Private land conservation in Australia: A national perspective

Victoria Marles, CEO, Trust for Nature (Victoria)

PLC Roundtable, Darwin, August 2018
Vision: Empowered and connected land conservation communities in Australia

Purpose: To protect and look after Australia’s natural environment for the long term by increasing our collective impact

Objectives:
- Be a national voice for land conservation
- Facilitate the practice of land conservation (e.g. through an annual conference)
- Increase public awareness/support for land conservation
ALCA now

Biodiversity Conservation Trust NSW
Bush Heritage Australia
Greening Australia
Landcare Australia Limited
Nature Foundation South Australia
Queensland Trust for Nature
South Endeavour Trust
Tasmanian Land Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy Australia
Trust for Nature Victoria
.....
Private land conservation: a definition

“Conserving, restoring and protecting important natural areas on private lands, with the objectives of maintaining ecological processes, supporting economic and social interests, and meeting national targets for biodiversity conservation” (ALCA)
PLC: International context

- Increasing prominence of PLC worldwide
- Growth in PLC networks
  - e.g. ILCN, ELCN, ALCA
- Growth in Privately Protected Areas (PPAs)
  - “A protected area...under private governance” (IUCN)
  - ~14,300 PPAs, >16m ha (Bingham et al 2017)
  - PPA futures report (Stolton et al 2014)
  - World Conservation Congress 2016 PPA resolution
  - PPA Best Practice Guidelines (in development)
Private land conservation in Australia: key facts

- Australia’s surface area: 7,692,024 sq. km.
- ~63% privately owned / managed land
- Land managed for conservation is expanding
  - both public and private (State of the Environment Report, 2017)
- Conservation on private lands accelerating
  - Aus greatest PPA coverage, >8.9m hectares (Bingham et al 2017)
    - ~4,900 covenants (4,450,000 ha), ~140 reserves (4,594,120 ha)
  - Majority added since 2000 (Fitzsimons 2015; Hardy et al 2017)
- Increased importance attached to private land conservation
  - through various Federal and State policy frameworks
Conservation agreements across Australia (2009)
Private land conservation: delivery

• Varying approaches to PLC
  • E.g. Landcare, Land for Wildlife, land purchase, conservation covenants

• NGOs, NFPs are working at significant scale
  • Large scale protection projects
  • Large restoration projects
  • Through markets (including property and carbon markets)
  • Protecting productive farmland

• So too are private landowners
  • >4,900 conservation covenants (Fitzsimons 2015)
  • Land for Wildlife: >14,000 properties registered (Prado et al 2018)
  • Landcare: >5,400 groups (Landcare 2018)

• Focus of ALCA is on long-term agreements
Approaches to PLC: Land purchase

**Approach type:** purchase private land and manage for biodiversity

**Example:** Avoid Island (QTfN)

**Benefits:** Expert ownership; management

**Challenges:** Purchase costs; ongoing costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead organisation/s</th>
<th>Queensland Trust for Nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach type</strong></td>
<td>Land purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>near Mackay, Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year started</strong></td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who else is involved</strong></td>
<td>Local Councils, education providers, students, volunteers, Wildmob, Queensland government, sponsors and corporate volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of landholders involved</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coverage</strong></td>
<td>83 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approach type: in-perpetuity, binding agreements with private landholders

Example: Trust for Nature (Victoria)

Benefits: long-term protection; stewardship

Challenges: landholder uptake; supporting agreements long-term
Nature Refuges in Qld

- Nature Conservation Act 1992
- Voluntary conservation covenanting program
- Conservation Agreement negotiated directly with landholder
  - Irregular State government funding
  - Some incentivisation by local Councils

Over 4M hectares under covenant

500+ landholders

Includes Aboriginal freehold

70% area made up of pastoral
Approaches to PLC: Landholder conservation agreements

**Approach type:** Voluntary property registration agreements

**Example:** Land for Wildlife; HSI Wildlife Land Trust

**Benefits:** community engagement; conservationists

**Challenges:** non-binding; resourcing

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead organisation/s</th>
<th>Humane Society International and Land for Wildlife agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach type</strong></td>
<td>Voluntary agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
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</table>
| **Number of landholders involved** | 487 (WLT) \ 
                        | ~13,500 (LfW)                                              |
| **Year started**    | 2007 (WLT) \ 1981 (LfW*)                                   |
| **Coverage**        | ~60,000 ha (WLT) \ ~2,200,000 ha (LfW)                     |
| **Who else is involved** | The owners of WLT sanctuaries (WLT); State Governments, Local Governments, Greening Australia, CMAs, delivery agents, consultants and private landholders (LfW) |

(Photo: Land for Wildlife)
Approaches to PLC: Stewardship agreements

**Approach type:** stewardship payments to landholders

**Example:** Midlands Conservation Fund

**Benefits:** engaging productivity-focused landholders; outcomes in agricultural landscapes

**Challenges:** sustaining finance

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<tr>
<th>Lead organisation/s</th>
<th>Tasmanian Land Conservancy, Bush Heritage Australia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach type</strong></td>
<td>Stewardship agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of landholders involved</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year started</strong></td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coverage</strong></td>
<td>2,636 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who else is involved</strong></td>
<td>Philanthropic foundations and private donors, the Tasmanian Midlands landholders and community, Greening Australia, and the Tasmanian and Australian Governments</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Approaches to PLC: Landscape partnerships

**Approach type:** multiple e.g. restoration, land purchase, management, protection

**Example:** Gondwana Link

**Benefits:** philanthropic and corporate engagement; broad participation

**Challenges:** Scale; collaboration; integration

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<tr>
<th>Lead organisation/s</th>
<th>Gondwana Link Ltd</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Approach type</strong></td>
<td>Landscape partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of landholders involved</strong></td>
<td>Many hundreds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year started</strong></td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coverage</strong></td>
<td>~1000km linkage, over ~22 million hectares</td>
</tr>
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In 2017 the main players include: many landholders, BirdLife Australia, Bush Heritage Australia, Carbon Neutral, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Curtin University, Fitzgerald Biosphere Group, Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park, Friends of the Porongurup Range, Gillamii Centre, Greening Australia, Green Skills, Millenium Kids, Nature Conservation Margaret River, Ngaaju Conservation Aboriginal Corporation, Nowanup Rangers, Oyster Harbour Catchment Group (Ranges Link), Pew Charitable Trusts, Rangelands NRM, The Nature Conservancy, The Wilderness Society, Threshold Environmental, University of Western Australia and the Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee.
Key challenges for PLC in Australia

• Sustained funding and investment in PLC
• PLC planning, integration, and coordination
• Policy support
• Barriers to uptake, e.g.
  • Tax settings
• Support for landowners and stewardship, e.g.
  • Incentives
  • Rates rebates
• Communicating value of PLC
PLC18 Accelerating Connection

Australian Land Conservation Alliance conference

24 to 26 October 2018
QUT Gardens Point | Brisbane

Join the conversation #PLC18

Special offer for Landcare Conference delegates
20% discount on full conference registration and gala dinner ticket. Email Joanna@qtfn to take advantage of this offer while it is available.