



SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

this page = 019 725 301 (int. = +61-3-9273 8301)

this page is updated each Wednesday, usually by 5pm



SOI MESSAGE - 19 MARCH 1997

SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE		
December 96	*	+7.3
January 97	*	+3.5
February 97	*	+12.4

Last 30 days		+ 6.8
Last 90 days (b)		+ 6.9

SOI trend (b) during January - February was Phase 4 (i.e. rapidly 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.		

normal, but recent measurements suggest that it is warming rapidly i.e. the La Niña phase is on the wane.

Warmer-than-normal SST's have largely dissipated in the western Pacific. SSTs are warmer than normal in a large band across central and eastern parts of the southern Pacific Ocean, including the region adjacent to the Chilean coast.

An interesting feature, identified by Bureau of Meteorology Research Centre, is a region of warmer-than-normal water (at 150m depth) that appears to be slowly progressing eastwards into the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. We emphasise the importance of carefully monitoring this sub-surface pattern over the next three months, for any further signs of deleterious effects on our climate patterns.

The average SOI over the previous 30 days has fallen to +6.8. Climate forecast systems are suggesting a mixed rainfall outlook during the March to May period.

THE BOTTOM LINE

REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

"LITTLE CHANGE TO CLIMATE OUTLOOK"

Rainfall prospects remain little changed for the March to May period. Use of the 'SOI phase analysis' system within AUSTRALIAN RAINMAN shows most of Queensland and NSW has a 50% chance of receiving median rain for the next three months. Exceptions to this are the northern coast and interior, western Cape York Peninsula, and the southern coastal districts of NSW where the probabilities are higher at 60%-80%. Conversely, sections of south-eastern Queensland and northern central NSW have a 30%-40% chance of receiving their median rainfall for this time of year.

Bureau of Meteorology forecast systems currently suggest little bias towards either an excessively-high or unusually-low rainfall pattern for this time of year.

Sea-surface temperatures in the central equatorial Pacific Ocean are now warmer than normal. In the eastern equatorial Pacific the temperature of surface waters is still cooler than

The rising SOI trend in January - February indicates that generally there is a low probability of unusually early or unusually late frosts this winter. However, there is not a low probability of an early start to the frost season in the Goondiwindi district. This assessment will be updated at the end of May.

The next passage of the 30- to 50-day oscillation is due during the first two weeks of April.

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/>, and also on BoM's fax and Internet information services.

NEXT UPDATE of the SOI MESSAGE: 26 March

Climate Impacts and Spatial Systems - Department of Primary Industries

Compiled by Col Paull and Dr Roger Stone, 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