

Presentation of the Charles Darwin Research and Innovation Medals
Address by His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC
Administrator of the Northern Territory
Charles Darwin Symposium Dinner, SKYCITY Darwin, 23 September 2009

Minister, Acting Lord Mayor, Professor Peter Doherty Nobel Laureate

Professor Barney Glover Vice Chancellor

Professor Grahame Webb, Chair of the Northern Territory Research and
Innovation Board, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a very real honour to be here tonight for the inaugural presentation of the Charles Darwin Research and Innovation Medals. It is fitting that these awards coincide with the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth; the 170th anniversary earlier this month of the Beagle's third voyage when Lieutenant John Lort Stokes named Darwin Harbour; and Celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*.

Indeed, it was a personal highlight for me in my position of Administrator of the Northern Territory to launch the special Exhibition at the Northern Territory Library on 10th September. I am still in awe of the fact that I have held in my hand a real first edition of this marvellous work. I have for more than thirty years treasured a personal facsimile of the first edition, but the real thing is quite another thing.

The Charles Darwin Medal has been established to recognise individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to research and innovation in a variety of fields across the Northern Territory. It is a prestigious award and will not be presented on an annual basis, but rather when the Northern Territory Research and Innovation Board consider a nominee worthy of honour.

Much as Charles Darwin himself dedicated many years to research prior to publication, so tonight's recipients have devoted themselves to their fields over the course of many years. They all fulfil the following criteria:

Impact - significant and lasting contribution to the Northern Territory through research and/or innovation.

Benefit - to Territorians through research outcomes and/or application of innovations.

Longevity - a long and distinguished record of excellence.

Relevance - achievements must be broadly aligned with the Northern Territory's research priorities of Strong *Communities, Economic Development and Sustainable Environment*.

Additional consideration was given if the research or innovation addressed Indigenous disadvantage, helped build strong communities in remote regions or population centres, or advanced tropical or desert knowledge.

There is no doubt that tonight's recipients have made a lasting impact in their chosen fields. Whether land management, disease control in cattle, establishing wildlife sanctuaries, Indigenous infant health or integrating traditional concepts with contemporary thinking - you are leaders, workers and visionaries. My congratulations go to you all. Your contribution to the development of the Northern Territory is acknowledged, celebrated and greatly valued.