

River communities

Rivers are the lifeblood of the Australian continent and the Australian people. They range from wild, raging rivers to peaceful backwaters. Fresh water is Australia's most vital and precious natural resource.

Life on the river

Aboriginal Australians were the first to live on the banks of Australia's rivers. They fished, hunted and gathered bush food. They made bark canoes to travel down the rivers. Later, European settlers transported their goods along the rivers in boats. Settlements were established and paddle steamers transported people and supplies along the river systems.

Australia's longest rivers

Name	State	Length (kilometres)
Murray River	NSW, VIC, SA	2520
Murrumbidgee River	NSW, ACT	1575
Darling River (from the Murray to the Culgoa rivers)	NSW	1390
Lachlan River	NSW	1370



The major rivers of Australia start in the interior and flow to the coast.

aussie fact

The eastern part of Australia contains the largest and the longest rivers. They flow through forests, wetlands and farmlands, as well as cities and towns.



Crocodiles are common in the Katherine River.

Katherine River

The Katherine River in the Northern Territory is a popular tourist destination. Guides take people by boat to Katherine Gorge, through rocky banks, paperbark forests and past towering sandstone cliffs. Wildlife in the area includes crocodiles, goannas, bats, flying foxes and plenty of bird life. Adventurous visitors can ride the river rapids in canoes.



MY STORY

Jim Demetriou works on the Katherine River in the Northern Territory. He takes people on tours along the river in a 48-seat riverboat. Passengers see freshwater crocodiles dozing on logs, sharing their environment with catfish, archerfish and barramundi. 'I live here because of the lifestyle,' Jim says. 'I love the freedom, the wildlife and meeting new people. I couldn't live anywhere else.'