Hello.

I wanted to take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you to all staff at La Trobe for the enormous amount of work that everyone has put in during the course of the year.

I know that this hasn't been an easy year in many respects as we bed down new systems new business processes and get used to working in a new structure,  but I'd just like to say a huge thank you  for all of the hard work that has gone in this year to make everything work. I know that there are still some problems but I hope everyone has a sense that where we know what the problems are that there is a real willingness to ensure that they get fixed as quickly as possible.

At the same time this year has been a year of enormous achievement. We've educated more students than ever before and the university is starting to gain recognition outside for its performance particularly in research. This year for example we returned to the top 400 on the QS and the THE global rankings of universities, this reflects an underlying improvement in the university's performance which I'm pleased to say has continued throughout 2015. It also reflects the hard work of many many people across the university, members of our senior leadership group and the research office who ensure that our data returns are presenting the university in as positive a light as possible.

This year's also been one in which we've recruited many new staff around the capabilities that we want to develop to ensure we deliver our strategic plan. So new staff have arrived across all disciplines this year, some were planned for as part of the business planning that went on last year, others have been more in response to opportunities that have arisen during the course of the year as people have indicated a willingness and desire to join La Trobe. But across the board I'm delighted to say that we have been joined this year by some outstanding people and it's clear that La Trobe is a place that many many high quality people consider to be a desirable place to come and work.

Looking ahead, next year 2016, I think contains lots of exciting developments for the university. There will be for example the largest ever capital plan delivered next year by I&O consisting mainly of refurbishments of buildings across the university at all of our campuses. Earlier this year the university council signed off on a development plan for the Bundoora campus. This is a twenty to thirty year project that over time will utterly transform this university, it will transform the look and feel of the campus itself at Bundoora as we diversify and intensify activity on campus, but it will also overtime produce a financial return to the university that will really be transformative provided we make the right use of the resources that it will generate. So it's an exciting time I think to be at La Trobe in that respect and we can look forward to the future I think with great optimism.

Having said all of that I know that work continues, although this is an end of year message and I'm wishing you all a very happy holiday, there is still a lot of work to do in advance of next year. Of course there are still courses to be prepared for next year, grants to be written, students to be recruited or re-enrolled and I know that a lot of you will be working hard throughout December and for most of January. Nevertheless I do hope that everyone gets an opportunity to have some down time and spend time with their family and their loved ones over the Christmas and new year break. So from me and from all of my senior colleagues I just like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a very happy new year and a great 2016.

Thank you.