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- THE HON DR CRAIG EMERSON MP
Minister for Small Business,
Independent Contractors and
the Service Economy

Media Release

Senator the Hon Kim Carr

26 Feb 2009

MINISTERS CEMENT AUSTRALIA-SOUTH AFRICA SKA PARTNERSHIP

Joint release with Mr Mosibudi Mangena, South African Government Minister for Science and Technology

Mr Mosibudi Mangena, South African Government Minister for Science and Technology and Senator Kim Carr, Australian Government Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research today confirmed the high priority which both Governments give to the planned *Square Kilometre Array* (SKA) radio telescope.

They noted that to date the Governments, along with the State Government of Western Australia, have together committed approximately 150 million Euros (around \$296 million AUD) to the international SKA program to bring this iconic global project to fruition.

They agreed that it is now time for Australia and South Africa to work more closely together in partnership to advance the global SKA program.

To this end, South Africa and Australia will collaborate in the development of a coordinated scientific and technical program for the SKA pathfinder telescopes, the South African pathfinder MeerKAT and the Australian SKA Pathfinder (ASKAP).

This collaboration will enhance the scientific impact of both pathfinders and contribute to advancing the international SKA program overall. The close involvement of the SKA Science and Engineering Committee and the SKA Program Development Office will be sought to ensure that this collaboration is an integral part of the international SKA program.

Astronomers will be able to exploit the complementary and common nature of the two SKA pathfinder facilities, conducting science that is aligned with the SKA reference mission, as well as capitalising on science opportunities provided by new astronomical facilities at other wavelengths.

The Ministers noted that the SKA pathfinder collaboration program will further stimulate academic collaboration and exchange between Australia and South Africa. It will further leverage recent investments in human capability building in astronomy in both countries, such as the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research in Western Australia and the South African Centres of Excellence in radio astronomy.

The Governments have also agreed to work closely together to promote the scientific value and broad ranging benefits of the SKA to the international community. South Africa and Australia are ready to engage with potential partner countries in the development and implementation of the SKA.

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