

Careers

return, I responded to Sport and Recreation Victoria's recruitment campaign and was lucky.

What are your interests in football and sports generally:

I love sports and previously participated as a netballer in the Australian team to the 1997 Maccabiah Games in Israel. The Manchester United v Australia match played at the MCG earlier this year was the first football match I ever watched though. When I was given this job opportunity, I did not mind that it was a foot- and not a net-ball, I just grasped it!

First job:

Articled clerkship and solicitor at a first tier Melbourne law firm.

Career highlights:

Graduating from a combined law/psych degree and my present job (of course!). Once the Games are over I will be in need of a good holiday – maybe a couple of months in Nepal and Africa. On my return, more job opportunities may be in the wind for me with the announcement that the Commonwealth Games will be held in Melbourne in 2006!

Role Model:

My parents, who have always given me the freedom and confidence to follow my dreams and to do what makes me happy.

So you want to be an Australian Youth Ambassador...

The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program

In May 1998, the Australian Government announced it would allocate \$10 million over the next two years to fund the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program to send up to 500 young Australians abroad.

The Program identifies and places skilled young Australians, aged 18-30, on development assignments throughout the Asia Pacific region. It gives them the opportunity to use their skills to assist developing countries, while building long-term goodwill and understanding between Australians and our neighbours.

The program works with Australian *Partner Organisations* including companies, educational institutions, government agencies and community organisations which have a commitment to the Asia

Pacific region. Partner Organisations may nominate their staff to become Australian Youth Ambassadors. If successful, these young Ambassadors are then sent to work with Host Organisations in the region.

A *Host Organisation* may be a government department, local business, educational or community organisation in an eligible Asia Pacific country. They propose development assignments for the Australian Youth Ambassadors. Assignments are generally of six months duration (a minimum of three and a maximum of 12 months is considered) and must meet a specific development need.

Most countries in the Asia Pacific eligible for Australian aid are also eligible for this program.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have a specific skill or knowledge (trade, profession or other qualification) to contribute to a development assignment. The program seeks a wide range of representation of young men and women from all states/territories, industry sectors, progressions and trades.

The first group of youth ambassadors left Australia in March 1999 and boasts a wide range of skills including teachers, engineers, scientists, journalists, lawyers, doctors, IT specialists, social workers and librarians. These young people are now serving in Nepal, Vietnam, The Philippines, the Maldives, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu.

The second intake, due to depart in July / August 1999, will comprise of AYAs leaving for Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, Micronesia, Samoa and Kiribati.

What are the benefits to Host Organisations?

- Development assistance.
- Access to highly skilled Australian Youth Ambassadors.
- Knowledge and skills transfer.
- New or expanded links with Australian companies, government agencies and organisations.

What are the benefits to Partner Organisations?

- Making a positive contribution to development and enhancing Australia's engagement with the Asia Pacific region.
- New or expanded links with companies, governments and organisations in the region.
- Increased understanding of cultures in new and emerging markets.

Outstanding staff development opportunities.

Why become an Australian Youth Ambassador?

The program provides individuals with:

- An invaluable opportunity to broaden their experience and increase their understanding of the

cultural diversity and development needs of our neighbours.

- A unique professional development experience that will expose participants to working in a cross cultural environment.
- An opportunity to develop skills in resourcefulness, adaptability, managing diversity and self managing leadership.
- The opportunity to make a positive contribution to the development of our neighbours.

For more information on the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program including a list of our Partner Organisations and the countries involved, have a look at www.aisaid.gov.au or contact:

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Catherine Tobin – Youth Ambassador

Catherine Tobin has long aspired to live and work in the Asia Pacific region. The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program will now give her that chance when she heads off to Cambodia to work as a NGO/Government Liaison Officer in Phnom Penh.

The 29 year old law graduate, who has an interest in travel and development issues, is looking forward to her six-month stint in Cambodia.

"I am excited about the prospect of working and living in a different culture and hope to make a positive contribution in my role as a volunteer," Catherine said.

"I believe that program provides a fantastic opportunity to develop both personally and professionally to promote cultural exchange between Australian and its neighbours, and to contribute to a country's development goals," she said.

Catherine graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1995 with a combined Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws with Honours. Her main area of legal practice has been criminal law, having worked as a solicitor with the Office of Public Prosecution in Melbourne for two and a half years.

Catherine, who comes from Melbourne, has previously worked as a volunteer at a women's refuge and a community legal centre. In addition, she has participated as a youth leader on camps for underprivileged children.

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In recent times, Catherine, has taught law at the Victoria University of Technology and Swinburne University of Technology (TAFE).

While in Phnom Penh Catherine will be working with the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) which is a membership organisation for NGOs working in Cambodia.

Nha Nguyen – Youth Ambassador

Nha Nguyen was born in a fishing village in rural Vietnam and came to Australia as a refugee at five years of age. In August, she returned to a coastal village but this time in Samoa where she is serving as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development.

The lawyer from Melbourne is drawing on the skills she acquired in her commerce degree while working at the Women in Business Foundation based in the capital of Apia.

“It is great to have such a rare opportunity to contribute to third world development and strengthen ties between Australia and our neighbours in the Asia-Pacific,” Nha said.

Nha, 25, will help the Foundation establish an accounting system to ensure accountability and sustainability.

“I’m really excited about the prospect of living and working abroad and looking forward to leaning about Samoa, its people and culture,” Nha said.

Nha speaks Vietnamese, Japanese, Thai and conversational French and she is hoping to add Samoan to her list! Nha plans to pursue a career at the Bar when she returns but also harbours a passion for foreign affairs and international humanitarian law. She also has an artistic streak and narrowly missed out on a role in the musical production of *Miss Saigon* after auditioning and training at the Victorian College of the Arts.

In 1994, Nha spent three months at Thailand’s Srinakharin University on student exchange. This really opened her eyes to the diversity of cultures in this world.

“My own settlement in Australia has provided me with many opportunities and I’m keen to share the skills I have learned here with others,” Nha said.

Rachel Nicolson – Youth Ambassador

A month-long backpacking trip in Vietnam has whetted Rachel’s appetite for that country. Although Rachel has travelled through a number of developing countries in Asia, Vietnam, with its culture and the challenging developmental issues it faces, has done most to fire her imagination.

In August Rachel, who hails from Melbourne, returned to Vietnam to work as a program officer with the Southeast Asia Minister of Education Organisation Regional Training Centre in Ho Chi Minh City.

The Centre, established in 1996, operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and is one of 12 such centres in Southeast Asia. It provides training for education managers in Indochina.

Rachel, will assist the head of the educational management department to establish, monitor and evaluate an educational assessment program for Indochinese countries.

Rachel, 22, has a background in education issues with a focus on policy and advocacy work. She has served as President of the Monash University Student Association. In this role, she was responsible for representing the interests of the student body as well as formulating the policy direction of a broad range of support services for students.

Rachel will take to Vietnam her belief that a country’s education system is an essential component of development. Advances in state education levels, she says, result in better access to the social tools that are vital to overcoming development issues on an individual and community basis.

Rachel consider the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program a fantastic opportunity to apply her skills and experiences in a meaningful, hands-on way, directly contributing to the flow of resources from a developed country to a less developed neighbouring country.

She is currently completing her law degree at Monash University, focusing on human rights and, in particular, on indigenous people. Rachel has a Bachelor of Asian Studies and has been studying Vietnamese for the past six months in preparation for her assignment.