

VIC GROUP HELPS BUILD SUPPORT FOR JOBSEEKERS

Susannah Peareth-Kinston and Patrick Splawa-Neyman know all about how challenging it can be to be a newly graduated information management professional. They say the process of job applications and interviews is not just draining but can also be quite demoralising. That's why the Victorian ALIA Students and New Graduates Group has been developing a support network that includes mentors and job hunting wiki resources.

It is beneficial for new graduates of any profession to have a good support network and to feel like they are not alone in their quest for the perfect job. We have both been involved in the Victorian ALIA Students and New Graduates Group for over a year and Patrick is now the National Secretary. Ultimately, we both wanted to be able to not only help organise events and various resources for our fellow new graduates, but also to be supportive mentors to our peers.

Realising that many new graduates were becoming increasingly frustrated with the whole job application process, we decided we should set up a career's mentorship program through the Group by buddying up volunteer mentors with a job seeker. The role of a mentor was simply to look over cover letters and resumes and give feedback on any key selection criteria. All parties were informed that the only aim was to improve the job application process, and that it would be a bonus if it helped secure an interview.

We started the program in February this year in Victoria and it has been positively received. While still in its infancy, we hope that the mentor program will continue to be a regular service offered by the Students and New Graduates Group.

The Group also provides a job help wiki. Many students are studying online or interstate and don't have access to face to face mentoring, so the job help wiki was created as a central

hub for resources designed to help students and new graduates prepare for the job hunting process. It is available to all at the New Grads News Online blog at alianewgrads.wordpress.com.

The wiki was launched in late July and currently consists of 12 pages on different aspects of job hunting, including recruitment agencies, interview tips, resume advice and job search strategies.

The wiki is a work in progress and will be updated on an ongoing basis as users provide feedback on which resources are most useful. We have also been busy with other like-minded schemes in our professional lives. Patrick continues to develop the job help wiki while Susannah has been successful in launching a computer class for job seekers applying for jobs online, designed particularly to help out the less technically savvy.

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