



What is a catchment? A 'handy' map

Think of your hand as a map of a catchment. Hold the palm of your hand upwards. Bend your hand slightly to make a 'cup shape'. The lines on the palm of your hand should now be more visible.

Picture your fingers as mountain ranges and the lines in your palm as rivers. It's now starting to rain, the rain is running down your fingers, into the rivers and filling up in the palm of your hand.

Canberra's catchments work in the exact same way as your hand catchment. Our catchments sit within the Brindabella, Yanununbeyan and Tinderry mountain ranges. When it rains or snows on the mountains, the water soaks into the ground. The more rain or snow there is, more water will run off and flow down the sides of the mountains.

If you look at your fingers, you should see little lines. Imagine these lines are the creeks and rivers within the mountain ranges that catch the water.

These creeks and rivers flow into our surrounding rivers such as the Murrumbidgee River, Queanbeyan River and Cotter River. The ACT has two catchment areas -

the Cotter River catchment on the west of the ACT and on the south east of Canberra the Queanbeyan River catchment. Our catchment rivers are where we build dams to hold our water supply.

The Cotter River catchment is made up of three water storage dams, Corin Dam, Bendora Dam and Cotter Dam. These dams catch the run off water from creeks within the Brindabella mountain ranges. The Queanbeyan River catchment has one water storage dam, Googong Dam. This dam collects its water from the creeks and rivers within the Yanununbeyan and Tinderry mountain ranges.

Everyone lives in a catchment. Here we build our cities, houses and suburbs. Water is sourced from our catchments and piped to our taps every day, supplying drinking water for the community's health and wellbeing.

It is important we look after our environment and our water supply. You can do this by making sure you don't use too much water at home or school and take care of what you put down the drain. By doing these things you can help protect our catchments and the urban water cycle.

Use the ACT urban water cycle activity to learn about the parts of the natural water cycle and the built features that make up the urban water cycle.

