

Winners are gridders... from left, The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson MP (Minister for Education, Science and Training), Adelaide Baird (Yalanji Traditional Owner), Dr Rosemary Hill (Australian Conservation Foundation and Project Leader, Rainforest CRC), Professor Nigel Stork (CEO, Rainforest CRC), Steven Nowakowski (Photographer/Publisher, Little Ramsay Press), Roy Gibson (Yalanji Traditional Owner), and The Hon. Tony Staley (Chair, Cooperative Research Centre Association) (Image: Ric Magazowski, Shot on Sight Photographics).

The hard cover Yalanji Waranga Kaban: Yalanji People of the Rainforest Fire Management Book is defined by superb artwork and photography.

Winners!

The temperature in Melbourne might have only reached a chilly 18°C on Thursday 19 May, but there was a warm feeling in the air for a very special group of far north Queensland's Eastern Kuku-Yalanji people. In a first for the Rainforest CRC, staff, researchers and community members of Mossman and Wujal Wujal descended upon Melbourne to take part in the Cooperative Research Centres Association (CRCA) Awards for Excellence in Innovation for 2005.

Following a very successful launch in Cairns in December 2004, the spectacular hard cover Yalanji Waranga Kaban: Yalanji People of the Rainforest Fire Management Book has received rave reviews and has now been honoured with a prestigious national award, one of only four presented each year. The Award for Excellence and Innovation recognises the outstanding contribution the book has made to education, training and public outreach.

For the Yalanji people, the award caps almost ten years of collaborative fire research with the Rainforest CRC. The book explores traditional natural resource management practices used by Yalanji Traditional Owners from the Daintree

The successful launch of the book, covered by our January 2005 issue of Forest Matters, lit the way to nomination for a 2005 Award for Excellence in Innovation.

COMMUNITY CHEST

Yalanji Fire Management Practices Defined

A new book entitled Yalanji Waranga Kaban: Yalanji People of the Rainforest Fire Management Book was launched by Traditional Owners of the Daintree rainforest on 20 December 2004 in Cairns. Stunning images of Yalanji people, their country and culture, and a captivating story presented in both Kuku-Yalanji language and English provide a rare glimpse into the depth of knowledge and the spiritual connection behind fire management practices that have sustained the values of the rainforest for millennia.

Led by Dr Rosemary Hill of the Australian Conservation Foundation, the project is a culmination of nearly ten years' research, and was proudly partnered by the Rainforest CRC, Cape York Land Council, Wujal Wujal Community Council and Bamanga Bulu Ngadimunku, with support from the Australian Conservation Foundation, Natural Heritage Trust, James Cook University and publisher Little Ramsay Press.

Invited guests, Traditional Owners and their families filled the Cairns Cruising Yacht Squadron club house to witness the special milestone for Yalanji people, and were treated to live dance performances by Bamanga Bulu Ngadimunku Dancers.

Copies of the book are available for \$29.95 and may be ordered through Little Ramsay Press (email ramsaypress@semail.com.au). All proceeds from the sale of the book return to Yalanji organisations to support ongoing land management and cultural projects.



*Yalanji Traditional Owners (seated) Bamanga Bulu Ngadimunku and the Cairns dinner club (Photo: Steven Nowakowski)

*Yalanji dance artwork and photography complement personal recollections, stories and musical performances by the Yalanji People of the Rainforest Fire Management Book. (Image: Steven Nowakowski)

Visit the Conference websites at www.rainforest-crc.jcu.edu.au



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rainforest



rainforest, part of Queensland's Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and one of Australia's 'biodiversity hotspots'. Fire management in the Wet Tropics is a current resource management issue of growing relevance. In sharing their knowledge of fire management, Yalanji people can provide invaluable insight into traditional approaches and assist sustainable rainforest management.

The book is written by Traditional Owners – it transfers oral history into written words, both in English and, for the first time, in Yalanji language. The passing on of intimate traditional knowledge in natural resource management and culture will make a significant contribution to future generations.

A Plan Unfolds...

Earlier this year, the Rainforest CRC identified a unique opportunity to bring national attention to not only the Yalanji Fire Management Book but also the extensive research and knowledge gained through collaborative work involving Yalanji Traditional Owners and Dr Rosemary Hill of the Australian Conservation Foundation. Also Leader of the Rainforest CRC's Project 1.5, Rosemary has helped to develop policies, protocols and practical mechanisms for recognising Aboriginal peoples' values, rights and responsibilities associated with rainforest environments. The Yalanji Fire Management Book was nominated for the Award for Excellence in Innovation in February.



During the filming of the three minute Award video, Birgit Kuehn snapped this photo of a tourist group at Bloomfield Falls. Kuku-Yalanji Dreamtime Walks include the falls in their tour trail.



Dr Rosemary Hill, left, discusses issues relating to Yalanji Country with Traditional Owners. Many regular meetings such as this were held during the production of the Yalanji Fire Management Book (Image: Steven Nowakowski).



Film producer, Chloe Lucas, with project photographer Steven Nowakowski (Image: Birgit Kuehn).



Chloe Lucas (left) of Imagocean Productions with Dr Rosemary Hill during the filming of the three minute video for presentation at the Awards Night (Image: Birgit Kuehn).



Filming of the three minute video was conducted at some of far north Queensland's most precious places, including Bloomfield Falls, near Wujal Wujal Community, shown here (Image: Steven Nowakowski).

Success!

By March, the Rainforest CRC had confidentially received the news it had been waiting for – the Yalanji Fire Management Book was a winner of an Award. The next step involved production of a three minute video for presentation at the Award Night in Melbourne, carried out by Chloe Lucas of Imagocean Productions, based in Townsville. Chloe had previously undertaken filming with Giringun Aboriginal Corporation and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service in Cardwell.

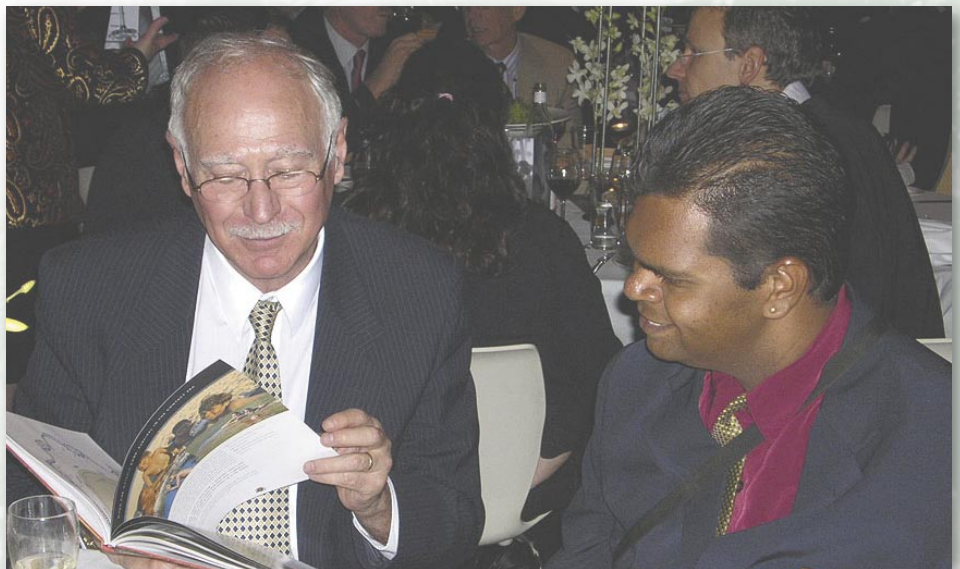
With support from the Australian Conservation Foundation and Rainforest CRC, Traditional Owners, researchers and staff flew to Melbourne in May to accept the Award. On behalf of the Yalanji Traditional Owners, Francis Walker said, "It's not just a book for us, it's cultural survival, it will keep our language, culture and Law alive." Senior Traditional Owner, Edward Barney, added, "This book will help government land managers understand our way of running fire management on our country from our Law and culture".

The Rainforest CRC would like to extend particular thanks to, and congratulate:

- Yalanji Traditional Owners, for sharing their unique knowledge of country and fire;
- Dr Rosemary Hill, for many years' hard work and determination in seeing the project through to fruition;
- Steven Nowakowski, who took such beautiful photographs of the Yalanji people, effectively documenting their way of life for future Yalanji, Australian and international generations;
- Chloe Lucas, who ensured the professional production of the three minute Award video at short notice; and
- Birgit Kuehn, who coordinated the successful nomination of the Yalanji Fire Management Book for the 2005 Awards for Excellence in Innovation.



Adelaide Baird with the 2005 Award for Excellence in Innovation (Image: Ric Magazowski, Shot on Sight Photographics).



Professor Leon Mann, Director of the Centre for Research and Development Leadership at The University of Melbourne, reads through the Yalanji Fire Management Book with Desmond Tayley, Chair of Wujal Wujal Community Council (Image: Steven Nowakowski).



Yalanji Traditional Owner, Edward Barney (left) with photographer Steven Nowakowski, who provided superb images for the Yalanji Fire Management Book (Image: Steven Nowakowski).



Professor Nigel Stork, Rainforest CRC CEO, with co-author Dr Rosemary Hill of the Australian Conservation Foundation (Image: Steven Nowakowski).



Yalanji Fire Management Book co-researcher and co-author, Adelaide Baird, with Don Henry, Executive Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, at the Award Dinner (Image: Steven Nowakowski).

