Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

NVIS Fact sheet
MVG 24 – 30 and MVG 99 – other cover types

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.

This fact sheet covers an additional eight MVGs other MVG types.

Overview

- A number of land cover types occur across Australia. These include natural areas such as bare ground, open water or human-influenced cover, such as urban areas, cropland and grazing country where the trees and shrub have been removed or thinned.
- Other cover types were generally standardised within each jurisdiction, but there are inconsistencies and omissions when compiled nationally.
- Some of these cover types (MVGs 24, 26, 27, 29 and 30) could be broadly considered "natural" from a terrestrial viewpoint.
- In summary, the data for other cover types is included here for contextual and cartographic purposes only and is not suitable for quantitative reporting at this stage.

Sand dunes, 117 km south of Innamincka, SA (Photo: M. Fagg)

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MVG 24 – Inland aquatic: freshwater, salt lakes, lagoons

- Fresh and/or brackish water features.
- Generally open water or other major hydrological feature devoid of vegetation for most of the year, such as a large salt lake.
- Some datasets provided to NVIS have not distinguished between freshwater and seawater, so arbitrary spatial editing was performed to distinguish sea and estuaries (MVG 28).
- Also, no attempt has been made to distinguish between natural or man-made water features in this classification.
- Please note that vegetated wetlands are generally classified under the relevant major vegetation group, such as other grasslands, herblands, sedgelands and rushlands (MVG 21) and melaleuca forests and woodlands (MVG 9).
- Salt lakes and coastal lowlands often have fringing areas of saltmarshes, which are assigned to Chenopod shrublands, Samphire shrublands and Forblands (MVG 22).

Salt lake, east of Lake King, WA (Photo: M. Fagg)

MVG 25 - Cleared, non-native vegetation, buildings

- These are areas with all or most native vegetation removed, including urban areas and cropland.
- Also includes a wide range of grazing land where the native trees and shrubs have been removed or substantially modified.
- Includes areas where the data supplier has described the understorey as dominated by introduced species. Areas of weed infestation, where the weed is dominant in the landscape, would be classified under this group.
- Whilst changed from their original structure and composition, these areas often contain significant biodiversity resources and the potential for restoration.

Clearing gidgee (MVG 6) near Charleville, Qld

MVG 26 – Unclassified native vegetation

- Areas designated as native vegetation by the data supplier, but with insufficient details available to assign it to another major vegetation group.

MVG 27 – Naturally bare: sand, rock, claypan, mudflat

- Includes natural environments that are naturally devoid of vascular plants.
- Extensive areas devoid of vegetation can be found as bare ground, either sand dune, claypan or salt lakes in the harsh environments of the arid interior.
- Coastal sand masses can often contain extensive areas of bare sands, mostly as active dunes.
- Includes bare or lichen-encrusted rock in coastal, alpine, arid and other environments, such as Uluru and Monadnocks in Western Australia. A very small number of these areas have NVIS descriptions of the non-vascular plants present.

MVG 28 – Sea and estuaries

- Open water in the marine environment.
- In the NVIS major vegetation group products, the ocean polygon has been deleted where present in the supplied data. Some estuarine polygons may have been maintained.
- In some instances, spatial edits were performed on input datasets to distinguish inland aquatic features (MVG 24) from marine waters in estuaries.

MVG 29 – Regrowth, modified native vegetation

- These areas have been nominated by the data supplier as containing regenerating native species following disturbance.
- Alterations to the structure and/or composition of the vegetation of these areas, is such that they cannot be easily classified into one of the "native" MVGs (1-23).

MVG 30 – Unclassified forest

- Plant community details not otherwise specified or likely to be erroneous, and unlikely to be Indo-Malayan species. Dominant trees with crown cover >20 per cent (FPC >30 per cent). The apparent dense tree canopy could perhaps be an artefact of satellite remote sensing, where a fast growing understorey is mistaken for trees.

MVG 99 – Unknown/no data

- No details are available.
- *Ad hoc* comparison with adjacent areas and independent (non-vegetation) datasets can reveal areas that could be reassigned to hydrological features (MVG 24) or cleared/modified land (MVG 25). However, there are no details to do systematic reinterpretation with any certainty, nor to distinguish the relevant MVGs from the input datasets, where several cover types may be confounded.
- Such systematic reinterpretation is thus beyond the scope of NVIS.