

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
GRADUATION ADDRESS  
29 MARCH 2011

Dr Ian Gould Chancellor of the University of South Australia, Professor Peter Høj Vice Chancellor and President, Distinguished Guests, Graduands, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Almost 30 years ago, I sat at my own graduation ceremony at Edinburgh University. The world was very different then – but my guess is that my thoughts were similar to those you might be having today.

University graduation is a significant moment in your careers and in your lives. Today, you rightfully celebrate your achievement and share that celebration with family, friends and fellow graduates – but you will also look to the future, and the world you will influence through your professional endeavours.

I recall my own thoughts at my graduation. With a degree in mechanical engineering, I was keen to put what I had learnt to use. I didn't want to sit behind a desk. I wanted some excitement, and an international career that would bring me new opportunities. So I took a risk and went to work on an oil rig.

Scotland, in the early 1980s, was a fortuitous place to be – for me at least. The North Sea oil and gas industry was well-established and provided me with a unique opportunity to launch a career which is now approaching its 4<sup>th</sup> decade.

I would like to share one of my earliest work stories with you. After six years of a great education I was a very keen young hire. Three days into my new job, on the oil rig, we were working at night drilling when a spanner fell into the well. The spanner was three miles down and as we were working with a diamond drill we had no choice but to retrieve it. Working over the next 36 hours we managed to get the spanner back to the surface and lay it upon the deck. The man who had originally dropped it stood next to spanner as we all watched the leader walk across to him and announce "Your Fired". The man quietly kicked the spanner back into the well. Needless to say I had just had my first lesson in management. Perhaps there might have been a better way to handle the situation.

The North Sea is what is now referred to as a mature field. Production has been declining for many years and while it remains important to my native Scotland, its broader contribution has diminished.

In Australia, by contrast, we find ourselves with an emerging opportunity in energy that is globally significant. Regardless of the industry you choose to work in, you will all benefit from the expansion in activity in supplying cleaner and reliable energy to this country and the growing economies of our Asian neighbours.

Here in South Australia, abundant resources of natural gas, uranium and exciting developments in wind power and geothermal energy will play a major role in underpinning the security of long term energy supplies, and doing so with a lower carbon footprint. Both are critical challenges for our times.

Santos, the company I lead, is at the forefront of these challenges. As the largest producer of natural gas for Australian homes and industries, we can make a significant contribution to a cleaner energy mix at home and overseas, through our growing Liquefied Natural Gas business.

The natural gas industry will create thousands of jobs in the early years of your careers. There is enormous potential for the Cooper Basin, in the north of this state to play a significant role in fuelling the future.

Success will require enterprise and innovation.

This is true of whatever field you have chosen.

Your world is different to the one I graduated into. Life is moving at a faster pace. Communications are instantaneous and driving deeper and stronger connections between markets and cultures.

Not everyone will keep pace with these changes but leaders must.

To succeed you will need to be able to understand a world much wider than the one you have grown up in – whether that world was Edinburgh, Adelaide, Singapore or Seoul.

To capture that understanding you'll need to be more than specialists in your chosen field. Success will require an openness to opportunity, an acceptance of complexity and a willingness to take risk.

University years are, and should be, great fun. I am sure that's been true of your experience at the University of South Australia. Many of the friends you have made here will be friends for life.

In our social lives, we often form ties with people whose values, background and outlook match our own. But the leaders of tomorrow won't confine themselves to such relationships.

Those who succeed will be shaped by their abilities to relate to and influence a wide range of diverse communities.

I have three daughters who are completing, or have just completed, their university studies. My son is completing his schooling. They, like you, are leaders of the future.

And I know they and you will lead change around the outdated norms and confines that currently may hold us back. That is a fantastic thing!

The world you will help shape will outlive us all.

You can feel tremendously excited about the role you will play beyond these university walls. You should be grateful for the opportunity your education has afforded you, and indebted to those who provided it.

You, and your families and friends, can be very proud you are graduating from such a quality institution as the University of South Australia. At Santos, we are pleased to work very closely with UniSA. Rest assured that we are not alone in holding this University in high regard.

But mostly, today at least, you should be proud of your achievement and celebrate it.

Please accept my congratulations on your graduation and best wishes for your careers ahead.

ENDS.