

# Open downs



## General description

Flat to gently undulating plains of Mitchell grass and open tussock grassland and saltbush herbfields.

## Landform

Flat to gently undulating plains.

## Woody vegetation

Mimosa bush, beefwood, whitewood, vine tree, western bloodwood, desert gum, boonaree, bauhinia.

## Expected pasture composition

\* Denotes non-native "Expected Pasture Composition" species.

### Preferred

Barley, curly and hoop Mitchell grasses, Queensland bluegrass.

### Intermediate

Lovegrasses, silky browntop, stargrass, katoora, bottlewasher grasses.

### Non-preferred

Feathertop wiregrass.

### Annual grasses

Button grass, Flinders grass, pepper grass, downs couch, comb windmill grass, delicate lovegrass.

### Common forbs

Bladder saltbush, grey rattlepod, annual verbine, paper rose, copperburrs, gidgee burrs, bogan flea, sida.

## Suitable sown pasture

Not suitable for sown pastures.

## Introduced weeds

None

## Soil

Moderately deep red, brown and grey deeply cracking clays with self-mulching surfaces, and some deep desert loams. Often gilgaied, and may have scattered stone pavements.

### Description

**Surface:** Self-mulching with some crusting; **Surface texture:** heavy clay; **Subsoil texture:** heavy clay.

### Features

Cretaceous deposits and mantled pediments with some deeply weathered rock. Some surface stone that may be varnished.

Water availability

Moderate

Rooting depth

Deep but limited by salinity and sodicity.

Infiltration

High initially on a dry soil profile, slowing to moderate levels after 50 mm of rain as cracks close and to low levels after 75 mm of rain. Increasing run-off following 75 mm of rain. Estimates based on low to moderate intensity storm rain.

Fertility

Moderate

Salinity

Very low to low at the surface increasing to very high at depth.

Sodicity

Sodic at depth.

pH

Moderately to very strongly alkaline with soft lime present and gypsum at depth.

**Long-term carrying capacity information (A condition)**

Based on fully watered area for 1AE = 450 kg animal consuming 8kg DM/day				
Median annual rainfall 186 – 335 mm				
Pasture type	Median tree cover (TBA m <sup>2</sup> /ha) (FPC %)	Median annual pasture growth (DM kg/ha)	Safe annual utilisation pasture growth (%)	LTCC (ha/AE)
Native species	0 TBA/FPC	230 - 1770	20%	8 - 64
	3 TBA 8 FPC	90 - 930	20%	16 – 162

**Enterprise**

Breeding and seasonal backgrounding.

**Land use and management recommendations**

- Suitable for grazing of native pastures.
- Rotational wet season spelling to maintain perennial pasture composition.
- Maintain adequate ground cover to minimise soil erosion.

**Land use limitations**

- Best pasture growth from gilgais and depressions.
- Susceptible to erosion along stockpads, fencelines, roads and near water points.

**Conservation features and related management**

- No listed issues.

**Regional Ecosystems**

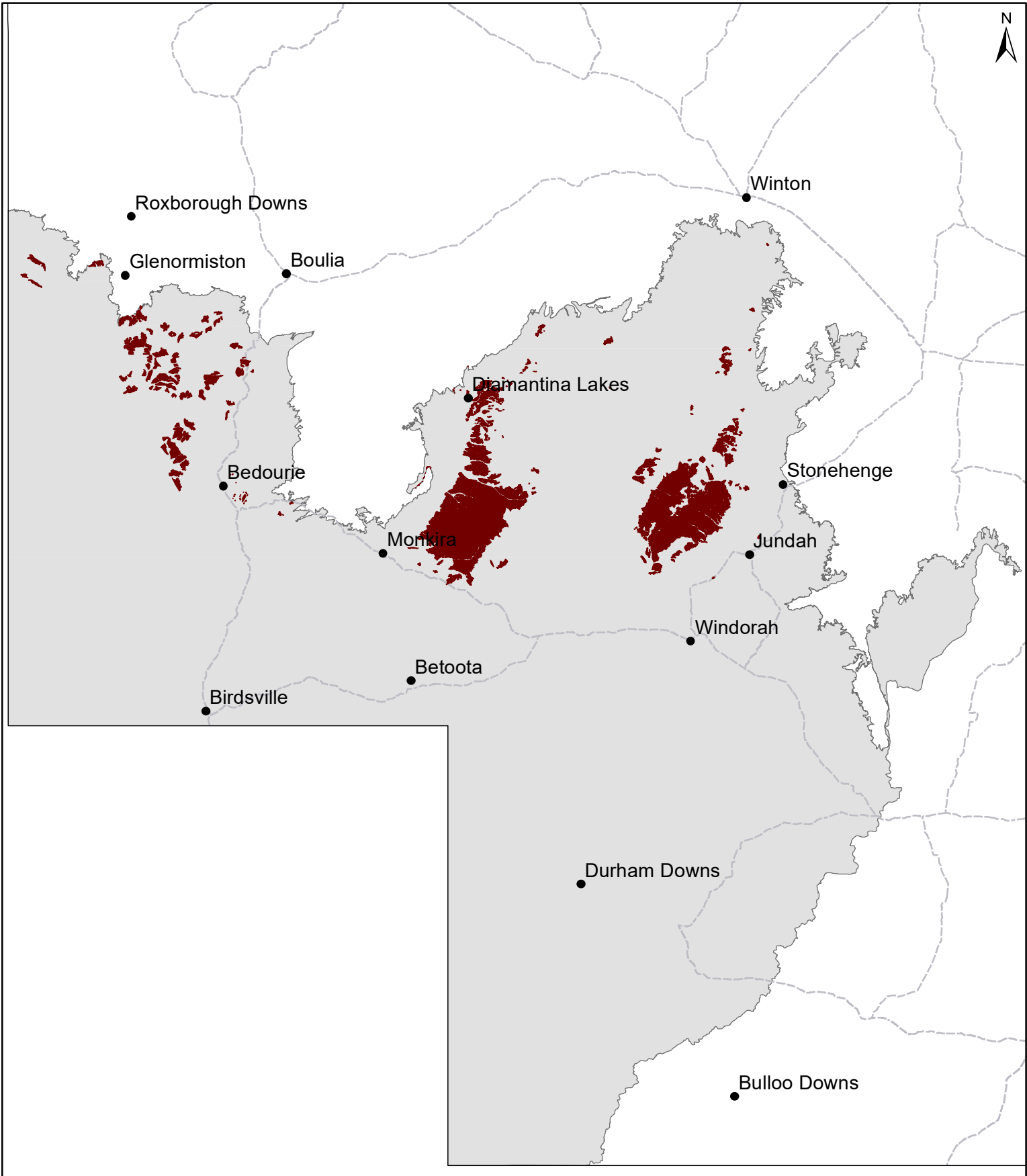
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**WARLUS Part**

**Land systems**

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
	F1, F2, F3, F4	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8				F1, F2, F3, F4

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Area of land type in region: 3%  
Median rainfall (region): 151 – 390 mm  
Average rainfall (region): 187 – 429 mm  
Area of land type with FPC: 1%  
Median FPC: 8%  
Median TBA: 3 m<sup>2</sup>/ha

