



# Cooke Fuller Group

INSURANCE BROKERS & FINANCIAL ADVISERS

Authorised Financial Services Provider

3 Park Lane Kloof 3610 • PO Box 590 Kloof 3640 • Phone: 031 764 8200 Fax: 031 764 2917  
E-mail: info@cookefuller.co.za • Web site: www.cookefuller.co.za

## The run-up to the 2010 Fifa World Cup

With less than two months to go to the World Cup, the infrastructure facelift that has inflicted numerous disruptions on South Africans over the past four years appears to be over as scaffolding is gradually disappearing, revealing world-class airports, roads and stadiums. It is important to reflect on our reasons for hosting this World Cup. What the event offers us is the chance to rebrand ourselves in front of a global audience, in terms of doing away with perceptions around our third world infrastructure, and secondly about addressing fear.

Foreign perceptions of South Africa's infrastructure are far more third-world oriented than the reality on the ground, and they are likely to be pleasantly surprised by the first-world levels of many of our roads, airports, hotels, restaurants and indeed the general business environment. Throw in world-class bandwidth and hopefully we can start attracting some serious investment interest.

The second reason we are hosting the World Cup is to dispel fear. Nobody is disputing that South Africa has serious crime issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible, but it is not at the levels portrayed in the UK and European press, where citizens are literally warned to buy bullet-proof vests, take them on the plane and put them on before disembarking in Johannesburg for fear of getting shot. We need to show the world that you can come here for two weeks and have a great holiday without being attacked or falling victim to crime.

Unfortunately, thus far, what was meant to have been a once in a lifetime opportunity for us to rebrand ourselves positively as mentioned above, the reverse has actually been true. I have spent a great deal of time over the past two weeks trying to explain to clients from Tokyo to New York that Messrs Malema and Terre'blanche have not rendered South Africa irreversibly on the road to racial carnage, and that there is no need to turn their backs on us from an investment perspective. A stream of bizarrely negative UK and European press hasn't helped matters either!

But all is not lost, and the main event is yet to start. It is up to all of us to do our bit to make sure it's the success we want it to be. If we are going to complain about traffic, queues and fully-booked restaurants, then it's not going to be great. If you are friendly and offer to help every time you see a tourist looking lost, it will be a great World Cup. A good or a great World Cup, it's up to you!

There will be fewer visitors than initially expected, which although unfortunate from a jobs and growth perspective, will make it easier logistically to pull off a faultless World Cup. However, the TV audience remains enormous, which from a country promotion perspective is a massive opportunity that we must grasp with all our energy and enthusiasm.

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Directors: H J Fuller (Australian) M Gallacher (British) E L Fuller N Dip. Mkt & Sales Man, CFP® A L Fuller B Com, CFP® G C Horne  
C H Garrun B Com, LLB, H Dip. Tax Law, ACII A J Guthrie A P Henderson C A Saunders

