

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HERBARIUM

by John Huisman

WA has one of the most unique and diverse floras in the world, including vascular plants, algae, fungi, lichens, mosses and slime moulds. The Western Australian Herbarium houses more than 790,000 specimens from all regions of WA, and provides a comprehensive and scientifically defensible record of the State's flora taxonomy, which is crucial to effective conservation. These data are made widely available through 'FloraBase' – a publicly accessible database – and also feeds into the department's biodiversity portal 'NatureMap', which provides information on WA's natural assets. The work of the WA Herbarium is supported by a group of enthusiastic volunteers and through engagement with numerous stakeholders, including industry, other government agencies, and the general public.

Herbarium botanists carry out taxonomic research, often using DNA sequencing, to ensure that all species are recognised and described. Information captured in the WA Herbarium collection enables conservation prioritisation of species and communities, and informs management plans, biodiversity assessments and environmental impact assessments. The WA Herbarium works closely with the Threatened Flora Seed Centre as another biodiversity collection, and is a source of preliminary information and repository for voucher specimens from biological surveys.