

Occasional Address

Royal Exhibition Building, Thursday 18 April 2019, 11.00am

Professor Daryl Le Grew AO

*Vice-Chancellor's Fellow, University of Melbourne
Doctor of Architecture (honoris causa) recipient*

Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, including a delighted spectrum of partners, parents, siblings, children and friends of this fine group of Graduands, to whom I also enthusiastically offer my greetings.

Chancellor and Dean, Professor Willis, my thanks for your kind introduction. Reflecting on the unanticipated string of events that constitutes my life and career points up the key assets of the Melbourne degree, a segue into my theme.

Graduands, we recognise your talent, your hard work and your tenacity. In so doing we recall that this fine University has tended to your development of mind and persona and is about to merit you with an invaluable asset for the future. Your degree.

Central to this asset is the corpus of knowledge and skill that will win you a toehold in the wider world. Despite the chattering class of education commentators, you are relevant and employable right now, such is the imprimatur of the Melbourne degree. Don't be surprised though if your first employers express some unease about your work readiness. Don't be put off. Chances are they are not ready for you; the "golden age" of their own education having passed. Work with them and help reinvent their world and their workplace.

If this doesn't work out, move on. It's a wide world and ultimately you create your own opportunities. So, re-imagine your skills to new situations, volunteer your knowledge and service in unique settings, charm your way into unfamiliar networks, find like minds and create new enterprise, use your social media skills to create worlds of work that don't yet exist.

Remember, what separates your Melbourne degree from mere training is the focus on the axioms and the historical and philosophical context that are the roots of your discipline.

Vice-Chancellor's Introduction

Isaac Newton said of his discoveries.... he was "standing on the shoulders of giants" referencing the flow of knowledge that inspired him. As it will you. The flow gives you hindsight and foresight. This is your intellectual powerhouse.

Your degree is underpinned by discovery, free discourse, the tussle of competing theories, the controversy of ideas fearlessly put and tested. You have been shaped by this dialectic and by your capacity to search, discover, and defend fiercely. It's great to be right, but it's ok to be wrong.

Your degree turns on critical thinking. Now take that healthy scepticism and analytical sharp edge and test it in the crucible of society, where all is mixed and mingled, but rarely integrated.

Helpfully though, your degree links analysis with synthesis. You can imagine and compose a future, test it now and pursue it over time. As a Melbourne graduate you are both critical and creative.

Remember though, Melbourne's stance is progressive; ideas are valued if they both progress knowledge and better society. Commit your knowledge to a better future in which human and environmental realities co-develop sustainably. This intertwining of knowledge with progressive betterment is part of your inheritance. Use it wisely.

Your degree is current now but will be overtaken by new knowledge within the few years. In that short time frame, research will verify new knowledge, current knowledge will be reinterpreted or abandoned; global climate, society, economy and the body politic will have shifted ground, conflict will have flared or eased, with technology surging two or three paradigms ahead.

The University will adapt. So will you. You will change your career path several times in the next decade. New horizons and fall back positions will be needed. Start now. You will find yourself in different places, serving different communities. A global player, you will think in at least one other language, enmesh yourself in new cultures; continually renew your knowledge and skills, even re-educate yourself several times. Be ready. Nothing can be taken for granted.

And.

Don't let fear get in your way.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, said at her Commencement in 1969 "We are, all of us, exploring a world none of us understands...searching for a more immediate, ecstatic, and penetrating mode of living...for the integrity, the courage to be whole, living in relation to one another in the full poetry of existence. Fear is always with us, but we just don't have time for it."

I agree, just go for it!

Doctor of Architecture *honoris causa* citation

Professor Daryl Le Grew

An alumnus of the University of Melbourne, Professor Le Grew graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture in 1967 and a Master of Architecture in 1971. He subsequently taught and researched at Melbourne, before being appointed to Deakin University in 1986.

Professor Le Grew quickly progressed through the academic ranks at Deakin, becoming Acting Vice-Chancellor in 1996. Following this he relocated to New Zealand to assume the role of Vice-Chancellor at the University of Canterbury, and under his tenure from 1998 until 2002 oversaw substantial change and modernisation of the institution, including a significant boost to its international recruitment.

Professor Le Grew returned to Australia in January 2003 as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Tasmania and over the next eight years worked tirelessly to increase participation in tertiary education in Tasmania and to improve the University's performance and reputation as a research and teaching institution.

Professor Le Grew returned to Melbourne in 2011 and served as a Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Fellow at Monash University and as Vice-Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Melbourne. In his role at Melbourne he provided valuable advice to university leadership on campus design and new buildings including the Melbourne School of Design and Arts West.

In July 2015, Professor Le Grew was appointed Interim Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, and served in the role until the appointment of the new Dean in November 2016.

Beyond his institutional roles, Professor Le Grew has held a number of significant public appointments with the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research's Higher Education Research Reference Group, Universities Australia, the Australian Research Council, the National Cultural Heritage Committee and the Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

A registered architect since 1971, he has been an adjudicator and key consultant on major public infrastructure projects including the Melbourne Recital Hall, the Ian Potter Museum at Federation Square, and Christchurch Art Gallery.

Professor Le Grew is an internationally recognised researcher, architect and higher education leader, who has made an extraordinary contribution to the transformation of higher education and public architecture in Australia.