

## Stephanie Burzacott – Graduation Speech

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, fellow graduates, university staff and guests. On behalf of the graduates receiving their degrees today, I would like to thank you all. I would like to thank everyone who has supported us through this time in our lives. To all of the parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters here today who have had to put up with us through this time, we wouldn't be here without you and the support you have given us. You have always been there for us, from letting us overtake the family study room with a truck load of text books to helping guide us into the direction that has led us here today.

It is truly amazing that today, in my home town of Ballarat that we have so much diversity around us. Students have come from all around the world, from places such as Finland, France, China, Austria and Lithuania just to name a few, to study here at Federation University. One of my favourite memories was making the international students feel welcomed, usually by talking to them about the Eurovision song contest and if they have ever been. There are also student's graduation from our overseas locations, such as Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, which goes to show how diverse and far reaching academic learning can go. I use to study Japanese here at the university and I understand how difficult learning a second language at an academic level can be and those whose English is not their first language are some of the most determined and motivated people I know. If you look around, we are all different, even those with identical twin sisters studying the same degree at the same time, and no Sophie unfortunately couldn't make it today.

To our lecturers, you deserve so much more than our thanks on this day. From dealing with our panicked late night emails, to making sure that world war III doesn't start with group presentations and for acting as a referee for us when our dream jobs come up. Because of these lecturers I was able to obtain my dream job in Human Resources and I can't thank them enough for their dedication and hard work they have done for us all. I would say to Sophie that one day I hope that I am as amazing as our lecturers.

No matter what direction you choose to go in, whether it is employment or further study, our degrees today have taught us to never give up. We are here because we kept pushing to learn and further ourselves.

We are the leaders of the future and we need to lead by positive example. Don't be afraid to try new things and always look for ways to challenge yourself. This is your story and it all begins here, so stay true to who you are. With this, I would like to lastly congratulate everyone on their amazing achievements today, and in the words of RuPaul Charles, graduates, Sashay Away.

Thank you.