• Good morning.

• At the outset, I want to formally welcome the President of Tianjin University, Professor Li Jiajun and as well as our other special guests from Tianjin University.

• I also welcome most warmly Madam Zhu Liping of the Standing Committee of the CPC Tianjin Municipal Committee and Party Secretary of the Tianjin Education Working Committee of CPC Tianjin Municipal Committee, and the delegation she leads.

• I also want to acknowledge the Governor of South Australia, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce and the Premier of South Australia, the Hon Jay Weatherill who will be joining us later in the morning.

• And the Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Stephen Yarwood.

• Indeed, it is a great pleasure to welcome all our distinguished guests here today.

• This important event further strengthens the bilateral collaborative relationship – and just as significantly, the vital
enduring friendship – between Tianjin University and the University of South Australia.

• It is certainly an honour for us to be involved in this joint venture with Tianjin.

• As one of China’s first modern university, founded in 1895, it is an institution built on an outstanding heritage and which is actively embracing a dynamic future.

• In fact, that is just one of a number of features that Tianjin shares with the University of South Australia, which in turn has roots dating back more than 150 years and which continues to enjoy a strong upward growth trajectory.

• Both universities also share a global profile in disciplines such as engineering, architecture and urban planning.

• And as we are celebrating today, we also share a common commitment to environmental sustainability, and to our broader Asia-Pacific region.

• These are among the key areas of focus identified in a couple of crucial strategic documents released recently – the Australian Government’s ‘Australia in the Asian Century’ white paper that examines the growth of our region, and
the ‘South Australia-China Engagement Strategy’ unveiled last December by Premier Weatherill.

• In releasing the white paper, Prime Minister Julia Gillard highlighted five specific areas of action that will drive Australia’s engagement with Asia, and the establishment of this China-Australia Centre for Sustainable Urban Development will help to meet a number of those.

• Firstly, it builds further on existing areas of strength and ones of which the University of South Australia is justifiably proud.

• That’s because we have established recognised global credentials in environmental sustainability through enterprises such as:

  • The Zero Waste SA Research Centre for Sustainable Design and Behaviour, headed by Professor Steffen Lehmann and supported by the South Australian Government through Zero Waste SA

  • The Barbara Hardy Institute that helps advance innovative research into our planet’s most pressing sustainability challenges
• The School of Natural and Built Environments that is equipping highly skilled graduates to become tomorrow’s environmental leaders

• The Cooperative Research Centre for Low Carbon Living that brings together industry organisations, government agencies and research institutions to develop means by which to tackle greenhouse gas emissions

• And the Hawke Research Centre that is named in honour of former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke and which conducts pioneering research in a number of areas including social sustainability

• Another key area identified in the white paper was investment in skills and education, and the development of collaborative relationships throughout our region.

• There’s no doubt this joint Centre will play a significant part in achieving those ambitions and will help create greater awareness - as well as increased knowledge and skills - to tackle sustainability challenges in China and Australia.

• And finally, the white paper emphasised the need to develop deeper and broader collaborative partnerships, and enhance the all-important people-to-people relationships.
• And that is undoubtedly one of the great strengths of the initiative that we are formally launching today.

• This Centre will be defined by the quality of the people involved, as well as the vision and the commitment of the people who will help it realise its bold aspirations.

• Among those ambitions is to create a truly international centre of excellence for multidisciplinary research and sustainable development.

• Perhaps most importantly, it will help to bring together and impart new skills to our region’s future leaders, and work closely with industry, governments and communities throughout the Asia-Pacific.

• Ladies and gentlemen.

• By the year 2025, our region will account for almost half of the global economy’s output.

• That means, in addition to being the world’s largest producer of goods and services, the Asian region will also be the planet’s largest consumer.

• It is for that reason the issue of sustainability is fundamental to our future prosperity, and to that of our children.
• And that is why the establishment of the China-Australia Centre for Sustainable Urban Development is as visionary as it is timely.

• And why I am delighted to announce today that UniSA will be establishing an innovation fund of $1 million for our Chinese collaborations, available for matched funding from our Chinese partners.

• I congratulate everyone involved with this initiative for their contribution, I commend you all for your support, and I greatly appreciate your attendance at today’s opening and for the subsequent symposium.

• For those of you visiting from China, I hope you enjoy your time at our University and in Adelaide, and I wish you all the very best for your onward travels and for the future.

• Thank you.

(ends)