



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION SOUTH AFRICA

**Remarks by High Commissioner, HE Ms Ann Harrap
Australia Night: Football Federation Australia and Austrade's
Business Club Australia
Tuesday 1 December
Cape Town, South Africa**

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great pleasure for me to welcome you here this evening to what we are calling our 'Australia night'.

Tonight gives us – representatives of both the Australian government and Football Federation Australia – an opportunity to share with all of you some of our hopes, dreams and expectations for WC2010 and beyond.

So what is Australia looking for next year when one of the greatest shows on earth comes to South Africa?

Well I can tell you we have high hopes, dreams and expectations for the Australian team, the Socceroos. The team captured the imagination of Australia and the world in Germany in 2006. In what was their first appearance at the World Cup finals for 32 years, the Socceroos did us all proud with a strong performance, reaching the round of 16 only to be knocked out by eventual World Cup champions, Italy.

And now, the Socceroos, under the careful stewardship of coach Pim Verbeek, have performed consistently strongly in the World Cup qualifying campaign, reflected in their climb in the FIFA rankings, reaching at one stage 14th in the world, to now be ranked number 21.

With a squad featuring many of the Germany 2006 personnel, I think it would be fair to say that Australians have high hopes that the Socceroos will equal or better their last showing.

We also have high expectations of the Australian fans who have shown themselves time and again to be passionate, proud Aussies who support their team but who also applaud the skill and sportsmanship of others in equal measure.

Local Organising Committee CEO, Mr Danny Jordaan said at the flag raising ceremony in Johannesburg to mark the 200 day countdown to the World Cup next

year that he would be holding Ambassadors and High Commissioners to account and watching how many fans from their respective countries would be visiting South Africa in 2010 compared with how many visited Germany in 2006.

Well I can tell you Danny and other LOC and FIFA representatives that Australia won't disappoint. There are already over 29,000 tickets sold to Australians, one of the highest figures per head of population of the participating nations – so you can see that Australians are brimming with excitement to get here.

We have high expectations of what this World Cup will do for Australia and Africa relations. The World Cup comes at a time when Australia is looking to significantly enhance our engagement with Africa - at the political level; through trade and investment; through our development assistance program and through people to people links.

The World Cup sporting fiesta will be a boon to those links as Australians, South Africans and other Africans from the 'six pack countries' - and from all walks of life – meet, mingle, and form friendships that will have lasting benefits for the individuals and the nations concerned way beyond next year.

And we have high hopes and expectations of the opportunities for business connections that the World Cup presents.

Tonight Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm particularly delighted to be able to announce the Business Club Australia initiative, which will take place during the World Cup. Business Club Australia is a world-class program that creates strategic business activities around truly global sporting events.

BCA is an initiative of the Australian Trade Commission, the Australian Government's trade and investment agency. It is designed to align Australian business and government promotional efforts in South Africa around the World Cup and provide an opportunity for Australian businesses to strengthen new and existing relationships with South African and other international business travellers.

The BCA has been a very effective business networking model at a range of mega sporting events from the Olympics to Rugby World Cups – but this is the first time that it has been applied to football and we are very proud to have the endorsement of FFA for BCA as Australia's official international business program for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

BCA will be based at the 221 Restaurant here at the Waterfront and so for at least the first two weeks of the tournament there will be a physical location for business networking activities including luncheons, dinners, cocktail functions, industry themed events and official receptions.

Large screens will also show key World Cup matches, most notably our important Socceroos clashes, for those not able to cheer them on first hand.

We are also likely to host BCA events in each city immediately preceding a Soccerroos game.

So for those wishing to pursue business opportunities during the World Cup I encourage you to get involved with BCA, particularly here in Cape Town where our research indicates that four out of five business travellers will be spending some of their time.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I've given you a sense of how much Australia is looking forward to next year – of our hopes and expectations.

But I can tell you our excitement does not stop there – as evidenced by Australia's bid to host the 2018 or 2022 FIFA World Cup.

I will leave the team from the FFA to tell you the story of why Australia would make a fantastic host – suffice to say, that like South Africans, Australians love our sport – we love to play, watch, organize, compete, ensure maximum participation and enjoyment – and most of all have fun with our sport – and we will do that in spades if you 'COME PLAY' with us in 2018 or 2022.

Thank you.