

Aggregating weed data to improve on-ground outcomes for management: a case study in the Pilbara

Bruce L. Webber^{1,2}, Kathryn L. Batchelor¹, Stephen J. van Leeuwen³ and John K. Scott^{1,4}

¹ CSIRO Land and Water, Private Bag 5, PO Wembley, Western Australia 6913, Australia

² School of Plant Biology, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, Western Australia 6009, Australia

³ Western Australia Department of Parks and Wildlife, Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington, Western Australia 6151, Australia

⁴ School of Animal Biology, The University of Western Australia, 35 Stirling Highway, Crawley, Western Australia 6009, Australia
(bruce.webber@csiro.au)

Summary The Pilbara region of Western Australia is experiencing a significant increase in human activity in remote areas with high biodiversity value. The resultant increase in biosecurity risk and threat from weed invasions associated with this change requires greater efforts for control. However, existing knowledge on weed distributions in the Pilbara is extremely fragmented and most of the data are not accessible. The timely development of a weed database could, therefore, help with the identification and prioritisation of management options that span tenure boundaries and that could have the greatest benefit for on-ground outcomes. Although the majority of the weeds of the Pilbara are relatively well known, in the last 20 years a huge volume of flora and vegetation reports have

been produced by botanical consultants employed by the mining industry for the purpose of obtaining environmental approvals. We have examined these reports, as well as a range of other weed databases from the Chichester and Fortescue IBRA sub-regions for information on weed distributions. From this information we will develop a weed risk assessment for a prioritised set of weed species that will contribute to an overall invasive plant management strategy for the Pilbara. A major product of the project will be a publicly available, comprehensive weed database that can be efficiently updated and expanded, providing extractable data for use as a weed management tool.

Keywords Pilbara, flora, weeds, database, aggregation, risk management.