

# Wildlife corridors



Human impacts on native vegetation are quite marked in Australia. Animals become 'trapped' by the barriers of clearing, cropping, roads or housing. This has resulted in patches of vegetation of varying sizes and shapes being surrounded by cleared land. The loss of connection (corridor) between patches of bush seriously disrupts the processes necessary for some plant and animal species to survive. Some examples of how organisms are affected when their movement through the landscape is restricted:

- ☞ Inter-breeding is reduced (inbreeding and loss of genetic diversity)
- ☞ If a species is eliminated by fire or disease, it may not be possible for another member of this species to recolonise
- ☞ If a species breeds, it will be difficult for the offspring to disperse to other areas
- ☞ Seasonal movements to avoid drought or obtain food (eg nectar) are restricted

Patches of vegetation may be of adequate size for a population of adults, but not large enough to cater for the requirements of their offspring. Hence the long-term survival of that species is at risk. Some of the common bird species, eg parrots, butcher birds, magpies, kingfishers are not as affected by tree clearing as other species eg tree creepers, sugar gliders. Species such as wrens, bettongs, melomys which live in the ground layer require corridors or large areas of grassland.

A small amount of clearing or cropping in a property is unlikely to have a serious impact, but as the total amount of clearing increases across the landscape, serious impacts can result. It not only affects connectivity and survival of fauna species, but can cause salinity and tree dieback at the regional scale.

