

REFERENCE

ACID SULFATE SOILS (ASS) <sup>1</sup> ON RELATIVELY UNDISTURBED LAND				
Depth	Depth Code	Depth to Actual Acid Sulfate Soil <sup>2</sup> (pH <4.0)	Depth to Strongly Acidic Soil layer <sup>2</sup> (pH <4.0 to <5.0)	Depth to Potential Acid Sulfate Soil <sup>3</sup>
	0 - 0.5m	0	A0	S0
	0.5 - 1m	1	A1	S1
	1 - 2m	2	A2	S2
	2 - 3m	3	A3	S3
	3 - 4m	4	A4	S4
	4 - 5m	5	A5	S5
	>5m	5+	A5+	S5+

- NOTE:
- The depth codes above imply that a predominance of profiles in the map unit fall within the nominated depth range.
  - Actual acid sulfate soil layers (designated with an A code) often overlie potential acid sulfate soil layers (designated with an S code). Where this occurs e.g. the map unit is coloured according to the depth of the upper surface of the 'actual' layer (A0) and overlaid with yellow dots. An 'a' preceding the soil depth code e.g. indicates a strong acid soil layer with field pH ranging from <4.0 to <5.0. This may or may not be a result of sulfide oxidation. While 'a' depth code is shown on the map, no colour is assigned to it.
  - In areas where there is varying depth to an ASS layer that cannot be separately mapped at the operative scale, two colours are used to designate the dominant depths. This appears as equal width striped colours. e.g. .
  - S<sup>2</sup> indicates sediments of Pleistocene age<sup>1</sup>, so that S<sup>5</sup>+ indicates sulfidic sediments (of Pleistocene age) deeper than 5m.
  - w - Subscript w indicates areas associated with *Melaleuca* sp. wetlands and occasionally *Casuarina glauca* communities. Oxidisable sulfur % in surface layers may be highly variable and often exceeds the 'Action Criteria'. This may include sulfur from organic compounds and modern accretion of sulfides in a wet, organic rich environment. ASS typically occurs at depth. Where this occurs e.g. or or the map is coloured as per the actual or potential depth category and is overlaid with w pattern.
  - N - Subscript N indicates areas with oxidisable sulfur values that exceed the action criteria but contain varying amounts of carbonate materials that may compensate for the potential acidity. The map unit is coloured as S2 and overlaid with green dots e.g. .

- S Land mapped at 1:100 000 scale where ASS occurs within 5m of the surface.
- S<sub>LA</sub> Limited field assessment but occurs in a landscape position where there is a reasonable probability of ASS occurrence. This is usually land where the present use precludes any disturbance eg. National Parks, Reserves etc., or land where accessibility is severely restricted.

ACID SULFATE ON DISTURBED LAND<sup>5</sup>

- S<sub>DL</sub> Disturbed land, eg. Canal estate, Marina, Aquaculture, Quarry, Urban, Industrial likely to contain ASS. (In some cases partial or full treatment may have been undertaken). Limited field investigation.

5m AHD<sup>6</sup> CONTOUR - NORMAL LIMIT OF FIELD INVESTIGATION

The 5m contour line delineates the normal limit of field investigation of Holocene, estuarine sulfidic sediments<sup>7</sup> which form ASS. However ASS has been found in this study on some lands above 5m, eg. valley flats, sand dunes and channel benches. In other cases the limit of Holocene ASS<sup>8</sup> is either at or below the 5m contour. In the latter case, the land between the ASS limit and the 5m contour is designated LP explained below. Contour information may have been produced at a scale different to that assigned to this map. As a consequence, the location of contours on this map may not be as accurate as those on the original contour map.

LAND WITH A LOW PROBABILITY OF ACID SULFATE SOIL OCCURRENCE

- LP Land between the 5m AHD contour and the outer limit<sup>8</sup> of Holocene, estuarine ASS (ie land <5m AHD) as mapped at this scale, with low probability of ASS occurrence<sup>9</sup>. Limited field investigation.
- LP5 Land >5m AHD with low or negligible probability of ASS occurrence<sup>9</sup>. Limited field assessment.

LAND NOT ASSESSED

- NA Land not assessed for ASS as part of this survey. It may include non ASS land beyond the boundary established as the limit of Holocene, estuarine, sulfidic sediments<sup>8</sup> but insufficient or no field testing was carried out<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Acid sulfate soil is the generic term used to define soils derived from estuarine sediments containing iron sulfides (pyrite) or containing the acidic products of the oxidation of sulfides. The term includes actual and potential acid sulfate soils. Unless used with the superscript P, the code 'S' implies sulfidic sediments of Holocene age. The superscript P implies sediments of Pleistocene age<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> An 'A' preceding the soil depth code indicates the probable depth to a soil layer or horizon where a field pH of <4.0 is first encountered. A field pH of 4.0 or less is used as an indicator of an Actual Acid Sulfate Soil (AASS) which has mobile acidity in the form of ionic hydrogen, aluminium, iron or acid salts. Extensive areas with high actual acidity derived from sulfide oxidation may constitute a significant environmental hazard. Some soils with high organic matter may have low pH from organic acids. An 'a' preceding the depth code indicates the probable depth to a soil layer or horizon with field pH ranging from <4.0 to <5.0. This may or may not be a result of ASS oxidation.

<sup>3</sup> An 'S' preceding the soil depth code indicates the probable depth to a Potential Acid Sulfate Soil (PASS) layer or horizon. PASS are soils where the oxidisable sulfur percentage exceeds the prescribed 'action criteria'<sup>4</sup> at which treatment is required if disturbed. Testing for Oxidisable sulfur is conducted by the Total Oxidisable Sulfur (TOS) method, the Chromium Reducible Sulfur (S<sub>CR</sub>) method or the Peroxide Oxidation - Combined Acidity and Sulfate (POCAS) method.

<sup>4</sup> Oxidisable sulfur 'Action Criteria' that trigger treatment are currently: Sands, 0.03 %; Loams to light clays, 0.06 %; Medium to heavy clays, 0.1 %. NOTE: For disturbance > 1000 tonnes the action criteria is 0.03% regardless of soil texture.

<sup>5</sup> Limited or no field checking has been carried out in disturbed lands.

<sup>6</sup> The reliability of elevation data is variable across the study area. AHD refers to Australian Height Datum.

<sup>7</sup> The primary focus of ASS investigation in this study are the sulfidic sediments that were deposited in the Holocene epoch, that is, during the last 10 000 years. Experience in coastal stratigraphic mapping shows that similar, but much older sulfidic sediments of Pleistocene age can occur, still in a reduced (anaerobic) state, being buried under either cemented sands or old, consolidated alluvium. They are far less common than the Holocene equivalents, and have been found beneath land whose surface is both above and below 5m AHD. Generally, Pleistocene sediments will be found at greater depths below the surface than equivalent Holocene sediments.

<sup>8</sup> The outer boundary of Holocene estuarine ASS commonly occurs at the intersection with hard rock or other materials of non estuarine origin. It is either at the 5m contour or at lower elevation. This boundary is established using limited field checking at the boundary itself, together with the use of contour lines and geological map boundaries. There is no field assessment beyond the 5m AHD contour level. It should be noted, however, that certain lithologies on land above 5m AHD may contain sulfidic material of non estuarine/Holocene origin. Additionally, much older, estuarine, sulfidic sediments may occur at depth on land >5m AHD, as discussed in footnote 7 above.

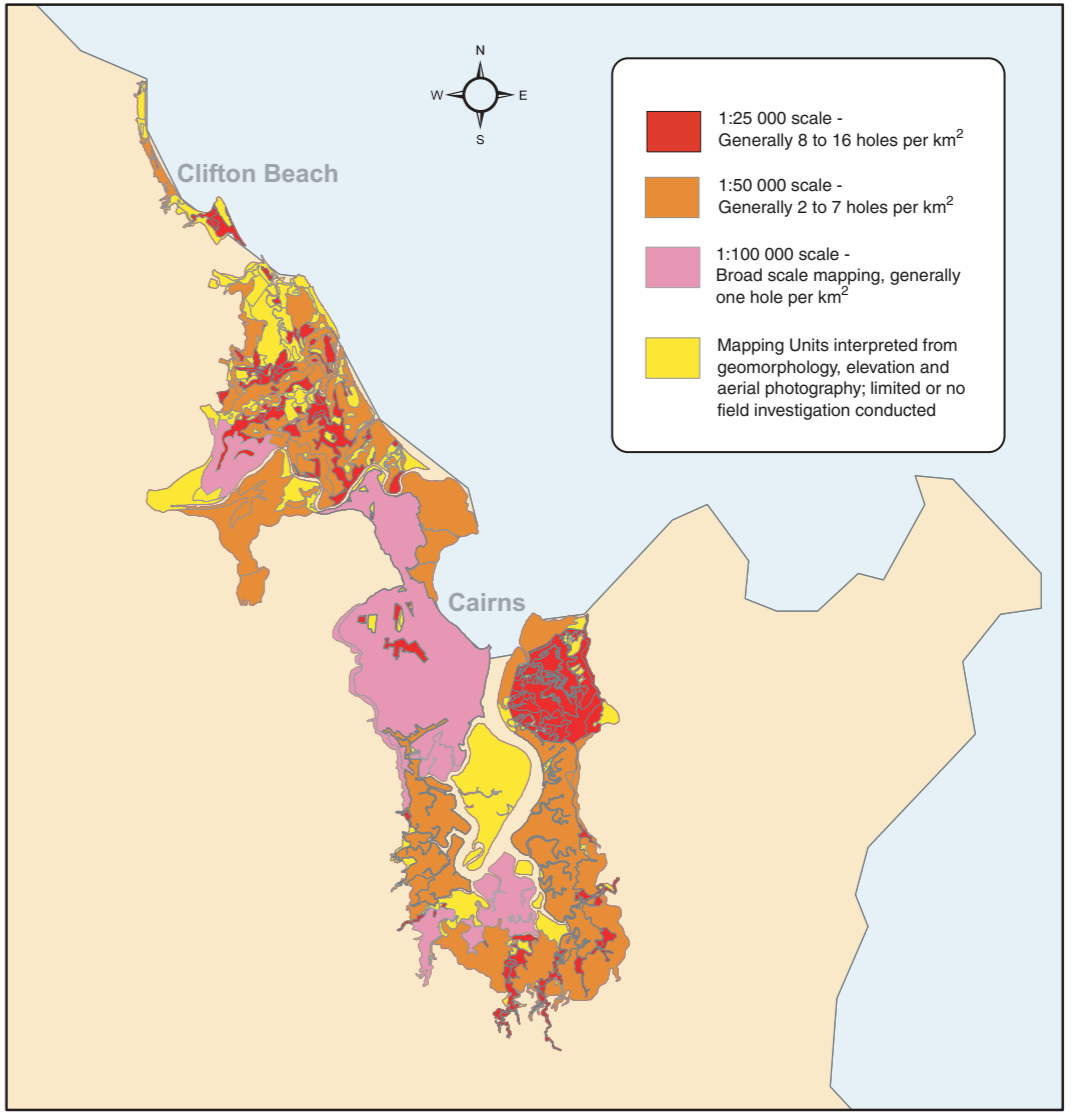
<sup>9</sup> CAUTION: It is not possible to accurately map the distribution of ASS adjacent to rivers and streams at the current mapping scale eg mangrove fringes. ASS may also be buried below alluvium of past and present stream channels some distance upstream of mapped areas.

<sup>10</sup> Beware that the distinction between AASS and PASS is rarely clear and that it is not uncommon for a soil layer or horizon to contain both AASS and PASS. Likewise the severity of AASS or PASS can vary in their distribution vertically or spatially. Mapping codes only reflect the dominant category based on the limited sampling. In most cases detailed sampling and analysis is usually required under the State Planning Policy 2/02 'Planning and Managing Development Involving Acid Sulfate Soils'.

- 256 Borehole locations where profiles were described in detail and samples taken for analysis
- Local Authority boundary
- Digital Cadastral Database

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INTENSITY DIAGRAM



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ACCURACY STATEMENT:  
Due to varying sources of data sets, spatial locations may not coincide when overlaid.  
Produced at the Indooroopilly Sciences Centre by Spatial Information Group, Natural Resource Sciences, Department of Environment and Resource Management.

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SPECIAL ACID SULFATE SOILS MAP  
CAIRNS AREA

SCALE 1 : 50 000



Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator (MGA Zone 55)  
Horizontal Datum: GEOCENTRIC DATUM OF AUSTRALIA (GDA94)  
Note: This map is GDA94 compliant

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