

# NATIONAL PARKS

## Connecting Nature

### Summary

- In Australia, the Commonwealth government committed to the establishment of a National Reserve System (NRS) of protected areas that is effectively and equitably managed, well connected and integrated into the wider landscape.
- Protected areas may not, however, in themselves be enough to support self-sustaining populations of all species they contain.
- Connectivity between protected areas is essential for building resilience in the face of rapid change, especially climate change.
- Connecting protected areas through other lands - "turning islands into networks" - is the single most important consensus direction in global conservation,
- A nationwide bio-link projects will enhance connectivity between key habitats and help engage the community in collective effort.

### Context

The Commonwealth Government had a commitment to "a long-term strategy designed to retain and restore ecological connectivity and facilitate connectivity conservation".

The National Wildlife Corridors Plan of 2012 was the primary delivery mechanism.

The Plan was a national framework to guide and coordinate the planning and establishment of wildlife corridors.

The National Wildlife Corridors Plan was abandoned one year after its introduction.

This didn't stop progress.

Tremendous effort has been made by many Australians to push this vision forward. Several national-scale corridors have been established to connect Australia's landscapes.

To complete the task requires massive coordination and cooperation between multiple jurisdictions and collaboration between various categories of landholder ('across tenures'). To succeed, these endeavours need more than the dedication and energy of the few; they need support from the highest levels, including leadership and reliable resourcing – financial and human.



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### Issue

The vision is being upheld: but it is wavering.

Having got so far, many of these initiatives are now struggling and are being abandoned or put on hold because of the lack of reliable funding and support. If these nation-wide endeavours are to be successful substantially more encouragement, direction and support is needed.

At the same time, the continuing loss of native vegetation and fragmentation continues to be one of the top threats facing our unique wildlife: time is of the essence. We need to act now to connect nature: we need to act now to ensure that the tremendous progress that has been made has not been in vain.

### Further reading

See the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) Briefing Paper, Connecting Nature [www.npac.org.au/](http://www.npac.org.au/)

### Policy recommendation

**The Commonwealth Government should commit, re-engage, and lead the implementation of this vision to meet its international and national obligations and to safeguard our wildlife.**

#### The Government can lead by:

- **Establishing a strategic, coordinated framework to retain, restore and manage ecological connections across the landscape.**
- **Supporting the planning and implementation that have gone into existing initiatives.**
- **Providing guidance and oversight of the planning and development for further complimentary initiatives.**

## ABOUT US

The National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) has a mission to protect, promote and extend national park systems within Australia. NPAC was formed in 1975. We are a national body that coordinates and represents the views of a range of State and Territory non-government organisations concerned with protecting the natural environment and furthering national parks. NPAC provides a forum for regular communication between State and Territory National Parks Associations and acts as a united voice supporting conservation of the National Reserve System across Australia.

**Victorian National Parks Association**  
Visit [www.vnpa.org.au](http://www.vnpa.org.au)

**National Parks Association of Queensland**  
Visit [www.npaq.org.au](http://www.npaq.org.au)

**Tasmanian National Parks Association**  
Visit [www.tnpa.org.au](http://www.tnpa.org.au)

**National Parks Association of NSW**  
Visit [www.npansw.org.au](http://www.npansw.org.au)

**Nature Conservation Society of South Australia**  
Visit [www.ncssa.asn.au](http://www.ncssa.asn.au)

**National Parks Association of the ACT**  
Visit [www.npaact.org.au](http://www.npaact.org.au)