

Launch of Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards
SPEECH by His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC
Administrator of the Northern Territory
Holiday Inn Esplanade – 28 August 2009

It is with great pleasure that I join you today for the launch of the Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards for 2010. I greatly value this occasion where we can encourage and promote the positive achievements of our young Territorians.

In June, I undertook a tour from Darwin to Alice Springs to celebrate the Queen's Birthday. At each of the Receptions along the track, young achievers were invited to be part of the celebrations. As I said at the time - nearly two billion people live in the Commonwealth and half of these are under twenty-five. That is why I enjoy the opportunity to meet as many young Territorians as possible; the future is in their hands.

There are those like Simone Liddy, last year's winner who is well on her way to becoming a registered professional pharmacist. Bronte James, the 2009 Regional and Rural Initiative Award winner who works shifts in a gold mine and also works with her family on Hidden Valley Station to progress recognition of their cattle.

There are many young people who consider their endeavours in a humble light, uncertain whether they have the application to truly excel. Let me share with you the story of one of our young Territorians whose life has been one of adversity rather than privilege, of almost overwhelming physical limitations but increasing reputation.

Last week I toured the 26th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards at the Museum. Before I left, I popped into the excellent shop there to find considerable excitement at the arrival of a new product range.

Cheeky Dog t-shirts are now a hit far beyond the borders of the Northern Territory. Dion Beasley was a finalist in the 2006 Northern Territory Young Achiever awards. He began expressing his daily life through drawings of camp dogs. With the help of Joie Boulter, his former primary school teacher, a young man who is profoundly deaf and suffers from muscular dystrophy is now able

to communicate with a wide audience. It was indeed a privilege to meet Dion in his home town of Tennant Creek.

As you have heard this morning, these Young Achiever Awards provide a great opportunity for our young people to receive encouragement and reward. I therefore look forward to announcing the Channel 9 Young Achiever of the Year at the Gala Presentation Dinner in April next year.