

## **Press Release: World Biodiversity Day May 22**

### **Threatened plant salvaged when Lake Pedder was flooded, survives, ready to again thrive once the Serpentine Valley is restored.**

Great and inspiring news for World Biodiversity Day.

“The commitment of one woman, the late Kaye Geeves, saves a rare plant. It is proof yet again of the truism that a small group of committed people can save the world.” said Christine Milne AO, Convenor Of the Lake Pedder Restoration Inc.

Prior to the creation of a Hydro storage impoundment which flooded the valley in 1972, it was thought the *Milligania johnstonii* was endemic only to the Lake Pedder region. The threat of losing the species and its habitat in the flooding led conservationist the late Kaye Geeves to propagate a plant, attempting to preserve a specimen. Over the subsequent 50 years Ms. Geeve’s *Milligania johnstonii* has exchanged hands numerous times. Today the Ridgeway Nursery has secured its future.

“This is an exciting story for World Biodiversity Day, adding yet another layer of biodiversity credentials to the case for restoring Lake Pedder and the Serpentine Valley”

“Here we have a plant, thriving 50 years after being saved from destruction and now we have an incredible opportunity to return it to its natural habitat

“The United Nations officially launch the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Restoring Lake Pedder would put Tasmania on the global stage for both biodiversity and ecological restoration. Its time has come”

The Shortleaf *Milligania*, ‘*Milligania johnstonii*, grows exclusively in secluded pockets of the South-West Tasmanian wilderness. Blooming over summer, the dwarf, mat forming, perennial lily, once abundantly occupied the mosaic of moorlands of the original Pedder and Serpentine Valley.

Although flora surveys completed after Pedder’s inundation have found the slow growing *Milligania* also populates the De Witt Range and the Giblin, Hardwood and Maxwell Rivers, the *johnstonii* remains listed as rare under the threatened species act of 1995 due to its highly specialised habitat in the sedgelands moist sand and mud.

In her 2020 Lake Pedder Restoration Ecological Scoping Study, Dr Anita Wild found the *johnstonii* will be “.. useful for targeted planting and restoration purposes if sufficient seed was able to be collected.” The horticulturalists at Ridgeway Nursery concur with the optimistic outlook for the species’ future, stating that for a *Milligania johnstonii* is easily propagatable.

For further comment please contact Restore Pedder campaign coordinator Tabatha Badger on 0448812281

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