



# Awards single out world-class innovation

## Mark Jones

David Merson admits he is tempted to stay involved in the business that defined his career for two decades.

The founder and chief executive officer of Queensland software company Mincom from 1979 to 2000 has seen it rise to become a \$200 million exporter with 1200 staff and a dominant figure on the Australian technology landscape.

"But once you step back from an organisation you've got to let it get on with business," Mr Merson said.

His ability to help Mincom become a player on the international stage earned Mr Merson the Australian Information Industry Association's inaugural CSIRO Tony Benson Award of Individual Achievement in ICT at an awards ceremony celebrating the best in Australian innovation.

The iAwards ceremony, held last night at Sydney's Darling Harbour, attracted more than 800 guests from the technology industry, academia and government circles, including 2005 iAwards patron Helen Coonan, Minister for Communication, Information Technology and the Arts.

Mr Merson joined a list of 12 Australian technology companies to win iAwards across a range of industries, including agriculture, communications, education, government and finance. Awards were also given to secondary and tertiary students and for contributions to the technology industry and community.

According to Mr Merson, the awards reflect a recognition among technology companies of the need to cultivate the business skills required

to succeed in Australian and global markets.

"The enterprise software marketplace has been slow over the past few years, partly because of the saturation in the large company space, and there's been a fall-off in the IT spend. That's turning around now, the market is improving," Mr Merson said.

Senator Coonan presented the Minister's Award for Excellence, the Inspiration iAward to the Marvin Consortium, a partnership between animated character software company Inchain, the

Health and Community Services and the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training.

## "The enterprise software market is improving."

Marvin's application allows non-IT-savvy indigenous communities to combine audio, images and scripted voice-overs that are narrated in presentations by animated computer characters.

Among the other winners, Hearne Scientific Software and CSIRO Entomology won the Agriculture and Primary Industries category for a product that lets biologists carry out biological risk assessments.

Imagination won the media category for a DVD board game, while telecommunications vendor engin took out the communications category for its VoIP broadband phone service.

AIIA chief executive Rob Durie said this year's winners covered a crop of products that could compete on a global scale.

Northern Territory Department of

## AND THE WINNERS ARE

### Category winners in the 2005 iAwards

CATEGORY	WINNER
Agriculture & Primary Industries	Hearne Scientific Software and CSIRO Entomology
Applications & Infrastructure Tools	Beonic
Communications Applications	engin
Education & Training	AudioRead
E-Government & Services	Inchain & Northern Territory Department of Health & Community Services
Financial Applications	Shine Technologies
General Applications	Intergraph
Healthcare	Childrens Hospital at Westmead
Industrial Applications	Vehicle Management Corporation
Media & Entertainment	Imagination
Research & Development	Torian
Security	Securewrap
Local Industry Award	Imagination
Community Award	Hearne Scientific Software and CSIRO Entomology
Inspiration Award	Inchain & Northern Territory Department of Health & Community Services
Secondary Student Project Award	North Sydney Girls High School
Tertiary Student Project Award	Simon Goldrei
CSIRO Tony Benson Award for Individual Achievement in ICT 2005	David Merson



David Merson