

# MEDIA RELEASE

## AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY VIENTIANE



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### **50 Lao citizens to study in Australia under Australian scholarships**

Australia's Minister for Education, the Hon Christopher Pyne MP today presented 50 Lao students with Australia Awards Scholarships at a ceremony in Vientiane.

The 50 recipients will join a select group of over 1,100 Lao citizens who have studied in Australia under the Australia Awards scholarship programme and returned to Laos with world-leading tertiary qualifications.

Mr Pyne said the Australia Awards are invaluable in providing professional development opportunities for future leaders in developing countries.

“This programme is an important part of Australia's overseas development work, in the Lao PDR and across the Asia-Pacific region. Australia Awards alumni are already well represented in senior government roles in the Lao PDR,” Mr Pyne said.

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. At least half the awards are conferred on Lao women.

The scholarships are a central and long-standing part of Australia's \$60 million annual aid programme in the Lao PDR, which focuses on education and human resource development, rural development, unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance, trade and investment, and natural resource management.

Mr Pyne said through study and research, the Australia Awards recipients would develop the skills and knowledge to drive change and help build enduring people-to-people links with Australia.

“Learning through the Australia Awards will open up professional development opportunities and provide an excellent platform for the recipient's future careers. These scholarships will also help develop professional networks of contact and greater two-way understanding between Australia and the Lao PDR,” Mr Pyne said.

Each of the 50 Lao awardees demonstrated academic excellence and has undergone a highly competitive and rigorous selection process to earn a scholarship.

Globally, more than 4,500 scholars and fellows from over 140 countries each year undertake study, research and professional development through the Australia Awards, with around half studying at Australian universities.

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*Minister for Education Pyne (centre), together with Vice Minister of Education and Sports, H.E. Mrs Sengdeuane Lachantaboun, presented 50 Lao students with Australia Awards Scholarships at a ceremony in Vientiane.*

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