Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Willem Westra van Holthe, has congratulated the Northern Territory winners at the 2010 Nursery and Garden Industry Australia Awards.

Mr Westra van Holthe attended the Awards Ceremony at the Darwin Convention Centre last night.

"The Awards are an opportunity for those within the industry to obtain national recognition," Mr Westra van Holthe said.

"There were 64 finalists from across Australia in 17 award Categories.

"I'm very proud that the Northern Territory was so well represented at the awards and that they showed they were more than competitive with the larger jurisdictions.

"Geoff Miers, operator of Garden Solutions in Alice Springs, won the National Community Award for outstanding commitment to the local community.

"Geoff and his team are active in offering free workshops and educational assistance on pest and disease management in plants. The business is also involved in fundraising.

"The Territory’s other big winner was Allora Gardens Nursery in Darwin which was inducted into the NGIA Hall of Fame 2008-2010 after winning ‘Best Small Garden Centre in Australia’ in 2005 and ‘Best Medium Garden Centre in Australia’ in 2006 and 2007.

"This is a significant achievement and rewards the commitment shown by owner and manager, Estelle Cornell, her family and team.

"Striving for excellence is an important part of business success. Reaching the pinnacle of success many years running is truly an outstanding achievement.

"Geoff Miers, Allora Gardens and Katherine business, Cycad International, were also runners-up in a number of other Awards on the night.

"It’s been 10 years since the NGIA Awards were held in Darwin and I’m hoping it doesn’t take another decade to get them back here."

"I would encourage the Northern Territory Government to recognise the importance of these Awards and throw its support behind this crucial part of the horticultural sector."

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430