

# Fact sheet 1: Lake Eyre Basin State of the Basin Condition Assessment 2016 report



The Lake Eyre Basin State of the Basin Condition Assessment 2016 report will identify the status of hydrology, water quality, fish and waterbirds in the Lake Eyre Basin and examine current and emerging pressures and threats. Outcomes of the report will be used to inform the 2017 review of the Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement.

## Lake Eyre Basin

The Lake Eyre Basin covers almost one-sixth of Australia (about 1.2 million square kilometres) and is one of the world's largest internally draining river systems. The arid rivers of the Basin are among the world's last unregulated dryland rivers. They are home to boom-to-bust ecosystems that have adapted to dramatic variability in flow conditions. The Basin supports a range of nationally important natural, social and economic values.

## Lake Eyre Basin Intergovernmental Agreement

The Australian, Queensland, South Australian and Northern Territory governments are signatories to the Agreement, which provides for the establishment of arrangements for the management of water and related natural resources to avoid adverse cross-border impacts and ensure that Australia meets its international obligations. The Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum is responsible for implementing the Agreement. The Senior Officers Group, Community Advisory Committee and Scientific Advisory Panel advise the Ministerial Forum on government, community and science issues associated with managing the Basin.

Under the Agreement, a review of the condition of watercourses and catchments within the Lake Eyre Basin Agreement Area is to be undertaken every 10 years. The last report was the State of the Basin 2008: Rivers Assessment. It focused on the health of the entire Basin river system—catchments, flood plains, lakes, wetlands and overflow channels.

## Key findings of the State of the Basin 2008: Rivers Assessment report

The State of the Basin 2008: Rivers Assessment report was a desk top study based on information from government agencies, natural resource management boards and research reports. The 2008 report found that Basin rivers and catchments 'are in generally good condition'. Unlike other arid river systems in Australia or the world, the Basin's low level of hydrological modification 'means critical aquatic ecosystem processes remain intact'.

At the time, Cooper Creek was the most studied catchment of the Basin's five main catchments. According to the 2008 report, data on the creek was inadequate compared with that from many Australian coastal catchments. The 2008 report recommended that future river assessments focus on developing a greater understanding of hydrology, the boom-and-bust cycles of aquatic ecosystems and other features of the Basin system. It also identified potential threats to the condition of rivers and catchments, including inappropriate water resource development, invasive pests and land-use intensification.

## Lake Eyre Basin Rivers Assessment programme

The 2008 report identified that the limited amount of environmental monitoring and data on the Basin would be an issue for future condition assessment reporting. As a result, in 2011 the Lake Eyre Basin Ministerial Forum initiated the Lake Eyre Basin Rivers Assessment (LEBRA) programme. LEBRA has collected hydrology, water quality and fish data from more than 50 waterholes across the Basin. This data along with information sourced from natural resource management bodies, government agencies and universities will be used in the development of the Lake Eyre Basin State of the Basin Condition Assessment 2016 Report.

The 2016 report will be developed in consultation with Australian, state and territory governments, natural resource management bodies, research institutions, the Lake Eyre Basin Community Advisory Committee, the Lake Eyre Basin Scientific Advisory Panel, communities and landholders.

### Consultation

Public consultation on the draft 2016 report will be held in early 2017 in Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Interested parties are encouraged to comment on a copy of the draft that will be available on the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website. The report will be publicly released in mid 2017

### More information

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