Australian Government
Department of the Environment and Energy

NVIS Fact sheet
MVG 17 – Other shrublands

Australia's native vegetation is a rich and fundamental element of our natural heritage. It binds and nourishes our ancient soils; shelters and sustains wildlife, protects streams, wetlands, estuaries, and coastlines; and absorbs carbon dioxide while emitting oxygen. The National Vegetation Information System (NVIS) has been developed and maintained by all Australian governments to provide a national picture that captures and explains the broad diversity of our native vegetation.

This is part of a series of fact sheets which the Australian Government developed based on NVIS Version 4.2 data to provide detailed descriptions of the major vegetation groups (MVGs) and other MVG types. The series is comprised of a fact sheet for each of the 25 MVGs to inform their use by planners and policy makers. An additional eight MVGs are available outlining other MVG types.

For more information on these fact sheets, including its limitations and caveats related to its use, please see: 'Introduction to the Major Vegetation Group (MVG) fact sheets'.

Overview

Typically, vegetation areas classified under MVG 17 – Other shrublands:

- are dominated by a broad range of shrub species that may include mixed species communities and mosaics of several communities that are not heathlands (MVG 18) or Acacia shrublands (MVG 16)
- are dominated by woody plants branching at or near ground level and with a canopy height of one m – 10 m and projected foliage cover of up to 70 per cent
- include dominant genera Allocasuarina/Casuarina, Banksia, Bursaria, Dodonaea, Duma, Eremophila, Grevillea, Kunzea and Melaleuca
- may include regenerating stands of other MVG's e.g. MVG 9 - Melaleuca forest and woodlands or MVG 14 - Mallee woodlands and shrublands.

Lignum (*Duma florulenta*) shrubland (centre and right), Coopers Creek, Nappa Merrie Station, Qld (Photo: M. Fagg)

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Facts and figures

Major Vegetation Group	MVG 17 - Other shrublands
Major Vegetation Subgroups	28. Low closed forest or tall closed shrublands (including Acacia, Melaleuca and Banksia) 30. Heath 32. Other shrublands 49. Melaleuca shrublands and open shrublands 57. Lignum shrublands and wetlands 80. Other sparse shrublands and sparse heathlands
Typical NVIS structural formations	Shrubland (tall, mid, low) Open shrubland (tall, mid, low) Sparse shrubland (tall, mid, low)
Number of IBRA regions	69
Most extensive in IBRA region (Est. pre-1750 and Present)	Murchison (WA)
Estimated pre-1750 extent (km^2)	156 321
Present extent (km^2)	122 685
Area protected (km^2)	28 760

Eremophila bowmanii (silver turkeybush) with *Acacia aneura* (mulga), near Yenloora, Qld (Photo: M. Fagg)

Structure and physiognomy

- Composed of a canopy of low to tall shrubs with a height of one metre – 10 m and projected foliage cover varying from less than 10 - 70 per cent.
- Canopy density influences the structure of the ground layer.
- Ground layer is highly variable depending on soil moisture and texture, potentially including sclerophyllous sedges and rushes to perennial and/or ephemeral forbs and graminoids.

Indicative flora

- Broad range of dominant shrub species which may belong to genera such as *Allocasuarina/Casuarina, Banksia, Bursaria, Dodonaea, Duma, Eremophila, Grevillea, Kunzea, Leucopogon, Persoonia, Thryptomene, Neofabricia, Nitraria* and *Melaleuca.*
- Lignum shrublands are dominated by *Duma florulenta (*formerly *Muehlenbeckia).* Other shrubs present may include species of *Chenopodium, Acacia* and *Atriplex.*
- Melaleuca shrublands include a wide variety of Melaleuca species such as *Melaleuca brevifolia* and *M. uncinata* in mallee and other semi-arid systems, *M. halmaturorum* or *M. ericifolia* in brackish or semi-saline environments and coastal *Melaleuca, M. huegelii* or *M. armillaris* depending on site characteristics and climate.

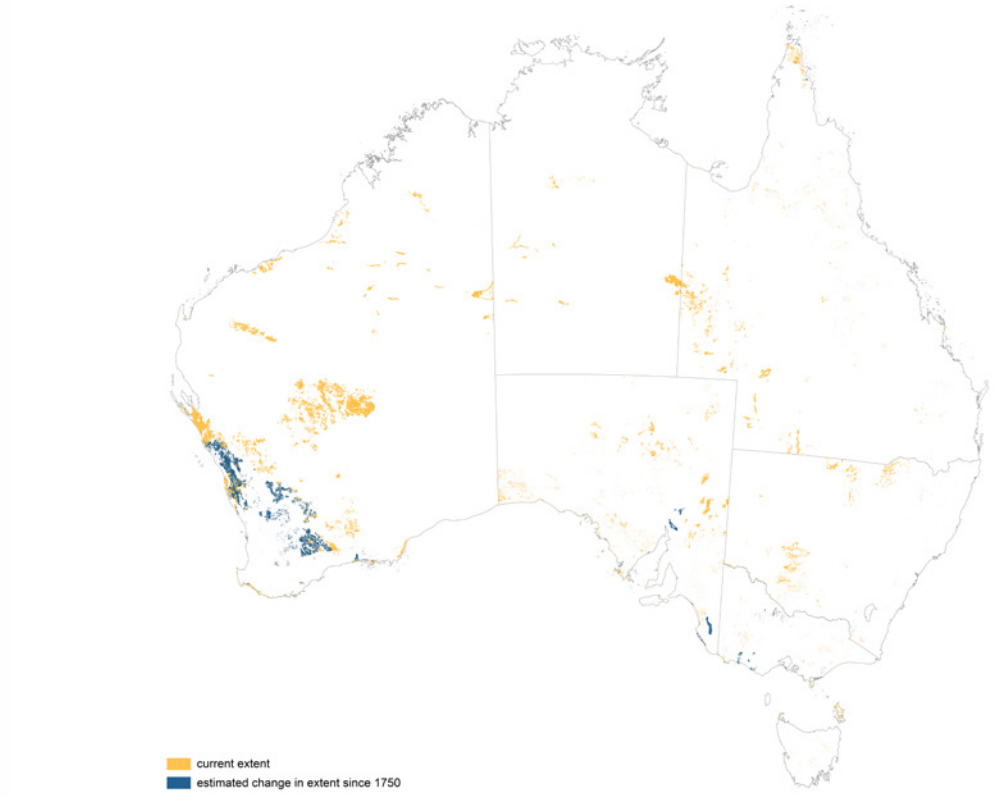
Environment

- Distributed across a very wide range of environmental conditions within semi-arid rangelands to temperate coastal areas in the south-east and western areas of Australia.
- Lignum shrublands and wetlands occur on inland floodplains and within broad drainage channels.
- Melaleuca shrublands occur in widely contrasting environments, mostly within the temperate climate zone. These include semi-arid sandplains, coastal sand dunes, subsaline wetlands and freshwater mires.
- Other shrublands may span a range of environments, mostly within semi-arid or arid climates.

Geography

- Scattered widely, mainly across southern Australia, extending to subtropical latitudes in Queensland.
- Lignum shrublands occur through semi-arid and arid regions of inland Australia.
- Melaleuca shrublands occur mainly across temperate latitudes in the mallee regions, coastal fringe and mire landscapes of Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.
- Other shrublands are scattered throughout inland Australia and into tropical latitudes.

The below image outlines the location of this MVG group in Australia.



Change

- Approximately 22 per cent (33 600 km^2) of the estimated pre-1750 extent cleared accounting for 3.2 per cent of total clearing in Australia mainly as a result of pastoral activities, and primarily in mallee regions and near the coast.
- Changes in shrublands are driven by total grazing pressure, clearing in some cases and fire regimes.
- Some of these shrublands have been protected in conservation areas.

Key values

- Biodiversity including a large variety of species within the plant communities, particularly after seasonal rains.
- Remnant populations of a wide range of vertebrate and invertebrate species.
- Lignum shrublands provide breeding habitat for a wide range of birds and mammals, including some rare and endangered species.

List of key management issues

- Total grazing pressure management.
- Feral animal control.
- Preventing further fragmentation of remnant of native vegetation.
- Maintenance of appropriate fire regimes.
- Weed control.
- As with other rangeland areas there are public policy issues of stewardship and land capability to support use, especially on leasehold lands.
- Ongoing investment in development of rangelands monitoring systems remains a priority and will provide increased opportunities for efficiencies in pastoral management and nature conservation investments within this MVG.

Atalaya hemiglauca (whitewood), *Eremophila freelingii* (rock fuchsia bush), *Scaevola spicata*, *Cassia sturtii*, *Sida* spp., *Acacia tetragonophylla*, near Tibooburra, NSW (Photo: M. Fagg)

References

Australian Surveying and Land Information Group (1990) *Atlas of Australian Resources. Volume 6 Vegetation*. AUSMAP, Department of Administrative Services, Canberra, 64pp. & 2 maps.

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Keith D.A. (2004) *Ocean Shores to Desert Dunes. The native vegetation of New South Wales and the ACT.* Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), Hurstville.

National Land and Water Resources Audit (2001) *Australian Native Vegetation Assessment 2001.* National Land and Water Resources Audit, Canberra, 332pp.

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Data sources

Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA), Version 7.

National Vegetation Information System, Version 4.2.

Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database – CAPAD 2014 – Terrestrial.