

Verses from the poem 'My Country'

by Dorothea Mackellar



I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains,
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror -
The wide brown land for me!...

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When sick at heart, around us,
We see the cattle die -
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady, soaking rain...

Dorothea Mackellar's famous poem captures our love of Australia's landscape but it also captures one of our greatest challenges: how to manage our water.

Australia is the second driest continent on Earth – after Antarctica – and rainfall varies greatly from year to year and place to place.

This means that our water supplies can be scarce and unreliable.

Even though we live on such a dry, climatically unpredictable continent, Australians use a lot of water.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has reported that Australian water consumption in 2014-15 was 17,375 gigalitres. 15,522 gigalitres were consumed by industry and 1,852 gigalitres by households. A gigalitre represents one billion litres of water.

Managing our water supplies will remain a challenging task and a topic of much debate in Australia in years to come.

While it's important to 'think big' about the possibilities, it is also important to consider the economic, environmental and social costs of each water supply option carefully. With our diverse range of options – including dams, aquifers, desalination (making fresh water from salt water) and recycling (purifying wastewater so we can use it again) – and careful consideration of how we use our water, we can deliver a sustainable and secure water supply for the future.

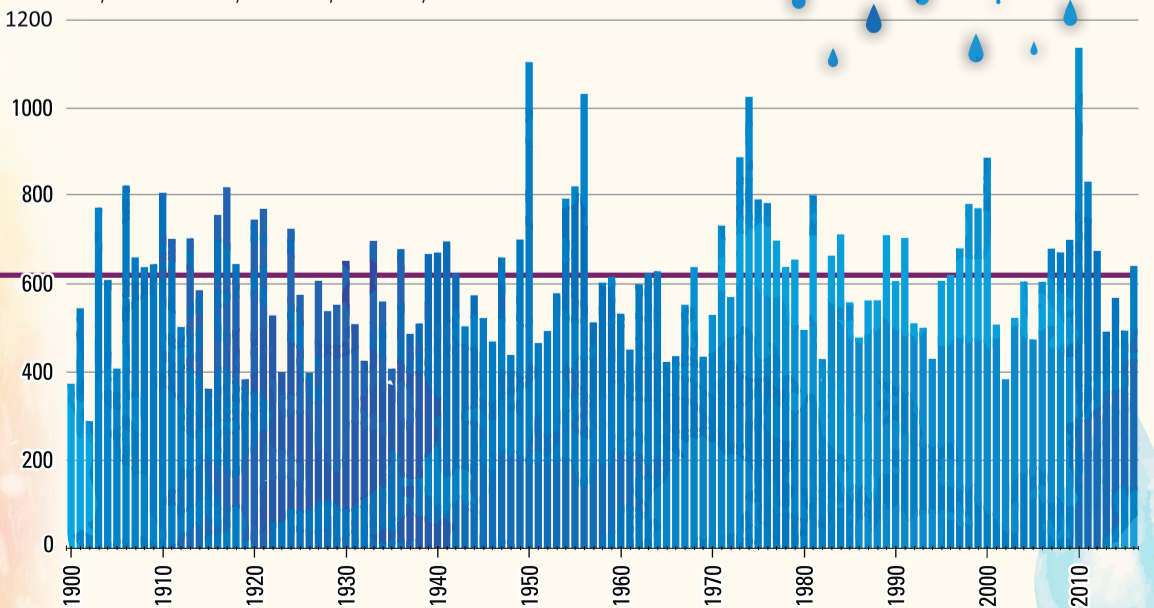
Source: www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4610.0

Average Annual Rainfall 623.4 mm

Annual rainfall totals in Queensland since 1900

As shown in this graph, rain patterns in Queensland can vary a lot from year to year.

With this unpredictability, many Queenslanders prepare for possible droughts during times when there is normal rainfall – especially, farmers and those whose livelihoods are tied to the land in some way – so that they are ready when dry conditions come.



Data Take from: Australian Bureau of meteorology – Annual Rainfall – Queensland (1900 - 2016) (CC) http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/change/#tabs=Tracker&tracker=timeseries&tO=graph%3DraIn%26area%3Dqd%26season%3D0112%26ave_yr%3DA