

encapsulated by award



At the AIM WestBusiness Pinnacle: Back: Left to right, Kathy Bunce, Iluka; Gary Martin, Australian Institute of Management WA; Gavin Taylor, Perth Stadium Management. Middle: Brett McCarthy, The West Australian; David Carter, Austral Fisheries; Mick Beilby, Minnovare; Tegan Brockman, Carnegie Wave Energy; Callum McCracken, Minnovare. Bottom: Peter Long, Mayor of Karratha; Clayton Walker, Rio Tinto; Alison Ramm, Department of Education; Stan Perron. Picture: Ben Crabtree

and iron ore could be released. Land said, 'I know a few spots up north, where there is iron ore. Let's put in a couple thousand pounds each and I'll fill up the Auster (aircraft) and we'll peg a few leases. "That was the Friday and then on the Saturday he came out to my office, and I said: 'Look, I've lost a lot of money with you buggers. Here's £500. I'll have 15 per cent instead of 33 per cent on any iron ore that you peg within the next 10 years . . ."

Despite reducing his venture stake, that £500 investment went on to net him more than

\$100 million in returns. Also in attendance were the family of the late BGC founder Len Buckeridge, who was also one of the 19 nominees for the coveted award. Son Sam Buckeridge and widow Tootsie Buckeridge praised Mr Perron as a worthy winner. Azure Capital executive chairman John Poynton, Northern Star Resources managing director Bill Beament, Russell Gibbs, the chief executive of Hawaiian and the chief executive of St John of God Health Care Dr Michael Stanford — who were all in attendance at the event —

were also nominees for the top award. The winners in the eight other hotly contested categories were: **Marketing Excellence Award: Austral Fisheries.** The West Leederville-headquartered fishery won for a marketing campaign that highlighted the company's commitment to sustainable fishing. It helped contribute to an 85 per cent increase in revenue over the past four years. **Workplace Diversity Excellence Award: Iluka Resources.** The mining

company measures its success in reaching its diversity objectives each quarter, including its bid to boost female and indigenous employment. It draws workers from broad age groups and abilities, and supports its staff with flexible working hours and paid volunteer leave. **Innovation Excellence Award and Emerging Business Excellence Award: Minnovare.** The mining and civil engineering company won both award categories for its Azimuth Aligner — a groundbreaking drilling rig alignment system that reduces

“ We developed a culture where we are very ethical in everything we do, and it's paid dividends. **Stan Perron**

alignment time for drilling from 90 minutes to about five minutes. Key clients across the globe claim each rig boosts productivity and saves hundreds of thousands of dollar a year. **Human Resources Award: Department of Education.** The government department was recognised for its recent change to how it appoints staff, transferring this responsibility to principals. This ensures staffing decisions match the individual needs and circumstances of the students in each community. **Green Business Award: Carnegie Wave Energy.** The Fremantle-based company is currently the world's only operational grid connected wave energy project, with the electricity sold to naval base, HMAS Stirling. Its CETO technology, which is has been developing for nearly 10 years, converts ocean swell into zero-emission renewable power and desalinated fresh water.

Corporate Social Responsibility Excellence Award: Rio Tinto and City of Karratha. The pair joined forces in a public private partnership amid the resource sector downturn in a bid to maximise innovative social investment. The two entities pooled their knowledge, working as equals to identify and meet community needs. This led to improved community infrastructure and medical services as well as many new festivals and events. **Customer Service Excellence: Perth Stadium Management.** The group hosts more than a million fans a year. It does this with the added challenge of an ageing stadium and 350 casual staff, with only a dozen permanent employees. Both staff and customer satisfaction are up about 15 per cent since 2011.



Anna and Ken Wyatt



Scott Cook, Trent Woods and Matthew Cook



Clare Omodei and Laura Padrotta



Claire McGregor and Matt Macfarlane



Anna Chauvel and Andy Sharp

Perron's ethics, honesty

■ Kim Macdonald



Mining magnate Andrew Forrest paid tribute to Stan Perron as one of the great influences of his life during a glittering ceremony to recognise the patriarch as the Business Leader of the Year.

The 93-year-old founder of the Perron Group received a standing ovation from a crowd of more than 600 people on Thursday night, as he received the accolade at the Pinnacle awards, run by the Australian Institute of Management WA and *WestBusiness*.

Some of Perth's most respected corporate stalwarts attended the black-tie event at Crown, including the 2013 inaugural Business Leader of the Year, Wesfarmers managing director Richard Goyder.

Mr Perron has spent more than seven decades building his \$2.8 billion empire, in fields ranging from mining and earthmoving to retail and property development.

During that time he has played a key role in the State's development and has done business with some of the great titans of WA business, even giving a "broke" and "desperate" Lang Hancock a loan in 1959 that eventuated in the development of Hamersley Iron.

Mr Perron's exemplary business conduct across all his ventures and with all who know him has earned him a reputation for strong ethics and honesty.

As he walked to the stage on Thursday to long and loud applause, one enthusiastic punter appeared to sum up the feeling in the room by yelling: "This man is a legend".

Mr Forrest, nursing a broken leg, presented Mr Perron with the Pinnacle award, which he won last year, and reminisced about their early business dealings.

"I was just a whippersnapper stockbroker, I'd go and pitch an idea to him or a venture, equally crazy, and he'd look at me intently," the Fortescue Metals Group founder told the crowd.

"He'd always give me the time of day. Generally he'd say thank you very much but no, but always, he would be encouraging.

"So for all leaders here I absolutely ask you to share that inspiration, that ability to look after those coming after us.

"To give them the kinds of



Passing it on: WA Business Leader of the Year Stan Perron with 2014 winner Andrew Forrest. Picture: Ben Crabtree



Engaging: Professor Gary Martin presents. Picture: Ben Crabtree

gifts that (indigenous leader) Scotty Black and the great man (Perron) who gave me the time.

"A great man who gave me the time, and therefore, not wild horses nor injury would prevent me coming here tonight."

The event's MC, Simon Reeve from Channel 7, joked about having the nonagenarian and the injured Mr Forrest standing at the precipice of five steep stairs next to the stage as they posed for photos.

He joked: "What could possibly go wrong here?"

As if tempting fate, a group of percussionists called Defying

Gravity, from the WA Academy of Performing Arts, had earlier occupied the stage, welcoming the crowd with a hypnotic drum set.

But song choices by entertainers Luke Kennedy and Michael Falzon hit a slightly more reassuring note for winners traversing the stairs, including Feeling Good and the old-time favourite, I've Got You Under My Skin.

They were supported by Perth Symphony Big Band, led by maestro Jessica Gethin.

Mr Perron accepted the award with trademark humility, explaining he had



always been eager about work and making a dollar, and had been surrounded by a great group of loyal staff during his career.

Of his 130 employees, 28 had worked for him for more than 20 years and four had been there more than 40 years.

"We developed a culture where we are very ethical in everything we do, and it's paid dividends," he told the audience.

He then provided an interesting insight into a piece of WA's mining history, explaining he provided Mr Hancock a £500 loan as a way of

recouping some major losses he incurred in deals with the iron ore magnate.

In the late 1950s Mr Hancock had paid on a third of a £75,000 tantalite mine he purchased from Mr Perron, after a collapse in the price of the commodity. He then lost £30,000 in a manganese venture with Mr Hancock.

"I used to have lunch with Lang and Peter Wright in Kings Park every week and he was always coming up with bright ideas," Mr Perron said.

"One Friday in 1959, we were having lunch and he said the government is going to change,



Brenda and Domenic Cappelluti



Lisa Holley, Sarah Brotherston and Kimberley Campbell



Deirdre Carlin and Steve Stock



Barry Sammels, Andrew Hammond, Deb Hamblin and Scott Wildgoose