



Australia Awards



Scholar Reflections: Anuk De Silva at the inaugural Australia Awards Scholars Forum for South and West Asia

Australia Awards scholar from Sri Lanka Anuk De Silva reflects on the inaugural Australia Awards Scholars Forum for South and West Asia.

Selected Australia Awards scholars from South and West Asia came together recently in Canberra for a two-day Scholars Forum to support institutional and people-to-people links between Australia and the region – a first for Australia Awards. **The inaugural Scholars Forum for South and West Asia attracted over 100 participants** including 58 Australia Awards scholars, alumni, senior diplomats from the region, representatives from Australia's education sector, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The theme for the Forum was LEARN | LINK | LEAD to reflect the Australia Awards experience.

Among scholars at the Forum was Anuk De Silva from Sri Lanka. These are his reflections and little about his Australia Awards experience.



Above: Anuk De Silva, speaking about his Australia Awards experience at the Scholar's Forum.

Anuk's reflections of the Scholar's Forum

'It was a wonderful experience to meet with the other scholars at the Forum and listen to their inspiring stories on how they are planning to utilise their knowledge and networks to help in the development work in their own countries. The Forum provided me with an opportunity to link up with my fellow scholars from my home country, some of whom I was meeting for the first time, and make lasting friendships with them within a short span of time. It was also great to listen to what the various diplomats had to say during the morning phase of the Scholars Forum, which was indeed a thought-provoking session. Overall, it was a highly satisfying and enlightening experience, and I am deeply humbled to have been given the opportunity to be a part of the Scholars Forum.'

Making Connections

'I made a presentation at the Scholars Forum covering the knowledge and skills I have gained so far through my studies and the connections I have made and continue to make with peers and other professional colleagues. I hope to utilise these linkages across three separate sectors, namely: economic development, education, and arts and culture. With the knowledge I have gained through my studies in marketing, consumer behaviour and branding, I hope to utilise those skills at a national level and assist in the promotional and marketing activities of Sri Lanka as a desirable tourist destination, thereby aiding the economic development of the nation. With the networks I have built with the various lecturers and academics in Australia, I hope to further enhance the education sector by establishing exchange programs for students and academic staff so that deserving students back home could benefit from the vast experience and knowledge of the professors here in Melbourne. Finally, with my avid interest in the performing arts, and with Australia boasting a vibrant theatrical sector, with many local and foreign touring productions taking stage here, I have an idea to develop some possible collaborations that would allow various home-grown stage plays that celebrate the rich cultural traditions of each country to be performed in the other, thus allowing for the exchange of arts and culture between the two nations through mainstream theatre.'

‘When I am back home, I hope to continue to utilise the linkages I made in Australia across the sectors of economic development, education, and arts & culture’ – Anuk De Silva



Above: Anuk (far right) with fellow scholars from Sri Lanka at the Scholars Forum.

The Australia Awards Experience

‘Throughout my whole life, this has been the first time that I have lived on my own overseas and to be studying at a foreign university. Personally, I feel it was a great decision on my part. I am forever grateful to Australia Awards for having provided me with the opportunity to study at one of the best universities in Australia. It is nothing less than a dream come true for me to study at the University of Melbourne. I have had a wonderful time so far here in Melbourne, and the team at Australia Awards has always been there for the scholars with financial assistance, academic support and advice in general.’



About Anuk

Australia Awards scholar Anuk De Silva is undertaking a Master of Commerce (Marketing) at the University of Melbourne. Prior to commencing studies in Australia, he was Head of Corporate Communications and Branding at a leading apparel firm in Sri Lanka. His current studies focus on the role of marketing in consumer behaviour, communications and branding. He hopes to apply the knowledge he has gained in these areas to business environments back home.

Having graduated from the University of Colombo with a BSc. in Physical Science, he decided to pursue a career in Branding and Corporate Communications. Subsequently, he completed a Professional Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK, to which he is affiliated as a Chartered Marketer and a Fellow. He is a Certified Professional Marketer (Asia) of the Asia Marketing Federation. He also completed a Master of Business Administration from the Postgraduate Institute of Management, Sri Lanka, prior to embarking on his studies in Australia. In addition to his professional experience, he has been involved as a Visiting Lecturer and a Professional Trainer in Colombo. He was also presented with the Corporate Communication Professional of the Year 2013 award, by the CMO (Chief Marketing Officer) Council at the 4th CMO Asia Awards for Branding and Marketing in July 2013.

Australia Awards are prestigious international Scholarships, Fellowships and Short Courses funded by the Australian Government. Australia Awards Scholarships aim to contribute to the long-term development needs of Australia's partner countries in line with bilateral and regional agreements.

For further information:

Australia Awards: www.australiaawards.gov.au

Australia Awards in South and West Asia: www.australiaawardssouthwestasia.org

Australia Awards – Sri Lanka: www.australiaawardssrilanka.org