

OCEANS AND WATERWAYS RESOURCE PACK

Oceans and waterways are central to Australia's identity, environment, and way of life. As an island nation, we are also shaped by inland rivers such as the Murray, the Darling, the Victoria, the Finke, and the Murrumbidgee. We depend on healthy water systems in many ways. This Resource Pack provides Units with a wide range of activities, which incorporate the Australian Guide Program, whilst providing opportunities to learn about our oceans and waterways.



Cultural Significance

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, oceans and waterways hold deep cultural, spiritual, and practical importance. Waterways are connected to Dreaming stories, and traditional practices. Respecting and protecting these waters is closely tied to preserving cultural heritage and knowledge.

Environmental Importance

Our oceans and waterways support amazing biodiversity. Rivers, wetlands, and estuaries provide vital habitats for birds, amphibians, and plants, which help maintain ecological balance. These systems also play a role in regulating climate by absorbing carbon dioxide and distributing heat around the planet.

Economic Value

Oceans and waterways are vital to Australia's economy. Industries such as fishing, aquaculture, shipping, and tourism rely heavily on healthy marine and freshwater systems. Inland waterways support agriculture by providing irrigation.

Recreation and Lifestyle

Australians have a strong connection to water through activities like swimming, surfing, canoeing, and other activities. Beaches, rivers, and lakes are central to leisure, community life, and wellbeing. Access to clean, safe waterways enhances quality of life and encourages outdoor activity.



Challenges and Responsibility

Our oceans and waterways are not just natural features - they are life-supporting systems that shape our environment, culture, and lifestyle.

OCEAN & WATERWAYS RESOURCE

How to Use this Resource: *This resource pack is designed to help girls. Guides take the lead while working in partnership with their Leaders. Use the activities as a starting point for conversations with your Guides—invite them to choose what they want to explore, suggest their own ideas, or adapt activities to suit their interests. Leaders can support by offering guidance, ensuring safety, and helping turn the girls' decisions into action. Talk about the skills the Guides will explore as they undertake these challenges.*

PEOPLE

Culture, Community &
Connection

- ❑ **Run an awareness campaign** about the oceans, lakes, wetlands or a river near your Unit. Involve your District families; with permission display on School noticeboards, Unit/ District social media. Think about and consider: reduced plastic use; protection of marine life; respect for beaches and waterways. *Skills: Researching skills, environmental stewardship, digital literacy, advocacy and community engagement skills.*
- ❑ **Plan and deliver a water way clean-up.** Head to a nearby ocean/waterway and organise a clean-up. Supply gloves and bags, talk about how rubbish affects marine life. *Skills: Project planning, leadership and teamwork. Guides explore risk awareness and civic responsibility to the local community.*
- ❑ **Rip & Water Hazard Challenge:** Learn to identify and respond safely to rips and water hazards. Use photos or diagrams to spot safe and unsafe swimming areas, and discuss dangers such as submerged rocks, strong currents, eddies, and rips in rivers and oceans. Create a Beach Safety Map showing flags, danger zones, and lifeguard or surfing areas. *Skills: Risk awareness, safe-decision making and observation skills.*

Remember, we have a process for planning activities in our Girl Guide Program:

1. DISCOVER
2. DECIDE
3. PLAN
4. DO
5. EVALUATE



Discover and **Decide** what you are going to do. You then need to **Plan** the activity and **Do** it.

After the activity you need to **Evaluate** how your activity went and share your findings or what you may have learnt with your Patrol, Unit or Peer group.



❑ **Plastic-Free Day Challenge:** Go plastic-free for a whole day (or meeting, maybe a camp?), track what's hardest to replace. Discuss how these changes could help the environment and waterways. Learn how to reduce single-use plastics at home; Do a plastic audit of your weekly rubbish. *Skills: Critical thinking and problem solving to find creative alternatives. Guides self-reflect on own habits for sustainable living.*

❑ **Stormwater Catchment Walk:** Explore your local area to find drains, gutters, and runoff paths leading to waterways. Observe what's in them and where they flow. *Skills: Environmental observation and civic responsibility.*



❑ **Marine Life Facts:** Learn & share interesting facts about Australian marine animals such as sea turtles, crustaceans, and dolphins. Encourage your Patrol or Unit to pick a favourite marine animal and present a fun fact about it to your Patrol or Unit. *Skills: Research and confidence in presentation skills.*



PRACTICAL

Hands-On Creativity,
problem solving,
initiative

❑ **Ocean Microplastics Hunt (Safe Simulation):** Explore how hard it is to remove microplastics once they enter the waterways. Using a tray, fill with water, sand, small beads, confetti etc to simulate pollution. Use sieves, spoons, or tweezers to try removing the "microplastics." *Skills: Observation, problem-solving, and understanding pollution challenges in waterways.*

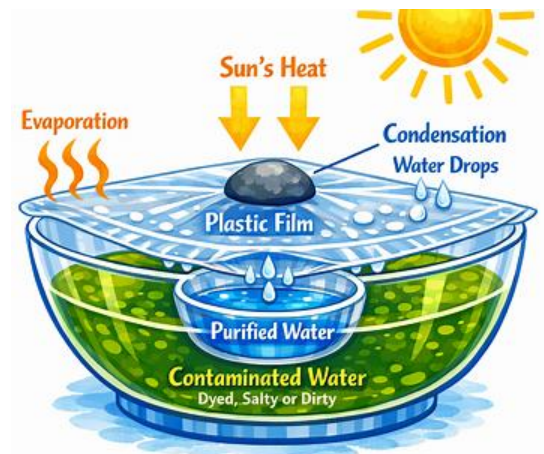
❑ **Water Quality Testing:** Compare different water samples by checking clarity, colour, smell, and sediment. Test pH using a pool kit and discuss why pH matters for healthy waterways. *Skills: Scientific testing, data comparison, and environmental awareness.*





**STOP OCEAN
PLASTIC POLLUTION**

- ❑ **Create a “low-waste kit” for camps:** Most of us already do this, but we can learn why it is important to protect the natural environment; reduce landfill and to learn sustainable habits we can use every day. *Skills: Developing practical sustainability habits.*
- ❑ **Water Testing Scavenger Hunt:** Set up stations with water-related challenges: find a drain to the ocean, a native plant preventing erosion, or a water-saving device. *Skills: Active investigation and applying environmental knowledge outdoors.*
- ❑ **Mini Solar Still:** Place a small bowl inside a large one filled with salty or coloured water. Cover with plastic wrap with small weight (pebble) on top of the wrap, then leave in sunlight to show how evaporation and condensation can purify water. *Skills: Scientific investigation and understanding the water cycle.*



- ❑ **Reusable Item:** Learn why using something more than once can be fun as well as sustainable. Try making things from different types of material such as paper and plastic. Try making something you can use, such as beeswax wraps. See how long your reusable item lasts. *Skills: Understanding sustainable designs using creative and problem solving skills.*



DIY Recycled Bottle Paddleboat

Labels in the image:
Wooden skewers
Plastic bottles
Plastic spoons for paddle
Twisted rubber band



□ **Sort rubbish** into recycling, landfill, and compost; learn why these categories exist; is there another category you'd like to create; how does your council or territory government separate the different types of rubbish. *Skills: Building environmental awareness and understanding of government regulations.*

□ **Build a Natural Filter:** Using an upside-down plastic bottle with the end removed, layer sand, gravel, charcoal, and cloth or coffee filter to make a simple water filter. Test how well it cleans muddy water (not for drinking). *Skills: Problem-solving and understanding water treatment processes.*

□ **Water Currents Marble Race** Use straws or fans to create "currents" in a tray and race marbles or small objects. Discuss how currents affect swimming, boating, and pollution movement. *Skills: Exploring physical forces and predicting movement*



□ **Water Science Experiments:** Try some simple experiments, like showing how oil floats on water- how can we get rid of oil from water? What happens to wildlife when there is an oil spill? Discuss pollution and the effects on ocean & waterways life. Think about the different types of pollution and where they come from. *Skills: Exploring pollution and strengthening scientific thinking.*



PHYSICAL

Movement, Adventure
& Outdoors



- ❑ **Reusable Plastic Free Craft:** Make a reusable item such as a decorated water bottle, beeswax wrap, or fabric snack bag. *Skills: Sustainable design and creative confidence through practical, low-waste making.*
- ❑ **Create an ocean-themed game and teach other Guides.** Work out what theme you'd like to have; are there any games you can adapt? Do you want to think of a new game? Use your imagination to adapt the game for different age groups. *Skills: Creativity, leadership, communication and adaptation.*
- ❑ **Water Adventure Day with your Unit** – plan a day pond dipping, paddleboarding, kayaking, canoeing, or swimming. *Skills: Outdoor confidence, water safety awareness, teamwork, and responsible adventure skills.*
- ❑ **Go on a waterway exploration walk**, either with your Unit or by yourself. What can you see that should be there; what shouldn't be there; what simple changes could be made to reduce pollution in the waterway. *Skills: Observation and environmental awareness.*
- ❑ **Recycled Sea Creature Projects:** Create sea creatures using recycled materials like egg cartons, cardboard, and old bottles. This is a great way to discuss recycling and ocean conservation. *Skills: sustainable creativity and problem solving and fine motor skills.*
- ❑ **Ocean Photography or Poetry:** Photograph water environments or write a poem/reflection. Some theme ideas: "What the ocean/waterways gives me"; "If the ocean/waterway could speak". Share your photographs or poetry with your unit. *Skills: Creative expression and communication.*



SELF

Identity, Growth & Reflection



- **Reflect and write** a short poem or journal entry: think about what an ocean or waterway means to you. *Skills: Self expression.*
- **Learn about an issue** that affects the ocean or waterway near you and share your thoughts with your Patrol or Unit. *Skills: Critical thinking and advocacy.*
- **Coral Bleaching:** Explore why the Great Barrier Reef is under threat from warming oceans, pollution, and extreme weather. Use images or simple models to compare healthy vs. bleached coral, then map the main stressors affecting the reef. Discuss how Guides can help protect marine environments. *Skills: Understanding climate impacts, ecosystems, and environmental stewardship.*

MORE CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES

Pledge: Encourage your Patrol or Unit to write or draw a pledge about how they can help protect their local waterway. Ask them to share it with their Patrol or Unit

Create an Ocean and Waterways

Quiz – Australia Edition: You can include topics about pollution of rivers, oceans, marine parks and wetlands: consider the Great Barrier Reef, Jervis Bay Marine Park; Murray Darling Basin; Lake Eyre or Kakadu.

- **DIY Aquarium:** Use a clear plastic container and fill it with water, pebbles, and plastic sea animals to teach about different ocean or waterway habitats. *Skills: Understanding habitats and ecology*
- **Songs and Dance:** Learn some water-themed songs, or have a dance party with music inspired by the ocean and other waterways. *Skills: Creative expression*
- **Story Time:** Read books about the animals/insects/marine life found in your ocean or waterway. Follow up with a drawing or colouring session.

