

FOREWARD

The former soil Conservation began an inventory of Victoria's lands in the 1950's, led by R. G. Downes who saw the need to include data on land characteristics and processes in planning uses and management.

The land systems method has subsequently developed, with Frank Gibbons, Jim Rowan and Ken Rowe prominent in its application, along with others whose names appear in the list of referees.

The resulting studies identify land systems and, in the detailed reports, the land components within them. These provide information on factors affecting production, susceptibility to processes of soil deterioration, and land management.

The reports have been widely used for soil conservation and land protection activities, planning and land management. Another major user has been the Land Conservation Council, with land systems providing a key input to planning Victoria's parks and reference areas systems. The reports also have an important educational role, in assisting students and others to understand the landscape.

An earlier State-wide overview was provided by the Authority's 'Land systems map of Victoria - 1975' (known as the 'mud map'). It included provisional land component descriptions, but was not published, and at that stage many of the studies used for this present report had not been completed.

The initiative for this report arose from the Council's Statewide Assessment of Public Land Use, which required information on land systems across the State. Jim Rowan combined maps from existing reports and unpublished material, filled the unmapped gaps, applied a consistent method to identify and describe the land systems, and prepared most of this report. Simon Ransome prepared some of the report and supervised its production.

The resulting report provides an excellent overview of land systems across the State, summarizing overstorey vegetation, soils, and processes of soil deterioration, with references to the more detailed published studies.



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