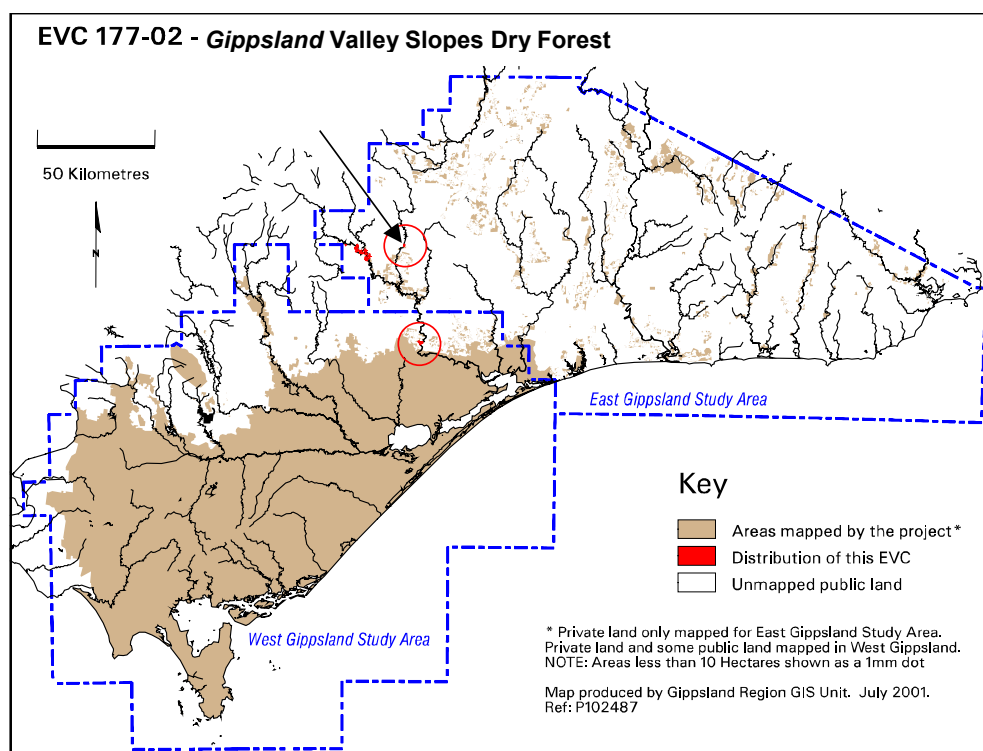


## EVC 177 Valley Slopes Dry Forest

### Floristic Community 177-02 Gippsland Valley Slopes Dry Forest

Description below is from Gippsland RFA (Commonwealth of Australia and NRE, 1999).

<b>Elevation (metres above sea level)</b>	100-500
<b>Average rainfall p.a. (mm)</b>	700-1000
<b>Topography</b>	Steep, eroding slopes above major rivers
<b>Geology</b>	Ordovician sandstones, siltstones and shales
<b>Soils</b>	Skeletal though fertile and well-drained.
<b>Related/adjacent EVCs/FCs</b>	Not available
<b>Present land use</b>	Nature conservation, recreation
<b>Present distribution</b>	Slopes above the Mitchell, Dargo, Wonnangatta and Tambo Rivers
<b>Examples of sites/quadrats/lists</b>	Alexanders Road above the Mitchell River, Farm Track above the Dargo River, Ryan Knob and Little Gibraltar Spur above the Wonnangatta River W of Dargo
<b>Total Area (ha)/ Number of polygons</b>	249/21
<b>Group analysis no.</b>	Not available for East Gippsland Study Area



#### Vegetation: structure/floristics:

The overstorey is open in structure, eucalypts present including Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora*, Red Box *E. polyanthemos* and River Peppermint *E. elata*. Black Wattle *Acacia mearnsii* may form an open forest. Lightwood *A. implexa* is lightly scattered as a small tree to large shrub.

The shrub layer is not very diverse although structurally it is usually fairly well-developed. Shiny Cassinia *Cassinia longifolia* is visually prominent amongst a range of smaller, usually heavily grazed species including Prickly Currant-bush *Coprosma quadrifida*, Austral Indigo *Indigofera australis*, Sweet Bursaria *Bursaria spinosa*, Hairy Bursaria *Bursaria lasiophylla* and occasionally Tree Violet *Hymenanthera dentata*. Saloop Saltbush *Einadia hastata* is indicative of the dry nature of this community.

The ground layer is unusual in that it carries a mix of species common to both drier or wetter sites which do not usually occur together. For example the juxtaposition of Mother Shield-fern *Polystichum proliferum* and Saloop *Einadia hastata*. Ferns, particularly common rock-dwelling species such as Necklace Fern *Asplenium flabellifolium* and Rock Fern *Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia*, contribute significantly to the overall ground cover in spaces between the rocks. Austral Bracken *Pteridium esculentum* is also relatively common.

Grasses and sedges are less diverse, but visually prominent. Large tussock-forming species include Long-leaf Wallaby Grass *Notodanthonia longifolia*, Variable Sword-sedge *Lepidosperma laterale* and Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia*. Sward-forming graminoids are widespread throughout the vegetation but contribute little to the overall biomass and are usually grazed. These include Common Hedgehog-grass *Echinopogon ovatus* and Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides* var. *stipoides*. Forbs are diverse comprising a large proportion of the overall diversity. The most common forbs include Prickly Starwort *Stellaria pungens*, Kidney Weed *Dichondra repens*, Cat's Ear *Hypochoeris radicata* and Slender Dock *Rumex brownii*. Indian Weed *Sigesbeckia orientalis*, Scrub Nettle *Urtica incisa*, Forest Starwort *Stellaria flaccida* and Southern Tick-trefoil *Desmodium gunnii* may be present as tangled, impenetrable masses.

Twining Glycine *Glycine clandestina* and Wonga Vine *Pandorea pandorana* are common climbers in Gippsland Valley Slopes Dry Forest.