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Vegetation communities of the Venus Bay peninsula

Coast Banksia Woodland is one of six Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) found on the Venus Bay Peninsula. EVCs are groupings of plants that grow together because of soil, aspect and climatic conditions. Two significant EVCs that once dominated the First, Second and Third Estates at Venus Bay are Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic and Coast Banksia Woodland.

1. Coast Dune Scrub Mosaic

This vegetation is the wind-pruned scrub and heath bordering the beach and often includes a band of grassland just off the beach. It is subject to high levels of salt spray, waves and onshore winds. The band of grass is now dominated by an introduced species called Marram Grass (*Ammophila arenaria*), planted extensively along the Victorian coast to bind the sand and prevent erosion. Native grasses can be found amongst the Marram Grass in localised patches.

In South and East Gippsland, Coast Dune Scrub Mosaic (CDSM) lines the coast of:

- Venus Bay from Point Smythe to Cape Liptrap
- most of the west coast of Wilson's Promontory
- the Ninety Mile Beach

The west coast of Wilsons Promontory and Venus Bay have a lot in common. If you look at a map you can see how they face south-west at much at the same angle, are about the same length, and the same roll of the Southern Ocean formed their extensive sandy dunes during the past 10,000 years.

Regional Forest Agreement sources note that about 87% of CDSM is preserved as it was prior to white settlement. Some is residential subdivision. At the Wilsons Promontory National Park preservation is rated at almost 100%, although it is accepted that even here the vegetation has changed greatly since white settlement and some species of trees lost through fierce forest fires last century may never reappear (Costermans 2003).

Common shrubs:

Coast tea-tree, Coast Wattle, Drooping She-oak, Sweet Bursaria, Coast Beard-heath and Seaberry Saltbush.

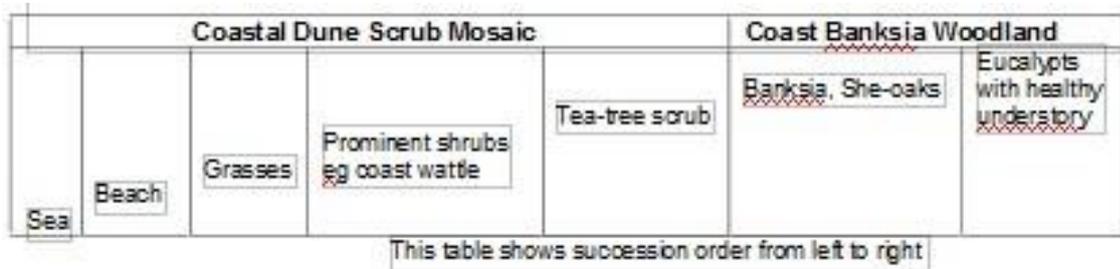
Common ground cover plants:

Bower Spinach, Long-hair Plume-grass, Coast Sword-sedge, Coast Spear-grass, Small-leaf Clematis, Knobby Club-sedge, Bidgee-Widgee, Native Pelargonium and Blady Grass.

2. Coast Banksia Woodland

This EVC is restricted to coastal or near coastal localities inland behind secondary and tertiary dunes, or on sand sheets inland from Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic. Usually it will be dominated by an overstorey of Coast Banksia growing above Coast Tea-tree, Coast Wattle, Coast Beard-heath, Swamp Paperbark, Sweet Bursaria, Drooping She-oak, shrubs and ground covers. Around Anderson Inlet for example mature Coast Manna Gums are an integral part of the overstorey.

Costermans (2003, p.19) shows a cross section explaining how the Venus Bay Peninsula type-vegetation was/is established by a process called **succession**. It shows how grasses came first and Manna gums last, the latter establishing themselves on the oldest dunes. **Coast Banksia Woodland** takes advantage of the accumulation of more fertile soils created by the original **Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic** plants.



Reference:

Costermans, L 2003, CD Supplement 2006, *Native trees and shrubs of south-eastern Australia*, Reed New Holland, Sydney. Available at the Bunurong Environment Centre, Inverloch.