

Martin Blake: USYD Occasional Address University of Sydney Business School Graduation Ceremony – The Great Hall

I would like firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we are meeting on today, the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, and pay my respects to elders past and present.

I would also like to thank the University of Sydney, the Presiding Officer, Tony Masters, Eddie Anderson the Faculty Dean, and university staff for giving me the opportunity to speak today, and congratulate the happy, and no doubt relieved graduates, and their proud families. It is a momentous occasion and a day you will remember for all your lives.

I'm Martin Blake, NSW Chairman of KPMG Australia, and am the face of KPMG in the NSW market. I also have the honour of being the Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Business School. I'm very fortunate to have my role at KPMG which I describe as "connecting beautiful minds to shape the future of Australia".

I say this because I'm lucky enough to meet people at all levels in society careers and from all walks of life both in Australia and overseas. I certainly don't have all the answers to the problems the world is faced with today, nobody does but I try and spend a lot of my time on the balcony thinking deeply about the key issues and opportunities for Australia.

Society is increasingly turning to the private sector and asking companies to respond to broader societal challenges and the public expectations of KPMG have never been greater.

Key questions I spend time thinking about and discussing with my colleagues of KPMG and with business leaders across the public and private sectors include:

- How are we managing our impact on the environment?

- Are we adapting to technological change?
- Are we providing the retraining and opportunities that our staff and our children need to adjust to an increasingly automated world?
- Are we using behavioural finance and other tools to prepare staff and partners for retirement, so they invest in a way that will help them achieve their goals?
- Are we helping the world set itself on a path to sustainability by acting on both sustainable development and climate change?
- Public and private sector organisations must challenge themselves to think about what role do we play in the community?

I've been lucky enough to have spent 34 years working in Financial Services and Professional Services working in the US, the UK and many countries in Asia. I try and reinvent myself every year. My model for doing this is very simple. What interests the CEO I serve fascinates me and I will travel anywhere in the world to find out the latest thinking and best practice on a particular issue. I've recently tweaked the nose of terror and taken a career changing move towards working in Infrastructure, Government, and Healthcare and taking the role as lead partner for NSW Government, our largest client in Australia. The reason for this move is, the NSW Government simply has the most ambitious reform and infrastructure investment agenda since Captain Cook arrived in Botany Bay. The Government is spending A\$80.1bn in infrastructure principally in Greater Western Sydney in the next 4 years. To give you a sense of the scale of investment in infrastructure, the number of cranes in Sydney in September 2013 was 92, there were 329 cranes in September 2017, which is 51% of cranes in Australia. Despite all the bluster from Donald Trump, in September 2017 in the whole of US and Canada, there were only 420 cranes. Both myself and KPMG are 100% committed to supporting the NSW

Government to deliver on their game changing reform agenda and ambitious infrastructure investment program.

The world is changing at a rate which was inconceivable just 20 years ago. As a result there is a huge amount of pressure on the government, the workforce, and consequently on graduates and young people in general to adapt.

Part of adapting is finding the special 1% about yourself that gives you the edge. To find that innovative 1% you need a mind open to New Latitudes New Latitudes, and it important for you to challenge any limiting beliefs you may have about yourself.

A fascinating and well researched book I thoroughly recommend you read as your last piece of homework, is "The 100-Year Life" by Lynda Gratton. Lynda is a Professor at the London Business School and was rated last year in the top 10 Most Influential Business Thinkers in the World by the Financial Times. Her research challenges the notion of a three-stage pathway through life; namely, education, work, and retirement, because whether you are 20, 40, or 60, we all need to do things differently from the previous generation.

Personally, I have always lived by the French philosophers Theroux's mantra "live the life that you have imagined". To help you think about this you may want to reflect on the acronym ACDC:

- Accountability
- Capability
- Discipline, and
- Commitment

These are values that not only KPMG look for in all of the graduates we hire, but any company in any industry will treasure. We all have different capabilities, interests, and skills. KPMG doesn't, and certainly I don't advocate hiring only economics, finance and commerce students.

In 2017, KPMG hired well over 400 graduates across Australia, and was recognised as the most popular employer by the Fin Review and Grad Connection. Diverse points of view and culturally and gender diversity simply fosters no linear thinking and broader more creative and collaborative solutions.

We hire engineers, graphic designers, linguists, software experts, and lots of bright young people with fascinating degrees and culturally diverse backgrounds. Your studies and mindset shouldn't hold you back from applying for the job you want – your education and your degree is a wonderful platform to use to reinvent yourself.

If you want to live and work overseas – “Just Do It”! 1 million people or 5% of Australia's human capital lives and works overseas. I understand the University of Sydney was ranked 71st in the latest Centre for World University rankings and was also the 2nd highest Australian-based university on the list. Your qualifications will be recognised and highly respected globally, but it is critical that you demonstrate the commitment to continue to learn new things and broaden your capabilities.

I immigrated to Australia when I was your age. I wanted to live here for one reason – “to live the life I imagined”. I love sailing, and the first thing I did before I had a job, girlfriend, car or a house was bought a yacht. I'm pleased to report that I have owned a yacht for 30 years and race in the beautiful Sydney Harbour every week with my sailing pals. We have already started training on the supermaxi Comanche for this year's Sydney to Hobart Race. This starts with the Sydney to Southport race at the end of July.

In closing, I think one of the things that really matters is the accountability you feel to contribute and help others in a meaningful and dynamic way, using your unique set of capabilities to think in non-linear ways, and having the discipline and commitment to focus on what is truly important in your life.

So be brave, be bold, and be positive, because opportunities are abound. For you all as future leaders of the world.

Congratulations on your graduation, you can feel truly proud of what you have achieved as future global leaders.

I wish every each and one of you every success in your career and never forget to reach for the stars and live the life you have imagined.

Thank you for your time today.