

**Media Release:**

**23.4.08**

## **Sky's the Limit for Apprentice Scheme**

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife school-based apprentice Graeme Talbot Jr was awarded the 2008 Group Training NT School-based Apprentice of the Year on Wednesday 16 April.

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts (NRETA) congratulates Graeme on winning the award, along with senior ranger Mark Fogarty who was nominated for the Group Training NT Supervisor of the year.

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Director Graham Phelps said Graeme won the award because of his extraordinary enthusiasm, team work and bush skills.

"Graeme started volunteering at Fogg Dam during school holidays when he was 15 and then completed a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management in record time," Mr Phelps said.

"By the end of this year he'll finish Year 12 with a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management, which means he'll be a qualified and experienced ranger with many opportunities available to him.

"Graeme's supervisor Mark Fogarty and Chief District Ranger Barry Scott have been instrumental in the success of implementing the school-based apprentice program at NRETA.

"Mark and Barry have developed an excellent team attitude and commitment to the four apprentices at Fogg Dam and continue passing on their knowledge, supporting the kids and expertly training them up."

Mr Talbot Jr said he was thrilled to win the award and loved being part of the team at Fogg Dam.

"I've grown up in the wetlands area and I love being on the land and out in the fresh air so naturally I was drawn to becoming a park ranger," Mr Talbot Jr said.

"My apprenticeship involves a wide variety of tasks including talking to visitors, learning about weed management and fire management techniques, and identifying native wildlife."

Mr Phelps said NRETA was nominated for Group Training NT Employer of the Year which was a huge accomplishment for the Department.

"The NRETA school-based apprentice program is focussed on building opportunities for young Territorians and encourages kids to look to Parks and Wildlife for a future career," Mr Phelps said.

"Successful completion of an apprenticeship with NRETA opens the door and enables the person to step straight into a full time ranger position if one is available.

"We consider it vitally important to help build opportunities for both indigenous and non-indigenous Territorians to become rangers. "

Ends

**Media Note – for more information contact Karlie Goetze on 8999 4726**

Issued: 10.45am Wednesday, 23 April 2008