

793161

COX BIGHT

This land system includes the sandy beaches, associated dunes and sandy flats between Louisa Bay and South West Cape. Although all of these beaches are relatively exposed most have bluffs, points or capes which provide some protection from harsh westerly weather. Nevertheless vegetation is often wind pruned, stunted and affected by salt spray.

Soils are usually sandy and may have peat surface layers. At the Freney Lagoon outlet these cover boulder deposits which have probably been dumped by storms. These are unconsolidated and occur at a depth of 20 cm. Williams (1981) has proposed that cemented conglomerate deposits in the Port Davey area are of Pleistocene or Tertiary age. At New Harbour it appears that a number of old beach deposits stretch back to Falls Creek. These are covered by sedgeland/heath (*Melaleuca* Land System 898122).

There is a certain amount of variation in the vegetation of geographically separate parts of this land system. At New Harbour eucalypt forest (up to 15 m high) occurs behind a coastal strip dominated by *Festuca littoralis* (Goldin 1980). On sandy coastal flats (e. g. Cox Bight) vegetation is often angled back, "wedge shaped", from the sea

with *Persoonia muelleri*, *P. juniperina*, *Melaleuca* spp., *Leptospermum* spp., *Monotoca glauca*, *Leucopogon parviflorus*, *Cyathodes* spp., *Acacia* spp., *Eucalyptus nitida*, and some vegetation typical of wet forest environments (e. g. *Anopterus glandulosus*, *Phyllocladus aspleniifolius*, *Ziina arborescens*, *Phebalium squameum*, and *Pomaderris apetala*) common. *Gahnia grandis* sometimes occurs in the understorey. The native nettle, *Urtica incisa*, is common on and just behind some fore dunes. *Festuca littoralis* may occur immediately above the high tide mark or *Correa backhousiana* and *Cyathodes juniperina* may replace it, often in positions heavily affected by salt spray. In addition the following plants may inhabit salt affected sites: *Cotula reptans*, *Oxalis corniculata*, and *Geranium potentilloides*. The coastal vegetation usually forms a narrow strip immediately above the high tide mark and sedgeland/heath replaces it on the organic soils of the hinterland.

Two lagoons at Cox Bight (Miller and Freney Lagoons) have shorelines on seaward aspects which run almost parallel to the present coastline suggesting that sand whipped up by southerly or south westerly storms is deposited along these shores. Minor irregularities could be a result of storm damage or positions where the lagoons have broken out. At present recreation and nature conservation are the main land uses. The land system is situated in the South West National Park, and South West Conservation Area.

Photo 41

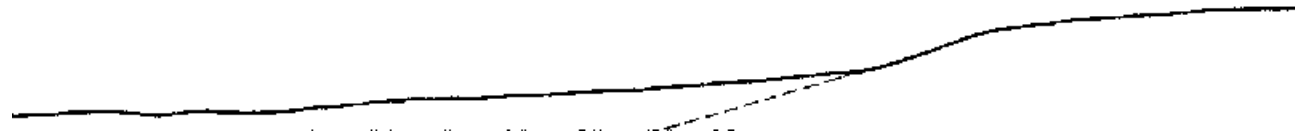


The eastern side of Cox Bight from Point Eric

LAND SYSTEM
COX BIGHT

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Area (ha): 820



ALTITUDINAL RANGE (m)	0-300	APPROXIMATE ANNUAL RAINFALL(mm)	1500-2000
SITE NO. /ALTITUDE			19/1/S
(m)/ASPECT			
TOPOGRAPHY		Sandy coastal areas	
Position	Beach	Sandy coastal flat	
Typical Slope()	1	1	
Proportion(%)	60	40	
GEOLOGY	Recent coastal sands with some boulder deposits		
NATIVE VEGETATION Structure	Closed - scrub		
Floristic Association (See Appendix 1 for common names)	Unvegetated	Persoonia muelleri	
	Acacia verticillata Leucopogon parviflorus Drimys lanceolata Anopterus glandulosa Cenarrhenes nitida Pomaderris apetala Cvathodes juniperina Correa backhousiana Monotoca glauca Melaleuca squarrosa Dianella sp. Leptospermum scoparium Phyllocladus aspleniifolius		
SOIL Surface(A or P horizon) Colour (moist) and texture	Reddish black (10 R 2. 5/1) fibrous peat		
Subsoil (or B horizon) colour (moist) & texture	Very dark grey (2. 5 Y 3/0) clayey sand to sand		
Primary Profile form	Uniform		
Depth surface horizon(m)	0. 25		
Typical total depth(m)	>0. 60		
Permeability	High		
LAND USE	Recreation(bushwalking)		
HAZARD			