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Sotheby’s Art Sponsorship to Create Job and Tourism Opportunities

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NT Indigenous art will be placed in the international spotlight at Sotheby’s Aboriginal Art Auction - held in Melbourne on Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th July - Chief Minister and Tourism Minister, Clare Martin, said today.

“My Government, through the NT Tourist Commission, is providing sponsorship to this event of up to $20,000 to ensure the Territory is recognised and promoted as a leader in producing indigenous art,” she said.

“The majority of work at this auction is by NT and SA indigenous artists and is an excellent opportunity to continue raising awareness of the Territory and attract increased numbers of art loving tourists and buyers.”

Ms Martin said that demand to view and purchase indigenous art is a powerful tourism tool and, by sponsoring this art auction, the Territory Government is able to promote the Territory and its famous and beautiful indigenous art.

“Normally, the art auction travels to North America and Australia but this year pre-auction exhibitions have been held in Paris, London and Sydney prior to tonight’s auction in Melbourne,” she said.

“That means NT art has been on show to art lovers, media and selected guests internationally and, according to Tim Klingender, Sotheby’s Director of aboriginal art, London has never seen an aboriginal exhibition this quality.”

The major work for the exhibitions/auction is a painting by Rover Thomas of Uluru which is expected to sell for between $750,000 and $1 million - thereby being the biggest price ever paid for an aboriginal work.

The NT Government sponsorship includes a full-page advertorial piece in the introductory pages of the 320-page catalogue, invitations for thirty guests at each of the exhibition previews and promotional opportunities.

This has resulted in interest from international and national travel, art and media representatives and will deliver sales and increased tourism.

Ms Martin said that, per-head of population, the NT had more people making a living from art than any Australian state or Territory and that indigenous art brings millions of dollars into the local economy every year.