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1 A genome-wide search for local adaptation in a terrestrial-  
2 breeding frog reveals vulnerability to climate change

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8 Running title: Genetic diversity and local adaptation in frogs

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Deanne Cummins<sup>1</sup>  
W. Jason Kennington<sup>1</sup>  
Tabitha Rudin-Bitterli<sup>1</sup>  
Nicola J. Mitchell<sup>1</sup>

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14 <sup>1</sup>School of Biological Sciences, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway  
15 Crawley WA 6005, Australia

16  
17

18 Correspondence:  
19 Deanne Cummins  
20 School of Biological Sciences, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway,  
21 Crawley, Western Australia 6009, Australia

22  
23

Email: [deanne.cummins@research.uwa.edu.au](mailto:deanne.cummins@research.uwa.edu.au)

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Paper type: Primary research

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31 **Abstract**

32 Terrestrial-breeding amphibians are likely to be vulnerable to warming and drying climates,  
33 as their embryos require consistent moisture for successful development. Adaptation to  
34 environmental change will depend on sufficient genetic variation existing within or between  
35 connected populations. Here we use single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) data to  
36 investigate genome-wide patterns in genetic diversity, gene flow and local adaptation in a  
37 terrestrial-breeding frog (*Pseudophryne guentheri*) subject to a rapidly drying climate and  
38 recent habitat fragmentation. The species was sampled across twelve central and range-  
39 edge populations (192 samples), and strong genetic structure was apparent, as were high  
40 inbreeding coefficients. Populations showed differences in genetic diversity, and one  
41 population lost significant genetic diversity in a decade. More than 500 SNP loci were  
42 putatively under directional selection, and 413 of these loci were correlated with  
43 environmental variables such as temperature, rainfall, evaporation and soil moisture. One  
44 locus showed homology to a gene involved in the activation of maturation in *Xenopus*  
45 oocytes, which may facilitate rapid development of embryos in drier climates. The low  
46 genetic diversity, strong population structuring and presence of local adaptation revealed  
47 in this study shows why management strategies such as assisted gene flow may be  
48 necessary to assist isolated populations to adapt to future climates.

49

50 **Keywords**

51 Genome-wide, genetic diversity, local adaptation, SNP, climate change, amphibian,  
52 *Pseudophryne guentheri*

53 **Introduction**

54 An alarming number of amphibian species, approximately a third worldwide, have  
55 declined or become extinct since 1970 (Lips, Diffendorfer, Mendelson, & Sears,  
56 2008; Perl et al., 2017; Pounds, Fogden, & Campbell, 1999; Van Rooij, Martel,  
57 Haesebrouck, & Pasmans, 2015). This global decline has been attributed to factors  
58 such as habitat fragmentation, disease, climate change, increased UV-B radiation  
59 and introduced species (Beebee & Griffiths, 2005; Collins & Storer, 2003; Lips et al.,  
60 2008; Van Rooij et al., 2015; Wake, 2012). Climate change is an indirect contributor  
61 to amphibian population declines by compounding the effects of other threats  
62 (Pounds et al., 1999; Winter et al., 2016) but also directly impacts amphibian  
63 populations by causing physiological tolerances to be breached, and by reducing the  
64 rate and scale of dispersal (Lawler, Shafer, Bancroft, & Blaustein, 2010).

65

66 Amphibian populations can potentially respond to new selection pressures via  
67 evasion, phenotypic plasticity or genetic adaptation (Urban, Richardson, &  
68 Freidenfelds, 2014). However, evasion of unfavourable climates is not an option for  
69 species whose dispersal is restricted due to habitat fragmentation (Beebee, 1995;  
70 Lawler et al., 2010; Smith & Green, 2005). Similarly, phenotypic plasticity will not  
71 necessarily allow persistence under continued directional environmental change, as  
72 there are limits to the extent of non-genetic responses (Auld, Agrawal, & Relyea,  
73 2010; Dewitt, Sih, & Wilson, 1998; Gienapp, Teplitsky, Alho, Mills, & Merila, 2008).  
74 For many species, genetic adaptation represents the best option for population  
75 resilience in the face of continued directional change in their environments (Sgrò,  
76 Lowe, & Hoffmann, 2011).

77

78 The capacity of populations to adapt to new selection pressures will depend on their  
79 ability to evolve phenotypes that suit their new environments (Tigano & Friesen,  
80 2016). This ability in turn depends on the level of standing genetic variation within a  
81 population upon which natural selection can act (Aitken, Yeaman, Holliday, Wang, &  
82 Curtis-McLane, 2008). Short-lived species can evolve rapidly in response to climate  
83 change if they possess sufficient genetic variation in tolerance traits (Sgrò et al.,  
84 2011), and higher levels of genetic diversity provide a greater probability of achieving

85 allelic combinations that confer beneficial phenotypes (Barrett & Schluter, 2008). In  
86 the absence of genetic variation, there is now strong evidence for an increased risk  
87 of extinction in wild populations (Spielman, Brook, & Frankham, 2004). Further,  
88 restricted gene flow between populations subject to different environmental  
89 pressures will increase their genetic divergence, and result in local adaptation  
90 (Slatkin, 1987).

91  
92 For many amphibian species, environmental disturbances will be experienced as  
93 increasing temperatures and decreasing rainfall (Bernhardt & Leslie, 2013). An  
94 overall decrease in rainfall, plus increasing variation in precipitation, such as the  
95 incidence and severity of drought events, will likely have a severe negative effect on  
96 both aquatic and terrestrial-breeding anurans as breeding success, phenology and  
97 migration are tightly associated with the presence of water (Todd & Winne, 2006;  
98 Walls, Barichivich, & Brown, 2013). Terrestrial-breeding frogs are especially  
99 vulnerable to a reduction in rainfall, as seasonal rainfall causes increases in soil  
100 moisture and the appearance of standing water that are critical to breeding success.  
101 For example, frogs in the Australian *Pseudophryne* genus lay their eggs in burrows in  
102 direct contact with the soil, and rainfall keeps embryos hydrated and ultimately floods  
103 the burrows (Eads, Mitchell, & Evans, 2012). Burrow flooding initiates hatching and  
104 provides standing water for the completion of metamorphosis (Bradford & Seymour,  
105 1988). Climate change is apparent across the continent-wide distribution of this  
106 genus, but is particularly marked in the southwest of Australia. This bioregion has  
107 experienced substantial declines in autumn rainfall over the past 40 years, and  
108 climate projections suggest that temperature and evaporation will increase, while  
109 rainfall and soil water availability will further decrease (Bates, Hope, Ryan, Smith, &  
110 Charles, 2008). The frequency of years with exceptionally low soil moisture is  
111 predicted to increase to approximately once every six years by 2030, with a possible  
112 60% decrease in autumn rainfall by 2070 under the most extreme climate change  
113 scenario (Bates *et al.* 2008).

114  
115 In this study we conducted a genome-wide analyses of genetic variation in the  
116 crawling frog, *Pseudophryne guentheri* — one of 17 terrestrial-breeding amphibian

117 species endemic to the southwest of Australia. The species is an ideal model for  
118 studying responses to climate change due to marked intraspecific variation in the  
119 ability of embryonic and adult life stages to withstand desiccation (Rudin-Bitterli,  
120 Evans, & Mitchell, 2018). Based on a quantitative genetics study of a single  
121 population of this species, Eads *et al.* (2012) suggested it has limited capacity to  
122 adapt to a drying climate, due to low levels of heritable genetic variation in traits  
123 associated with desiccation tolerance. Here, we expand to a multi-population study  
124 and use a genotype-by-sequencing method to generate genome-wide single  
125 nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) markers to assess population genetic structure and  
126 test for signatures of local adaptation to climatic variables. Taken together, these  
127 data provide a means for assessing the susceptibility of this species to future climate  
128 change.

129

## 130 **Materials and Methods**

131

### 132 **Sample selection**

133 Tissue samples from 192 individual *P. guentheri* collected from 12 geographically  
134 distinct populations were selected for genetic analysis. The populations were  
135 distributed across approximately half the known range of *P. guentheri* in  
136 southwestern Australia, and spanned environmental gradients including average  
137 annual temperature, which decreases from north to south, and average annual  
138 precipitation, which increases from north to south, and is higher in more coastal  
139 localities (Fig. 1).

140

141 Tissue samples were obtained from the Western Australian Museum and collections  
142 of the authors (NM, TBR), and included the muscle or liver of adult frogs (mostly  
143 males) or the tail of a tadpole (sex unknown). Samples from most locations (Binnu,  
144 Chidlow, Dudinin, Flint plot, Mullewa, Ridgefield farm and Yalgoo) were collected  
145 during the 2016 autumn-winter breeding season. For two sites, samples were  
146 collected in two different years (Flint plot: 2006 and 2016, Pinjar: 2007 and 2008),  
147 which allowed analysis of temporal variation. Given the short period between the  
148 temporal samples from Pinjar, they are unlikely to represent different generations, but

149 were nonetheless included to have independent samples of the same population and  
150 test for genetic changes over one year. Of the remaining populations, two were  
151 sampled in 1992 (Dalwallinu and Wyalkatchem) and Spalding Park was sampled in  
152 1993. In addition to samples of the target species (*P. guentheri*), tissues samples of a  
153 sympatric species (*Pseudophryne occidentalis*; Fig. 2a) collected 9 km east of  
154 Yalgoo in 2009 were included. This population occurred only 10 km from the Yalgoo  
155 *P. guentheri* population and so was used to test for potential hybridization, as  
156 admixture between lineages can occur at species boundaries within this taxonomic  
157 group (O'Brien, Keogh, Silla, & Byrne, 2018).

158

### 159 **SNP genotyping and screening**

160 Tissue samples were sent to Diversity Arrays Technology to generate a genome-  
161 wide single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) data set, using a genotype-by-  
162 sequencing approach (DArT-seq; <http://www.diversityarrays.com/>). DArTseq involves  
163 a combination of DArT complexity reduction methods and Illumina sequencing and is  
164 similar to restriction site-associated DNA sequencing (RADseq; Davey et al., 2010).  
165 DArTseq has three major advantages including a lower DNA input, greater tolerance  
166 to low quality DNA and a higher call rate (Sánchez-Sevilla et al., 2015). Four enzyme  
167 systems for complexity reduction were tested and *PstI-SphI* was chosen. The *PstI*-  
168 compatible adapter comprised an Illumina flow cell attachment sequence, a  
169 sequencing primer and a staggered barcode region of varying lengths. The reverse  
170 adapter (*SphI*-compatible) contained the Illumina flow cell attachment sequence and  
171 an *SphI* overhang sequence. DNA samples were processed in digestion/ligation  
172 reactions (Kilian et al., 2012). Only ligated fragments with both a *PstI* and *SphI*  
173 adapter were amplified by PCR with an initial denaturation step at 94 °C for 1 minute,  
174 followed by 30 cycles with a temperature profile as follows: denaturation at 94 °C for  
175 20 seconds, annealing at 58 °C for 30 seconds and extension at 72 °C for 45  
176 seconds, with an additional final extension (Melville et al., 2017).

177

178 Following PCR amplification, the products from each sample were pooled and  
179 applied to a cBot (Illumina) bridge PCR and then sequenced on an Illumina  
180 HiSeq2500. Single read sequencing was run for 77 cycles (Kilian et al., 2012).

181 Sequences were processed using propriety DArTseq analytical pipelines. The  
182 primary pipeline was used to filter poor quality sequences from FASTQ files (Kilian *et*  
183 *al.* 2012). Identical sequences were collapsed into “fastqcoll files” and data was  
184 groomed using DArT’s propriety algorithm to correct for low quality bases from  
185 singleton reads, using collapsed reads with multiple members as a template.  
186 Groomed data was used in the secondary pipeline for SNP calling (Kilian *et al.*,  
187 2012).

188  
189 Following the generation of 103 608 loci, DArT loci that were genotyped in fewer than  
190 85% of samples, had a minor allele frequency (MAF) less than 0.05, or low sequence  
191 coverage (<5), were removed from the dataset prior to analysis. Then, to screen for  
192 cryptic lineages and possible hybrids between *P. guentheri* and *P. occidentalis*, a  
193 neighbour joining tree based on Nei’s genetic distance (Nei, 1972) was constructed  
194 using the R package POPPR version 2.5.0 (Kamvar, Tabima , & Grünwald, 2014).

195

## 196 **Population structure and genetic diversity**

197 Loci were divided into two groups: neutral loci and loci that are potentially under  
198 directional or balancing selection. Loci potentially under selection were identified  
199 using the *fdist2* method in LOSITAN (Antao, Lopes, Lopes, Beja-Pereira, & Luikart,  
200 2008). This method measures population divergence by generating a global neutral  
201 distribution for  $F_{ST}$ , under Wright’s Island model (Charlesworth, 1998; Wright, 1931)  
202 and estimates the expected heterozygosity and unbiased  $F_{ST}$  values for each locus. It  
203 is considered a conservative method of identifying neutral loci as retention of loci  
204 under weak selection is minimised, which could bias results (Thomas, Kennington,  
205 Evans, Kendrick, & Stat, 2017). Analyses were conducted assuming an infinite  
206 alleles mutation model, based on 500 000 simulations, and using neutral mean  $F_{ST}$ , a  
207 95% confidence interval and a false discovery rate of 0.1. Loci with a probability  
208 between 0.05 and 0.95 were retained as neutral loci, as they were not considered  
209 significantly different from the neutral mean  $F_{ST}$ . Neutral loci were screened for  
210 conformity to Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium (HWE) using GENODIVE 2.0b.27 and the  
211 Benjamini & Yekutieli (BY) method was used to correct for multiple comparisons



212 (Benjamini & Yekutieli, 2001). Loci that deviated consistently from HWE (in more  
213 than three populations) were removed.

214 Only putatively neutral loci were used for the following analyses. Population structure  
215 was assessed by calculating Weir & Cockerham's  $F_{ST}$  using the R package  
216 'hierestat' (Goudet, 2005). The significance of  $F_{ST}$  values was determined by  
217 bootstrapping 100 replicates (Weir & Cockerham, 1984) and we corrected for  
218 multiple comparisons using the BY method (Benjamini & Yekutieli, 2001). Population  
219 structure was also assessed by performing a discriminant analysis of principle  
220 components (DAPC) using the R package 'adegenet' (Jombart, Devillard, & Balloux,  
221 2010). No *a priori* information about sampling location were used in the analysis. The  
222 optimal number of principle components and discriminant functions were retained  
223 using a cross-validation method (Krzanowski, 1987).

224

225 The R package 'hierestat' was also used to calculate inbreeding coefficients ( $F_{IS}$ )  
226 and expected heterozygosity ( $H$ ). Bootstrapping based on 100 replicates was  
227 performed over loci to generate confidence intervals, to assess the significance of  $F_{IS}$   
228 values for each population and the BY method was used to correct for multiple  
229 comparisons (Benjamini & Yekutieli, 2001). A Friedman rank sum test was used to  
230 determine whether genetic variation differed significantly among populations, and a  
231 Wilcoxon rank sum test was used to determine which populations were differed  
232 significantly from each other (Bauer, 1972; Friedman, 1937), again, correcting for  
233 multiple comparisons using the BY method (Benjamini & Yekutieli, 2001). The R  
234 package 'snpReady' was used to calculate the estimated effective population size  
235 ( $N_e$ ) for each population, using a single sample method based on heterozygote  
236 excess (Robertson, 1965).

237

238 Relationships between measures of genetic diversity and the  $F_{IS}$  of each population  
239 against five environmental variables were tested using regression analysis.

240 Environmental variables examined included monthly total rainfall, minimum and  
241 maximum temperature, average evaporation and monthly soil moisture (upper layer).

242 All environmental variables were obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology  
243 (<http://www.bom.gov.au/>) for the specific coordinates of each population, which were

244 interpolated from weather station data. Monthly values were averaged across 38  
245 years (1980-2017) for all environmental variables.

246

247 We also conducted a Bayesian clustering approach with the software package  
248 STRUCTURE 2.3.4 (Pritchard, Stephens, & Donnelly, 2000) and using sNMF analysis  
249 (Frichot, Mathieu, Trouillon, Bouchard, & François, 2014) to check for consistent  
250 results. The number of genetic clusters (K) tested, ranged from one to 12 with ten  
251 replicates per K and no prior information about sampling location. A burn-in of 10 000  
252 was followed by 100 000 MCMC replicates, assuming correlated allele frequencies.  
253 STRUCTURE HARVESTER (Earl & vonHoldt, 2012) was used to determine the optimal  
254 number of populations following the delta K approach (Evanno, Regnaut, & Goudet,  
255 2005). The sNMF analysis was conducted using the R package 'lea' (Frichot &  
256 François, 2015) with similar settings for K to support the STRUCTURE results and  
257 represent them graphically, using a method that is robust to departures from  
258 traditional population genetic model assumptions including HWE (Frichot et al.,  
259 2014). Finally, a mantel test was conducted using the R package 'ade4' to test the  
260 correlation between genetic (using Provesti distance; Alonso, 1975; Prevosti, 1974)  
261 and geographic pairwise distance matrices.

## 262 **Signatures of local adaptation**

263 To identify loci putatively under directional selection, a Bayesian model-based  
264 approach was conducted using BAYESCAN 2.0, using default settings (Foll &  
265 Gaggiotti, 2008). This method has been shown to have lower rates of type 1 errors  
266 than the *fdist2* method under a hierarchical model in ARLEQUIN (Narum & Hess, 2011).  
267 BAYESCAN was also conducted using just the two samples collected from Flint Plot  
268 to determine if any temporal variation at this location could be attributed to directional  
269 environmental selection. Loci with a q-value of less than 0.05 were considered to be  
270 under directional selection.

271

272 One limitation of the BAYESCAN approach for detecting loci under directional  
273 selection ('outlier loci') is the relatively high false discovery rate (40%; Luu, Bazin, &  
274 Blum, 2017). To filter the resulting loci for false positive results a second outlier  
275 detection method PCADAPT was used, which has a lower false discovery rate (10%;

276 Luu et al., 2017). A second limitation of the BAYESCAN approach that it cannot  
277 determine which environmental variables may be driving selection (Villemereuil &  
278 Gaggiotti, 2015). Hence, to infer the particular environmental variable underlying  
279 directional selection on loci, the software package BAYESCENV was used (with  
280 default settings) to test whether  $F_{ST}$  increased with environmental differentiation  
281 (Villemereuil & Gaggiotti, 2015). As outlined earlier, the environmental variables  
282 examined were monthly total rainfall, minimum and maximum temperature, average  
283 evaporation and monthly soil moisture. Each variable was standardized to represent  
284 an “environmental distance” between the value observed at each population and the  
285 reference value (average across all populations) for each variable, as per developers  
286 instructions (Villemereuil & Gaggiotti, 2015).

287

288 To identify if any loci under directional selection (as identified by all three  
289 approaches) were in genic regions that coded for proteins, a general nucleotide blast  
290 search ('blastn') was conducted, followed by specifically blasting reference nucleotide  
291 sequences against four available frog genomes: the African clawed frog (*Xenopus*  
292 *laevis*), the Western clawed frog (*Xenopus tropicalis*) the Tibetan frog (*Nanorana*  
293 *parkeri*), and the cane toad (*Rhinella marina*) (available at:  
294 [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genome/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genome/)). To ensure only highly similar sequences were used  
295 for investigation of outlier SNP function, a BLAST match was considered significantly  
296 similar if it had greater than 80% coverage, greater than 90% identity and an E-score  
297 of less than  $1 \times 10^{-10}$  (Pearson, 2013).

298

## 299 **Results**

### 300 **SNP genotyping and screening**

301 Of the 103,608 high quality SNPs produced by the DArT propriety pipeline, 12,787  
302 (12.3%) met our selection criteria. A neighbor-joining tree generated by this subset of  
303 SNPs showed that the Yalgoo *P. guentheri* were genetically distinct and were most  
304 likely a cryptic lineage (Fig. 2b). Hence to allow examination of intraspecific variation  
305 within *P. guentheri*, all Yalgoo sequences and the *P. occidentalis* sequences were  
306 excluded from further analysis.

307 **Population structure and genetic diversity**

308 Analyses of the neutral loci indicated high levels of genetic differentiation among  
309 populations. Pairwise  $F_{ST}$  estimates between sites ranged from 0.052 to 0.327, with  
310 most pairwise  $F_{ST}$  values significantly different to zero (Table S4). Strong population  
311 structure was also evident from the inference of individual ancestry coefficients and  
312 DAPC (Fig. 2c and Fig. 2d, respectively). The DAPC grouped individuals from each  
313 population sample into a distinct genetic cluster. A clustering analysis using the R  
314 package 'lea' was consistent with the results of a STRUCTURE analysis, showing  $K$   
315 = 5 to be the most likely number of ancestral populations.

316

317 A plot of individual ancestry coefficients, based on  $K = 5$ , grouped individuals from  
318 the northern populations of Binnu, Mullewa and Spalding Park in a single cluster.  
319 Individuals from central regions (Wyalkatchem and Dalwallinu) were placed in a  
320 separate cluster, but showed some admixture with the cluster representing the  
321 northern populations. Pinjar samples collected in 2007 and 2008 clustered together  
322 and most of the southern populations formed distinct genetic clusters, showing very  
323 small levels of admixture. Strong geographic structure was also evident from the  
324 significant positive relationship between pairwise  $F_{ST}$  and geographical distance (Fig.  
325 2e).

326

327 Genetic variation within populations was relatively uniform (expected heterozygosity  
328 ranging from 0.193 to 0.247; Fig. 3), although there were several significant  
329 differences between populations, and between samples taken from the same  
330 population in different years. In general, populations with greater geographical  
331 separation and sampled more than a year apart were more likely to be significantly  
332 different (Fig. 2e & Fig. 3). Temporal variation was evident in the Flint Plot  
333 population, where expected heterozygosity was significantly lower in the more recent  
334 2016 sample (Fig. 3 & Table S3). All populations showed relatively high, significant  
335 median  $F_S$  values, ranging from 0.161 to 0.318 and low estimates of  $N_e$  ranging from  
336 18.2 to 51.9 (Table S1). The lowest  $N_e$  were found at Ridgefield Farm, Wyalkatchem  
337 and Flint Plot with the Flint Plot population showing a slight decline in  $N_e$  over ten  
338 years (Table S1).

339

340 Genetic variation (expected heterozygosity) and  $F_{IS}$  showed significant linear  
341 relationships with evaporation, maximum temperature and latitude, but not with  
342 minimum temperature, rainfall or soil moisture (Fig. 4; Table S2). Lower latitude  
343 populations and those with higher maximum temperatures and higher levels of  
344 evaporation had less genetic variation and lower inbreeding coefficients than did  
345 higher latitude populations characterized by lower maximum temperatures and  
346 evaporation.

347

### 348 **Signatures of local adaptation**

349 When all populations were considered, BAYESCAN identified 1590 outlier loci that  
350 were putatively under directional selection. PCADAPT identified 783 outlier loci, with  
351 560 loci identified by both approaches. The BAYESCENV analysis on these same  
352 populations identified 413 unique loci correlated with environmental variables (Fig.  
353 S2), 308 were correlated with soil moisture, 260 were correlated with rainfall, 182  
354 were correlated with minimum temperature, 181 were correlated with maximum  
355 temperature and 171 were correlated with evaporation.

356

357 Using loci identified by all three outlier analyses as putatively under directional  
358 selection, 413 BLAST searches were conducted, and two blast results matched the  
359 selection criteria. One locus that showed strong correlation with evaporation and soil  
360 moisture had a high sequence identity and coverage with multiple transcript variants  
361 of Protein Kinase C, zeta mRNA of two species of clawed frogs, *Xenopus tropicalis*  
362 and *Xenopus laevis* (Table 1). Another locus showing strong correlation with all  
363 environmental variables had 100% coverage and 93% identity with a region  
364 upstream of chromatin modifying protein (Chmp2a) in Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).

365

### 366 **Discussion**

367 Given the projections of a drying climate in the southwest of Australia, information on  
368 the partitioning of genetic variation within vulnerable species is critical for predicting  
369 their capacity to adapt genetically. In this study of *P. guentheri*, we identify six to  
370 seven distinct genetic clusters that potentially exhibit high levels of inbreeding and

371 signatures of local adaptation. Populations at the range margins had amongst the  
372 lowest levels of genetic variation, and one population sampled a decade apart  
373 showed declining genetic variation over time. Recent habitat fragmentation in  
374 southwestern Australia has constrained gene flow in many species. Restricted gene  
375 flow, coupled with the low genetic diversity as we reveal here, suggests that *P.*  
376 *guentheri* has a limited capacity to adapt to rapid climate change.

### 377 **Population structure and genetic variation**

378 Strong population genetic structure can reflect naturally low dispersal capability and  
379 high site fidelity, as known in other terrestrial-breeding frogs (Driscoll, 1997, 1998;  
380 Smith & Green, 2005). Terrestrial-breeding frogs are restricted to breeding sites that  
381 are consistently moist, and/or will reliably flood (e.g. near ephemeral creek lines),  
382 often leading to isolation across different drainages. Some species that occupy  
383 forested drainage lines (e.g. *Geocrinia alba* and *G. vitellina*) show extreme site  
384 philopatry, and exchange of males between adjacent populations is either rare or  
385 does not occur at all (Driscoll, 1997). Fidelity to breeding areas, and even to specific  
386 nest sites is also known in the *Pseudophryne* genus (Heap, Stuart-Fox, & Byrne,  
387 2015; Mitchell, 2001, 2005) and could in part explain the strong genetic structure in  
388 *P. guentheri*. In addition, *P. guentheri* tadpoles are restricted to small, temporary  
389 pools and are unlikely to get washed between populations (Bradford & Seymour,  
390 1988), hence low dispersal in the larval phase could also contribute to the strong  
391 population structure evident in this study.

392 Habitat fragmentation is also well known to influence species' population structure  
393 (Andersen, Fog, & Damgaard, 2004; Burns, Eldridge, & Houlden, 2004; Dixo,  
394 Metzger, Morgante, & Zamudio, 2009; Levy, Kennington, Tomkins, & Lebas, 2010;  
395 Richter, 2009; Spear & Storfer, 2008). Most of our study populations occur in the  
396 Western Australian Wheatbelt, a once-forested area that has been extensively  
397 cleared since the early 1900s for agriculture with less than ten percent of native  
398 vegetation remaining in small isolated remnants (Hobbs, 1993; Jarvis, 1986;  
399 Saunders, 1989). Other study populations outside the Wheatbelt region, such as  
400 Pinjar, occur adjacent to land that has been cleared for agriculture or for the  
401 expansion of the city of Perth (Weller, 2009). Land clearing for agriculture has been

402 found to influence the abundance and composition of amphibian populations (Gray,  
403 Smith, & Leyva, 2004) and inhibit genetic exchange between them, causing genetic  
404 differentiation (Lenhardt, Brühl, Leeb, & Theissing, 2017). Specifically in the  
405 Wheatbelt region, land clearing has been shown to reduce gene flow between  
406 populations of the granite outcrop-dwelling lizard *Ctenophorus ornatus*, with  
407 populations occupying outcrops on agricultural land showing lower genetic variation  
408 and greater genetic divergence relative to populations in a nature reserve (Levy et  
409 al., 2010). While the dispersal ability of *P. guentheri* is unknown, land clearing almost  
410 certainly creates a barrier to gene flow in this species due to the risk of desiccation  
411 when crossing the agricultural matrices between breeding sites.

412  
413 While substantial population structure suggests limited gene flow between  
414 populations, the strong geographical patterns (including isolation-by-distance)  
415 suggest that *P. guentheri* populations have not been isolated in the past. Northern  
416 populations were clustered together in the plot of ancestry coefficients, which could  
417 be the result of historic range expansion in a northerly direction or because they have  
418 been isolated by habitat fragmentation more recently than the southern populations.  
419 When range expansion occurs via several founder effects, genetic drift will effectively  
420 be accelerated (Slatkin & Excoffier, 2012), resulting in relatively lower levels of  
421 genetic diversity in the northern populations and a higher genetic similarity between  
422 them, as found in this study. Notably, many studies have documented a temporal lag  
423 in changes to genetic population structure in response to habitat fragmentation,  
424 especially in less mobile organisms (Burel et al., 1998; Holzhauer, Ekschmitt,  
425 Sander, Dauber, & Wolters, 2006; Landguth et al., 2010; Levy, Tomkins, Lebas, &  
426 Kennington, 2013; Spear & Storfer, 2008). Hence, the timing of land clearing may  
427 have some explanatory power in our study. Based on an account of clearing patterns  
428 in the Wheatbelt (Jarvis, 1986), fragmentation around the three northern (Binnu,  
429 Mullewa and Spalding Park) and the two central populations (Dalwallinu and  
430 Wyalkatchem) occurred in 1890, 40 years after clearing around the southern  
431 populations (Flint plot, Ridgefield farm, Dudinin). More recent land clearing around  
432 the northern and central populations could explain their stronger genetic clustering,

433 although with a time difference of 40 years, this pattern could also be due to historic  
434 range expansion.

### 435 **Isolation and inbreeding**

436 The significantly positive  $F_{IS}$  values detected in this study are consistent with limited  
437 gene flow between populations. In addition, small  $N_e$  have likely given rise to high  
438 levels of genetic drift (Ellstrand & Elam, 1993; Slatkin, 1987). The significant decline  
439 in genetic diversity within the Flint plot population over ten years (Fig. 3; Table S1)  
440 provides some evidence that gene flow has been insufficient to mitigate the negative  
441 effects of genetic drift. If populations remain isolated, further declines in genetic  
442 diversity would be expected. This makes populations vulnerable if they lack sufficient  
443 genetic variation to adapt to changing environments or to evolve resistance to  
444 introduced diseases (Collins & Storer, 2003; Wake & Vredenburg, 2008).  
445 Furthermore, low rainfall has a negative impact on the breeding success of species in  
446 this genus (e.g. *P. bibronii*, Mitchell, 2001). Flint plot in 2006 had very low autumn  
447 and winter rainfall (Fig. S1), very few males mated and clutch failure was common  
448 (N. J. Mitchell, unpublished data). This process likely repeated in 2010 when rainfall  
449 was also very low (Fig. S1), but no visits to the site were made in 2010 to confirm this  
450 pattern. Recurring recruitment failure due to years of very low rainfall may have  
451 compounded the effects of genetic drift in the small, isolated Flint Plot population,  
452 further reducing genetic diversity. Future studies should include temporal analysis of  
453 genetic variation in multiple *P. guentheri* populations to establish if the decreasing  
454 diversity is widespread, and to identify the factors associated with significant  
455 declines.

456  
457 In general, high  $F_{IS}$  values suggest high levels of inbreeding within populations.  
458 Breeding between related individuals can lead to reductions in fitness, including  
459 lower mating success, reduced fecundity, increased sterility, slower development and  
460 increased susceptibility to environmental stress (Bijlsma, Bundgaard, & Van Putten,  
461 1999; Frankham, 1995; Roff, 1998). In small populations with an  $N_e$  less than 100 (as  
462 estimated for all of the population in this study), inbreeding can lead to mutational  
463 meltdown (Keller & Waller, 2002). The  $F_{IS}$  values of *P. guentheri* populations are  
464 comparable to some of the highest  $F_{IS}$  values in populations of the European tree



465 frog *Hyla arborea*, which showed signs of inbreeding depression on larval survival  
466 (Andersen et al., 2004). In some cases, natural selection can 'purge' deleterious  
467 alleles from the population through strong selection against them (Reed, Lowe,  
468 Briscoe, & Frankham, 2003), however, the extent of purging depends on many  
469 factors and is often inefficient especially in small populations where selection is less  
470 effective and genetic drift dominates (Keller & Waller, 2002). In addition, purging is  
471 environmentally-dependent, as changing or deteriorating environments can evoke  
472 previously 'concealed' genetic load to become expressed, resulting in increased  
473 inbreeding depression in harsher environments (Bijlsma et al., 1999). Hence high  
474 inbreeding coefficients in a changing climate are likely disadvantageous. While it is  
475 possible in this study that inbreeding coefficient values were inflated due to the SNP  
476 markers used, similar  $F_S$  values were obtained even when loci that consistently  
477 deviated from HWE were removed.

478

479 Intriguingly,  $F_S$  values and genetic diversity both decreased significantly with  
480 increasing temperature and evaporation (Fig. 4). Lower genetic diversity near the  
481 northern range edge could reflect more frequent drought years that negatively affect  
482 reproductive success and keep populations small (Walls et al., 2013). Alternatively,  
483 lower genetic diversity may simply reflect less migration to range margins than  
484 occurs at the center of a species range (the central-marginal hypothesis; (Eckert,  
485 Samis, & Loughheed, 2008). On this basis, higher levels of inbreeding would be  
486 expected in our populations near the northern range edge, yet we observed the  
487 opposite pattern. One explanation is that selection against inbred individuals is  
488 particularly strong in the northern populations, as inbreeding depression is more  
489 severe in more harsh environments (Miller, 1984). Alternatively, the differences could  
490 arise via kin selection in southern populations, or due to differing levels of multiple  
491 mating, as implied by marked divergence of male reproductive traits in these same  
492 populations (Rudin-Bitterli, 2018), and recognition of complex and variable mating  
493 systems in congeners (O'Brien et al., 2018).

494

495 **Signatures of local adaptation**

496 A genome-wide scan identified 413 outlier loci putatively under directional selection.  
497 Soil moisture and rainfall variables were correlated with the greatest number of  
498 outlier loci, suggesting these factors are strong drivers of local adaptation in *P.*  
499 *guentheri*. Evaporation is likely to impose selection pressure as it determines the  
500 length of time standing water is available between rainfall events and affects soil  
501 moisture. Rainfall is an important trigger of breeding, initiates hatching and provides  
502 the ephemeral water sources that allow the completion of metamorphosis (Bradford  
503 & Seymour, 1988). Unsurprisingly, locations with lower rainfall tend to have drier  
504 soils, higher evaporation and higher temperatures (Table S5). In concert, these  
505 variables potentially create intense selection, likely influencing embryonic mortality,  
506 the time taken to hatch (induced when nest sites flood), the rate of larval  
507 development and the survival of metamorphs (Blaustein et al., 2010; Donnelly &  
508 Crump, 1998; Eads et al., 2012).

509  
510 One locus identified as being under directional selection (correlated with both  
511 evaporation and soil moisture) resulted in a high blast match with an mRNA transcript  
512 of Protein Kinase C, zeta (PKC). This suggests local adaptation of populations in a  
513 genic region involved in the activation of oocyte maturation. Specifically, the zeta  
514 isoform of PKC is expressed in *Xenopus* oocytes in early cell division (Gosner stage  
515 6; (Gosner, 1960) and is critically important in the activation of oocyte maturation and  
516 in the control of proliferative cascades (Dominguez et al., 1992). The mechanisms  
517 that control PKC zeta activity are poorly characterized, but activation of this protein  
518 by Ras (a family of proteins that are involved in mediating the early cellular response  
519 to mitogens) has been suggested (Diaz-Meco et al., 1994).

520  
521 In *P. guentheri* there is likely to be positive selection on marginal populations for  
522 faster oocyte maturation, in response to less frequent and less predictable rainfall  
523 (Nicholls, Drosdowsky, & Lavery, 1997). Variation within the genic region of PKC  
524 zeta may be associated with differential expression of the PKC zeta gene (Liu et al.,  
525 2004), which could result in oocyte cell proliferation at variable rates. Hence, northern  
526 populations may be locally adapted to express PKC zeta at higher levels for faster

527 oocyte maturation to exploit unpredictable rainfall events for breeding. Further  
528 research is required to identify the function of different PKC zeta alleles in amphibian  
529 oocytes and to compare their expression levels (temporally and quantitatively) from  
530 populations adapted to different environments. Although this was the only genic  
531 region we detected in *P. guentheri* linked to local adaptation, there are likely to be  
532 more given the very strong correlations between outlier loci and environmental  
533 variables. These include genes involved in the hatching response (for which there is  
534 evidence of heritability in this species; Eads et al. 2012), and genes that influence  
535 larval development rates. Essentially, limited genomic resources for amphibian  
536 species (currently four complete genomes), and their phylogenetic divergence from  
537 *P. guentheri* (pairwise divergences of 148-205 MYA; <http://www.timetree.org/>),  
538 reduces the likelihood that functional genes under selection can be identified.

539

540 Two of the fourteen species currently recognized in the Australian amphibian genus  
541 *Pseudophryne* are listed as Critically Endangered, and a third as Vulnerable (EPBC  
542 Act, 1999). While *P. guentheri* is not threatened, our analysis reveals genetic  
543 patterns consistent with population isolation, decline and inbreeding, suggesting the  
544 species is at greater risk of extinction than is currently recognised. We provide strong  
545 molecular evidence of local adaptation, which is supported by a parallel study of *P.*  
546 *guentheri* that found strong patterns of clinal variation in desiccation tolerance (both  
547 in adults and first generation offspring) across a rainfall gradient (Rudin-Bitterli,  
548 2018). Limited gene flow between populations means that much of the variation that  
549 exists at the species level is unavailable to populations threatened by environmental  
550 change. To enhance the resilience of this species to a rapidly changing climate,  
551 targeted gene flow could potentially be used to improve its adaptive capacity.

552 Targeted gene flow comes with its own set of risks, the major one being outbreeding  
553 depression. This has been highlighted by outcrossing different populations of the  
554 common frog *Rana temporaria*, which resulted in malformed offspring (Sagvik, Uller,  
555 & Olsson, 2005). Caution should be taken in implementing such a strategy, however,  
556 targeted gene flow may be necessary to demographically and adaptively rescue  
557 highly inbred populations (Macdonald, Llewelyn, Moritz, & Phillips, 2017). In theory,  
558 alleles suited to hotter temperatures and drier climates could be introduced to more

559 mesic *P. guentheri* populations, either via managed movement of individuals or their  
560 gametes from different populations (Carlson *et al.* 2014). We recommend in  
561 particular that marginal populations to the north and east of the range are monitored  
562 and protected, as they are likely to contain alleles that could benefit the broadest  
563 suite of mesic populations that may soon be maladapted to their local environments.

#### 564 **Acknowledgements**

565 We thank Paul Doughty, Rebecca Bray and Ryan Ellis from the Western Australian  
566 Museum for provision and registration of tissue samples, Daniel White, Oliver Berry  
567 and Blair Bentley for advice on genetic analyses, and Yvette Hitchen for assistance  
568 in the laboratory and Adrzej Kilian, Kasia Heller and Cina Zachariah from Diversity  
569 Arrays Technology for generating the SNP data and advice on tissue sample  
570 preparation. Stewart Macdonald, Brighton Downing and Marcus Lee were  
571 instrumental in collecting many of the 2016 samples. Funding was provided by the  
572 Australian Government's National Environmental Science Programme through the  
573 Threatened Species Recovery Hub, and the School of Biological Sciences at The  
574 University of Western Australia.

575 We certify that we have no affiliation or involvement with any organization with  
576 financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter discussed in this manuscript.

#### 577 **Data Accessibility Statement**

578 Environmental data including yearly averages (1980 - 2017) of soil moisture, rainfall,  
579 temperature and evaporation, for the coordinates of each population and SNP data will  
580 be deposited in the Dryad Digital Repository.

581

#### 582 **Author Contributions**

583 JK and NM conceived the study, TBR and NM provided tissue samples, DC and JK  
584 analysed the data and DC drafted the manuscript. All authors wrote the final version  
585 of the manuscript.

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856 **Tables**

857

858 **Table 1** Sequence matches with genic regions recovered for outlier loci.

Locus	Reference species	Matching region	Percentage coverage (%)	E - value
9309	<i>Salmo salar</i>	Upstream of Chromatin modifying protein (Chmp2a), EU025709.1	100	3.00E-18
10128	<i>Xenopus tropicalis</i>	Predicted: protein kinase C, zeta mRNA (variants X1, X2, X3), XM_012965862	82	1.00E-11
10128	<i>Xenopus laevis</i>	Predicted: protein kinase C, zeta mRNA (variants X1, X3, X4, X5, X6, X7, X8), XM_018227867.1	82	6.00E-10

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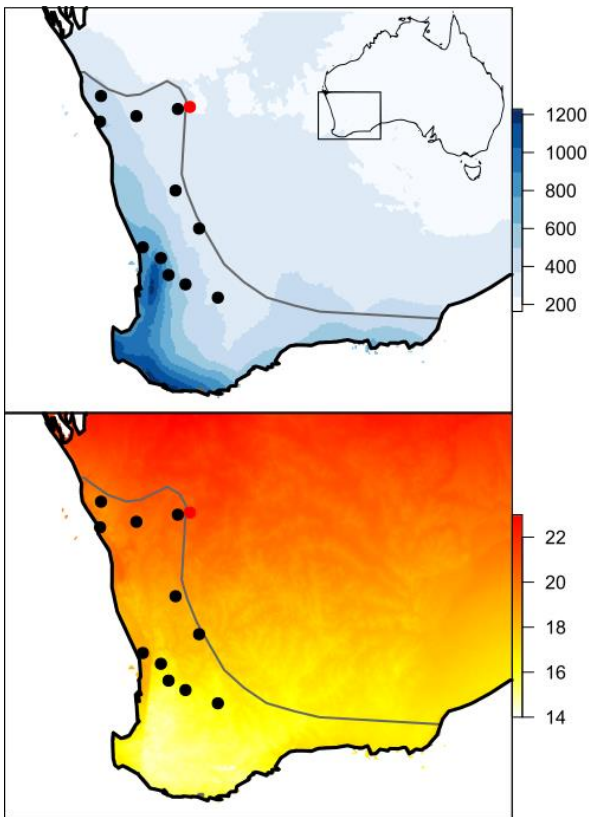
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874 **Figures**

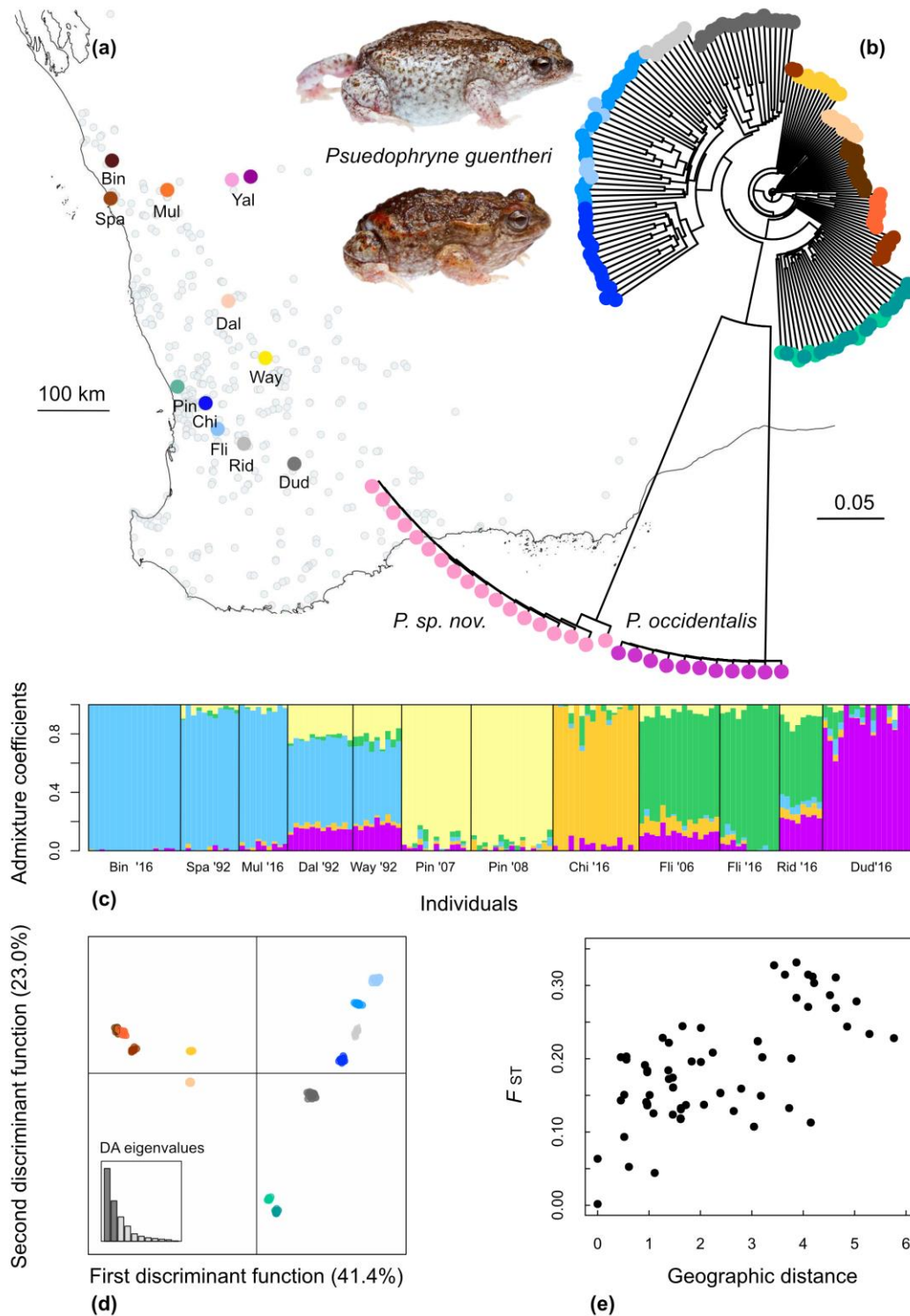
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877 **Fig. 1** *Pseudophryne guentheri* sample locations overlaid on average annual precipitation (mm)  
878 and temperature (°C) data respectively (top to bottom). The red point shows the location  
879 of the *Pseudophryne occidentalis* population used in this study, while the grey line shows  
880 the approximate eastern edge of the range of *P. guentheri*.

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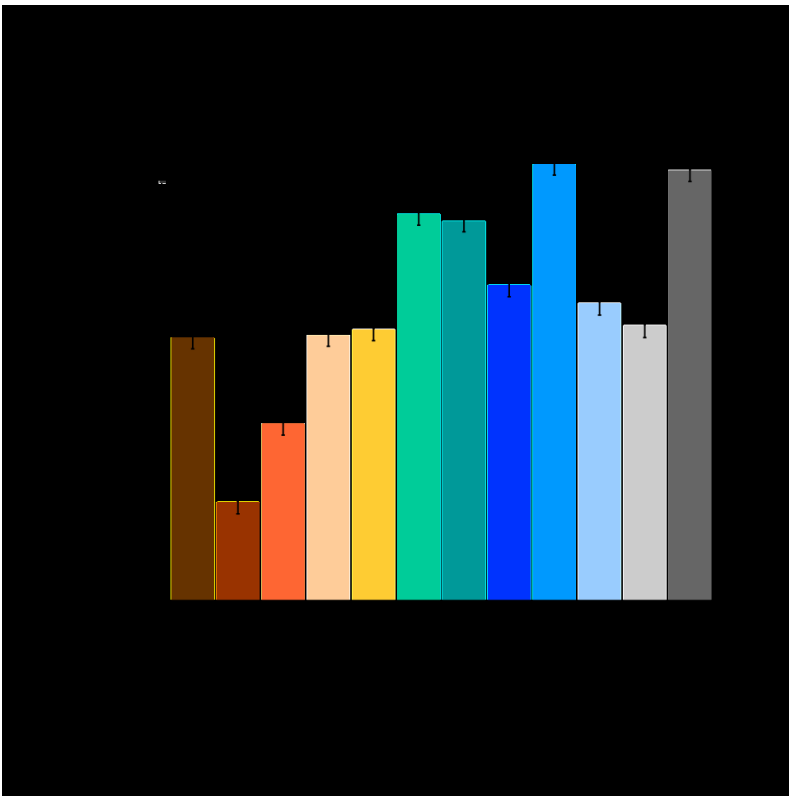
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**Fig. 2** Descriptive statistics showing population samples and different aspects of *P. guentheri* genetic structure. a) Locations of sampled *P. guentheri* and *P. occidentalis* populations (coloured circles) overlaid atop all distribution records for *P. guentheri* (grey circles; data from <http://spatial.ala.org.au>). Population abbreviations are outlined in Table S5. b)



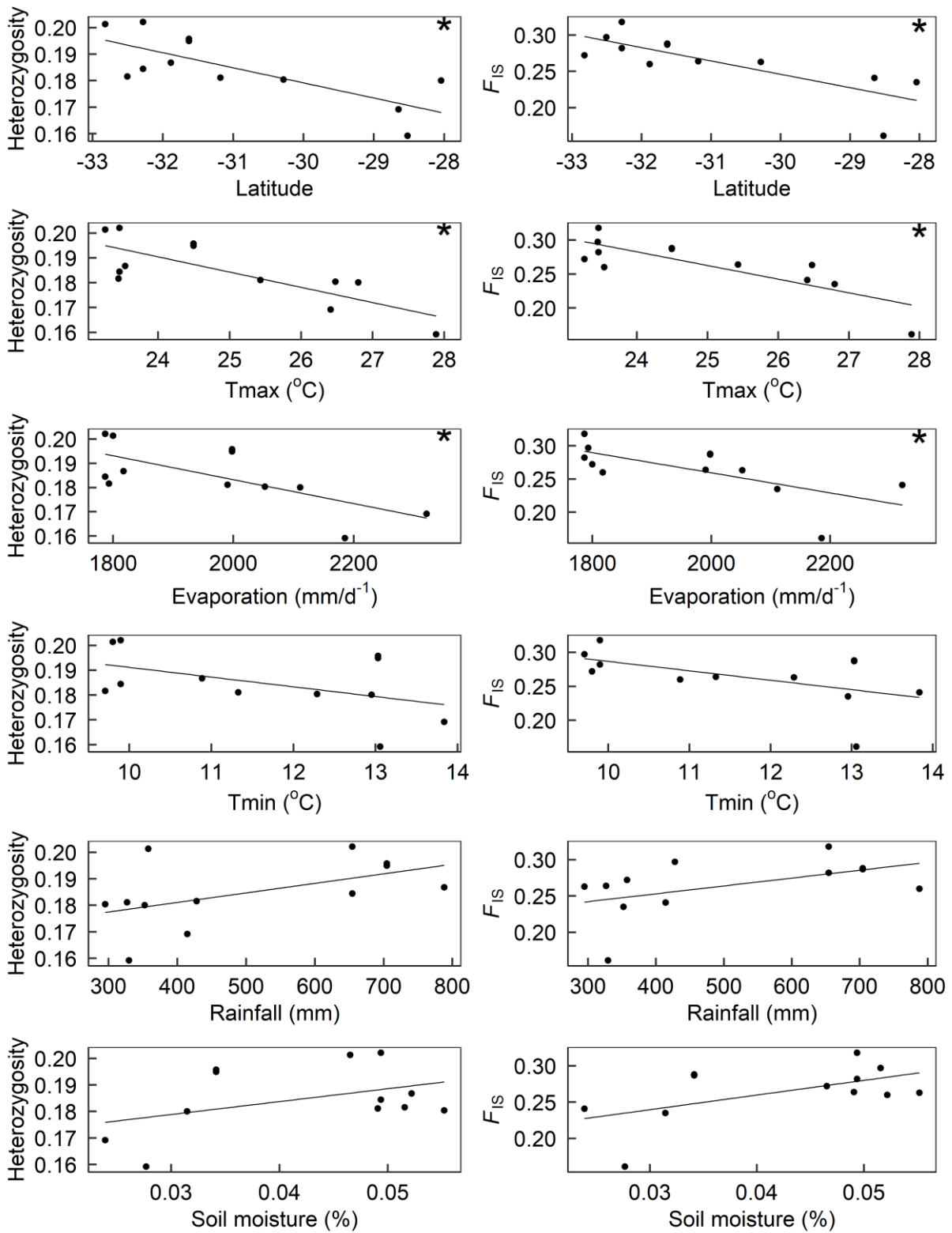
887 Neighbour joining tree based on Nei's genetic distance using all individuals (including *P.*  
888 *occidentalis* and a cryptic species). c) Bar chart of ancestry coefficients from a sNMF  
889 analysis of *P. guentheri* samples ( $K = 5$ ) based on neutral loci, and d), a DAPC scatter  
890 plot of the same data. e) The relationship between pairwise  $F_{ST}$  (neutral loci) and  
891 geographic distance (as a distance matrix) for population samples ( $r = 0.649$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ).  
892 *P. guentheri* photo credit: Corne van Linden.

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897 **Fig. 3** Mean expected heterozygosity calculated using selectively neutral loci ( $\pm$ SE). Letters  
898 denote statistically different groups (Table S3) based on pairwise significant differences,  
899 calculated using BY corrected p-values ( $P < 0.00076$ ). Colours correspond to those used  
900 in Fig. 2.

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**Fig. 4** Linear relationships between estimates of genetic variation (left column) or inbreeding coefficients ( $F_{IS}$ ) (right column) and latitude plus five environmental variables. Significant relationships are denoted by an asterisk (Table S2).

