6. HOW THE RATINGS CAN BE USED (Freehold Land Only)

Land capability ratings can bu used for planning when consideration of the natural assets and limitations of the land ie required. The need to consider such factors is becoming more widely recognised. The Victorian Department of Planning has produced a Rural Land Mapping Guide (Department of Planning 1981) which is a manual for rural municipalities engaged in establishing planning controls. In this manual the following recommendations are included;

(a) any desired subdivision or development should be encouraged into appropriate areas within land Class 1 or 2 capability, and with care into land of Class 3 capability;

(b) subdivision or development should be discouraged in land of Class 4, and generally prohibited in lad of Class 5 capability;

(c) any application for subdivision or development of land in Class 3 or 4 should be referred to the Soil Conservation Authority for comment;

(d) applications for subdivision or development in land Class 5 capability may be referred to the SCA if assistance is needed with formulating grounds for refusal of the application.

1. ***For general construction activities,*** the ratings give an indication of the relative difficulty, and hence the relative costs, of establishing housing foundations, constructing secondary roads, and conducting shallow excavations. Consequently, where low cost development is required, land in class 1 and 2 should be considered. For the remaining classes the level of physical limitations imposed by the land will increase steadily from class 3 through to class 5, where in the latter case the cost of satisfactorily overcoming these limitations for subdivision is normally prohibitive.

2. ***For effluent disposal***, by soil absorption; the ratings refers to the ease of installation and the risk or failure of the soil absorption trenches associated with septic effluent disposal systems. For class 1 and 2 land, few is any drainage or installation problems are foreseen and 'average size' systems with a trench length of approximately 50 m are suitable. For the remaining classes of land difficulties relating to slope, soil depth or rock limitations, and with the ability of the soil to absorb the effluent, will steadily increase form class 3 through to class 5 land. These difficulties will be reflected in the trench length and total area required to be set aside for effluent disposal, and in installation costs. As a general rule, trench lengths of 50 – 120 m (occupying 280 – 540 sq m) will be required in class 3 land, and 120 – 250 m (occupying 540 – 100 sq m) will be required in class 4 land. In class 5 land severe limitations such as impermeable or waterlogged soils, or significant risks of offsite pollution normally prohibit on-site effluent disposal.

   In all areas effluent absorption fields should be free from buildings, hard paving and trafficking, and should not receive run-on water from other surfaces. Deep rooted, rapidly transpiring perennial plants grown on the absorption field will improve drainage and penetration rates.

3. ***For erosion risk*** the ratings indicate the level of the erosion risk perceived for areas of soil denuded of vegetative cover during the course of developing or using the land for rural residential purposes.

   In areas of class 1 and 2 land the Authority will generally have no objections to the land use on the basis of erosion risk. However in the remaining areas of class 5 through to class 5 land there will be a steadily increasing risk of erosion and hence and increased level of management or control costs that will be required to prevent significant soil loss. Authority advice on soil conservation should be sought for intensive developments within class 3, and for all development within classes 4 and 5. It is SCA's view that development on Class 5 land should not proceed unless it can be demonstrated that the physical limitations can be overcome without incurring an unacceptable level of soil erosion or creating a pollution hazard to the catchment water supply.