

Speech: V&A Dundee is ready to open its doors

Scotland Secretary David Mundell has hailed the arrival of the V&A Dundee, which opens on Saturday (15 September).

It is an incredibly important moment.

An amazing treasure trove from one of our greatest cultural institutions is about to be shared with millions of visitors from Scotland, the UK and around the world.

It was a great privilege for me to speak at tonight's (Wednesday 12 September) gala dinner and enjoy an all-too-brief tour of the exhibitions.

Architect Kengo Kuma's new building, on Dundee's wonderfully redeveloped waterfront, is simply breath-taking.

Iconic is an overused word – but it is an instant icon.

I love the juxtaposition with that much-loved symbol of Dundee, RRS Discovery; the old and new side by side in city that is redefining itself for the 21st century.

But V&A Dundee is about much, much more than a stunning building.

Ultimately, it will be judged by its exhibitions and events.

Having been inside, I'm in no doubt it's going to be a huge success.

Inspired by the richness of Scottish art and design down the centuries, backed by the world-renowned strength of the V&A's collections and driven by an exceptional team of curators, it is a place people will want to return to time after time.

It is a place that people will cherish and a source of real pride for Dundee.

It will delight our senses, challenge our preconceptions and – of course – nurture generations of young minds.

I firmly believe V&A Dundee will quickly become as well-loved as our other great institutions. Our National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, for example, or Glasgow's Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery. Or, indeed, 'V&A London,' as we'll have to start calling it.

The UK Government awarded an additional £5 million for the project in the 2016 Budget.

We all owe a huge debt to everyone involved in the delivery of this inspiring

project – surely the biggest single investment in culture and the arts in our lifetimes.

So I want to put on record my thanks all those who have turned the dream into reality, from the City Council to the V&A staff, from the builders to the architect.

They have worked wonders to enrich the cultural life of Dundee, Scotland and the whole of the UK.