

# Sand dune country



## General description

Networks of sand dunes with mobile crests associated with open spinifex hummock grasslands and forblands, often with shrubs and lightly timbered on the lower flanks of the dunes. Inter-dune claypans often consist of swamp canegrass open grasslands and forblands, and may be timbered with coolibah.

The linear dunes in the Simpson Desert are up to 320 km long, running in a NNW-SSE direction.

Sandplains and dunefields cover about 21.4% of the Channel Country.

## Landform

Sand dunes with inter-dune claypans.

## Woody vegetation

Coolibah, mulga, western bloodwood, whitewood, bauhinia, beefwood, Georgina gidgee, boonaree, needlewood, lignum, sandhill grevillea, sandplain wattle, hopbush, parrot pea, pituri bush.

## Expected pasture composition

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

Preferred grass species occur at the bottom of the swale on inter-dune claypans.

^ Denotes species that are important to dune stabilisation.

### Preferred Intermediate

Neverfail, cotton panic, katoora.

Sandhill canegrass^, spinifex^, woollybutt, wanderrie grass, lovegrasses (e.g. neat), five-minute grass, bottlewasher grasses, swamp canegrass.

### Non-preferred

Wiregrasses.

### Annual grasses

Fairy grass, button grass, three-awned wanderrie. Kerosene grass (non-preferred).

### Common forbs

Samphire, soft roly poly, cottonbush, parakeelya, tangled mulla-mulla (sandhill snow), red twinleaf, annual yellowtop, bluerod, regal birdflower, bluebush pea, wild parsnip, nardoo.

## Suitable sown pasture

Not suitable for sown pastures.

## Introduced weeds

None

## Soil

Very deep red, yellow and white silicon sands on mobile crests and upper flanks of dunes; earthy sands and sandy earths on lower flanks of dunes; grey clays in the inter-dune areas.

### Description

**Surface:** Loose, **Surface texture:** sand, **Subsoil texture:** sand.

### Features

Cainozoic sand over clay sheet.

### Water availability

Very low

### Rooting depth

Deep

Infiltration	Very high
Fertility	Very low
Salinity	Very low
Sodicity	Non-sodic
pH	Neutral

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

Based on fully watered area for 1AE = 450 kg animal consuming 8kg DM/day				
Median annual rainfall 151 – 256 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	90 - 290	10% (inter-dune claypans)	101 – 325
	2 TBA 5 FPC	20 - 120	10%	244 – 1461

### Enterprise

### Land use and management recommendations

### Land use limitations

#### Breeding

- Suitable for grazing of native pastures.
- Maximise ground cover to reduce soil erosion and stabilise sand dune ridges.
- Responds to small falls of rain.
- Subject to sheet erosion by wind and some scalding.
- Generally soil low fertility limits pasture productivity.
- Phosphorus often limits animal performance.
- Palatable perennial pastures generally absent – seasonally variable forage of forbs and short grasses, low bulk.
- Ground cover generally low.
- Responds quickly to light rainfall.
- Some top feed available.
- Lack of *Acacia calcicola* regeneration due to total grazing pressure. High level of rabbit infestation; can be problematic in some areas.
- High reptile diversity.
- Potential habitat for rare and threatened fauna species including mulgara, dusky hopping mouse and the night parrot.
- Habitat for the endemic grass wren.
- Some areas require mosaic burning.
- Spinifex grassland benefits from mosaic burning over 7 to 10 year cycle to maintain diversity and reduce wildfire risk. Burning should only be carried out when there is sufficient soil moisture to generate new growth.

### Conservation features and related management

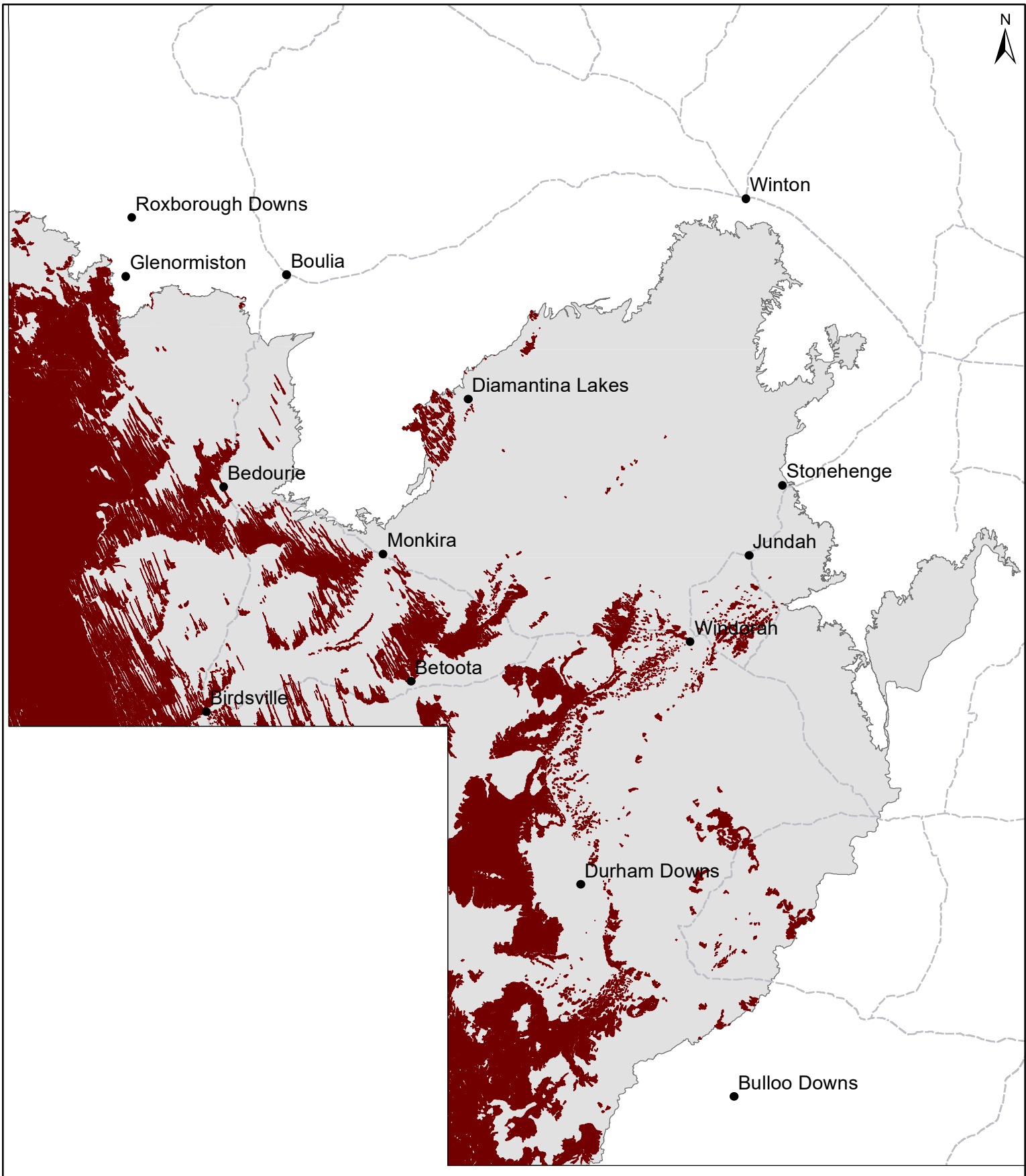
### Regional Ecosystems

#### WARLUS part land systems

5.3.13b, 5.3.14, 5.6.1, 5.6.1x1, 5.6.2, 5.6.3, 5.6.4, 5.6.5a-b, 5.6.7, 5.6.8, 5.6.8a-b.

I	II	III	IV	V	VI
D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8	D1, D2, D3, D4				D1, D2

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Area of land type in region: 20%  
Median rainfall (region): 151 – 390 mm  
Average rainfall (region): 187 – 429 mm  
Area of land type with FPC: 15%  
Median FPC: 5%  
Median TBA: 2 m<sup>2</sup>/ha



**Queensland**  
Government