

Downs



Landform

Open 'Downs' country.

Woody vegetation

Predominantly treeless Mitchell grasslands. Whitewood, blackwood, White's ironbark, ghost gum, bloodwood (e.g. large-fruited), mimosa, gidgee and boree species may occur.

Expected pasture composition

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

Preferred

Curley, barley and bull Mitchell grasses, Queensland bluegrass, native millet.

Intermediate

Feathertop and whitespear wiregrasses.

Non-preferred

Annual grasses

Red Flinders grass (Intermediate species).

Common forbs

Suitable sown pastures

Not suitable for sown pastures.

Introduced weeds

Parkinsonia, parthenium, prickly acacia, spiked malvastrum.

Soil

Deep grey or brown cracking clay soils with a self-mulching surface.

Description

Surface: Cracking and self-mulching; **Surface texture:** medium to heavy clay; **Subsoil texture:** medium to heavy clay.

Water availability

Moderate

Rooting depth

Deep

Fertility

Good; good nutrient status.

Salinity

Moderate

Sodicity

Moderate to high sodicity in subsoil.

pH

Mostly neutral, some with strong acidity or alkalinity.

<p>Utilisation</p>	<p>25%</p>
<p>Enterprise</p>	<p>Breeding and growing.</p>
<p>Land use and management recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for grazing of native pastures. Capable of high pasture growth. • These highly productive areas can be used strategically for growing stock, or meeting periods of high nutritional demand for the breeding herd. This gives the added benefit of spelling the less productive land types.
<p>Land use limitations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These land types have very productive, resilient soils; however, they are susceptible to infestation by parthenium. • Light falls of rain can close the surface cracks subsequently limiting infiltration and resulting in a poor pasture growth response. • Shallow-rooted annuals have a short growing season. • Variable soil erosion hazard. Highly prone to sheet erosion despite gentle slopes.
<p>Conservation features and related management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tussock grasslands of the Prairie–Torrens Creek Alluvials subregion are outliers of the more extensive Mitchell grasslands to the west. These grasslands have a high number of species of conservation significance compared with those in the woodlands, and those animals that do occur are specialised and almost entirely restricted to this habitat. • The dense tussock grass cover and deep cracking soils are important habitat features (nesting, food and shelter) for small ground dwelling birds (e.g. red-chested button quail, white-winged fairy-wren), mammals (planigales, dunnarts including a disjunct occurrence of the endangered marsupial <i>Sminthopsis douglasi</i>), dragons (e.g. lined earless dragon), snake lizards, and native predators (e.g. barn owls, Collette’s snake). • Avoidance of over-grazing that consistently removes all ground cover and causes compaction of the soil structure will impact on animals that live in the cracks and tussocks. Loss of ground cover also allows feral predators such as the fox and cat to hunt more effectively. • While native annuals are quite nutritious during the growing season they are short-lived and will be quickly grazed out if subjected to a continuous grazing regime. • A dense pasture biomass should always be maintained to protect the soil surface, maximise infiltration and protect and maintain biodiversity. • Avoid burning during dry months. As a rule of thumb, introduce ‘cool’ burns after heavy rain.
<p>Regional ecosystems</p>	<p>10.3.7a-b, 10.3.8a, 10.4.6a-b, 10.4.8, 10.4.8x1-3, 10.9.1b, 10.9.1d, 10.9.1f, 10.9.2d, 10.9.2dx1-2, 10.9.2e.</p>
<p>DUSLR project land units</p>	<p>AL1, AR2, BA1, BA3, DE2, MH2, PP3, RD4, TC2, TK1.</p>