



## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION SOUTH AFRICA

### **Official Opening of Australian Consulate in Cape Town** 5pm on Thursday 3 December 2009

#### **Remarks by Australian Minister for Early Childhood Education, Childcare and Youth and Minister for Sport, the Hon Ms Kate Ellis MP**

It is a great pleasure to be here this evening in Cape Town for the **official opening of the Australian Consulate in Cape Town.**

The appointment of *Mr Andrew Douglas to be Australia's Honorary Consul*, resident in Cape Town, with jurisdiction throughout the Northern, Western and Eastern Cape provinces, is an important step to building on the deep and wide-ranging relations between Australia and South Africa.

It comes at a time when Australia is significantly **strengthening its engagement with the countries, institutions and peoples of Africa.**

We are *strengthening our political engagement* – in the past six months five African foreign ministers have visited Australia and in January this year, Australia's Foreign Minister was the first ever Australian foreign minister to attend an African Union meeting.

We are building on our *trade and investment relationship* – there are over 300 Australian companies in Africa, and the FIFA 2010 World Cup will offer opportunities to build on that.

And we're *substantially increasing our development assistance to Africa* in areas where Australia has expertise and can make a positive and unique contribution to Africa's development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

South Africa has traditionally been our **most important relationship in Africa**, for a whole host of reasons.

We, like many other nations, stood with ordinary South Africans in the *long struggle against apartheid* and assisted in your *transition to a modern, democratic nation*.

*Our Governments have a long, productive history of cooperation* across a wide range of issues, including most recently on climate change, science and technology and global economic issues. And as Australia does more with Africa, Australia will be looking more and more to partner with South Africa.

*Our peoples are doing more and more together* - in the business world, in tourism, in our educational institutions and on the sporting field. There are now 12 direct flights per week and more than 100,000 Australians visit South Africa each year. And I almost don't need to mention our fierce competitive rivalry in rugby and cricket, and other sports, which is well-known to us all.

In this context, **Mr Douglas' appointment will help build on these ties**, and in particular foster the strong trade and investment dynamic, including through the Australian Government's proposed business networking opportunities – through Austrade's *Business Club Australia* – to be centred around Cape Town during the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa next year.

And Mr Douglas will play an *important consular role* as well, particularly with the 2010 FIFA World Cup approaching. Already almost 30,000 tickets have been sold to Australians who will come to cheer on the 'Socceroos'.

*Mr Douglas comes well-qualified to the role*. He is an Australian businessman, resident of Cape Town for a number of years and well-known in the South African communications community. The company provides a range of commercial, marketing and production services to a variety of Australian and South African clients.

Mr Douglas is also responsible for the management of all commercial development and partnership activities for the *Australian Football League in Africa*. In South Africa the game is known as 'Footy Wild' and the sport is growing quickly with almost 20,000 registered players and a valuable contribution to community development in South Africa.

I want to make mention of a major reason why I am here this week – the draw of the **FIFA 2010 World Cup** to be held for the first time in Africa.

On behalf of the Australian Government and the Australian people, I wish South Africa all the best for a successful hosting of the world's biggest sporting event to be held for the first time in Africa. We're very excited that the Aussie soccer team – the 'Socceroos' – has qualified and are very much looking forward to a successful campaign.

As you may be aware, Australia is **bidding to host the 2018 or 2022 FIFA World Cup**. In a little under 12 months, FIFA will decide which of the bidding nations is best-placed to host.

Australia is an ideal candidate:

- We are ready and willing to host, hence the slogan for our bid – “Come Play”;
- We have a proven track record in hosting major events – the Olympic Games in 2000 in Sydney were but one example;
- We have quality infrastructure and the capacity to enhance it;
- We are in Asia, the fastest growing market for football in the world;
- And Australians love our football!

Finally, with the world’s eyes turning to the World Cup in South Africa, I wanted to mention the **1-GOAL Education for All initiative**.

Many of us personally know the power of education in helping to change lives and to give individuals the chance to achieve their potential. And we recognize the power of football ‘on and off the field’ to give all children a better chance at life.

The 1-GOAL campaign seeks to use the World Cup to highlight the grim reality that 75 million children around the world do not have the opportunity to obtain a basic education and to build support and awareness so as to make the *education for all children around the world the lasting legacy of the first African World Cup*.

Tomorrow morning I will be *demonstrating Australia’s support for the campaign in a tangible way*. Tomorrow the Australian Government will donate some 1700 Lapdesks, an example of which I have here, to disadvantaged children at a local school.

On that note, I’d like to encourage you all to register your support on the 1 Goal website - [Join1GOAL.org](http://Join1GOAL.org).

Please continue to enjoy the evening – we are very fortunate that we will now hear an acclaimed *Australian singer-songwriter, Lior*.

Thank you.