Tasmania
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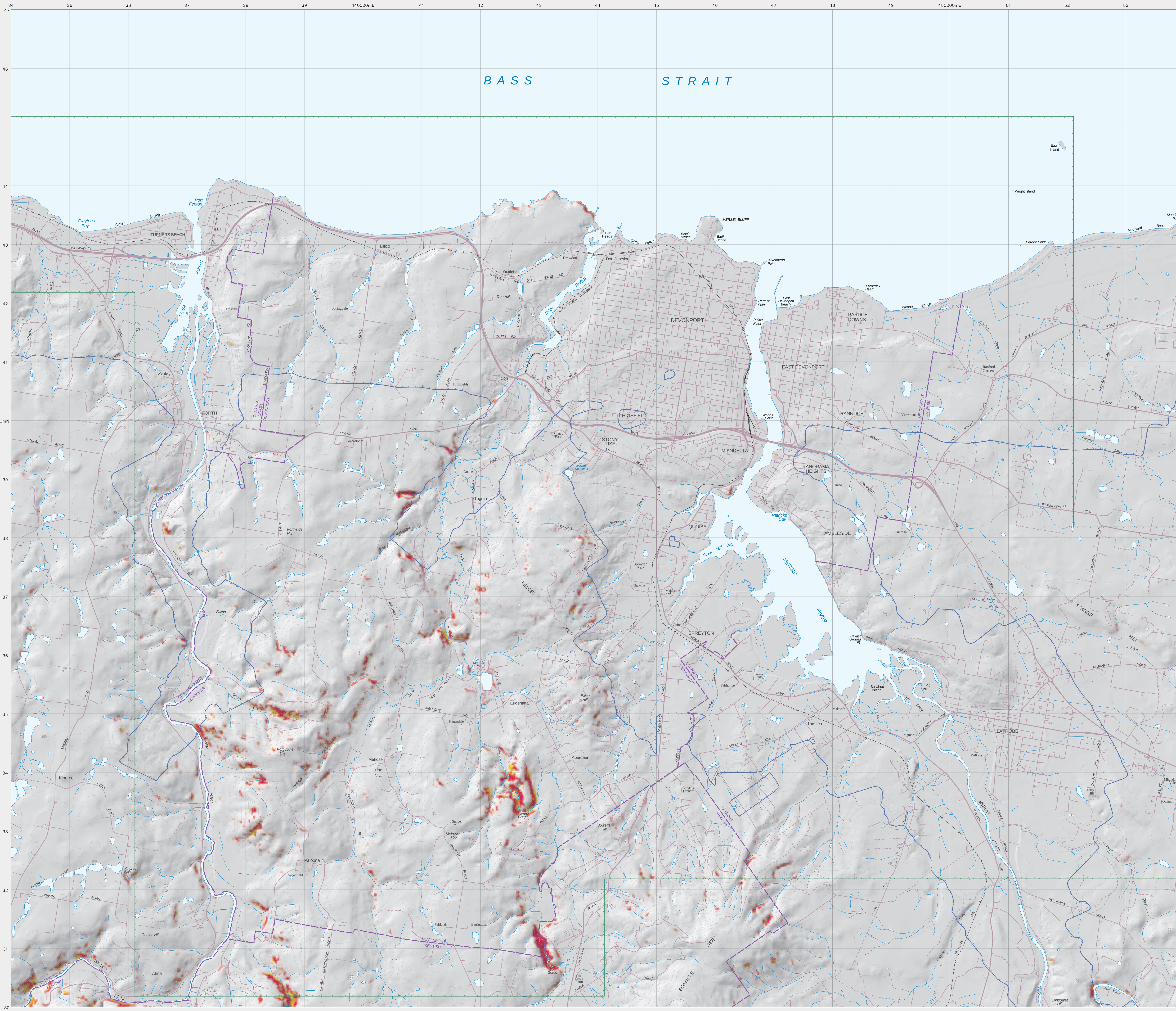
Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources
MINERAL RESOURCES TASMANIA

TASMANIAN LANDSLIDE MAP SERIES

DEVONPORT – ROCKFALL SUSCEPTIBILITY

MAP 4



Landslide Hazard Series

Background, Aim and Purpose

This map is one of a set of thematic maps addressing regional landslide susceptibility and hazard for urban areas and surrounds in Tasmania. The project is undertaken by Mineral Resources Tasmania, in partnership with Local Government and sponsored by the Natural Disaster Mitigation Programme (involving Federal and State contributions).

Large tracts of land throughout Tasmania are subject to slope instability and over 60 houses have been destroyed by landslides since the 1950s with many more significantly damaged. While only minimal loss of life has occurred such events are highly traumatic to those directly affected and the financial cost to individuals, organisations and the State runs into many millions of dollars. Recent disasters such as the Thredbo Landslide in New South Wales, serve to remind society of the potential for loss of life even from relatively small landslides. Fortunately, landslide damage can be avoided when ground conditions are properly understood before construction proceeds and, in already developed areas, this understanding can be used to mitigate the hazard through various measures.

Method

A methodology has been specially developed for this map series and is used for other areas of Tasmania. It can be downloaded from the MRT website although minor changes in approach have been made since the first maps were completed. Furthermore, the Australian Geomechanics Society have published guidelines for landslide zoning (AGS 2007a,b) and changes have been made to conform to these as much as possible.

The methodology used is based on:

- Recording observations of land instability in–and surrounding–the study area (the landslide inventory).
- Analysis of the processes that control each landslide type.
- Computer assisted modelling that simulates each of the landslide processes to predict areas that could be affected by future landslides.

Caveats for Use

The information provided is in the public domain and anyone is free to use it provided they read and understand the purpose and limitations.

The following caveats shall apply to the maps.

- The hazards identified are based on imperfect knowledge of ground conditions and models to represent our current understanding of the landslide process. As this knowledge improves our perception of the hazard and the depiction on the map may also change.
- These maps can be used as a guide (or flag) to the need for specific assessment in potential hazard areas.
- Planning decisions should not be made solely on the basis of the zones delineated on the map.
- The scale limitations of the data should be considered at all times as exceeding this limit could lead to inaccurate decisions about the hazard.
- Site specific assessment of landslide hazard and risk should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced practitioners in the fields of engineering geology and geotechnical engineering.
- Practitioners undertaking site specific assessments should read the map text and associated documents to obtain a thorough understanding of the methodology and limitations of the maps.
- Areas where no susceptibility or hazard is shown can still have issues with slope instability.
- Anthropogenic influence on slopes cannot be predicted and the occurrence of slope instability resulting from the influence of human actions is specifically excluded from these maps.
- The identification and performance of cut and filled slopes have not been specifically considered in map production and their scale is such that they often cannot be resolved on the maps. The presence of such slopes should always be considered in site specific assessments.

Rockfall Hazards

The rockfall susceptibility zones shown on this map apply to two types of landslide process, rockfall (sensu stricti) and topples. A rockfall is defined as the independent movement of rock or soil fragments through freefall, bouncing, rolling and sliding. They are usually sourced from cliffs or steep slopes and are a fast moving type of landslide. A topple as the name implies involves a forward rotation of material, usually on an escarpment, that may develop into a rockfall if the landscape and properties of the displaced mass allow. For the purposes of the map they are modelled together and for convenience generally referred to as rockfall. It is possible that a third process may be involved in some cases – rock or debris avalanches that describe the movement of a large number of boulders in a single event but this has not been witnessed in the region and is difficult to prove from available geological evidence.

From a geomorphic perspective the major areas that are susceptible to rockfall occur in the Northwest Coast area are mainly confined to modern coastal cliffs, some steep inland hills such as the Dial Range and on artificial cuttings in certain rock types. There are few records of rockfall in the landslide database, which is partly a reflection of the limited areas in which the process can occur but also because these features are more poorly preserved in the landscape, not generally visible on aerial photographs and often not reported.

The process of rockfall modelling consists of predicting source areas and runout paths. The methodology is explained more fully in Mazengarb (2005) but is has been necessary to modify some aspects to suit local conditions and to satisfy the AGS (2007a,b) guidelines for Landslide Risk Management. Source areas were determined by selecting slopes greater than or equal to 42 degrees. The choice of angle is based on the angle of repose for dolerite talus defined in published literature (e.g. Caine 1983) and from unpublished field observations in Tasmania. It is recognised that isolated rockfalls can occur on slopes lower than this value, but this is considered to be generally of lower probability. A digital elevation model was constructed from which the source areas were derived. It is important to realise that the reliability of the source prediction is variable because the digital elevation model from which the source is derived is based on a combination of disparate datasets of varying resolution and quality.

Runout paths were modelled from each source cell, travelling in the direction of maximum downhill slope as defined by an aspect grid. This is a simplistic technique that represents the most likely path of boulder(s) travelling downhill. In reality the actual path of material may deviate from this to some degree. The modelling does not take into account obstacles and small scale topography that are beyond the resolution of the input layers; such as trees, structures and protective fences. The extent of each runout has been defined using the travel angle method with two values, 34 and 30 degrees, representing decreasing probability respectively (see conceptual diagram). These values are based on field studies of dolerite talus fan slope angles in Tasmania. For rockfalls occurring in weaker rock units, the travel angle values chosen may, in many instances, be too low and thus overestimate the runout distance.

Relative or quantitative susceptibility descriptors of Very Low, Low, Moderate and High as defined in the AGS (2007a) guidelines were not adopted because of insufficient field evidence in the study area. Instead the guidelines allow an alternative approach, although not entirely satisfactory, of susceptible or not susceptible. The three zones on the map (source area and the two runout zones) can be considered as susceptible to rockfall. Areas outside these zones are considered not susceptible with the proviso that because the modelling is not perfect there may be special cases where rockfall could occur.

This map identifies a number of locations (less than 0.05% of the study area) that could be affected by rockfall events. The main rockfall areas are associated with topple failure and rockfall failure of basalt along the coastal cliffs. They may also occur on other natural slopes such as steep ranges and incised valley walls. Rockfalls will also occur on artificial slopes such as quarry faces and road cuttings that are spread throughout the study area.

The velocity and size of boulders involved in rockfall is expected to vary from place to place and should be considered in site specific investigations. This implies that the consequences will vary, however the consequences of rockfalls can cause serious injury or death to unprotected persons. Structures could also receive significant damage from typical sized boulders of basalt or dolerite.

The frequency of rockfall events in the study area is difficult to quantify and needs further work for site specific instances.

Rainstorms, ocean waves, frost wedging and human activities are all potential triggers for these events. Seismic shaking (earthquakes) is another potential trigger, but is a hazard that is poorly understood in Tasmania.

Conclusions

The rockfall susceptibility map identifies small areas of land within the modelled boundaries that may experience this hazard. Most of these areas are in remote and sparsely populated regions where exposure of structures and persons is minimal. While a few recent (European era) rockfall records are known, there is insufficient information to calculate likelihoods.

Despite the low spatial incidence of the rockfall hazard, caution is required in the susceptible zones identified. Rockfall may also occur in areas modelled as not susceptible given the limitation of the methodology used and consideration should be given to the hazard for developments on or adjacent to slopes. Within these areas a geotechnical investigation should be undertaken – as outlined in the Practice Note Guidelines for Landslide Risk Management (AGS 2007c,d). The risk of destruction of property, injury or loss of life should be estimated on a site by site basis.

References

AGS 2007a: Guideline for Landslide Susceptibility, Hazard and Risk Zoning for Land Use Planning. Australian Geomechanics, 42(1), 13–36.

AGS 2007b: Commentary on Guideline for Landslide Susceptibility, Hazard and Risk Zoning for Land Use Planning. Australian Geomechanics, 42(1), 37–58.

AGS 2007c: Practice note guidelines for landslide risk management, Australian Geomechanics, 42(1), 63–114.

AGS 2007d: Commentary on practice note guidelines for landslide risk management, Australian Geomechanics, 42(1), 115–158.

Caine, N., 1983: The mountains of northern Tasmania. A.A. Balkema, Rotterdam. 200p.

Mazengarb, C. 2005: The Tasmanian landslide hazard map series: Methodology. Tasmanian Geological Survey Record 2005/04, Mineral Resources Tasmania, Hobart. 43p.

Further Information

IMPORTANT: This map should be used in conjunction with an understanding of the information contained within the document "Tasmanian Landslide Map Series: User Guide and Technical Methodology".

This document, and other information on this map series or Tasmanian landslides in general can be obtained from the MRT web site at www.mrt.tas.gov.au or by contacting the agency directly. Copies of the map images (PDF format) are freely available from the MRT website. GIS layers developed by MRT and shown on the map are supplied to each Council in the area and are available for purchase at a minimal cost of supply.

Susceptibility Zones

Source areas.

Runout area – travel angle 34 degrees (more susceptible).

Runout area – travel angle 30 degrees (less susceptible).

Source area: An area of hillside with the potential to form a slope failure, identified largely on the basis of slope angle.

Runout area: An area down–slope of a source area where the moving earth, debris or rock can potentially travel.

Rockfall Features

Rockfall deposit.

1590 Rockfall, recent or active.

1591 Rockfall, activity unknown.

Note: Most of the rockfall locations in the landslide database are points without matching polygons. The number shown against the symbol is the landslide ID from the MRT database.

Data Sources

The sources for the digital elevation model (DEM) used in thesusceptibility modelling are:

1 – Airborne Laser Scanning

Airborne Laser Scanning data boundary.

2 – 1:5 000 topographic contours

1:5 000 topographic contour boundary.

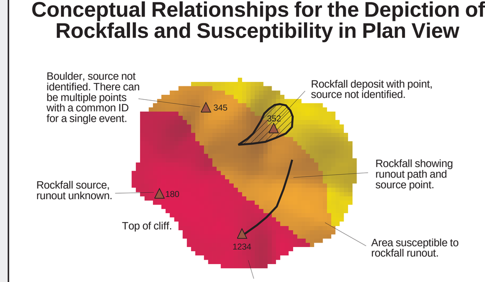
3 – 1:25 000 topographic contours

Remainder of mapsheet area

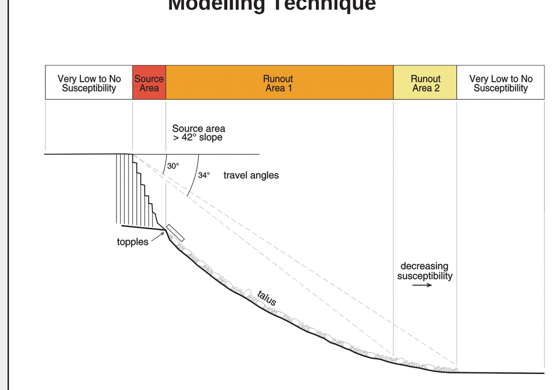
Miscellaneous

Municipality boundary.

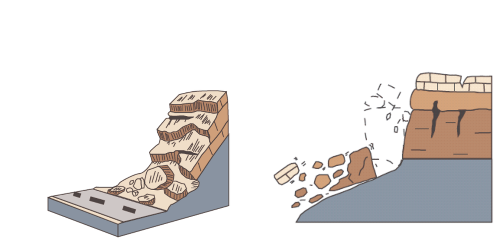
Conceptual Relationships for the Depiction of Rockfalls and Susceptibility in Plan View



Conceptual Diagram Illustrating Rockfall Modelling Technique



Examples of Slope Failure Depicted on Map



(Source: United States Geological Survey fact sheet 2004–3072)

Scale: 1:25 000

0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500m

GDA94 – MGA Zone 55. Contour Interval 20 metres.

GDA

Citation:

Mazengarb, C. 2010: Map 4, Devonport – Rockfall Susceptibility. Tasmanian Landslide Map Series. Mineral Resources Tasmania, Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources, Hobart.

Acknowledgements:

Contributions to the map from M. Stevenson and J. Bowerman.

Base data from the Land Information System of Tasmania (LIST), Copyright State of Tasmania.

Airborne Laser Data derived from Climate Futures for Tasmania LiDAR dataset, available from the LIST.

Map produced by the Geoscience Infromation Branch of Mineral Resources Tasmania using GIS software.

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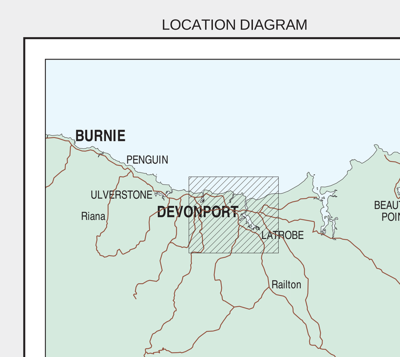
LOCATION DIAGRAM



LANDSLIDE MAP SERIES

WARNING:INKS ARE LIGHT SENSITIVE

Data correct & plotfile generated: 11-APR-2012