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# **Soil Health Strategy - A Component of Catchment Management**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Water quality in streams and lakes has received much interest from the community and the Government in the last two decades with the setting up of the Victorian Water Quality Monitoring Network (WQMN) and water quality is being monitored at some 280 stations around the State. Water quality in streams and lakes is a function of what happens on land in the catchments feeding them. The Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) in Victoria were set up to promote sound land management in order to promote healthy rivers and streams. Promoting the health of the soil therefore is an essential task. What needs to be done is to develop an understanding of the hydrological, geochemical and biological functions of soils in catchments, and what constitutes a healthy soil from this perspective. We also need to develop better predictive models to link the flow regimes and water quality of streams to soil and land management because there are constant changes of land use in many catchments with unknown impacts at present. These tasks are not within the scope of WQMN and appear not well integrated with the Departments of Primary Industry and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

This paper is limited to a cursory investigation of the link between soil health status of lands within the Glenelg-Hopkins CMA region, land use and land use changes, and water quality in the streams and lakes in these catchments.