

Afternoon Tea for National Youth Science Forum Representatives
SPEECH by His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC
Administrator of the Northern Territory
Government House – 10 September 2009

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Government House and I would like to start my comments today with sincere thanks to Rotary for their encouragement of our young scientists Australia-wide for the past twenty-five years. Attendance at the National Youth Science Forum gives them, quite literally, a chance in a lifetime.

The value of science in the modern world was potently emphasised last month with the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Eureka Prizes. Nineteen prizes rewarded research across many disciplines of science, as well as science-related photography, journalism and teaching. Coverage of the awards ceremony presented a tiny taste of the excitement of science, the rewards and those occasional “eureka” moments. The scientific focus of the prize winners ranged from a new hypothesis on human obesity based on research into swarming locusts, to the development of a revolutionary new solar cell using several low-cost items including an ink-jet printer, nail polish and a pizza oven!

It was also good to see the teachers who stimulate our young scientists being recognised. The winner of the recently introduced Eureka teaching award was a Head of Science who utilises Port Philip Bay as his outdoor classroom where students are taught marine biology, waste management and water education in his popular ‘science-through-snorkelling’ lessons.

Professor Hans Bachor is the Chair of the National Science Summer School and Director of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Quantum-Atom Optics. His research interests include the fields of quantum squeezing and entanglement. I think that I’d have to attend more than a forum or summer school to understand those theories but I would be fascinated to learn whether any of you are wiser. The Professor notes: *Science is in demand more than ever to find new solutions and alternatives, to create a stable, sustainable world. ... You are part of the new generation that will set the trends for the future.*

Finally, less than a quarter of the students that apply actually win selection and a place at the Science Forum. Well done and I wish you all the best for your visit to Perth.