



**Safeguarding Australia's flora, through a national
network of germplasm collections**

MEDIA RELEASE

SeedReady Communities strikes gold for threatened ecosystems

A national seed conservation project will kickstart the restoration readiness of some of Australia's most threatened ecosystems, with the Australian Seed Bank Partnership announced as the Gold Tier recipient of the 2026 Australian Geographic Awards for Nature.

The Partnership is a national alliance of 10 conservation seed banks across botanic gardens and conservation organisations working together to collect, research and share knowledge about Australia's native seeds. Together, it holds collections from over 70% of the country's known native flora, including 983 plant species threatened with extinction.

The award will support the SeedReady Communities Project, an initiative that brings together six conservation seed banks with local communities across WA, SA, NT, NSW and VIC to conserve priority plants within threatened ecological communities.

The two-year project will secure seed from over 30 plant species, unlock germination secrets, and share knowledge openly for future restoration. It will also connect national seed banking expertise with Traditional Owners, Landcare groups, regional organisations, young people and other local conservation groups, building practical skills and lasting local capability alongside seed collections.

The aim is to ensure that when threatened landscapes need restoring, the seed, knowledge and people are ready.

Australia is home to more than 1,500 nationally threatened plant species, while climate change, habitat loss, fire, invasive species and disease continue to put pressure on native vegetation.

Former director of the Western Australian Botanic Garden at Perth's Kings Park, Sue McDougall OAM says seed banking is one of Australia's most important and practical tools for preventing plant extinctions.

'Australia's native plants are facing increasing pressure – but seed banking gives us a powerful pathway to safeguard species before they are lost while building the knowledge we need to restore them in the future,' Ms McDougall says.

SeedReady Communities will put this approach into practice by looking beyond individual species and working to conserve the important plant building blocks of threatened ecological communities. Local knowledge and participation will guide the work on the ground, supported by the seed science, conservation expertise and shared data of the national network.

This project is proudly supported by the Australian Geographic Society.

About the Partnership

The Australian Seed Bank Partnership has spent more than 15 years building a national safety net for Australia's native flora. Seed banks are not simply storage facilities. They provide living collections that can support research, propagation, threatened species recovery and ecosystem restoration when seed is needed.

The Partnership's experience following the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires demonstrated the value of having seed and knowledge ready before disaster strikes. Nationally coordinated projects secured collections from 542 fire-affected species, improved germination knowledge for 362 species and supported propagation of 92 species for restoration and conservation.

Australian Geographic Awards for Nature

The Australian Geographic Awards for Nature is the Australian Geographic Society's flagship funding program for nature. It supports outstanding, community-driven conservation projects across Australia. The Australian Seed Bank Partnership is the Gold Tier recipient of the 2026 Award receiving \$50,000 to support the SeedReady Communities Project.

Learn more: [Seedpartnership.org.au/seedready-communities](https://seedpartnership.org.au/seedready-communities)

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