Assessing success for translocations of threatened flora in Western Australia

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Plant translocations are recognised as a key management tool for the recovery of threatened species and for mitigation against the lost of individuals or populations. Translocations are now also being considered as a tool to aid in species conservation under likely climate change scenarios. The increasing use of translocations for species conservation highlights the importance of setting appropriate success criteria so that a translocations contribution to the recovery of a species can be accurately assessed. Ultimately the purpose of a translocation should always be to establish viable, self-sustaining populations. The challenge is in setting success criteria that enable realistic assessment of whether the translocated population is viable and will be able to persist in the long-term. When self sustainability has been achieved, resources can then be redirected to other species also in need of management. The Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has implemented translocations for more than 60 plant species over the past two decades. Many of these species are long-lived woody perennials with life cycles linked to disturbance events, such as fire. With long intervals between generations there is a need for a methodology

that enables us to predict the likelihood of persistence for new populations. This presentation will give an overview of the plant translocations undertaken by DEC over the past 20 years and highlight key lessons learnt that have contributed to the development of a framework for evaluating translocation success and to the improvement of the translocation program.

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