

# Midlandscapes: matching actions to opportunities in landscape conservation in the Tasmanian Midlands

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## Introduction

The Tasmanian Midlands (hereafter the Midlands) are arguably one of the most significant, yet least appreciated, landscapes in Australia. Typically, priority conservation landscapes in Tasmania are seen as those with tall wet forests or remote mountains and moraines. While these are important, the grassy ecosystems of the Midlands remain as one of the most under-protected landscapes in Australia with less than 4% of the bioregion protected.

There is a long history of landscape-scale and connectivity initiatives in the Midlands, each building on the work of its predecessors. Despite these efforts, there has been a concomitant decline in the extent and integrity of the grassy ecosystems, and the species that depend on those ecosystems. The Midlandscapes project is aiming to reverse that trend, and see conservation integrated into the predominantly agricultural focus of the region.

Midlandscapes is focused on the Tasmanian Midlands Biodiversity Hotspot, one of 15 biodiversity hotspots in Australia (Australian Government 2012), and encompasses the lowland plains and foothills of the Midlands up to an altitude of ~600 m between the Eastern Tiers, North Eastern Highlands and the Western Tiers and Central Plateau (Figure 9.1). The total area of the Midlandscapes project is 640 900 ha with a total of 120 000 ha of conservation assets, priority vegetation communities outside the current reserve system, identified by the project team through a Conservation Action Planning process. Midlandscapes aims to see 64 050 ha managed with a primary conservation focus by 2020.