



## **Backlogs and botanical survey: streamlining data delivery in an under-collected region for taxonomy and systematics.**

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Western Australia (WA), being almost the quarter the size of Europe or the United States and often inaccessible, has a high collecting cost for botanical and faunal vouchers. According to specimen data available through the Australasian Virtual Herbarium (AVH), WA is the second least botanically collected Australian state. With an average of only 50.5 specimens per 100 km<sup>2</sup> the state as a whole barely meets the minimum number of vouchers for adequate floristic inventory. Efficient processing of specimens and rapid accessibility of collection data through online data aggregators, such as Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) and AVH using community-accepted and developing information standards, is critical for understanding the status and trends of biodiversity, for evidence-based conservation, decision-making processes for the management of lands and waters, taxonomy and systematics, and other scientific products. Changes in collections workflows for accessioning specimens, including digital infrastructure improvements, help to reduce bottlenecks limiting the processing and availability of specimens and data. Automatic data quality checks assist with improving specimen data, but social limitations in receiving high quality data and the need for human processing of physical specimens, ensuring collections are not lost, mislabelled or mishandled, along with data enhancement post-field work, remain challenges worth exploring and minimising.

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