

Biodiversity Survival - from Reserves to the Entire Landscape
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As the environmental debate becomes ever more urgent and complex the focus of strategic action and the debate about who pays has to change. While we spend more and more on the environment and most agree on saving it, the decline in key environmental indicators advances at an increasing rate. The agendas around climate change, pollution, vegetation, landcare, water use etc are founded on the primacy of conserving biodiversity. When I became a conservation activist, the focus was on national parks, conservation reserves and icons, but for all our battles we have only managed to get 6% of Qld locked away from development and resource exploitation. My message today is that the focus has shifted from the reserve system to the entire landscape and most of that is primarily used for food production, 70 per cent of Australia. If we are to conserve our biodiversity and it is to survive climate change, then islands of biodiversity won't work. We certainly need a comprehensive and representative reserve system but it needs to be linked by a network of corridors across the entire landscape. A reserve system target of ten or twenty percent is similarly inadequate for what is left of our relatively intact landscapes, like Northern Australia. A more realistic target for those landscapes would be no further net loss as well as the repair and management of what is left. The means to achieve that whole of landscape approach is to engage and partner with the land manager, the farmer, recognizing the need for food security for the planet's 6 billion inhabitants and biodiversity security for the other 10 billion species which co-inhabit the earth with people.