Chief Minister, Clare Martin, today launched the Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards for 2005, encouraging young Territorians to nominate now.

“The Young Achiever Awards recognise the exceptional abilities, achievements and potential of the Territory’s youth - and Government is a very proud supporter of the Awards,” she said.

“The Northern Territory has the youngest population in Australia, so my Government is committed to providing our youth with support and encouragement, and recognising their achievements and contributions.”

Ms Martin said the Awards encourage young people to be more involved in their community.

“Young Territorians are an important part of building a brighter and better future - it is our young people that will lead the way forward,” Ms Martin said.

“The 2004 NT Young Achiever Maria Scaturchio is an excellent embodiment of the awards.

“She’s a passionate, creative young woman who works tirelessly to support and encourage young Territorians to follow and achieve their dreams.

“Maria’s list of achievements and community participation is inspiring. She assists the Palliative Care unit at Royal Darwin Hospital, has worked as a development officer for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards … and to top it off she is a current member of the Australian Country Women’s Water Polo team!”

Ms Martin said there were several different awards in the NT designed to encourage young people to pursue excellence, and added that the NT Government provided Youth Grants to assist young people to access programs, events and activities.

“I would encourage all those interested to contact my Office of Youth Affairs for information on these Awards, and also for information on how to access the Youth Grants,” she said.

The NT Young Achiever Awards Program will culminate with the naming of the 2005 winner at the launch of National Youth Week in April next year.