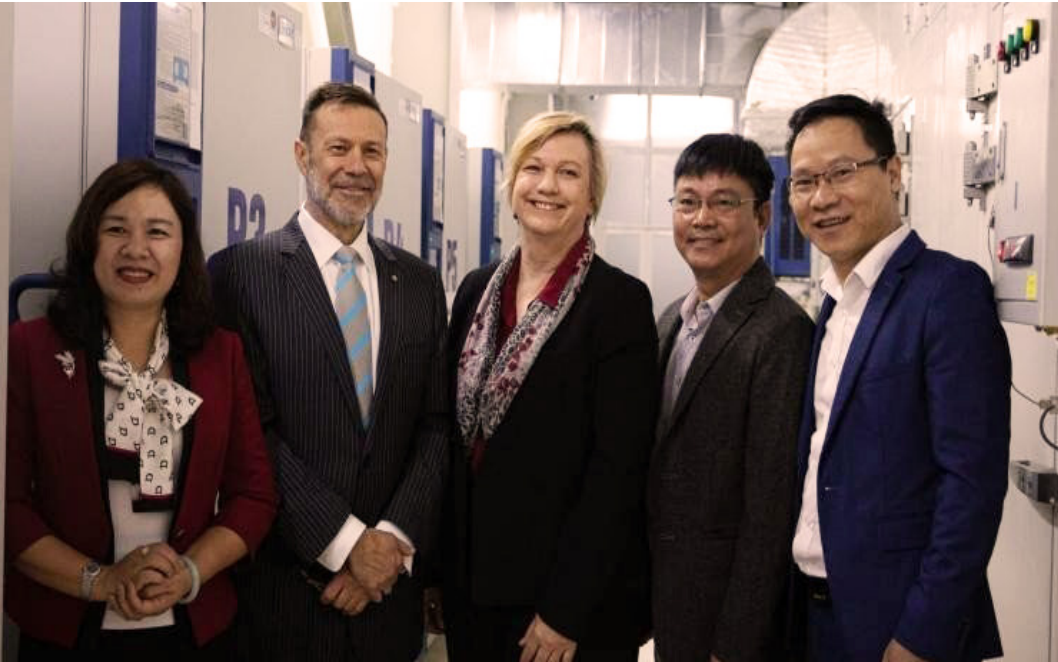




Australia Awards

# ALUMNI CONTRIBUTIONS DURING VIETNAM'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

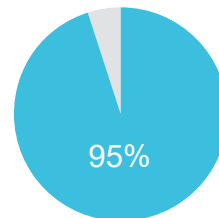


Alumni Dr Nguyen Cong Luat (1<sup>st</sup> from R) was responsible for vaccine supply in his role as Deputy Head of the National Expanded Program on Immunisation (NEPI) Office.

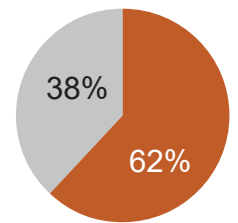
**Australia Awards alumni made impressive emergency and longer-term contributions to Vietnam's COVID-19 response, particularly alumni working in health-care related areas. Nearly 80% of these alumni made direct contributions to addressing COVID-19 challenges in local communities.**

## Notable national and regional alumni contributions to COVID-19 recovery

- Leading the World Health Organisation's (WHO) COVID-19 vaccine coordination and guidance in the Western Pacific region.
- Coordinating Vietnam's national COVID-19 vaccine supply and distribution.
- Providing guidelines to hospitals and medical centres across the country through the Ministry of Health's National COVID-19 Response Committee.
- Enabling rapid identification of new COVID-19 variants in Vietnam through joint research with Australian specialists.
- Producing and sharing COVID-19 research findings with the broader global health community.



Alumni used expertise developed through their scholarship to contribute to the COVID-19 response.



Alumni emergency response contributions  
Alumni long-term recovery contributions

“ I led a research project to examine the COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and associated predictors in the general community in Vietnam under the support of Aus4Skills. My report was submitted to the Vietnam Ministry of Health to assist in policy making as well as published in international peer-reviewed journals. ”

*Dr Minh Cuong Duong, Lecturer and Epidemiologist, University of New South Wales (UNSW)  
World Health Organisation Consultant, South-East Asia Region  
UNSW alumnus, graduated in 2016*



“ I work at one of the largest private medical groups in Vietnam. During the pandemic, I was on the steering committee of the corporation, guiding and supporting the transformation of a general hospital in the system into a hospital for COVID-19 treatment ”

*Ms Le Ngoc Anh Phuong,  
Former Group Director of Marketing and Communications, Hoàn Mỹ Medical Group  
University of Sydney, graduated in 2010*



# ALUMNI STORIES



## ENSURING FAIR ACCESS TO VACCINES

Dr Tran Thi Giang Huong is Director of Division of Programmes for Disease Control, WHO Office for the Western Pacific based in Manila, Philippines. She was Chair of the COVID-19 Vaccine Working Group which provided vaccine strategies and guidance for 37 countries in the Western Pacific Region, covering 1.9 billion people. Dr Huong led the vaccine distribution and deployment to member countries in the region, according to priority needs. The Working Group, collaborating with the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative, ensured member countries, including Vietnam, could access sufficient vaccines and deliver quickly to effectively respond to the pandemic and prevent deaths and severe illness. Vietnam received 70 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX facility. Dr Huong graduated with a Master of Public health from the University of New South Wales in 2000.

## PROVIDING DIRECTION IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

Dr Van Dinh Trang was a member of the Ministry of Health COVID-19 Response Committee and Head of the Microbiology and Molecular Laboratory at the National Hospital of Tropical Diseases that developed national Ministry of Health guidelines related to COVID-19 response activity. These guidelines were applied by all national hospitals and other medical care units around the country. Initial national guidelines included how to diagnose and confirm cases of COVID-19. Later guidelines covered cost rates for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing. The consequential reduced price of PCR testing across the country relieved some of the financial burden experienced in the community. Dr Trang graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy in Medicine from the University of Sydney in 2019.



## COLLABORATING FOR ADEQUATE VACCINE SUPPLY



Dr Nguyen Cong Luat returned to the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in the Ministry of Health after completing his PhD at Curtin University in 2019 and a Master degree at the University of Queensland in 2011. He took up the role of Deputy Head of the National Expanded Program on Immunisation (NEPI) Office and was responsible for vaccine supply. Dr Luat participated in preparing required documents, to receive, store and distribute COVID-19 vaccine to all provinces and cities nationwide with a total of over 262 million vaccine doses, among which 26.4 million doses were from Australia. Dr Luat was delighted with Australia's vaccine supply and logistical support which made him proud of his close links to Australia through his scholarship.