

# Innovation on the radar for award winner



**ALL-ROUNDER:** Australian Industry Defence Network national young achiever Tom Green was praised for his mentoring and leadership. Photo: KARLEEN MINNEY

**By John Thistleton**  
Business Editor

Tom Green believes if America can produce new defence technology then Australia can do it better.

The 29 year-old electronics engineer works for CEA Technologies in Canberra which was founded on this philosophy 27 years ago.

Mr Green has been named Australian Industry Defence Network's national young achiever for 2010.

He is working on the phased array illuminator that will be fitted to Anzac-class frigates in six months.

CEA Technologies co-founder and director Ian Croser said Mr Green had excelled in all aspects of design,

development, production and testing of the latest generation of complex active phased array radar technologies.

Mr Green said working on an Australian-made product which would have a world-wide market was more than a business and was of national significance.

The strong conviction comes from a young man who a few short years ago was unsure of what engineering was all about.

Born in Bega and moving to New Zealand and Canberra, he followed his leaning towards science, technology and maths into a multi-disciplinary engineering course at the Australian National University.

Five years studying mechanical engineering, electronics, robotics

and mechatronics gave him a sound understanding of what engineering was all about.

His final year at ANU's Physical Science and Engineering Research School was spent on electronic design of a long range modem for people in the bush to connect to the internet. This proved to be good background for his work with CEA.

Australian Industry and Defence Network ACT chairman Rob Tonkin said young people in defence industries loved being at the cutting edge of technology.

"They get encouraged," Tonkin said. "Our members tend to be small to medium enterprises where there is often a lot more opportunities for innovation.

"It's a freer place if you're a small

business. You can let innovation come along, rather than having to get permission out of a bigger organisation, be it public or private.

"They used to say all the great innovation comes out of people's backyards – think of the Silicon Valley – a lot of those companies started out as some one in their garage. They don't start in the bigger organisations."

While the young achiever award attracted quality nominations, Mr Green's applied engineering and leadership, at-work mentoring of newcomers and outside of work with Scouts, gave him an edge.

Mr Green said CEA's leading-edge products made his career interesting and gave him access to top technology and testing equipment.