

ADDRESS BY
HIS HONOUR MR TOM PAULING AO QC
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
ON THE OCCASION OF
**LAUNCH OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARDS**

Holiday Inn Esplanade, Darwin

29 August 2008

It is with great pleasure that I join you today for the launch of the Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards for 2009. I had the pleasure of attending the Awards Presentation for the first time in April 2008 - what an inspiring event.

The young people of the Territory should be proud of their achievements – our winners last year were extremely worthy of their accolades.

They included singer-songwriter Leah Flanagan whose Darwin Festival performances have been greatly enjoyed; Des Abbott who has of course won a bronze medal in his Olympics debut with the Kookaburras hockey team; and AJ Kulatunga whose website *dreambuildinspirelead.com* is well named.

As you have heard this morning, these Young Achiever Awards provide a great opportunity for our leaders of tomorrow to receive a

helpful prompt in the right direction through encouragement and reward.

Some of my own recent official commitments are pertinent to this morning's announcement. Youth Parliament assembled recently in our Legislative Assembly Chamber. The message that emerged from and about the youth in our community is not the stereotype one finds in the NT News: listless, rebellious, idle youth - but rather a youthful population full of ideas and bright futures.

The second commitment was a visit to a Parliament of altogether another kind.

Two weeks' ago, Mrs Pauling and I attended Al Zahra College in Arncliffe, Sydney. This is an Islamic school to Year 7, part of a scheme run by Constitutional Education Fund Australia through a Parliamentary Club. In effect they are the School Council but run with all the formality and trappings of the Parliament. They debated a bill, read a second time, to reduce class times during the period of Ramadan because the children can't concentrate fully when fasting. The bill passed all stages on the voices and we were impressed by their thoughtful considerations.

The final example is a Presentation made under the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, a scheme I myself participated in an impossibly long time ago.

These award recipients had all taken a broad view of their world and done a great deal to give back to the community that has nurtured and supported them.

On each occasion I was impressed with, and have had confirmed, my faith in the capacity of our young citizens to make wise decisions and in Olympic terms strive for a personal best.

I look forward to announcing the Channel 9 Young Achiever of the Year at the Gala Presentation Dinner in March 2009.

Good luck with your nomination this year!