



Get your catchment

When it rains, you never know for sure what's going to happen! It may be really heavy for a short time or lighter and go on for ages. That's a fact of life.

We can't dictate where rain will fall but simple physics tells us where it will go if it falls in any given area.

Each catchment is different depending on the lay of the land. Some catchments are smaller and have lots of hills or mountains and others are large and flat with wide floodplains. So it's really important to understand where you live within your catchment and where water flows, especially if you live near a water course or on or near the floodplain!

Gravity will do its thing and ensure water flows overland, in rivers and streams, ultimately to the lowest point, filling up natural or manmade water bodies along the way.

What happens when it rains in a catchment?

All water bodies and water courses within a catchment have a capacity. Think about a swimming pool or a bucket – two man-made water bodies that have a limit to what they can hold. If it keeps raining and filling faster than you're taking water out, when it reaches the top it overflows.

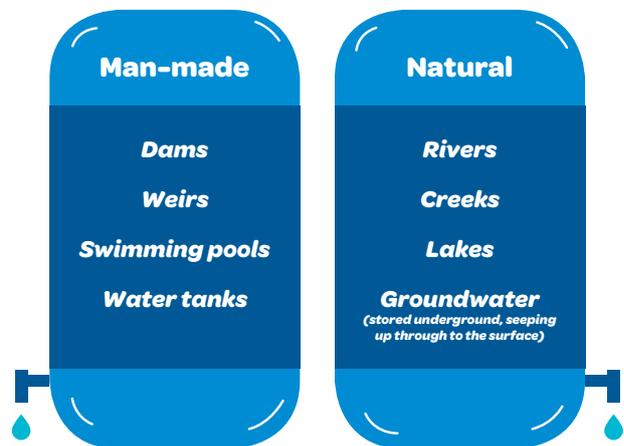
When a water body does overflow, the 'run-off' has to escape somewhere. Again, gravity takes over, leading the water to the next lowest point until eventually, it fills our natural water bodies – rivers, creeks and lakes – and inundates our floodplains.

Inevitably when a catchment receives a lot of rain, the water bodies and water courses within the catchment overflow. When they do, the excess water can impact on adjoining infrastructure such as roads, train lines and, of course, towns and cities.

Where is water captured?

Can you think of all the possible ways water is captured?

Here's a few to get you started:



The Bureau of Meteorology is a great resource for catchment maps.

Know your catchment

It's important to understand your catchment, especially here in Queensland where it can rain... a lot. Heck, there's a reason many Queensland homes are built on stilts!

We've seen many instances over the years of townships and even big cities being affected by rains and flooding, often as a result of rivers and creeks rising above their banks.

Many Councils across Australia provide access to flood maps which are especially useful when it comes to building infrastructure.

These flood maps and other catchment maps can help you make decisions, such as where to buy or build a house, or to what specification infrastructure should be built. These maps also help identify the chance of flooding on pastoral and agricultural land, or even evacuation routes in the case of a really bad flood event.

Is living near water bodies or water courses dangerous?

Water bodies within a catchment are critical to our way of life. Dams help store drinking water, rivers provide transportation options, lakes and dams can be great places for recreational activities and residential water tanks help keep gardens green in droughts!

Any body of water can be dangerous – whether in a flood or not. It pays to understand how rain in your catchment can impact the water bodies and water courses near you.

What to do

1

Know your area

Do I live on a floodplain? Does my property have a history of flooding? At what height do the rivers closest to me spill their banks? Which rivers and creeks flood first when there is lots of rain? Are there landscape elements on my own property that could contribute to flooding? Could I become isolated due to a flood? Your local Council, local SES, Council flood maps and *FloodCheck* maps from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy can help answer these questions.

2

Register for alerts and information

This ensures that you are aware of what is going on around your community. Contact your local Council to find out what weather event advice will be available through local officials, register for storage level alerts from dam operators such as SunWater and Seqwater, and follow the Bureau of Meteorology online.

