

MAC CLARK (*ACACIA PEUCE*) CONSERVATION RESERVE

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The Mac Clark (*Acacia peuce*) Conservation Reserve is a significant research site for establishing further information regarding the ecology of *Acacia peuce*, its use by Aboriginal people, and the occupation of the Simpson Desert region by Aboriginal people prior to European development of the area for pastoral grazing.

The reserve is located in one of the driest places in Australia, 230km south east of Alice Springs, on an otherwise featureless and windswept gibber plain adjacent to the western fringe of the Simpson Desert. It covers an area of 3,042 hectares and protects several stands comprising about 2000 individuals of *Acacia peuce*, or Waddywood, one of the rarest and most striking Australian native plants of the arid zone.

The name "peuce" is Latin for "pine-like" and the tree closely resembles a pine or casuarina in appearance. *Acacia peuce* grows up to 17m tall and possibly lives for up to 500 years.



***Acacia peuce* at Mac Clark (*Acacia peuce*) Conservation Reserve.**

There are only two other known populations of Waddywood. These are located on the Queensland fringe of the Simpson Desert. The three disjunct stands are thought to be relics of a once continuous distribution that probably occurred before the last glacial maximum about 18 000 years ago.

The reserve lies within the traditional area of the Southern Arrente Aboriginal people. It is a focus of rich cultural history to these people who know the tree as Irrekepe. The extremely hard wood was prized for making waddies, or digging tools, and is thought to have been traded over large distances. The reserve is rich with Aboriginal artefacts and several colourful stories revolve around the site.

The area also contains the only sizeable representation of a stony down (undulating gibber plain) and associated herbland-tussock grassland formation that is under conservation management and fenced from stock and feral animals in the Northern Territory.

Pastoral development near the reserve began in 1922 when the McDill brothers obtained the original pastoral lease and named the property Andado, which is derived from the Southern Arrente word for stone tools.

In 1955 Mac and Molly Clark bought the station and lived in the Old Andado Homestead. The reserve is named after the late Mac Clark whose interest in the trees led to the declaration of the Reserve.

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Northern Territory Government
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment

Heritage Advisory Council

GPO Box 4198
Darwin NT 0801
Phone: (08) 8924 4143 Facsimile: (08) 8924 4053

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