



**Event:** International Women's Day

**Date:** Monday 7 March

**Location:** Hawthorn Arts Centre

**Speech notes**

Vice-Chancellor Professor Linda Kristjanson

It's a pleasure to be here today, celebrating not just women, but also diversity at Swinburne.

I'd like to extend my thanks to our visiting guest speakers,

- Inga Peulich
- Professor Bob Wood

Thank you for making the time to be here today. Your words have inspired us and given us a lot to reflect on. It's so important that we get together regularly to have an open dialogue about diversity and gender equality.

The conversations we have today encourage us to take a stand against sexism. They inspire us to create positive change in our environment.

It's always refreshing to hear from people outside your own organisation... to be reminded that other organisations are also working hard to create fair and diverse cultures.

### **Thank Swinburne guest speakers**

I'd also like to thank our Swinburne guest speakers, who have been so generous with their time today:

- Virginia Kilborn
- Mish Eastman
- Addy Dudley-Smith

While you are all part of the Swinburne community, you all have had very different experiences and that is what makes our community special.

Diversity is one of the foundations of a successful organisation. It is the basis for a strong, competitive edge. This something that Swinburne has been very good at.

## **Swinburne's commitment to inclusion and diversity**

During my time at Swinburne, I've had the opportunity to work closely with my colleagues in Human Resources and other areas to implement a number of policies and initiatives that both support and encourage diversity.

Just last year:

- We participated in the Science in Australia Gender Equity pilot program, which aims to help increase the number of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine.
- We extended family violence leave to our casual staff, as well as on-going and contract staff... we were the first university in Australia to take this step.
- We were named as an Employer of Choice for the eighth year in a row by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.
- We were the first university in Australia to declare its support for marriage equality, something that received a very positive response from our community.
- We also appointed our Director of Multicultural Engagement, Chin Tan. Chin will work with us to deepen our understanding of multiculturalism and to build connections with diverse communities.

These initiatives all contribute to creating an inclusive, diverse environment, where our students and staff feel comfortable to be themselves at all times.

I have attended a number of International Women's Day events in the at Swinburne, and they have always had a very positive vibe. This year is no different.

I would like to thank everyone who helped put this year's event together.

- To my colleagues in HR, thank you for organising today
- Andrew Field, M-C of the event
- All of our Swinburne guest speakers and
- Our live performers

You have all helped make today a terrific celebration of the women in society.

Today, we have a photographic exhibition just outside in the foyer, which is honouring twenty 'Women of Swinburne'.

These photographs represent women from many different backgrounds and stages in their lives. But what they have in common is that they are all connected to Swinburne, in one way or another. There are some inspirational stories accompanying these photos, and I encourage you to take the time to read them.

This exhibition will also be displayed in the ATC building across the road in the coming weeks. So if your colleagues couldn't make it here today, they will have a chance to see it for themselves.

As we now draw to the conclusion of the event, I encourage you to make your way into the foyer and join us for some morning tea, where you can take a look at the photographs on display.

Thank you for making the time to join us in celebrating International Women's Day.