



Australian Embassy
The Philippines



MEDIA STATEMENT

Australia honours the achievements and contributions of outstanding Australia-educated Filipinos



Acting Australian Ambassador, Dr. Moya Collet with the recipients of the Australia Alumni Excellence Awards. From L-R: Abigail Tan, *Young Achiever*; Dr Ma. Asuncion Beltran, *Excellence in Innovation*; Dr Dexter dela Cruz, *Alumnus of the Year*.

Manila, Philippines – The Australian Embassy in the Philippines recognised the exceptional achievements of outstanding Australia-educated Filipinos at the annual Australia Alumni Excellence Awards.

“Our Australia Global Alumni community is an important part of the Australia-Philippines Strategic Partnership. This year’s Australia Alumni Excellence Awardees are impressive Filipinos who have been using their Australian education, expertise, experience, and networks to contribute enormously to the Philippines,” said Australian Chargé d’Affaires Dr. Moya Collett.

The following alumni were awarded:

- **Dr Dexter dela Cruz** (PhD in Marine Biology, Southern Cross University, 2019) was awarded as Alumnus of the Year for leading the development of groundbreaking coral reef restoration techniques used in the Philippines and Australia that have helped improve climate change resilience. His reef experiments and studies in the Philippines assisted in the restoration of degraded reef areas, and have since been used in the Great



Australian Embassy
The Philippines



Barrier Reef. Dr dela Cruz is a recipient of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research's prestigious John Allwright Fellowship.

- **Dr Ma. Asuncion Beltran** (Masters in Tropical Veterinary Science, James Cook University, 2003) was recognised with an Excellence in Innovation Award for developing innovative agricultural technologies and practices that help boost food security in the Philippines. She introduced technologies to improve the viability of backyard poultry as a source of livelihood among farmers across the Philippines.
- **Abigail Tan** (Graduate Diploma of Health Promotion, Deakin University, 2020) received the Young Achiever Award for her work at increasing health-seeking behaviours and strengthening health governance at the local level across the Philippines. She led the *Optimising Health Literacy and Access to Health Services* process in the Philippines in partnership with the Department of Health's Health Promotion Bureau.

Meanwhile, seven alumni were recognised with Special Citations for outstanding contributions in several fields:

- Alumni network: Medal of Valor awardee Col Ariel Querubin (ret.);
- Culture and arts: National Museum of the Philippines Director General Jeremy Barns;
- Community development: Entrepreneurs Emmanuel and Mary Grace Belviz;
- Health: Paediatric oncologist Dr Amy Dy;
- Education: Dr Dionisia Rola;
- Environmental conservation: Dr Jayson Ibanez; and
- Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion: Imari Roble-Cesario.

Since the 1950s, thousands of Filipinos have studied in Australia and now form part of the dynamic Australia Global Alumni community in the Philippines, which includes senior Philippine government officials, scientists and esteemed members of the academe, and business and industry leaders.

Australia Global Alumni in the Philippines are invited to register/update their contact information at australiaawardsphilippines.org/alumni.

###