Speech to the UNESCO Mayor Forum June 2016

Tena koutou katoa fellow mayors and city representatives. Hello everyone. And thankyou to UNESCO and the Beijing Municipal Govt for providing the opportunity to contribute to this Creative Cities forum.

This afternoon I also appreciate having the opportunity to tell you about Dunedin and our vision to be one of the world’s great small cities. And with a population of just 125,000 we are indeed a small and very young city – certainly compared to many of the great and historic cities represented here from all over the world.

However one thing all of us here leading our communities have in common, is the desire to make those communities places that offer our people the opportunity to live prosperous and fulfilling lives.

Prosperous and fulfilling – the conjunction of economy and culture but more importantly the imperative of making both sustainable.

So while our vision is about increasing incomes and jobs for our people – it is more about integrating culture and creativity into our city life and ensuring creativity supports our economic well-being and vice-versa.

Our city is fortunate to have a strong history of nurturing and celebrating literary, artistic and design endeavour.

By achieving UNESCO Creative City of Literature status in 2014 Dunedin is emphasising our cultural strengths to an international audience, but not just for cultural tourism or for attracting students to our prestigious University and
Polytechnic – also to reinforce the attractiveness and creativity of Dunedin as a place to live.

As a city, we have looked at the work of international experts such as Richard Florida who has written on the importance of integrating culture and innovation into sustainable urban development.

Florida notes city economies of Creative Cities are typified by the '3 Ts': Talent, Tolerance and Technology - ingredients that support innovation and future economic growth.

I will explain how the Dunedin City Council has developed strategies and policies to make this a reality. I will also tell you about some specific activities we are undertaking to deliver on our vision and nurture a sustainable urban environment.

Our Council used to have over 50 different strategies. Now we have just eight - and they are interconnected. They are Economic, Environment, Arts and Culture, Social Well-being, Transportation, Parks and Reserves, 3 Waters and our Spatial Plan.

Two in particular – the Economic Development Strategy and Arts and Culture Strategy – are crucial in how we integrate culture and innovation into our city.

The Economic Development Strategy includes several themes: including “linkages and beyond our borders”, and “Dunedin as a compelling destination”.

Both themes specifically address integrating culture and creativity in our urban area. They help provide a 'bridge' between Economic Development and Arts and Culture.

The Arts and Culture Strategy includes themes such as “inspired connections” & “a creative economy”.

Dunedin is the first city in New Zealand to consider the development of arts and culture through an economic development lens.
To realise a 'creative economy' Council has appointed a dedicated Arts and Culture position and a City of Literature project organiser in our economic development unit.

In doing this, the arts and creativity sector is aligned to the wider goal of creating a compelling destination for our residents and visitors alike.

Over the last five years, Dunedin has supported a number of projects which integrate culture and creativity into the development of a sustainable city including street art, cycle lanes, heritage building restoration, culturally based festivals and events, and red carpet roll-out for business start-ups.

Our future plans include education and business programmes to foster the flow of talent into the city and grow the value of existing arts and creative businesses.

We are planning sector by sector, starting with film and creative tourism, creating plans that build businesses to deliver new visitor experiences.

We'll be maximising the unique creative and cultural opportunities of becoming Australasia's first GigCity – with ultra-fast broadband.

We believe these measures will further support the city through a growing sense of pride and confidence, celebration of diversity and the development of our reputation as a compelling destination to study, live, work and visit.

All of this, we believe, helps contribute to our vision of Dunedin as one of the world's great small cities with a sustainable economy, a sustainable culture and sustainable values set in a sustainable environment.