



Figure 1.1 – Location of the Study Area

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location of the study area

The study area encompasses the catchments to the Cosgrave, Dean and Russell Reservoirs which are storages for the town water supply to the township of Creswick.

Creswick is located in the Central Highlands of Victoria, 100 km northwest of Melbourne and 15 km north of Ballarat. The study area is due east of the township of Creswick (see Fig. 1.1).

1.2 Reasons for the study

This land capability study was initiated following discussions between the Creswick Shire Council and the Soil Conservation Authority in relation to the management of the catchment to the newly constructed Cosgrave Reservoir and the existing Dean and Russell Reservoirs.

There are two methods of statutory control that can be employed in an endeavour to maintain an acceptable quality of water entering the reservoirs:

- (i) a Land Use Determination, under Section 23 of the Soil Conservation and Land Utilization Act 1958, and
- (ii) by suitable provisions included in an Interim Development Order or planning scheme of the relevant Local Government Authority (the Shire of Creswick).

The catchments to the Cosgrave and Dean Reservoirs are shortly to be proclaimed under Section 5(1)(b) of the Land Conservation Act 1970 and Section 22(1) of the Soil Conservation and Land Utilization Act 1958. Following this, a Land Use Determination will be made by the Soil Conservation Authority, detailing acceptable land uses for the various parts of the two catchments.

Development in the Shire of Creswick (and thus within the two catchments) is currently regulated by a blanket Interim Development Order, pending the preparation of a Planning Scheme.

Change in certain forms of land use, which may have a detrimental effect on the quality or quantity of water entering the storages, is better regulated by the planning scheme. The subdivision of land for residential use falls into this category.

There is a need for physical data on the land in the catchment and on the capability of the land to support a range of uses and the effects which these uses may have on the water supply; this need occurring during the preparation of both the planning scheme and the Land Use Determination. The aim of this report is to provide that information.

1.3 Land use and capability ratings

Ratings have been made for a variety of activities generally relating to residential and recreational uses. These uses are detailed in Section 2.2 of this report.

While the majority of the study area is committed to agricultural pursuits, there is some pressure to develop parts of the catchments for residential (farmlets/bush blocks) and recreational use. As such development is likely to be on an ad hoc manner based on existing crown allotments, a level of resolution which enables identification of different types of land within these allotments is required. To provide this required detail, the study area has been mapped at a scale of 1:13 500 and the ratings applied to these map units.