Mayoral Speech – Yu Yuan Galley, Shanghai
*Anything Could Happen* exhibition launch
Monday, 8 May 2017

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

Deputy Director-General of Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office, Mr Liu Guangyong
Deputy District Mayor of Huangpu, Mr Chao Kejian
New Zealand Consul-General in Shanghai, Ms Guergana Guermanoff

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this exhibition – *Anything Could Happen*.

It is particularly pleasing, and an honour for Dunedin, that the exhibition is being shown in this gallery in the beautiful Yu Garden, which is such a taonga – a treasure, for your city. Indeed Yu Yuan is a living artwork in its own right.

You will see why the exhibition is called *Anything Could Happen*. It includes 45 works by 32 artists and ranges from art, fashion, sculpture and photography, through to ceramics, jewellery and even shoe-making.

The creativity of the artists and designers with works in this exhibition is unconstrained by convention – quite deliberately. Dunedin has always nurtured an innovative and diverse cultural scene and what you see in the show is a snapshot of the creative energy and style of Dunedin. There should be no surprise that Dunedin and Shanghai are both UNESCO Creative Cities.

So it is fitting then that our Sister City agreement – renewed only a year ago – has been expanded to include exchanges in the cultural and creative sectors.

In recent years, Dunedin has adopted an Arts and Culture Strategy *Ara Toi Ōtepoti – Our Creative Future*. It has been developed with the aim of positioning Dunedin as one of the world's finest creative small cities where creativity is fully integrated into the city's identity and recognised as essential to its future success.

It sets out the directions for further strengthening arts and culture in Dunedin over the coming years, and also recognises the intrinsic value of arts and culture as a way of the city expressing its vision and also recognises the value of the creative sector as part of the city's knowledge economy. I am sure that is a way of thinking Shanghai understands.

I know Dunedin people enjoyed the recent Shanghai Film Festival which opened its New Zealand tour in Dunedin and I hope we are soon able to host Shanghai artists in Dunedin. We look forward to working with you to help that happen.
The pleasure of being here is made even greater by the special relationship Shanghai and Dunedin share as sister cities – a special relationship that is beautifully symbolised by the connection Yu Yuan has with our garden Lan Yuan. Indeed without the generosity of Shanghai and Yu Yuan, Dunedin would not have Lan Yuan at all.

Like the two cities they are sisters – sister gardens – gardens that are living, growing symbols of our living, growing relationship.

Again I acknowledge the incredible gift Lan Yuan has been to Dunedin, an example of Shanghai’s ongoing generosity to Dunedin. It is at once a glowing expression of Chinese culture in our city and an acknowledgement of the contribution that our early Chinese citizens made to Dunedin city.

I hope that for the coming weeks the Anything Could Happen exhibition will be an expression of our contemporary culture within your city.

These sorts of exchanges, like the Shanghai Film Festival hosted in Dunedin recently, like the contribution of Shanghai University of Engineering Science models to iD fashion, and this exhibition of Dunedin art and fashion, help bring our two cities and our people closer together. They provide cross-cultural understanding where we can learn from our differences and revel in our similarities.

I would like to conclude by again emphasising that the relationship between Yu Yuan and Lan Yuan in Dunedin is the reason that this exhibition could happen. That is precious to us and we are greatly moved by the generosity of Yu Yuan in hosting this exhibition in this beautiful gallery.

Our feeling is expressed in the emblem we brought here to mark this event. It is fashioned from pounamu – the most revered and precious material in our land. In fact the South Island – home as it is to the Ngai Tahu iwi who have ownership of all this stone – is known as Te Wai Pounamu – the Waters of Jade. It is the only place it is found. The inscription is Aukaha – To tie and hold together. It speaks to the Friendship between Yu Yuan and Dunedin.

I commend this exhibition to you. Enjoy, learn, take inspiration from it and most of all may the artistic expressions displayed here nurture and enhance the wonderful bond between our two cities and our two communities for many years to come.

Kia ora tatou

Dave Cull
Mayor of Dunedin