PREFACE

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment has been involved in formal land capability assessment studies since the early 1970s. The Land Capability Section of the (then) Soil Conservation Authority established the framework for the conduct of formal land capability studies upon which this recent work is based. This framework included rating tables for some thirty activities. Ratings for various relevant activities were presented as thematic maps, or combined into ratings for various land uses, depending upon the needs and abilities of the client. A number of the original rating tables have since been revised to include more-detailed soil and site information.

A recent survey of the awareness, needs and willingness to use land resource information to prepare or revise long-term planning strategies by rural municipalities in Victoria attracted a response from the greater majority of these municipalities, indicating general appreciation of the value of sound land resource information to land use planning processes.

Prior to funds being made available from the (then) National Soil Conservation Program to involve Local Government in the use of land capability information in their planning strategies, the Regional Office of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment at Alexandra made an urgent request for a land capability study of the Buxton-Taggerty area. DNRE staff needed factual land resource information to make informed decisions on the applications, passed on to them by the Shire of Alexandra, for development in that area.

The primary objective of this study has been to provide staff at the Alexandra Regional Office of DNRE with detailed land resource information and an assessment of the likely performance of the different land units for a range of land uses. This information can provide the basis for many land use and land management decisions to be made by engineers and planners in Local Government, both now and in the future. In doing so, many of the problems and unexpected costs that occur when land is used beyond its capabilities can be avoided.