



## Australian High Commission, Abuja

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### **African Women in Leadership Network launch – Australia promotes Nigeria’s leaders of tomorrow**

The Nigerian chapter of the Australia Awards African Women in Leadership Network was officially launched today in Abuja by the Australian High Commissioner, H.E. Jonathan Richardson, and Honourable Minister Professor Mrs Ruqayyatu Rufai, Minister for Education. Other special guests included Mrs R.A. Kadafa, Deputy Director of the Career Management Office representing the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, as well as the Nigerian Alumni Ambassador, Ms Jennifer Ndidi Ozegbe.

The Australian Government offers a pan-African program of development scholarships and fellowships for African professionals known as the Australia Awards. The African Women in Leadership Network (AWLN) will promote Australia Awards to potential female applicants from eligible countries, including Nigeria, and support scholarship recipients going to Australia to pursue their post-graduate studies.

“Gender equality is at the heart of Australia’s development efforts in Africa”, said Mr Richardson, who is accredited to Nigeria and six other West African countries.

“We want more women to participate in and benefit from the Australia Awards scholarships and to return to champion development issues in their home countries.”

AWLN also provides a forum for future female leaders to meet to discuss development issues facing African women, and to share insights about their careers and professional opportunities and challenges.

The AWLN was formed earlier this year and already has about 130 members from over 25 African countries, including 8 from Nigeria.

Since 2010, Nigeria has benefited from more than 130 Australia Awards scholarships in the fields of agriculture, mining, health, education, water and sanitation, environment and governance. About half of these scholarships have been awarded to women.

Scholarships are offered at PhD and Masters-level, as well as short professional development courses of up to three months. The scholarships cover the full cost of travel and tuition, as well as accommodation, living expenses and health insurance. The Australia Awards promote equal participation by women and men in.

For more information on Australia Awards and AWLN, visit [www.adsafrica.com.au](http://www.adsafrica.com.au).

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