

Testimonial: Research stay at the Monash University Melbourne as part of the Bayreuth-Melbourne colloid/polymer network

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I conducted a 3-month research stay at Monash University as part of my doctorate at the University of Bayreuth. Within the scope of my doctorate, I am working on colloidal approaches for light management in organic solar cells in the group of Prof. Markus Retsch.

In Melbourne, I was hosted by Prof. Jacek Jasieniak and his group, which is working on Nanomaterials for Next-Generation Technologies. Based on the connecting interest for functional nanomaterials for light harvesting applications, the purpose of the research stay was to initiate a cooperation between the two groups.

The Jasieniak group gave me a warm welcome at Monash University and from the beginning on, I was fully integrated into the group activities. I was working in the newly built New Horizons building, which offers modern joint research facilities. The cooperative and supportive way of my coworkers made it easy for me to find my way in the laboratories.

The aim of my project was to design nanostructured substrates for the straightforward measurement of the exciton diffusion lengths in hybrid perovskite films by quenching experiments. Thereby, I was able to use the group's expertise in perovskite synthesis in combination with my knowledge in the preparation of nanostructured metal films. Furthermore, I participated in the Australian Colloid & Interface Symposium (ACIS2017) in Coffs Harbour.

The DAAD office and the staff of Monash University were very helpful with the arrangement of my research stay. For the short-time stay, an eVisitor visa was sufficient. My visit was financially supported by the DAAD with a fixed rate for the travel costs and a monthly allowance, which was enough to cope with my accommodation and daily expenses. I was living with a very attentive Indian couple in a shared house near the Clayton campus (approximately 1 hour from the CBD with public transport), which I found on Airbnb. They made me feel at home and I truly relished our evening hours or dinner parties together.

The city center of Melbourne and its suburbs offer diverse opportunities and I enjoyed events like the White Night or the St Kilda Festival. During the weekends, we explored the vicinity of Melbourne. My personal highlights were unforgettable trips to the Grampians National Park, Wilsons Promontory National Park or Phillip Island with its unique wildlife.