

Firstly I would just like to thank UNISA for inviting me to give the formal address today, I feel extremely honoured to be a part of this special occasion. I would like to welcome the graduates here and congratulate you on all your achievements. I know you have been waiting for this day since embarking on your degree those years ago and must feel incredibly proud and relieved to be graduating with success. Today is also significant for your loved ones and friends that are here to celebrate with you this afternoon, as they have travelled through this experience with you, supporting you at every stage and probably endured the stress of every deadline and exam as well. So I also welcome and congratulate the support parties that are present. Although it may feel like things are coming to an end, this is really only the beginning and now is the opportunity to make your mark on the world.

I was fortunate enough to study at the Whyalla Campus myself when I finished High School back in 2006. I graduated with a Bachelor Degree of Business and Enterprise in 2010. And that is where my journey began. I am Whyalla born. Growing up in a regional area I often felt like my roads to success were limited and I would only ever be successful if I moved to a capital city. I also never considered the steelmaking industry as a career path, it was a masculine environment. I hope, however, that my story demonstrates that you can flourish and establish a career no matter what your postcode may be and studying locally can present many opportunities and benefits. Through studying at the local campus I was offered a 6 month Administration Cadetship with Harsco Metals and Minerals out at the OneSteel Site here in Whyalla. This was originally to cover maternity leave. I am now the first and only female Operations Manager and have been with the company for 8 years. Through hard work, persistence and using the skills and knowledge I gained at University I worked my way from Administration, into the Management team and then changed from an office role into the Operational side of the business. Throwing my office suit and heels aside to put on the hi-vis gear and steel cap boots for a change. It has been a real challenge taking on this role, managing a team of approximately 100 employees with only 1 female operator when I first began. In this role I have managed to increase the amount of women onsite but not just because they were female but because they were capable of fulfilling the role. This is not where I ever envisioned I'd be when I was growing up but I'm a big believer in everything happens for a reason & I now realise this was my purpose.

As a result of the work I achieved during my time at Harsco, I was nominated and awarded the Whyalla Business Woman of the Year for 2015 which also led to being named the Telstra South Australian Young Business Woman of the Year for 2015. These awards are a testament to all the strong, successful women working in industry. We are changing the future for young women and giving them more possibilities for success and better opportunities to pursue their dreams and achieve them. I am now lucky enough to be leading a culture change where I can happily go to work in what is considered a man's world and be a woman in it. It makes me feel incredibly proud to work for a company and within a team that not only values diversity and supports females in what's considered an "untraditional" industry but also recognises and celebrates their contribution to business successes.

I hope to use these awards to give back to Whyalla through being a role model not only for other young women but men as well because retaining people in Whyalla is imperative to the sustainability and viability of the community.

I advise all graduates embarking on their career to be bold and courageous – follow your true aspirations, no matter how unattainable or impossible they may seem. The possibilities are endless and studying at UniSA through regional campuses such as Whyalla, presents many opportunities for the future so be open and receptive. Nothing worth having comes easy, and to be successful the

right attitude is equally as important as ability. So with hard work and the right outlook on life - the world is your oyster. I wish you all the very best for the future.