

Speech by CE at Business of Design Week opening ceremony (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Business of Design Week (BODW) opening ceremony this morning (December 6):

Linda (Governor of Victoria, Australia, Ms Linda Dessau), Eric (Chairman of the Hong Kong Design Centre, Professor Eric Yim), Victor (Chairman of the BODW Steering Committee of the Hong Kong Design Centre, Mr Victor Lo), Margaret (Executive Director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Ms Margaret Fong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

â€‹ Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to join you today for the opening ceremony of Business of Design Week, the 17th edition.

â€‹ I'm delighted to welcome Melbourne as this year's BODW partner city, which is the first city from the southern hemisphere to partner with Asia's leading annual business design gathering. The catalyst for this creative partnership was a visit I made to Melbourne three years ago, during which I met the Premier of Victoria, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and, of course, Linda, the Governor of Victoria. We all had the strong desire, and exchanged views on how to forge stronger ties between our two places, particularly in the area of design. Since then I've been following closely the developments, including during my subsequent meeting with Linda in Hong Kong. I was naturally delighted when the Hong Kong Design Centre, organiser of BODW, signed an agreement with the State Government of Victoria in May last year, confirming Melbourne's role as this gathering's partner city.

â€‹ And I'm thrilled at the enthusiastic response from Melbourne and the state of Victoria. Creative Victoria's mission includes more than 170 designers, design organisations and institutions. I'm told it is the largest Australian design delegation ever to take part in an international design conference. The Melbourne Pavilion alone boasts more than 130 Victorian design projects. And more than 90 Victorian fashion projects are featured at BODW's 7 Mallery Street site.

â€‹ I should just add that our partnership with the city of Melbourne, Australia, this year is particularly meaningful because last month Hong Kong and Australia successfully concluded negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement. So I am anticipating a lot of exciting things to happen on various fronts, of course, including design.

â€‹ This creative coming together makes smart design sense. It makes great business sense, too. Melbourne and Hong Kong, after all, offer singular strengths in business and design. Hong Kong, one of the world's leading financial centres and a global research and business hub, is blessed with a distinctive East-meets-West culture. We are designed to create rewarding connections and to help our partners excel.

As for Melbourne, it is one of the world's most liveable cities. Indeed, as Eric noted, Melbourne has been named the most liveable city in the world for the past seven years in a row. Apart from being a multicultural city, Melbourne is also a global centre for technology, health and education, as well as a hub for arts, culture and innovation. Under the theme of "Think, Collaborate and Create" this year, we all look forward to Melbourne's innovative showcase on how design and innovation are changing contemporary urban landscapes and bringing impacts to our societies and living.

This year's BODW features a wealth of design intelligence and insight, as Eric has outlined for us. Alongside the BODW Conference and Fashion Asia, there's also the brand new BODW City Programme, which will foster collaboration among local designers and businesses and engage the wider public through workshops, festivals and other happenings in different districts. I look forward, as well, to the Design Centre's collaboration with our Tourism Commission, bringing design and creativity to a wider audience at the community level.

Ladies and gentlemen, my Government is committed to supporting the design and creative sector. Last year, I announced the addition of HK\$1 billion into our CreateSmart Initiative, a dedicated fund for our creative industries. This year, my Government is earmarking another HK\$1 billion, this time for our Film Development Fund. It will be used to boost local production, build our film audience and nurture talent, particularly in scriptwriting and script production. It will also help market Hong Kong films as a brand, while focusing on new markets. The Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road regions, in particular, offer great promise for film and our creative industries in general. And I'm delighted to note that a "Greater Bay Area & Design" discussion was held Monday afternoon as part of BODW.

My Government is also committed to developing design thinking as a problem-solving capability. In the past year, the Design Centre has been organising classes and seminars both at the community level and within the Hong Kong Government. We are now working with the Design Centre to establish an event space, here in the vibrant community of Wan Chai, to enhance public appreciation of design and design thinking.

Design thinking can only lead to creative connections. You can see that at work, right here, at BODW. For that, my thanks to Eric, Victor and the Hong Kong Design Centre. I'm grateful also, of course, to Linda and the city of Melbourne, this year's partner city.

I wish you all a very enjoyable BODW, and the best of business and design in the coming year. Thank you very much.