

Deputy Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, University staff, parents, friends and guests. On behalf of the graduates receiving their awards today, I would like to say welcome and thank you for being present today to celebrate with us. To my fellow graduates, I would like to say congratulations, we made it.

A close friend of mine often referred during my studies to the 'university bubble' I existed in. I picture this bubble, where things happening on the inside are different to those on the outside. In the bubble, we spend time thinking about why pedagogy is so important for keeping 16 year old's in the classroom, how many pages are involved in a 6,000 word essay, and whether it is selfish to take 7 hamburgers from the free BBQ.

Regardless of where we completed our studies; on FedUni's various campuses around Australia or Online, or with our partner providers in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, despite the varied challenges we faced; academic, social, personal and the universal issue of getting out of bed for 8:30 lectures, and regardless of the diversity of programs we have studied within the Schools of Education and Arts, our bubble has been a shared one. We have sat in exam halls with each other, toiled through assignments together and braved numerous Ballarat winters side by side. Our end goal has always been the same, and we have reached it here today.

We owe endless appreciation to those who have helped keep our bubble intact through the course of our studies; to parents, partners, children, family and friends who have supported, encouraged and cajoled, we say thank you. To our lecturers, tutors and to the staff within the incredible support services offered within the University, you have our gratitude for your hard work and dedication.

For the circumstances that threatened the integrity of our bubble, we are also grateful. We will take the lessons we have learned and resilience we have built forward with us, knowing that regardless of what we faced on the way, we have all arrived at this place of success today.

As comforting as our bubble has been, and despite the joy it has been to share it with all of you, today marks the unequivocal bursting of that bubble. And my friends, I have never been so proud to see a bubble burst.

To everyone graduating today, congratulations and thank you.