• Good evening

• Although my voice may sound familiar to you, I am an adopted Australian,

• chair of the Australian Technology Network of universities and

• Vice Chancellor and President of one of them – the University of South Australia.

• My name is David Lloyd. I sound familiar because I came from this institution.

• I did my undergraduate and postgraduate education here at Dublin City University, and eventually was Bursar and Director of Strategic Innovation at Trinity College Dublin
• I then became Dean and Vice President of Research at Trinity and at the same time chaired the Irish Research Council.

• Then I got the call that upended my life and that of my family.

• Literally.

• I was offered the role of Vice Chancellor of the University of South Australia

• and we ended up on the other side of the world.

• Without going into too much detail, suffice to say that I left Dublin in January when it was 4.5 degrees

• and somewhere over the Equator, someone moved the decimal point
• I landed in Adelaide in a microwave. It was 45 degrees, one of the hottest days ever recorded.

• Note I said ‘one of’; there were many more to come that summer.

• But what struck me about Adelaide, and about the University of South Australia – familiarly known as UniSA - in January 2013 was the energy.

• It was palpable. I had arrived in the midst of the very famous Tour Down Under cycling race of which UniSA is a major supporter,

• and people were tearing around at dizzying speeds, a lot of them wearing lycra admittedly so that gave the game away, but still
• the focus and the passion and the belief shown by people at UniSA was energising

• and it didn’t take my small family long to realise that, upside down as it was, Adelaide was a great place to land.

• The opportunities available in this new young place were amazing.

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• Now, I have to add here that Australia has a schizophrenic attitude towards age.

• It is a land inhabited for a reported 60,000 years by the Aboriginal people
• but it is a young nation, measuring its years from the time Captain James Cook pulled ashore at Inscription Point at Botany Bay in 1770.

• So it is a nation both 60,000 and 245 years old.

• UniSA is like that. Next year we head into our 25th year as a university but our antecedent institutions, those great schools of art and mining and industry that made us stretch back to the mid 19th century.

• Our fellow members of the ATN –
  
  o Curtin University;
  o the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology;
  o the University of Technology Sydney; and
  o Queensland University of Technology

• have all had similar growth patterns,
• all being given university status within five or six years of each other in the late 1980s, early 1990s because of government reforms of the education sector.

• Back then the so-called Dawkins reforms, named after the then Federal Minister for Education, John Dawkins, were aimed at improving the "efficiency" and "international competitiveness" of Australian universities.

• The reforms brought about the conversion of all Colleges of Advanced Education and Institutes of Technology into universities.

• As you can imagine, it upset a lot of the longer-established universities who complained that education was being ‘dumbed down’.

• They criticised the attempt to 'commercialise' university education, and expose research to 'subjective' market pressures.
• The brand new universities that came out of the reforms had already built close connections with industry,

• had long histories of working in partnerships with them and

• were able to hit the ground running working on practical results through focused research.

• For years they had worked at practising what they teach.

• They were lean institutions, nimble, agile, able to change quickly and adapt to changing circumstance.

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• Now, the average age of universities in the world’s top 100 is 180 years;
• the average age of the top seven Australian institutions is 101.

• But, to be fair to them, those elderly institutions were built for a different purpose.

• They were built to offer generalised degrees, to broaden the outlook of those who could afford to know the intricacies of theology, law, medicine and arts.

• They stand like intellectual islands, isolated and pure and weathered by the tides of history.

• We haven’t got time for that.

• The universities of the Australian Technology Network don’t want to be what Australians call sandstone universities and Americans call Ivy League.
• And that’s our competitive advantage.

• We offer specialised professional degrees and give our students experience in the professions they’re entering

• and we contribute to the national social and economic wealth by building strategic partnerships and undertaking solution-based research which is relevant to the expectations of industry and the community.

• Just to give you a snapshot of how successful the ATN universities have become in their short histories:
  o there is an ATN university in each Australian mainland capital city;
  o there are almost 220,000 students enrolled, which is about 20 per cent of the Australian higher education load;
  o we have about 28 per cent of all Engineering students;
• 41 per cent in architecture and building;

• there are around 50,000 international students studying through the ATN universities, which is about 27 per cent of Australia’s overseas university students;

• we employ over 18,000 people;

• our total research income is $AU326.1 million – two-thirds from applied research partnerships with industry and government;

• in fact, in the last five years, over 70 per cent of ATN research income has come from industry.

• 84 per cent of our research within the ATN is at world class or above, according to Excellence in Research for Australia, a group which evaluates the quality of the research undertaken in Australian universities against national and international benchmarks.

• That figure was an improvement of 34 per cent from our earlier ranking in 2010.
• The ATN is involved in world leading research networks in
  o Sports Science,
  o Communication and Media Studies,
  o Physical Chemistry,
  o Architecture,
  o Materials Engineering,
  o Cultural Studies,
  o Nursing,
  o Mechanical Engineering, and
  o Applied Economics

• And, the ATN universities are essential participants in 20 out of 35 Cooperative Research centres active in 2014/2015.

• all of the ATN universities are ranked in the QS Top 50 under 50 ranking of the world’s top 50 universities established in the past 50 years;
• and, as you have heard today, all five ATN universities are in the Times Higher Education *Top 100 under 50*.

• All-in-all, Australia has 16 universities in that Top 100 list – more than the UK has.

• All the ATN universities have grown fast in our 25/26 years

• And we have been able to grow so quickly because we’re young and agile.

• And when we want to make changes, we don’t have to wade through decades or even centuries of past practice

• nor counter attitudes that are ingrained, nor obey reputational imperatives.

• The title of my discussion this evening is: *Ripping Up Strategic Planning – A Fresh Approach for a Fresh University.*
• Now, corporate experts around the world, according to publications like *Forbes* magazine and the *Wall Street Journal*, are predicting the end of the strategic plan based on the fact that the future is no longer predictable.

• It took the GFC in 2008-2009 to convince them that the future didn’t cooperate with even the best laid plans;

• the global economy, which was expected to soar, dived instead;

• the housing bubble burst.

• The world discovered that technology often moves too quickly;

• social attitudes take surprising turns; and
• even governments, which are meant to be stabilising forces, have a tendency to throw yorkers at inopportune times.

• The trouble with strategic plans, according to the consensus of business leaders, is that the planning team – in what could be a lucky coincidence – pretty much always develops the strategy that the CEO wants.

• Senior management gathers in some offsite location;

• they sit in darkened rooms and workshop ideas,

• then present and defend their plans to people who have had little or no input into them.

• And since nobody seems to be able to predict the future, strategic plans are always safely vague.

• The ideal strategic plan now is to plan on being flexible.
• Think about the future and consider the possibilities.

• Know your business well, plan on being fluid enough to make the best of your good fortune and mitigate your misfortune.

• And, instead of handing down decisions to be acted upon, co-create.

• Marketers will tell you that co-creation is one of the best ways to unearth innovative ideas.

• Let the people who’ll buy and use your products have a say in their creation.

• Talk to them, ask their opinions, get their ideas and act on them.

• That word – act – is the word that most agree was missing most from thousands of corporate strategic plans.
• It is the word that we have stressed time and time again in our own.

• Action. Strategic Action Plan.

• At UniSA, we didn’t rip up a strategic plan but we did turn it on its head.

• We called it a strategic action plan. And we crowd-sourced it.

• We developed 52 discrete actions that will take us to where we want to be by 2018.

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• Universities the world over - and I include the sandstones, the Ivy Leagues, the Golden Triangle, the Sutton Trust and the Russell Group so nobody feels left out - do two things.
• They generate new knowledge; and

• They transfer that knowledge.

• Generation is through research,

• Transfer is through dissemination, primarily through our graduates.

• When I joined UniSA in 2013 I saw that both were carried out very effectively.

• But I also realised that, as successful as it was, this university could do better.

• In the knowledge that UniSA generated, there was an opportunity for our research to become increasingly more relevant and useful to industry,
• to translate fundamental and curiosity-driven research into practice by providing new solutions for problems and new ideas for industry and society.

• There was also a need to ensure critical mass, scale and impact from our research institutes and to provide greater connection between our research and education agendas.

• In knowledge transfer through the production of graduates we also do very well but we felt we could really improve in delivering a fuller university experience for our students.

• Our student cohort is roughly half school leavers and half adult learners aged between 18-25.

• More than 1 in 5 are international students;

• Some of them are from low SES backgrounds, some are not.
• It is a diverse and vibrant student body.

• And each and every one of them has a different way of absorbing knowledge. A different way of learning.

• So, we had a vision of what UniSA could become.

• What we needed was to hear more ideas from all sectors of the university and get their buy-in to a coherent action plan.

• You will be pleased to know that we didn’t send senior management off on a retreat to mull ideas and create a plan.

• We had a party instead. We threw the doors open and asked the world what they thought we should do to bring about the changes we wanted.

• We used IBM’s Collaborative Innovation platform.
• Globally, (and remember this was almost two years ago) over 80 businesses, not-for-profits and government bodies have successfully used this technology for organisational conversations.

• We were the first university in the world to use it.

• This process, Unijam, was a crowd-sourced online social media brainstorm session,

• it was live over 38 hours

• and involved the entire university, our students, staff, alumni and stakeholders,

• as well as our government and industry partners, plus some VIPs from around the world, including:

  o the South Australian Premier;
  o former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke;
  o the head of NASA; and
• the President of Stanford University.

• Unijam generated
  o more than 18,000 posts;
  o reached more than 50 countries;
  o was very active on social media;
  o trended on Twitter; and
  o and tackled a massive range of issues.

• Those issues included
  o learning and teaching;
  o campus facilities;
  o research; and
  o cultural issues, such as racism and reconciliation.

• It showed we could have mature conversations across the university community on complicated and sometimes difficult topics.
• And that those conversations could take place between staff and students, students and politicians, graduates and administrators and that this was perfectly normal.

• Being young gave us the opportunity to create the culture we wanted

• we were able to define what a university should be and re-shape ourselves to fit.

• And, of course, since students, staff and alumni suggested most of the changes, they were happy to help bring them about.

• And if we were a sandstone university we wouldn’t have been able to change a thing without a decade or three of effort.

• The results of our Unijam discussion were published in our strategic action plan, *Crossing the Horizon*. 
• And as soon as that was released I did a series of town hall meetings on each of our metropolitan campuses with video links to our regional colleagues.

• We shared the plans and opened ourselves to questions and comments.

• That was when I knew that we got the buy-in we were hoping for.

• Across all four campus meetings there was nothing but reinforcement that we were on the right path and that people were happy to walk on it with us.

• I’m also happy to say that we haven’t been afraid to tackle any of the changes that Unijam suggested.

• And they were not small or insignificant changes either.
• Since Unijam we have conducted a major curriculum review which told us that we have too many program offerings and an overly complex presentation of choices to incoming students.

• Now our Schools are reorganising their offerings and will embed a future of blended learning to give students greater flexibility in how and when they learn.

• I just can’t see that happening in an ancient institution where custom and tradition promote a certain degree of stasis.

• In research we are developing critical mass, scale and impact from our research institutes and providing a greater connection between our research and education agendas.

• We’re developing interdisciplinary research themes and refining our investment in them to strengthen and redefine those areas in which we excel.
• We even decided to only hire great staff and that has led us to articulate our core attributes for staff at UniSA.

• Unijam also prompted two major changes that we never saw coming but which are now both underway:

• ONE is a simple infrastructure project – a Great Hall – which will serve as the heart of the university which is spread over four city and metropolitan campuses and two regional locations.

• The second was saving one of our suburban campuses, a very pretty park-like space that will now become a centre for excellence in teacher training.

• So far our plans are working. I believe they are working not just because they’re good plans but because we keep the communication going and we’re getting good feedback.
While we are in the process of changing the way the university operates and engages with its communities to better meet the demands of the 21st century higher education landscape,

- We’re not changing the people.

- It was American scientist, academic and author Peter Senge who famously noted that ‘people don’t resist change – they resist being changed’.

- My own observation is that it’s not about resistance, it’s about drag. And momentum can carry you forward through that.

- We don’t want to alter the depth of the commitment and the quality of the people who make the UniSA community a great place to work and to study and to collaborate with.
• And that is an attitude that is shared across the Australian Technology Network.

• We have a long history of working in partnership with industry and the professions and

• as Australia moves from a traditional heavy manufacturing base to the development of professional services, advanced manufacturing and high value added production,

• there are enormous opportunities for industry and universities to work closer together.

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• We are all young universities here tonight and we each have the opportunity to take advantage of our youth, our agility and our flexibility to drive universities in a different direction that that which was mapped by the ancient portals of learning.
• We have the opportunity to be guided not by centuries old institutions with ivied walls and unyielding attitudes.

• They have their place.

• But since we live in interesting and demanding global times, opportunity abounds for nimble, focused institutions to respond to local, national and global changes.

• That’s our place.

• Our place is focused on the future where innovation and creativity combined with knowledge will deliver economic growth.

• We are all facing some major shifts in the higher education landscape.
• We need to be ready to respond by developing working partnerships with industry and government.

• Fortunately, because of our youth, we can be prepared to operate in much the same manner as the great companies and enterprises that inspire us.

• There are limitless opportunities that exist for universities and industries to work together to create global wealth.

• In fact, a report commissioned by Google states that the value of that collaboration in Australia alone would be worth around $46 billion.

• I assure you that we have every intention of taking more than our fair share of those opportunities as they arise.

• Thank you.