



John Ferris Memorial Scholarship - John Dawson

John Dawson of the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at James Cook University, Townsville - has won a \$15,000 top-up to his PhD scholarship to use radiocarbon dating tools to understand the impacts of climate change on reef islands.

The scholarship, which commenced on 1 July 2009, is administered by AINSE Ltd and means that John can travel to use sophisticated accelerator facilities at ANSTO. It is called the John Ferris Memorial Scholarship and is named after environmental scientist John Ferris who worked at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) for more than 20 years before he died in 2008, is funded by generous donations from John's family, friends and colleagues at ANSTO.

"This is great news for me as it's difficult to get access to the best equipment for my research purposes so this is an enormous help," said Mr Dawson.

Managing Director of AINSE, Dr Dennis Mather, said that 'in considering applications for AINSE's 2009 postgraduate award series, John is the second John Ferris Award recipient and was the highest ranked applicant this year in the area of environmental science.'

John's PhD research project will use radiocarbon dating and associated studies to better understand the rates at which reef islands have been formed and to use this information to model the potential impacts of climate change.

Both the Australian Government Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's 2007 publication 'Climate Change and the Great Barrier Reef: A Vulnerability Assessment' have reasserted the particular vulnerability of low-lying reef islands of the Great Barrier Reef to impacts associated with climate change.

AINSE Ltd has been supporting research on climate change for a number of years and is pleased that it is able to support this specific research by outstanding research students. In designating John Dawson as a John Ferris 'Scholar' AINSE Ltd reinforces both its ongoing support for research in this critical area and its continuing commitment to high-quality research.

Image: John Dawson (left) with ANSTO Environmentalist, Heink Heijnis next to a memorial tree (Angophora costata) planted in September 2007 by John Ferris' friends and colleagues.