

Thank you, Pro-Chancellor. It is an honour to be here. When I was asked to give this Occasional Address, I had no idea what I might say that would be inspiring and uplifting and worthy of your special celebration. So, I thought I'd have a look at what others have said on such occasions. I came across an address given by Tim Minchin in 2013, at the University of Western Australia, where he was awarded an honorary doctorate. It was brilliantly funny, inspiring and uplifting – just what you'd want for such an occasion. So, if you start to drift off during my speech, can I suggest you google 'Tim Minchin UWA address' and listen to that one instead....!

Here we go! Today is a very special day for you all. You are here because you have worked hard, sacrificed and committed to a goal. And so too, in many instances have the families and friends who have supported you. Some of you may already be working, some may be about to enter the workforce and some of you will still be looking, or maybe even undertaking further study. Whatever your path, today is a very important milestone on your journey. Today is the celebration of that hard work, and it is a day that you will remember for many years to come, even if you don't remember this address.

Achieving your study goals and being awarded your qualification here today has given you choices, options for your future, possibilities that

you would not otherwise have, without the skills you have learned and the knowledge you have gained. In regional Australia, that matters a great deal, because you are part of a much smaller cohort of people with higher education qualifications compared to the urban areas of Australia.

And so, I acknowledge the University of South Australia, for their commitment and support to higher education in regional South Australia.

As you contemplate your futures, and take the next steps on your journey I thought I'd share some thoughts about what I've found to be useful - in a list of words: The first of these words is 'Gently'. Go gently, and don't be too hard on yourself, and remember to set boundaries. Too often at work we forget this, especially when we are new to the workforce.

Next is 'Relationships'. Relationships matter a great deal in the world of work, and they need to be developed and nurtured. You are going to spend a lot of time in the workplace, so make sure you invest generously in the relationships you have with others.

Third on my list is 'Achievement.' We have this tendency in Australia to knock down those who are successful. Be proud of your achievements, and always acknowledge the achievements of others. Stars shine brightest when they are reflecting the light of others as well as their own.

'Diversity' is on my list. The labour force changes we have experienced in the first 20-odd years of this century are almost unprecedented. We are doing jobs now that weren't even dreamed of last century. In my experience, taking every opportunity to try something new builds well rounded employees. And if you're working in regional communities, that is especially important.

Next, in the workplace, and everywhere else, really, think 'us' not 'other.' Trust me on this one. Take time to understand your prejudices and biases, especially if you think you don't have any. You do. We all do. It is important to understand how these affect our thinking and doing, especially in service industries where we are dealing with people every day.

'Accountability' is another important attribute that has made it on to my list. Being accountable isn't just about owning up when you muck up. Being accountable, means we are taking responsibility for our work. And when we do that, we are also recognising that our work matters. We are giving it value by doing it well.

'Talent' – is great and practice is what will build it. I don't know any endeavour where practice doesn't help. Exercise your skills. Test them. Be a life-long learner.

And now – the last word on my list? 'Eco' as opposed to 'ego.' Treat your workplace as an eco-system, where everyone has a contribution

to make and those contributions are important to the healthy functioning of the eco-system.

So, for all those of you who haven't been sitting there googling Tim Minchin, you may have noticed a pattern in the words I've shared. If you take the first letter of each: Gently, Relationships, Achievement, Diversity, Us, Accountability, Talent and Eco you'll see that they spell 'graduate.' And hopefully, they'll be helpful for you in making the transition from graduate to valued employee.

Finally, as Bill Murray once said, 'Whatever you do, always give 100%....unless you happen to be donating blood!'

Congratulations to you all.