with a phone call and/or second visit if more information is required ☐
- Write a report on the business ☐
- Develop a PowerPoint presentation ☐
- Present your business profile to your class ☐
- Send a thank you letter to the interviewee ☐

## Stage 2: the interview

### ‘Our Local World of Work’ student interview questions

#### 1. The manager

1.1. Who are you interviewing and what is their job?

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1.2. How did they get to where they are now? Where did their career begin? What training have they done?

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#### 2. The organisation - type and structure

##### Type

2.1. What type of organisation is it?

*eg is it a commercial business, a government body, or a non-profit organisation?*

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2.2. What sector does it belong to?

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**If it is a non-commercial organisation:**

*e.g. local government,*

2.3. What is its purpose?

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2.4. How is it funded? By whom?

*e.g. local government - quarterly contributions from ratepayers (property owners) in their area and some state government funding*

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Go straight to Q3.

**If it is a commercial business:**

2.5. What is its business structure?

*e.g. Is it a company?*

*Is the business privately owned or publicly listed (on the stock market)?*

*Is it a family business or*

*owner/operator (the person who owns it manages it)*

*a partnership?*

*Is it a franchise*

Expand on your answer. Explain what this business structure means?

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### 3. What does it do?

#### Products or Services

3.1. What products or services does the organisation sell or deliver?

Provide a detailed listing of its products or services – collect brochures or pictures

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#### Customers & Clients

3.2. Who are the organisation's customers or clients?

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3.3. How does it deliver its services or sell its products? Provide details

*ie wholesale (to other companies) or retail (direct to the public)? Or both?  
Via internet?*

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#### Competitors

3.4. If it is a commercial business, who are the business' competitors? (only if employer is happy to discuss)

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## 4. Who does what?

### Background and Organisation Structure

4. 1. Provide a background on the organisation

*eg. When was the organisation established? By whom? How did it develop to where is today?*

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4.2. Who is the organisation managed by? What is their title and job?

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4.3. How many people does the organisation employ?

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4.4. List and describe the different departments in the organisation and their function.

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## Organisation chart

- 4.5. Collect or draw an organisation chart showing the:

- management structure
- departments and jobs
- number of people in each area.

Note: There is a chart on your PowerPoint template.

## 5. Employment & Careers

### Recruitment - hiring new people

- 5.1. Who in the organisation is responsible for recruiting new employees? What is their title and their job?

*Eg Human Resources Manager? General Manager?*

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- 5.2. How does the organisation find new staff?

*eg: hire directly – advertise in the local paper and online through MyCareer or use a recruitment agency, casual employees through a labour hire company or an to offer work experience students*

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5.3. List or draw the recruitment process

*e.g. Firstly, a recruitment company is employed to:*

- *advertise the job vacancy for the organisation,*
- *sort through the applications and then*
- *interview some of the applicants,*

*Then, the Human Resources manager:*

- *interviews the shortlisted applicants with two other managers; and then*
- *offers the job to a person.*

*The whole process takes about six weeks. The successful applicant is given a three month trial period before having a permanent contract of employment.*

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5.4. Does the organisation have any difficulty finding the staff they need? If so, what are the reasons?

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## Apprenticeships

- 5.6. How many apprenticeships/traineeships does the organisation have? Could the organisation employ more apprentices/trainees? How?

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- 5.7. Does the organisation employ school-based apprentices? (ie a senior student working one day a week as an apprentice for one year). If not, is it a possibility?

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## Career paths and the industry

- 5.8. Is there a career path within the organisation from these entry level positions?

Choose one job and draw a diagram of a possible career path/s through the organisation

- 5.9. What sort of skills or personal attributes does a person need to get a job and be successful in this industry?

*eg: good communication and interpersonal skills, self-motivated, team work, good hand skills.*

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- 5.10. Does the business provide training or support employees to doing training to progress in the organisation? Is it accredited training? List the training.

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### Benefits

- 5.11. What are the opportunities or benefits of working in that industry?

*eg; chance for overseas work, it develops skills that are valued by other industries, it offers secure, permanent employment*

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### Challenges

- 5.12. What are the challenges of working in the industry?

*eg shift work, long hours, need for constant training, must be motivated.*

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**Advice to young people?**

- 5.13 Does the employer have any advice to give young people about getting a job in the industry?

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**6. Managing its workforce****Employment Conditions**

- 6.1. Do employees work under an award or an individual workplace agreement?  
If so, which award?

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- 6.2. List the major employment conditions ie overtime, shift work, annual leave,

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- 6.3. Are employees part of a union? Which union? What role does the union play?

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## Occupational Health & Safety

- 6.4. Who is the person responsible for managing Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) in the organisation? What do they do?

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- 6.5. Are there specific Occupational Health & Safety issues/risks in this industry?

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- 6.6. What does the business do to reduce OH&S risk and injury?  
*eg in house training; OH&S committees*

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## Culture/Work environment

- 6.7. How would the employer describe the company culture?

*Eg; team oriented, family business, lean, outcomes driven, friendly and relaxed,*

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6.8. What factors influence the culture of the organisation?

*Eg. long standing workforce with very little turnover, multi-cultural workforce, high level of casual workers*

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6.9. Does the organisation have any strategies to develop or maintain a 'happy' workforce?

*eg. social functions, Friday afternoon pizza*

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## 7. The future (optional)

### Growth

7.1. Is the business growing? Or is it maintaining or downsizing? What is influencing that change?

*eg: Is its turnover (income from the sale of good/services) increasing?  
Is its workforce increasing or decreasing or stable?  
Overseas competition?*

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## Five years time?

7.2. How is the organisation likely to be different in five years time?

*eg: exporting,  
moving to a new location,  
expanding its current operations;  
new technology*

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## Additional Notes:

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**Remember the 'thank you' and to organise contact details for further questions and to send a draft of your profile of the organisation.**

## **stage 3: after the interview**

### **3.1 powerpoint presentation**

Follow up with the employer to fill in any information gaps. Telephone or email the employer, asking for additional information.

Develop your report into a Powerpoint presentation (using the template provided on the CD):

- with a slide for each subheading (minimum of 20 slides)
- use dot points for key information
- make full use of your digital photos

Feel free to change the colour scheme etc and add any additional information.

Make it your presentation.

Send the employer a draft copy of your work to check accuracy.

Present to your class or some other audience:

**Save your presentation to disk and give it to your teacher.**

### **3.2 write your letter of thanks to your employer**



## Our local world of work

### Student evaluation

#### Student

Name:

School:

Year level:

Course:

#### Business

Name:

Address:

Person Interviewed:

Position:

Date of interview:

1. What did you think of this investigation activity? *Please tick*

☐ Excellent   ☐ Very good   ☐ Good   ☐ OK   ☐ Not good   ☐ Bad

2. What did you like about this activity?

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3. What was difficult about the investigation?

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4. What did you learn? Was there anything that surprised you? (eg different jobs)

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5. Would you like to learn more about this industry?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. Were there any jobs that interested you?

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