

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Avoca River rises near the western end of the Great Dividing Range and flows northwards to drain into Lake Bael Bael just west of Kerang. The western boundary of the catchment is clearly defined by the Pyrene Range, whereas the eastern boundary is subdued, with only occasional prominences such as the Black Range, Bealiba Range, Mount Kooyoora, Mount Kerang and Mount Buckrabanyule.

On leaving its hill tract, the river and its flood plains enter the eastern limit of the vast undulating plain, with aeolian sediments overlying Tertiary marine deposits, known as the Mallee-Wimmera plains. To the east lies the Riverine Plain.

The area studied (see Figure 1) lies in the hill tract of the Avoca River, covering some 3 600 square kilometres.

The Soil Conservation Authority has had a long involvement in reclamation and extension in the catchment. The hilly areas are particularly prone to deterioration and have been subjected to uncontrolled clearing and mismanagement under various uses in the past. The resultant deterioration takes many forms, the more obvious of which is erosion. However, changes in the regulation and quality of surface and underground waters have also brought about salinity problems.

The effects of this extend to the north of the surveyed area on the Riverine Plain and beyond to the Murray River.

Changed management is required in much of the catchment to minimise deterioration of land, and changed use sometimes appears necessary - for example, retirement of land from cropping or grazing.

This report contains basic data for land use planning. Preliminary chapters deal with individual features that affect the nature of the land and its use, namely climate, geology and geomorphology, soils and native vegetation. The amount of prior local information on each feature varies, as discussed in each chapter.

Land systems are mapped and described in terms of land components, each with its array of inherent land features, hazards and broad factors affecting productivity. The final chapter concerns interrelations between land types, hazards, uses and management.

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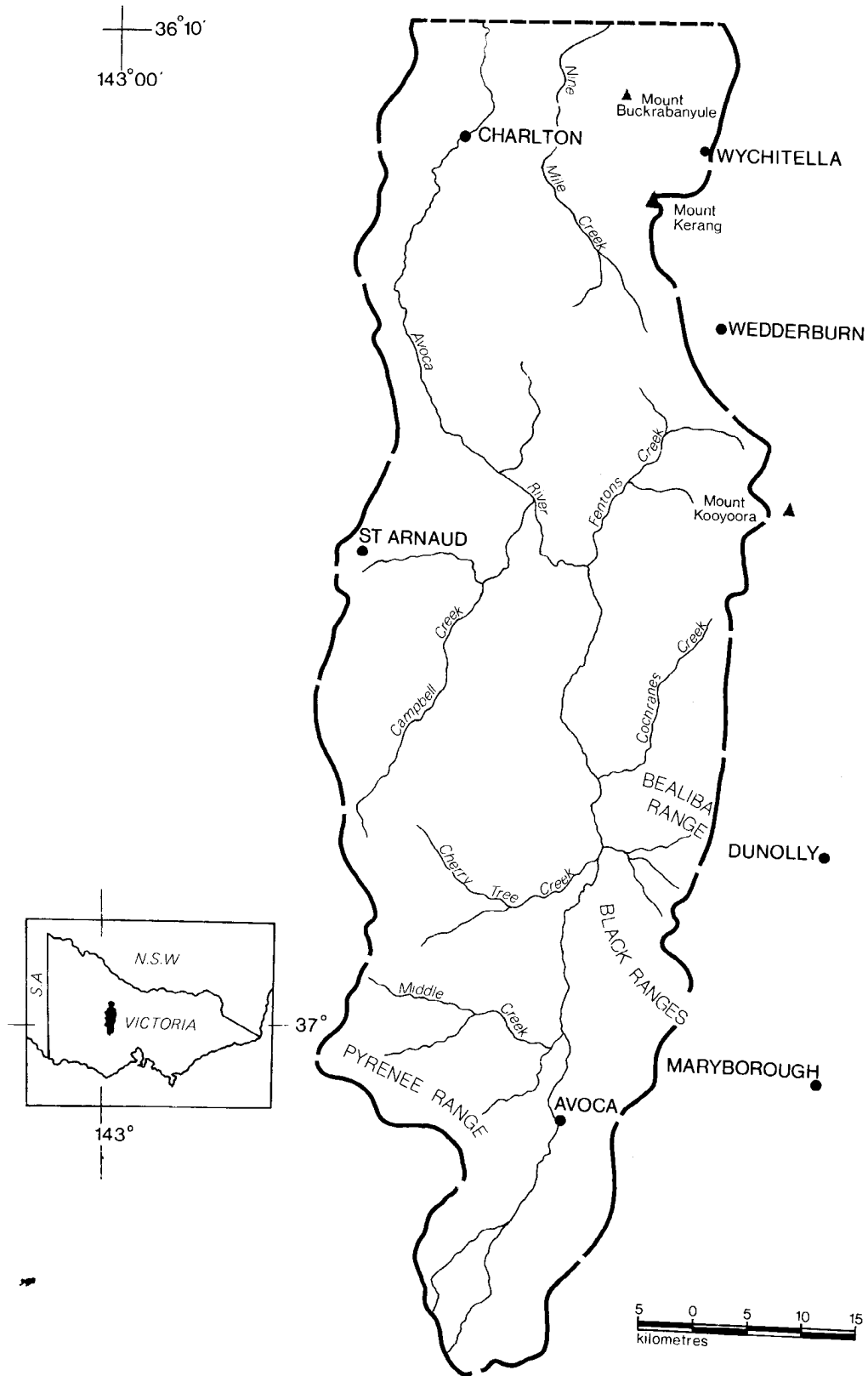


Figure 1 – Locality Map