

Call for input to draft national wildlife corridors plan

Landscape-scale connections of ecosystems and habitats for the movement of wildlife are the subject of a draft plan released by the federal government for comment.



Credit: Jiri Lochman/ Lochman Transparencies

The independent advisory group that prepared the draft plan includes representatives from Landcare, the National Farmers Federation, and Bush Heritage, among other organisations, as well as scientists and academics in ecology and natural resource management.

‘Sometimes the areas that are put into conservation from a connected landscape are so isolated that they lack the resilience that comes from connected landscape,’ says federal environment minister Tony Burke.

‘Corridors are about connecting those dots; it’s a way of improving resilience and ensuring that we are protecting nature in a way that preserves it for generations to come.

‘National wildlife corridors would lay a foundation for a new, collaborative, whole-of-landscape approach to conserving biodiversity’.

Mr Burke says the advisory group’s plan aimed to build up populations of threatened native wildlife and rebuild the ecological functions in the landscape, including the long-term retention of natural stores of carbon.

‘It’s also designed to help strengthen the resilience in our native landscapes against climate change,’ says Mr Burke.

According to Mr Burke, the implementation of the national wildlife corridors would be done through existing methods of putting land into conservation such as through Landcare programs, or voluntary participation by farmers in environmental stewardship initiatives.

Mr Burke stressed the voluntary nature of landholder participation.

‘It’s important that landholders understand that wildlife corridors will have no impact on land except through the voluntary agreement of the land holder. The rights that landowners have within the law would not change under any national wildlife corridors plan.’

The Advisory Group proposes new national wildlife corridor legislation as a mechanism for the nomination, assessment and listing of national wildlife corridors.

The federal government and the advisory group will undertake consultations with stakeholders. Anyone interested is invited to submit comments to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

The public comment period closes on 20 April 2012.

Source: Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

More information

A compendium of existing and planned Australian wildlife corridor projects and initiatives, and case study analysis of operational experience, report prepared by CSIRO for the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, June 2011.

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