

ADDRESS BY
HIS HONOUR MR TOM PAULING AO QC
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
ON THE OCCASION OF
RECEPTION FOR THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARDS
Government House, Darwin
18 June 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you here this evening and in doing so, I acknowledge the Larrakia people and their ancestors, traditional owners of the land on which this house stands.

First introduced fifty-two years ago for boys and fifty years ago this year for the girls, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme offers challenge, adventure, and opportunities to learn new skills - both mental and physical - and to travel along the road of personal discovery.

I travelled on that road at Fisherman's Point on the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales in 1966, when the award scheme was called "Outward Bound".

It was a very demanding two weeks and there were times in the first week when I wished I wasn't there. It would have been easy to give in.

At the end of the second week, I didn't want to leave.

It had a very positive effect upon my life as you can see.

When you read the biography of one of the founders, Baron Hunt, you learn how incredibly rich life can be. It included travelling from the United Kingdom to serve with the Indian Police and commanding the King's Royal Rifle Corps and the Indian Infantry Brigade during World War II.

Hunt became the Chief Instructor of the Commando Mountain and Snow Warfare Training Camp and then the Leader of the British Expedition to Mount Everest between 1952 and 1953, when the team of Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay conquered Everest.

By then Hunt was barely halfway through his life and he went on to become President of many organisations, including the Royal Geographical Society, and the recipient of numerous awards and honours before he died ten years ago, aged 88.

We all need mountains to climb. And in the case of the award winners, you have the enviable energy of youth that can be channelled into your endeavours. I look forward to learning more about the projects you became involved in – an intriguing array from leadership training with the Junior Police Rangers and sailing, sea kayaking and bush walking adventures to learning Arabic drumming and belly dancing.

Congratulations on all your achievements and I urge you to use this experience as a building block for your future path in life.