



# SEASONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION SERVICE SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

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## SOI MESSAGE - 31 JANUARY 1997

SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE		
November 96	*	- 0.8
December 1996	*	+7.3
January 97	*	+3.5
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Last 30 days		+ 3.5
Last 90 days (b)		+ 3.6
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SOI trend (b) during December - January was Phase 2 (i.e. positive ▲).		
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.		

The Bureau of Meteorology are forecasting above average rainfall for the total January-March period in an area around the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The next passage of the 30- to 50-day Oscillation is due on 26 - 31 January, and then within the period of 1 - 9 March.

Monthly sea-surface temperatures now represent a La Niña pattern. They are cooler-than-normal in the eastern equatorial Pacific, and warmer-than-normal over most of the western equatorial Pacific and the central and eastern Indian Ocean. However, the latest weekly sea-surface temperature map shows colder-than-normal temperatures in the Coral Sea, and an area of warmer-than-normal water developing off the coast of Chile.

The National Climate Centre advise that easterly winds near the surface have re-strengthened over the equatorial Pacific.

Pasture growth forecasts indicate that although average summer rainfall is the most likely outcome this year, this may not produce median pasture growth where grasses have been weakened by several years of drought; however, pasture quality and animal performance should be excellent.

*The average SOI over the previous 30 days was +3.5. Climate forecasts continue to suggest a high probability of near average rainfall for most of Queensland during the January to March period.*

### THE BOTTOM LINE

### REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

#### 'REASONABLE RAINFALL STILL MOST LIKELY'

DPI/DNR's review of current seasonal climate forecasts indicates Qld/NSW rainfall prospects remain reasonable, although with some variation from location to location.

The probability of receiving median rainfall, during the January to March period, is about 50% over most of eastern Australia. Exceptions in Queensland are in the south-west corner and an area to the north-west of Emerald where the probabilities are about 35%; and areas inland from Mossman, around the Selwyn Range and a strip from Kingaroy to Cracow where the probabilities are about 65%.

In NSW exceptions are parts of a wide strip running from Sydney to north-west NSW where the probabilities are about 35%. In parts of western Victoria the chances of obtaining median rainfall are about 65%.

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. 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 MESSAGE update will be on the 5th of February (usually by 5pm).

### Climate Impacts and Spatial Systems - Department of Primary Industries Compiled by Dr Roger Stone and Col Paull, QDPI.

If you would like any further information, please contact Col Paull on (07) 389 69587, or one of the Climate Risk Co-Ordinators located at Longreach (076) 584 400, Charters Towers (077) 872 155, Emerald (079) 828 801, Kingaroy (071) 600 717 and Roma (076) 229 999

Some information courtesy Bureau of Meteorology,  
CSIRO and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, USA