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Ecosystem conservation in multi-tenure reserve networks: the contribution of land outside of publicly protected areas

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Abstract

Multi-tenure reserve networks have been developed as a mechanism to improve cross tenure management and protection of biodiversity, but also as a means of accounting for biodiversity assets managed for conservation outside of protected areas on public land. We evaluated the contribution of multi-tenure reserve networks to enhancing the comprehensiveness and representativeness of ecosystems in publicly protected areas, using three Australian case studies. All networks contributed to enhancing comprehensiveness and representativeness, but this contribution varied between networks and between components of those networks. Significantly, components on private land and “other public land” in all three networks greatly enhanced the protection of some ecosystems at a subregional scale. The Grassy Box Woodlands Conservation Management Network, in particular made a substantial contribution to conservation, with most components protecting remnants of an endangered and under-represented ecosystem. Multi-reserve conservation networks not only act to protect threatened and under-reserved ecosystems, but they also provide a mechanism to account for this protection. Thus, multi-tenure reserve networks have the potential to provide increased knowledge and understanding to conservation planning decision making processes.