

A new Sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*) Order

The new Sandalwood Order will specify maximum harvest/take limits for living (green) and dead sandalwood, along with the duration of the order.



The Sandalwood Order review

- Monitored sandalwood condition and changes over time.
- Modelled various management scenarios, including:
 - a. 'do nothing' approach;
 - b. no harvest with reseedling; and
 - c. various levels of living (green) and dead harvest with seeding at harvest.
- Undertook extensive literature review of knowledge gaps.
- Undertook preliminary consultation.

Key limitations

- Limited inventory plot data in many regions.
- Limited information on socioeconomic environment.
- Uncertainty around future composition of industry and market environments.

Considerations

- Assessment based on best available information.
- Risk analysis of species' potential for persistence within and across its distribution.
- Ecologically Sustainable Use (ESU) and principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) in accordance with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

Findings

- Without intervention, sandalwood is at risk of long-term decline due to a lack of natural regeneration.
- Achieving ESU depends on more than take limits and includes factors such as regeneration program success.
- Commercial harvesting with seeding has the potential to improve regeneration at a localised level where sustainability actions¹ are met.
- Model simulations of varying levels of living (green) and dead harvest suggest successful regeneration leads to improved population structures over time.
- Dead wood only harvest is considered to provide the best outcome for ESU. However, after considering principles of ESD, the draft review report² recommends an appropriate level of living (green) take, which is subject to review during the public comment period.

Recommendations

- Reduce the annual take of living (green) harvest by 500 tonnes, comparative to the current order, to allow a maximum of 750 tonnes living (green) harvest and a maximum annual limit of 1250 tonnes dead wood harvest.
- New Sandalwood Order be for duration of 10 years.
- Increasing proportion of wild sandalwood available to Biodiversity Conservation regulation 67 sandalwood take licence applicants.
- Expanded inventory, monitoring and data management.
- Increased support for management of licensing, compliance and enforcement³.
- Prioritise urgent development of a sandalwood establishment strategy consistent with the *Santalum spicatum* (sandalwood) Biodiversity Management Programme.

Next steps

- Public comment period for the draft review report and draft technical report⁴.
- Analysis of submissions and new information.
- Independent panel⁵ review and advice.
- DBCA finalises reports.
- Minister for the Environment recommends a new Sandalwood Order to apply in 2027.

¹ For an overview of sustainability actions required to harvest sandalwood, refer to the CEO Guideline to support the Biodiversity Conservation Regulations, Sandalwood Licensing available at: dbca.wa.gov.au/licences-and-permits/sandalwood-licences.

To obtain a licence to take sandalwood, applicants must show evidence that management actions will ensure retention of sufficient seed-bearing trees, manage threats and that there will be successful levels of reseedling and recruitment.

² *Review of the Sandalwood (Limitation of Removal of Sandalwood) Order (No. 2) 2015, 2026 Draft Review Report*.

³ This does not recommend specific changes to licensing, which is outside the scope of the Sandalwood Order review.

⁴ *Review of the Sandalwood (Limitation of Removal of Sandalwood) Order (No. 2) 2015, 2026 Draft Technical Report*. The draft technical report is an optional resource for those wishing to view more details of the sandalwood population modelling and habitat stratification.

⁵ An independent panel has been appointed to review and provide advice to DBCA at key stages of the process.

