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CONFERENCIA PLENARIA

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19:30 hs

NOVEL ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION – OPPORTUNITIES OR DILEMMAS FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGISTS

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Novel ecosystems that do not fall along the traditional gradient of pristine to degraded landscapes contain new combinations of species and relative abundances of species that arise through human action, environmental change, and the impacts of the deliberate and inadvertent introduction of species (Hobbs et al. 2006). This talk presents the results of a major large-scale and long-term landscape experiment in south-eastern Australia in which strong evidence of novel ecosystems has been uncovered. The work also has identified highly unpredictable patterns of species co-occurrence indicating that no simple model or set of models would accurately forecast a priori how groups of species respond to landscape change. Novel ecosystems will become increasingly common in the future and they will raise complex management and ethical dilemmas for policy makers and resource managers. For example: when and where are novel ecosystems appropriate? What can we do about changes deemed inappropriate? When does the preservation of a novel ecosystem become a conservation concern?

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