



# SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

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this page is updated each Wednesday, usually by 5pm



## SOI MESSAGE - 3 March 1999

### SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE

December 98	*	+11.7
January 99	*	+14.7
February 99	*	+7.1
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Last 30 days		+ 8.9
Last 90 days (b)		+ 12.2
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SOI trend (b) during January-February 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.

### REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

Both the QCCA and BoM SOI climate forecasting systems indicate that rainfall probability values in most parts of the eastern States of Australia during the March to May period vary little from the long-term 'normal' values for that time of year. However, the probabilities of exceeding median rainfall over those three months are 60-70% in many coastal districts of southern Queensland and northern NSW, southern Cape York Peninsula and south to Hughenden; and probabilities are about 35% in south-west Victoria and southern Tasmania.

La Niña pattern is now firmly established in the Pacific Ocean. In general terms a La Niña pattern means reduced rainfall for our trade competitors in south-western USA, Argentina and central Asia.

Colder-than-normal, equatorial sea-surface temperatures are now present from around the International Dateline to the eastern Pacific Ocean. In addition, temperatures are warmer than normal in waters off northern and eastern Australia.

We are now entering that time of year when the sea-surface temperature pattern and the SOI can change rapidly.

The current seasonal outlook is indicating increased activity of sorghum ergot, particularly in late-planted crops in the Central Highlands; increased leaf diseases in summer crops; and rain may interfere with cotton harvesting. Burning wheat stubble before planting this year's crop may be necessary to control yellow spot.

The probabilities of above-average pasture growth during the February-April period are high (60-90%) for much of Queensland; this may result in pasture quality being poorer than usual.

This summer, heavy rainfall has tended to occur in some districts around the passage of the 30- to 50-day Oscillation. The next one is due about the first week of March.

*The average SOI over the last 30 days was +8.9 . The probabilities of exceeding median rainfall during the March to May period are 60-70% in many coastal districts of southern Queensland and northern NSW, and parts of northern Queensland. However, they are only about 50% in the remaining areas of the eastern states of Australia.*

### THE BOTTOM LINE

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:**  
**10th March 1999**

### 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 extension officers at the DPI in Charters Towers, Emerald, Gympie, Kingaroy, Longreach, Mackay, Mareeba, Roma and Toowoomba.

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