

# Colin a finalist in top science awards

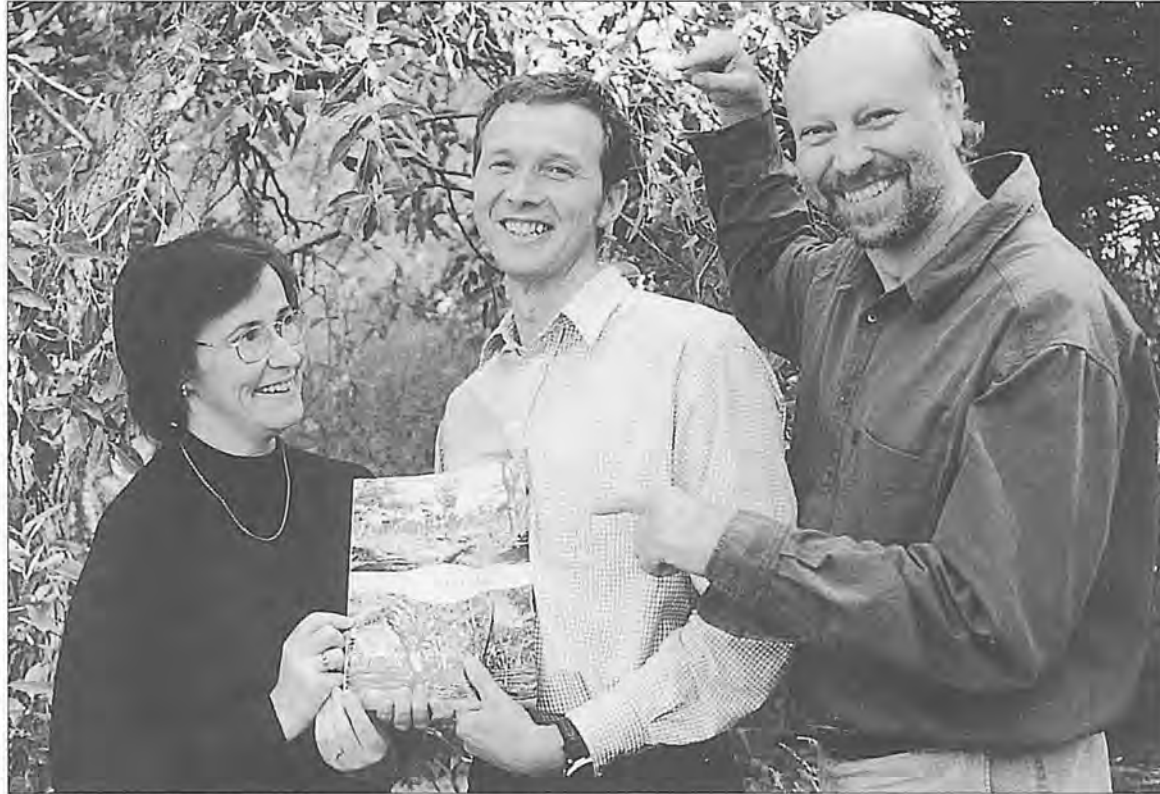
by Sue McKenna &  
Neil Burrows

**THE Australian Museum Eureka Prizes are recognised as Australia's most comprehensive and coveted science awards. They were launched in 1990 to reward excellence in Australian science and raise the profile of science in the community.**

Of the 13 categories, the Royal Botanic Gardens (Sydney) Eureka Prize for Biodiversity Research is awarded to an individual, team or organisation for innovative scientific research that makes an outstanding contribution to the conservation of Australia's biodiversity.

CALMScience senior research scientist in Biodiversity Conservation, Colin Yates, and Professor Richard Hobbs (Environmental Science, Murdoch University) were among the four finalists in this category of the prestigious Eureka Prizes.

The nomination was for their cooperative research focusing on the conservation of temperate eucalypt woodlands across Australia, and on the experimental restoration of degraded woodlands in Western Australia. This culminated in a synthesis of the research in a book edited by Colin and Richard, *Temperate Eucalypt Woodlands in Australia*.



*CALM Herbarium principal research scientist David Coates (right) points out that Colin Yates is the one we should admire, and that the book Colin is holding is the one that contributed to his recent success in the highly coveted Australian Museum Eureka Prizes. Meanwhile, CALMScience principal research scientist Margaret Byrne is content to look hugely impressed. Photo by Verna Costello*

The project has brought together information on Australian woodlands; identified gaps in our knowledge and has culminated in the development

of a woodlands management guideline.

"These woodlands are the quintessential image of the Australian bush,

celebrated in art and literature, as well as being important biologically," Colin said.

"Their loss would be lamented and

their conservation celebrated by many."

Hundreds of farmers, land care groups and management agencies are now using the book's Woodlands Tool Kit to restore degraded woodlands and regenerate plants.

"The conversion of temperate eucalypt woodlands into agricultural lands represented one of the most significant vegetation changes in Australian history," Colin said.

"The widespread clearing of these ecosystems resulted in a massive loss of biological diversity and widespread land degradation."

The project started by the identification of the factors that had caused the degradation, enabling universal restoration guidelines to be developed.

The duo's work was assisted by scientists, land managers, policy makers and the general public.

Colin Yates has worked at CALM for two years, designing, implementing and co-ordinating research into critically endangered flora to assist their recovery. Before working for CALM, he won the CSIRO Post-Doctoral Fellowship to develop techniques and guidelines to restore degraded remnant salmon gum woodlands.

The Award presentations appeared on ABC television in mid-May.