5.7 Native vegetation

The majority of agricultural land in the Shire has been extensively cleared of native vegetation. On the volcanic plains and alluvial terraces there remains only a few isolated stands of native vegetation. These exist mainly along roadsides and in paddocks. Many of these stands are showing signs of dieback and have little or no native understorey remaining. Large pockets of native vegetation occurs to the north of Lancefield and in the south-western corner of the Shire. Parts of these pockets are on public land, therefore they have retained some remnant understorey.

5.7.1 Sedimentary Gently Undulating Rises/Undulating Rises/Rolling Hills/ Rolling Low Hills

Low open forests of Long-leaved Box, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, and Red Stringybark occur east and north east of the Shire, on the crests and upper slopes of the sedimentary hills and rises. On the lower slopes open forests occur dominated by Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Red Stringybark, Manna Gum, Candlebark, Yellow Box and Long-leaved Box. On the drainage depressions Messmate, Yellow Gum, Broad-leaved Peppermint, Long-leaved Box, Blackwood, and River Red Gum predominate, with a grassy understorey. Relative to the south western corner, and north of the Shire, this is a moderate rainfall zone.

On the sedimentary hills and rises around Riddells Creek woodlands is the dominant vegetation community. The annual rainfall is high being between 750 and 1000 mm and the elevation is as high as 700 m. The dominant species tend to be Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Messmate, Long-leaved Box, Red Gum, Swamp Gum and Blackwood.

North of Lancefield, Messmate, Broad-leaved Peppermint, Manna Gum, Narrow-leaved Peppermint and Black Wattle occur in an open forest formation. This area experiences the same rainfall regimes as around Riddells Creek.

In a natural state, all formations tend to have a shrubby understorey dominated by wattles such as Golden Wattle and Silver Wattle, as well as native grasses such as Kangaroo grass, and rushes in the drainage depressions.

5.7.2 Granodiorite Rolling Hills/Steep Hills

In the high rainfall area on the Granodiorite in the south west of the Shire, open forest formations predominate.

Vegetation on the north and westerly aspects tend to be Messmate, Long-leaved Box, Narrow-leaved Peppermint and Broad-leaved Peppermint, while on the south and easterly aspects Messmate, Manna Gum, Alpine Ash are common. Snow Gums are rare in the low lying, areas of the State although there are scattered occurrences in the extreme south western corner of the Shire (Allan 1985). A shrubby understorey dominated by Blackwood, Black Wattle, Silver Wattle and Prickly Tea Tree occurs as well as ground cover of Bracken Fern and native and introduced grasses.

5.7.3 Granite Rolling Low Hills/Undulating Rises/Steep Hills/Plateaux

On the granite soils north of Lancefield, open forest communities exist. Although there has been clearing for agricultural purposes, part of the Cobaw State Park is found on this land type. The common crown cover consists of Messmate, Manna Gum, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Yellow Gum and to a lesser extent, Mountain Ash. The understorey is dominated by Silver Wattle, Blackwood and Black Wattle with a ground cover of Bracken Fern and native grasses such as Kangaroo grass, as well as introduced grasses.

5.7.4 Rhyodacite Steep Hills/Rolling Low Hills

In the high rainfall areas around Cherokee in the South West of the Shire, open forests carrying much the same species as on the granodiorite occurs. Again rare snow gum communities can be found.

5.7.5 Basalt Lava Plain/Undulating Low Hills/Rolling Hills/Steep Low Hills

Much of the vegetation on the basalt plains and hills have been cleared for agriculture. Open woodland formations still exist along roadsides and in isolated stands in paddocks.

On the basalt cones vegetation cover is sparse with the main vegetation being Manna Gum, Narrow-leaved Peppermint and Blackwood. Most of the cones in the Shire have been grazed heavily, therefore the ground cover is usually dominated by introduced grasses, with very little remnant native grasses existing.

The slopes generally have a mixture of Grey Box, Red Stringybark, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Messmate, Yellow Box, River Red Gum, Drooping She-oak, Silver Wattle, Blackwood and Golden Wattle.

Trees that prefer moisture such as Manna Gum and Swamp Gum occur on the drainage depressions, as well as rushes and native and introduced grasses.

5.7.6 Volcanic Rolling Hills/Rolling Low Hills/Undulating Low Hills/Steep Hills

A lot of the red volcanic soils in the Shire have been cleared for agriculture, although there are still stands of native vegetation along roadsides and in paddocks. The vegetation is similar to that of the basalt plains and hills, occurring in an open woodland formation. The major species are Narrow-leaved and Long-leaved Peppermint, Manna Gum, Messmate, Silver Wattle and Blackwood. Rare Snow Gum communities can also be found on these soils.

5.7.7 Sedimentary and Conglomerate Steep Hills/Rolling Low Hills

Some of this land unit occurs in Mount Charlie Flora Reserve, therefore there is still a high percentage of forested land remaining. The land is quite steep and the vegetation differs depending on the aspect although the formation is consistently low open forest. Messmate, Candlebark and Narrow-leaved Peppermint dominate on the southerly and easterly aspects, whereas Broad-leaved Peppermint, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Long-leaved Box and Yellow Box are common of the north and east aspects. Other species such as Silver Wattle and Manna Gum are found on both aspects.

5.7.8 Alluvial Terraces

The terraces and flood plains in the Shire are very sparse of vegetation. They are usually heavily grazed or are cropped, therefore remnant native grasses have often been replaced with introduced pasture. A few River Red Gums remain.

5.7.9 Colluvial Fan Undulating Rises

The colluvial area north of Lancefield has very little native vegetation. River Red Gum, Narrow-leaved Peppermint, Silver Wattle and Golden Wattle are the main vegetation cover which exists on this area.

5.8 Proclaimed water supply catchments

There are 48 km^2 of proclaimed water supply catchments in the Shire that require special consideration. These catchments provide a water supply to the towns of Romsey, Lancefield and Riddells Creek. In addition some of the water supply catchments for the towns of Gisborne and Sunbury are also located in the Shire. It is possible that these water supply catchments will be enlarge or others proclaimed to cater for the water supply needs of the growing urban centres. In the Lancefield area there a numerous water supply bores and the township of Lancefield also relies on bore water for domestic supply. Careful planning of land use in these areas is essential if future resource use conflicts are to be minimised (see Figure 5.11)

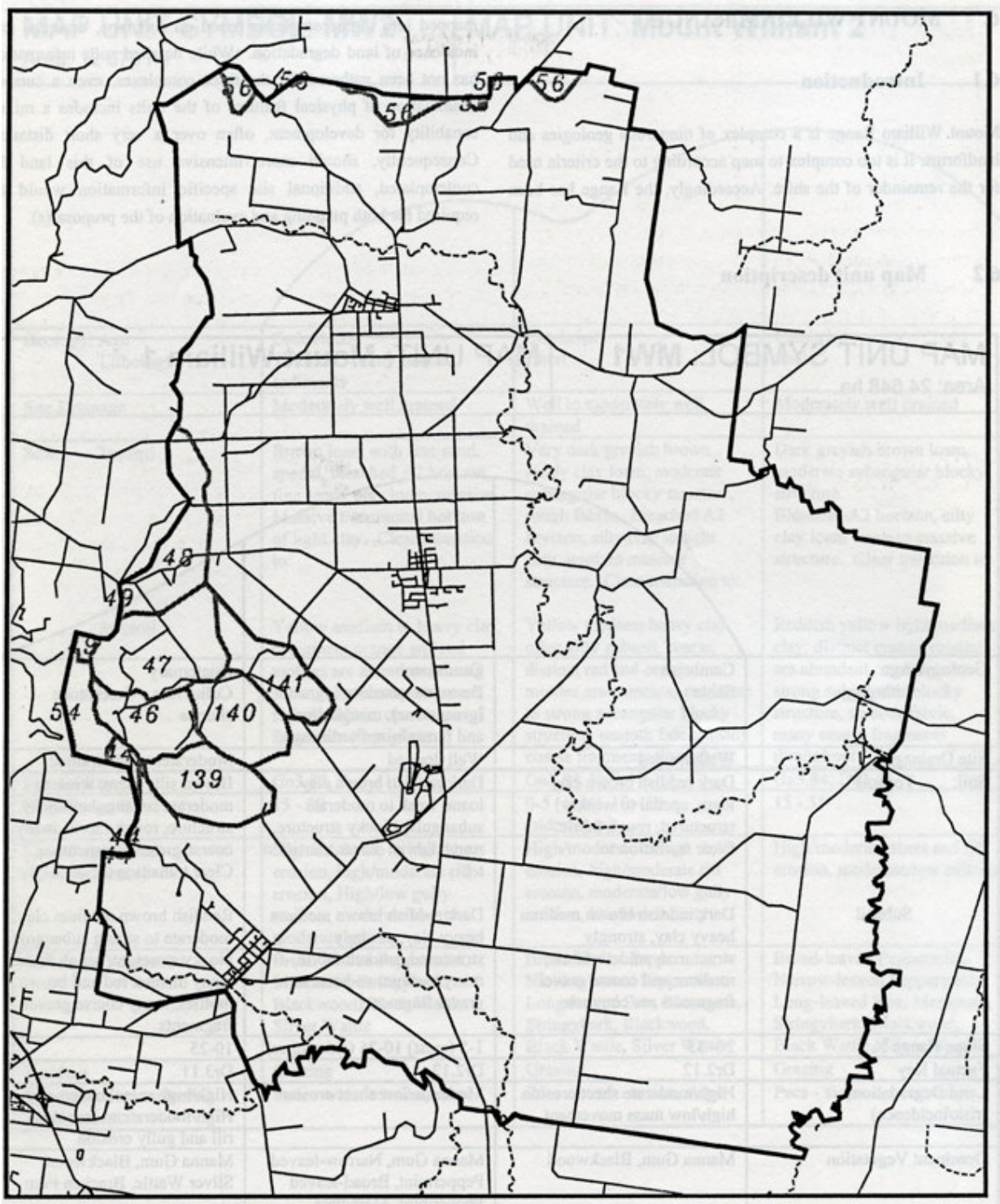

Figure 5.11 Proclaimed Water Supply Catchments within the Shire of Romsey.

LEGEND

No. of catchment	Proclaimed Catchment	Trunk Stream
56	Mollisons Creek (Pyalong)	Mollison Creek
48	Monument Creek	Monument Creek
47	Romsey	Upper Bollinda Creek
49	Lancefield	Deep Creek
141	Sunbury (Bollinda Ck)	Bollinda Creek
54	Gisborne-Sunbury	Barringo
140	Sunbury (Charlies Ck)	Charlies Creek
46	Riddells Creek	Main Creek
44	Rosslynne Reservoir (Riddells Ck)	Riddells Creek
139	Sunbury (Main Creek)	Main Creek

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