

# Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

## Acacia latzii Maslin (MIMOSACEAE)

### TJILPI WATTLE PETER LATZ WATTLE

#### Conservation status

Australia: Vulnerable

Northern Territory: Vulnerable



Photo: S. Ward

#### Description

*Acacia latzii* is a small tree or shrub to 4 m high with thick rough bark. The flowers are in globular heads, and the pods are linear.

Flowering: April-October; December-January.

Fruiting: May-November.

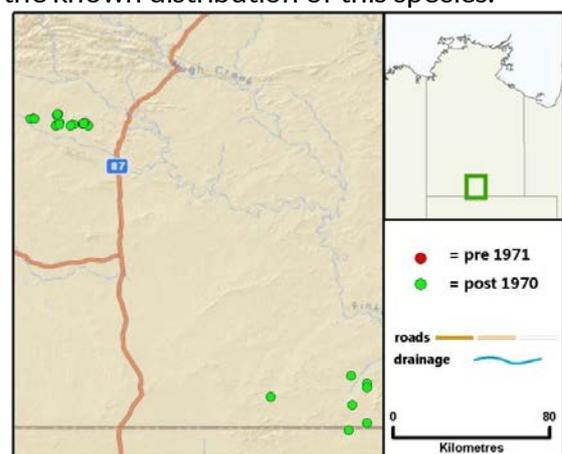


*Acacia latzii* flowers (Photo: D. Albrecht)

#### Distribution

*Acacia latzii* is endemic to the Finke Bioregion of the Northern Territory (NT), where it is restricted to two areas 200 km apart (White et al. 2000; Neave et al. 2004). The Bacon Range population (Henbury Station) has a longitudinal range of 28 km, and a latitudinal

range of 11.5 km giving an extent of occurrence of 322 km<sup>2</sup>. The Beddome Range population, along the eastern edge of the NT-South Australia (SA) border, has a continuous distribution from Coglein Creek (New Crown Station) in the east to the main Tiewon Station access road in the west. The longitudinal range is c. 65 km and the latitudinal range is c. 35 km. The extent of occurrence is 2 275 km<sup>2</sup> including the NT and SA portions; and 963 km<sup>2</sup> including the NT portion only (Nano et al. 2008). In addition, an outlier stand occurs on Mt Cavanagh Station in SA, c. 40 km west of the main population (SA DEH unpublished data 2008). Future survey will likely increase the known distribution of this species.



Known locations of *Acacia latzii*

Conservation reserves where reported:  
None.

## Ecology

The habitat of *A. latzii* is characterised by silcrete-capped mesas and low stony hills derived from mainly shale and siltstone. This species is often concentrated along minor creek-lines and on low hill slopes. Soils are sandy clay-loams and are often highly alkaline at depth. The ground layer comprises mainly short grasses and chenopod subshrubs (Nano et al. 2008).

The northern and southern populations of *A. latzii* have a very similar demography. Age structure is highly skewed towards the older age classes: in 2008, adults comprised 85 per cent of the population while sub-adults, juveniles and seedlings respectively comprised nine per cent, five per cent and one per cent (Nano et al. 2008).

*Acacia latzii* has a life history profile typical of many desert tree species, characterised by long-lived and drought tolerant adults and infrequent regeneration. Though rare, recruitment is likely to be sufficient for stand replacement where disturbance remains low. Available information suggests that this species has low tolerance of fire (Nano et al. 2008).

## Conservation assessment

*Acacia latzii* is classified in the NT as **Vulnerable** (under criterion D2) based on:

- a restricted population, with <5 known locations; and
- a plausible threat of heightened fire exposure within the next decade if Buffel Grass becomes established in its habitat.

## Threatening processes

Increased fire exposure associated with Buffel Grass invasion would directly threaten this species. Available information suggests that this species is incapable of withstanding repeated fire exposure (Nano et al. 2008).

Cattle and feral herbivore impacts on *A. latzii* were found to be low in the 2008 survey of the stands (Nano et al. 2008). However, seedling loss during a recruitment phase due to animal browsing and trampling represents a potential threat to this species.

*Acacia latzii* is inherently vulnerable to decline from stochastic events by virtue of its small population size and fragmented distribution. Altered rainfall patterns associated with climate change may affect adult survivorship and increase the rarity of recruitment events.

## Conservation objectives and management

A national recovery plan for threatened arid zone Acacias has been prepared by the Territory Government together with other state agencies (Nano et al. 2005). The plan covers *Acacia latzii*.

Actions 1, 3 and 8 of the National Recovery Plan for this species have been implemented (Nano et al. 2008). Targeted surveys have increased the known extent of this species and the NT populations are now mapped. A monitoring programme is established to quantify population and threat trends. Indigenous ecological knowledge has been documented and Indigenous people have expressed a strong desire to be involved in the conservation of this species.

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## References

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- White, M., Albrecht, D., Duguid, A., Latz, P., and Hamilton, M. (2000). *Plant species and sites of botanical significance in the southern bioregions of the Northern Territory. Volume 1: significant vascular plants*. A report to the Australian Heritage Commission. (Arid Lands Environment Centre, Alice Springs.)