

Land Unit 6.

Land Units 6 and 7 include all the granitic country with slopes in excess of about 25 per cent. Land Unit 6 is distinguished from Land Unit 7 by the predominance of rock as the surface material. This takes the form of small or large and often spectacular tors, and extensive sheets of steeply shelving rock, similar to those cut through by the main road near Mackays Lookout, and also includes the precipitous rock faces typified by The Gorge of Crystal Brook. The Horn, The Cathedral, Mt. Dunn, The Hump, Le Souef Peak, The Monolith, on the main plateau, and Mt. McLeod on North Buffalo, are prominent peaks in this land unit.

The elevation ranges from about 2,000 feet to the summit of The Horn at 5,645 feet. Available relief may be as little as 100 feet or as much as 2,000 feet.

The climate of these areas is probably different from soil slopes of similar altitude and slope because of high run-off and the absorption and re-radiation of solar heat by the bare rock. Average annual precipitation may range from about 45 inches to 70 inches or more, and in winter, snow may lie for several months. Persistence of snow is greatest in spaces between rocks and on ledges.

Average monthly temperatures have been estimated to range from 53° F. to 67° F. in January to 30° F. to 42° F. in July. Because of the predominance of rock as the surface material, temperature extremes may be greater than on similar soil slopes.

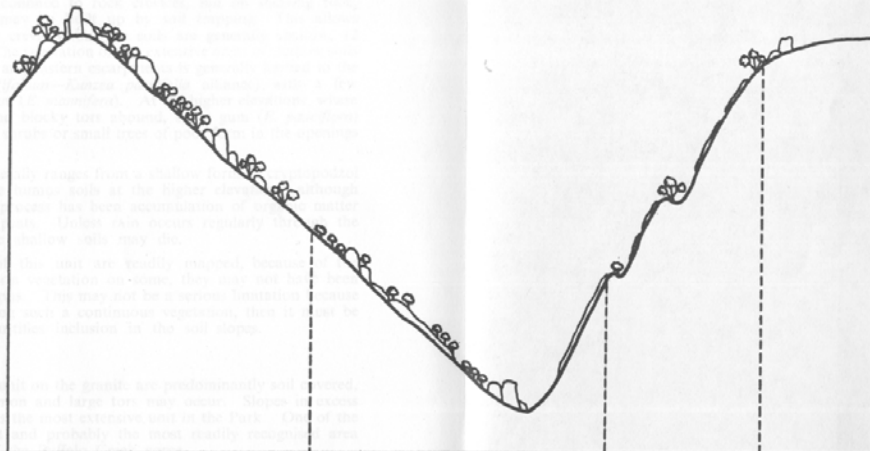
The vegetation is generally confined to rock crevices, but on shelving rock, relatively large patches of soil may be built up by soil trapping. This allows vegetation to extend beyond the crevices, but the soils are generally shallow, 12 inches to 18 inches at the most. The vegetation on the extensive areas of shallow soils on shelving rock on the northern and eastern escarpment is generally limited to the dry heaths (*Leptospermum myrtifolium*-*Junza parvifolia* alliance) with a few small scattered trees of brittle gum (*E. mannifera*). At the higher elevations, where shelving rock is less extensive and blocky tors abound, snow gum (*E. pauciflora*) occurs usually as mallee-form tall shrubs or small trees of poor form in the openings between the rocks.

Where soil has formed it generally ranges from a shallow form of cryptopodzol at the lower elevations to alpine humus soils at the higher elevations, although frequently the only soil-forming process has been accumulation of organic matter at the surface, resulting in dry peats. Unless rain occurs regularly through the dry months, vegetation on these shallow soils may die.

Although the main areas of this unit are readily mapped, because of the abundance of shrub or mallee-form vegetation on some, they may not have been recognised on the aerial photographs. This may not be a serious limitation because if the soil is capable of supporting such a continuous vegetation, then it must be relatively stable and probably justifies inclusion in the soil slopes.

Fig. 6

LAND UNIT 6 (Slopes: granite-rocky)



Topography	Steep slopes exceeding 25 per cent. and up to near vertical in The Gorge. Available relief varies from less than 100 ft. to over 2,000 ft.	Land Units 3 or 4
Elevation range	From about 2,000 ft. in the north-east to the summit of The Horn (5,645 ft.) in the south	
Estimated average temperatures	Jan. 53° F.—67° F. : July 30° F.—42° F.	
Estimated average annual precipitation	From about 45 in. with no snow at the lowest elevations, to over 80 in. with snow persistent for 2 to 3 months at the highest elevations	
Soils	Rock is the dominant surface material with lithosols being the most important soils ; cryptopodzols occur in pockets at lower elevations and shallow forms of the soils of the normal elevational sequence shown in Fig. 7 occur occasionally	
Vegetation	The dry heath community (<i>L. myrtifolium</i> - <i>K. parvifolia</i> alliance) is dominant where shallow soils occur up to about 4,000 ft. ; at the higher elevations the broken rock usually provides sufficient anchorage for stunted forms of snow gum (<i>E. pauciflora</i> assn.) to persist Scattered snow gum of poor form : Dry heaths and bare rock : Occasional snow gum and bare rock	