

Is erosion stealing your land?

HANDY HINT
Plant indigenous vegetation or deep rooted pasture to use excess water near its source.



why is erosion an important issue?

Erosion is a natural occurrence. However, it has been intensified by the dramatic changes in landuse since European settlement in the Leigh Catchment. Widespread clearing of the landscape has been the main landuse change. It has resulted in the replacement of deep rooted native vegetation with shallow rooted pastures and crops. The consequence: a drastic decline in soil stability and susceptibility to erosion.

what type of erosion is that?

The six main types of soil erosion common to Leigh Catchment are; tunnel, gully, sheet, streambank, landslips and soil creep.

Tunnels form when water moves through a subsoil course, carrying dispersed soil to an outlet point. When sections of topsoil above a tunnel collapse, a deep channel remains.

Gullies develop through time as water travels down depressions in the landscape, gradually eroding the soil and resulting in large cuttings in the landscape.

Sheet erosion is the removal of a uniform thin layer of soil by raindrop splash and water runoff. Sheet erosion is less obvious as soil movement occurs very gradually.

Streambank erosion results from inadequate vegetation along the streambank and in the landscape, decreased soil stability, and water velocity.

A landslip can be defined as a mass movement of soil. When soil becomes saturated, the increasing weight causes it to tear away from the slope and slip downwards. Excess water in the soil profile is the prime cause of landslips, although geology, soil type, and topography also contribute.

Soil creep is the slow, down slope movement of soil under the influence of gravity. Soil creep is often mistaken for 'cow tracks' running around a hill slope.

why protect my land from erosion?

Controlling erosion will help to:

- prevent further loss of productive agricultural land
- maintain valuable topsoil
- reduce sedimentation of waterways
- reduce nutrient contamination of waterways
- reduce dangers of eroded landscapes to humans and stock
- improve the aesthetic appeal of your landscape

what can I do?

Techniques for reducing erosion vary depending on the type of erosion present and the individual situation. The main techniques are:

- deep rip, re-compact, and re-sow tunnel sites where suitable for ongoing production, so as to increase soil stability and reduce water in the soil profile
- fence off and revegetate gullies and tunnels to stabilise soil
- maintain an adequate vegetative cover to minimise risk of sheet erosion
- avoid exposing bare soil when heavy rain is likely
- revegetate landslip sites with deep rooted species, especially above the slip
- fence off landslips to exclude stock

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

