

Australian Alumni Awards 2016

The Australian Alumni Program aims to provide a range of business, community and networking opportunities to unite and support graduates of Australian universities as well as other institutions of higher learning.

On Thursday 23 June, more than 150 guests attended the annual Australian Alumni Awards in the Astor Ballroom at the St Regis Hotel in Bangkok. The awards provided an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the achievements of Alumni members who have applied their Australian education in their professional endeavours in Thailand.

H.E Mr Paul Robilliard the Australian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand addressed guests, highlighting the Australian Government's commitment to fostering strong educational connections between Australia and Thailand through both the Global Alumni program and the New Colombo Plan. Khun Panita Vongkusolkit and Khun Prom Sirisant were announced as Global Alumni Ambassadors, which is part of Government's effort to raise the profile of Australia's world class education system and strengthen the connections between Australia and rest of the world.

Khun Pichai Chuensuksawadi, Editor in Chief of the Bangkok Post, also addressed guests, providing a heartfelt reflection of his experiences of living and studying in Australia.

Award Recipients

Kawita Vatanajyankur - Mitr Phol Young Alumni Award

Video Artist and Founder of the Ferry Gallery
BA Fine Arts (Painting Major), RMIT University



Kawita is a 29 year old video artist and business entrepreneur. She has demonstrated entrepreneurial thinking by developing an innovative, contemporary art gallery on a commuter ferry that crosses the Chao Phraya river. Recognised by the Tourism Authority of Thailand as a pioneering initiative, Kawita's not for profit 'Ferry Gallery' provides opportunities for creative exchange between Australian and Thai artists and also connects river commuters and tourists with contemporary digital art experiences.

Kawita's motivation for establishing the Ferry Gallery stems from her desire to bring art to everyday people who do not necessarily have opportunities to visit art galleries. With exhibitions focussed on topical issues such as climate change and the elimination of violence against women, Kawita aims to create excitement, help grow an arts-engaged community and spark conversation between everyday people.

In her own video works Kawita plays the performance artist, physically compromising her own body and offering a powerful examination of the psychological, social and cultural ways of viewing and valuing women's everyday labour. Describing herself as a feminist, Kawita's works were recently curated into the prestigious Thailand Eye exhibition at Saatchi Gallery, London. This exhibition is currently showing at the Bangkok Arts and Cultural Centre, Main Gallery, 8th Floor until August 2016. Visit the Ferry Gallery <http://www.theferrygallery.com/>

Phundanai 'Peter' Sathavonmanee - dwp Alumni Entrepreneurial Award

Co-Founder Coro Brothers Company Limited

President Monash Alumni, Thailand

Diploma of Business and Bachelor of Business, Monash University



Phundanai is a 28-year old business entrepreneur. Fast-paced lifestyles and stressful jobs drove Phundanai and his brother to turn a plot of land in Ratchaburi province into a farm where they could seek sanctuary and grow vegetables as a hobby. Their hobby has since grown into the business venture 'Coro Brothers Company Limited'. Working with academics, an architectural team, chefs and farmers over several years, Phundanai and his brother opened innovative agro-tourism business

'Coro Field' in 2015. Receiving in excess of 2000 visitors per day, Coro Field focusses on cultivating organic and rare strains of crops from around the world and provides visitors with the opportunity to unwind and gain hands on experience in organic farming.

Phundanai is also the youngest and first President of the Monash University Alumni group in Thailand. Growing membership from 10 to 200 members in one year, he works closely with alumni based in both Thailand and Australia. Phundanai also sponsors 2 children from low-socio economic backgrounds in Thailand, is committed to volunteerism and driven to establish his own charity in Thailand so he may contribute more broadly to improving the lives of those less fortunate than himself.

Visit Coro Field <http://www.corofield.com/en/>

Dr Thitipong Nandhabiwat - Australian Embassy, Bangkok Alumni Leadership Award

Dean, International College, Rangsit University, Thailand

Doctor of Information Technology, Murdoch University



Dr Thitipong has demonstrated outstanding leadership of the highest calibre. At the age of thirty nine, he holds various senior management positions and pioneers for change in Thailand in both the academic field, and public sector.

As an academic leader he has fostered strong Thai – Australian relationships by connecting Murdoch University and Rangsit University to deliver a collaborative double degree program in Information Technology. He has also expanded the network between Thailand and Australia by establishing a double degree program in International Business between the University of Canberra and Rangsit University.

Pichai Chuensuksawadi - Bumrungrad International Hospital Alumni of the Year

Editor in Chief, Bangkok Post

Bachelor of Arts (Political Science), James Cook University

Bachelor of Arts (Journalism), University of Queensland



Khun Pichai is one of Thailand's most outstanding media leaders and a senior statesman of media in Thailand, regionally and internationally. Khun Pichai started his career as a proofreader; quickly rising to the top he was appointed Editor of the Bangkok Post, Thailand's most influential English-language newspaper, at the age of 37.

At that time Post Publishing PLC was a single-language, single medium company. It expanded under Khun Pichai's leadership and in 2002 he was promoted to the new position of Editor-in-Chief of the company's operations. Under Khun Pichai, the company moved into Thai-language publishing, with a business paper (*Post Today*) and later a free newspaper (*M2F*). He also took the company into television and digital publishing.

His standing and authority put him on the top rung of Thai media leaders. Among Australian alumni, he stands out as one who has shown leadership in his profession and thus made a significant contribution to his country. Khun Pichai is also active in charitable work, as chairman of the Bangkok Post Foundation (and education fund) and the Phud Hong Leper Foundation.