

## **In the Beginning – the Australian Plant Name Index**

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In 1970, Professor William Stearn of the British Museum of Natural History gave a talk to the Australian Academy of Science. In that talk he lauded the need for a new Flora of Australia. After his address, a Fellow of the Academy approached and offered funds to begin the process. Following discussions by Australian biologists – led by Dr Hansjoerg Eichler, it was determined that the best way to use these funds would be to prepare an index to plant names as a precursor to a Flora. The process to develop the plant name index began in April 1973 under the direction of Dr Nancy Burbidge and with the appointment of Penelope Hack. They began working on Bentham's Flora Australiensis and Mueller's Fragmenta. I was appointed in late 1973 and began working on the project in January 1974. When the initial funds ran out in June 1976, the project was transferred to CSIRO and later to the Department of the Environment under the newly formed Bureau of Flora and Fauna – later to become the Australian Biological Resources Study. The Australian Plant Name Index was published in four volumes in 1991 and sometime later made available as an online searchable database.

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