



## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### **Australia and Botswana boost professional links**

Sixty-nine Botswana professionals have participated in Australian government-funded scholarships since 2008. This is in addition to the significant numbers that have been funded by the Botswana government to study in Australia.

According to the Australian High Commissioner to Botswana, HE Ms Ann Harrap, the time may now be right to set up an Australia alumni organisation in Botswana as a means of building networks and maintaining bilateral partnerships.

“Australia has been very proud to assist with addressing human capacity needs in key areas identified by the Botswana Government through our Australia Awards Scholarships Program”, Ms Harrap said.

“There is now a core group of Botswana who have a link with Australia and there could be real benefits in that group keeping in touch and utilising their professional networks both within Botswana and back to Australia to deliver positive development outcomes for Botswana”.

Professional students from Botswana have undertaken masters-level study in Australia, as well as shorter-term professional development training, in areas such as health, mining and public policy. The support provided by the Australian government is in the context of a larger development assistance program for the continent which will see 1000 Africans studying on Australia Awards every year.

“Any alumni network would need to be alumni-led. It would need leaders who are energetic, self-starters and who have a vision for what can be achieved through regular connection with other alumni”, Ms Harrap said.

“But the Australian Government would be happy to provide seed funding for its establishment, including through research and advertising. We would also be happy to assist our Honorary Aussie alumni to carry out activities contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Botswana”, Ms Harrap said.

Ms Harrap will meet with a group of Botswana alumni during her visit to Gaborone from 12-14 June. She will also promote, with the relevant Botswana government departments, further study opportunities in Australia.

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