Speech: Swinburne Aviation Industry Conference 2013

Vice-CHancelor Professor Linda Kristjanson

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I would like to extend a warm welcome to our industry partners and our many speakers who will be with us over the next three days to make this a memorable and exciting event.

To my Swinburne colleagues here today, ladies and gentlemen – welcome one and all.

Swinburne is proud to present its Aviation Industry Conference, and as host of this wonderful event I hope that you enjoy your time with us.

This conference is an excellent forum for industry experts, professionals, researchers, and students to present and discuss the current and future directions and trends in the aviation industry.

This year also marks the 21st anniversary of Aviation at Swinburne and some of you here today would have been at last night’s reunion event.

We train pilots to the highest standards and our graduates hold positions in Australia and the world’s major airlines including Qantas, Virgin Australia, Jetstar, Emirates and Cathay Pacific.

Swinburne aviation graduates also pursue careers in many other exciting and diverse areas of the industry such as: Flight Instructors, Charter Pilots, Search and Rescue Pilots, Customs/Surveillance Pilots and the Royal Flying Doctors Service.

At Swinburne we are passionate about excellence in education and research, and are also committed to innovation and technology.

Swinburne is a progressive university that is focused on high-impact global research, high-quality teaching and active engagement with both industry and the community. Therefore our mission reflects this by connecting high quality education and research, particularly in science, technology, design, business and innovation, with industry and the wider community.

Our vision is to be known and respected, nationally and internationally, for excellence in those areas, and whom we include, rather than whom we exclude.

We provide a more personal experience for students, and are recognised for quality teaching, relevant courses and excellent facilities.

Swinburne has a flexible undergraduate degree structure, so that our students can build a program with the breadth and depth of study that suits their individual interests and career needs.

They are also provided with opportunities to engage with education from vocational learning through to postdoctoral studies.

Swinburne believes education is integral to a sustainable future. It provides individuals and society with the greatest opportunity to reach their potential.

We also believe that everyone should have access to education.
Our dual sector nature places us in a unique position to provide opportunities for those traditionally under-represented in the higher education system.

We also recognise that social inclusion must extend to the provision of broader education opportunities that equip students to address the socio-cultural, environmental and financial sustainability challenges of the future.

Swinburne has earned a reputation for high-impact research. We have leading-edge research centres that respond to industry and government priorities, and the needs of society.

We have recently invested $240 million in research and teaching infrastructure. The building in which we meet today – the Advanced Technologies Centre - is home to major research centres and high quality laboratories that allow the graduates from Swinburne opportunities for first-class learning and research training.

Our newest building – the Advanced Manufacturing and Design Centre – is currently under construction next door and will allow opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and research across the fields of engineering, design, ICT and business.

Both of these new facilities and investments in major infrastructure, position the university to optimise our research programs and build industry links.

Our research focuses on niche and emerging areas, and we’re driven to find innovative research solutions to real world problems that can also create jobs and wealth.

This building, the ATC houses $40 million of state-of-the-art technology and research facilities including – the Smart Structures Laboratory; Robert Simpson High Temperature Laboratory; Direct Metal Deposition Laboratory; Smart Sensing and Signal Processing Laboratory; and Bioengineering laboratories.

The Advanced Manufacturing and Design Centre will further increase our research and teaching capabilities.

Our close ties with industry provide our students with invaluable business and workplace experiences during their studies.

Industry representatives inform, shape and challenge our curriculum, while more obvious impact might be guest lecturers from industry, a final-year cross-discipline team project matched to a real business need, or a paid work placement for participants in our long-running and successful Industry-Based Learning program – which is celebrating it’s 50th anniversary this year.

Our industry connections extend beyond the classroom. We collaborate with industry in the commercialisation of major research projects.

We also deliver customised training to businesses and organisations.

The internationalisation of the curriculum at Swinburne helps prepare graduates for an increasingly globalised and mobile workforce.

In partnership with more than 90 educational institutions around the world, Swinburne also offers assistance and opportunity to study internationally on exchange, study tours or study abroad.
The university’s Sarawak campus in Malaysia even provides the benefits of cross-cultural learning without leaving Swinburne.

Swinburne is a member of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities and the Community Colleges for International Development.

In recent years, Swinburne has progressed to become one of the world’s leading universities, ranking as one of the top 400 universities in the world, as assessed by the Academic Ranking of World Universities, and one of the top 100 in the world in physics.

Our emphasis is on high-quality, engaged teaching and research in science, technology and innovation – teaching and research that makes a difference in the lives of individuals and contributes to national economic and social objectives.

We will continue to work to advance and build our research through partnerships with industry, our communities and other universities within Australia and internationally, to achieve outcomes that are directly relevant to industry and society.

We encourage, support and invest in research and development that aspires for the highest quality as judged by peers and those who fund and use our research.

Today we will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Melbourne’s Defence Science Institute and further, reach agreement on our first research project.

The M-O-U is significant for Swinburne and I look forward to several more joint-project announcements to follow.

Professor Mark Hargreaves, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Partnerships) from the University of Melbourne and Swinburne’s Professor George Collins, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Development), will formally sign the memorandum of understanding.

I will now hand over to Clint Heinz from Defence Science Industries who will say a few words about the new agreement between Swinburne and Melbourne.

Thank You.