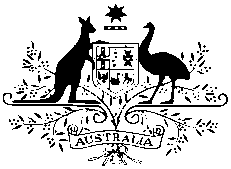
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**Australian High Commission**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**25 November 2016**

**Australian Ambassador congratulates Australia Awards recipients**

Australian Ambassador to Maldives Bryce Hutchesson hosted a reception in Malé on 23 November to congratulate 16 Maldivians who have been offered Australia Awards scholarships to study at Australian universities in 2017.

The recipients will undertake master’s degrees at Australia’s top universities in the fields of economic development, education, environmental management and good governance.

“This latest batch of Australia Awardees follow in the footsteps of the more than 600 other Maldivians, dating back to the early 1970s, who have received Australian Government scholarships” said Mr Hutchesson.

Australia is a highly popular destination for international students. Last year, around 640,000 international students were enrolled to study there.

In addition to offering world class education, Australia is attractive to students because it is one of the most authentically multicultural societies in the world.

“You will receive not only a top-quality education at Australia’s world class universities, but also a very warm welcome” said Mr Hutchesson.

The Hon Dr Aishath Shiham, Minister of Education, attended the event as Chief Guest.

Members of the Maldives Australia Alumni (MAA) were also present. The MAA provides an opportunity for Awardees to network and interact after they return from studies in Australia.

The Australian Government offers Australia Awards to Maldivians on an annual basis.

The next round of Australia Awards Scholarships will be open for applications from 1 February 2017 until 30 April 2017. Please visit the Australia Awards website [www.australiaawards.gov.au](http://www.australiaawards.gov.au) or [www.australiaawardsmaldives.org](http://www.australiaawardsmaldives.org) for further information.