

Biolinks in south-eastern Australia – changing land use for a changing climate: Victorian policy responses

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'... Arrayed with a huge variety of creatures, plants and land forms, in spite of its use and misuse at the hands of settlers and occupiers, it is a unique natural estate of great beauty, spirit and strength.'

Michael Leunig
 'Sleep on country', *The Age*
 26 January 2012, p. 1

Biolink zones as a framework

Changing global climates are causing complex environmental change at a variety of scales. Projections indicate that these changes will accelerate during this century and include the risk of mass extinctions (Thomas *et al.* 2004; IPCC 2007). Distribution and abundance of biota will change and impacts of habitat and population depletion and fragmentation will be exacerbated in south-eastern Australia. For south-eastern Australia, a system of biolink zones, representing large-scale land-use change, was an early science and policy response to the threats of climate change and to provide better ecological linkages between existing large protected areas (DCE 1992; Brereton *et al.* 1995). A comprehensive statewide biolink zoning achieved formal policy adoption in 2009, making Victoria the first jurisdiction, internationally, to have such an adaptation response to biodiversity and climate change