

INTRODUCTION

The Timor West/Black Ranges study area (Fig. 1) lies seven kilometres north of Maryborough and three kilometres south of Dunolly occupying an area of two hundred and fifty-six (256) square kilometres in the Parishes of Bet Bet, Rathscar, Wareek and Natte Yallock. The area is bounded on the west and south by the $143^{\circ} 30'$ longitude and $37^{\circ} 00'$ latitude respectively. A line between Archdale Junction through to Carmanuel Creek and south from Bet Bet township forms the northern and eastern boundary.

Gentle granite country occurs in the north and broad alluvial plains extend to the south and east. The plains separate two steep metamorphic ridges prominent in an otherwise subdued landscape. Cereal cropping is the major land use with sheep grazing confined to the steeper terrain. Salting has been observed in eight locations in differing landscape positions, however the site of most concern is Timor West where shallow saline groundwater threatens a large area.