



# SOI FAX HOTLINES

(Southern Oscillation Index)

this page = 1902 935 301

this page is updated each Wednesday, usually by 5pm



## SOI MESSAGE -5 May 1999

### SOI (a) AVERAGES / PHASE

February 99	*	+7.1
March 99	*	+7.6
April 99	*	+16.8
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Last 30 days		+ 11.6
Last 90 days (b)		+ 9.9
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SOI trend (b) during March-April was Phase 4 (i.e. 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.

### REVIEW OF CLIMATIC FORECASTS AND INFORMATION

SOI climate forecasting systems indicate that rainfall probability values in most parts of the eastern States of Australia during the May to July period vary little from the long-term 'normal' values for that time of year. Exceptions are the south-eastern quarter of Queensland and adjacent border districts in NSW, and coastal districts in northern NSW and eastern Victoria where probabilities are 60-80%. However, in parts of far southern NSW, central and western Victoria, and far northern Tasmania the probabilities are 30-40%.

La Niña pattern continues in the Pacific Ocean in a weakened form. 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 present from around the International Dateline to the central Pacific Ocean. In addition, temperatures are warmer than normal in waters off northern, eastern and western Australia.

We are now in autumn when the sea-surface temperature pattern and the SOI can change rapidly. However, while the La Niña pattern has weakened, currently the SOI and sea-surface temperatures suggest continuation of that pattern.

Rainfall prospects over the winter cropping areas of central and southern Queensland are excellent. We will give an up-to-date assessment of the frost risk later in the month. Burning wheat stubble before planting this year's crop may be necessary to control yellow spot.

The likelihood of above-average pasture growth during the April-June period is low for much of Queensland, as pasture growth has already reached its potential in many regions.

The next passage of the 30- to 50-day Oscillation is due about the second week of May.

*The average SOI over the previous 30 days has decreased to +11.6 . Currently the SOI and sea-surface temperatures suggest continuation of the La Niña pattern. Thus the probabilities of exceeding median rainfall during the May to July period are 60-80% in the south-eastern quarter of Queensland and the north-eastern corner of NSW, and about normal in most other parts of the eastern States.*

### 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:**  
**12th May 1999**

### Climate Impacts and Grazing Systems - Department of Natural Resources

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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