



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY  
PHNOM PENH**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**TWENTY YEARS OF AUSTRALIA AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS IN CAMBODIA**

Some of Cambodia's top business people, government officials, academics and civil society leaders will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Australia Awards scholarships in Cambodia tonight.

Over the past two decades, more than 500 talented Cambodian students have received scholarships from the Australian Government to study in Australia. Many more have studied in Australia through other means. The anniversary event will bring together all Australian alumni to share memories, celebrate achievements and make new contacts.

H.E. Ms Alison Burrows, Australian Ambassador to Cambodia, said that the anniversary was an opportunity to reflect on the contribution Australian alumni have made to Cambodia's development.

"Australian alumni have gone on to become ministers, ambassadors, senior officials, CEOs, vice chancellors and community leaders" she said.

"I am proud of the contribution that Australia has made to Cambodia's development by training top students from all walks of life."

Studying in Australia is a life-changing experience for many Cambodian students.

Mrs Tum Sisopheareth completed a Master of Education at Flinders University after receiving an Australia Award in 2004. She is now a provincial coordinator at an international NGO and teacher trainer in Kampong Cham Province. It is an impressive achievement, particularly since she was the only girl from her village to graduate from high school in her year.

According to Mr Eang Bunthan, President of the Australian Alumni Association in Cambodia and graduate of the Australian National University, the benefits of an Australian education are clear.

"It is all about quality – the teachers, the facilities and the lifestyle! And the benefits don't stop once you leave Australia—the alumni network is a great source of advice and support".

Many students are returning home with new ideas to drive Cambodia's development – either in government, civil society or business. Mr Chang Bunleang was inspired by his experience studying in Australia when he co-founded Brown Coffee in Phnom Penh.

“Studying in Australia broadened my knowledge and gave me the foundations to come back to Cambodia to make changes. I was inspired by the strong coffee culture in Sydney and Melbourne and this gave us the idea to establish Brown Coffee. Australia opened up my small world to countless opportunities” said Bunleang.

Australia is an increasingly popular destination for Cambodian students, including those studying privately and through distance education. In 2013, there were over 600 Cambodians studying in Australian higher education institutions.

For more information about the Australia Awards program visit:  
[www.australiaawardscambodia.org/](http://www.australiaawardscambodia.org/).

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