

# MEDIA RELEASE

## AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY VIENTIANE

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### **Australia Farewells Lao Scholars**

Australia's Ambassador to the Lao PDR today hosted a reception to farewell 46 young Lao men and women who have received Australia Awards scholarships to study in Australia in 2015.

Ambassador Williams told the four PhD candidates, 30 masters and 12 undergraduate students they should study hard to take advantage of this unique opportunity, so they could better contribute to the Lao PDR's future economic development on their return.

"This is a chance for some of the Lao PDR's next generation of leaders to build new skills, knowledge and networks in areas vital for the country's future, such as education, natural resource management, public administration and trade," Williams said.

The Ambassador said each of the awardees had demonstrated academic excellence, and had undergone a highly competitive selection process to earn a scholarship. The 46 Australia Awards recipients had come from diverse backgrounds, representing eight provinces.

Australia Awards are prestigious international scholarships and fellowships funded by the Australian Government to support the long-term development needs of Australia's partner countries.

Australia Awards are an integral part of Australia's \$60 million annual development cooperation program in the Lao PDR, which focuses on education, human resource development, rural development, UXO clearance, trade and investment, and natural resource management.

The Australian Government confers up to 50 Australia Awards Scholarships for Lao citizens each year to complete undergraduate or postgraduate degrees, or technical and vocational training courses in Australia.

Since the inception of Australian Government scholarships in Laos, more than 1,100 Lao scholars have successfully gained tertiary qualifications in Australia and returned to apply their new skills in the Lao PDR.

Further information about Australia Awards can be found at [www.australiaawards.gov.au](http://www.australiaawards.gov.au).

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