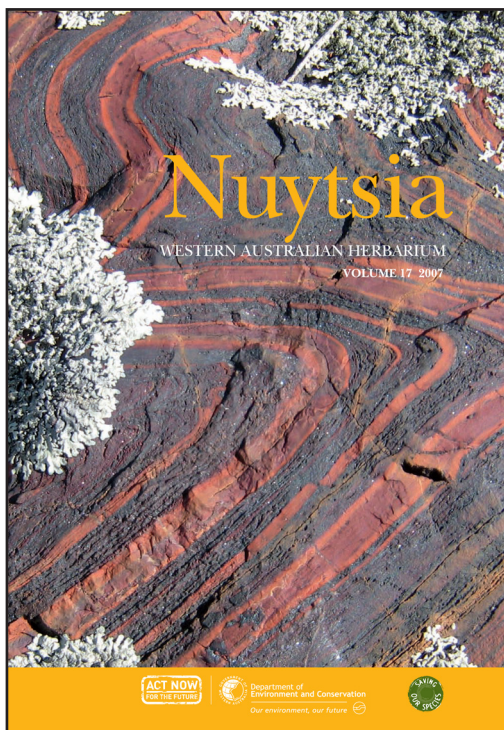


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Preface

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Preface

In 2006, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) implemented the ‘Saving Our Species’ biodiversity conservation initiative—a two year programme targeting key biodiversity conservation issues in Western Australia. Approximately 70 strategic projects were implemented in its first year, one of which aimed to resolve the taxonomy and expedite the scientific description of unnamed vascular plant taxa in Western Australia, especially those that may be vulnerable to future mining activities. This special edition of *Nuytsia* is a major outcome of this taxonomy project.

The included papers focus on providing formal scientific descriptions for taxa endemic to, or with distributions centred on, the Banded Iron Formation (BIF) ranges of the Yilgarn Craton, and the Ravensthorpe Range and Bandalup Hill. These mineral-rich areas were selected because the current resources boom in Western Australia has increased their prospectivity and hence there is a pressing need for greater understanding of the biodiversity of these regions. As discussed by Gibson *et al.* in the introductory paper, the BIF ranges of the Yilgarn have been the focus of extensive DEC surveys in recent years, with additional survey of these ranges and those in the Ravensthorpe area continuing through 2007. In addition to this regional approach, taxa listed on DEC’s “Declared Rare and Priority Flora list for Western Australia” were also targeted, regardless of where they occur in the State.

Ninety five taxa, representing 21 families and 33 genera, are newly described in this volume. Thirty six of these occur on BIF ranges or in other ironstone habitats and six are largely confined to the Ravensthorpe area. Seventy eight taxa are listed as being of conservation concern (eight as Declared Rare Flora, 36 as Priority One, 18 as Priority Two, 15 as Priority Three and one as Priority Four), 39 of which are new additions to the “Declared Rare and Priority Flora list for Western Australia”.

This extraordinary taxonomic output has been delivered in the relatively short time frame of 13 months. It highlights what can be achieved with a strategic focus and demonstrates the taxonomic productivity possible when appropriate resources are dedicated to the task. It should be noted that these outcomes were only possible because of the generous input of time and botanical expertise from a substantial number of research scientists. Over 70 Australian and international botanists prepared and reviewed manuscripts—a unique, large-scale collaboration that has resulted in tangible conservation outcomes for Western Australia.

Effective conservation and management of the State’s flora is reliant on a sound taxonomic framework; however, the flora of Western Australia remains far from fully documented. There are *c.* 1,700 known, undescribed vascular plant taxa in Western Australia, the majority of which lack diagnostic information. Furthermore, new species continue to be discovered through the taxonomic assessment of herbarium collections, floristic surveys and the botanical evaluation of mineral leases. It is hoped that the success of this special edition will provide the impetus for further resourcing of taxonomic research in Western Australia.

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