



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Australia South Africa Alumni Association officially launched on 15 June, 2016**

Australia Awards alumni have been instrumental in the formation of the Australia South Africa Alumni Association (ASAAA) to provide a forum for the alumni to network and collectively utilise their skills and expertise to contribute to the development of the country.

"Australia is delighted to host South African students in our universities each year, both those privately funded and those who receive Australia Awards scholarships. The Alumni Association is a fantastic initiative which helps to ensure not only that their connection with Australia does not end on their return home, but that there is an ongoing platform to support their continued professional development and encourage their ongoing contribution to South Africa's social and economic transformation" said event host Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, HE Adam McCarthy.

Since 1997, 218 South African nationals have been sponsored by the Australian Government through the Australia Awards to study in Australia.

"Alumni associations have an important role to play for returning students in driving networking, collaboration and development opportunities. I am honoured to be leading this effort in my country with other like-minded Alumni," said Nompumelelo Radebe, Chair of the Australia-South Africa Alumni Association. She received an Australian Government-funded Australia Awards scholarship to study a Master of Public Administration at the University of Sydney, which she completed in 2009.

"We chose to celebrate the launch of the ASAAA on the eve of Youth Day to honour the efforts of those who fought for equal access to education and because the ASAAA is committed to improving education outcomes for young South Africans", said Ms Radebe.

South Africa has now joined the ranks of other Australian Alumni Associations which have been established in Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia.

Australia Awards offers long-term Masters scholarships as well as short courses. It promotes equal participation by both women and men. The initiative also aims to ensure that people with disability 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.

#### **Media Contacts:**

Sarah Withers Dippenaar

Email: [sarah.withers@dfat.gov.au](mailto:sarah.withers@dfat.gov.au)

Tel: +27 12 423 6170

Website : [www.australiaawardsafrica.org](http://www.australiaawardsafrica.org)