Natural Values Atlas (NVA)

Instructions
– Vegetation Condition Assessment
Data Entry and Searches

Tasmanian Government

VCA Searches

TASVEG Vegetation Condition Assessment (TASVEG VCA) is a transparent, reliable and scientifically valid site–based method of vegetation condition assessment developed by DPIPWE in conjunction with the three Tasmanian Natural Resource Management (NRM) regions. The method is the most widely accepted method for assessing vegetation condition at a site level in the State and applies to both forest and non-forest native vegetation in Tasmania. TASVEG VCA, has published guidelines and benchmarks, and is based on the well known, scientifically endorsed Victorian vegetation condition assessment method and is more or less consistent with methods used in several other states. Since its development, the uptake of TASVEG VCA by NRMs, NGOs, government and industry has increased and it is currently the standard method used in Tasmania for undertaking condition assessments of vegetation communities.

The VCA component of the NVA allows users to Search for existing VCA scores, enter raw VCA field data from which the NVA will automatically calculate the component and final VCA scores and to search for current and older versions of the VCA Community Benchmarks.

Navigating to the VCA Search Page

To navigate to the VCA score search page click on the Vegetation Tab located along the top of the page. This will take you to the Vegetation home page. Go to the search menu and choose 'VCA Score Search' listed under the Vegetation heading on the left hand side of the Vegetation home page.

The VCA score search page displays a number of boxes that will allow you to define your search parameters (see below). Users can populate as many or as few search terms as they like and then press 'enter' on their keyboard or click on the Search button to run their query. Detailed descriptions for each of the search parameters are given below.

Explanation of Search Parameters

Source – This is the organisation/entity from which the data was sourced (e.g. Birds Tasmania). Use this field to search for VCA scores from a selected organisation/entity. The id field beside the source field can be used to search for the source with the abbreviated source code. Users can click on the open book icon at right 📖 field to refine their search term or browse through the possible values.

Program - This is an overarching organisational structure under which data may have been collected (e.g. the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program). Within a program there are often a number of Projects Use this field to search for all data from a chosen program. The id field beside the program field can be used to search for the program with the abbreviated program code. Users can click on the open book icon at right 📖 to refine their search term or browse through the possible values.

Project – All data entered in the NVA is assigned to a project. This is primarily to assist with the retrieval of data. If you know of a project, or if you want to search for data under your own project, you can type in the name of the project to return VCA scores entered under that project. The id field beside the project field can be used to search for the program with the abbreviated project code.

Users can click on the open book icon at right 📖 to refine their search term or browse through the possible values

Person – This refers to the person who collected the VCA data in the field (the observer). You can enter a person's name and search for records submitted under their name. The id field beside the program field can be used to search for the person with the NVA person id number. Users can click on the open book icon at right 📖 to refine their search term or browse through the possible values

Vegetation Community – This parameter is use to search for a VCA score by the TASVEG community that was assessed. Use this field to return all VCA scores for a community. This search uses the three letter vegetation community code listed in TASVEG. The id field beside the Vegetation field can be used to search for the vegetation community using the 3 letter TASVEG code. Users can click on the open book icon at right 📖 to refine their search term or browse through the possible values.

Benchmark Variant – This parameter can be used to refine a search for a benchmark by using the benchmark variant name, e.g. DCR Eucalyptus cordata forest: (forest)

Benchmark Version – This parameter can be used to search for scores by the version of the benchmark that was used to generate them. A community benchmark may be updated and thus may have older versions that are available but no longer in use.

Benchmark Type –This parameter can be used to filter the search by the benchmark community types, 'forest' or 'non- forest'.

Include Unreliable– This parameter provides the option to include, in the search results, VCA data that has been identified as unreliable

Search Area – This parameter is used to limit the spatial extent of the VCA search. Clicking on the map opens the web mapping interface where users can zoom into a region of interest and draw a polygon to define their search area (the 'Draw a polygon' tool 🔲 is used to define the search area). Users have the ability to customise the layers visible in the web map but will need to zoom in before some layers become visible. Once you are happy with the search area, use the 'Accept Geometry' button ✅ to send the shape back to the search criteria page. A buffer size (in metres) can also be specified at this point to increase the total area to be searched. For more detailed instructions about how to use the NVA map interface go to page xx

Buffer – This allows for an increase in the size of the search area using a defined distance.

Search Format – This area allows users to toggle between a 'Simple' search (default setting) – which will return a table of the features found by applying the chosen criteria, and an 'Export' search which provides three format options for download. It is recommended that users first perform a simple search and check their results before the export search is run.

Results Per Page – This area provides a dropdown menu where users can select the number of records to be shown on each page of the results table.

Search and Reset – These buttons initiate the search, and reset the search form parameters.

VCA Score Search Results

After running the simple VCA search you will be presented with a table of results in the area below the search form; it should look similar to the table presented below.

The top of the results table will indicate the total number of pages and total number of records returned by your search. Each row of the table represents a record for an individual VCA that meets the criteria specified in your search and the columns display the scores for each of the VCA scoring components. Clicking on the blue 'Details' button in the left most column will display the VCA location and a view of all details for that record which should look similar to below.

The VCA score details view shows all the same information as in the results table but also includes two map windows showing the location of the VCA in Tasmania. At the top of the VCA score details view there are two buttons, 'Back' and 'Refresh <mark>The 'Back' button is used to</mark> return to the previous page

How to Use the NVA Map Interface

Using the NVA's map interface you can navigate around the map, zoom in zoom out, query map layers and identify or draw features that can be returned to the NVA to use in your search. This is achieved using the various tools incorporated into the map interface. The functionality of the different tools is outlined below. **Activate each tool by clicking on it *prior* to using it.**
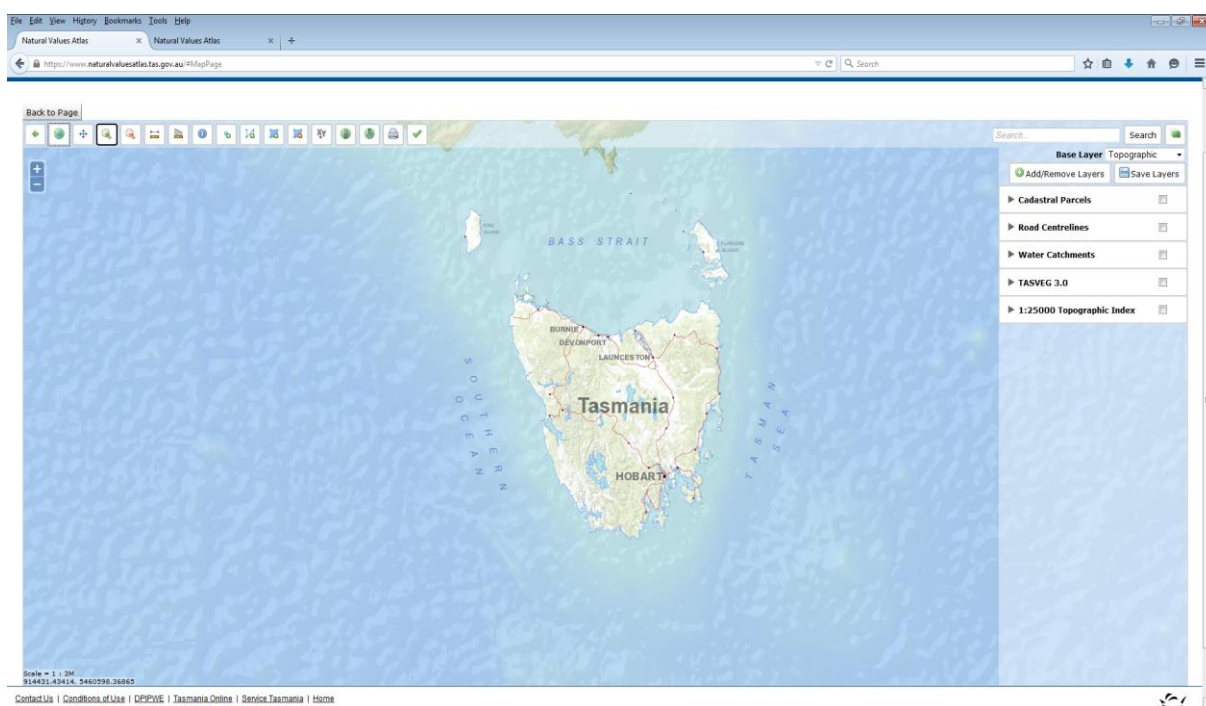
Map tools:

Previous View Button - go back to the preceding view

Pan Tool – click on the map and drag to move map around in the window

Zoom In Tool – click the tool and draw a rectangle around the area of interest and the map viewer will zoom in to the area you selected

Zoom- Out Tool – click the tool and draw a rectangle to zoom out and the map viewer will redraw the current view to fit into the rectangle.

Full Extent button – returns to the default view showing the full map of Tasmania

Zoom In on the centre of the map (predetermined amount of zooming)

Zoom Out on the centre of the map (predetermined amount of zooming)

Ruler Tool – Use this tool to measure a distance on the map. Click on the map at the start position and double click to finish. A pop-up window will display the length of the line you have drawn.

Polygon Tool - To draw a polygon, activate this tool by clicking on it. Click at a start point and then continue clicking to draw around the area of interest. Double Click to finish. Try not to cross over the line you have already drawn (self-intersect) as this might cause your search to fail. To return this feature to the NVA and use it as a search criterion, click the ✔ button at the top of the page.

Line Tool - To draw a line, activate this tool by clicking on it, then click on the map at the start of your line. Draw the line by clicking as appropriate. Double click to finish drawing. To return this feature to the NVA and use it as a search criterion click the ✔ button at the top of the page. (**Note:** If you want to search using a line you should also enter an amount of buffer around the line in metres – once you have returned to the NVA search page –it is probable that a search simply using a line will return no results.)

Point Tool – To draw a point, activate this tool by clicking on it, then click on the map where you would like your point to be. To return this feature to the NVA and use it as a search criterion click the ✔ button at the top of the page. (**Note:** If you want to search using a point you should also enter an amount of buffer around the point in metres – once you have returned to the NVA search page – it is probable that a search simply using a point will return no results.)

Delete all Drawn Features Tool – As the name suggests clicking on this icon will delete any / all of the features you have drawn on the map using the tools above. It will also clear any features which you may have selected from a layer using the Information Tool in conjunction with the Layer Management window (see below).

Show Vertices Tool – displays a table in which you can type the co-ordinates of the vertices (i.e. the corners / joins / points) that define the shape you wish to search. To enter a point, simply click on the button and then type in the coordinates of your point location. If you want to enter a rectangle or anther shape, first use the Polygon tool to draw a polygon and then click the Show Vertices button so that you can bring up the vertices and edit them to accurately define your search area. You can also use this tool to view the vertices (coordinates) of features you have selected / drawn using the information and select features tools (see below).

Return Geometry to the NVA Button – returns the specified search area/point/line to the NVA search page (also closes the map window and returns to the NVA pages). Once back in the NVA you will then need to click on the Search button to start searching the NVA records using the point /line /polygon you have defined.

Upload Shapefile (zipped) – uploads a zipped ESRI shapefile onto the NVA to use as a search area. **Shapefiles need to fairly simple, single polygons which are not too large** or the upload / search may fail. If you don't know what a shapefile is, it's probably best to ignore this button... ☺

Save Map to PDF – this allows you to save the currently displayed map view to a PDF. You can then open the map with Adobe Reader and print it, or copy the image into an image management program to save in different formats and/or paste into MS Word etc.

Layer Manager Area
The Layer management area (see diagram next page) allows you to add layers of map data to your map view and to change the base layer for your Map.

Click on the Manage Layers button at the top right of the map viewer window to open the layer management area (on the right hand side of the map window see diagram below). If you click the same button again the layer manager area will be hidden.

To select a different base layer for the map click on the drop down arrow to the right of the 'Base Layer' heading on the Layer Management area. You can choose from, 'No Base Layer', 'Topographic' (the default), 'Scanned Maps' (scanned TASMAP maps), or the State Orthophoto (state-wide coverage of aerial photographs).

Layers of spatial information can be added to your map view by opening the manage layers pop-up window, searching for the layers you require and clicking on the green **+** to the right of the layer name. Selected layers will move to the column on the right. If you click on the red **–** sign next to the layers on the right, they will be removed from the map and return the list of available layers on the left.

Once you are happy with the layers you have chosen click Apply Changes. The layers you have chosen should be plotted on the map. If a layer you have added doesn't appear to have plotted on the map check to see if there is a 'processing' symbol like this, displaying on the screen. If you can see this symbol, the layers may still be waiting to draw and you need to wait a little for them to be plotted.

Search for places, (type in place names, addresses or Property ID's)

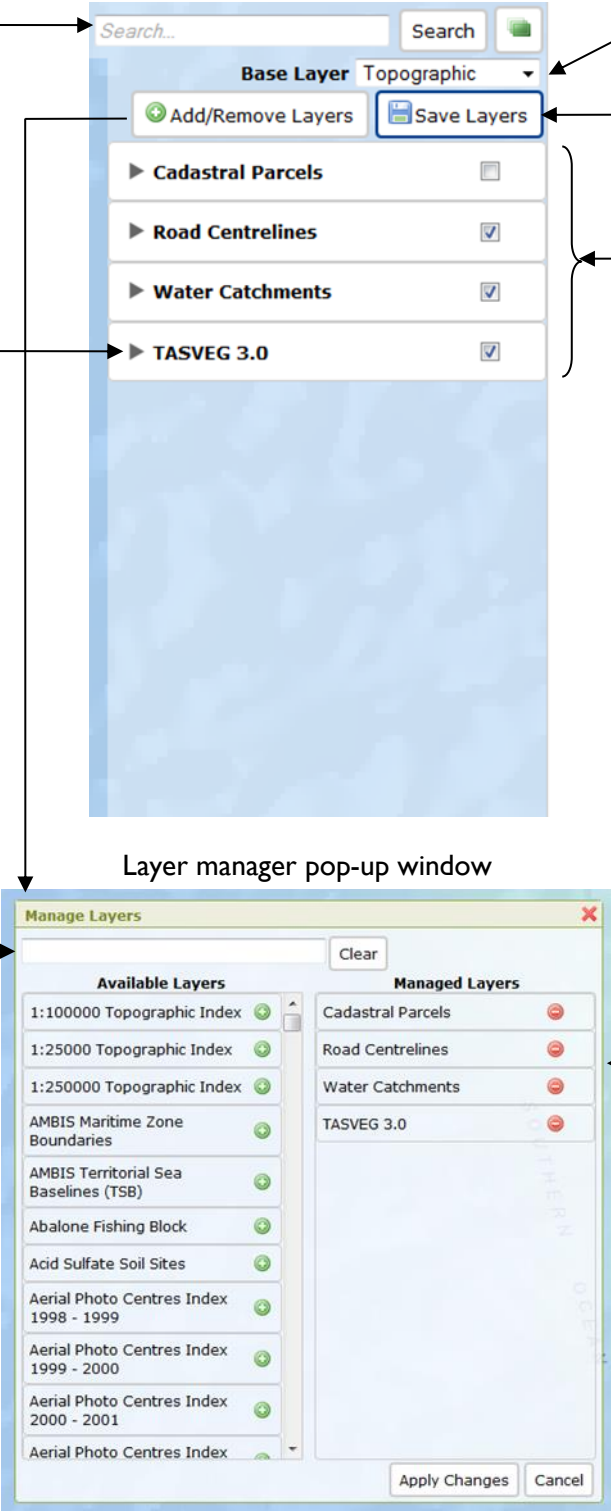**Choose** map base layer

Click on the arrow to **display a legend** for the layer

Currently added layers (**check tick boxes** to turn off and on) **Note: if a layer is turned on but doesn't display you may need to zoom in for it to become visible.**

Save current layers

Layer manager pop-up window

Search for available map layers, (type in a key word)

Currently displayed layers are on the right, available layers on the left. Click the + or – signs next to each layer to add or remove

Natural Values Conservation Branch
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Tasmanian Government

If you don't see the processing symbol, and the layers you have chosen still don't appear on the map it's likely you not have zoomed in close enough to display this layer (complex layers are not displayed when you are zoomed out as they would make the map unreadable). Zoom in closer until the layer becomes visible.

Legends: If you want to see a legend for a layer/s you have loaded you can click on the right pointing arrow to the left of each layer name to open a legend window.

Information tool and select features tool – use this to return information about map features and *to select map features*. The tool displays specific information from a chosen map feature. Using the mouse select a feature you are interested in from the layers you are displaying on your map, i.e. click anywhere on / inside the required map feature to retrieve information about the feature. The Identify Feature Results pop-up box should appear. This window will display specific information about the feature you have chosen.

You can now also *use the chosen feature as a search parameter* to search for records on the NVA. To do this, click on the green **+** button at the top right of the information Feature Results window (see diagram below). Your chosen feature should now be outlined in red on the map. If you then click on the green ✔ at the top of the NVA Map Viewer page, the geometry for the selected feature will be returned to the NVA search page so that you can conduct a search on the area outlined.

Identify Feature Results	✖
▼ **Cadastral Parcels (1 features)**	
Feature	
Volume	30849
Folio	2
Computed Area	50975.081
Measured Area	50990
Pid	7381184
Potential Pid	0
Cad Type1	Private Parcel
Cad Type2	Private Parcel
Tenure Type	Freehold Title
Feature Name	
Strata Level	Not Applicable
Property Name	
Objectid	219804
Cid	1189805
Lpi	GVL00
Shape	Polygon

Use the green **+** to select the feature you are interested in. Then click on the ✔ button at the top of the page to return the selected feature to the NVA search screen and run a search on the area bounded by the feature.

VCA Data Entry

It is now possible to enter the raw field data into the NVA and have it automatically calculate the component and final VCA scores. To enter VCA data select the VCA entry link on the LHS of the Vegetation home page.
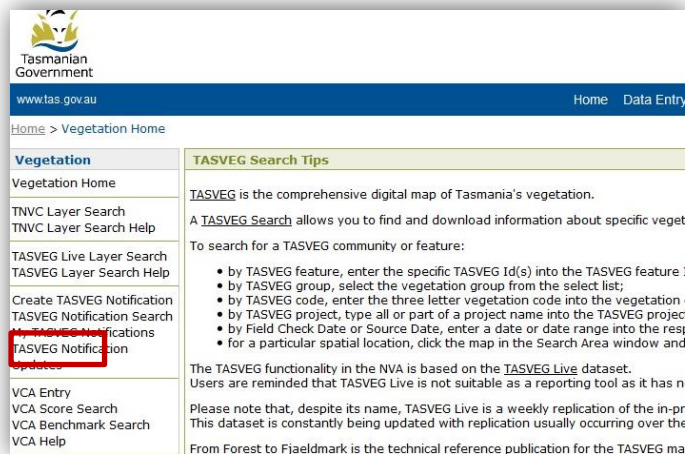
This will take you to the VCA data entry page. The first lot of data entry fields are virtually the same as those required for species observations data. The mandatory fields indicated by the blue field names must be filled in.

When the community benchmark field is populated, a suite of fields specific for that benchmark and vegetation type will appear..

The field names in blue (see below) are also mandatory and must also be filled in, as must all of the understorey lifeform fields for 'count' and 'cover', to enable the correct calculation of scores. For fields without drop down options, the data must be a number (including 0) that can have up two decimal places. A description of the allowable values for each field can be found either by referring to the VCA manual or by hovering over the field name. The data entered is used to calculate the component and final VCA scores.

If there are attachments relevant to the VCA being entered these can be loaded before or after data entry is completed, via the attachments section at the bottom of the data entry page. To attach a document select 'add new item' (see below).

Select the 'browse' button (see below) to find the document you want to load. Add a document description and indicate if that document is restricted. Flagging a document as restricted limits viewing and download to users with permission to access restricted documents.

Once all the data has been entered, select "Save and Generate Score" located on the top and bottom LHS of the VCA entry section.

The NVA will calculate the score from the raw data entered and return the component and final VCA score results and show all the associated observation data along with a location map.

Project	General Flora Data
Benchmark	AHL - Lacustrine herbland version 1
Foreign Id	

GDA94 Zone 55 Easting/Northing   POINT(595747 5580379)

Position	
	Click on the map to open a large version
Position Accuracy (m)	100
Estimated Area (Ha)	
Mapping Method	
Survey Type	
Observation Date	06-Aug-2012
Date Accuracy	Day
Observer Names	G Green (11541)
Location Desc	
Zone Name	
Condition Notes	
Observation Notes	
Missing Raw Data?	No
Record Status	Accepted

▶ VCA Raw Scores

Attachments

Attachment	Description	File Name	Uploaded Date	Restricted?
	There was no data found for your request			

VCA Calculated Scores

Id	Benchmark Version	Date Generated	Record Status	Final Score	Large Tree Score	Tree Canopy Score	Understorey Lifeform Score	Weeds Score	Recruitment Score
1002	1	08-Aug-2016	Accepted	94.5			20	15	

The raw data can be viewed if required by clicking on the arrow beside the VCA Raw Scores (see above). This will hide/unhide all the raw data entered for each scoring component (see below). You will need to scroll down the page to see all the components.

VCA Raw Scores

Large Trees

Large Tree Count (per Ha)	250
Large Tree Health %	100

Tree Canopy Cover

Tree Canopy Cover %	60
Tree Canopy Health %	100

Understorey Lifeforms

Immature tree (IT) Count	1
Immature tree (IT) Cover %	15
Tree (sub-canopy) or Large Shrub (T) Count	2
Tree (sub-canopy) or Large Shrub (T) Cover %	10
Tree (sub-canopy) or Large Shrub (T) reproductively mature specimens observed?	Yes
Medium to Small Shrub (S) Count	2
Medium to Small Shrub (S) Cover %	5
Medium to Small Shrub (S) reproductively mature specimens observed?	Yes
Herb and Orchid (H) Count	2
Herb and Orchid (H) Cover %	5
Herb and Orchid (H) reproductively mature specimens observed?	Yes
Grass (G) Count	1
Grass (G) Cover %	5
Grass (G) reproductively mature specimens observed?	Yes
Large Sedge, Rush, Sagg, Lily (LSR) Count	1
Large Sedge, Rush, Sagg, Lily (LSR) Cover %	1
Large Sedge, Rush, Sagg, Lily (LSR) reproductively mature specimens observed?	Yes
Ground Fern and Fern allies (GF) Count	1
Ground Fern and Fern allies (GF) Cover %	10
Ground Fern and Fern allies (GF) reproductively mature specimens observed?	Yes
Moss and Lichen (ML) Count	1
Moss and Lichen (ML) Cover %	50

Lack of Weeds

Weeds Cover %	0
High Threat Weeds %	0
Phytophthora cinnamomi Symptoms?	No

If incorrect data is inadvertently entered please contact Natural Values Information Section staff to request data correction and regeneration of the corrected VCA component and final scores. Contact staff on: NVA support Phone: (03)61654328 or (03)61654349 Email: support@naturalvaluesatlas.tas.gov.au or TASVEG support Phone: 61654320 Email: TVMMPSupport@dpipwe.tas.gov.au.

VCA Benchmark Search

The VCA benchmark information can be accessed either via the NVA or via the DPIPWE website at this web address http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/conservation/flora-of-tasmania/monitoring-and-mapping-tasmanias-vegetation-%28tasveg%29/vegetation-monitoring-in-tasmania. For access to benchmark information via the NVA, click on the VCA benchmark link located on the LHS of the vegetation home page. See below.

This will take you to the VCA benchmark search page. See Below

Explanation of Search Parameters

Vegetation group - This will return all benchmarks within a broad vegetation group, for example, scrub heathland and coastal complexes.

Vegetation community – This is the TASVEG community name. Using this will find the benchmark for a particular community for example, eastern scrub on dolerite. The **id** field next to it can be used to search for the community using the TASVEG code for the community for example SED.

Benchmark variant - This is the variant name of a particular TASVEG community for example DPD, Dry eucalypt forest and woodland has four variants grassy facies. (forest), grassy facies (woodland), shrubby facies (forest) and shrubby facies (woodland). This can be used to find the benchmark for a particular community variant.

Associated Threatened Community - If the Associated threatened community is selected this will return only those communities which have an associated threatened community.

Benchmark Version - In some cases there may be old and new versions of a benchmark and a search can be qualified by using this to return the version of the benchmark required.

Benchmark Type. This refers to forest and non-forest community types and can be used to find the benchmarks for all communities of that type.

Search Format – This area allows users to toggle between a 'Simple' search (default setting) – which will return a table of the features found by applying the chosen criteria, and an 'Export' search which provides three format options for download. It is recommended that users first perform a simple search and check their results before the export search is run.

Results Per Page – This area provides a dropdown menu where users can select the number of records to be shown on each page of the results table.

Search and Reset – These buttons initiate the search, and reset the search form parameters respectively.

VCA Benchmark Search Results

After running a VCA benchmark simple search you will be presented with a table of results in the area below the search form; it should look similar to the table presented below.

The top of the results table will indicate the total number of pages and total number of records returned by your search. Each row of the table represents a record for an individual VCA benchmark that meets the criteria specified in your search and the columns display the information for each of the VCA benchmarks. Clicking on the blue 'Details' button [Details] in the left most column will display a view of all details for the selected VCA benchmark which should look similar to below.

The Details button provides all the benchmark variants for that community. At the very bottom of the benchmark details page (see below) is an attachments section. This is where the full benchmark document is located and it can be viewed or downloaded by clicking on the document icon in the attachment field. The full benchmark document provides the benchmarks as well as a community description and species lists.

Large Tussock Grass (LTG) Count	
Large Tussock Grass (LTG) Cover %	
Medium to Small Tussock Grass (MTG) Count	
Medium to Small Tussock Grass (MTG) Cover %	
Non-Tussock Grass (NTG) Count	
Non-Tussock Grass (NTG) Cover %	
Tiny Grass, Sedge, Lily (TGS) Count	
Tiny Grass, Sedge, Lily (TGS) Cover %	
Large Sedge, Rush, Sagg, Lily (LSR) Count	4
Large Sedge, Rush, Sagg, Lily (LSR) Cover %	20
Medium to Small Sedge, Rush, Sag, Lily (MSR) Count	1
Medium to Small Sedge, Rush, Sag, Lily (MSR) Cover %	5
Ground Fern and Fern allies (GF) Count	1
Ground Fern and Fern allies (GF) Cover %	10
Tree Fern (TF) Count	
Tree Fern (TF) Cover %	
Scrambler, Climber and Epiphyte (SCE) Count	1
Scrambler, Climber and Epiphyte (SCE) Cover %	5
Moss and Lichen (ML) Count	1
Moss and Lichen (ML) Cover %	5

Attachments

Attachment	Description	File Name	Uploaded Date	Restricted?
		DAC_heathy_forest.docx	11-Aug-2016	No