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# 5th WORLD SUMMIT ON ARTS & CULTURE MELBOURNE 2011

3-6 October 2011

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## Welcome from the Minister for Foreign Affairs

I am delighted to welcome you to the 5<sup>th</sup> World Summit on Arts and Culture; and the first Summit to be hosted by Australia.

Australia has one of the most diverse and innovative cultural scenes in the world. Foremost in this is our proud acknowledgement of the first Australians on whose land the Summit will take place and whose cultures we celebrate as among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We also celebrate and welcome Australians who have come from every corner of the globe. Our people identify with more than 270 ethnicities and speak more than 260 languages. Our proximity to and strong people-to-people links with our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond mean we have rich, deep and enduring connections across all forms of the arts. Gifted and talented artists, musicians, performers, writers, designers and innovative thinkers from all around the world have chosen to make Australia their home, making enormous contributions to our cultural achievements right across the artistic fields.

The Summit is a wonderful opportunity for global leaders to exchange ideas and experiences of how the arts and culture can enrich and invigorate our lives, our communities, and our planet. Artistic engagement and cultural understanding strengthen all facets of human interaction, not least in the fields of foreign policy and international relations.

The Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, through the Council for Australia Latin America Relations, Council for Australia-Arab Relations and Australia-Indonesia Institute, and through the International Cultural Visits program, is pleased to support delegates from across the world to participate in this event.

I look forward to the creativity and excitement, the ideas and networks that will be generated during the Summit discussions; and by the richness of the Australian performances around the Summit and during the Melbourne Festival.

**Kevin Rudd**