Acknowledge the Wathaurong people of the Kulin nations, the traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered today. We pay our respects to them for their care of the land.

**Acknowledge**
- Dr Sarah Leach General manager Health Services GMHBA
- Michelle Quigley QC

Welcome to Deakin’s headquarters, our beautiful Waterfront Campus. It’s one of Deakin’s five stylish and technology-rich campuses: one in metropolitan Melbourne, three in regional Victoria and our fifth and fastest growing campus is in the cloud. Deakin today has over 53,000 students and ranks 36 in the recent the Times HE listing of the world’s universities under 50 years.

At 42 years, Deakin is a gen Xer and shares many of the characteristics of its generation – technologically adept, flexible, nimble and with a ‘can do’ approach.

And Deakin has a long-held reputation for developing award winning partnerships with industry, governments, communities and professional organisations.

We’re delighted by our growing partnership with GMHBA and look forward to further developing the opportunities both in research and education.

Just some of the things we’ve been working on recently …

- With Professor Julie Pascoe, an industry scholarship looking at the relationship between muscle strength and memory
- With Professor Steve Allender, developing a software application providing support to communities to collectively address entrenched and complex problems.
- Research led by Professor Tracey Bucknell from Deakin’s Quality Patient Safety Strategic Research Centre – PRONTO Prioritising Responses of Nurses to Deteriorating Patient Observations
- Alfred Deakin Professor Svetla Venkatesh’s work on the autism app TOBY
- We’re also interested in continuing to work with GMHBA on health promotion activities, like the event on autism at the Pier which attracted over 2,500 people

I’m particularly pleased to have this opportunity to speak with you this afternoon – I have been asked to talk a bit about leadership and about what I’ve learned along the way in my career in education. But I’d also like to reflect on what the digital age means for leadership, what it means for mentoring, for connections, and in particular what it means for women.

Way back last century, when I began my career, leadership tended to be dominated by charismatic leaders who were influenced by the two world wars and by the depression. Organisational hierarchies were structured along military lines and there was an unspoken set of rules for climbing
the organisational hierarchy and ascending the ranks in search of power, status and money ... those who succeeded were mostly men.

Women’s role in business and society has certainly changed. There are more empowered women ... more women who are highly educated, more women who have substantial earned income and higher employment rates for women up and down the social spectrum.

But not more women on Boards or in Cabinet, or in positions of senior leadership. And I’m one of only 10 female vice-chancellors leading Australia’s 43 universities. The glass ceiling has not been shattered yet. There is still inequity in wages and in the proportion of women in positions of influence.

But there were some pluses – for baby boomers like me, career resilience often meant grabbing on to the right organisational ladder and hanging on. The jobs you did were opportunistic at times, often fitted around childcare and the needs of family, but the route was pretty traditional and while part-time work was usually involved; you could see some structure.

Today, with the rise of technology, with the complexity of a global market and with the inexorable shift in global economic power, job security is at risk of becoming an oxymoron and career pathways are less clear and less secure. The contingent workforce is edging to be the new normal.

It’s estimated that 47% of jobs will be computerised within one or two decades and around 65% of children in primary school today will be in jobs yet to be invented. Deakin today educates students to be social media managers and app developers. Hard to believe I know, but the first iPhone and the first apps only launched in June 2007, less than 10 years ago.

But the future is here and for those prepared to pay attention and take a few risks – very exciting times indeed. Global connectivity, big data, cognitive computing, new media and the internet of everything – it’s driving new ways of communicating, new business models, and I believe it’s driving new thinking about leadership.

The pace of change is extraordinary, and the impact on the work we do, whatever business we are in, is profound. Senior executives everywhere are wondering whether they’ll be the next ones to be ubered or amazoned.

From digital informatics to wearables, the healthcare industry is undergoing its own massive changes. Cognitive computer IBM Watson can now assist patient decision making using knowledge from 600,000 medical evidence reports, 1.5 million patient records and clinical trials and 2 million pages from medical journals.

Deakin’s own partnership with IBM Watson allows us to provide personalised answers to students 24/7 365 days a year – and to surf the mega trends of automation, big data and customisation.

This year’s internet of things wearables go beyond fitbits and step counting to measure core health data such as blood pressure, vision quality and body temperature, and there are a myriad of apps and games addressing mental health and wellbeing.

It’s a churning mix of opportunities, threats and ambiguities, transforming everything that is safe and familiar to us and demanding new skill sets, new networks and new ways of thinking.
Richard Branson famously said that disruptive innovation requires a change in mindset not a change in processes. It requires a willingness to discard old business models and to deliberately target situations where the competition is complacent.

Branson’s advice? ‘Screw business as usual, look at what our customer wants and what the industry needs, then go in and exceed their expectations’. It’s not language we feel particularly comfortable with, but in principle he’s right.

In this digitally enabled and hyper-connected world of crowdfunding, Facebook, twitter and Instagram – in health, in education and in business – our customers, our students, our clients, our industry partners and our staff are no longer passive observers but expect to be actively engaged, to co-create knowledge, influence outcomes and evolve understanding.

Students want to influence ideas, not be told what to think; people want to make choices that align with their own motivation about health, employees want to engage, not follow instruction. Leaders are finding that if an organisation is to be agile and open it’s just not possible for all direction to come from the top.

Leadership today is most definitely a team sport. Collaboration and engagement is the new black … it drives change and it’s a way of standing firm in a shifting and volatile environment.

Co-creation works hand-in-hand with clients, customers and employees allowing all stakeholders to follow their individual goals in parallel with the organisation … the high level of participation drives both innovation and scaling.

Some examples:

Google relies on daily customer feedback then reacts and adapts in a matter of weeks. The next big idea can come from anywhere.

Here in Australia, when mum Stephanie Giese posted a blog revealing her concern about Target’s overly sexualised clothing, Target responded quickly, offering to collaborate with her to address her concerns. They turned what could have been a disaster into a minor bump in the road.

VicHealth’s Citizen’s Jury on obesity brought together 100 everyday Australians to tackle the wicked problem of obesity

Collaboration taps in to the innovation of individuals and drives the creation of new intellectual capital; it is both empowering and enabling.

Successful leaders in this information age will be those who inspire discussion, generate new ideas and foster innovation – those who can communicate a clear, shared vision of where our organisation or department or unit is headed – and why we must change. I see leadership in the digital age not as a role, but as an emergent learned quality. And as it happens the skillset that best suits leadership in the information age is one that women can recognise and feel comfortable with particularly well.

So what are the skills we need to prevail to the very top of whatever you have your eye on? I will ignore sheer hard work and persistence at being the best you can be at your discipline or industry. That is a given.

In the digital age flexibility is God. Women have flexibility down to a fine art – it’s our thing. After years of successfully juggling work and family, women do flexible very well indeed.
Resilience is something else women do well. After all we’ve faced barriers men for the most part don’t. Anyone who has bounced back from failure and withstood discrimination has developed great stores of resilience and often a dry humour to go with it. Resilient people don’t blame other people, or a lack of funding or a lack of opportunity when things go badly. They talk with others and they listen and they consider how they could do things differently. Resilience involves the ability to pay attention to the main game, the main idea, despite the issues, the ability to spot trends and turn them into opportunities. To resist the urge to get bogged down in the office politics, the lab dynamic, the way things used to be … and instead keep looking toward the future.

Humility and ownership are also critical – a sense of inherent responsibility, the ability to work with a team to solve a problem, then step back. If you don’t experience failure, you don’t learn from failure.

And keeping connected matters. I think good role models as mentors are at the heart of cultivating a work culture that encourages leadership and collegiality. When I arrived in Australia from the UK I had no career connections and no family connections. And this was Perth where everyone is either related, married, or went to primary school together. The Vice-Chancellor at UWA, the late Fay Gale and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Alan Robson, were invaluable role models and mentors for me when I first arrived in Australia to take up a role at UWA. They looked out – actively connected me, gave me feedback. My idea of a mentor is someone who is interested in you and assists you with you plan.

In this digital age, mentoring can transcend geographical and institutional barriers – quite literally ‘mentoring without borders’. And discussion can be in real time; no more waiting for an appointment, when a problem arises you can immediately IM a question or set up a skype meeting.

Through a Twitter chat, blog, or responses to a LinkedIn post, we can receive the sort of support and guidance that in the past came solely from a mentor. Through blogs, LinkedIn and twitter, even TED talks. You can follow and learn from the world’s great influencers – Hillary Clinton, Aung San Suu Kyi or Marissa Mayer the CEO of Yahoo and the first female engineer at Google. It’s true to say that experienced leaders have always had as much to learn from the rising stars in an organisation as they have to teach them, but in the digital age this reverse mentoring really comes into its own.

The millennials can teach the rest of us a thing or two about SnapChat, WhatsApp, Hootsuite and BuzzSumo as well as assist us to see the potential for digital analytics to improve our teaching, manage our data and engage with our stakeholders.

Today, insights and ideas can come from anywhere. Uber wasn’t started by bus companies to compete with taxis, Airbnb wasn’t set up by a leading hotel chain, Apple was not a music company when it disrupted the music industry and Amazon was an online book store, and yet it is now one of the leading IT cloud providers and is challenging the traditional heavyweights of computing.

Courage has always been a factor in good leadership, but leaders in the digital economy need an extra dose if they are to be nimble and adaptive … look at the courage of Apple when it made iPhone’s larger when the trend everywhere was to downsize.

My thoughts about how to move from me to we?

Appreciate the value of intellectual currency: ideas, knowledge and knowhow are critical currency if we are to transition successfully to a sustainable 21st century economy.
Share your weaknesses – too often we see admitting a lack of knowledge as admitting to failure when it can be a strength.

Celebrate successes and share credit where credit is due.

And importantly, become part of the leadership funnel. Mentoring others is a great way to make sure the talent pipeline is kept filled with people ready to manage and lead.