

## **PREFACE**

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has been involved in formal land capability assessment studies since the early 1970s. The Land Capability Assessment Section of the (then) Soil Conservation Authority established the framework for the conduct of formal land capability studies upon which this more recent work is based. This framework included rating tables for some thirty activities. Ratings for various relevant activities were presented as thematic maps, or combined into ratings for various land uses, depending upon the needs and abilities of the client.

A recent survey of the awareness, needs and willingness of rural municipal planners to use land resource information to prepare or revise long-term planning strategies attracted a response from the greater majority of these municipalities, indicating general appreciation of the value of sound land resource information to land use planning processes.

Subsequently, a submission seeking funds from the National Soil Conservation Program was prepared. It was proposed to undertake detailed land capability studies in municipalities with significant pressures for change in land use to more intensive uses, where there was significant existing or potential land degradation issues, or where better quality agricultural land was under threat of development for residential purposes.

The Shire of Romsey is the fourth municipality to be studied in the current series of investigations. The primary objective has been to provide the municipality with detailed land resource information, consisting of base data on the nature of the land and of assessments of the likely performance of the land under various activities. This information can underpin many land use and management decisions by the municipal authority, both now and in the future. In doing so, many of the problems and unexpected costs that would be incurred by the use of the land beyond its capabilities can be avoided.