

Is your land affected by salinity?

HANDY HINT

The best way of controlling secondary salinity is to prevent groundwater recharge by using water where it lands.

what is secondary salinity?

The replacement of native vegetation with crops and pastures has resulted in changes to the water balance across the region. This changed water balance has seen an increase in the height of saline groundwater, resulting in groundwater discharging to the surface in some areas. This is known as secondary (induced) salinity.

types of salinity

'Local' secondary salinity occurs where rain falls in a catchment and causes groundwater recharge and salt movement within the system.

Hydrologists believe the aquifers across Leigh Catchment are 'local' or 'intermediate' systems. This form of secondary salinity is easier to manage as it occurs on a farm or on a sub-catchment scale. In this situation Landholders can come together to combat the problem for the improvement of the local production systems, either on their own properties and their neighbours.

why control secondary salinity?

Secondary salinity effects agricultural land, waterway health, remnant vegetation and urban areas. Damage may extend to rural and regional assets such as roads, railways and bridges. In urban areas excess salt will damage assets such as street paving and guttering, parks and gardens, and domestic and urban buildings.

managing secondary salinity

Secondary salinity management is most effective where techniques target specific saline aquifers in an attempt to reduce both the recharge and discharge of a system.

Techniques used to combat salinity include groundwater monitoring, electromagnetic mapping techniques; indicator plant surveys and extensive soil and geological analysis of underground aquifers and groundwater systems.

Tools available for secondary salinity management include:

- 'Break of Slope' plantings
- Deep-rooted perennial pasture and indigenous tree plantings
- Agro-forestry in recharge zones
- Surface and sub-surface drainage
- Salt-tolerant pastures
- Groundwater pumping

Leigh Catchment Group

The Leigh Catchment Group is made up of nine Landcare groups within the Leigh Catchment, which lies south of Ballarat towards Geelong.

As a Landcare network, the Group encourages working together to achieve sustainable ecosystems, agriculture and communities.

If you would like to become involved in Landcare with the Leigh Catchment you can contact us on (03) 5341 2364 or email leighcg@ncable.net.au



Leigh Catchment Group

