

PRESS RELEASE

Philippine Embassy, Canberra

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Philippine Embassy and the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Meet Filipino Scientists in Australia for the *Balik Scientist Program (BSP)*

15 May 2016 – Philippine Ambassador to Australia Minda Calaguian-Cruz, together with Dr. Jaime Montoya, Executive Director, Health Research and Development Council and Chair of the DOST Biosafety Committee, and Dr. Reynaldo V. Ebor, Executive Director, Philippine Agriculture and Aquatic Resources Research Council, met with Filipino scientists based in Australia to invite them and join DOST's *Balik Scientist Program (BSP)*.

Present during the DOST briefing at the Philippine Embassy were Filipino Science and Technology experts and graduate students based in Canberra. Also present were Philippine Embassy officers and staff. Ambassador Calaguian-Cruz enjoined the group to support and help promote BSP among their network of Filipino scientists in Australia. She stressed the importance of science, technology and research in pushing further the Philippines' development.

The DOST-BSP aims to tap the ingenuity and expertise of Filipinos abroad to strengthen the science and technology capabilities of local researchers in the Philippines, including the academe, public and private sectors, that helps to accelerate the flow of new strategic technologies that are vital to national development. The program also aims to encourage more Filipino S&T professionals abroad to share their expertise in the field of agriculture, energy, industry, emerging technology or in health in the Philippines. It is a laudable effort of the Philippine government effort to manage the effects of brain drain by tapping the supply of talented researchers and scientists abroad whose expertise are not available locally. More information on the program can be viewed at <http://bsp.dost.gov.ph>.

In addition to the promotion of DOST-BSP in Canberra, the 7-member DOST Biosafety Committee also visited Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney on 12-21 May 2016 as part of their continuing capacity building programme. The DOST-BC is the body mandated to oversee the evaluation and monitoring of all experiments on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) intended for contained use, i.e., laboratory, greenhouse, glasshouse and confined test. The Canberra visit is part of its continuous enhancement programme to learn best practices in advanced countries dealing with GMOs in risk assessment and in addressing the issues and concerns raised against the technology and its products. The delegation, accompanied by the Embassy, held meetings at the Office of the Gene Technology and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).
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Philippine Ambassador H.E. Minda Calaguian-Cruz (3rd from right) and Philippine Embassy Officers with DOST officials headed by Dr. Jaime Montoya, Executive Director, Health Research and Development Council and Chair of the DOST Biosafety Committee (2nd from right)



Philippine Ambassador H.E. Minda Calaguian-Cruz, Philippine Embassy Officers, DOST officials and Filipino scientists based in Australia

