

COMPOSITION, CO-EVOLUTION AND CONSERVATION OF THE FLORA

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The flora of the region comprises over 2 000 species (c. 10% of the total Australian flora), comprising a mixture of temperate and tropical affinities. Monocotyledons are disproportionately represented in the flora. Few generic endemics are known, but some famous specific relicts occur e.g. *Livistonia alfredii*, *Macrozamia macdonaldii*. Weeds are also uncommon. Analysis of the phytogeography of major families (Amaranthaceae, Mimosaceae, Poaceae and Asteraceae) show species richness is closely linked to topographic relief and habitat diversity (salt lakes) within the area.

Studies on the Liliaceae of Central Australia has demonstrated that a suite of "recent" species, often not yet recognized, occurs in the region. The biology of the flora requires further study, as preliminary studies indicate numerous strategies exist.

The influence of phytogeography and biology on the adequate conservation of the flora will be discussed.