

A statement for the purposes of approved conservation advice  
(s266B of the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

**Approved Conservation Advice for**  
***Acacia macnuttiana* (McNutt's Wattle)**

This Conservation Advice has been developed based on the best available information at the time this conservation advice was approved.

**Description**

*Acacia macnuttiana*, Family Mimosaceae, also known as McNutt's Wattle, is a tall bushy shrub 1–3 m high, with straight or curved leaves with a pointed tip and one to three small glands along the edge (DECC, 2005a). The flowers have golden yellow globular heads and appear between July and September, with fruit following in spring to summer (Harden, 1991; Steenbeeke, 1998).

**Conservation Status**

McNutt's Wattle is listed as **vulnerable**. This species is eligible for listing as vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth) (EPBC Act) as, prior to the commencement of the EPBC Act, it was listed as vulnerable under Schedule 1 of the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992* (Cwlth). The species is also listed as endangered under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (NSW).

**Distribution and Habitat**

McNutt's Wattle is restricted to NSW, occurring on the New England Tablelands and extending just onto the North West Slopes. The species is found in widely scattered locations in the Tenterfield area and west to around Torrington (DECC, 2005a).

The species is conserved in Boonoo Boonoo National Park (NP), with fewer than 1000 individuals (Sheringham & Westaway, 1995; Briggs & Leigh, 1996), and in the Torrington State Recreation Area, where at least 1000 plants occur in several populations. In addition, a small population was discovered along Morven Creek in Washpool NP (Copeland & Hunter, 1999). This species occurs within the Border Rivers–Gwydir and Northern Rivers (NSW) Natural Resource Management Regions (DECC, 2005a).

McNutt's Wattle favors sandy soils on acid granite substrates, often among boulders, in riparian habitats near streams and in gorges (Harden, 1991; Tame, 1992; Sheringham & Westaway, 1995; Orchard & Wilson, 2001). It occurs in dry sclerophyll forest, woodland and heath (Harden, 1991; Tame, 1992; Sheringham & Westaway, 1995; Steenbeeke, 1998) and is found at 500–1000 m above sea level (Quinn et al., 1995). Associated species include *Allocasuarina littoralis*, *Angophora floribunda*, *Bursaria spinosa*, *Callistemon flavovirens*, *Eucalyptus biturbinata*, *Leptospermum brachyandra*, *Lophostemon confertus* and *Pomaderris* sp. (Quinn et al., 1995; Sheringham & Westaway, 1995).

The distribution of this species overlaps with the 'White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland' EPBC Act-listed threatened ecological community.

**Threats**

The main identified threats to McNutt's Wattle include fire; destruction, disturbance and erosion of habitat by agriculture or development activities; and trampling by bushwalkers (NSW NPWS, 2003a). Prolonged absence of fire may preclude regeneration whereas too frequent burning may eliminate it (Quinn et al., 1995), or fire may not be of sufficient intensity to crack seed coats and allow seedling germination (DECC, 2005a).

### **Research Priorities**

Research priorities that would inform future regional and local priority actions include:

- Investigate the ecology of the species, including responses to fire,
- Determine and model the preferred habitat of McNutt's Wattle (DECC, 2005b), and
- Undertake survey work in suitable habitat and potential habitat to locate any additional populations/occurrences/remnants.

### **Regional Priority Actions**

The following regional priority recovery and threat abatement actions can be done to support the recovery of McNutt's Wattle.

#### **Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification**

- Identify populations of high conservation priority.
- Manage threats to areas of vegetation that contain populations/occurrences/remnants of McNutt's Wattle.
- Ensure development activities do not adversely impact on known populations of McNutt's Wattle.
- Investigate formal conservation arrangements such as the use of covenants, conservation agreements or inclusion in reserve tenure.

#### **Fire**

- Develop and implement a suitable fire management strategy for McNutt's Wattle.
- Provide maps of known occurrences to local and state Rural Fire Services and seek inclusion of mitigative measures in bush fire risk management plans, risk register and/or operation maps.

#### **Conservation Information**

- Raise awareness of the McNutt's Wattle within the local community.
- Avoid accidental trampling of McNutt's Wattle near walking tracks by providing information to the public in national park areas and erecting fencing or signage (DECC, 2005a).
- Involve local landowners and Landcare groups in conservation measures for McNutt's Wattle (DECC, 2005b).
- Map known populations of McNutt's Wattle and ensure state and federal records they hold are geographically accurate (DECC, 2005b).

#### **Enable Recovery of Additional Sites and/or Populations**

- Undertake appropriate seed collection and storage.
- Investigate options for linking, enhancing or establishing additional populations.
- Implement national translocation protocols (Vallee et al, 2004) if establishing additional populations is considered necessary and feasible.

### **Local Priority Actions**

The following local priority recovery and threat abatement actions can be done to support the recovery of McNutt's Wattle.

#### **Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification**

- Monitor known populations to identify key threats.
- Monitor the progress of recovery, including the effectiveness of management actions and the need to adapt them if necessary.
- Control access routes to suitably constrain public access to known sites on public land.
- Minimise adverse impacts from land use at known sites.

### Invasive Weeds

- Identify and remove weeds in the local area, which could become a threat to McNutt's Wattle, using appropriate methods.
- Manage sites to prevent introduction of invasive weeds, which could become a threat to McNutt's Wattle, using appropriate methods.

### Fire

- Implement an appropriate fire management regime for local populations.
- Determine if and/or where an ecological burn is required (DECC, 2005b) and implement accordingly.
- Ensure regional fire plans and hazard reduction burn planning consider the location of known McNutt's Wattle populations (DECC, 2005b).

This list does not necessarily encompass all actions that may be of benefit to McNutt's Wattle, but highlights those that are considered to be of highest priority at the time of preparing the conservation advice.

### Existing Plans/Management Prescriptions that Could Affect the Species

- Boonoo Boonoo National Park fire management strategy (NSW NPWS, 2005a) and plan of management (NSW NPWS, 2002),
- Torrington State Conservation Area plan of management (NSW NPWS, 2003b),
- Gibraltar Range Group of Parks plan of management (NSW NPWS, 2005b),
- Washpool National Park draft fire management strategy (NSW NPWS, 2005c),
- Private native forestry code of practice for northern NSW (DECC, 2007), and
- NSW Threatened Species Priority Action Statement for *Acacia macnuttiana* (DECC, 2005b).

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