

## 1. What is a catchment?

### Discussion topics and information

The concept of a catchment can be hard to communicate, so learning about them in different ways is necessary to develop a good understanding.

#### **What is a catchment?**

A catchment is the area of land that catches rainfall and sends it into a waterway (eg. a creek, river, lake or the sea).

If looking at a river, the catchment area extends to the highest point of the surrounding hills. The catchment area is far larger than the area of the waterway itself.

An example to illustrate a catchment could be a rainwater tank. The roof of a house is the catchment area, the gutters and pipes are like the creeks/drains that take the water to its final collection point (the tank). So any rain that hits the roof/catchment is directed into the tank/waterway.

#### **Who lives in a catchment?**

Everyone lives in a catchment!

In urban areas, houses, schools etc. are directly connected to waterways by the system of gutters and drains on roads. Anything left lying on roads, driveways and other hard surfaces can be washed into gutters, then down drains. Drains direct water into the nearest waterway, which in turn runs into the main river or the sea. So what we do at home and school impacts upon waterways.

In rural areas, drainage patterns are more obvious as surface runoff runs downward towards a stream, dam or wetland. Water that soaks into the ground, enters a groundwater

catchment, which may also eventually re-enter surface waterways.

### Lesson ideas

- Demonstrate a catchment using a tarp or plastic sheet. Raise it slightly along either side so that water poured onto it runs to the middle of the tarp.
- Turn the demonstration into a catchment model by painting the plastic with water, fields and houses and sticking on plastic trees and animals.
- You can also borrow OWN's catchment model for one week.
- Complete the word puzzle 'what can I find in my catchment?'
- Show the class the *Water: Learning and Living* poster (included at the back of this folder). Ask students to use their finger to follow the path of water that has fallen into the catchment as rain.
- Show the class the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Board map (included at the back of this folder) and identify some familiar features. Note there is more than one catchment in the Onkaparinga Catchment Water Management Boards area (see activity 2 for more information).

### Recommended resources

[www.cwmb.sa.gov.au/kwc/section1/1-01.htm](http://www.cwmb.sa.gov.au/kwc/section1/1-01.htm)

[www.cwmb.sa.gov.au/kwc/interactive/cc/index.htm](http://www.cwmb.sa.gov.au/kwc/interactive/cc/index.htm)

[www.healthywaterways.org/filelibrary/FILE2003318153218.pdf](http://www.healthywaterways.org/filelibrary/FILE2003318153218.pdf)

(good catchment diagram)

*Water Learning and Living* catchment poster

Onkaparinga catchment poster

(Both maps can be found at the back of this folder)