

## *Vandiemenia ratkowskiana* Hewson

Status: **Critically Endangered (CR)** B1,2c

Class: Hepaticopsida

Order: Metzgeriales

Family: Vandiemeniaceae

**Description and Biology:** *Vandiemenia ratkowskiana* is a medium sized thallose, cushion-forming plant that was collected from a log on a track to Wellington Falls in January 1980. The stems are no longer than 1cm in length and between 0.2 and 1mm in width without nerves, with irregular bipinnate branching. The small ventral branches may be modified male branches. Female plants and sporophytes are unknown for the family. An initial inspection may lead one to assume this species is of the *Metzgeria* genus.



The liverwort *Vandiemenia ratkowskiana* Hewson. Published with permission by the illustrator Mirja Streimann.

**Distribution and Habitat:** This species is known only from the type locality on the main track to Wellington Falls on Mt Wellington situated approximately 6 km WSW of Hobart in Tasmania. The habitat is thought to be wet sclerophyll forest, dominated by *Eucalyptus delegatensis* at possibly just below 1,000m above sea level.

**History and Outlook:** *Vandiemenia ratkowskiana* was discovered in January 1980. Subsequent searches have not revealed any colonies, including the original. The locality is close to a much-used path in a national park, but the area has been burnt since the original collection, and is generally fire-prone. A thorough search of similar habitats in the area should be undertaken to locate further colonies. These colonies should then receive special protection whilst allowing further study and conservation. The conservation of this species is important as it is thought that this family is a possible link between the present-day families of Aneuraceae and Metzgeriaceae.

**References:** Hewson, H.J. 1982. Vandiemeniaceae: a new family in Metzgeriales. *J. Hattori Bot. Lab.* 52: 163–165.

**Red Data sheet author:** H. Streimann with contributions from H. Hewson.

**Last updated:** December 2000