



Les Pedley at Sweers Island, Gulf of Carpentaria, November 2002. Photo: M.B. Thomas

Les Pedley (1930–2018)

Les Pedley passed away on 27 November 2018 at his Indooroopilly home in Queensland. He was born in Ipswich, Queensland on May 19, 1930 and attended Ipswich Grammar School. On finishing school in 1948 he became a cadet in the Department of Agriculture and Stock in Brisbane. After a 5-year cadetship, during which time he gained a Bachelor of Science from the University of Queensland, he was appointed as Assistant Botanist in 1953 at the then Botany Branch and Herbarium located in George Street, Brisbane. In the 1960s Les was seconded to CSIRO to work on two Queensland Land Use surveys: Nogoa – Belyando in 1964 to 1965 and Maranoa – Balonne in 1968 to 1969. In 1968 he carried out a survey of the vegetation of Cape York Peninsula with Ray Isbell from CSIRO. From these surveys Les developed a love and appreciation for Queensland's open country and the plants and birds that inhabited these landscapes.

Les was the Australian Botanical Liaison Officer at The Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, from 1971 to 1972. He returned to work at Kew in 1992 and while there he wrote accounts of legumes for the *Revised Handbook of the Flora of Ceylon*. Most of Les's working life at the Queensland Herbarium involved a range of administrative duties as well as his taxonomic research into Australian legumes: in particular the genus *Acacia*. Les formally described over 160 plant species new to science, most of these from Queensland.

Les studied Latin and French at high school and in the later part of the 1970s he returned to the University of Queensland to pursue an Arts degree including further Latin studies. This he successfully completed in 1980. Les's Latin skills, plant nomenclature and taxonomic knowledge were always greatly appreciated by his colleagues and friends at the Queensland Herbarium. Indeed, this issue of the Queensland Herbarium's scientific journal *Austrobaileya* contains 10 'old school' Latin diagnoses written by Les as part of the formal publication of 10 new species of wattle.

Les was the founding Editor of *Austrobaileya* in 1977 and performed this role to 1988 when he officially retired as Assistant Director. He was also a member of the Editorial Committee of the *Flora of Australia* from 1980 to 1988. After retirement Les enthusiastically continued to pursue his taxonomic studies as a Research Associate at the Queensland Herbarium. He worked 5 days a week, eventually dropping back to 4 days, for the next 30 years and published more scientific papers in 'retirement' than he did while employed. In 2008 Les was awarded an Australia Day Achievement Award from the Department in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Queensland botany.

Les was a keen field botanist and conducted extensive field work throughout Queensland. He collected legume specimens into his 80s with his daughter as the driver. He contributed over 4000 specimens to the Queensland Herbarium collections.

Les was a very kind and generous man, and great colleague. He loved to tell stories of the early days in his career, his many field experiences and his observations of life and people. We will miss his friendship and expertise.

This issue of *Austrobaileya* is dedicated with due respect to the memory of Les.

A full bibliography is appended.

Les is honoured by the legume genus *Pedleya* H.Ohashi & K.Ohashi and five native plant species: *Acacia pedleyi* Tindale & Kodala, *Commersonia pedleyi* Guymer, *Diploglottis pedleyi* S.T.Reynolds, *Ptilotus pedleyanus* Benl and *Tephrosia pedleyi* R.Butcher.

G.P. Guymer, Queensland Herbarium