

# PRESS RELEASE

## *Philippine Embassy, Canberra*



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### **The Philippine Embassy celebrates International Women's Month with the Commonwealth Club in Canberra through an Exhibition of Philippine Indigenous Fabrics and Cultural Presentation**



*Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz giving a presentation on the history and evolution of indigenous weaving in the Philippines, highlighting that women and girls featured prominently in Philippine society.*

14 March 2017 – In celebration of International Women's Month, the Philippine Embassy together with the Commonwealth Club hosted an afternoon tea, featuring an Exhibition of Philippine Indigenous Fabrics and Cultural Presentation, at the Commonwealth Club in Canberra on 14 March 2017.

The exhibition is an initiative of Ms. Sally Barber, State Director of Philippine-based Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, and award-winning writer, Dr. Merlinda Bobis.

Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz gave a presentation on traditional weaving as a fine art of resilience. She shared the history and evolution of Philippine traditional weaving, its continuing legacy as a living tradition, and the role of women and girls (weavers) with their stories of resilience and creativity. The Embassy showcased

the different Philippine textiles and clothes made of *piña*, *jusi*, *hablon*, *yakan*, *inabel* and *t'nalak*, among others. The exhibit also featured a shaman costume designed by Filipino artist, Julie Lluch, for Dr. Merlinda Bobis.

Members of the Commonwealth Club, diplomatic community and Filipino Community present at the event applauded the performance by Dr. Merlinda Bobis who displayed the use of traditional fabrics for contemporary fashion and theatre using her woman warrior costume for her epic poem, *Kantada ng Babaing Mandirigma / Cantata of the Warrior Woman Daragang Magayon* that was published as a book in the Philippines.

Dr. Bobis also demonstrated how to use fabrics and accessories for contemporary fashion on 15-year old Filipino-Australian artist, Ms. Robyn Russell, who gave a touching rendition of the song, "*Scars to her Beautiful*," as a tribute to all women and girls.

Through this indigenous textile and accessories display, the Philippine Embassy hopes to give tribute to the women weavers not only in the Philippines but all over the world who were, and continue to be, pillars of their economies and societies. END



*Minister and Consul General Nina P. Cainglet with Ms. Sally Barber and Philippine Embassy staff at the Textile Exhibition room*



*Dr. Merlinda Bobis during her performance on how traditional fabrics are worn for contemporary fashion and theatre, through her play, 'Cantata of the Warrior Woman Daragang Magayon'.*





*(Left to right) Minister and Consul General Nina P. Cainglet, Ms. Robyn Russell, Ms. Sally Barber, Philippine Ambassador Minda Calaguian-Cruz and Dr. Merlinda Bobis.*



*Showcasing beautifully hand-crafted Philippine textiles at the Commonwealth Club*