

**Occasional Address, UniSA Graduation Ceremony
Adelaide Convention Centre,
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- Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, members of the University of South Australia community and distinguished guests.
- And especially graduands, your parents, family and friends.
- Today marks both an end; and a beginning and I am delighted to have been invited to give this occasional address at your graduation.
- When my family arrived in Australia in 1848, from Ireland and France, this country was a very different place. There:
 - Was little or no respect for the Indigenous peoples, let alone their lands or customs or traditions
 - Were only basic government services
 - Were no universities
 - Was no electricity, or running water or soft drink or televisions
 - Were no iPhones, no Facebook or Twitter.

- Had UniSA existed, life as an undergraduate international student would have been pretty boring!
- My family were simple farmers. From the Somme (France) and Kilkenny (Ireland). In fact no-one in my family had ever been to university.
- It wasn't until my dad, four generations later in Australia – someone who wanted to be a lawyer, not a farmer – 'forced' me and my sisters and brothers to leave the farm and get an education.
- 'You can come back on to the farm once you've gone away, gained a qualification, got some experience and seen the world,' he used to say.
- Well his plan was so effective we all did that. Except none of us went home to the farm! Which was quite possibly his plan.
- But what we did discover is my dad was right. We all got our qualifications, gained experience and saw the world – just as you have, coming here to Adelaide and studying at UniSA.
- My parents also used to all so say: 'the harder you work, the luckier you get', although I think the golfer Gary Player should be cited!

- As international students, you may have heard, or be curious of this oddly Australian expression: ‘the lucky country’.
- It is 50 years this year since Donald Horne, like me, a journalist (and who became an academic) released the book – ‘The Lucky Country’.
- Perhaps what is lesser known is those famous words, ‘*The lucky country*’, were in fact written as irony in the opening sentence of the final chapter.
- The full sentence in fact reads: “*Australia is a lucky country, run by second-rate people who share its luck.*”
- The phrase went to become the book’s title and has been widely misinterpreted since.
- It was hardly damning praise.
- We could probably ask ourselves the question ‘has anything changed’, but a graduation ceremony is most definitely not the place for a discussion on Australian politics!
- But it is the spirit of this ‘Lucky Country’ sentiment that I hope you have learned in Australia and that I urge you to adopt.
- As events as recent as last week and throughout this year have highlighted, Australia, and indeed the world, needs you to apply your education, your experience and your tolerance more than ever.

- Just as my dad sent me away from home because he believed it was in my best interests, so to your family has supported you to push on.
- Education is the building block of knowledge and the foundation of a broad and sustainable multicultural community. I can't emphasize this enough.
- There are many great examples of those who have made their own 'luck'.
- It doesn't matter if you are sons of latter generations of immigrants like me, or international students like you.
- Take Hieu Van Le, who became the South Australian Governor this year. He fled Vietnam as a boat person, arriving in Australia in 1977.
- On sailing into Darwin harbour he was warmly greeted by a local fisherman – "G'day mate, welcome to Australia".
- It's this kind of inclusiveness you need to build whether you heading home to Bangalore, Beijing, or Brussels – or building a life in Australia
- I hope this has been 'a Lucky Country' for you, and I don't mean that ironically.
- I challenge you to take your degree and put it to good work. Look outside, not inside.
- Look up, not down.

- Look forward, not backward.
- Work hard and make your own luck.