



MEDIA RELEASE
Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian students receive scholarships worth RM 442,000

*Malaysia Australia Colombo Plan Commemoration Scholarships
build on strong education ties between Australia and Malaysia*

KUALA LUMPUR 31 January 2008 – In a ceremony hosted today by the Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia, Ms Penny Williams, three Malaysian students received scholarships to pursue their undergraduate degrees in Australian universities. The recipients were Christopher Tay Kong Soon who will study for a Bachelor of Visual Arts in Graphic Design at La Trobe University, Lim Wei Fang who will study Economics at the University of Queensland, and Davintra Jothy Thillainathan who will study Commerce at the University of Newcastle.

The scholarships were granted under the 2008 Malaysia-Australia Colombo Plan Commemoration (MACC) Scholarships Program. A fourth scholarship at Curtin University of Technology will be awarded shortly. Collectively worth RM 442,000, this year's MACC Scholarships provide full or partial tuition fee waivers.

Speaking at the ceremony Ms Williams emphasised the importance of education to the relationship between Australia and Malaysia.

“Education is a bedrock of the Australia-Malaysia relationship. Through it, we have come to know each other better and create binding ties between our two communities.

“The Colombo Plan paved the way for an education relationship of extraordinary depth. Four thousand young Malaysians studied in Australia as Colombo Plan scholars. Many of them went on to become prominent contributors to Malaysian politics, academia and business – people like Dato' Mustapa Mohamed, the Minister for Higher Education, and the late Datuk Dr Sam Abraham, the renowned pediatrician. All the Colombo Plan scholars, and indeed any Malaysian who has studied in Australia, hold a special place in the Australia-Malaysia relationship.

“This Commemoration Program has been built on the spirit of the Colombo Plan. It encourages a two-way flow of scholars between Malaysia and Australia. It enables us to continue learning about one another. I am sure that this year's recipients will make their own names in Malaysia's history as they excel in their respective fields.”

Over 80 scholarships have been granted for two-way exchange of Australian and Malaysian students under the MACC Program since its launch in 2001. The Program is spearheaded by the Malaysian Australian Alumni Council, an umbrella organisation for Australian university alumni in Malaysia, and IDP Education Australia, with the support of the Malaysia-Australia Foundation, the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, Australian Education International and the Australia Malaysia Cultural Foundation.

Currently there are almost 20,000 Malaysian students studying in Australia.

#

For media enquiries, please contact Ms Farah Nazrene Taharim, Media Relations Adviser
Tel: 03 - 2146 5537 Fax: 03 - 2141 4323
Email: farah.taharim@dfat.gov.au