

A new, rare *Grevillea* species, found in only one location in south-west Western Australia, has recently been formally named. The species has been called *Grevillea kulikup* after the locality near which it was found. However, while the location of this newly described species has been known by botanists for a while, it was initially thought that this was just a northern occurrence of another, equally rare *Grevillea* species—*G. acropogon*.

Grevillea acropogon is found around Tone Bridge and for many years was known from a single location. Management of this critically endangered species by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions included fencing the population to protect plants from grazing, collecting seed, establishing a new translocated population and survey for new locations. It was during one of these surveys in 2014 that an earlier herbarium record from 2001 of *G. acropogon* near Kulikup was followed up and a small population was found. This new population, some 50 kilometres north of Tone Bridge, led to renewed survey efforts focused in the Kulikup area, however unfortunately no additional populations were found. Field observations at the time noted some differences between the plants at Kulikup and those at Tone Bridge and the habitat at each site was also slightly different, however no differences were seen between herbarium specimens from the two locations.

The discovery of the plants at Kulikup did raise questions around management options for *G. acropogon*. In particular, could seed from the Kulikup plants be used to increase plant numbers and genetic diversity at the translocation site near Tone Bridge? This led to a research project that included an investigation of the ecological and genetic differences between plants at the two locations. During the study the morphological and genetic differences between the two locations became so apparent that *Grevillea* taxonomist, Peter Olde, was asked to assess the plants at the two locations. After a field visit and

extensive study of herbarium specimens, Peter Olde was convinced that the plants at Kulikup were distinct from those at Tone Bridge and in 2024 named the Kulikup plants as a new species.

Grevillea kulikup is described as a spreading shrub to one metre in height and three metres in width. The branchlets and leaves are covered in fine hairs, which is the primary feature distinguishing it from *G. acropogon*. Flowers are red and held in inflorescences (bunches) of 18 to 24 flowers near the ends of the branches. Flowering occurs mainly between August and December and birds are most likely the pollinators.

To date, *G. kulikup* is only known from the single population located in the 2014

surveys where there are less than 20 adult plants. The site has now been fenced to protect plants from grazing by kangaroos, and seedlings have been grown and planted at the site to boost the size of the population and surveys for additional populations continue. The discovery of a new *Grevillea* species was an unexpected, but happy result of the research to support the conservation of *G. acropogon*. It shows that there is still much to learn and discover in our unique and biodiverse south-west Western Australia.



Grevillea kulikup

Above *Grevillea kulikup*.
Photo – Andrew Crawford/DBCA