



Marion Scrymgour
MEMBER FOR ARAFURA

22 August 2007

Western Arnhem Land: “Science province of the Nation”

Member for Arafura Marion Scrymgour today congratulated Territory winners of awards in the Eureka Prize, Australia’s most prestigious awards for excellence in science.

“Maningrida’s science teacher, Mason Scholes was awarded the \$10,000 Holmes a Court-University of Technology Prize for Science Teaching for his brilliant work with senior high school students,” said Ms Scrymgour.

“And the grand old man of western Arnhem land’s stone country, Lofty Bardayal Nadjamerrek OAM, is the leading partner of the team which took the inaugural IAG Eureka Prize for Innovative Solutions to Climate Change.

“These awards really take your breath away.

“Amazingly, both prizes have been awarded to projects in the same part of remote Australian Aboriginal land; and that both combine traditional Aboriginal knowledge and skills with western scientific methods and knowledge, which is an astonishing and well deserve credit to all concerned.

“Mason Scholes’ scientific teaching was part of a junior ranger’s program developed through the school in conjunction with local land and sea management programs.

“Among other things, the program has discovered up to 45 new species of spider in the Maningrida area.

“The West Arnhem Land Wildfire Abatement (WALFA) scheme has, over a decade, combined traditional fire management regimes with western science to reduce wildfires, promote biodiversity and create a greenhouse gas abatement scheme which in its first year reduced CO₂ emissions by 256,000 tonnes—double its original estimate.

“This has been carried out by ranger groups across western and south western Arnhem Land, and is being backed by payments from the Darwin Gas plant of \$1 million a year over 17 years as greenhouse abatement trading.

“So the programs are strongly linked—and show the way forward for real jobs for the people of the region.

“At the moment the Federal Government is saying that CDEP will be abolished by 30 June 2008—and the land management program across the Territory are heavily dependent on CDEP support.”