Event: Launch of Melbourne International Games Week
Date: Friday 23 October 2015
Location: Swinburne University of Technology

Speech notes
Vice-Chancellor Professor Linda Kristjanson

Thank you to everyone for being here today, to celebrate the launch of Melbourne International Games Week.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather - the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We also pay respects to all Aboriginal Community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to the Victorian Premier, the Honourable Daniel Andrews. Thank you for making the time to be with us at Swinburne this morning.

And to our other special guests:

- The Honourable Philip Dalidakis, Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
- Lawrence Crumpton from Microsoft Australia
- Tony Reed from Game Developer's Association
- James Bonner from Opaque Multimedia
- Irene Verins from VicHealth
- And representatives from Creative Victoria

While I must confess that I am not much of a gamer myself, I do have a great deal of admiration for people that have the passion and ability to develop games.

At Swinburne, we have been delivering games courses to students for over eleven years. In that time we have produced over 600 graduates, who have gone on to specialise as developers, designers, engineers, artists and writers.

Our gaming staff and students are heavily involved in the Melbourne and Australian games community, which is why it is fitting that the launch of Melbourne International Games Week takes place here at Swinburne.

At last count, Swinburne students and staff are involved in six events during Melbourne International Games Week.

A major highlight of the week will be the presentation of six new games, developed by Swinburne students in their final year of study. These games will be presented at none other than PAX, the largest videogame event in the southern hemisphere.

And later tonight in this very space, the Microsoft More Personal Computing Hackathon will begin. This 48-hour event will see teams of coders and developers work around the clock to develop a suite of new applications for Microsoft technology. These will include four health challenges, posed by sponsors VicHealth.

I want to wish the teams competing in the hackathon the best of luck. Please do try and get some sleep over the next 48 hours!

And while we are all gathered here today, I am very pleased to announce a wonderful new partnership between Swinburne and the Game Developer's Association of Australia.

This partnership will give Swinburne's Games and Interactivity student's access to The Arcade, a game development hub in Melbourne's CBD.

They will get to sit among over 80 resident game developers and be surrounded by more than 30 game development studios.

I am sure that this new partnership and access to industry will help our students to become the next generation of successful game developers.

It's important to note that Swinburne's gaming graduates have gone on to find much success in Australia and internationally. The team from Opaque Multimedia who are here with us today, are a fantastic example of this.

Earlier this year, their team won first place in the Microsoft Imagine Cup 2015 World Citizenship Competition, for their Virtual Dementia Technology.

Working in partnership with Alzheimers Australia, the team used gaming technology to create a virtual reality training experience that enables people to see what life is like living with dementia.

As a result, there is an increased level of empathy towards people with dementia. This has helped improve relationships with thousands of family members and carers.

This is why it is so important to continue to invest in education, so that we can create outcomes that change people's lives.

One person who has been a big supporter of education is Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews.

Since his election, Premier Andrews and his Government have placed great emphasis on making Victoria the "Education State".

We've taken note of the significant initiatives that you are progressing to improve educational outcomes in Victorian primary and secondary schools.

We welcome the work that you have been doing to restore confidence in vocational education in Victoria and we were delighted to welcome you to our former Lilydale campus earlier this week to announce the way forward for that campus next year in partnership with the local community.

Premier, since your election you have spent a lot of time focussing on the educational opportunities that we can offer people to get the skills they need for the jobs in the future. This too is one of

Swinburne's great strengths.

We're delighted to have you here at Swinburne today to formally open Melbourne International Games Week.

So, without further ado, it is my pleasure to invite the Honourable Daniel Andrews to speak to you now.