



**AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION**  
**PRETORIA - Monday 27 January 2014**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Australian Business Chamber of Commerce (Southern Africa)**

South Africa's Minister of Mineral Resources, the Hon Susan Shabangu, was the guest of honour at the inauguration of the Australian Business Chamber of Commerce (Southern Africa) (ABCSA). The inauguration coincided with the 'Australia Day' celebrations hosted by the Australian High Commissioner, HE Mr Graeme Wilson, on 27 January 2014.

"The ABCSA will be a not for profit organisation with a broad membership including multinational companies, SMEs and individuals. ABCSA 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 will also be welcome to join", said Mr Wilson at the inauguration.

Mr Wilson used the occasion to highlight the substantive and diverse relationship between Australia and South Africa. He said the bilateral relationship was underpinned by strong trade and investment ties, extensive people-to-people links, and shared values such as democracy, equality, human rights and respect for the rule of law. A number of cultural and sporting events during this year's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of democracy celebrations would showcase these connections to the South African public. Mr Wilson also noted that Australia had significant historical links with South Africa, including its support for the anti-apartheid movement and its leadership in relation to international financial and sporting sanctions.

"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.

The development of ABCSA has been supported by Mr Wilson and Mr John Madew, Australia's Senior Trade Commissioner for Africa. ABCSA will be headed by Mr Michael Templeton, the Regional Manager (Finance and Administration) of Leighton Africa. Describing ABCSA's role, Mr Templeton said: "There has been a growing need across various industries to create a business group with an Australian flavour. ABCSA will provide a stepping stone to help businesses get established, access relevant information and network with other businesses that have similar synergies".

The ABCSA inauguration was generously sponsored by Challenger Energy Limited. Challenger is an ASX-listed oil and gas explorer poised to enter the world-class shale gas province of the Karoo Basin via its South Africa-based subsidiary, Bundu Gas and Oil Exploration. For further details, see [www.challengerenergy.com.au](http://www.challengerenergy.com.au)

For more information about ABCSA, please contact:

Mr Michael Templeton  
Regional Manager Finance and Administration  
Leighton Africa  
(w): +2787 310 9270  
(c): +2776 942 4512  
(e): [michael.templeton@leightonafrica.com](mailto:michael.templeton@leightonafrica.com)