



Top rural teachers recognised

THREE of Australia's top rural educators have been recognised in a ceremony for the inaugural 2007 Rural Trade Teacher of the Year Awards.

The awards, run by the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) in conjunction with the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, aim to raise the profile of rural trade skills teaching and its importance to rural communities, while also providing fitting recognition and reward for our exceptional trade teachers.

"These three winners each demonstrate not only outstanding achievements in teaching, but also an admirable commitment to the future sustainability of Australian agriculture," NFF president David Crombie said.

"The winners were chosen from an exceptional field, with nominees representing a cross section of courses, learning institutions and States.

The winners are National Agriculture teacher Ben Silvino, Balaba; National

Horticulture teacher Graeme Harris, NSW, and National Conservation and Land Management teacher Andrew Nicholson, WA.

Each winner takes home \$10,000 in prize money - \$5000 of which will go towards a developmental education project designed by the recipient.

Mr Harris was also awarded the overall 2007 Rural Trade Teacher Award and will now compete for the title of 2007 National Trade Teacher of the Year, along with the remaining seven industries under the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence.

"Facing an unprecedented demand for skilled labour, Australian agriculture is heavily reliant on the ability to provide interesting and rewarding employment opportunities," Mr Crombie said.

"Making those opportunities available are the rural trade teachers, who play a vital role in trade education and training around the nation, skilling and growing our dynamic rural communities.

"The NFF is dedicated to not only encouraging, but recognising and rewarding, excellence in trade teaching. The ability to attract, train and retain workers in rural trades serves the long-term prospects of employees, regional communities and the farm businesses that rely on them."