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Media release

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PENOLA TOWNSHIP AND THE NEARBY COONAWARRA WINE REGION
SCORE KEY ROME PROMOTION

Issued on behalf of the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See

On Australia Day 2010, the Australian Embassy to the Holy See will be conducting its first ever Australia Day function and the town of Penola and the adjoining Coonawarra wine region of South Australia will be featured first up.

This was announced today by SA Tourism and the Australian Embassy to the Holy See and is part of a rotating program of feature towns and regions for this particular Australia Day function. The function will be held on the left bank of the Tiber River, just near the Vatican and St Peter's Basilica and Castel Sant'Angelo.

Speaking from Rome, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See Tim Fischer said that it made a great deal of sense to select "Penola township and the nearby Coonawarra wine region", especially given the enormous work of Blessed Mary MacKillop in this area.

"It was at Penola that Mary MacKillop established her first school, in January 1866, leading to her formation of the Sisters of St Joseph. It was at Penola and the nearby Coonawarra region that she began to devise her education templates and curricula that were later taken up by the SA State Government. In a small way this activity is a salute to a great Australian, at a very interesting time.

"It will greatly help that the "Terra Rossa" Coonawarra Wine Region has stepped up to the mark and will supply wine product from this famous region on the evening of the function, wine produced from the rich red soils of this part of South Australia and which have a worldwide reputation for excellence.

"I should add that activity of this kind will be rotated. For example I recommended and the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd present the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, with six of the best bottles of De Bortoli's Noble One wine from Griffith last July and this was well received. Likewise another six bottles were presented by the PM to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Bertone, on the same hectic visit, " Mr. Fischer added.

SA Tourism Commission Executive Andrew McEvoy said there had been a warm response to the Rome based activity from the region, and arrangements were being completed to

supply the wine product into Rome on time, adding that Penola and the nearby Coonawarra wine region were expanding their tourism product and orientation at this time. Mr McEvoy also stated that it was an honour for the Limestone Coast region of South Australia.

South Australian Tourism Minister Jane Lomax-Smith said she welcomed the opportunity to introduce more Europeans to the delights of South Australia's wine regions.

"Coonawarra and its famed strip of 'terra rossa' soil produce some of Australia's finest red wines. The Ambassador's decision to feature the region's wine may well serve as an added enticement to those attending the celebration to come to the region, see for themselves where Mary MacKillop began her work and stay to sample our magnificent wine experiences," the Minister added.

Wineries that will be participating include DiGiorgio Family Wines www.digiorgio.com.au and Zema Estate www.zema.com.au , both with Italian connections.

For further information:

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