



## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

# MEDIA RELEASE

28 February 2014

### **Fierce competitors on the field celebrate a long history of friendship**

While the Australian and South African cricket teams go to battle in the Third Test match in Cape Town (1-5 March), a number of official events will take place on the sidelines of the match to commemorate the strong and growing Australia-South Africa bilateral relationship, in the context of the South African Government's 20 years of democracy celebrations.

The Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, HE Mr Graeme Wilson, will join the Australian and South African teams on the ground before the commencement of the Third Test match for the playing of the national anthems. Mr Fikile Mbalula, the South African Sports and Recreation Minister, will host a lunch on the first day of the Test and hand over plaques to Cricket South Africa and Cricket Australia to express appreciation for their contributions to 20 years of democracy. The High Commissioner will also deliver an address as part of an official 20 years of democracy dinner hosted by Mr Mbalula. Additionally, the Australian High Commissioner and a number of former South African and current Cape Cobra players will participate in a cricket clinic in Khayelitsha township on Friday 28 February.

Speaking from Cape Town today, Mr Wilson highlighted the substantive and diverse relationship between Australia and South Africa. He noted the recently inaugurated Australian Business Chamber of Commerce Southern Africa (ABCSEA) which will be an important mechanism for increasing commercial ties. ABCSEA's membership will draw on the large number of Australian mining companies that have business interests in southern Africa, as well as a range of businesses in other sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure and education. Businesses based in southern Africa with interests in Australia are also welcome to join.

"It is a very exciting time to be Australia's High Commissioner to South Africa, particularly with Australia taking on important international responsibilities such as our membership of the UN Security Council in 2013-14, our presidency of the G20 this year and our chairing of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for the next two years. These responsibilities also open up new opportunities for bilateral cooperation", Mr Wilson said.

Mr Wilson said that in addition to strong trade and investment ties, the bilateral relationship was underpinned by extensive people-to-people links. There will be a number of cultural events during this year's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of democracy celebrations to celebrate and commemorate these ties. These include an outreach program aimed at encouraging young students to get excited about science and particularly the amazing Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescope. Additionally, the cutting-edge 'Tropfest' short film festival will be showcased across South Africa, with the broader aim of setting up an African version of the competition to support young filmmakers. The Australia Council for the Arts is also supporting an exciting new experimental art collaboration with the University of the Free State and the Vryfees festival, worth over R580,000 per annum for three years.

Australia's significant historical links with South Africa, including our support for the anti-apartheid movement, will be highlighted through a photographic exhibition to be held in the second half of 2014. The exhibition will illustrate Australia's contribution to the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa, including the Australian Government's leadership role in pursuing financial sanctions and sports boycotts,

as well as non-governmental activities led by trade unions, churches and individual activists. The exhibition will also include images of the warm and substantial bilateral relationship in the post-1994 era.

See [www.southafrica.embassy.gov.au](http://www.southafrica.embassy.gov.au) for further details of these upcoming cultural events.

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