MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 4 October 2013

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AWARDS FINALISTS NAMED

Deputy Premier and Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Stoner today announced the finalists in the NSW International Student of the Year Awards on behalf of the Premier.

“Through these Awards, NSW publicly recognises the contributions that international students make to their fellow students, their educational institutions and the wider community,” Mr Stoner said.

“The 13 finalists, who come from 11 countries, represent a range of educational sectors, including higher education, vocational education and training, schools and English language programs.

“These talented students have all shown great commitment to supporting other students, developing a range of initiatives from anti-bullying and mentoring campaigns to advocating for international students at their institutions and nationally.

“Many have volunteered for other organisations such as Red Cross, Legacy and the NSW Cancer Council.”

Mr Stoner said there were more than 72,000 international students in NSW.

“NSW welcomes international students and we value the contributions they make to our State through the diversity, fresh ideas and global connections they bring to our classrooms and our community.

“NSW’s overseas cultural and trade ties are enhanced by our international education sector and the NSW Government is working with industry partners to ensure its long-term growth.”

The winners of the Awards will be announced at the Sydney Opera House on Thursday, 10 October.

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) FINALISTS

Mr Enrico AVONA, Brazil, South West Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW (Granville)
Enrico arrived in Australia in 2011 with limited English, but with his friendly personality quickly made friends. After completing an English course and Certificate III in Sports Coaching, he offered free lessons in Capoeira, a Brazilian mixed martial arts/dance sport. With a Bachelor of Pharmacy, accreditation in First Aid and Blood Collection and three years’ experience working in a Brazilian pathology laboratory, Enrico decided to pursue his career here. He is enrolled in the Diploma of Laboratory Technology (Chemical and Forensic Testing Course). His distinction average and willingness to assist other students overcome their learning difficulties make him an inspiration to international students.

Mr Joseph PARK, South Korea, C3 College (Oxford Falls)
While studying full-time, Joseph plays an active role in his church and local community. He is often up at 4am to travel from the west of Sydney by public transport to attend chapel before class. He works with the music team and runs a weekly Bible study group. He also runs his church media team, which provides video content for weekend services. Joseph readily shares his media skills with others. His church is building its own facility and Joseph has contributed a great deal, working as a volunteer to install the new media system.

SCHOOLS FINALISTS

Miss Naomi CHAN, Hong Kong SAR, Mosman High School
Naomi is an active member of Mosman High Student Representative Council. As an international student representative, she has initiated and supported many charity fund-raising activities. As Mosman High’s representative at the Young Women’s Leadership Seminar at Parliament House, Naomi participated in community projects including the Halve Poverty Event at Manly Beach to raise awareness of global poverty. She is a mentor at the school homework centre and supports the Buddy System which helps to settle new ESL students into the school.

Miss Cherry Bo FERNANDEZ, The Philippines, Casula High School
Cherry is an outstanding student leader. As Vice-Captain interacting with students of all ages, she has shown an ability to operate both as a part of a team as well as independently. She has participated and represented her school at several conferences and seminars aimed at young women leaders. Cherry has helped organise fundraisers for Legacy Day, Bandaged Bear Breakfast and Jeans 4 Genes day. Cherry helps primary school students with their reading.

Mr Alphonsus FRANK, Solomon Islands, Pacific Coast Christian School (Tweed Heads)
Through his involvement in the Max Potential Leadership Mentoring program, Alphonsus organised a school breakfast for the staff and students to highlight the importance of eating a healthy breakfast for increased concentration and effective learning. Last year, he initiated a Big Brother, Big Sister program at the school to support younger students, and recently led his class in organising a disco to fundraise for women’s health supplies for the Solomon Islands. He is very focused on social justice and welfare.

Mr Junxi (James) TIAN, China, Ashfield Boys High School
As a senior prefect, James initiated two projects to encourage fellow students to participate in volunteer programs. He organised an Anti-Bullying Video Competition and this year, established The Bush Care Volunteering program for Year 7 and 8 students. In addition to involvement on the Students Representative Council, James has assisted and liaised with the international student coordinator organising student meetings and afternoon teas. He has helped many new arrivals make a smooth transition to high school in Australia. James volunteers for the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal and a Red Cross Australia retail outlet.

Ms Yuhan (Wendy) YANG, China, Blakehurst High School
Since enrolling in 2012, Wendy joined the Student Representative Council and participated in fund raising activities, helped to promote multiculturalism and anti-bullying, as well as organising events. These activities assisted in Wendy being appointed as a senior prefect. Wendy has participated in Relay for Life, and the Red Shield Appeal, volunteered at the Red Cross Blood Bank and at the Sydney Cats and Dogs home. She placed third in the 2013 Zonta International Young Women in Public Affairs Award.
HIGHER EDUCATION FINALISTS

Mr Tong Sheng (Thomson) CHNG, Malaysia, Curtin University, Sydney
Thomson has been a proactive international student representative since 2009. In 2010, he was a founding delegate of the Council of International Students Australia (CISA), the peak representative body. He was elected National Secretary of CISA and in 2013, National President. Among Thomson’s achievements was his “My Study My Career” forum this year which informed international students about ways to enhance their employability while studying in Australia. He was an invited speaker at the Community Relations Commission’s youth networking event.

Ms Elizabeth FRADGLEY, Canada, University of Newcastle
Since enrolling in 2012, Elizabeth has been committed to improving the wellbeing of individuals with chronic illness. Her post-graduate thesis is guided and supported by community involvement. She has created volunteer opportunities within an academic project, connecting university research with the community. Elizabeth facilitates a support group for people with intestinal bowel disorders. She also provides advocacy and co-ordinates awareness raising and fund raising towards the establishment of a local chapter of Crohn’s and Colitis Australia.

Ms JAMBAY, Bhutan, University of New England
Jambay came to UNE on a scholarship in June 2010. While studying she has volunteered for many activities on and off campus. She has held several official roles including as the elected President of the Bhutanese Students’ Association of Armidale and as International Student Representative on the Undergraduates of New England Guild. Jambay has helped new students adjust to university life and improved cultural awareness both within and outside the university.

Ms Maria LOBATO, Argentina, The University of New South Wales
While undertaking a Masters of Law at UNSW, Maria has demonstrated a passion for volunteering and student activism. She volunteers for Amnesty International. As the Coursework Student Officer on the UNSW Postgraduate Council and a member of the Postgraduate Coursework Committee, Maria is a vital voice for domestic and international students. As the Women’s Officer at the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, Maria she advocates for both female and international students. She campaigned in support of the retrospective application of post-study work visa rights for all current students.

Mr Devinda PERERA, Sri Lanka, University of Wollongong
Devinda advocates for international students, offering mentoring support and assisting as a volunteer. Studying for a PhD in Electrical Engineering, Devinda also works as a university tutor and regularly volunteers his time to assist fellow international students adapt to university life. He is a member of the Illawarra Committee of International Students and Student Leader in Graduate House. His fellow students nominated him for a Vice Chancellor’s Outstanding Contribution to Teaching and Learning Award in 2012.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTENSIVE COURSES FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS (ELICOS)
Ms Leticia Luiz, Brazil, University of Sydney Centre for English Teaching
Leticia began her studies in English in July 2012 on a Science Without Borders scholarship. She established a multinational student group which produced a talent show to encourage cross-cultural communication among international students. In January, Leticia helped run an event to provide opportunities for high school students with an indigenous background to learn about engineering. Leticia regularly gives presentations to new students on how they can make the most of their overseas education experience. She is now studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Sydney.