

Land use of Australia major type definitions

Supplementary Information for Figure LAN 26 Locations and extent of major type of land use in Australia, 2015–16

Table: Definitions of major land use classes in Australia

Land use class	Definition
Nature conservation	Protected areas managed mainly for science, wilderness protection, conservation of specific natural features or species management. Also includes national parks, heritage agreements, voluntary conservation arrangements, registered property agreements, and recreation areas with primarily native cover.
Managed resource protection	These areas are managed primarily for the sustainable use of natural resources. This includes areas with largely unmodified natural systems that are managed primarily to ensure the long-term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, water supply, aquifers or landscapes, while providing a sustainable flow of natural products and services.
Other minimal use	Areas of land that are largely unused (in the context of the prime use) but may have ancillary uses. This may be a deliberate decision by the land manager or the result of other circumstances. The land may be available for use but remain unused for various reasons.
Grazing native vegetation	Land uses based on grazing by domestic stock on native vegetation where there has been limited or no deliberate attempt at pasture modification. Some change in species composition may have occurred. This class is used when there is greater than 50 per cent dominant native species.
Production native forests	Commercial production from native forests and related activities on public and private land.
Grazing modified pastures	Land used for pasture and forage production, both annual and perennial, based on significant active modification or replacement of the initial vegetation.
Plantation forests (a)	Land on which plantations of trees or shrubs (native or exotic species) have been established for production, or environmental and resource protection purposes. This includes farm forestry.
Dryland cropping	Land that is under cropping but where no irrigation is used. Crops include cereals, beverage and spice crops, hay and silage, oilseed, sugar, cotton, and pulses.
Dryland horticulture	Land used for crop plants that are intensively cultivated, usually involving a relatively high degree of nutrient, weed and moisture control. Includes fruit trees, vine fruits, shrub berries and vegetables.
Irrigated pastures	Land used for irrigated pasture production, both annual and perennial, based on a significant degree of modification or replacement of the native vegetation. Includes irrigated woody fodder plants, legumes and grasses.
Irrigated cropping	Land under irrigated cropping. Crops include cereals, beverage and spice crops, hay and silage, oilseeds, sugar, cotton, and pulses and irrigated cereal crops which are cut for straw.

Irrigated horticulture	Land used for irrigated crop plants that are intensively cultivated, usually involving a relatively high degree of nutrient, weed and moisture control. Includes land under netting to protect crops from hail or birds.
Urban intensive uses (b)	Land within urban areas with residential or industrial infrastructure. Includes manufacturing and industrial sites, urban residential areas and land allocated to providing commercial or public services resulting in substantial interference to the natural environment (cemeteries, sportsgrounds, land used by energy utilities, airports, railways). It also includes land which is zoned for urban residential development where houses or apartments have not yet been constructed but infrastructure, such as roads and street lights, is in place and it is clear that the intended land use is urban residential.
Intensive horticulture and animal production	Land used for intensive forms of plant or animal production often with special purpose improvements used for production. Includes nursery stock grown in containers, shadehouses or glasshouses, and animal sheds and yards. Also includes land used for cultivating fish and crustaceans (aquaculture).
Rural residential and farm infrastructure	Land within rural areas with houses and or other residential infrastructure with or without associated agricultural activity. Includes remote communities (less than 20 residences or buildings), farm buildings and other farm infrastructure. Rural residential generally refers to areas with blocks larger than 0.2ha located in a rural setting (away from the main urban setting).
Mining and waste	Land from which minerals, precious stones and coal is being extracted (open cut and deep-shaft mines, quarries and tailings dumps and dams) and land associated with waste disposal activities (landfills, incinerators, sewerage infrastructure and effluent ponds).
Water	Land used for water includes lakes (natural or human-made bodies of mainly static water surrounded by land), reservoirs and dams, rivers, wetlands and estuaries. It also includes artificial open channels which provide the supply, distribution or removal of water for irrigation purposes, or for a significant infrastructure function (such as salt interception, land reclamation, or drainage between water features for environmental management purposes).

(a) includes commercial and other plantations. (b) Urban intensive uses areas are under review.

Source: Definitions for major types of land use are given in ABS (2021), and are based on the Australian land use and management classification, version 8 (ABARES 2016)

References

ABARES (2016). *The Australian Land Use and Management (ALUM) Classification Version 8. Prepared by the Australian Collaborative Land Use and Management Program Partners*. Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), Department of Agriculture, Canberra, Australia:114.

ABS (2021). *National Land Account, Experimental Estimates: The National Land Account provides statistics to measure changes in land attributes over time, both from an economic and an environmental perspective*, accessed 11 October 2021, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/environment/environmental-management/national-land-account-experimental-estimates/latest-release#methodology>.