



SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

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this page is updated each Wednesday, usually by 5pm



SOI MESSAGE - 23 April 1997

SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE		
January 97	*	+3.5
February 97	*	+12.4
March 97	*	-7.0

Last 30 days		- 19.2
Last 90 days (b)		- 1.3

SOI trend (b) during February -March was Phase 3 (i.e. rapidly falling \searrow).		
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.		

Generally, these conditions are not conducive to worthwhile rainfall for eastern Australia in the longer-term. The next passage of the 30- to 50-day oscillation is expected during the last two weeks of May.

The Bureau of Meteorology research section advises that sea-surface temperatures are continuing to warm in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. They have cooled rapidly in the Coral Sea and over the western Pacific. There are now westerly anomaly winds to the north of Australia.

Statistical records indicate that generally there is a low probability of unusually early or unusually late frosts this winter. However, there is a high probability of an early start to the frost season in the Goondiwindi to Dalby districts, and areas in the south-east of Queensland. This assessment will be updated at the end of May.

In the current situation we strongly recommend a **DROUGHT WATCH** response involving planning for dry conditions, and regular monitoring of the SOI, sea-surface temperature patterns and published seasonal climate outlooks. We also advise caution when making property management decisions.

The average SOI over the previous 30 days continues to fall and is now -19.2. Thus the chance of obtaining 'average' rainfall during the April-June period is about 30% for some areas of the State, especially parts of the south-east and the central west.

THE BOTTOM LINE

REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

"CONCERN OVER CLIMATE PATTERN"

The continued rapid fall in the SOI over the past six weeks and the continued deterioration in the sea-surface temperature patterns in the Pacific Ocean are cause for some concern. Use of the 'SOI Phase Analysis' system within AUSTRALIAN RAINMAN shows most of eastern Australia has a 50% chance of receiving median rain during the April - June period. This means that for those areas, climate forecast systems cannot do any better than describing the long-term climate averages for this time of year.

Notable exceptions to this are the tropical north coast and northern Cape York Peninsula, parts of the central west, coastal districts and adjacent areas from Rockhampton to Nambour, sections of the Burnett and Dawson, and parts of the Central Highlands where the probabilities of receiving median rain are about 30%. Conversely, parts of the eastern Darling Downs, Granite Belt, Boonah district, central and south-western NSW and western Victoria have probabilities of 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/>, and on BoM's fax and Internet information services.

NEXT UPDATE of the SOI MESSAGE: 30 April

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 Climate Risk Co-Ordinators located at Longreach (076) 584 418 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