



**SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT WILDLIFE
CORRIDORS PLAN**

15 March 2012

INTRODUCTION

The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) welcomes the opportunity to lodge this submission on the Draft National Wildlife Corridors Plan. UDIA was represented on the Advisory Group which developed this draft and we offer in principle support to the plan. Nevertheless, we urge the Government to adhere to the principles of voluntary cooperation and respect of property rights.

ABOUT UDIA

UDIA is the peak body representing the property development industry throughout Australia. Established at a state level in 1963, the Institute evolved to become a national body with a number of state-based divisions in 1970.

UDIA aims to secure the economic success and future of the development industry in Australia, recognizing that national prosperity is dependent on our success in housing our communities and building and rebuilding cities for future generations.

Our members cover a wide range of specialist and industry fields, including: Developers, Valuers, Planners, Engineers, Architects, Marketers, Researchers, Project Managers, Surveyors, Landscape Architects, Community Consultants, Environmental Consultants, Lawyers, Sales and Marketing Professionals, Financial Institutions, State and Local Government Authorities, and Product Suppliers.

The property development industry is one of the major drivers of the Australian economy, directly accounting for 7.3% of Australia's GDP and employing 975,700 Australians.

The urban development industry has increasingly embraced environmentally sustainable development. Our growing sustainable approach has been in response to legislation enacted by the various layers of Government and as a result of our own industry-driven initiatives.

UDIA's commitment to sustainability is evidenced by its adoption and promotion of the EnviroDevelopment initiative, which through an independent certification process recognises sustainable developments. We are committed to working with all levels of Government to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes.

DRAFT NATIONAL WILDLIFE CORRIDORS PLAN

UDIA lends in-principle support to the Australian Government's National Wildlife Corridors Plan. The industry is receptive to the plan's purpose to restore and manage ecological connections in the Australian landscape. The emphasis on voluntary cooperation is an essential element of the plan which needs to be maintained throughout the implementation phase.

Whilst it is recognised that the Council administering the Wildlife Corridors requires an appropriate head of power, UDIA questions whether the proposed Wildlife Corridors Act is necessary to achieving the desired outcomes of the plan. Acts of Parliament are generally introduced to regulate behaviour and considering this plan is based on voluntary cooperation it is not entirely necessarily to enshrine this plan in legislation.

UDIA is fully supportive of the plan's second principle: *Effective corridors connect the landscape across a mosaic of land tenures and land uses without affecting property rights*. This principle needs to be strictly adhered to throughout the implementation of the plan.

As the draft plan states, 'The listing of a National Wildlife Corridor under the Act would be a strong recognition of the conservation importance of the area'. If the Government decides to establish the proposed Act, the status given to such areas under the legislation has the potential to galvanise opposition to proposed development activity. The listing of any area needs to be accompanied by an education campaign emphasising the principles of voluntary cooperation and property rights. Too often good intentions have been lost in implementation, unleashing unforeseen consequences for communities, businesses, Governments and the environment. It is essential that this initiative does not become a quasi -planning control.

UDIA is extremely supportive of the draft plan's principle that *the design and location of corridors should be based on the best available information derived from scientific research, traditional Indigenous and practitioner experience*. Nevertheless, the establishment of corridors should also enjoy broad-based support from the community. It is particularly important that this initiative enjoys the full support from all levels of Government. The process of identifying, designing and implementing wildlife corridors needs to be properly integrated with State and Local Government corridor planning and planning processes.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

UDIA thanks the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities for the opportunity to provide this submission. UDIA would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of this submission in greater detail. For further information, please contact UDIA National on 02 6230 0255 or at udia@udia.com.au.

Yours sincerely



Julie Katz
UDIA National President