

Wildflower Society of WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC.)



THE USE OF NATIVE FLORA FOR CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA Adopted 27 July 2011

Preamble

A recent Australian Senate enquiry into native vegetation states:

According to the consultation draft of Australia's Native Vegetation Framework, native vegetation is defined as all vegetation that is local to a particular site or landscape, including all terrestrial and aquatic plants both living and dead.[1] However, across states and territories, the definition of what constitutes native vegetation differs. The NSW Native Vegetation Act 2003, for example, defines native vegetation as 'remnant vegetation, protected regrowth or non protected regrowth'.[2] The Queensland Vegetation Management Act 1999 defines 'Vegetation' as a 'native tree; or a native plant, other than a grass or mangrove'.[3] (Commonwealth of Australia..., 2010)

[1] Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Australia's Native Vegetation Framework, Consultation draft, February 2010, p. 11.

[2] NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, Submission 15, p. 2.

[3] Vegetation Act Management 1999 (Qld), s. 8.

'Native vegetation' comprises grasses and groundcover as well as trees in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia; native grassland is excluded in Queensland and (currently) in Tasmania from general permit requirements, although grasses may be protected under threatened species legislation and the Australian Government's Environment and Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.[48] (Commonwealth of Australia..., 2010)

[48] Productivity Commission, Impacts of Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations, Report No. 29, April 2004, p. XXV.

Whatever the definition, Australia, and Western Australia itself, has distinct flora. There are more than 12,000 species in Western Australia alone.

The Wildflower Society of Western Australia (Inc) – WSWA – provides the following policy for all government organizations in Australia - federal, state and local - for the use of WA flora for those official occasions where a floral tribute is deemed appropriate. These guidelines have been informed by those established by the then Australian Society for Growing Australian Plants (ASGAP), now Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) – ANSP(A) - for the bouquets for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games (Creer, 2000).

Policy

There are a number of occasions when the use of wildflowers is deemed appropriate for official functions. These include but are not limited to:

- wreaths
- floral bouquets
- table decorations
- buttonholes
- floral arrangements.

On state, national and international ceremonial occasions in Western Australia, it is deemed appropriate to use only wildflowers of Western Australia since:

- ceremonial occasions should celebrate and promote Western Australia and provide a memorial of Western Australian heritage and character
- Western Australia has a thriving native cut flower industry that can provide native flora and foliages for ceremonial occasions including *Chamelaucium* spp. (waxflowers), *Banksia* spp. and *Anigozanthos* spp. (kangaroo paws). Almost 100 Western Australian native species are now cultivated for their flowers or foliage. Waxflowers are available from June to November and kangaroo paws are available from July to January
- other native plant products are processed and sold as dried or preserved flowers and foliage. These are available year round and include *Banksia* spp., *Stirlingia* spp, *Verticordia* spp. and *Dryandra* spp. (W.A. Dept Agriculture and Food, 2006)
- there are many cultivars of WA's flora available and these can also be used provided that the parentage of the cultivar is from WA
- the inclusion of wildflowers from other areas, e.g. South Africa and the eastern states, detracts from the fact that over 75% of WA's wildflowers are found only in WA, i.e. they are endemic to this state.

Information

The WA Department of Agriculture and Food has a section on floriculture which can be contacted for suppliers of WA flora as cut flowers <http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/CONTACT.html?s=217470431>

One helpful site is Market Fresh flowers

http://www.marketfresh.com.au/flowers/2_flowers_guide/aus_natives.asp

The WSWA notes that wildflowers from other areas have often been included in ceremonial floral representations. The WSWA also notes that Bulletin 4399 from the W.A. Department of Agriculture and Food (2006) extols the virtues of protea – which are not Western Australian flora - along with colonial species like carnations, roses and the like. So care is required when choosing true WA flora species.

The WSWA (Inc) <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~wildflowers/> would be only too pleased to assist with the choice of WA floral varieties. Other organisations that can assist in recommending the best species to use as cut flowers for such occasions include:

- The Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority <http://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/>
- The Department of Environment and Conservation, Herbarium <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/content/category/41/831/1821/>

References

Commonwealth of Australia. The Senate (2010). *Native Vegetation Laws, Greenhouse Gas Abatement and Climate Change Measures*. Retrieved from http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/fapa_ctte/climate_change/report/c02.htm

Creer, J. (2000). The Olympic bouquet. *Australian Plants*, 20(164), 331-353.

Western Australia. Department of Agriculture and Food. (2006). Flowers from Western Australia: At a glance. *Bulletin 4399*. Retrieved from http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/PC_92653.html?s=0