



Water

Let's be sustainable

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Surface water

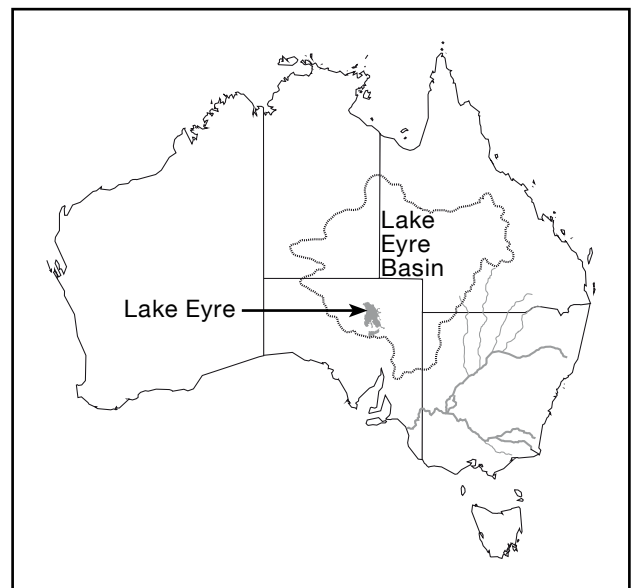
What is surface water?

Surface water is water that collects on the Earth's surface such as in lakes, rivers, wetlands or the ocean.

Where is surface water stored in Australia?

Australia has many river systems and catchment areas. The largest is the Murray-Darling system. This begins in Queensland, runs through New South Wales and Victoria and ends in South Australia (where it flows into the ocean).

Another large catchment is the Lake Eyre Basin, which covers about 1.2 million square kilometres (almost one-sixth of Australia) and is among the world's largest internally draining river systems. The Basin spans across large parts of South Australia, the Northern Territory, Queensland and some of western New South Wales. It is considered one of the world's last unregulated wild river systems.



Is surface water an unlimited resource?

No, it is not unlimited. The amount of surface water relies on the amount of rainfall. As Australia is a very dry continent, with limited rainfall, our supply of surface water is often low.

What are the threats to surface water?

There are two main threats to surface water:

1. Drought

In times of low rainfall the water level in rivers, lakes and dams can become very low.

2. Overuse

The amount of water taken from surface water, especially in times of drought, has a big impact on the water levels in the rivers, lakes and dams.

Overuse can only be fixed by making sure we use water wisely.