



THREE-MONTH SEASONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK STATEMENT

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Rainfall probabilities for April to June 2003, issued 18th March 2003

Little signal in NT June quarter rainfall outlook

The latest seasonal rainfall outlook from the Bureau's National Climate Centre shows a contrasting pattern of odds for the June quarter, particularly in the east and southeast of the country.

The chances of ABOVE median rainfall for the **April to June** period are between 50 and 60% across most of the Northern Territory (*see map*). So with climate patterns like the current, about 5 to 6 seasons out of 10 are expected to be wetter than average in these areas, whilst about 4 to 5 out of 10 are drier. The highest chances are in the northwest of the Territory, where they are between 55 and 60%. It should be noted that April to June rainfall totals typically make up only a small part of the annual total.

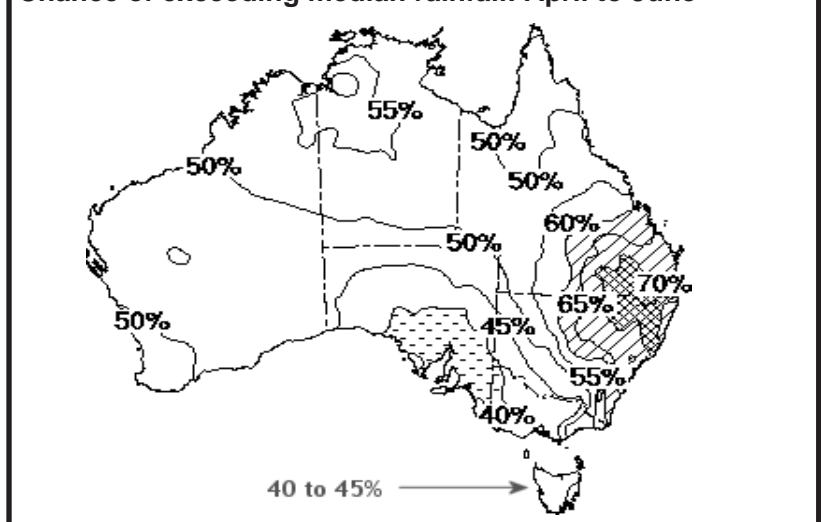
The objective statistical outlook scheme has low reliability across most of the Territory for this season (*see background*).

The overall pattern of probabilities is almost entirely a result of warm and rising temperatures in the Indian Ocean. As far as the El Niño is concerned, most of the main indicators show the event is very close to being over. Whilst a regeneration of El Niño cannot be ruled out entirely, this is **much less likely** than either neutral or La Niña conditions. For more detail see www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso.

Background Information:

- The Outlook probabilities are based on recent Indian and Pacific Ocean temperatures. Both oceans were warmer than average in February.
- Model Reliability: Strong reliability means that tests of the model on historical data show a high correlation between the most likely outlook category (above/below median) and the verifying observation (above/below median). Low reliability means the historical relationship is weak.
- The Australian impacts of 23 El Niño events since 1900 are summarized on the Bureau's web site at http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/australia_detail.shtml.
- February's value of the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) was -7, a drop of 5 points from the -2 in January. The approximate SOI for the 30 days ending 15th March was -4.
- This outlook represents a summary. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are shown on page 3.

Chance of exceeding median rainfall: April to June



*The national text and a colour map are on the WEB at http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/rain_ahead.shtml.
An online Seasonal Climate Outlook subscription service is available at <http://www.bom.gov.au/silo>.*

More information on this outlook is available from 9:00am to 5:00pm (CST) Monday to Friday by contacting the Climate and Consultancy section in the Bureau's Darwin Office: (08) 8920 3813.