

Chancellor, vice chancellor, distinguished guests, fellow graduates, university staff and guests, on behalf of the graduates receiving their awards today I wish to say welcome and thank you for celebrating this special day with us. I am honoured to be nominated to speak to on behalf of all the graduates here today. To be honest it took a while for the right words to come to me. How could I come up with a speech that represented such diversity and wide spread experiences? We have come from all walks of life to be here, from different disciplines, those who studied at different locations and via different delivery modes to study under the banner of Federation Australia. As a graduate registered Nurse and Midwife I feel a huge sense of pride and achievement and today is our day to celebrate our success, hard work and dedication in setting the foundations of our future.

I was really nervous to come up here and speak in front of so many people, and that got me thinking about how many times I had felt like that throughout my studies. I remember how nervous I was on my first day and submitting my first assignment. How daunting it was to walk into my first lab and not know anyone and how overwhelming the information content was in my first lecture. I remember the fear walking into each and every one of my placements, thinking 'what if they don't like me' or 'what if I am not good enough or know the right skills'. Reflecting on those emotions now in my grad year, made me realise how much federation university prepared me. Going beyond knowledge and skills I was taught to face my fears with confidence, to stick up for what I am passionate about, to establish myself as a professional and to become a competent member of the healthcare industry.

The path at times has not been easy and I can guarantee that all of us at times have wanted to give up. The sleepless nights, endless assignments, exams, navigating placements, trying to juggle work, family, extra study and a social life all while trying to resemble a functioning human being are all good excuses to give up. Some of us did, but those of us here today have stuck through it and we can raise our heads high knowing that we overcame the challenges and we reached the end.

Our journey has allowed us to develop friendships like no other, to grow into resilient, creative and empowering professionals. For this we say thank you to the lecturers and staff who invest their knowledge into the next generation of graduates. To our partners, family and friends, we thank you for your never ending support. For pushing us on when we wanted to give up, for listening to us when we needed to vent but most importantly for being our anchor.

Finally I end with a quote from Dr Suess "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know that you know. You are the guy who'll decide where to go."