

**ADDRESS TO EASTERN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
GRADUATION CEREMONIES  
NAPIER, FRIDAY 27 MARCH 2009**

**STEPHEN JACOBI  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
JACOBI CONSULTING LTD**

**“THINK GLOBAL, ACT GLOBAL”**

(Mihi)

It's a pleasure to be with you and to have the honour to address this graduation ceremony.

On behalf of everyone here today I extend to you graduands our warmest congratulations for all you have achieved.

We salute not only your academic success but also your commitment and your enthusiasm for your studies.

I have no doubt that right now is the very best time to be graduating.

I say this because never before has the field of human knowledge been so broad.

Never before have we known so much about the world, about science, about technology, about enterprise.

Never before has our world been so inter-connected, never before has New Zealand been so well linked to its overseas markets.

It has never been easier than it is now to study, to travel and to do business all around the world.

You have heard it said: “think global, act local”.

It is good to act local, to build strong local communities, to develop competitive local businesses, to enjoy life right where you are.

For most of us, that's here in Hawke's Bay, undoubtedly the best place in the world to live !

This morning however I want to challenge you.

I am here to tell you that something weird has happened over the last decade.

The world has become a lot smaller.

What used to be local has become global – business, certainly, but also culture and recreation, science and education, even social networking.

Freer markets, ease of travel, the internet, email - the age of Facebook has come !

And so this morning I want to challenge you, wherever you are, whatever your discipline, whatever your future career.

I want to challenge you to think global and act global !

Yes, these are the best of times, but they are the worst of times too.

They are the worst of times because the benefits of this new understanding of the world are not shared equally.

They are the worst of times because as the frontier of human knowledge has expanded, the limits of human compassion appear to have been reached.

They are the worst of times because even despite all we know about business, about finance, about what makes economies tick, we find ourselves in the grip of an economic crisis whose effects are being felt the world over.

Over US\$1 trillion has been sucked out of the global financial system.

Even though most of this has been replaced by governments injecting money back into the system, there is a loss of confidence in the world economy and lending and borrowing remain difficult.

The World Trade Organisation predicts global trade will drop 9 percent this year, the biggest such contraction since World War II.

For the time being we in New Zealand appear to have been spared from the worst of the economic fallout.

Our banks have not been exposed to the sub-prime fiasco in the United States and Europe.

But our companies are suffering from a fall in global demand and from that same lack of confidence.

Our small economy has been growing strongly in recent years but now growth is sharply curtailed and unemployment is rising.

Very definitely these are the best of times for you graduating today and for all of us who enjoy the benefits of a world class education.

They are the worst of times if you have no job to go to, no education to call on and no hope for the future.

You don't have to move too far from this theatre to see the effects of what we politely call "social exclusion" and by which we really mean poverty and a lack of opportunity.

So we have great hope for you graduands.

Our hope is that because of what you have learned at EIT over the past years, because of the competence and dedication of your lecturers, the world is going to be a better place.

It will be a better place if, despite all the problems, you can think and act globally.

You have some fine role models for this at EIT.

And that's not surprising for an institution with the motto "live your dreams".

Dr Carl Paton is living his dream as he prepares to present his research into technical aspects of performance cycling at an overseas conference this year.

Diane Mara lives her dream as she receives a New Zealand honour for her work in researching Pacific women in tertiary education.

EIT's Bachelor of Viticulture students are living their dream as they help build a body of research aimed at improving the quality of New Zealand wine, one of this region's and this country's iconic export products.

Connie Manning is living her dream as she completes an Air New Zealand internship at Los Angeles International Airport having completed her Diploma in Tourism and Travel.

These members of the EIT community are thinking and acting globally.

They are global citizens and they see the opportunities not just locally but in the world beyond.

While not all of us have the opportunity to live and work overseas, all of us come into contact everyday with people, ideas, goods and services from outside the region in which we live.

My message to you today is to relish those opportunities to see your job, your relationships, your life in a global context.

Because the more we think and act globally, the more effectively we can do this as a nation, the more effective we will be in recovering from the economic crisis, securing the future of our communities and addressing the poverty of opportunity that is still far too evident around us.

I know there are some who would prefer us, at this time of economic crisis, to raise up the drawbridge, turn our back on open markets and put in place new barriers to trade and to immigration.

I do not share this “back-to-the-past” vision for the future.

Our wealth-producing industries – tourism, agriculture, forestry, fishing, horticulture, wine – have all been built on external markets.

These industries are not only New Zealand’s life-blood, they are this region’s life-blood too.

Make no mistake about it – it is the revenue from these industries which flows back into the rest of the economy.

They are also industries whose future depends on the quality of graduates from institutions like EIT.

They have a direct stake in EIT’s success.

The extent to which these key sectors can continue to trade profitably will be a key determinant of how soon, and how quickly, we can emerge from the current crisis.

These industries can only thrive and prosper in an open global economy.

That’s why New Zealand must do all it can to open new markets.

That’s why the World Trade Organisation negotiations are so important and why we need to conclude new free trade agreements with the United States, Korea, India and Japan, as we did with Australia over 25 years ago and have done more recently with China and the countries of ASEAN.

Some countries are already starting to put up those protectionist walls – like the Europeans who have re-instated dairy export subsidies.

There are even calls for more protection and subsidies for ailing companies here in New Zealand.

We must resist this temptation at all costs.

We must do so because our other internationally competitive industries cannot cope with the costs that this protection would place on our economy and because it runs counter to our reliance on open international markets.

At the global level we must do all we can to convince others around the world not to put in place measures which would inhibit the role of trade in increasing growth.

A closed world means fewer opportunities for New Zealand; opening markets deliver benefits that spread through the rest of the economy.

During the summer holidays I read an excellent book by the new US President, Barack Obama.

It has a title which is highly appropriate in the current economic environment: “The Audacity of Hope”.

Both audacity and hope are in short supply in this credit-constrained and confidence-shaken world.

President Obama says that what we need is “hope in the face of difficulty. Hope in the face of uncertainty. The audacity of hope”.

It is the election of President Obama that has inspired hope in a wounded nation.

Looking around this theatre today, and seeing the pride which the families and friends of you graduands have in your achievement, it is not so hard for us too to find hope for the future.

By thinking global and acting global, by living our dreams, by remaining open and outward looking to the rest of the world, we can have the audacity to say that there is a way forward.

In these best of times and worst of times, your graduation today will help us not only to confront today’s challenges but to build a better world for the future.