

Hon Doc address – Prof David G. Lloyd – 4th March 2026

Thank you, Chancellor – and thank you to the University of South Australia for affording me this incredible honour.

Graduands, Colleagues, Friends, Family, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me begin by saying how utterly surreal this experience is for me right now.

I've officiated at quite literally hundreds of graduation ceremonies, celebrating the passage of tens of thousands of graduates from 2013 to now – and delivered countless speeches and citations during that time.

In fact, I've had a hand in the award of nearly 70 honorary doctorates alone during my time as Vice Chancellor of UniSA – so you'd imagine I would have gleaned quite a bit from all of those on how to structure and deliver an occasional address for an event such as this. Laden with sage advice for life. And how to keep it – ideally - brief and interesting.

Boy oh boy - I do wish I'd been paying more attention.

Perhaps there's a lesson in that.

I'm reminded that the great professor, Yoda, once lamented the lack of attention paid by his pupil, Luke Skywalker - saying '**All his life has he looked away to the future, to the horizon. Never his mind on where he was! What he was doing**'. I know *exactly* what he meant.

In a world of rampant ready and easy digital distraction, it's very easy to forget to be present. To be mindful of the now – and of what is going on around us.

Which is a shame – not only because there is so much going on around us which we might find interesting if we were to spend time noticing it, but also because one minute, you're a graduate, wearing the batman cape, doing the batman walk across the red carpet in new shoes and trying to see yourself on the big screen, and the next, you find yourself in the audience applauding *your* adult children as they graduate – and wondering where that time has gone and what has happened in between.

That's all ahead of you. For now though – my advice is to just remember to *pay attention* on the way through. It can't be that hard.

You're all here because you're smart.

And fortunate. Many of you will have probably made your own luck along the way by being tenacious and focused. Today you're joining a global minority, part of the less than 7% of the world's adult population educated to degree level. How amazing is that.

You have a unique set of skills – not in the Liam Neeson Taken kind of way – but a set of skills that differentiates you from 93% of everyone else on the global stage.

Some of you, like me, will be the first member of your immediate family to attain a university qualification – you likely now won't be the last.

Education is a passport to career and to opportunity.

And represents an opportunity in and of itself – to use what you have learned about learning to interrogate the information you receive daily through those countless channels of distraction – and to cut through that noise to educate others around you.

To respectfully challenge ignorance and bias, to appropriately counter misrepresentation, bigotry and fake news.

To use your capacity to discern what is true from what is not – and to lend *your* voice in the defence of truth and to those less well able to use theirs.

Your education, your status as highly educated people in this world - gives you an edge – and an obligation – to use it not only for the betterment of yourself – but for those around you.

To do this, again I advise that you pay attention, and stay current.

Stay connected to current affairs and debate, to those latest breakthroughs and new research and discoveries and ways of working that will always emerge in your chosen disciplines and fields of study – pay attention to follow those new and emerging trends so that you stay ahead of the curve, ready to apply your capacity to learn and adapt – for good.

And as you do these things – despite your evidenced great advantage of education and as educated people – do also learn to *stay humble* – as that other renowned professor Elvis Presley once noted - **if you let your head get too big, it'll break your neck.**

Go well among the wider world, bring joy with you wherever you travel, treat others with kindness, dignity and respect – and always remember to give them your full attention as you do in those moments that matter – and who knows what dividends you shall reap and what impact you will have.

You start on one path and finish on another. A chemistry degree in Ireland can lead to the creation of a new University in Australia. You couldn't make it up. But you can roll with it as it unfolds and shape it and make it your own. You've got the education, the skills and the imagination – just apply some focus and see what happens.

Be nice to people on the way. It doesn't cost you anything and it can make all the difference to them and to the world around you. We could do with more nice people. Be one of those if you can. Do or do not – there is no try.

Good luck to you all, and congratulations again. Thank you.