FOREWORD

Land is a resource that provides many of our material and aesthetic needs.

Productivity at a site under a specific use can be related to land characteristics and processes, or to management practices. However, we need to conserve the land so that we can maintain or improve productivity under a range of uses and sustain it indefinitely. This requires an understanding of the effects of management on the land. Furthermore, treatment of one piece of land may affect another. Many hazards of land deterioration exist, and their incidence must be minimised. Soils, for example, may suffer erosion of various kinds, or compaction or chemical decline. Such deterioration will, in turn, affect the quality and regulation of surface and underground waters.

Productivity and hazards vary from one land type to another, depending on inherent land characteristics and processes, and their interrelations. In order to provide a basis for considering these complexities, the Soil Conservation Authority has developed a system of land classification based on integrating data on climate, geological material, land form, soil, native vegetation and land use into 'land systems' and 'land components'. Although land systems are mapped on a broad scale, descriptions of the land components within them are relatively detailed.

The survey reported in the following pages is one of a series of multi-purpose surveys begun in 1952, designed to provide a broad-scale coverage of the State of Victoria. The purpose is to map, describe and evaluate the biophysical nature of the land as basic information for planning conservation of the land under a variety of uses, and determining its most suitable use in the public interest. The information provides a basis for planning at the State or regional level, and also a systematic background for local investigations such as land capability assessment for specific uses.

The surveys have evolved from principles put forward by Downes (1949), Christian and Stewart (1953), Costin (1954), Gibbons and Downes (1964), Gibbons and Haans (1976) and others.