COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
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Conti, L., Easton, M., Saldais, M., Dumovic, V., & Kostecki, R. (2016). *Humanities 7: Western Australian Curriculum.* South Melbourne, Victoria: Oxford University Press.

2.18 Managing water scarcity

Water is most difficult to manage when there is not enough to go around. Water becomes scarce when the demand for clean water exceeds the available supply. It is one of the biggest issues facing Africa, the second-driest inhabited continent in the world after Australia. Whereas all Australians have access to clean water, millions of Africans face water shortages. Of the 800 million people who live in Africa, more than 300 million live in water-scarce areas.

The cause

The main reasons for water scarcity in Africa are:

- a large and fast-growing population
- large areas with low and variable rainfall
- poor water quality
- lack of water infrastructure, such as pipelines.

The problem

Water scarcity contributes to the deaths of many African children. Local water sources may contain harmful bacteria that cause diseases, such as typhoid and dysentery. These diseases are spread by drinking and washing in contaminated water.

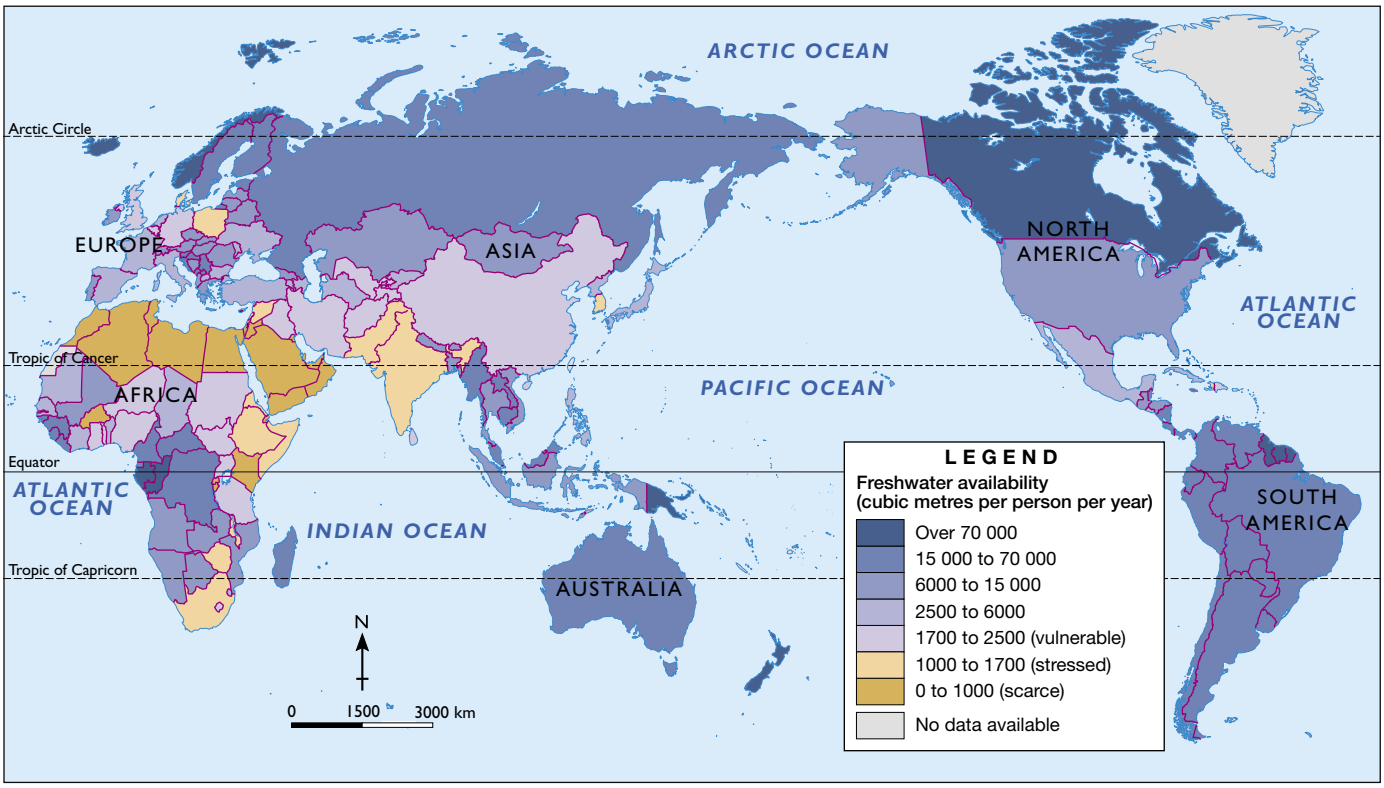
The solution

The most common solution to water scarcity in African villages is digging a well. A water well is created by digging or boring into the ground in order to reach groundwater in underground aquifers. Clean water from a well stops people catching any water-borne diseases. Providing clean and drinkable water for communities across Africa is a high priority for many of its **developing countries** and international relief agencies, such as World Vision and AusAID.

Source 2 This woman in Zambia is collecting water from a dried-up river bed half a kilometre from her house. She uses a saucepan to fill the large container, which she will carry on her head or shoulder back to her home.

Source 1 A young girl in Guinea-Bissau enjoys clean water from a new well that has been sponsored by the World Vision aid agency.

WORLD: FRESHWATER AVAILABILITY PER PERSON PER YEAR, 2007



Source 3

Source: Oxford University Press

Source 4 A woman fills a water container from a well in the desert in Niger. In most African societies, women are the collectors and managers of the family water supply. African women can spend up to 60 per cent of their day collecting water, especially where water sources are far from the village.

Check your learning 2.18

Remember and understand

1 What is water scarcity?

2 Why is water scarcity such a problem in Africa?

3 What problems does water scarcity cause, especially for women and young children?

Apply and analyse

4 Look carefully at Source 3.

- **a** Describe the area of Africa that suffers most from water scarcity.
- **b** Australia is the driest inhabited continent on Earth. Does it have a water scarcity problem? Why or why not?
- **c** Compare freshwater availability in Australia and New Zealand. Which country has access to more fresh water? Why do you think this might be the case?

Evaluate and create

5 Create a poster or PowerPoint presentation highlighting the problems of water scarcity in Africa and how it affects people's lives.