Northern Territory Library Success on Global Scale

The Northern Territory Library (NTL) is the proud recipient of the 2007 Annual Access and Learning Award of US $1 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Global Libraries initiative. Microsoft Australia, a Global Libraries initiative partner, will provide a software donation.

The Access and Learning Award honours NTL’s innovative approach to bringing computer and Internet technology to remote Indigenous communities.

Minister for Local Government, Elliot McAdam congratulated Northern Territory Library staff on their success and dedication to delivering their remote programs.

“This award is one of the highest accolades for libraries across the world and the staff of Northern Territory Library should be very proud that their hard work has been recognised on a global scale,” said Mr McAdam.

NTL received the award in recognition of the “Our Story” database, as part of the Libraries and Knowledge Centres Program. The program helps Indigenous communities increase their technology and literacy skills and assists local people to preserve and share their cultural heritage.

It does this by training staff in communities to help archive digital recordings, photographs, film, stories and song in local languages, using library computers. Trained staff operate the Library and Knowledge Centres and in turn teach community members to use the “Our Story” database.

Last night NTL Director Ms Jo McGill and a Community Library Officer were presented the award in Durban, South Africa during the 2007 International Federation of Library Associations’ General Conference.

“Being recognised for the work libraries are doing in remote communities is a fantastic accomplishment for us. We join countries like Bangladesh, Denmark, and South Africa in this distinct honour,” said Ms McGill.

“Community libraries are helping to address the social and economic disadvantage Indigenous communities face by connecting people to information and technology and at the same time keeping culture strong.”

The award funds will assist to increase training opportunities for NTL community library officers and library users, and expand the Learning Knowledge Centres Program in other communities.
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To arrange a photo opportunity with NTL or to speak with Ms Jo McGill in South Africa please contact Nichole Taylor 0437 621 433 or (08) 899 98302.

Background
For information on the Access to Learning Award and the Gates Foundation visit: www.gatesfoundation.org.
For information about Northern Territory Library visit: www.ntl.nt.gov.au.

About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, the foundation is led by CEO Patty Stonesifer and co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.