



Commonwealth of Australia

Inclusion of ecological communities in the list of threatened ecological communities under section 181 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EC 133)

I, GREG HUNT, Minister for the Environment, pursuant to paragraph 184(1)(a) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, hereby amend the list referred to in section 181 of that Act by:

including in the list in the **critically endangered** category

Natural Damp Grassland of the Victorian Coastal Plains

as described in the Schedule to this instrument.

Dated this 4th day of February 2015

Greg Hunt

GREG HUNT
Minister for the Environment

SCHEDULE

Natural Damp Grasslands of the Victorian Coastal Plains

The Natural Damp Grassland of the Victorian Coastal Plains is a type of grassland dominated by tussock grasses, typically with a sparse presence of trees and shrubs. It is generally found at elevations less than 100 metres above sea level, on heavy grey silty-loamy soils that are poorly draining, often damp and sometimes waterlogged. The ecological community is limited to southern Victoria, and has a disjunct distribution on the coastal plains. There are known occurrences in south Gippsland, the head of Western Port Bay, Philip Island, Mornington Peninsula and the Bellarine Peninsula.

The grassland generally is dominated by tussock grasses, notably *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass) on drier sites, or *Poa labillardierei* (tussock grass) on wetter sites. The range of grasses and forbs present includes species associated with damp sites.

The key diagnostic characteristics for the ecological community are:

- The ecological community is limited to southern Victoria, within the South East Coastal Plain bioregion (Interim Biogeographical Regionalisation of Australia version 7), and is associated with seasonally damp sites.
- The vegetation structure is a tussock grassland in which the dominant feature is a ground layer primarily comprised of herbaceous species. Trees and larger shrubs (>1 metre tall) are sparse to absent, such that their projective foliage cover is 5% or less across the grassland patch.
- The ground layer of the patch must contain four or more ground layer species from the list of characteristic plant species below, including at least one of the two key grass species: *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass) and/or *Poa labillardierei* (common tussock grass).

The ecological community is not present if the following features are evident:

- *Eucalyptus tereticornis subsp. mediana* (Gippsland red gum) is present in or near to the grassland. This tree is characteristic of drier grassy communities in Central Gippsland, notably Gippsland Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis subsp. mediana*) Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland.
- There is a substantial presence of halophytic (salt-tolerant) species, with an absence of glycophytic (salt-intolerant) herbs. This is indicative of saltmarshes, samphires, estuarine flats or other saline or brackish sites that are not part of the ecological community.
- The grasslands are known to be derived from cleared woodland or heathland, where the tree or shrub canopy has been removed but a native ground layer remains intact.
- Grasslands with higher cover of small to medium shrubs (cover of more than 10%), which can be considered heathland communities rather than grassland.
- Grasslands associated with calcareous sands and loams, or coastal grasslands on dune swales.

List of characteristic plant species for the Natural Damp Grassland of the Victorian Coastal Plains

Scientific name	Common name
Grasses and related plants	
<i>Deyeuxia quadriseta</i>	reed bent-grass
<i>Hemarthria uncinata</i>	mat grass
<i>Juncus subsecundus</i>	finger rush
<i>Lachnagrostis aemula</i>	blown-grass
<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i>	common blown-grass
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	spiny-headed mat-lily
<i>Pentapogon quadrifidus</i>	five-awned spear-grass
<i>Poa labillardierei</i>	common tussock-grass
<i>Rytidosperma laeve</i>	smooth wallaby-grass
<i>Rytidosperma semiannulare</i>	heath wallaby-grass
<i>Schoenus apogon</i>	common bog sedge
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	kangaroo grass
Broad-leaved herbs	
<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	bidgee-widgee
<i>Burchardia umbellata</i>	milkmaids
<i>Calocephalus lacteus</i>	milky beauty-heads
<i>Centella cordifolia</i>	pennywort
<i>Dichondra repens</i>	kidney-weed
<i>Eryngium vesiculosum</i>	prickfoot
<i>Haloragis heterophylla</i>	varied raspwort
<i>Leptorhynchos tenuifolius</i>	wiry buttons
<i>Lythrum hyssopifolia</i>	small loosestrife
<i>Oxalis exilis</i>	shady wood-sorrel
<i>Tricoryne elatior</i>	yellow rush-lily
<i>Veronica gracilis</i>	slender speedwell