

THE HON T F BATHURST AC
CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW SOUTH WALES
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY LAW GRADUATION CEREMONY
OCCASIONAL ADDRESS
FRIDAY 7 JUNE 2019

1. Your Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley Governor of New South Wales and Mr Wilson, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor, Fellows of the Senate, Acting Dean, members of the Academic Staff of the Sydney Law School, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen and most importantly all those graduates who have had their degrees conferred today. I also particularly acknowledge the international students graduating today. I know that the University is proud of its international students and the intellectual stimulation and inclusiveness which results from an intermingling of students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
2. I would like to begin this address by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. While Sydney University is the oldest university in Australia, we must remember that this land, Gadigal country, has been a site of learning and law for thousands of years.
3. In this spirit, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chancellor and the University for the great but highly underserved honour bestowed on me today. It is a great honour and privilege to join you and your families for this very special occasion and to deliver this address. Today's ceremony should remind all of us that a graduation is much more than a piece of paper with your name on it or even a photo outside the Great Hall in a highly Instagrammable mortarboard and gown.
4. A graduation is a celebration of community. First and foremost in your minds today will no doubt be your families and friends, who have supported and

encouraged you in your studies, in many cases through their own tremendous sacrifice. It is those loved ones who are most proud of you today for your achievements and who are hopeful for your future as you take your knowledge and energy into the world.

5. A graduation is also a recognition of your place within a wider community of scholarship and learning. This is a community that asks novel questions and looks at answers from many different angles. Importantly, it has a deep commitment to evidence and truth. As you enter your careers or carry on your work in your chosen field, I hope very much that you will continue to see yourself as part of the community of scholarship and learning, and that a questioning mind and spirit will guide the way in which you tackle the challenges ahead.
6. For many, if not most, of you this is not your first degree. You are to be congratulated for pursuing post-graduate studies. Whether you intend to pursue a career as a lawyer or undertake any other professional or academic occupation, the depth of knowledge gained from your studies and the rigour of the academic training you have experienced will always be beneficial to you.
7. In that regard, you have been particularly fortunate to study at an outstanding university. This university, and particularly its Law Faculty, is held in the highest esteem, not only in this country but throughout the common law world. You can rest assured that, in these circumstances, your degree will be recognised as showing real academic achievement. The tradition which surrounds this ceremony, the academic procession and the formal presentation of degrees, all serve as a reminder, not only of the importance of this occasion, but of the fact that the University has been educating graduates such as yourselves for over 150 years. You have now become part of that proud tradition.
8. However, with the privileges you have received from your education at this wonderful university also come responsibilities. No doubt you will each pursue your own paths after leaving here today. One of the great advantages of the education and study you have undertaken is that it not only equips you for work in the particular discipline in which you have received your degree, but also equips you to adapt to the demands and challenges, professions and

activities outside that discipline.

9. Thus, while many of you will become lawyers, others will move to other fields, such as commerce, public service, academia, and dare I say it, politics. But all of you have a responsibility to maintain and promote intellectual honesty, tolerance and appreciation of cultural diversity which forms part of this university's tradition and for which it can be so proud. For those of you who end up practising law, this means upholding the fundamental tenets of the rule of law, namely, the equality of all people under the law and the fact that every member of society, regardless of their wealth, power or socioeconomic position, are equally entitled to the protections afforded by the legal system.
10. If I may pass on one piece of advice, it would be to never die wondering and to not be frightened of failure. Take up every opportunity, and bring others along with you. As Chief Justice, I am not sure if I should stand here and recommend you commit a trespass, but I can say that, if a door seems closed to you, knock on it, find a way through a side passage, or try jumping the fence.
11. You now have the opportunity to become leaders and innovators in whatever field or fields in which you choose to work or practice. For your own sake and for the sake of the entire community, don't let this opportunity slip by.
12. Finally, can I once again pass on my congratulations and wish you all the best for the future. I know you will all make great contributions to our community.