THREATENED PLANT TRANSLOCATION

by Colin Yates

Research shows that for many of WA's critically endangered plant species, the most effective way to protect and conserve them is to establish new populations in areas free from threats or where these can be managed. DBCA's threatened plant translocation project, which is being conducted throughout WA, has helped protect 51 species from extinction by establishing new populations or augmenting existing populations (collectively known as translocations). For 19 of these species, there are now more translocated plants than in naturally occurring wild populations.

A number of establishment techniques have been trialled to determine whether they assist in establishing translocated populations. While some techniques, such as watering seedlings in the first summer and protection from grazing, were specific to particular species or habitats, other techniques were found to be more broadly applicable. An adaptive management approach has allowed for the incorporation of research findings and translocation procedures into subsequent operational plantings.

DBCA's plant translocation program undertaken by science staff in collaboration with regional colleagues is highly regarded as a proactive and successful approach to plant conservation, and DBCA is currently leading a national plant translocation project for the National Environmental Science Program's Threatened Species Recovery Hub.