



NEWS RELEASE

Premier Jay Weatherill
Treasurer
Minister for State Development
Minister for the Public Sector
Minister for the Arts

Thursday, September 26, 2013

SA to host world-class Aboriginal art festival

The future of Aboriginal art as a high-end art industry will be strengthened with a new world-class visual art festival to be held in South Australia.

Premier Jay Weatherill has announced the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island visual arts festival – to be held in Spring 2015 – and supported by the State Government, Art Gallery of South Australia and a \$4 million BHP Billiton investment.

BHP Billiton chief executive Andrew Mackenzie joined Mr Weatherill for the announcement at the Art Gallery of South Australia today.

“Art is a significant contributor to the economy of Aboriginal communities,” Mr Weatherill said.

“We want to strengthen the future of Aboriginal artwork in high-end arts.

“We also have the ambitious goal of making South Australia the international hub for Aboriginal visual art.

“When we asked BHP Billiton last year to recommit to South Australia, support for a major national Aboriginal cultural event was one of the initiatives we sought.

“South Australia was a leader in the appreciation of Aboriginal art – we were the first to display work by an Aboriginal artist in a State art collection when in 1939 we acquired a work by Albert Namatjira.

“The South Australian Museum houses the biggest Aboriginal anthropological artefact collection. We want to strengthen our leadership in the appreciation of Aboriginal art by hosting a world-class festival.”

The \$4 million earmarked for the visual arts festival is part of a number of activities in South Australia being supported by BHP Billiton as a result of its recommitment to the State.

Along with its \$540 million investment in re-scoping the Olympic Dam expansion project, BHP Billiton has also committed more than \$110 million to other scientific, environmental and social initiatives.

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Government of
South Australia



The winner of this year's Premier's NAIDOC award and the first Aboriginal curator appointed to the Art Gallery, Nici Cumpston, has been appointed the inaugural artistic director for the festival.

The festival that will feature: a series of exhibitions; a curated Aboriginal art fair featuring recognised APY Lands artists and other selected artists; and a national symposium that brings together collectors, exhibitors, academics and arts centres.

"BHP Billiton is pleased to offer its support to this event as many of our Australian businesses operate on or near Aboriginal lands," Mr Mackenzie said.

"We feel it is important for Aboriginal communities to have greater opportunities to develop economically not only through direct employment and contracting with BHP Billiton but also by maintaining and enhancing their cultural activities."

The announcement follows the State Government releasing its Future Fund Policy, which will preserve some of the benefits gained today from mineral and petroleum reserves for future generations.

The Future Fund will quarantine money to be spent on infrastructure, children, families and the workforce.