



PROGRAM

11th Biodiversity Across the Borders Conference, 2026

Biodiversity in the balance: Conservation in a changing world.

This one-day conference is designed to disseminate new ecological research findings to natural resource managers, researchers, and individuals interested in advancing environmental stewardship.

Friday, 5th June 2026

Federation University Australia, Mt. Helen Campus, Ballarat.

SESSION ONE:
INTRODUCTORY AND KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

VENUE: Caro Convention Centre (Building M)

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| 8:00 | REGISTRATION (FOYER) |
| 8:40 | WELCOME Acknowledgement of Country, welcome Vice-Chancellor, and introduce the Keynote speaker. PROF. IVEN MAREELS Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, Federation University Australia |
| 8:50 | OPENING 11th Biodiversity conference PROF. DUNCAN BENTLEY, Vice-Chancellor – Federation University Australia |
| 9:00 | KEYNOTE ADDRESS PROF. MARTINE MARON – University of Queensland Trends in conservation: innovation or diversion? |

PLENARY SESSION - Chair: EM. PROF. MICHAEL CLARKE

VENUE: Caro Convention Centre
Main Hall Theatre (Building M)

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| 9:35 | PROF. PHILIP ZYLSTRA – Curtin University Ecological controls on fire in a heated landscape |
| 9:55 | PROF. LAUREN RICKARDS – La Trobe University Conservation in a climate change world: vital importance, challenges, opportunities. |
| 10:15 | PROF. DAVID WATSON - Charles Sturt University Using sound to monitor biodiversity at scale. |

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

10:35 | **EM. PROF. MARTIN WESTBROOKE**

10:40 - 11:25 | **MORNING TEA & POSTER SESSION**
(Caro Main Hall, Studio Theatre)

Keynote Speaker



Professor Martine Maron
The University of Queensland
*Trends in conservation:
innovation or diversion?*

Plenary Speakers



Professor Lauren Rickards
Latrobe University
*Conservation in a climate change
world: vital importance,
challenges, opportunities*



Professor Philip Zylstra
Curtin University
*Ecological controls on fire
in a heated landscape*



Professor David M. Watson
Charles Sturt University
*Using sound to monitor
biodiversity at scale*

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| SESSION TWO | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| VENUE: Caro Main Hall Theatre | | VENUE: Geoffrey Blainey Auditorium (Building C) |
| | Natural Capital in farming and rural environments CHAIR: MR. CHRIS PITFIELD | Urban, grassland and plant ecology CHAIR: DR DEBBIE REYNOLDS |
| 11:25 | ASSOC. PROF. JIM RADFORD How farmers are boosting their profits and production. | DR. JACINTA HUMPHREY Designing for nature doesn't cost the Earth. |
| 11:40 | DR. ALEX MAISEY Why farm-scale natural capital matters: building natural capital accounts for agricultural landscapes. | DR. KATHERINE HORSFALL Urban restoration of grassy ecosystems – fulfilling the requirement to connect and restore fragmented remnants to conserve threatened species. |
| 11:55 | DR. GRACE SUTTON Harnessing remote sensing and machine learning to improve estimation of natural capital on farms. | DR. BEN ZEEMAN Threatened plant recovery on the Victorian Volcanic Plain. |
| 12:10 | DRS. RICHARD ARCHER & FRANCISCO ASCUI Democratising data for natural capital accounting and reporting. | DR. MARK DOBROWOLSKI Rehabilitation of malleefowl habitat post mineral sands mining in Victoria's north-west. |
| 12:25 | MS. ANNETTE CAVANAGH Plants on farms: species richness across an agricultural intensification gradient. | MS. KRISTIN MONIE Ecological data to guide conservation of the endangered ecological community <i>Tecticornia lylei</i> . |
| 12:40 | MR. TIM D'OMBRAIN The FMU Model - A new vegetation community map for Victoria to guide ecological management and restoration. | MR. LUKE FLORENCE Uncovering environmental niches in dual-mycorrhizal and non-mycorrhizal forest trees. |
| 12:55 – 1:50 | LUNCH Albert Coates Complex Poster session (Caro Main Hall, Studio Theatre) | |
| SESSION THREE | | |
| VENUE: Caro Main Hall Theatre | | VENUE: Geoffrey Blainey Auditorium (Building C) |
| | Fire and Biodiversity CHAIR: DR. KATE CALLISTER | Wildlife Conservation and Monitoring CHAIR: DR. KUSHAN TENNAKOON |
| 1:55 | ASSOC. PROF. LUKE KELLY Fire mosaics for people and nature: a multidimensional approach. | DR. DOUG ROBINSON A 30-year statewide re-assessment of Grey-crowned Babbler populations across Victoria and implications for their future conservation. |
| 2:10 | PROF. TRENT PENMAN Future fires need current action not inaction. | MR. JOSHUA FASTUCA The benefits of conservation fencing for herpetofauna. |
| 2:25 | DR. AMY SMITH Simulating fire management for long-term ecosystem resilience. | DR. ANTHONY RENDALL Optimising reintroduction success of Bush Stone-curlew (<i>Burhinus grallarius</i>). |
| 2:40 | ASSOC. PROF. DAVID CHEAL Why the received wisdom of a post-fire increase in plant species' richness is wrong. | DR. CHRISTA BECKMANN Roadkill reimagined: A systematic review of innovative use and value of animals killed by vehicular traffic. |
| 2:55 | MR. BEN WILSON Incorporating the timelapse function to camera traps can improve monitoring of Australia's threatened social skinks. | DR. RICHARD YANG Signal vs Noise - The Hidden Contamination Problem in eDNA-Based Biodiversity Monitoring. |

3:10 – 3:45 **AFTERNOON TEA**
Poster session (Caro Main Hall, Studio Theatre)

SESSION FOUR:
Q&A PANEL DISCUSSION

Chair: PROF. DAVID WATSON & PROF. MARTINE MARON

VENUE: Caro Convention Centre - Main Hall Theatre (Building M)

3:45 – 4:45 **PANEL MEMBERS:** **DR. SOPHIE BICKFORD** (Executive Director, Biolinks Alliance); **DR. AYESHA BURDETT**, (Senior Wetland Ecologist, Nature Glenelg Trust); **DR. JAMES FITZSIMONS** (Senior Advisor, The Nature Conservancy); **DR. JENNY EMENY** (Business Development Manager, Glenelg Hopkins CMA)

CLOSE

VENUE: Caro Convention Centre - Main Hall Theatre (Building M)

4:45 – 4:55 **CLOSING ADDRESS:** **DR. GRANT PALMER** (Federation University Australia)

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