



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIA AWARDS

The Australian Government announced a new initiative on 13 November – the Australia Awards - to maximise the benefit to Australia of its extensive scholarship programs, and to support enduring ties between Australia and our neighbours.

Australia currently invests \$200 million each year in scholarship programs which, at any time, support around 5,000 international students to study in Australia.

The Australia Awards will bring together these Australian scholarship programs under a single recognisable brand. Rather than dilute Australia's scholarship effort through a group of uncoordinated programs, the Australia Awards initiative will ensure that Australian scholarships are consolidated, better branded, and delivered to support Australia's long term interests.

Just as the Colombo Plan delivered Australian education to the region as a coordinated and recognised brand a generation ago, the Australia Awards initiative will enhance the awareness and value placed on Australia's contemporary scholarship programs.

The Australia Awards initiative will, over time, build a new generation of leadership with strong links to Australia.

The Australia Awards will comprise two streams: a leadership stream that will target the best and brightest scholars to come to Australia; and a development stream that will build capacity in developing countries.

The Australia Awards initiative will:

- encourage Australia Award recipients to maintain their links to Australia through a strong alumni plan
- consolidate Australian Government scholarships programs together under a single powerful brand
- support the Australia Awards brand through a robust marketing strategy
- ensure that the beneficiaries of Australian scholarships have a better experience of Australia during their period of study through enhanced student services
- establish a high profile board that will provide expert advice and strategic direction on how the scholarship program can meet Australia's long-term interests, and can compete with other world class scholarship programs. Board members will be drawn from the government, corporate and academic sectors.

Speaking in Singapore, the Prime Minister announced the first phase of the initiative – the Australia Asia Awards.

The first Australia Asia Awards scholars will take up their awards in 2010. Comparable programs for other regions will be rolled out in subsequent years.

Addressing an audience at the National University of Singapore on 13 November, the Prime Minister announced that the Australia Asia Awards will be supported by new funding of \$18 million.

The Australia Awards will also showcase Australia's cutting-edge capabilities in the education sector, which includes eight of the world's top 100 universities, and demonstrate Australia's ongoing commitment to building closer and enduring ties with our region and beyond.

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