



SEASONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION SERVICE SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

menu page = 019 725 300

this page = 019 725 301



SOI MESSAGE - 3 APRIL 1996

SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE	
January 96	** +7.7
February 96	* -0.1
March 96	* +5.3

Last 30 days	+ 3.7
Last 90 days (b)	+ 4.8

SOI trend (b) during February - March was Phase 4 (i.e. rising ↗).	

NOTE : (a) SOI values calculated using mean barometric pressures from 1880 to 1992 - subject to revision by Bureau of Meteorology.

* Preliminary value ** Revised value

(b) See AUSTRALIAN RAINMAN for effects of SOI on rainfall at your location.

REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

Established climate forecast systems have their poorest skill (accuracy) at this time of year. For this reason our climate forecast systems suggest a 50% probability of receiving median rain in most of Queensland and NSW over the next three months. Exceptions in Queensland to the Southern Burnett where probabilities are about 35%, and a small area in south-west Queensland where probabilities are about 65%.

In NSW, the exceptions are the far north coast and far western areas, where probabilities are near 25%, and a small area near Canberra where probabilities are about 65%.

The next passage of the 30- to 50-day Oscillation is due about the third week of April.

Warmer-than-normal sea-surface temperatures in the western Pacific Ocean (including the Coral Sea) may

be cooling. There appears to be some warming of the cooler-than-normal waters in the far eastern equatorial Pacific.

The SOI trend during January-February was Phase 5 (i.e. near zero), which suggests a high probability of a late finish to the frost season this year.

Some experimental General Circulation Models (including that of the Bureau of Meteorology) are suggesting possible redevelopment of an El Niño in the winter period. Please note these models are experimental and should be used with caution. Alternatively, established statistical forecast systems will not provide reliable indications for winter/spring until late autumn.

The average SOI over the last 30 days was +3.7 . The probability of receiving median rainfall is now about 50% for most of Queensland and New South Wales for the April to June period. Rainfall prospects beyond autumn are uncertain.

THE BOTTOM LINE

To obtain more information for your location, we recommend combined use of the AUSTRALIAN RAINMAN package and the Bureau of Meteorology's Seasonal Climate Outlook. The WHEATMAN computer package is recommended for use in Queensland and northern New South Wales. Also a lot of additional information is available on our Internet World Wide Web service, 'The Long Paddock', at URL - <http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/longpdk/>.

The next SOI HOTLINE update will be on the 10th of April (usually by 5pm).

Climate Impacts and Spatial Systems - Department of Primary Industries

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If you would like any further information, please contact Col Paull on (07) 389 69587, or one of the Risk Management Co-Ordinators located at Cloncurry (077) 421 311, Charters Towers (077) 872 155, Emerald (079) 828 801, Kingaroy (071) 621 355 and Roma (076) 229 999

Some information courtesy Bureau of Meteorology,

CSIRO and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, USA