

## **PART 1**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY**

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## PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

This report is one of a series of studies of the land being carried out by the Soil Conservation Authority throughout Victoria. The sound management of land for any purpose requires an understanding of the environment. These surveys are carried out to produce information about the factors of the environment and their interactions, so that assessments of the most suitable use and management of the land may be made.

This study is at the Land System level, which involves the recognition of combinations of factors of the environment (namely climate, soil parent materials, topography, vegetation and soils), which result in different "types of land", and the mapping of areas in which the different types of land are present in a consistently recurring pattern. The methods used follow those described by Gibbons and Downes (1964).

The form of presentation adopted in this report results in some repetition, but it enables the seeker of general information about an area of land to find it without being concerned with technical detail whilst still providing for those who need this information. By working from the Land System map to the Land System diagram and the descriptive chapter in the text, increasing detail is obtained. The several chapters in which the environmental factors are described separately, provide the most detailed and technical information in this report.

## GENERAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE CATCHMENT

The Kiewa River is one of several tributaries of the Murray River in northeastern Victoria. It joins the Murray River just east of Wodonga and below Lake Hume. The Kiewa valley contains some of the most productive non-irrigated agricultural country in Victoria and the snow country at its southeastern end provides the water for the Kiewa hydro-electric scheme. The popular ski resort of Falls Creek is located in the Kiewa snow country, and, summer or winter, the whole catchment has a strong appeal to the tourist. Water from the catchment contributes significantly to the irrigation supplies controlled by the River Murray Commission, and its forests are an important resource providing timber, catchment protection, habitat for native flora and fauna, and are suitable for remote-area recreation.

The catchment is about 60 miles long but is never more than 20 miles wide, and near Tawonga it is only 5 miles wide. Its total area is about 675 square miles. The entire catchment lies between latitudes 36°S and 37°S, and between longitudes 146° 30' and 147° 30'. It is within the County of Bogong, and the shire councils of Wodonga, Yackandandah and Bright are responsible for local government in the northern, central and southern parts respectively.

Discovery of the northern part of the catchment was made by the Hume and Hovell expedition which crossed the Murray a short distance upstream from the junction of the Kiewa and Mitta Mitta Rivers in November 1824. It was not until 1835 that the first settlement was made, by William Wyse in the Bonegilla area, between the Mitta Mitta and Kiewa Rivers (Andrews 1929).

