Today Chief Minister and Minister for Arts and Museums, the Hon Clare Martin MLA, announced Jan Milner Cole as the winner of the 2003 Portrait of a Senior Territorian $3000 Government House Foundation Acquisitive Award at the official opening of the 2003 Portrait of a Senior Territorian Art Award.

Now in its fifth year, the Award is unique to the Northern Territory in encouraging Territory visual artists to create works recognising and celebrating the contributions of seniors in our community.

"Once again there has been Territory wide interest and participation in the exhibition. The artists involved have shared heart warming stories about their senior subjects and this year, around a third of the portraits are of Indigenous seniors. Seniors give our community a depth of knowledge, experience and understanding that is invaluable," said Ms Martin.

35 entries for the 2003 Award were received from artists located in Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Pine Creek, Oenpelli, Ngukurr and Yuendumu.

Katherine artist, Jan Milner Cole, has portrayed John Pfitzner in a portrait titled 'I Reckon'. Her subject John Pfitzner, is a former pole vault champion who represented Australia in the 1962 Commonwealth Games. John has lived in Katherine for over 30 years and claims that he is "now too old and cranky to live anywhere else".

"The arts are unique in that they provide one of the few opportunities where senior and younger members of our communities can meet and interact on equal terms. In a place where extended families are often interstate and at least a plane flight away, inter-generation friendships formed through activities such as the arts play an integral part in our community well being." Ms Martin said.

The major award, the $3000 Acquisitive prize sponsored by the Government House Foundation of the NT, was judged by a panel comprising Nerys Evans, President, Government House Foundation, Anne Phelan, Director, Framed - The Darwin Gallery and Gary Lee, Larrakia artist and arts manager.

Visitors to the exhibition are also invited to vote for the People’s Choice Award, which offers a prize of $1000 for the most popular entry.

"I urge everyone to visit this wonderful exhibition and to vote for their favourite portrait," said Ms Martin.

The exhibition is open 9am – 6pm every day in the Main Hall of Parliament House from 3 to 14 November 2003.

*In conjunction with the exhibition, Daena Murray, Curator, Visual Arts, Museum and Art Gallery of the NT will present a floor talk at 12.30pm on Thursday 6 November 2003*