

Dissemination of natural resources information via Victorian Resources Online website

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Victorian Resources Online (VRO), www.dpi.vic.gov.au/vro, is a key means for the dissemination of a wide range of Victorian natural resources information. This paper provides an overview of the website and the various ways information on soil, landform, water, marine, biodiversity, and land and water management issues are communicated. The website holds information at a range of scales – from statewide and regional overviews to a more detailed catchment and sub-catchment level.

The VRO website is attempting to 'bridge the gap' in information availability and comprehension for a wide target audience. By providing a more general description with visual aids, a wider range of people will gain an improved understanding. Information is delivered by clickable maps, a directory of downloadable reports, photographs, diagrams, text and clickable links to other external websites.

The major focus of VRO is soil and land-based information including: overview soil maps; soil/landscape mapping; sites of geological and geomorphological significance; geomorphological mapping, land degradation and soil pit site information. This is presented at varying levels of detail and includes links to appropriate explanatory material.

The Victorian Resources Online (VRO) website represents a useful model for the effective dissemination of a wide range of natural resources information. It relies on developing effective partnerships with key information providers and users; a continuous improvement approach to information product development; displaying information at varying scales and levels of generalisation, and attempting wherever possible to bridge user's 'knowledge gaps'. Evaluation of users is providing valuable insights into how 'next users' use this information. This has highlighted the wide range of uses for soil and land information and, in particular, the benefits for education.

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