

FOREWORD

Sustainable land use systems are those in which the impact of past and present land management upon the land resource, does not exceed the capability of land to support the land uses undertaken.

Sustainability is determined by the interaction between the physical land resource and land management. When the impacts of land use are greater than the ability of land to withstand them, land degradation results. Clearly, an understanding of the nature of land and its capability to support various land uses is essential information for planning the wise use of the land resource.

The middle reaches of the Goulburn River catchment, from Mansfield in the east of the junction with Hughes Creek contain a wide range of soil types and terrain which have varying physical limitations to land use. These limitations must be recognised so that the land can be used and managed for the dual objectives of sustainable production and minimisation of land degradation.

The report provides a broad inventory of land resources in 6700 sq km of the mid-Goulburn catchment, including accounts of the history, climate, vegetation, geomorphology, mining, water resources, soils and soil conservation practices. In addition broad scale interpretations of Land Capability for a range of land uses are also presented.

Equally important to the technical information provided is the role which the report will play in creating community awareness of the need to consider the capability of the land to support particular forms of land use.

The study presents a first approximation at broad scale to provide a program planning document which will facilitate subsequent, detailed and problem specific investigations. It is the final report of a three part broad inventory of the North Slopes of Victoria (involving some 20,000 km²) which has been undertaken by the Department of Conservation Forests and Lands with considerable financial assistance from the National Soil Conservation Programme.

There is still considerable scope for modifying community attitudes towards land use so that the broader context of land degradation is considered. If the land is used and managed within its limitations then it will be conserved for use by future generations, to the benefit of all.