The Problem

- Biodiversity values continue to decline, despite institutional commitments to halt the loss.
- Legislative review calls on the Australian Government to look beyond threatened species and ecological communities to larger, landscape-scale and connectivity initiatives.
- Requires cooperation across tenures and between networks of individuals and organisations.
- Institutional arrangements need to match the problem attributes.

Research Aims

1. Evaluate how institutions support or constrain landscape-scale biodiversity conservation.
2. Identify ways governance and institutions can be designed to better support landscape-scale efforts, using the Tasmanian Midlands and Australian Alps as case studies.

CASE STUDIES

**Australian Alps**

The Australian Alps is a publicly owned mountain range. The only area of Australia where snow cover persists for several months, it provides habitat for rare species like the Mountain Pygmy-Possum. Feral horses are amongst the key threats at a landscape scale.

**Tasmanian Midlands**

The Tasmanian Midlands is an agricultural valley, between Launceston and Hobart. The Lowland Native Grasslands – already a fraction of their former extent – are under further threat from irrigation development.

Stages and Methods

This research is divided into four stages.

- **Stage 1**
  - Describe the problem and current institutional arrangements
  - Literature review and Institutional Grammar Tool

- **Stage 2**
  - Develop diagnostic framework to guide data collection and evaluation.
  - Literature review and key informant interviews.

- **Stage 3**
  - Evaluate existing institutional arrangements.
  - Semi-structured, in-depth interviews and document review.

- **Stage 4**
  - Identify and develop opportunities to improve biodiversity governance.
  - Focus groups and expert review.

**Stage 2 Research Snapshot: Conceptual Framework**

Why the framework is needed:

- Current thinking focuses on adaptive governance to address institutional misfits.
- Literature is plagued by a gap between theory and practice.
- This framework bridges that gap.

What the framework does:

- Brings together institutional and organisational theory, political science, adaptive governance, and resilience.
- Provides a structured way to diagnose institutional problems and gaps and recommend solutions.

How it is being used:

- Data collected through 92 in-depth interviews and document analysis.
- Analysis underway.
- Findings will inform development of governance design options, which will be tested in six focus groups.

Figure: Diagnostic Framework

The framework consists of 12 components and 4 categories and is used to diagnose how well current institutional arrangements fit the problem of landscape-scale biodiversity conservation.