

Early invader Opuntoid cacti in Victoria

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Summary Opuntoid cacti are a group of invasive plants that form one of the sub-families in the Cactaceae family. They pose a serious risk to the biodiversity of Victoria and appear to be spreading with more species and infestations popping up in the landscape. In 2017 the Victorian Government declared all *Cylindropuntia* and *Opuntia* species (with a few exceptions) under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, prohibiting the trade of these species and their propagules. In 2017, new species of Opuntoid cacti have been discovered in Victoria. Westwood Pear (*Opuntia streptacantha* Lem.) was identified at

Wallpolla Island at Murray Sunset National Park in north-west Victoria and jumping cholla (*Cylindropuntia prolifera* (Engelm.) F.M.Knuth) located in Long Gully, a suburb of Bendigo, central Victoria. A third yet to be determined specimen has been collected at Wargan Bushland Reserve near Mildura. Specimens of all three have been submitted to the National Herbarium of Victoria. As awareness of invasive cacti grows, more species and sites are expected to be reported. Public land managers now have improved tools to make better investment decisions.

Keywords Opuntoid cacti, early invader.