

Ten years of NatureLinks in South Australia

Jody Gates and Stella Kondylas



Introduction

The NatureLinks initiative was developed by the South Australian Government as a strategy for tackling biodiversity decline at the landscape scale. This chapter explores the origins of NatureLinks from a ‘top-down’ strategy to establish five formally recognised biodiversity corridors for landscape-scale restoration and conservation, to a practical program with a strong emphasis on collaboration and connectivity between stakeholders.

Location

NatureLinks incorporates five ‘NatureLinks’ corridors across South Australia (Figure 6.1). These corridors – ‘East meets West’, ‘Arid Lands’, ‘Flinders–Olary’, ‘Cape Borda to Barossa’ and ‘River Murray–South East’ – vary in extent and occur across the range of ecosystems found in the state, including arid stony plains, rivers and wetlands, mallee and woodlands, grassy woodlands and forests. Each corridor is generally aligned with a particular bioregion or landscape with similar ecological and social systems.

In 2010, the South Australian and Northern Territory Governments collaborated to develop the Trans-Australia Eco-Link (TAEL), which aims to establish a corridor extending more than 3500 km from Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory to Port Augusta in South Australia (see also Chapter 5). In South Australia, TAEL incorporates much of the stony deserts bioregion where pastoralism is the major land use and mining and tourism are also important industries. The TAEL overlaps with the Arid Lands and Flinders–Olary NatureLinks.

Although the emphasis of the NatureLinks program is on the original five corridors and the Trans-Australia Eco-Link, similar principles are applied to the management of all