Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Kon Vatskalis today congratulated a team of researchers from the Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines (DPIFM) on their success at the recent NT Seafood Industry Awards.

The team, led by DPIFM Fisheries Group Senior Research Scientist Rik Buckworth, won the Research and Development Award for their invention of the genetag hook.

The genetag hook allows scientists to take a tissue sample from a hooked fish before releasing it. The tissue sample can then be gene-coded and later matched against a second sample, taken when the fish is eventually caught.

The technology is currently being used in the NT Spanish mackerel fishery. It has also stimulated a small manufacturing business in Darwin and has seen adaptations of the project in the USA, Canada and other countries, all of which use the Darwin manufactured genetag hooks.

Dr Buckworth, also won last night's award for "Best New Invention" on ABC TV's science program The New Inventors and in May this year was awarded the Tropical Knowledge Innovation Award at the Northern Territory Research and Innovation Awards.

Mr Vatskalis said the genetag hook is receiving world-wide recognition and is being used as a best practice option overseas.

"World fish stocks are under ever increasing pressure and the genetag hook may have a global impact on fisheries management, improving sustainability, food production and economic performance," said Mr Vatskalis.

"This invention will lead the way in providing us with vital information to ensure the development of more sustainable fisheries in Australia and overseas.

"I congratulate Dr Buckworth and his team for their brilliant work."

Contact: Gemma Buxton 0401 110 064