



SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

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this page is updated each Wednesday, usually by 5pm



SOI MESSAGE - 7 January 1998

SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE		
October 97	*	-17.4
November 97	*	-13.9
December 97	*	-10.8

Last 30 days		- 6.6
Last 90 days (b)		-12.8

SOI trend (b) during November - December was Phase 1 (i.e. consistently negative ▼).		
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.		

Sea-surface temperatures remain much warmer than normal in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. However, they are now normal in the Coral Sea and warmer-than-normal around most of the Australian coast, which may reduce the effects of the El Niño in some areas.

The 30- to 50-day Oscillation last passed by our longitudes between Christmas and New Year's day, and its next passage is due about the first week of February.

The average SOI over the last 30 days was -6.6 . The probabilities of obtaining 'average' rainfall during the summer months are 20-40% over most parts of the eastern States of Australia.

THE BOTTOM LINE

REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

"EL NIÑO ALERT"

It should be noted that while climate forecasts indicate a high probability of below average rainfall in some areas, this does not mean that they will miss out on all rainfall events.

The probabilities of obtaining median rainfall for the January - March period are 20-40% over most of the eastern half of Australia. That is, in years when the SOI trend was similar to the present one, median rainfall was received in 2-in-10 to 4-in-10 years depending on location.

The main exceptions are parts of southern Queensland, the eastern section of central Queensland, parts of northern inland NSW, coastal and near-coastal areas of Victoria and south-eastern NSW, and western Tasmania where probabilities are 40-60% (that is 4-in-10 to 6-in-10 years).

A pasture growth model indicates that the chances of exceeding median pasture growth during the January - March period are about 30% in parts of central and south-eastern Queensland. However, the probabilities of obtaining average pasture growth in southern and western districts are quite high.

In the current situation we recommend implementation of drought contingency plans, particularly in north-east Queensland, and caution when making property management decisions. We also advise regular monitoring of the SOI, sea-surface temperature patterns and published seasonal climate outlooks.

To obtain more detailed 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 SOI Fax Hotlines, our Internet World Wide Web service called 'The Long Paddock', and on BoM's fax and Internet information services.

NEXT UPDATE of the SOI MESSAGE:
14th January 1998

Climate Impacts and Grazing Systems - Department of Natural Resources

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) 584 418 Charters Towers (077) 872 155, Emerald (079) 828 801, Kingaroy (071) 600 717 and Roma (076) 229 999

Some information courtesy Bureau of Meteorology,

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