

Occasional Address - Deborah Cheetham

Thank you...

Acknowledgement...

Today, as you receive recognition for the hard work, for the discipline and the rigour that you have applied to yourself during your time here at the University of South Australia, you enter into a relationship with this space. You are the first to enter Pridham Hall as students and to exit as graduates. But the tradition of acquiring knowledge and graduating through a rite of passage not unlike this has taken place on this land for more than 2000 generations. On a day just like this - perhaps not quite as warm for this time of year - but a day such as this, only 200 years ago, you would have found the Kurna people here, passing on the vast and sophisticated knowledge of their law, their customs, their culture and their way of life, right on this spot. So I don't think that there is coincidence at all that the pride of the University of South Australia, Pridham Hall is built on this location and that it came about in part by an act of generous philanthropy.

In listening to Andrew Pridham speak about why he wanted to make his contribution through the Pridham Foundation, it wasn't so much about a building, although it is so architecturally beautiful; it wasn't so much about a legacy, although it is certainly that; it was about the people who would come here, the people who would benefit from the space, the pride that it would instil and it is you who are the first to enter into that relationship. No-one can take that experience from you. You were here on the very first day and we share that together.

For me, I have participated in the best way I know how: through music. For Aboriginal Australians, music is our traditional way of knowing the world and giving meaning to everything in it. Our songlines are a map to our identity, our knowledge

systems and to our deep sense of belonging. The same sense of belonging that I would wish for all Australians, starting with you here, today.

As you venture through those doors at the end of this ceremony there is an Australia and a world, but particularly an Australia, that is waiting for you to make your mark, to contribute to the ongoing process of this countries slow but inevitable progress towards maturity towards graduation day. As an optimist, I tend to think that Australia will be ready to Graduate in my lifetime. You know only too well the effort and determination it has taken to make the journey from not-knowing to knowing. Know one knows better than you how committed you have to be to earn the right to add those letters after your name. Although Australia is yet to receive its letters, when it does we will probably need a new song perhaps along the lines of the words penned by Australian music legend Judith Durham

*Australians let us stand as one, upon this sacred land
A new day dawns, we're moving on to trust and understand.
Combine our ancient history and cultures everywhere,
To bond together for all time, advance Australia fair.
With joyful hearts then let us sing, advance Australia fair.*

...

*Australians let us all be one, with peace and harmony.
Our precious water, soil and sun, grant life for you and me.
Our land abounds in nature's gifts to love, respect and share,
And honouring the Dreaming, advance Australia fair.
With joyful hearts then let us sing, advance Australia fair.*

...

*And when this special land of ours is in our children's care,
From shore to shore forever more, advance Australia fair.
With joyful hearts then let us sing, advance . . Australia . . fair.*

Today, we celebrate the continuation of passing on of knowledge on this land, the land of the Kurna people and I thank you for inviting me to be part of that celebration with you. I wish you every success in the future. Congratulations.