



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

MEDIA RELEASE

1 February 2012

***Message Stick* urban indigenous art exhibition opens in Cape Town**

Cape Town will be the first African stop for the Australian Government's latest touring art exhibition, *Message Stick: Indigenous Identity in Urban Australia*.

The *Message Stick* exhibition features 21 significant works by 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists who are at the forefront of the contemporary arts scene in Australia.

According to Australia's High Commissioner to South Africa, HE Ann Harrap, the works present unique political and social perspectives of contemporary Australian history and culture. The images are dynamic, sometimes influenced by experiences of dislocation and loss, but also infused with humour, energy and optimism.

"I feel very privileged to be able to showcase the significant artistic achievements of Indigenous Australians to a South African audience."

"Australia and the constituent countries of Africa have never been more interlinked and connected – through growing trade, through multilateral cooperation and through people-to-people links particularly migrants and students – and so ensuring we have respect and understanding of one another's culture and identity is fundamental to maintaining that new dynamic relationship." said Ms Harrap.

The *Message Stick* exhibition started its overseas tour in New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. It begins its African journey in Cape Town, and will then travel through other parts of Africa, the Middle East and India during 2012 and 2013.

The Lovell Gallery in Woodstock will host the *Message Stick* exhibition in February 2012. The exhibition will be open to the public from 1 February, with an official opening function hosted by the High Commissioner to be held at the Lovell Gallery on the evening of Thursday 16 February. Media representatives are welcome to attend the opening – please rsvp to mulyani.rhind@dfat.gov.au

For media enquiries, please contact Natalie Mendelsohn on +27 -834093619 or see the website of the Australian High Commission in Pretoria at www.southafrica.embassy.gov.au