



Saving threatened plant species

The Threatened Species Commissioner has mobilised \$355,000 to save threatened Australian plants through two projects—one to identify genetic gaps in the plant collections safeguarded by botanic gardens, and the other to review recovery plans and identify processes threatening rare plants in Commonwealth national parks. This is the first of those projects.

Project

A national assessment of insurance (*ex-situ*) collections of threatened plant species will be carried out to check their genetic resilience. This will inform future collections to support national plant recovery efforts.

Funding

\$240,000

Partners

This work will be undertaken by staff of the Australian National Botanic Gardens and Parks Australia. It will be done in consultation with the Council of Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens.

Background

Australia has a great network of botanic gardens, spearheaded by the Australian National Botanic Gardens which grows about 300 nationally-listed threatened species. However, a question remains about the genetic resilience of these collections. Plants from a single source can have a different genetic makeup and response to different environmental conditions. In the past, seed and young plants have often been taken from a single site, and then



Photo: Dunsborough spider-orchid (Andrew Brown)

propagated in botanic gardens. This means the species may be preserved, but we could be at risk of losing the genetic diversity and resilience that allows these plants to thrive over time. This project will identify opportunities for developing insurance collections that support the conservation of threatened species, including through providing source material for recovery efforts.

Species to benefit

Nationally threatened plant species.

© Commonwealth of Australia, 2014.



This fact sheet is licensed by Commonwealth of Australia under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence.

Top photo: Slender Darling Pea (John Baker)