

# A new future for Ninney Rise

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Ninney Rise in Bingil Bay, willed by its last owner to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, has new, and delighted, owners.

At last week's three-day Rainforest and Reef Conservation Stories Conference, held at Ninney Rise, the building and its grounds were officially handed over (leased) to the Friends of Ninney Rise by Regional Director for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, James Newman.

Negotiations for the transfer had been long, and finalisation was not expected so soon.

The lease was accepted by Suzie Smith, a founder member of the then Tully Branch (now Cassowary Coast and Hinchinbrook Branch) of Wildlife Queensland, and a member of the Friends of Ninney Rise.

Ms Smith said Ninney Rise, built by artist and environmentalist John Busst, had been the scene of the birth of a number of important environmental campaigns.

These included a successful bid to save offshore Ellison Reef from coral mining for agricultural lime.

Ninney Rise was also the birth place of Wildlife Queensland, then known as the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland.

Speakers at the conference were drawn from many aspects of the environmental movement including Doctor Aila Keto, co-founder and president of the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society; Professor Iain McCalm, champion of Ninney Rise and author of *The Reef - A Passionate History*; Max Chappell, Manager Planning and Conservation for the Wet Tropics Management Authority; and Mike Berwick, Chair of Terrain Natural Resource Management.

Djiru elder Leonard Andy performed the welcome to country ceremony and spoke about the reasons for his people's voluntary moratorium on hunting endangered animals such as the green turtle and the cassowary, and his daughter Whitney Rassip spoke on the promise and the reality of native title.

All agreed on one message, to look to the future, to change social attitudes so the future, as well as the immediate present, be borne in mind and the right thing be done by what is a magical area with many attributes, with a whole of landscape approach adopted.

It is hoped this conference will be the first of many at Ninney Rise, that it will be a tourism hub, and the house a meeting place for the friends of the beautiful area that is the Cassowary Coast.



**FOR THE FUTURE:** James Newman hands over the signed lease agreement for Ninney Rise to Suzie Smith.



**HAPPY MEETING:** Conservationist and author Doctor Aila Keto and Yvonne Cunningham shared memories of environmental campaigns.