



UniSA alumni win four awards in 2015 Telstra SA Business Women's Awards

Kate Thiele, Ashleigh Stiling and Michaela Webster shine

Three University of South Australia alumni took out four awards at the **2015 Telstra South Australian Business Women's Awards** this month.

We caught up with the winners **Kate Thiele, Ashleigh Stiling and Michaela Webster** — all business graduates — about what the award meant to them and any advice they might have for graduates seeking a career in business.

MBA alumna and Chief Executive of Guide Dogs SA/NT, **Kate Thiele** has overseen extraordinary growth in her organisation.



"It is an honour and joy to accept both the For Purpose and Social Enterprise Award and being named South Australian Telstra Business Woman of the Year. I am humbled and also have a strong sense of responsibility. It's been a journey of self-discovery, reflection and looking forward. That's not for myself, but also for what the award can bring to the not-for-profit sector. It's been in the shadows for too long," said Kate.

"Through this award I also hope to inspire many more young women to consider the not-for-profit sector as a great industry sector in which to forge a career path. If I have one message to those about to climb the leadership ranks it is to believe in authenticity; in keeping it real. Deliver what you say you will deliver and build trust. Trustworthiness is something you earn, along with respect — it is not related to role, gender or circumstance. Humility is important too — success is always best when shared. With amazing people you can do amazing things."

Ashleigh Stiling, Operations Shift Coordinator, Harsco Metals and Minerals, who is a young pioneer in the male-dominated steel industry, gained her Bachelor of Business and Enterprise at UniSA's Whyalla campus.

"I feel extremely humbled and honoured to be named the South Australian Young Business Woman of the Year for 2015. Especially as I know the calibre of women that have not only been awarded previously but also the other women named finalists this year. This award is a testament to all the strong, successful women working in industry that are equally deserving of recognition. We are changing the future for young women and giving them more possibilities for success and better opportunities to pursue their dreams and achieve them. I am now lucky enough to be leading a culture change where I can happily go to work in what is considered a man's world and be a woman in it." said Ashleigh.

"I advise female graduates embarking on a business career to be bold and courageous — follow your true aspirations, no matter how unattainable or impossible they may seem. The possibilities are endless and studying at UniSA through regional campuses such as Whyalla, present many opportunities for the future so be open and receptive. Nothing worth having comes easy, and to be successful the right attitude is equally as important as ability. So with hard work and the right outlook on life - the world is your oyster."

The Corporate and Private Award went to **Michaela Webster**, Bachelor of Business graduate and Chief Operating Officer of On the Run/ Peregrine Corporation.

"The Telstra Award process is the first time I have taken the opportunity to reflect on my career over the last 25 years and that process alone was extremely rewarding. Winning the corporate category after working in what was a 'start up business' begun by an immigrant in 1984, with one service station was a testament to the OTR team and their contribution since the business began," Michaela says.

"OTR is only in SA. It is run by a local team out of an office in Norwood. It was a reminder, having worked nationally and interstate, that we have an incredible hothouse of talent locally and all we need to do is start something".

"If I had my time again I would take the opportunity while at university to work out what I value, define my goals and create a short plan, then start".

"You can apply for jobs or do work experience at the same time. Whatever you do, it will be more fun and more sustainable if it fits with what you value, whatever that might be."

"If you want a corporate career, don't be afraid to make contact with people that inspire you and ask questions, you never know what it might lead to."

View winners' speeches [here](#).

Congratulations to [all alumni and staff finalists](#) in this year's awards.

The South Australia winners will proceed to the national finals in Melbourne on Wednesday, 18 November.

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