• Good evening.

• I have looked forward to this night for weeks and for the opportunity to take a close look at this extraordinary collection of Da Vinci’s machines.

• I’m thrilled that we were able to help support the exhibition and I thank Simon Klose for all the work that he’s put into staging this landmark event.

• This exhibition was developed by the Artisans of Florence and is a key component of the Riddoch Art Gallery’s exhibition program

• And a wonderful cultural, educational and tourism attraction for the South East.

• The Da Vinci Machines exhibition features 60 working models made from the drawings in Da Vinci’s Codex notebooks

• And you’ll see reproductions of 16 of Da Vinci’s most famous artworks including the Last Supper and the Mona Lisa
• There are a few things you might not know about the Mona Lisa which you might think about as you study the painting:

• Before it was stolen from the Louvre in 1911 it wasn’t even the most famous painting in its gallery, let alone the Louvre;

• Nobody noticed it was missing for more than 24 hours;

• Prime suspects at the time were the poet Guillaume Apollinaire who pointed the finger at the artist Pablo Picasso.

• The painting became famous for being famous.

• So much so that while the Mona Lisa remained ‘lost’ for two years, people still lined up at the Louvre to look at the empty space that it used to occupy.

• And if you ever wondered about that enigmatic smile, researchers at the University of Amsterdam and the University of Illinois used facial recognition software to uncover its secrets.
• They determined that Mona Lisa was

  o 83% happy;
  o 9% disgusted;
  o 6% fearful; and
  o 2% angry

• The man who captured happy, disgusted, fearful and angry on his Mona Lisa has been called a genius and the archetypal Renaissance man.

• Like many leaders of Renaissance humanism Leonardo Da Vinci did not see a divide between science and art.

• His work covered four main themes: painting, architecture, the elements of mechanics, and human anatomy.

• And fortunately for the chronically curious amongst us, between 1490 and 1495 he developed his habit of recording his studies in meticulously illustrated notebooks.
• His codices and manuscripts amount to 13,000 pages of notes and drawings, including designs for flying machines (some 400 years before the Wright brothers' first success), plant studies, war machinery, anatomy and architecture.

• These codices are now in the collections of museums, libraries, royal families and people like Bill Gates who bought the Codex Leicester for more than $30 million in 1994.

• Da Vinci’s ideas were mainly theoretical explanations, laid out in exacting detail, but they were rarely experimental.

• His helicopter design uses a braced, cloth-covered airscrew as a lifting device;

• His drawings of a fetus in utero, the heart and vascular system, sex organs, and other bone and muscular structures, are some of the first on human record.

• So while you’re enjoying this exhibition, consider this.

• In a time when his fellow human beings were farmers, soldiers, cart makers and builders, how is it that one man could envision a helicopter or a bicycle?
• How did he, a vegetarian and pacifist, come up with plans for a gunboat or a tank?

• At UniSA we have our own connection with Leonardo Da Vinci.

• David Unaipon, a Ngarrindjeri man, who was the first published Aboriginal writer, an inventor, a musician, an orator and a preacher.

• He was considered a ‘black genius’ and ‘Australia’s Leonardo’.

• His mechanical ideas included pre World War I drawings for a helicopter design based on the principle of the boomerang

• And he spent much of his life attempting to achieve perpetual motion.

• Our David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education – DUCIER - is named after him.

• And now DUCIER plays a central role in supporting the University of South Australia’s long-held commitment to Indigenous education and Reconciliation.
• And education is the key that holds all this together.

• At UniSA we talk a lot about education being the greatest intellectual adventure imaginable.

• We talk a lot about creativity and innovation, about using creativity to explore the many ways that a problem can be solved.

• According to legend, Leonardo was no great student but his greatest achievements began when he decided to learn as much as he could about the world he lived in.

• That was his great intellectual adventure.

• His flying machines required an understanding of how a bird flies, the flexing and bending of the wings, the guiding tail feathers, the lifting spread of feathers.

• He dissected corpses long before it was legal to do so outside the medical profession and from this he understood the skeleton, muscles and blood vessels and how they worked.
• More than 500 years ago, Leonardo da Vinci was the embodiment of creativity, innovation and intellectual adventure,

• a little of which we hope to nurture in our current students.

• This Da Vinci Machines exhibition is the kind of event that should instil in its audience, both young and old, a passion for science and for physics, not to mention art, history, technology, culture, engineering and design.

• And if it does all that – and bring cultural tourism to Mount Gambier – then Leonardo is still working his magic nearly 500 years after he died.

• Enjoy the exhibition.