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The *Western Shield* fauna recovery program in Western Australia: an external review process to provide focus and direction for the future.

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The *Western Shield* fauna recovery program has been operating since 1996 and has achieved a number of significant outcomes. The Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management (DCLM) recently convened a formal external review of the program involving a three-member review panel with research, wildlife management and program management expertise. DCLM staff prepared a series of 12 review papers addressing a range of issues relevant to the *Western Shield* program past, present and future. A public workshop (>100 participants), a closed plenary workshop (30 participants) and visits to key field sites allowed the review panel to identify key elements of the program, shortcomings, opportunities and program management issues. The review panel's draft report was put out for public comment before being presented to the relevant Minister and the DCLM review papers were peer-reviewed and published in a format available to the general and scientific public. This process is rare, if not unique in government conservation agencies and the account provided in this paper provides an example of the benefits of an open review process for key conservation initiatives and provides a template for other agencies to use in the future.