



## Curriculum Vitae of Melanie Holt

### Overview:

I am a Forensic Document Examiner with over 10 years' experience. I am now conducting a private practice from Penshurst NSW. I have previously been employed by Forensic Document Services Pty Ltd, the NSW Police Force and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in a similar capacity. I am a court-recognised expert who has provided evidence in over 200 criminal cases.

### Qualifications:

I hold a Bachelor of Applied Science (Honours) in Forensic Investigations. I completed my undergraduate degree from the Canberra Institute of Technology and was awarded the Institute Medal for my academic achievements upon graduation. I went on to complete my Honours at Canberra University. Whilst undertaking my degree and Honours, I directed my studies towards the field of document examination.

In late 2012, I completed all the requirements of the Diploma of Forensic Document Examination from the Canberra Institute of Technology. This course covered all aspects of forensic document examination including:

- Handwriting and signature comparisons;
- The use of the Electrostatic Detection Apparatus (ESDA), an instrument used to detect latent impressions in paper;
- The Video Spectral Comparator (VSC), an instrument used to examine ink and paper using varying light sources and filters;
- Ink, print and writing implement analysis;
- Examination of identity and security documents;
- Print processes and machine generated documents;
- The restoration and construction of documents; and
- Altered and manipulated documents.

In 2012, I received authorisation from the Forensic Services Group, NSW Police Force to provide expert evidence for the following examinations:

- Handwriting and signature comparisons;
- Detection of indentations including the use of the ESDA;
- Tear / physical comparisons;
- VSC comparison involving written and printed materials;
- Identification of print processes and machine generated documents; and
- Detection of obliterations and altered / manipulated documents.

My evidence has been accepted on numerous occasions in all levels of courts.

**Certifications:**

In 2014, I passed all the stringent requirements for certification by the American Board of Forensic Document Examiners, Inc (ABFDE) and have continuously maintained this certification. I was the first international examiner to be awarded the honour of diplomate. Currently only two Australian examiners hold this certification.

**Other Study/Experience:**

During 2007-2008, I was employed on a casual basis by Forensic Document Services Pty Ltd where I received training in many aspects of forensic document examination including ESDA, VSC, microscopes as well as handwriting and signature comparison.

Between June 2010 and February 2016, I was attached to the Document Examination Section of the Forensic Services Group, NSW Police Force. It was here that I received the bulk of my training through the completion of case work supporting major crime investigations.

During my time with the NSW Police Force I provided expert opinions in relation to forensic document matters in over 200 cases. I was also regularly requested to provide expert testimony in court. My evidence has been accepted in all levels of courts including Magistrates, District, Supreme and Coronial Inquests.

From 2016-2018, I was employed by Commonwealth Bank of Australia on a major remediation program they were undertaking in relation to financial advice. Here I managed a small specialised forensic team. My daily duties consisted of undertaking signature comparisons and determining the reliability of financial advice documents to be used in the assessment of financial advice.

Recently I have opened my private forensic document practice, Documents in Dispute.

I also hold a Bachelor of Commerce (majoring in Marketing and Legal Studies) from the University of Wollongong.

**Continuing Education:**

I continue my education by regularly attending document specific workshops and conferences.

Conferences attended include:

American Society of Questioned Document Examiners (ASQDE) – 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017

Australian & New Zealand Forensic Science Society – 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014

Australasian Society of Forensic Document Examiners Inc. – 2008 - 2016

**Associations:**

I am a current member of the NSW Branch of the Australian and New Zealand Forensic Science Society (ANZFSS), the Australasian Society of Forensic Document Examiners Inc (ASFDE Inc) and a corresponding member of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners (ASQDE). I regularly attend and present at industry conferences, lectures and meetings. I am also a member of the editorial review board for the Journal of American Society of Questioned Document Examiners (JASQDE).

**Publications:**

I have prepared the following publications:

- Sequencing ESDA Examinations with the recovery of Trace DNA from Questioned Documents – Honours Thesis May 2013
- Effect of DNA Tape Lifting on the ability of the ESDA to recover latent indentations in paper – Journal of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, June 2014

**Awards:**

- Best Poster – Document Examination, ANZFSS Symposium Sept 2014 (Adelaide)
- Institute Medal for Forensic Science – Canberra Institute of Technology, May 2009
- Numerous travel scholarships through ANZFSS to attend conferences and symposiums