



Appendix A Consultation with landholders

As part of this Background Review we completed a number of informal telephone interviews with landholders to gain an appreciation of their attitudes, issues and priorities with respect to gully erosion and sedimentation. Conversations revolved around a set of loosely defined questions:

- Are gullies present on your property?
- What is the extent of the gully network or how many gullies are present on your property?
- Are gullies a management issue on your property? Stock management? Rabbit harbour? Other?
- Do you have any knowledge of when gullying commenced?
- Are the gullies still active? If not, have the gullies been active in the recent past? How active are they?

Nine landholders were interviewed. A summary of the information gathered from these informal interviews is outlined below.

Landholders in the Ararat and Skeleton Hills unit cannot recall there being significant changes in the extent of the gully network in the recent past. The general consensus was that gullies had already reached their current extent prior to the current tenure. While there has not been any notable extension of the gully network in the recent past, a number of landholders were of the opinion that gully bed incision and sidewall erosion was still active. John Stewart, from Kurrajong remarked that gullies may drop as much as a foot after a large rainfall event. A number of landholders in the Ararat and Skeleton Hills unit have in the past completed gully restoration works on their properties. Debbie Shae, a landholder in the Skeleton Hills unit reported that they had completed a number of successful gully restoration works on the property in the early 1980s. Incised gullies are no longer a feature of these units, as they have had their sidewalls battered and trees have been planted on the slopes. Mark Pilgram commented that one of the gullies on his property had eroded two chains in the past two years.

A different picture of the history of gully erosion and activity was provided by the landholders who have properties in the Challicum Hills unit. It was stated by Jeff Smart and Eric Carter that gullies were not present in this unit prior to the 1940's. Clearing of native vegetation off the steep-sided slopes did not occur until the early 1940's. Gullying commenced rapidly after these slopes were cleared of vegetation. The general consensus provided from landholders in the Challicum Hills unit was that these gullies are still active. Jeff Smart has intentions to stabilise some of the areas where gullying is a problem. He intends to use similar techniques to those employed by the landholders in the Ararat and Challicum Hills area.

Landholder perceptions of the gullies ranged from those who viewed the gullies as a significant erosional problem, to those who viewed the gullies as not posing a significant erosional problem. The latter, were landholders who had successfully stabilised the gullies and revegetated the eroded areas. Landholders also mentioned that while Spring Rush has formed a cover along a number of gullies which has aided to stabilise the gully bed, these areas have also provided habitats for rabbit.



This has led to a number of landholders spraying areas where Spring Rush has formed a dense cover, in an attempt to reduce the extent of the rabbit problem.

Overall, perceptions on whether gullies are a management issue or not, varied, depending on the present condition of gullies on individual properties. A gully on Mark Pilgram's property is advancing towards one of his wool sheds and is seen as a significant problem that requires intervention. Plans are in progress by Jeff Smart to stabilise the eroding gullies on his property.