Australia’s universities are leading and dynamic contributors to the intellectual and cultural life of the nation. Their contribution blends visual and performing arts with science and education. They encourage creativity and innovation and create possibilities for new ideas and forms of expression to flourish.
Good evening

I’m David Lloyd, Vice Chancellor and President of the University of South Australia.

At the outset, I acknowledge that this ceremony is taking place on Kaurna land.

The Kaurna people have performed ceremonies on this land for many centuries, and we pay respect to their living culture and the unique role they continue to play in the life of the Adelaide region.

Like the Kaurna people, universities create and develop a living culture.

And that culture is an essential part and expression of a university

whether it is long established such as Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard
or a very new one such as at UniSA.

It is a tremendously exciting and rare thing to have the unique opportunity of laying the foundations for a relatively new university such as UniSA.

We are at the beginning of something extraordinary.

We have the advantage of youth and the dynamism that comes with it, and we have a vision about where we would like UniSA to be years from now when people call us the Harvard of Adelaide.

By culture, we mean something that has always had a fundamental place in universities, through teaching and research.

This is how culture is formed, and how it is properly understood.
• Whether we are pursuing science, medicine, mathematics, engineering, or the arts themselves, we are engaged in the process that both creates culture, and seeks to understand it.

• Although "culture" is what we do, one of the key ways that culture is actually expressed by universities is through their cultural facilities, if they are fortunate enough to have them.

• Great universities have great museums, but of course such facilities generally develop over time, reflecting the core activities of the institution.

• In Australia, for example, the University of Sydney's long academic involvement with archaeology internationally, has had a distinguished history since the 19th century, and this is reflected in its renowned Nicholson Museum.
• The University of Melbourne's distinguished Ian Potter Museum of Art has benefitted hugely from many generous endowments that have enabled it to build one of the great collections of Australian art.

• In any modern university, including here at UniSA, art and culture has increasing importance as part of the university's engagement with its community,

• whether this be our own university community of students and staff, or the wider community beyond the institution in the larger world.

• Such facilities educate us about the challenging and inspirational nature of the visual arts,

• and they also communicate to the world at large something about our institutional identity, vision, energies and cultural ambitions.
• They tell the world who we are, and what our values are, institutionally.

• New as we are, UniSA is very fortunate to already have significant cultural pillars in place in the form of its teaching and learning in the visual arts

• through the South Australian School of Art, which came to UniSA with its already long and proud history, when we were established in 1991,

• and more recently through the work of our Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art, which in a few short years since it opened late in 2007, has built a deserved reputation as one of Australia's leading university art museums.

• These established resources and high quality facilities of ours make UniSA quite unique, distinguished and competitive among the higher education institutions in South Australia.
They reflect the vision and efforts of my predecessors.

This is how culture is progressively built up, step by step.

Now it is my vision to build upon these excellent foundations by expanding and developing UniSA's cultural role in the community.

What university art museums do is inextricably linked with the core business of universities:

- teaching and research

- and both the museum and the university itself are strengthened and invigorated by each other.

- And universities the world over are leading and dynamic contributors to the intellectual and cultural life of their nations.
• They form just over one-quarter of the art museum sector.

• They produce primary research through visual arts practice, history and innovation.

• They showcase emerging and established Australian, Indigenous and international artists through exhibitions, acquisitions, public art commissions, publications and festivals.

• They initiate collaborative partnerships and outreach activities to stakeholders outside the university.

• They facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, exhibitions and staff

• as well as seminars, conferences and forums,

• which develop and build strategic alliances with individuals and organisations.
• They demonstrate best practice and professional standards for the sector.

• And they contribute to the public understanding of the significance of university art museums to the broader Australian museum sector.

• And so ends the paid political announcement.

• But let’s not forget the overarching importance of creativity,

• and remind ourselves that the arts have been the natural vehicle for this creativity to the great advantage of all aspects of human civilisation.

• Just to give you a brief example of that: the skills of craftsmen making glass in Venice centuries ago, led to the development of optical innovations such as the microscope and telescope.
• Creativity is exemplified by the visual arts.

• The amazing flow of experiment and new ideas has been sustained since the Renaissance, making the visual arts one of our culture’s most important activities.

• And universities have been involved in visual arts since the early 17th century when they became central to great art collections.

• The current Ashmolean Museum, part of Oxford University, is a combination of two ancient institutions: the University Art Collection and the original Ashmolean.

• The older of the two, the Art Collection, began fairly modestly in the 1620s with portraits and curiosities,

• and then grew as more portraits of historical figures such as soldiers, monarchs, college founders, writers and artists were added.
• Even portrait painters donated their own portraits.

• In the 18th century they began adding landscapes, historical paintings and scenes of contemporary life.

• Then Alumni got into the act, donating collections of Old Masters and

• by the early 19th century, that University Art Collection was considered an art gallery of general interest

• and a definite stop for tourists.

• Even now, especially now, the Ashmolean caters to undergraduate and postgraduate courses at Oxford.

• Besides the obvious courses involving archaeology and anthropology, prehistory, Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies,
• the collections are increasingly being used in teaching across all of Oxford’s four great academic divisions, the Humanities; Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences; and Medical Sciences.

• Early modern universities concentrated on teaching and research into subjects such as natural philosophy, logic, medicine, theology, mathematics, astronomy and astrology, law, grammar and rhetoric.

• But it was the admission of humanist professors that transformed the study of grammar and rhetoric, focused on teaching students to write and speak with distinction, to translate and interpret classical texts and to lead honourable lives.

• So, throughout history, and especially today, university art museums have a much larger responsibility than just hanging paintings on the wall.
• They are instrumental in helping universities create and apply knowledge, and they educate.

• And they don’t just focus on educating artists, although universities are safe places for creative people to find their feet, to discover their voice, to perfect their art.

• Visual literacy is becoming an essential 21st century skill.

• In the report *First We See – The National Review of Visual Education* – it was recommended that visuacy – the ability to create, process and critique visual phenomena – should become a core skill area for all Australian students.

• Visual literacy is increasingly playing a major role in science.

• Here in Australia, art and science contribute much to each other.
The Universities of Melbourne, Queensland and Western Australia have added the role of academic liaison curator to bring the contents of their art collections to aid in more scientific pursuits.

The collections have been made available to medical students where talk of deconstruction of the artworks has helped them develop observation skills which in turn sharpens their diagnostic abilities when facing real patients.

At the University of South Australia, special effects from the Australian Dance Theatre’s international hit show Proximity are being adapted to help in rehabilitation for people with stroke and brain injury.

Our School of Health Sciences researcher, Associate Professor Susan Hillier, joined with Australia’s leading contemporary dance company in ‘Proximity Clinical’ – a research project using Proximity’s video engineering system in a clinical setting.
• Evidence tells them that vision is the sense least likely to be impaired post-stroke.

• So, providing visual feedback to patients through this technology might provide a firmer possibility of positive neuroplastic changes, with the patient able to see clearly on screen how they currently move and what simple things they can do to improve their movement.

• At the University of New South Wales, the National Institute for Experimental Arts is a leading example for experimental collaboration in art, science and emerging technologies.
• Their 3D Visualisation Aesthetics Lab partners with the Children’s Cancer Institute, the Garvan Institute and the Centre for Nanomedicine in Australia and the University of Dundee in Scotland to explore new biomedical data design and interactive techniques to provide more effective information across healthcare research and services.

• In the United States, at Tufts University’s Rose Art Museum, the academic liaison curator uses the art museum as a *living textbook* for learning across disciplines, drawing on its collection of more than 8,000 objects for the purposes of advancing research and inspiring creative thought.

• Connecticut’s Wesleyan University worked with US choreographer Liz Lerman as she created a multimedia dance project which engaged artists, scientists, and educators in an exploration of the human implications of discoveries in genetic science.
The work, entitled *Ferocious Beauty: Genome* featured collaborations from institutions such as the National Institutes for Health, John Hopkins University, Stanford University, Howard University, the Genetics and Public Policy Center, the Institute for Genomic Research and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Scientists and scholars not only advised on content, but also contributed choreographic and narrative ideas.

They also appeared in the staged work through projected video segments.

They have also helped to leverage media coverage and design interactive programming such as town hall discussions on bioethics and art/science workshops.

Paul Muldoon, the Pulitzer-prize winning poet and head of Princeton’s Centre for Creative and Performing Arts summed up the situation of the arts quite nicely:
• ‘Sometimes there’s been a feeling that the arts are for someone else, for somewhere else, at some other time.’

• He is a boy from Ireland’s County Antrim so he knows what he’s talking about!

• While there is a place for pure visual or aural enjoyment from art, exhibitions are principally a discourse, a catalyst for engaging the audience to develop ideas and explore the potential for images and texts to communicate meanings.

• Universities, because of their very nature as teachers, researchers and community engagers, play a very strong role in the creation of that discourse.

• Through their museums they are the catalyst for the development of new works, new ideas and art histories.
• Because we, and I speak for Australian universities, play a key role in art education, we also hold a mirror to Australia’s art history in a way that other public art collecting institutions don’t.

• We actively engage in both research and teaching and encourage discourse and debate.

• Our art collections offer a rich cultural history

• But more than that, university art museums provide opportunities for the revitalisation of the work of established artists

• as well as providing initial professional experience for early career artists and curators.

• Through our networks, university art museums help build audiences, create demand for contemporary art and pioneer new international relationships.
• Because university art museums represent a multiplicity of views and constituencies, from Indigenous to multicultural contexts, we provide a mirror to the complexity of contemporary Australia.

• That’s no small feat.

• But, not only do universities and their art museums contribute to creation and innovation in culture and science, we are also fundamental to excellence in museum research and practice.

• We educate creators and their audiences and they, in turn, add immeasurably to the cultural richness of the communities and societies they serve.

• Let’s look at the education of audiences:

• After photographer Brent Leideritz’s nude photographs, which were scheduled for exhibition at Adelaide’s new Convention Centre wing, were refused exhibition,
• the photographer replaced them with QR codes that the public could zap with their smartphones and see what the Convention Centre’s upper management deemed too salacious.

• University art museums – simply because they are not corporate entities with shareholder-limited values - can provide artists with a safe place to create, to push ideas, to challenge perceptions and to maybe risk the risqué.

• Universities also look to their museums to act as gateways for area residents to enter the university and make use of its cultural and intellectual resources.

• When you consider that only around 35 per cent of the population has a tertiary education, throwing open the doors of university art museums to the general public is a very good way of getting bang for the taxpayers’ buck.
• The University of South Australia is a major contributor to Adelaide’s cultural life and South Australia’s taxpayers are well rewarded by their exposure to our institutions.

• The South Australian School of Art makes a major contribution to artistic excellence and has, throughout its history, had a strong connection to the community that surrounds it.

• As one of the oldest art schools in Australia through your history can be traced some of the State’s finest artists and some of the State’s foremost teachers of that art.

• As well as being a centre for high-quality research, the SASA Gallery is an active site of teaching and learning for the community.
• The **Kerry Packer Civic Gallery** at the Hawke Centre is primarily a community art space where the Hawke Centre presents free art exhibitions to the general public.

• Our **Architecture Museum** has a unique collection of architectural drawings, correspondence, photographs and architects’ personal papers which is available both to scholars and to the general public.

• Our **matchstudio** is an interdisciplinary research and professional practice studio that supports our students’ transition from university to professional work.

• Their projects have ranged from designing Posters For Sight to raise awareness of the issues surrounding blindness and vision impairment

• to investigating warehousing concepts and cold room storage configuration for Forensic Science SA.
• They are now taking an active role in the university’s latest partnership – the ICT Innovation and Collaboration Centre –

• where UniSA, global IT giant Hewlett Packard and the State government will collaborate to explore new ideas for information and communications technology business and products to help build the state’s economy.

• The university’s flagship Anne and Gordon Samstag Museum of Art, like most university art museums around the world, recognises that they must engage with new audiences who arm themselves with weapons of mass distraction.

• The museum’s most recent exhibition, *Do It Adelaide*, broke new records for attendance numbers and for the spectrum of age groups attracted to the opening.
• There were 10,000 visitors, uncountable tweets, particularly from artists like Tracey Emin and Yoko Ono, and huge support from local media, many of whom are alumni of this university.

• The Samstag’s scholarship program is one of the richest in the world and very sought after by aspiring and talented individuals.

• Since the program started in 1992 there have been 134 scholarships awarded, of which 33 went to South Australian artists.

• Recipients get to choose where they want to study and the scholarship covers the cost of institutional fees and travel, as well as a living allowance that is currently worth about US$43,000 for 12 months of study.

• One of their recent ‘standouts’ is Madison Bycroft who completed her Bachelor of Visual Arts (Hons) at the SASA in 2012 and
• is currently undertaking a Masters at Piet Zwart Institute, at the Willem de Kooning Academy in The Netherlands courtesy of the Samstag Scholarship.

• Since she won the scholarship her work has been featured in

  o Sydney’s Museum of Contemporary Art’s ‘Primavera’ exhibition;
  o the 2015 Adelaide Festival’s ‘Blinc’;
  o Art Stage Singapore;
  o Microscope Galleries, Brooklyn, New York; and
  o she’s had a solo exhibition at the Australian Experimental Art Foundation.

• We are very proud, as a university, of the opportunities that our Samstag Scholarship has given Madison to advance her creative vision and to move human civilisation that much further along.
• The University also is a sponsor of the world renowned Adelaide Festival of Arts and the OzAsia Festival and is a partner of the Adelaide Film Festival.

• Its community-focused Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre hosts a series of public lectures and seminars offering informed viewpoints on key concerns of the 21st century.

• And all of our cultural efforts go towards educating the next generation of artists and writers and curators and your help in making this possible is something we are always grateful for.

• We have already celebrated the million dollar plus collection of the works of Sydney Ball which have been hung at the University’s Mawson Lakes campus and give creative energy to students and academics specialising in engineering, information technology and mathematical sciences.
• It is contributions such as Sydney Ball’s and your support of local artists through your scholarship funding,

  o The $3000 Sydney Ball Friends of the South Australian School of Art International Travel Award;
  o the $1000 Friends of SASA Inc Prize; and
  o the $500 prize awarded by the President of the Friends of SASA

• that will enable us to not only create a living culture for us to enjoy and learn from today,

• but to put down the foundations for the enormous possibilities that our future holds.

• We’re very pleased that you are our partners and will help us grow into that future.

• Thank you.