

PRESS RELEASE



Philippine Embassy, Canberra

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70th Anniversary Awards Honours Extraordinary Contributions to Philippines-Australia Relations

CANBERRA – In celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Australia, the Philippine Embassy honoured twenty (20) individuals and organisations who made extraordinary contributions to enhancing bilateral relations. The awarding ceremony, held at the Residence of the Philippine Ambassador to Australia on 21 May 2017, coincides with the celebration of Philippines-Australia Friendship Day 2017 and the Philippines' National Heritage Month.

H.E. Minda Calaguian-Cruz, Philippine Ambassador to Australia, initiated the 70th Anniversary Awards to give recognition to Filipinos and Australians whose dedicated service in their respective advocacies have uplifted people's lives, promoted Philippine culture and heritage, support economic linkages, and raised awareness on the historic relations between the Philippines and Australia. Ambassador Calaguian-Cruz thanked the awardees for enhancing the long-standing friendship between the Philippines and Australia and inspiring many others to contribute in their own ways.

Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz, joined by First Assistant Allaster Cox and Ms. Elizabeth Kikkert MLA of the ACT Legislative Assembly, presented to each awardee a 70th Anniversary Certificate of Recognition. The awardees also had an opportunity to deliver short remarks and share their stories with each other.

The awardees, their families, and guests from the Filipino community were serenaded by the King of Modern *Harana* (Serenade) Mr. Miguel Castro. Mr. Castro performed a medley of Filipino Kundiman songs, *Sweet Sweet Land* (from the Musical Touch Me Not (Noli Me Tangere) to be shown in 2018 in Sydney, and a touching rendition of *We Can Be Kind*. Dr. Merlinda Bobis, a Filipino-Australian multi-awarded poet and novelist, also performed combining poetry and music to deliver her literary pieces, *Crow Turning*, *Shaman's Healing Chant*, *First Night and Love is Planetary*.

Guests also had an opportunity to view the exhibit of Mr. Castro's Papercut Artworks, displayed at the Ambassador's Residence, which included his Coron series depicting the coral gardens of Coron, Palawan and the Great Barrier Reef corals. Dr. Merlinda Bobis' publications and featured poems were also displayed. END

The 70th Anniversary Awardees are the following individuals and organisations:

Defense and Security Cooperation

Major Paul A. Rosenzweig, Ret.

Economic Diplomacy

Australia-Philippines Business Council (APBC)
Mr. Arturo Landrito Sta. Barbara

Cultural Diplomacy

Dr. Merlinda Bobis
Atty. Lolita Farmer OAM
Mr. Trevor Hogan
Mr. Renato Perdon
Mr. Christian Ramilo
Dr. Deborah Ruiz-Wall OAM

Community Service

Ms. Miriam Cocking
Mr. Alastair Douglas
Dr. Darryl J. Hodgkinson and Ms. Katherine Hodgkinson
Illawarra Filipino and Multicultural Women's Group Inc.
Mr. Rob and Jean Johnston
Mr. Robert Murray
Mrs. Rosie Lavadia-Norriss
Rev. Fr. Renato Paras
Mr. Maurice Schokman
Mrs. Perlita Swinbank†
Mrs. Elvira Tolentino



First row: Consul General Anne Jalando- on Louis, Philippine Consulate General in Sydney, First Assistant Secretary Allaster Cox of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, H.E. Minda Calaguian-Cruz, Philippine Ambassador to Australia, Atty. Lolita Farmer OAM (awardee), Dr. Deborah Ruiz Wall OAM (awardee), Mr. Chris Swinbank (husband of posthumous awardee Perlita Swinbank). Second row: Mr. Alastair Douglas (awardee), Mr. Maurice Schokman (awardee), Mr. Nonoy Perdon (brother of awardee Mr. Renato Perdon), Dr. Trevor Hoagn (awardee), Ms. Remi Macina (President of organization awardee Illawara Filipino & Multicultural Women's Group; Mrs. Elvira Tolentia (awardee and representative of awardee Christian Ramilo; Mr. Rob and Jean Johnston (awardee); Dr. Merlinda Bobis (awardee); Dr. Daryl Hodgkinson (awardee) Mr. Miguel Castro (guest artist); Minister and Consul General Nina Cainglet, Third Secretary and Vice Consul Nicole de Castro, Ms Kathleen Tudio and Ms Sheila Tu of the Philippine Embassy; Third row: Major Paul A. Rosenzweig MA JP (awardee) and Ms. Katherine Hodgkinson (awardee)