

WELCOME ADDRESS FROM IFA LETHU

OPENING OF THE *Home and Away* EXHIBITION: CANBERRA, 26 MAY 2011

The Director of Ceremonies, Professor Lawrence Cram, the Right Honorable Mr. Malcolm Fraser, The Board of the Drill Hall gallery, Representatives of the South African High Commission, Mr. Masango, members of Government, the Diplomatic corp, funders, media and Honored guests-all protocol observed.

Good Evening. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you tonight on behalf of the national and international boards of the Ifa Lethu Foundation. May I also tender the apologies of our Chair, Ambassador Lindiwe Mabuza who could not be here tonight on account of a sudden and serious illness. I would like to begin firstly, by personally thanking the Honourable Mr. Malcolm Fraser for accepting the position on our Global Advisory Council. South Africa thanks you for this. Secondly I would acknowledge our donor's role in setting up the Foundation. They are our founding donors, Diane Johnstone and Bruce Haigh as well as others such as Margaret Johnson, Steve Etheridge , Bruce Hunt, Anne Coutts, Sue Scott, Russell Rollason, Melissa Becker and Victor Gordon. I would also like to acknowledge dear friends of the Foundation - Mr. Phillip Green and Dr. Grace Moshe.

Bringing this exhibition to Canberra on the first leg of its international journey before it travels to the UK, USA and Chile, is a proud moment for us, as I am sure for many of our donors here this evening. In a sense, the collection has come back home to tell a story. It also allows us to account for what we have done with these paintings. Much of what you see today was made possible through our Australian friends and others and represents a story of resilience and triumph against tyranny. So that we say NEVER AGAIN. To date Ifa Lethu has repatriated 436 pieces of art from 14 countries and tonight we hope to attract many more such donations from Australia.

When I reflect on the issue of resilience, I am reminded at this point of a story which Minister Kate Ellis shared with me just yesterday. As the then Minister of Sport for Australia she recalled opening this exhibition in South Africa for the Soccer World cup in June last year. It was a melancholy night for Australians as the Socceroos had just suffered a defeat at the hands of Germany. Following the opening of the exhibition she went on to attend another event hosted by the Football Federation of Australia. Given the sense of despondency that permeated the air, she reminded guests at the event of the exhibition she had just opened and of its theme of resilience which so inspired her. She also emphasised the exhibition's message that failures should fill one with a determination to improve. That, she said, was a lesson for the Socceroos and its supporters for the future.

Three years ago, The Foundation included the developmental element into its work, with the intention of using the creative sectors -visual arts, crafts, sculptures and Fashion -to satisfy South African national impact priorities of poverty alleviation and the Millennium Goals. This led to the implementation of the creative entrepreneurship programmes which have resulted in the training of some 2300 creative practitioners to produce export ready products, and the development of 800 creative entrepreneurs who are currently trading successfully. Today the Foundation manages South Africa's largest repatriation and entrepreneurial development efforts and enjoys partnership and academic linkages with institutions in the UK, USA, India, Chile, Kenya and Mozambique. Given this, we hope we can use this opportunity to encourage ANU to join our other international partners in collaborative initiatives with our Foundation.

The success of Ifa Lethu also demonstrates the importance of aid and resources being channeled directly into projects and into the countries of their origin. This was clearly demonstrated through the awarding of aid and financial resources by donors, aid agencies and corporates from Australia-such as BHP

Billiton and AUSAID. In recent months we have been enthused by the political messages emanating from Australia regarding the value of Africa. Australian Foreign Minister, The Honorable Mr. Kevin Rudd has continued to reiterate this in his address to the African Union in January of this year as well as in his address to the African Diplomatic Corp last night in the celebration of Africa day. With such messages have come the commitment of 291 million Australian dollars and 750 scholarships for Africa.

While such commitments are laudable and encouraging we would urge that resources be ploughed directly into African countries and African projects as has been done for Ifa Lethu. Such direct interventions will clearly ensure success and effectively brand the profile of Australia in our countries.

Having made that plea, I would like to conclude by thanking Anthony Oats, Carol Brown and Nancy Seever, whose efforts in ensuring that this exhibition opened on schedule, are really appreciated. To Di and Bruce, South Africans owe you an enormous debt of gratitude. Ladies and gentlemen- enjoy.

Dr. Narissa Ramdhani
CEO