



# TONIGHT AGAIN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MYSTERY  
ROMANCE

Tonight Again reimagines Melbourne's night for those who already know it. Through short, poetic clues, users uncover fragments of a love story hidden in ordinary places, turning familiar streets into quiet moments of rediscovery.

Field testing was conducted with five participants aged 22–30, all regular visitors of Melbourne's CBD at night. Sessions took place across five locations between 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., allowing observation of usability and atmosphere under real conditions.

Participants were drawn to the story's intimacy and the way it reshaped their sense of place, but noted that navigation and visibility in low-light settings need refinement. Shorter clues, clearer next step interface indication, uncomplicated and safety reassurance were identified as key priorities.

Recommended improvements include tightening clue length, enhancing low-light readability, and improving feedback when locations are reached. These adjustments preserve the poetic tone while strengthening usability and the narrative flow.



# FIELD TESTING

## INTRODUCTION

Field testing for Tonight Again aimed to evaluate how the prototype performs in its intended environment Melbourne's night-time CBD. The goal was to understand usability, immersion, and atmosphere when the narrative unfolds in real city spaces. Conducting research within the user's real context aligns with the principles of field studies (Farrell, 2016), enabling observation of genuine behaviours influenced by lighting, sound, and spatial flow.

## PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION

The tested prototype was an interactive, high-fidelity simulation created in Figma, following Zaki Warfel's (2009) definition of a prototype as a representation of the final system in an experiential form. It featured a working navigation interface, poetic clue screens, collectible system, and narrative text reveal. Each location unlocked through a text-based riddle, followed by a story fragment and digital keepsake. The interface was monochrome with orange accents to maintain legibility and atmosphere in low-light environments, echoing recommendations for contextual mobile design by Kjeldskov and Paay (2010).



P.1 solving the puzzle



P.2 navigating clue 4



St. Paul Cathedral image taken by P.2



P.2 reading the next clue



P.3 arriving at the first location



P.3 arriving at the third location

# FIELD TESTING

The following pages present photographic documentation and field observations collected during testing. These images show participants interacting with the Prototype across six locations.

## TESTING SETUP, TOOLS, AND RATIONALE

Testing followed a contextual inquiry approach combining direct observation, think-aloud feedback, and short post-session reflections (MacKenzie, 2013; Nielsen, 2012). Participants were encouraged to verbalise thoughts while solving clues and navigating, allowing insight into both cognitive load and emotional engagement. Notes, voice recordings, and photographs were collected using a secondary phone for later thematic analysis. Testing in the real urban context was preferred over lab-based usability testing to capture authentic user experience, as recommended by Berry (2017), who highlights the importance of narrative design responding to spatial and atmospheric cues.

## TESTING CONDITION

Sessions were conducted between 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. to replicate realistic night-time conditions (Curtis et al., 2019). Weather was mild and clear with moderate foot traffic typical of Melbourne evenings. Each test lasted approximately 30–40 minutes, including orientation, clue-solving, and debrief. Participants used their own phones for comfort, while the facilitator accompanied crossings and laneways for safety. Observations focused on navigation clarity, readability under low light, comfort levels, and emotional engagement with the environment.



P.1 solving the puzzle



P.1 taking a photo of location 3



P. 4,5 interacting with the app



P.7 arriving at first location



P.6 reading a poetic clue



P.6 arriving at the location - too late

# FIELD TESTING

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS AND LOCATIONS

A total of seven participants aged 22–30 took part in the field testing, all regular visitors of Melbourne's CBD at night. Recruitment used convenience sampling of local young adults and couples who matched the app's intended audience. Three participants completed all five locations individually, while two participants tested one location together as a couple, and another two participants tested a separate location as a pair. This mix enabled comparison between individual and shared interaction patterns.

Testing covered six key locations selected for cultural relevance, accessibility, evening and night atmosphere. The Paperback Bookshop, Supper Inn, Flinders Street Station, Flinders Street Photo Booth, St Paul's Cathedral, and PJ O'Brien's. Each site offered a distinct narrative mood from intimacy and discovery to reflection aligning with the story's emotional arc.



P.7 interacting with the app



P.4,5 arriving at the location 5



P.6 interacting with the app



P.1 reading second poetic clue



P.2 arriving at the first location



P.3 using the app at the location 6

# FIELD TESTING

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation criteria drew from Tullis and Albert's (2013) usability framework, measuring effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction. Each session examined:

How easily participants could interpret and follow poetic clues [effectiveness]

How naturally the interaction fit within their movement and attention span in public space [efficiency]

Their emotional engagement, sense of safety, and enjoyment of the story experience [satisfaction]

Each site captured distinct contextual factors: from the quiet atmosphere of The Paperback Bookshop to the busy, high-light conditions at Flinders Street Station. Demonstrating the prototype's performance across diverse evening and night environments.

# SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION

Across all sites, participants naturally alternated between walking, reading, and interacting with the prototype, demonstrating adaptability to varied light and sound conditions. Low-light readability and interface contrast proved adequate, though reflections occasionally reduced visibility. Participants often paused to reflect on the story when the setting felt quiet or enclosed, suggesting the environment played a key role in immersion.

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THE PAPERBACK BOOKSHOP  
{SINCE 1960S}

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FLINDERS STREET PHOTO BOOTH  
{SINCE 1961}

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FLINDERS STREET STATION

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ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

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SUPPER INN {SINCE 1977}

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PJ O'BRIEN'S {SINCE 1997}

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P7 interacting with the app

# QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

## EVALUATION METHOD

Usability was evaluated through a heuristic inspection combined with qualitative field observations. The analysis drew on Jakob Nielsen's (1994) ten usability heuristics and Tullis and Albert's (2013) effectiveness–efficiency–satisfaction framework to assess both interface clarity and user experience quality. Issues identified during testing were categorised by heuristic type and rated for severity, supported by direct participant quotes and contextual observations.

USABILITY ISSUE	PARTICIPANT QUOTES	SCREEN / COMPONENT	HEURISTIC VIOLATED	SEVERITY RATING
Text readability reduced under low-light or reflective surfaces.	P2: "I should have brought my glasses." P4: "Grey text is too faint when the streetlight hits it."	Poetic Clue / Story Text Screen	#4 Visibility of System Status #8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design	LOW
Minimal layout caused uncertainty about interaction (tap vs scroll).	P1: "I didn't realise I had to scroll, I thought I needed to tap." P3: "The layout looks clean but I wasn't sure what to do next."	Story screen	#2 Match Between System and Real World #6 Recognition Rather Than Recall	HIGH
Participants felt uneasy if navigating alone late at night	P6: "I'd rather do it with my friend." P5: "It's better if it reminds users to go with someone."	Overall Navigation Flow	#9 Help Users Recognise, Diagnose, and Recover from Errors (contextual)	MEDIUM
Users wanted shorter clues for smoother reading while walking.	P4: "The short clues are nicer, you can read them quickly." P2: "Long text make me stop walking."	Clue / Puzzle Screen	#8 Aesthetic and Minimalist Design	MEDIUM
Some physical locations were closed when visited, reducing immersion but not usability.	P3: "Its already closed, so I couldn't check it out."	Location Access (Environmental)	#5 Error Prevention #7 Flexibility and Efficiency of Use	MEDIUM

### Severity legend

- High: Blocks or seriously disrupts the core experience or task. Fix before the next test.
- Medium: Noticeably hinders usability or immersion but does not prevent task completion. Address in the next design iteration.
- Low: Minor or cosmetic issues with little impact on task completion. Schedule for later sprints.

## IMMERSION AND ATMOSPHERE

Participants responded most strongly to the story's tone and the feeling of rediscovering familiar spaces. Quiet, atmospheric locations such as The Paperback Bookshop created stronger engagement, while louder or busier settings like Flinders station made it harder to focus on the narrative. These responses highlight how mood, lighting, and crowd levels directly influenced immersion.

## READABILITY AND LOW-LIGHT CONDITIONS

While the dark interface matched the night-time theme, several users struggled to read small grey subtext under dim or reflective light. Participants preferred concise poetic clues that could be read quickly without breaking the story flow. This indicated the need for greater text contrast, slightly larger type, and reduced text density.

"It felt more personal when it was quiet; I could actually follow and focus the story."

"Maybe the type setting on the greeting page could be larger."



## NAVIGATION AND FEEDBACK

Navigation generally worked as intended, but several participants were unsure how to progress on certain screens due to the minimal layout. On the clue and story pages, the interface required users to scroll to continue, but this wasn't immediately obvious. Some assumed they needed to tap to proceed instead. This uncertainty briefly interrupted the story flow and reduced confidence in navigation. Participants suggested adding a small indicator or motion cue to clarify the next step without breaking the app's clean aesthetic.

## SAFETY AND COMFORT

Even though all test sites were central and well-lit, participants expressed hesitance about exploring alone late at night. Most preferred doing the experience with a friend or partner, especially when moving between locations. This finding reinforces the need to communicate safety through tone, timing, and visual cues. Perhaps by recommending ideal hours or providing "daylight mode" testing options.

"I wasn't sure if I was supposed to tap or scroll."

"I'd rather do this in pairs, it feels safer and more fun walking around solving clues together."



## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL VALUE

Several participants viewed Tonight Again as a "shared date-night" activity rather than a solo exploration. The digital collectibles, such as the photo strip and poetic notes, were described as meaningful takeaways. This shows potential to extend the experience through memory-sharing or revisiting locations later—transforming the story into something participants could emotionally connect with.

"It felt like something we shared, not just a game."

## UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

Participants were more emotionally moved by quiet, reflective sites than expected, even if they weren't religious or sentimental. Many commented they would return to these places afterward, associating them with the story. This revealed an unplanned but positive outcome. The narrative experience encouraged real emotional and spatial connection beyond gameplay.

## SUMMARY

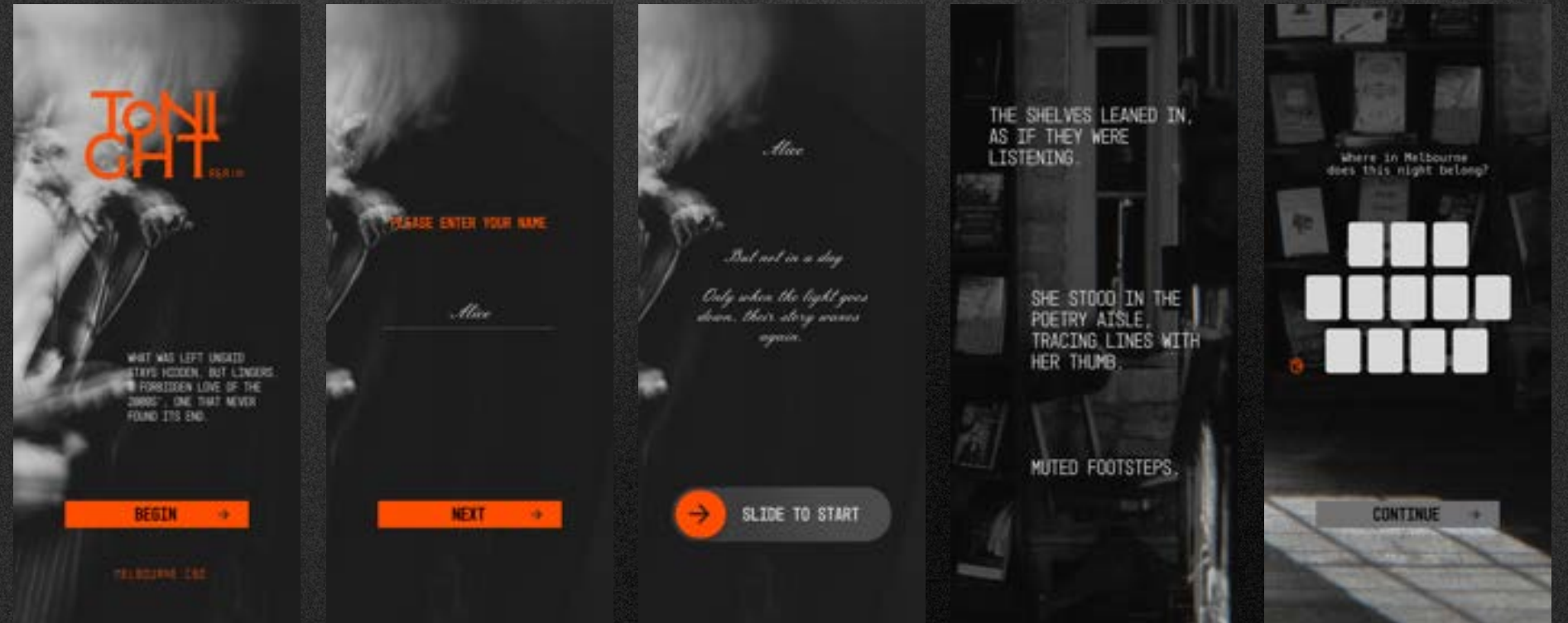
Field testing demonstrated that Tonight Again successfully engaged users through its poetic narrative and sense of place but revealed clear areas for refinement: **text clarity, feedback visibility, and safety communication**. The findings confirm that user experience in locative storytelling is inseparable from environment and atmosphere, and that emotional immersion relies on both narrative design and usability balance.



KEY

SCREEN

# DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFINEMENTS



This section presents the key prototype screens used during field testing and outlines proposed refinements based on user feedback and observational analysis. The recommendations aim to strengthen clarity, usability, and the overall narrative flow while preserving the poetic tone aesthetic of Tonight Again.





## GREETING PAGE

### FEEDBACK

Hand written text was a bit hard to read.

### REFINEMENT

Increase contrast and improve size and readability



## CLUE / STORY PAGE

### FEEDBACK

Users were unsure whether to tap or scroll on minimal layout.

Long text slowed the experience during walking.

### REFINEMENT

Add subtle scroll indicator or fade cue to guide progression without breaking the minimalist tone.

Break longer story parts into smaller, progressive reveals for smoother pacing.



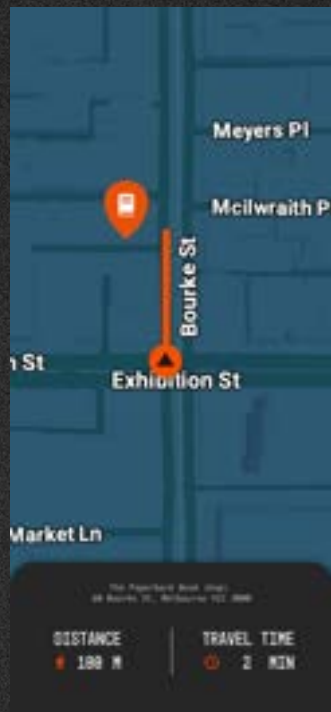
## HINT BUTTON

### FEEDBACK

Some participants overlooked the hint button.

### REFINEMENT

Adjust placement and introduce a slight glow animation when active.



## NAVIGATION FLOW

### FEEDBACK

One participant arrived after a location had closed.

### REFINEMENT

Add an optional time prompt like "Best experienced before 10 p.m." or small icons showing open/closed hours to maintain flow and realism.

# SUMMARY

These refinements aim to improve clarity and accessibility without losing the poetic tone of Tonight Again. Each recommendation is grounded in field testing evidence and prioritised to enhance readability, navigation confidence, and safety awareness while preserving the emotional intimacy of the night-time narrative.

# APPENDIX

## Paperback Books

P1: Oh, wow I like the background image, it suits the mood.

P1: [reads] "What was left unsaid..." okay, that's nice. But I didn't realise there was more below, I thought I had to tap.

P1: I didn't know I should scroll I tapped the screen a few times before I figured it out haha.

F: Good to know. How is the text readability in here?

P1: It's okay, but the grey text is a bit faint with the light hitting my screen like this. If I had my glasses it'd be better.

P1: I like short lines. Long paragraphs would make me stop walking.

F: Thanks, that's helpful.

P6: Don't tell me it's closed.. hahaha no way. We forgot to check the operating time.

## Flinders Station

P2: It's quite noisy here — I can't really hear audio if you had any.

P2: The greeting text should be bigger ewith this hand written style

P3 Wow I love the tone and the transition its so smooth and so cool, Your color palette is unique and outstanding.

P2: I almost didn't see the hint button at the bottom left.

P2: [reads] "Muted footsteps" that's a nice line, it fits the place.

P4: The map is helpful, but the station's lights make my screen glare, my screen so dark.

P4: I like the progress marker though — the "I have arrived" button is clear.

P4: One thing: on the clue page I wasn't sure whether to swipe or tap. I tried tapping first and nothing happened then I realize later that swipe up is more make sense.

## St paul Cathedral

P5: It's quiet here really enhances the reading. I stopped and read the whole clue.

P5: The longer story bits were nice but I think they should be split into smaller segments easy when you're walking? Just my personal though.

## PJ OBrien

P6: Wow this bar is busy and the mood is so vintage and country. I keep getting distracted. Not normally visit this kind of bar.

P4: I prefer doing this with friends, felt safer moving between locations and could be more fun.

P7: The iris live music is really new to me. So nice.

## Facilitator notes

- Several participants initially tapped instead of scrolling on clue pages. Consider adding a subtle scroll indicator.
- Low contrast grey text reported as hard to read under mixed lighting; increase contrast and/or font size.
- Participants valued quiet locations for immersion; busy places reduced focus.
- Suggest add "recommended visiting times" or availability icon for venues.

## Nielsen's 10 Usability Heuristics (Reference Guide)

1. Visibility of system status
2. Match between system and the real world
3. User control and freedom
4. Consistency and standards
5. Error prevention
6. Recognition rather than recall
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design
9. Help users recognise, diagnose, and recover from errors
10. Help and documentation

## LIMITATIONS

This field study used a small convenience sample (seven participants aged 22-25) and was conducted during limited evening time windows, which constrains generalisability. Observations were gathered in situ under varying environmental conditions (lighting, crowd noise and venue opening hours), which both strengthen ecological validity and introduce situational variability that may influence behaviour. The prototype tested was a high-fidelity Figma simulation rather than a fully native app; therefore some interaction behaviours (e.g., haptic feedback, GPS latency) may differ in a production build. Where illustrative transcripts were used for layout purposes, these are clearly labelled as mock examples; all authentic recordings and full transcriptions that exist are archived and available on request. Future testing should expand sample size, include more diverse time slots and demographic groups, and test an interactive build to validate these refinements.

# APPENDIX

## Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Age	Time of Testing	Session type
P1	Female	23	Evening	Individual
P2	Female	22	Evening	Individual
P3	Female	22	Evening	Individual
P4	Female	29	After 8 pm	Pair Session
P5	Female	29	After 8 pm	Pair Session
P6	Male	27	After 9 pm	Pair Session
P7	Male	25	After 9 pm	Pair Session

## Field Observation Notes

Location	User behavior	Environmental Condition
The Paperback Bookshop	User paused longer, quiet atmosphere improved immersion.	Warm indoor lighting.
Supper Inn	Distracted by noise, preferred short text.	Dim, crowded.
Flinders Street Station	Navigation smooth but glare on screen.	Bright artificial light.
St Paul's Cathedral	Reported strong emotional tone.	Reflective mood
PJ O'Brien's	Vintage, Nostalgic	Loud, warm lighting.

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