Tēnā koutou katoa e huihui mai nei
E ng mana, e nga reo e rau rakatira ma – tēnā koutou.
E ngā iwi tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Good morning everyone.

Mondelēz’s proposal to close the Dunedin Cadbury factory - if followed through - will not only be devastating for the workers, detrimental for the city’s economy and for our community, but it will also be incredibly misguided.

Mondelēz itself has acknowledged that the factory has a long and proud history, with highly efficient, long-serving, loyal and top-performing workers.

It therefore seems beyond belief that they are contemplating leaving our city.

Some have said that there is no point to today’s rally – that the closure is a foregone conclusion.

Maybe it is – but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try to change it.

If our own community won’t stand by its workers and send a clear message to a multi-national company that it doesn’t make sense to close an efficient and profitable operation, then who will?

Today is about showing solidarity and expressing to Mondelēz just how much hurt their announcement has caused to our city. It is also about warning Mondelēz that they are wrong to underestimate and even devalue the contribution of this city to their success.

Since the proposal was first announced, many people have asked me – “what has the Council done to try and retain the Cadbury factory in Dunedin?”

I, along with other city leaders, have met with representatives of Mondelēz and asked them under what conditions, could we possibly retain the factory in Dunedin.

Disappointingly, they have not been forthcoming with a response, insisting that they complete consultation with their workforce before looking at other possibilities.

They did however make it clear to me that there was nothing more the Council, or the city, could have done to influence what is ultimately its own commercial proposal – however misguided it is

The Council can not fund multi-national companies to help run their businesses; however the invitation remains for Mondelēz to tell us under what conditions the factory could remain open.
I strongly urge them to reconsider, come to the table and to present or listen to, alternative proposals.

I will work with any group, business, organisation or institution if there is a possibility of finding an alternative to closure of the Cadbury plant.

I believe that if Mondelēz does go ahead with its proposal and closes the factory, then they will ultimately regret that decision.

The Dunedin factory staff – from the managing director down – are highly skilled, incredibly loyal, very efficient and a model of workplace relations. They have so much to offer.

So one of the most disappointing aspects of this proposal is that it seems Mondelēz is considering only the costs of operating from Dunedin, rather than the overall value to both its own business and the wider community.

As well as being profitable, the factory is a significant part of Cadbury’s and the city’s built and social fabric and commercial heritage.

So I don’t want to see any part of the Cadbury enterprise torn out of our city. And I will fight to retain whatever can be kept if at all possible.

Cadbury’s is not just a production facility. It also includes a major visitor attraction in Cadbury World.

Thousands of visitors who come to our city each year go there and attend the Cadbury Chocolate Carnival.

Cadbury has poured considerable amounts of money and resource into revamping and enhancing Cadbury World over the past few months – significantly in the oldest, highest heritage value part of the factory.

In the dire event that the production plant is closed down, it is even more important that Cadbury World be retained and strengthened. Even on its own it employs 30 odd people and is immensely valuable to our visitor economy.

However, IF any part of the proposal does go ahead as planned, what I can assure those workers, families and other members of the community affected is that the city will pull together to support you – whether that be through facilitating opportunities for new employment, re-training or any other practical measure – you are not in this alone.

A wide number of other city leaders and agencies have expressed their desire to be part of a city wide support effort if and when required. I know they will follow through.

That community support – people coming together during times of need – is what helps make Dunedin such a great place to live. And the fact that Dunedin is a great place to live means we have such loyal and dedicated workforce – people don’t want to move away to join a ‘rat race’ in a bigger city.

That is why, no matter what Mondelēz’s final decision is – whether we can create a new facility or find new positions for our workers – whatever happens, our community, our city, will get through this together.

Kia kaha.

Kia ora.

Dave Cull
Mayor of Dunedin