



National Seasonal Rainfall Outlook: probabilities for February to April 2004, issued 15th January 2004

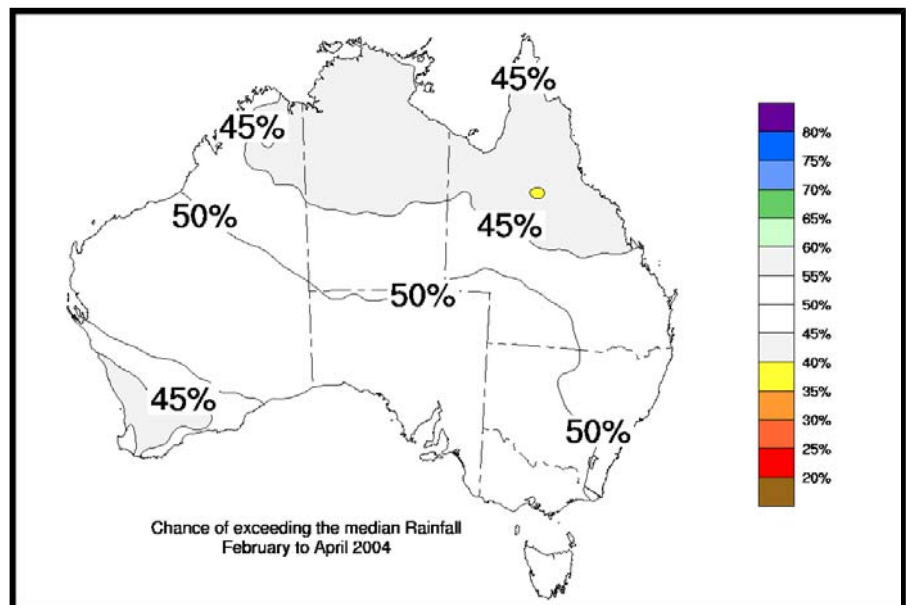
Neutral seasonal rainfall odds

The Bureau's seasonal rainfall outlook for late summer to mid-autumn shows no strong swings in the odds towards wetter or drier conditions. The chances of above average seasonal falls are generally close to a neutral 50%. This outlook is due to the fact that Pacific and Indian Ocean temperatures have a varying influence on Australian rainfall during summer and autumn.

For the February to April period, the chances of above median rainfall are between 40 and 55% across all States and Territories, except for a small patch in north-central Queensland where the chances are slightly less than 40% (see map). So with climate patterns like the current, about 5 seasons out of 10 are expected to be wetter than average over Australia, with about 5 out of 10 being drier.

Outlook confidence is related to the influence of Pacific and Indian Ocean temperatures on seasonal rainfall. During the February to April period, history shows this influence to be moderately consistent through the northern halves of both Queensland and the NT, most of WA, the far west of SA and southeast NSW. Elsewhere the influence is only weakly or very weakly consistent (see page 3).

The tropical Pacific Ocean cooled during December, but there was little change in tropical Indian Ocean temperatures. For more detail see www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/. The temperature patterns in the Indian and Pacific Oceans are not extreme enough to produce large swings in the outlook probabilities.



December's value of the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) was +10, a strong rise from the -3 recorded in November. The rise in the SOI was in part caused by below average air pressure over northern Australia associated with a strong onset to the monsoon. The approximate SOI for the 30 days ending 12th January was +2.

The following climate meteorologists in the National Climate Centre can be contacted about this outlook: Grant Beard on (03) 9669 4527, Blair Trewin on (03) 9669 4603, David Jones on (03) 9669 4085, Felicity Gamble on (03) 9669 4256.

For national and regional web versions of this release, see www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/rain_ahead.shtml .



National Seasonal Temperature Outlook: probabilities for February to April 2004, issued 15th January 2004

Higher temperatures likely in Qld and NT

The Bureau's seasonal temperature outlook for late summer to mid-autumn, shows increased chances of above average daytime temperatures over much of Queensland and the northern NT. In contrast, there is an increased likelihood of a cooler than average season in parts of southeastern Australia. This outlook pattern is mainly the result of above average temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean, particularly the west.

For the February to April period, the chances of above average seasonal daytime temperatures are between 60 and 70% northeast of a line from far northern WA to the north coast of NSW (see map). So with climate patterns like the current, about 6 or 7 seasons out of every 10 are expected to be warmer than average across these parts of the country, with about 3 or 4 out of 10 being cooler.

In southeast SA, most of western and central Victoria, as well as the southeast and far northwest of Tasmania, the chances of a warmer than average February to April period are between 35 and 40%. This means that a cooler than average season has a 60 to 65% chance of occurring.

Outlook confidence is related to the consistency of the influence of Pacific and Indian Ocean temperatures on seasonal temperatures. During the February to April period, history shows this influence on maximum temperatures to be moderately consistent over Queensland, the northern NT, central WA and patches in SA, Victoria, NSW and Tasmania (see page 3).

Warmer than average nights are favoured over much of northern Australia, with probabilities between 60 and 70% across the NT, the northern half of Queensland and northeast WA. In contrast, the chances across southeast parts of the mainland are between 35 and 40% indicating that cooler than average nights are more likely. Elsewhere, the outlook for seasonal minimum temperatures is neutral with chances between 40 and 60%.

History shows the oceans' influence on minimum temperatures in the February to April period to be moderately consistent over large parts of the country.

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