



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia pays tribute to a champion of reconciliation

The Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, HE Mr Graeme Wilson, today joined the Australian Governor-General, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in paying tribute to Nelson Mandela on behalf of the Australian Government and people.

"The world has lost one of the greatest and most respected leaders of the 20th century. Nelson Mandela was a true champion of reconciliation and a tireless advocate for justice, human dignity and freedom. He was a source of inspiration to people from around the globe."

"With the sad news of his passing, I express the condolences of all Australians to Mr Mandela's widow Graça Machel, his children and the people of South Africa, who have lost their nation's iconic father and its greatest son", Mr Wilson said.

Mr Wilson said Australia was proud to have shared in the struggle against apartheid and to have contributed to South Africa's transformation into a free, democratic and vibrant nation. Australians also cherished the memories of Nelson Mandela and the strong bonds that were established with South Africa through him and through the noble values he symbolised.

"Nelson Mandela has always been held in great affection and esteem by Australia. Shortly after his release from Robben Island, Australia welcomed Mr Mandela to Australian shores and he was later honoured with the nation's highest award, the Companion of the Order of Australia. He will be deeply missed and always revered," Mr Wilson concluded.

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