



Australian High Commission  
Solomon Islands

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **AUSTRALIA WELCOMES HOME 24 AUSTRALIA AWARDS SCHOLARS**

23 APRIL 2026

The governments of Solomon Islands and Australia warmly welcomed home 24 Australia Awards scholars at a reception held at the Australian High Commissioner's residence in Honiara in April, celebrating their academic achievements and their contribution to Solomon Islands' future.

The reception recognised scholars who have successfully completed undergraduate and postgraduate studies under the Australia Awards program and highlighted the vital role alumni play in strengthening national institutions, building leadership, and supporting Solomon Islands' long-term development.

Australian High Commissioner Jeff Roach congratulated the graduates on their dedication and success.

"To the 24 returning scholars—congratulations. You have worked extremely hard to earn your degrees, whether at bachelor, masters or PhD level. Australia is truly proud of you," High Commissioner Roach said.

He noted that qualifications gained through the Australia Awards program equip graduates with the skills, confidence, and networks needed to strengthen communities and institutions across the country.

The returning scholars bring valuable expertise across priority sectors, including health, education, engineering, climate change, environment, fisheries, and governance.

Representing the Solomon Islands Government, the Minister for Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), Hon. Tozen Leokana, thanked Australia for its continuing investment in the people and future of Solomon Islands and congratulated the graduates.

“The Solomon Islands Government, through MEHRD, remains committed to creating an enabling environment where your skills and expertise can be effectively utilised,” Minister Leokana said.

“We look forward to seeing you take up roles where you can influence positive change and contribute to our nation’s progress.”

Speaking on behalf of the graduates, Australia Awards Alumna Dr Lydia Kaforau said returning scholars shared a responsibility to give back to their communities and to Solomon Islands.

The reception also acknowledged the contributions of established Australia Awards alumni, whose leadership and mentoring continue to strengthen the Solomon Islands Australia Awards Alumni Network and support the successful reintegration of returning scholars.

The reception also recognised the vital role played by families and communities, whose encouragement and support were central to the scholars’ success.

PHOTOS:



**Caption 1:** Australian High Commission officials, SIG officials, SIAAA members and all the returning scholars



**Caption 2:** Minister Leokana, First Secretary Education Ami Bah and the AHC staff at the event.



**Caption 3:** Eleven of the 24 returning scholars.



Caption 4: High Commissioner Jeff Roach and Dr Lydia Kaforau (PhD Public Health), representing the returning scholars