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**How can innovation and technology assist in making Melbourne the arts, culture and design destination?**

I have had the great fortune of being the director of a major arts institution. I see on a daily basis the way arts and culture permeate our Melbourne community through our galleries, museums, artist-run spaces, theatres and bookshops.

The Melbourne community has an incredibly active engagement with the arts, but we need to be bold if we are to make Melbourne the arts, culture and design destination.

In the digital age, where we are all expressing ourselves in new ways; embracing creative endeavour and innovation in the arts is critical. Art, like technology, is about connecting people and sharing our stories.

Our cultural institutions need to cultivate new technologies to create experiences that reflect and represent the world we live in today. By bringing art and technology together, we transform the way visitors engage with art.

A thriving arts scene will transform this city into an international destination, drawing in tourists from around the globe, but also cementing our community's engagement with the arts. We need an environment that fosters the ingenuity and innovation of our creative community.

Innovation underpins what we are now doing at the National Gallery of Victoria. Our multimedia team is filming with drone cameras; we are using virtual reality Oculus Rift technology in our exhibitions to experience art in 3D; and our conservation department is working with the Australian Synchrotron on ground-breaking world-first discoveries using powerful x-rays and infrared radiation.

In our 2013 exhibition *Melbourne Now* we sought to inspire and enrich people's lives. This was a showcase of the creativity and dynamism of Melbourne's art scene across visual art, design, architecture, sound, dance, fashion and more. For me it was humbling, exciting, and unexpected to see Melbourne embrace the exhibition. It should encourage the entire arts scene to be bold and to continue to push the boundaries and deliver the unexpected in all that we do.

We are reaching out to our visitors whether they are at home or in the gallery, through live streaming or the *NGV Guide*, through our free digital collection resource, and through our social media. We believe the NGV's Collection, programs and resources are valuable to all Australians and aspire to increase our reach across Australia through technology.

This expands our audience both locally and overseas. It draws in children, young people and their families. Victoria's creative industries are a significant contributor to the economy of the state, accounting for \$23 billion that is eight per cent of Victoria's economy. We know the value of the arts for the lives of people.

As Steve Jobs, one of the world's most brilliant innovators, once said, "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower". We need to ensure through innovation that Melbourne continues to be a leading city of arts, culture and design.

To end on a personal note, I have grown up loving the arts. I see life through the prism of the arts whether it be visual, performance, sound. It is fundamental to my sense of the world.

Everyone can be enriched the way I have been, but we must embrace an innovative approach and use technology as we move forward to connect with new audiences.