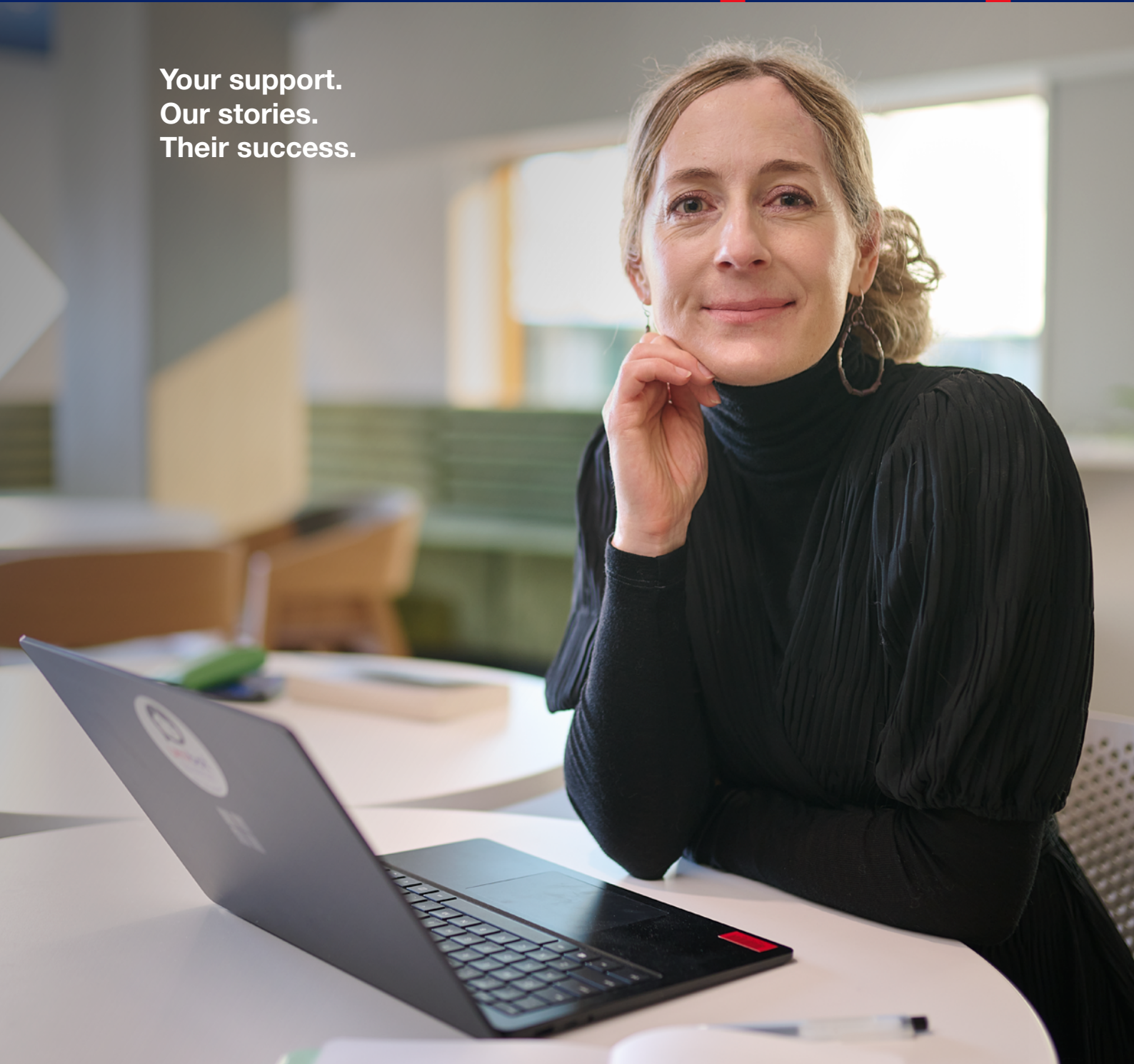


Donor Report 2022

Your support.
Our stories.
Their success.



Contents

- 03 Message from the Vice-Chancellor
- 04 A look at the numbers
- 05 2022 Donor Investment Report
- 06 RMIT research sheds light on hidden and harmful crime
- 08 The Sir John Storey portrait that needed a double take
- 10 Act of kindness gives asylum seekers academic hope

Our Mission

Aligning supporters' passions with RMIT expertise to realise the university's greatest ambitions.

Our Vision

To power extraordinary outcomes through philanthropy that advance RMIT's reputation as a global university of technology, design and enterprise.



Message from the Vice-Chancellor

It is with great pride that I reflect on the past year. Despite the many challenges we have faced during the COVID experience, we successfully graduated more than 22,000 promising young students from our campuses in Australia, Vietnam, and through partner institutions across the region.

I'm also delighted that we finalised our new strategy: *Knowledge with Action*. Building on RMIT's strengths and values, it brings together everything we have learned from the experience of recent years, with our ambitions for accessible lifelong education, impactful research and innovation, and an inclusive, sustainable future for the communities we serve.

In 2022, we also fine-tuned our approach to hybrid working for our staff and blended learning for our students; elevated our rankings across the board; lived our commitment to diversity and inclusion; and continued to create positive impact in all the communities where we operate.

Looking ahead, we will continue to be motivated by the knowledge that with every student we educate, we change lives – and not only individual lives, but the lives of generations to come. Likewise, with each impactful piece of translational research, we solve real world problems and make an impact on our world. However, much of this relies on the generosity and shared vision of our friends and supporters.

We remain acutely aware that everything we achieve and the difference we make, is the result of the community we engage in the process. So, we are profoundly grateful to our donor network for the vital role they play.

For example, in 2022, two successful appeals made a significant contribution to our scholarships, the Australian Film Institute Research Collection (AFIRC) and Ovarian Cancer Research. These efforts raise important funds for ground-breaking research and students in need.

These contributions remain crucial as we emerge from the public health impacts of the pandemic, while still navigating its ongoing financial impact on the higher education sector.



It will take several years to rebuild our revenue, particularly our international student fee revenues – the gap created by ongoing border closures cannot be rectified in a single cycle of improved enrolments.

I am deeply grateful for your support over the past year, and for your continued support through the challenges ahead. Thank you for everything you help our students and researchers to achieve, and for the impacts they bring to the world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Alec Cameron'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Alec' and last name 'Cameron' clearly distinguishable.

Professor Alec Cameron
Vice-Chancellor and President
RMIT University

A look at the numbers

Calendar Year 2022



\$5.76M

raised to
support the
University



\$3.9M

in philanthropic
funding disbursed
across the University



1,630

donations
received



761

philanthropic
scholarships
awarded



590

new donors



212

RMIT alumni
donors



38

donors making
a regular gift

RMIT Ranks

2023 QS World University Rankings



11th

in Australia



190th

globally

2022 QS Sustainability Rankings



5th

in Australia



53rd

globally

2023 Best Global Universities Ranking



209th

globally

2022 Donor Investment Report

While the economy enjoyed a period of post-COVID recovery in 2021, 2022 brought another set of challenges. In contrast to prior years where COVID-19 and its near-term economic effects were the key drivers of market movements, 2022 saw a marked shift in the economic outlook, and consequently, investor behaviour.

In early 2022, rising inflation, interest rate increases and international conflict contributed to rising commodity prices and uncertainty. As the year progressed, central bank intervention (through rate hikes) and uncertainty concerning the growth outlook were the key drivers of continually increasing commodity prices.

In summary, the RMIT Philanthropic Investment Portfolio incurred a 9.1 per cent loss for the full year to 31 December 2022, driven by unrealised market value movements. This is broadly consistent with the performance of benchmark funds, noting that these benchmarks include investments in assets that RMIT has taken a policy decision to exclude (such as energy stocks).

Sufficient funding was available for donor intended purposes despite income receipts (interest, dividends and other distributions received) of \$2.7 million being down from \$3.0 million in 2021.

In 2022, earnings of approximately 4.2 per cent (2021: 4.4 per cent) were applied to each endowed fund.

The total value of the portfolio at year end was \$93.1 million. The shape of the portfolio remained stable with almost three quarters being invested into growth assets, which maintain a reduced carbon footprint and lower exposure to companies with high ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) risk. RMIT remains committed to investing in products which align with our responsible investment principles.

Guidance from our investment advisors maintains a cautiously optimistic outlook for the coming 12 months.

Slowing inflation should allow for interest rates to peak this year, though the aggressive rate hikes we saw in 2022 may lead to a US recession. However, this is offset by poor market sentiment which means that much of the bad news is already factored into equity and bond prices.



RMIT research sheds light on hidden and harmful crime

It's a shapeshifting, increasingly prevalent crime that spans international borders, is hard to police and has often been dismissed as trivial or, worse, blamed on its victims.

A new international research project will look at the complex global phenomenon of image-based abuse – the non-consensual taking, creating or sharing of intimate images, including threats to share intimate images.

Led by Professor Nicola Henry, Australian Research Council Future Fellow in RMIT's Social and Global Studies Centre, and funded by a generous donation from Google, the research will focus on victim experiences, perpetration of image-based abuse and attitudes to the issue. In depth surveys across Australia, the United States, Mexico, Spain, the Netherlands, South Korea and several other countries will provide the insights to this escalating problem.

While her research has always concentrated on sexual violence, Professor Henry turned her focus to image-based abuse about ten years ago. She and her team found there was limited understanding of what constituted abuse and less than 50 per cent of people

Professor Nicola Henry, Australian Research Council Future Fellow in RMIT's Social and Global Studies Centre.



recognised it was a crime, despite the devastating effects it can have on victim-survivors. Her work has helped define the extent and effects of the crime and has informed changes in policy, prevention and policing.

“At first it was called ‘revenge porn’ and victims were often blamed for producing the images in the first place. There has been a shift from victim blaming, although of course it’s still a problem. Now all states and territories in Australia, except Tasmania, have offences relating to image-based abuse,” Professor Henry said.

The survey will build on Professor Henry’s previous Australian research, identifying attitudinal shifts and changes in the nature and prevalence of image-based abuse. Significant recent events have included high-profile celebrity cases of abuse, the #MeToo movement prompting a shift in ideas around consent, our increasing reliance on technology during the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise of AI and deepfake technology.

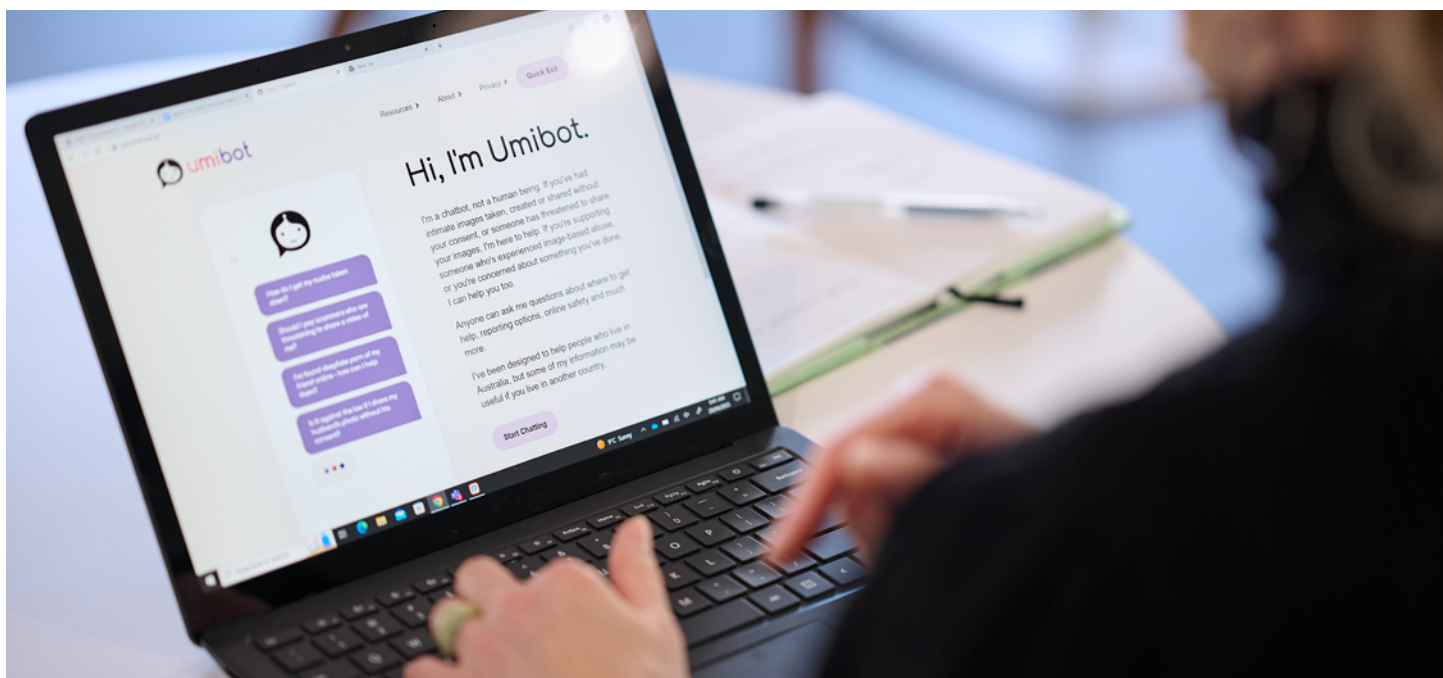
A member of the eSafety Commissioner’s eSafety Advisory Group, Professor Henry said piecemeal regulation in different countries had proved inadequate when dealing with global technology networks. Working with research partners Dr Rebecca Umbach, Senior User Experience Researcher at Google, and Assistant Professor Colleen Berryessa from Rutgers School of Criminal Justice, enabled the international scope of the survey.

“We are so grateful to Google for supporting this project. Image-based abuse is an international issue and we cannot address this problem unless we work together,” Professor Henry said.

She hopes the survey findings will contribute to changes in law, policies and practices around the world.

“Getting statistics is very powerful in terms of making change. The more research we perform, the more work we can do around education and prevention.”

Umibot, the chatbot technology Professor Henry and her team have developed as part of their fight against image-based abuse.



With the use of online surveys, this research will collect data on people’s attitudes towards image-based abuse, victim impacts and experiences, as well as perpetrators and their motivations – information which is often difficult to capture, but is critical to understanding the problem.

The Sir John Storey portrait that needed a double take

The bequest of an intriguing Australian artwork celebrates the man behind RMIT's longest-running scholarship program and deepens the family's continuing ties with the University. It also set off some serious sleuthing by RMIT's Art Collection team.

When grandchildren of Sir John Storey contacted RMIT to donate a portrait of their grandfather, Art Collections Coordinator Nick Devlin had to do a double take.

"I was pretty sure we had the real McCoy of Sir John stored away in our collection, but in identifying the newly donated portrait we had to do a lot of detective work," said Devlin.

It turns out the artwork he knew well was a copy of the original portrait, painted by eight-time Archibald Prize winner William Dargie and donated to RMIT by the family in 1956.

The original portrait of Sir John was painted in 1954, the same year Dargie painted his famous 'wattle painting' portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. Fearing the Queen's portrait would be lost or damaged in transit from England to Australia, Dargie painted a copy. Both paintings arrived unscathed and Dargie later painted a third for the Queen, at her request. The John Storey portrait is the only other instance of Dargie painting a copy.

The two portraits of Sir John Storey on display at an RMIT event. The recently donated original is on the right. Photographer: Matt Houston.



“It gives us a unique insight into Dargie’s techniques and provides an important teaching and learning opportunity for our students,” said Devlin.

The portrait was in the possession of Sir John’s daughter Judy Cope-Williams when she passed away late in 2022. It had been part of the glue that held the family together, said Judy’s son Mike Cope-Williams.

“It always occupied the most revered spot in the house and watched over us,” he remembered.

“We agreed RMIT was the place for it, it seemed right.”

The family has maintained strong links with RMIT since 1944, when Sir John, a pioneer of Australia’s automotive and aircraft industries, was vice president of RMIT’s precursor Melbourne Technical College. His eldest son John Storey Jnr was a mechanical engineering student at the time and was inaugural president of the Student Representative Council before his death from leukemia in 1947 aged just 22.

“Sir John had an absolute commitment to ensure technical education in Australia was first-rate and thought it was in the national interest that technical expertise should be improved from the ground up.”

Mike Cope-Williams

RMIT’s John Storey Junior Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1955 with a bequest from Sir John’s will in memory of his son. These scholarships have allowed more than 650 students to study overseas.

The Fund also offers a Scholarship in Mechanical Engineering to support outstanding students in that field.

“Sir John was, for so many reasons, very supportive of RMIT and we are very grateful for RMIT’s continued support of my grandfather’s legacy.”



Mike Cope-Williams stands in front of the portrait of his grandfather.
Photographer: Matt Houston.

Act of kindness gives asylum seekers academic hope

RMIT's Asylum Seeker Scholarship is giving people fleeing their homeland in fear and hardship a bright future, thanks to an incredibly generous \$5 million gift. Here, scholarship recipients Sara and Sophia share their stories.

Sara knew three words of English when she arrived in Melbourne 10 years ago – sorry, hi and hello. Her family had fled persecution in Baghdad, Iraq after Sara was born. They moved to Cyprus for four years before seeking asylum in Australia, finally arriving in Melbourne via camps on Christmas Island and in Adelaide.

"Melbourne was my first normal home in a very long time," Sara remembers.

The family settled in Melbourne's northern suburbs and Sara completed secondary school at Pascoe Vale Girls College. Though academic and ambitious, as the holder of a Temporary Protection Visa Sara is not eligible for HECS funding and she thought university was out of reach.

"Because of my personal experience, I wanted to be a social worker to help others, but I knew it would be very difficult for me to go to university."

Bachelor of Social Work student Sara, who received the Asylum Seeker Scholarship in 2022.





Bachelor of Arts student Sophia, who received the Asylum Seeker Scholarship in 2022.

Sara had already decided RMIT's Bachelor of Social Work (Hons) was the right path for her dream career in social work when she heard about RMIT's Asylum Seeker Scholarships.

Gaining the scholarship has enabled Sara to follow her chosen path.

"It feels great. Without the scholarship I would not be attending university at all."

Not only does RMIT waive tuition fees, it recognises the cost of living challenges to students and the scholarship also provides a \$15,000 living allowance to help students focus on their studies. Fellow recipient Sophia says fleeing Burma when she was a child remains "the major event in my life". It led her to Malaysia and Indonesia before Sophia and her mother sought asylum in Australia.

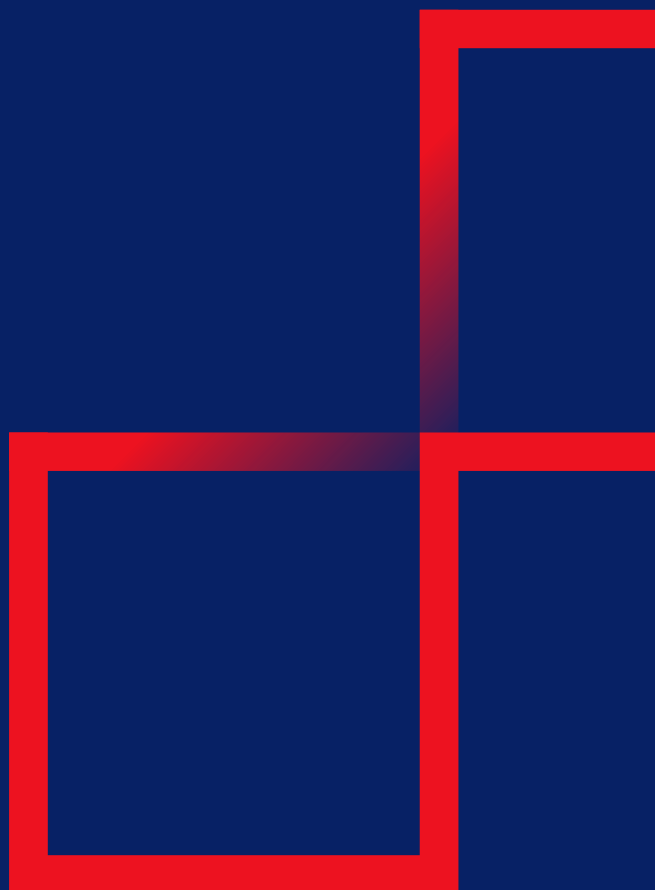
Sophia supported herself through her final year of high school working hard, with art in various forms always giving her comfort through uncertain times.

Despite knowing she would have to pay full fees for a tertiary education due to her visa status, Sophia attended open days at various universities including RMIT, where she learned of RMIT's Asylum Seeker Scholarships.

"I knew RMIT was where I wanted to be. When you are in a position like mine, it can feel like you don't really have options, so you just do whatever you can to make something happen."

Thanks to our most wonderful donor, a scholarship was awarded to Sophia and she is now studying RMIT's Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) majoring in video and sound.

"It's exactly what I wanted and the facilities are amazing, so I am very happy. I'm excited to be here working towards a degree and a good start in my adult life."



RMIT Philanthropy

GPO Box 2476
Melbourne VIC 3001 Australia
+61 3 9925 5220

giving@rmit.edu.au