

Linking Australia's landscapes: an introduction

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Australia has undergone a recent surge in interest in creating networks and initiatives that aim to 'link up' habitats and landscapes that have been fragmented by clearing or varying land uses or ownership. This increased interest has been stimulated by the involvement of a range of players – government, non-government organisations, landowners and the broader community.

In Australia, these initiatives include a range of activities that are promoted under a variety of names including 'biosphere reserves', 'wildlife corridors', 'conservation management networks', and 'biolinks', among others. These various initiatives are not just about achieving 'connectivity conservation' but are often couched in terms of 'landscape-scale' projects. There has been relatively little analysis of these diverse and *practical* initiatives in a single synthesis. Nor have the perspectives of those who have established or are coordinating and managing these projects received as much attention as they deserve. The result has been a gap in dialogue and understanding between the theoretical discussions of developing 'a network of corridors' across a continent (or state jurisdiction) and the practical reality of establishing and operating such initiatives in the landscape.

We aim in part to address these gaps through this book by bringing together the lessons from a diverse range of established connectivity initiatives and policy frameworks, together with a series of broader themed chapters encompassing aspects such as social, ecological and governance considerations. Initiatives featured include those from all Australian states and territories, and many initiatives which cross state and territory boundaries. The chapter authors are from universities, non-government organisations, state and national government agencies, research institutions and consultancies. Our intention, and hope, is that the descriptions in this book will not only inform policy makers, land managers, facilitators, and scientists, but it will also stimulate even greater efforts 'on the ground' by being of interest to the general public as well.

This book set out with the aim of canvassing a broad range of these multi-tenure conservation initiatives, described by the people directly involved in each project, not only to document the successes and challenges of these initiatives at specific geographies but also to begin to analyse if there were critical common lessons that have been learnt already in this new and evolving field. In particular we were keen to see if there were emerging models of approach that could potentially be adapted by new entrants into