



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH

MEDIA RELEASE

RECORD NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS HEAD TO AUSTRALIA

The Australian Ambassador HE Margaret Adamson will farewell 32 students, the largest number of Australian government-supported scholarship holders in one year, at a function on 17 December 2009. The students will undertake PhD and Master's programs in Australia in 2010. Australian alumnus, HE Tia Phalla, Vice Chairman of the National AIDS Authority, will make a keynote address.

The departure of this year's scholarship holders coincides with the recent announcement by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of a new scholarship initiative, the Australia Awards. The Australia Awards will be launched in Asia in 2010. Through this initiative, the Australian Government has committed A\$8million for scholarships for high achieving individuals and the development of a prestigious alumni program to foster their ongoing connection to Australia. A further \$10 million will provide for an additional 170 scholarships specifically targeting students from developing countries in Asia.

Australia has been offering scholarships to Cambodians since the 1960s. Since the 1990s over 370 students have been awarded scholarships, under three major Australian scholarship programs: Australian Leadership Awards, Australian Development Scholarships and Endeavour Awards.

Returning to Cambodia with high quality professional skills and English, many Australian graduates or alumni now hold key positions in the public and private sectors. One such alumnus is HE Tia Phalla, Vice Chairman of the National Aids Authority who graduated with a Masters in Public Health from the University of NSW in 1997. HE Tia Phalla will talk about his Australian scholarship experience, and how it enhanced his career. He will also give an update on the HIV/AIDS situation in Cambodia and how Cambodia is responding to these challenges.

Function details:

Date: Thursday 17th December 2009

Time: 1800 to 2030 hours

Place: Sunway Hotel, Grand Wat Phnom Room

For more information on Australian scholarships, please visit:

www.ausaid.gov.au/scholar/default.cfm or www.australianscholarships.gov.au

**Media Enquiries: Ms Arthi Patel, 023 213 470
Australian Embassy Phnom Penh
16 December 2009**