



Event: Ethel Swinburne Society Lunch

Date: Thursday 3 September 2015

Location: Swinburne University of Technology

Speech notes

Vice-Chancellor Professor Linda Kristjanson

Thank you – and a warm welcome to you all.

It is wonderful to speak with you at this important event. Gatherings such as this are a reminder of the strong community that is shared by Swinburne staff, student and alumni.

This sense of community is something that I am sure Ethel and George Swinburne would be proud to observe.

Establishing a technical college in Hawthorn arose from Ethel and George Swinburne's strong commitment to providing education to the majority of young people.

In his words, George could see:

... no other method of giving ... equal opportunity better than by increasing the facilities of education. All young people should be assisted and not merely the fortunate few.

Ethel and George worked in partnership, to drive innovation in business and education, to raise a family of four daughters and working for the public good through their many philanthropic activities.

We draw inspiration from their dedication as Swinburne faces disruptive times in the education industry.

The future of government funding for higher education remains unpredictable. Competition is fierce and we continue to live in uncertain and volatile political and social times.

We continue to adjust to a fast-changing, competitive world where every qualified domestic student can obtain a university place.

Students expect more and are entitled to have their expectations met.

Swinburne is constantly reviewing and improving our business, to make sure we align our university to students' needs and preferences.

We have refreshed our undergraduate course offering for 2016. The new course portfolio is designed to strengthen our place in the market and meet student expectations for greater flexibility and certainty in their study options.

We have also improved our Work Integrated Learning offering for students from 2016. Many of you would have benefited from workplace experiences while studying with us. From next year, we will make sure **all** new undergraduate students have these opportunities.

In Research, we are developing a strategic research and innovation plan, led by the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research and Development, Professor Aleksandar Subic.

The research plan will focus on growth, excellence and innovation, and will articulate the priorities, directions and approaches we need to achieve this.

There will be a strong focus on building research capacity across the university, and growing research engagement with industry and partners both nationally and internationally.

With a great deal of work underway, we are heartened to receive recognition for our successes:

- this year for the first time, Swinburne entered the Times Higher Education Top 100 universities under 50 years' old
- Swinburne was once again recognised as a world-standard research institution, being named in the top 400 by the Academic Ranking of World Universities
- Professor Matthew Bailes, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research received a prestigious Laureate Fellowship for his work in astrophysics and supercomputing – he has set himself the task of weighing the Universe
- The work of our vocational students and teachers has also been recognised - just last Friday, Horticulture student Chris

Henbery and Media teacher Kate Herbert both won Victorian Training Awards.

- it has also been a year of new beginnings – we launched the Swinburne Law School and welcomed our first law students into the university -- we also officially opened the Advanced Manufacturing and Design Centre and the ARC Training Centre in Biodevices
- this year's Open Day was also a great success – we hosted 15-thousand people on campus, a 33 per cent increase on last year's attendance. It was marvellous to experience the energy and enthusiasm of the next cohort of students as they toured our Hawthorn campus.

These achievements – and I have named a few of many – are for our whole community to share.

Together, we strive to enrich people's lives and to make a difference through the contributions our people make to their communities – in business, in the arts, in the community sector.

Your generosity ensures that Swinburne continues to flourish, to contribute to innovation in Australia and globally.

Today, we thank you for your commitment to Swinburne.