

**The El Niño-Southern Oscillation and beer sales in the Australian region
by Scott B. Power (1991), Bulletin of the Australian Meteorological and
Oceanographic Society, Vol. 4, No. 3, 47-48.**

The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is a major source of oceanic and atmospheric interannual variability in the Australian region. For example, drought usually accompanies a negative SO index, while rainy conditions persist along the eastern seaboard when it is positive. The latter is particularly pronounced around southern New South Wales which helps to explain why Sydney has such terrible weather compared with Melbourne.

In view of these strong associations it seems surprising that little attention has been paid to the important problem of determining the relationship between ENSO events and beer sales. In order to determine this relationship we developed a new index of Australian beer sales: the number of times a small group of post-grads and post-docs failed to resist the local pub on Friday night in a given month. The beer index is plotted as a function of the SO index in Fig. 1. A clear and unambiguous relationship is evident.

In order to account for this relationship we hypothesize that during an El Niño event (negative SO index) the hot and dry conditions made the students thirsty, while during the La Niña phase (positive index) the students entered the pub to get out of the rain.

Further work has been motivated by evidence which suggests that weak teleconnections exist between ENSO events and regions as far removed as Quebec, Canada. In order to determine the strength of the connection we have employed the same technique as that used in the Australian study, this time using Canadian students and post-docs. While the preliminary results are encouraging (Fig. 2) their statistical reliability is poor. Lengthier data sets are currently being accumulated.

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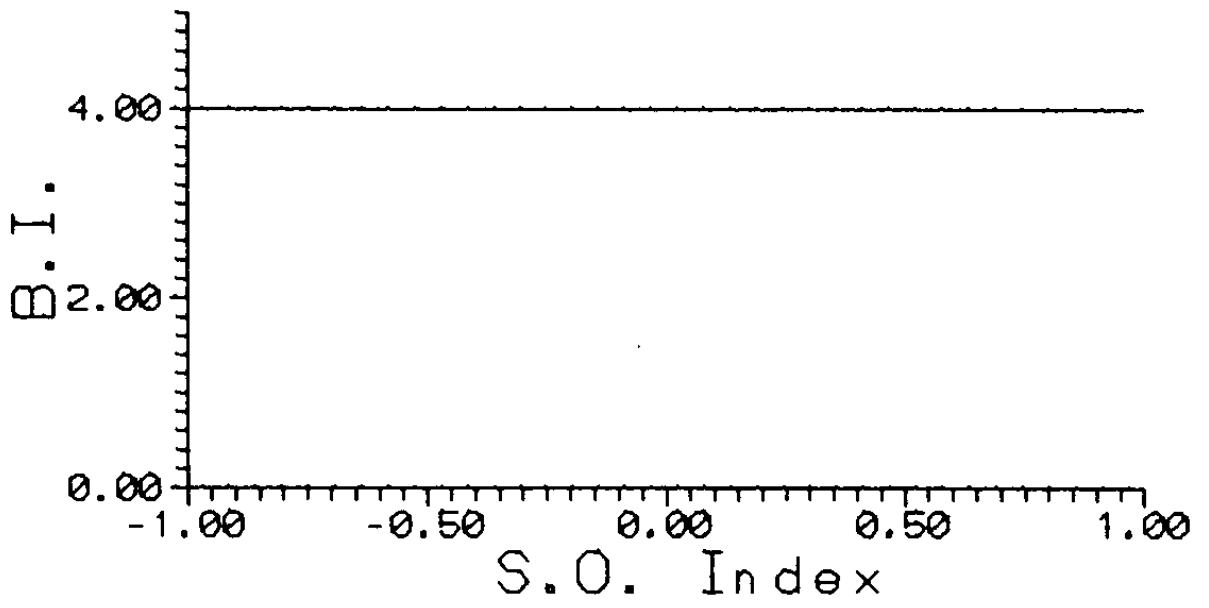


Figure 1. Beer Index vs. Southern Oscillation Index

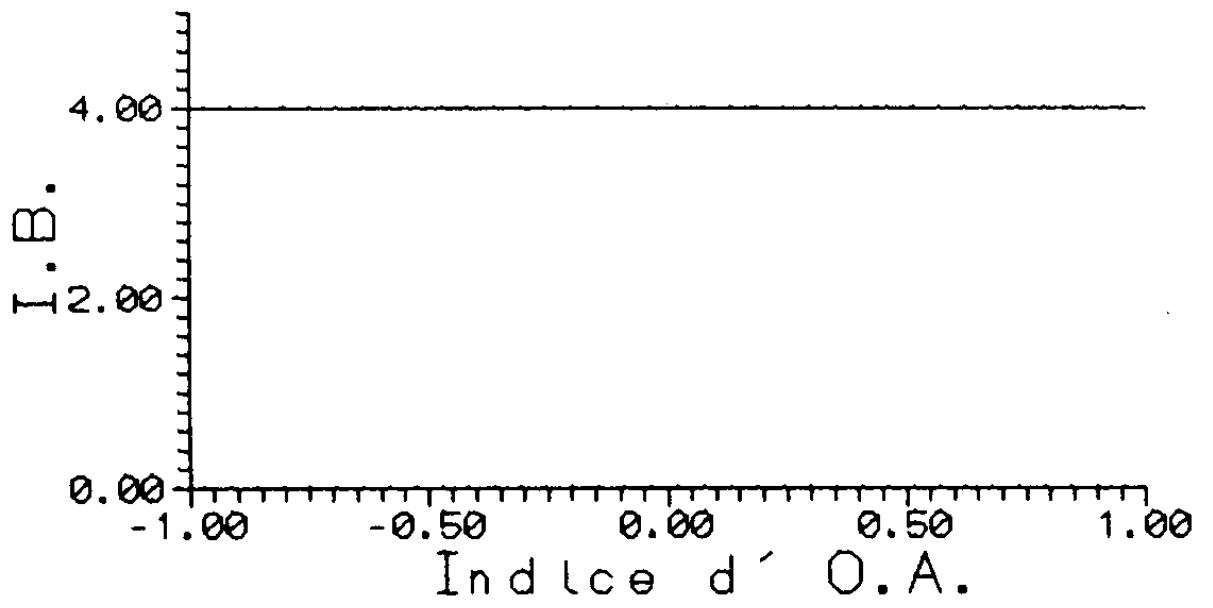


Figure 2. Index de Bieres vs. Index d'Oscillation Australien.