

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2024 CPSG Annual Meeting

**2024**  
ANNUAL MEETING  
**Sydney, Australia**  
October 30 - November 2







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CONSERVATION  
PLANNING  
SPECIALIST GROUP  
Creating the Future for Wildlife





We acknowledge and pay respect to all First Nations peoples, their Elders past and present, and emerging. We extend our gratitude to the Cammeraygal people, the traditoinal custodians of the lands upon which this meeting took place. We recognize and support their aspirations to maintain, protect and manage their culture, language, land, sea, Country, and heritage.

The 2024 Annual Meeting proceedings are published by the Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC). The opinions and recommendations expressed in this report reflect the issues discussed and ideas expressed by the participants in the meeting and do not necessarily reflect the formal policies of the IUCN, its Commissions, its Secretariat, or its members.

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# The 2024 CPSG Annual Meeting

was hosted by the Taronga Zoo in Sydney, Australia, from October 30th to November 2nd 2024.

This year, we welcomed 64 registrants from 16 countries. Over the course of these four days, participants took part in 8 different working groups to exchange experiences and discuss important questions across a variety of conservation topics, from plant conservation to biobanking initiatives. Some working groups also explored ways to further enrich CPSG's training courses and expand our capacity building for more conservation planning professionals worldwide.



We celebrated Dr. Onnie Byers who, after 31 years of service, will retire from CPSG in early 2025. We are pleased to announce that Dr. Caroline Lees will succeed Dr. Byers as the next CPSG Chair.

Our sincere gratitude goes to our keynote speakers, Erna Walraven and Kate Umbers. Erna gave an inspiring talk on the importance of our conservation work, while Kate highlighted current—and a need for more—invertebrate conservation efforts in the region.

We thank all participants for contributing to such an engaging and productive meeting. A special thank you goes to our conference hosts, the Taronga Zoo, for their generous hospitality and support in making CPSG's 2024 Annual Meeting a success.



# Working Groups



Eight different working groups were convened during this CPSG Annual Meeting. Within this document, you will find the working group summaries, including specific recommendations for each working group's next steps. If you want to dive deeper into each topic, you will find a link to the full report on each page.

1. **Conservation planning in Oceania**
2. **Regional biobanking initiatives**
3. **Development of a training course on managing conflict in species conservation planning workshops**
4. **Conservation planning for plants**
5. **Designing a PVA training course**
6. **Species conservation planning and genetic health**
7. **Fostering inclusivity in conservation planning**
8. **Regional training and mentoring in species conservation planning**



**Strategic Committee.** CPSG's Strategic Committee also gathered in Sydney prior to the start of our Annual Meeting.



## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

# Conservation planning in Oceania

## Convenors



**ANNE WIGNALL**

Auckland Zoo &  
CPSG Oceania



**SARAH THOMAS**

Auckland Zoo &  
CPSG Oceania



**KEVIN BULEY**

Auckland Zoo &  
CPSG Oceania

## Participants:

Kevin Buley, Danny de Man, Nic Dunn, Claire Ford, Richard Jakob-Hoff, Kristin Leus, Phil Miller, Liberty Olds, Kaori Ota, Natasha Peters, Graeme Phipps, Mark Pilgrim, Roopali Raghavan, Micaela Rios Meza, Sara Sullivan, Sarah Thomas, Monique Van Sluys, Anne Wignall

## Summary

This working group aimed to identify goals, opportunities, and challenges for reestablishing CPSG's Australasian Regional Resource Centre (RRC)—now known as CPSG Oceania.

We first asked participants what they would like CPSG Oceania to achieve in the next three years. Discussions centered on establishing relationships with key individuals, communities, and organizations, and building capacity. We then introduced participants to the six conditions of systems change (policies, practices, resource flows, relationships and connections, power dynamics, and mental models) and how they can provide a framework for understanding the operating environment for CPSG in Oceania. We then split into two groups to brainstorm opportunities and challenges for CPSG Oceania, applying the six conditions of systems change to guide our thinking. The opportunities and challenges identified helped generate recommendations for CPSG Oceania's work plan.

## Recommendations & next steps:

We identified three areas of focus for CPSG Oceania:

1. Building relationships with key individuals, communities, and organisations, including:
  - a. Contacting previous CPSG Australasia contacts
  - b. Linking with first nations peoples
  - c. Establishing and maintaining communications with regional network (e.g., via a newsletter)
2. Building capacity
  - a. Identifying current and potential CPSG affiliates
  - b. Identifying the skills and training needed
  - c. Identifying organisations that can volunteer staff time
3. Establishing a sustainable administrative structure, including resources, finances, and data management.

Access the full working group report [here](#).



## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

# Regional biobanking initiatives

## Convenors



**OLIVER RYDER**  
SDZWA



**BORIPAT SIRIARONRAT**  
Mahidol University



**KATIE HEINEMAN**  
SDZWA



**JOANNA SUMNER**  
Museums Victoria  
Research Institute

## Participants:

Megan Brown, Geoff Davison, Jo Day, Ashlee Hutchinson, Sanjay Kumer Shukla, Jansen Manansang, Andrew Mooney, Karin Schwartz, Kazu Takami, Eric Tsao

## Summary

This working group aimed to bring together Australasian biobankers to discuss their current initiatives and develop biobanking plans including benefit-sharing and incorporation of indigenous peoples and local communities.

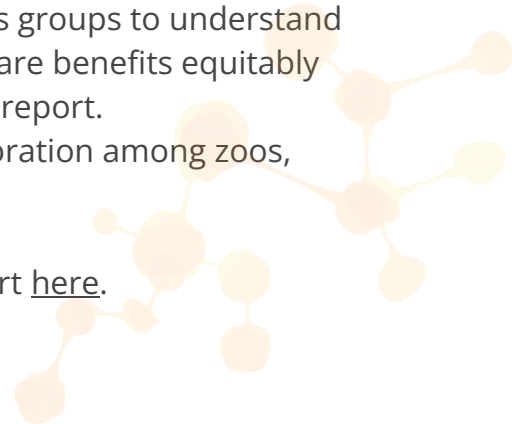
Biobanking supports species adaptation, conservation, and is a key component of the One Plan Approach, bridging *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation. Key actions included gap analyses of biobanked samples in Australasia, discussing ethical frameworks, and a discussion on what steps should be put in place to engage with indigenous groups to inform fair and equitable benefits and data sharing of biobanking initiatives.

Collaborations with zoos, museums, and universities are also central to advancing biobanking, with efforts to establish standardized practices, data sharing, and governance systems. Models like the EAZA Biobank can provide inspiration for building a regional biobanking network in the region. Challenges for this include navigating legislative differences, ethical considerations, and open access barriers across institutions and countries.

## Recommendations & next steps:

1. Conduct gap analysis for biobanked samples in Oceania and identify stakeholders
2. Engage indigenous communities
  - a. Ensure prior consent for sample collection
  - b. Collaborate with indigenous groups to understand cultural significance and share benefits equitably
  - c. More considerations in the report.
3. Strengthen institutional collaboration among zoos, museums, and universities

Access the full working group report [here](#).





## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

# Development of a training course on *Managing Conflict in Species Conservation Planning Workshops*

## Convenors



**JAMIE COPSEY**  
CPSG

## Participants:

Mark Smith, Eugenia Cordero, Simon Valle, Steve Unwin, Isabelle Tan, Naokaki Kawahara, Lauren Waller, Amy Byrne, Fabiana Rocha, Rebecca Biddle, Christina Dembiec, Frank Cipriano

## Summary

This working group aimed to review existing course materials and identify added content for the upcoming course on *Managing Conflict within Species Conservation Planning Workshops*. We began by presenting progress made since the 2023 CPSG Annual Meeting. We also provided participants with an illustration of course materials in the form of a recorded interview with an expert CPSG facilitator on their experience responding to conflict. Participants then split into two groups to reflect on (1) course objectives and format, and (2) course content. Both groups provided feedback and suggestions for further improvements to course development. The working group culminated in a 'mock' conflict scenario with participants playing pre-determined workshop stakeholder roles. This scenario was recorded and the edited version will be used within the course to portray both effective and ineffective ways of responding to conflict within a workshop setting.

## Recommendations & next steps:

To move the course towards completion, we identified the following:

- 1. Define target audience:** the working hypothesis is that the course will be for experienced facilitators or those who have completed CPSG's core facilitation course. Less experienced people may benefit but may need additional materials.
- 2. Incorporate content on surfacing conflict:** conflict is perceived by this working group to be a 'good thing'. However, there are situations in which stakeholders seem to agree without significant debate. As a facilitator, you need to be equipped with tools to help you check that the group is genuinely in agreement and not avoiding 'hidden' conflicts.
- 3. Consider cultural differences:** In some cultures, conflict may not be something that is openly dealt with. How would facilitators in these situations help groups to navigate unspoken disagreements?
- 4. Include live components:** working group participants felt that this was the sort of course that requires some live components (e.g. webinar discussion) as the learning needs to be grounded in shared experiences.

Access the full working group report [here](#).



## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

# Conservation planning for plants

## Convenors



**AMY BYRNE**

Morton Arboretum



**YVETTE HARVEY-BROWN**

BGCI



**JEAN LINSKY**

Atlanta Botanical Garden

## Participants:

Liberty Olds, Mike Jordan Ashlee Hutchinson, Roopali Raghavan, S. Pawlraj, Oliver Ryder, Eugenia Cortero, Naoaki Kawahara, Mark Smith, Sanjay Kumar Shukla, Lauren Waller, Kevin Buley, Natasha Peters, Eric Tsao, Fabiana Lopez Rocha, Kate Umbers, Caroline Lees

## Summary

This working group aimed to exchange experiences, resources, and tools on plant conservation planning, implementation, and tracking. First, we held a series of presentations highlighting past, current, and future plant conservation planning. These featured how the planning workshops were coordinated, how action plans are implemented, and how progress is tracked. Next, we split participants into three groups. Each group focused on answering two of these questions:

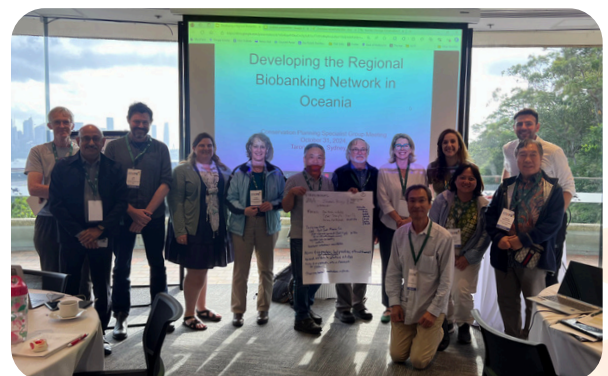
1. When you have an action plan that involves multiple organizations, and each organization is tracking their specific activities (from the action plan), how do you extract this information from each organization to have a consolidated progress report?
2. How do people define or measure success in their action plan implementation?
3. How do we report to funders on this work?
4. Are there any projects on the horizon or that you would like to work on for multiple taxonomic groups? Any funding opportunities that we could consider applying jointly? (All groups answered this question)

## Recommendations & next steps:

1. CPSG does not actively track projects, but people have asked for a tracking tool. Caroline Lees put together a spreadsheet that some CPSG facilitators shared with action plan participants to fill out to track progress. We are interested in providing feedback on this tool, working together with Caroline, and hope to use this for future plant conservation action plans.
2. We will take the feedback shared during this working group to further discuss at the plant conservation work group's quarterly virtual meetings. The first email to schedule the first meeting will go out in early 2025.
3. Yvette and Mike Jordan to connect to discuss potential collaborations on tree conservation in Kenya.

Access the full working group Report [here](#).





Left to right, top to bottom: (1) Conservation Planning in Oceania working group (2) Plant Conservation Planning working group (3) Development of the Conflict Management course working group (4) CPSG Regional Resource Center representatives (5) Plant Conservation Planning working group participants group photo (6) Biobanking initiatives working group participants group photo



## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

# Designing a PVA training course

## Convenors



**PHIL MILLER**

CPSG



**SIMON VALLE**

CPSG



**JAMIE COPSEY**

CPSG

## Participants:

Brad Andrews, Rebecca Biddle, Rob Brewster, Megan Brown, Frank Cipriano, Geoff Davison, Danny de Man, Isabelle Tan, Nic Dunn, Claire Ford, Sanna Hellstrom, Kristin Leus, Graeme Phipps, Kaori Ota, Mark Pilgrim, Sara Sullivan, Micaela Rios Meza, Kazu Takami, Karen Schwartz, Francesca Roncolato, Sarah Thomas, Steve Unwin, Monique Van Sluys, Anne Wignall

## Summary

The working group session began by outlining the rationale for developing a population viability analysis (PVA) training course and providing an evaluation of the in-person training program CPSG has delivered previously.

We then split the participants into three working groups to independently discuss who they envisaged this course to be for, what it should include, and how it should be delivered (online, in-person, or a combination). It was suggested that CPSG should offer a 'foundation' online course on how to implement PVAs with Vortex, appealing to a broad audience of researchers and conservation practitioners. Successively, those focused on using PVA in a planning setting would then enroll in an 'advanced' course with an emphasis on the challenges and opportunities of using PVA to inform conservation in a participatory setting. Finally, those who want to take their skills further while helping out CPSG would be invited to join the Technical Development Path and become a CPSG PVA practitioner.

## Recommendations & next steps:

1. It is up to CPSG and SCTI/Species 360 to engage in further discussion on if and how to collaborate in the design, creation, and delivery of the course.
2. Review available materials and start planning for the foundation PVA course.

Access the full working group Report [here](#).



## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

# Species conservation planning and genetic health

## Convenors



**KRISTIN LEUS**

Copenhagen Zoo &  
CPSG Europe



**CHRISTINA  
HVILSOM**

Copenhagen Zoo &  
CPSG Europe

## Participants:

Rebecca Biddle, Rober Brewster, Megan Brown, Frank Cipriano, Jamie Copsey, Geoffrey Davison, Jo Day, Danny de Man, Nic Dunn, Claire Ford, Ashlee Hutchinson, Michael McFadden, Phoebe Meagher, Phil Miller, Micaela Rios Meza, Andrew Mooney, Graeme Phipps, Oliver Ryder, Sanjay Kumar Shukla, Mark Smith, Sarah Sullivan, Joanna Sumner, Kazutoshi Takami, Isabelle Tan, Monique Van Sluys, Ardyta Widianti

## Summary

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework calls for the restoration of genetic diversity of native, wild and domesticated species. The two genetic indicators for Parties to report to CBD can be determined through DNA analysis or demographic *proxy* data. CPSG Europe is involved in the Biodiversa+ project GINAMO (Genetic Indicators for NAture MOnitoring), aiming to co-create (with country stakeholders) user-friendly methods, tools, and workflows for indicator calculation and reporting. CPSG routinely gathers DNA and proxy data to integrate genetic management in species conservation planning. Overlap can be expected in species subject to CPSG planning and those subject to genetic monitoring by countries. We explored the potential for exchanging data and processes between CPSG and CBD Parties.

## Recommendations & next steps:

- Raise awareness about the CBD KMGBF genetic indicators through a presentation at a CPSG RRC online meeting and share with other SSC SG.
- Identify the best way to inform the relevant authorities of countries that CPSG project reports can serve as a potential data source.
- Provide guidance to CPSG facilitators on identifying which species are being monitored, where, and how.
- Potential pilot project: for countries that have already calculated indicators, cross-reference the species chosen with species covered in CPSG planning or PVA processes. This will also show how feasible it is to obtain this data.
- When giving presentations on CPSG processes and tools, emphasize that our planning integrates planning for genetic health (something that is self-evident to CPSG but might not be to everyone) and link this to country obligations under Target 4 of CBD KMGBF.

Access the full working group Report [here](#).



## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

# Fostering inclusivity in conservation planning

## Convenors



**EUGENIA  
CORDERO**

CPSG & CSS Brazil



**CHRISTINA  
DEMBIEC**

CPSG



**FABIANA LOPES  
ROCHA**

CPSG

## Participants:

Amy Byrne, Simon Valle, Anne Wignall, Eric Tsao, Brad Andrews, Karin Schwart, Kevin Buley, Francesca Roncolato, Kirana Kushwardani, Lauren Waller, Liberty Olds, Sanna Hellström, Mark Pilgrim, Naoaki Kawahara, Richard Jakob-Hoff, Roopali Raghavan, Steve Unwin, Sarah Thomas

## Summary

What began as a desire to increase inclusion and accessibility in CPSG's training courses turned into a larger discussion around greater aspects of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) on a broader scale within conservation planning processes and projects.

For over 40 years, CPSG has assisted diverse groups to plan for the conservation of species. CPSG's approach is rooted in a set of principles that emphasize the use of sound science to support effective decision-making and the promotion of inclusive participation, referring not only to who is included in the planning process, but also to how their voices are valued and incorporated. Moreover, CPSG believes in the power of individuals to affect change and on developing competencies wherever it is required.

In this working group, CPSG asked participants to help us consider what DEAI means in terms of our ability to reverse the decline in threatened species. We received practical suggestions during the working group sessions (detailed in the report). However, no consensus was reached on what CPSG's overarching approach to DEAI practices should be, particularly given the challenges of operating on a global scale. The group emphasized the importance of being flexible and respect local contexts.

## Recommendations & next steps:

- CPSG HQ will explore and discuss how the principles of DEAI are represented and expressed within the organization and its activities.
- With the recognition that attitudes and approaches to DEAI vary significantly worldwide, each CPSG RRC should explore how the principles of DEAI are represented within the regional context.
- The global organization will then determine an agreed upon, flexible approach.

Access the full working group report [here](#).

## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

# Regional training and mentoring in species conservation planning

## Convenors



**JAMIE COPSEY**  
CPSG



**CHRISTINA  
DEMBIEC**  
CPSG

## Participants:

Frank Cipriano, John Werth, Richard Jacob-Hoff, Micaela Rios Meza, Karin Schwartz, Isabelle Tan, Kaori Ota, Geoffroy Davison, Steve Unwin, Amy Byrne, Naoaki Kawahara, Mark Smith

## Summary

This working group aimed to explore the potential of replicating the work of an ongoing CPSG capacity-building project based in the US—funded through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—to other regions and audiences. The existing project consists of free access to CPSG’s foundational [Facilitating Species Conservation Planning Workshops online course](#), targeted access to [Ex situ Conservation Assessment](#) training, and in-depth group mentorship for a proportion of the trained participants. Ultimately the project aims to embed capacity for species conservation planning within the US Zoo and Aquarium community. The core question for this working group was: can we/should we replicate this multi-year capacity-building project elsewhere? If so, how? Following an opening presentation to provide further details on the existing IMLS-funded project, participants discussed in plenary their responses to the core question.

## Recommendations & next steps:

There is merit in exploring the replication of the project elsewhere. CPSG’s training team next steps include:

- 1. Prioritize target audiences:** multiple potential audiences were identified as likely to benefit from a similar capacity-building investment. We need to determine which would be most advisable to target first. Given the newly re-established RRC in New Zealand, this region could be the one to focus on.
- 2. Develop follow-up IMLS grant application:** botanic gardens were identified as a community that could benefit from a follow-up IMLS grant within the US. Also in scope could be enhancements to Vortex as a quantitative risk analysis program to enable it to better meet the planning needs of plants. Such an application would need to be made in conjunction with the Species Conservation Toolkit Initiative (SCTI), hosted by Species360.

Access the full working group Report [here](#).





Left to right, top to bottom: (1) Fostering inclusivity in conservation working group (2) Designing a PVA training course working group (3) Regional training and mentoring in species conservation planning working group (4) Presentation on the need for more invertebrate conservation efforts (5) Designing a PVA training course working group



# CPSG Development Path

We celebrated this year's graduates from the CPSG Facilitator Development Path mentorship program. This is an 18-month program during which a select group of individuals are trained in CPSG's conservation planning processes and tools, and then mentored through real-world applications of these skills. **Congratulations to Simon Valle, Eugenia Cordero-Schmidt, Natasha Peters, Paul Bamford, and Lisa Faust!**



From left to right: Simon Valle, Eugenia Cordero-Schmidt, Natasha Peters



Paul Bamford



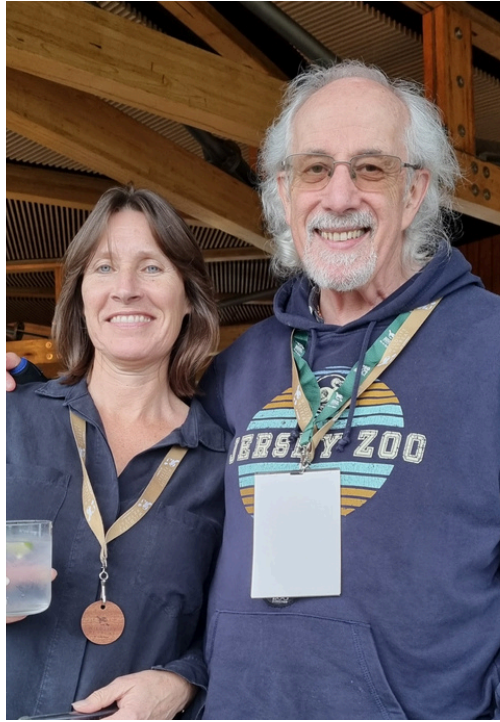
Lisa Faust

# CONGRATULATIONS, Graduates!















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Prudence Perry  
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