Two Territory women will share $20 000 after being named winners of the Chief Minister’s Study Award scheme for 2003.

Announcing the winners, the Chief Minister, Clare Martin said the Award Scheme, launched in October 2001, was one of the Territory Government’s first programs to focus on employment and training.

Frances Turner from Alice Springs won the Tertiary Study Award while the Vocational Study Award went to Yvonne Odegaard, also from Alice Springs.

The Study Awards, first presented last year, aim to help women gain access to formal qualifications and enhance their employment and general lifestyles.

Despite the many economic and professional advances women have made, on average they still earn less and on retirement are less financially secure than men.

Under the awards, $14 000 goes to the winner to help fund a tertiary study program while $6 000 is provided to enable the successful applicant to undertake a vocational study program.

Chief Minister Clare Martin said there had been an excellent response to this year’s call for expressions of interest with 14 applications for the vocational award and 64 for the tertiary award and the field of applicants was exceptional.

Ms Turner has spent 30 years working in the health field, most recently in nutrition programs associated with the "Strong Women, Strong Babies, Strong Culture" program which operates in seven remote communities.

She will use her award to study for her Bachelor of Indigenous Health Studies at Batchelor Institute.

Ms Odegaard, an indigenous artist with a background in business and the fashion industry, will undertake a course in Textile Design and Printing at the Alice Springs Campus of NT University.

Congratulating the successful applicants, Ms Martin said the judging panel had also highly commended the runners-up in each category, Ms Margaret-Marla Lewin, a mature age indigenous woman studying for a Graduate Diploma in Management and Administration, and Ms Edna Iles, co-ordinator of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Unit of Wurli Wurlinjang Health Service in Katherine.

She thanked the judging panel comprising the Vice Chancellor at the NTU,
Professor Ken McKinnon; the Director of the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs, Ms Eileen Shaw; and the Acting Deputy Chief Executive officer of the Department of Community Development, Sport and Recreation, Ms Sylvia Langford.