

## Media Release

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## Opening 27 May 2017 - The Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome

### *Experience a New Dimension and the Dawn of a Digital Era*

The long awaited launch of the revamped Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome is imminent and Iziko will finally open the doors of this unique new facility to the public on 27 May 2017.

The new Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome will offer perspective-3D edu-tainment and a unique experience unlike anything local audiences have ever encountered before.

Investments totalling R28,5 million have been secured to ensure the realisation of this project. Partners include: the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC); the Department of Science and Technology (DST); the National Research Foundation (NRF); the National Lotteries Commission (NLC); and key academic institutions in the Western Cape – University of Cape Town (UCT), University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

In the late 1950's the Museum set up a fledgling planetarium, and by the mid-80's, a newly built dome with a dedicated star machine followed, providing edu-tainment to over 2 million visitors to date. The new Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome now stands on the threshold of an exciting new era. Fulldome digital technology has become the norm for planetaria worldwide, offering high res, multi-media image projection. Immersive and multi-sensory experiences create a hub of creativity and learning that is no longer only focussed on astronomy, but on an unlimited array of subjects and genre, with content for audiences of all ages and interests.

The Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome brings the most advanced digital visualisation technology to Cape Town – creating a world-class digital fulldome theatre, with multiple functionality. This new fulldome theatre will provide unequalled edu-tainment, making virtual travel to explore the universe, the depths of the oceans, the inner working of the human body, the intricacies of atomic and chemical structures possible, or just providing animation and 360° cinema for sheer entertainment. Moreover, learners and educators from primary to tertiary levels will benefit from computer generated imagery that makes interactive teaching and visual learning possible, providing an unparalleled and accelerated learning experience.

Significantly, the upgraded Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome will assist to optimise South Africa's eResearch and data visualisation capacity, placing us at the cutting edge of this technology, both on the continent and globally. In addition, this new facility will assist South African scientists to develop the skills base and infrastructure required for projects such as

Square Kilometre Array (SKA), Southern African Large Telescope (SALT) and MeerKAT radio telescope.

The new Iziko Planetarium and Dome will be a space of innovation, where art and science meet and create a new platform for local artistic production, film and animation to be showcased for the world to see.

The upgrade of the Iziko planetarium forms an important adjunct to the roll out of a major Capital Works Project currently underway at the Iziko South African Museum. More than R220 million is being invested by the DAC to renovate the existing four-storey research space into a seven-storey, contemporary facility that will be partially accessible to the public, so that they can interact with the quintessence of this museum – research.

The new Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome, located in the revamped, state-of-the-art Iziko South African Museum will create a new and unique African “Centre of Excellence”.

*“As part of the upgraded Iziko South African Museum, the new Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome will feature as one of the African continent’s foremost centres of excellence for indigenous knowledge generation. This type of partnership, between museums, academia and government illustrates the value and impact of collaboration in creating synergies between generating knowledge and providing platforms of expression and innovation,”* says Ms Rooksana Omar, Chief Executive Officer, Iziko Museums of South Africa.

In his endorsement of this project, world renowned astrophysicist, author and science communicator, Dr Neil DeGrasse Tyson noted: *“No longer is the visitor limited to what the universe looks like from Earth. Vistas from across the galaxy and the universe itself are now possible...A digital planetarium further enables the wonders of the natural world to touch our lives in unexpected ways. Whether we gain perspective of our place in the world experiencing the diversity of pan-African culture, its folklore, and its art–writ large in the night sky; or by witnessing the forces of nature and how climate-change affects our planet; or by exploring the infinite universe – we are not the same walking out of the dome as when we walked in. Innovation in science and technology in the 21st century is the foundation of tomorrow's economy and our planet’s sustainability. Given the challenges facing us all, I know of no better way to unleash the untapped potential within the citizenry of the African continent.”*

Tickets for the re-opening of the Iziko Planetarium and Digital Dome can be purchased at the door and members of the public are encouraged to arrive early on opening day to secure a seat. Seating for each show is limited to 140 visitors.

For more information view <http://bit.ly/2aM5tWk> / <https://youtu.be/vIKrXBLUFD8>

## **ENDS**

Issued by

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On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer, Iziko Museums of South Africa

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### **About Iziko Museums of South Africa (Iziko)**

*Iziko operates 11 national museums, the Planetarium and Digital Dome, the Social History Centre three collection-specific libraries, a Mobile Museum, and is responsible for a naval vessel, the SAS Somerset. The museums that make up Iziko have their own history and character, presenting extensive art, social and natural history collections that reflect our diverse African heritage. Iziko is a public entity and public benefit organisation that brings together these museums under a single governance and leadership structure. The organisation allows \*free access to all individuals on commemorative days, (\*excluding the Castle of Good Hope, Groot Constantia Estate and Planetarium). Visit our website at [www.iziko.org.za](http://www.iziko.org.za), join our online community on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/IzikoMuseums](https://www.facebook.com/IzikoMuseums)) or follow us on Twitter (@Iziko\_Museums) for regular updates on events, news and new exhibitions.*