

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ethiopian Graduates from Australian Government-funded Scholarship Program Welcomed Back Home

On 18 February 2015, the Australian Government recognized Ethiopians who returned home from their studies under a fully-funded Australia Awards scholarship. The ceremony was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel.

They were joined by other guests, including Alumni from the Australia Awards and International Mining for Development programs - both funded by the Australian Government - members of Alumni-employing organizations, representatives from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and dignitaries from key Ministries and government institutions, including the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Mines, Ministry of Civil Service, Ministry of Water and Energy, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopian Sugar Corporation and Ethio Telecom.

“This Welcome Home function celebrates the achievements of these scholars in completing their postgraduate studies in Australia. They are now better positioned to contribute to national and regional development,” said H.E. Mark Sawers, Australian Ambassador to Ethiopia speaking at the event’s opening. “We also look forward to maintaining strong links with them as members of our Alumni network.”

The Australian Government has been a partner in supporting development efforts in Ethiopia and the Australia Awards scholarship program is a key mechanism of its aid program. Since 2011, over 170 scholarships have been provided to Ethiopians for Masters, PhD and professional development courses funded by the Australian Government.

Alumni who completed their studies in previous years presented posters detailing the activities they are leading in their organizations that have positive development impact. Initiatives showcased included agriculture development projects, for example research into rising water levels affecting sugarcane farms near Lake Beseka and GIS systems projects such as training junior geologists in preparing and analyzing geographical data.

Among the Alumni in attendance was Ms Hamere Tadege, Australia Awards Alumni Ambassador to Ethiopia, who graduated in 2013 with a Masters in Public and Health Care Administration from Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia. She is also President of the emerging Australia Awards Alumni Association in Ethiopia.

“It is important that Australia Awards Alumni are recognized in ceremonies such as this, and their contributions to development valued. The recently returned scholars will no doubt make a difference in their respective sectors”, Ms Tadege said.

Newly returned Alumni, Simeneh Shiferaw Moges, who completed a Masters of Water Resources Management at the University of South Australia, summarized the sentiments of those being recognized in the ceremony saying “This is a valuable opportunity for connecting recently returned scholars to Alumni and providing a platform for establishing support networks. We thank the Australian Government for the scholarship and for the continued support on return.”

Through the Australia Awards initiative, the Australian Government offers long-term scholarships as well as short-term fellowships. There are currently over 5,000 Australian Alumni across Africa. The initiative promotes equal participation by both women and men and seeks to ensure that people are given a fair and equal opportunity to compete for and obtain scholarships. The Australian Government has put mechanisms in place to support applicants and awardees requiring specific assistance.

More information on Australia Awards in Africa is available on the website: www.australiaawardsafrica.org

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