GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of **Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

CORPORATE GUIDELINE NO. 36

CONSERVATION OF SPECIES THROUGH TRANSLOCATION, CAPTIVE BREEDING AND SEED PRODUCTION AREAS

July 2022

1. OBJECTIVE

1.1 To maximise the conservation benefits, and minimise the risks, of translocations of conservation significant native species in Western Australia.

1.2 To ensure that *ex situ* captive breeding programs and seed production areas contribute effectively to *in situ* conservation of conservation significant species.

1.3 To ensure that the preparation, assessment, approval and implementation of proposals for translocation, captive breeding and seed production area (proposals) are of a high standard and compliant with relevant legislation.

2. SCOPE

This guideline applies to all native species, including those that are listed as threatened or extinct in the wild, and native species listed as priority or otherwise of conservation significance. The guideline applies to translocations of native species, captive breeding of native fauna and production of native flora via seed production areas in Western Australia. It includes movements of flora and fauna through wild-to-wild translocation, captive breeding for release, management of native fauna in captive collections and seed production area programs, to support the establishment or supplementation of wild populations.

This guideline does not apply to any fish or pearl oyster that is the subject of activities managed under the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994,* non-native species or species determined not to be flora or fauna under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). It does not apply to movements of flora or fauna between captive breeding or *ex situ* facilities; movement of injured (including sick or diseased), orphaned or abandoned fauna to fauna rehabilitation facilities or the release of rehabilitated fauna from those facilities. It does not cover the propagation of flora in nursery or laboratory facilities; for commercial purposes or for planting in public or private gardens.

This guideline relates to work undertaken by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the department), either independently or in collaboration with other organisations, and will be applied in the assessment of licence application and proposals to undertake these activities by external parties.

3. CONTEXT

This guideline relates directly to *Corporate Policy Statement 35: Conserving Threatened Species and Ecological Communities*. Further detailed information to guide translocation, captive breeding and seed production area activities is available in the

Species and Communities document *Guidance for planning conservation translocations in Western Australia*.

Under the BC Act , the department has responsibility for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in Western Australia. Conservation translocations, captive breeding and seed production areas are important tools for promoting the recovery of threatened species. When significant barriers to dispersal and recolonisation exist, conservation translocations may be the best way to augment existing populations, establish new populations or re-establish extinct populations. Translocation, captive breeding and seed production area proposals for conservation significant species can be high risk actions with considerable uncertainty in their outcomes and are undertaken where considered necessary and beneficial for species conservation. As translocation, captive breeding and seed production area outcomes can be unpredictable, these activities should not be a substitute for *in situ* conservation actions.

The department's approach to conservation translocations, captive breeding and seed production areas is aligned with current best practice methods, as outlined in:

- IUCN/SSC (2013) *Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations*. Version 1.0. IUCN Species Survival Commission, Gland, Switzerland.
- Commander *et al.* (2018) *Guidelines for the Translocation of Threatened Plants in Australia*. Third Edition. Australian Network for Plant Conservation, Canberra.
- *Code of Practice for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Western Australia*, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Perth.

4. LEGISLATION

The primary legislation relating to this guideline is the BC Act and the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* and their associated regulations. Specific provisions relating to the translocation of flora are specified under Part 7 of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018 (BC Regulations), with additional licensing provisions relating to flora translocations given under Part 4. Part 4 of the BC Regulations provides for licensing provisions relevant to fauna licences (Division 2) and flora licences (Division 3). Where a translocation involves the taking or disturbance of a threatened species, a BC Act section 40 authorisation is also required.

The department also has responsibilities under the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (Animal Welfare Act) to ensure that its activities involving fauna comply with the provisions of that Act.

5. DEFINITIONS

Captive breeding (for release) is the control or promotion of reproduction in a group of captive animals for the purpose of producing individuals for release into the wild.

Ecological replacement is the intentional movement and release of an organism outside its indigenous range to perform a specific ecological function that has been lost, usually through extinction.

Emergency translocation is the human-mediated movement of a plants or animals to a temporary holding location or permanent site in response to an imminent and serious threat such as fire, flood, disease or loss of habitat.

***Ex situ* population** is a collection of plants or animals that is removed from its natural environment and maintained in a facility such as a zoo, aquarium, seed bank, botanic garden, nursery or seed production area.

Seed production areas are sites designed to produce large quantities of genetically diverse, high-quality seed from one or more flora species for ultimate use in translocation or other species conservation programs.

Translocation is the human-mediated movement of a plant or animal from one location and release to another. It includes movements from and to wild and *ex situ* populations. Translocation, in relation to flora, is defined in the BC Act as to deliberately transfer a plant, or regenerative plant material, from one place to another (including back to the place where the plant was originally growing) with a view to maintaining or growing a living plant.

Wild population is a population of plants or animals, either naturally occurring or translocated, in a natural environment.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 Planning

6.1.1 Translocation, captive breeding and seed production area proposals should:

- support the conservation of the species in the wild and are not equivalent to, or a substitute for, effective *in situ* conservation of existing wild populations;
- aim to establish populations with conservation values similar to source populations, including maximising evolutionary potential (genetic diversity), resilience and capacity for maintenance of natural behaviours, ecosystem functions and connections;
- have a high likelihood of resulting in a viable wild population that will be self-sustaining in the long term;
- not pose unacceptable risks to the source population;
- not pose unacceptable risks to species or ecosystems at the recipient site, particularly if the recipient site supports threatened or priority species or threatened or priority ecological communities;
- be designed according to best available scientific evidence, including in selection of methods, source and recipient sites.

6.1.2 Translocation, captive breeding and seed production area activities should be aligned with relevant actions of a plan for the conservation or recovery of species and based on consultation and information sharing to support improved translocation practice and community acceptance.

6.1.3 Translocations to habitats or locations beyond the historic, current or inferred range of a species, require additional justification of the conservation benefits and site suitability and will be given consideration as habitat availability changes in response to climate change.

6.1.4 Translocation, captive breeding and seed production area activities for other conservation-related purposes, such as research or provision of ecosystem benefits, may also be considered. For ecological replacement translocations,

strong justification that the species is the most appropriate substitute for an extinct species, with regards to its ecological functions, is required.

6.2 Development of translocation and *ex situ* conservation proposals

6.2.1 Proposals, including those for emergency translocation, must be prepared using an approved form and must provide sufficient information for assessment of the proposal to the satisfaction of the department.

6.2.2 Development of proposals must include consultation with the source and recipient site land managers and the DBCA region or district office(s) in which the activity is to occur. Written consent of land managers must be obtained for the proposed activities and provided with the proposal. Where a proponent is a DBCA staff member, their Regional Manager, Branch Manager or Program Leader must also provide written endorsement of the proposal.

6.2.3 Completed proposals should be submitted to the Species and Communities Program at least six months before the planned date of the first action, except when emergency translocation is required. Relevant documents and the details of other required approvals, licences, and permits should be submitted with the proposal. Proponents will be given the opportunity to revise their proposal following advice from the Species and Communities Program and other experts, as necessary.

6.3 Approval of proposals

6.3.1 Proposals for translocation, captive breeding and seed production areas require approval of the Executive Director, Biodiversity and Conservation Science.

6.3.2 The department will only approve proposals received by written application. Applications will be assessed by the Species and Communities Program and at least one experienced scientist, who may be external to the department.

6.3.3 Translocations of threatened fauna species and threatened flora taken from the wild, require Ministerial Authorisation under section 40 of the BC Act. Additionally, all translocation and captive breeding programs for vertebrate fauna require approval by a registered Animal Ethics Committee under the Animal Welfare Act. Proposals will only be approved where all other relevant approvals, licences and authorisations, including those relating to inter-state activities, have been granted or are likely to be granted. Where appropriate, the department may work with other agencies to coordinate associated application approvals.

6.3.4 Proposals will only be approved when they include a commitment to monitoring and reporting that is considered to be sufficient for assessing progress against specified success criteria.

6.3.5 The department may approve proposals for an emergency translocation when a sudden event threatens the persistence of a population of conservation significance.

6.3.6 Approval of a proposal will not be guaranteed or made more likely by pre-emptively breeding or propagating individuals, investing in site works or facilities or obtaining project funding prior to the development or assessment of the proposal. Proponents are strongly advised to seek in-principle agreement from the department prior to conducting any such activities.

6.3.7 Conditions of approval may be applied for translocation, captive breeding or seed production areas in authorisations under section 40 of the BC Act for threatened species and under regulation 13 licences or approval under Part 7 of the BC Regulations for non-threatened fauna and flora, respectively.

6.4 Reporting

6.4.1 The department will require reports on the progress of translocation, captive breeding and seed production area programs to be submitted to the Species and Communities Program according to a reporting schedule outlined in the approval conditions.

6.4.2 The department will publish, and encourages proponents to publish, the results of translocations and associated research to inform the scientific community, relevant landowners and managers, other stakeholders and the wider community, in a timely manner.

7. CUSTODIAN

Executive Director, Biodiversity and Conservation Science.

8. KEY WORDS

Captive breeding, conservation, fauna, flora, seed production area, threatened species, translocation.

9. REVIEW

This guideline will be reviewed no later than July 2027.

10. APPROVAL

Approved by

Mark Webb
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Date: 7 July 2022