



THREE-MONTH SEASONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK STATEMENT  
**Rainfall probabilities for Winter 2003**, issued 15th May 2003

Page 1

# Below average winter rains more likely in the southwest

With the demise of the 2002/03 El Niño, there are improved prospects for winter rains over much of Australia. However it is still possible for the effects of the drought to linger for some time yet, especially in those areas where heavy winter rain is uncommon. Whilst a return 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](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso).

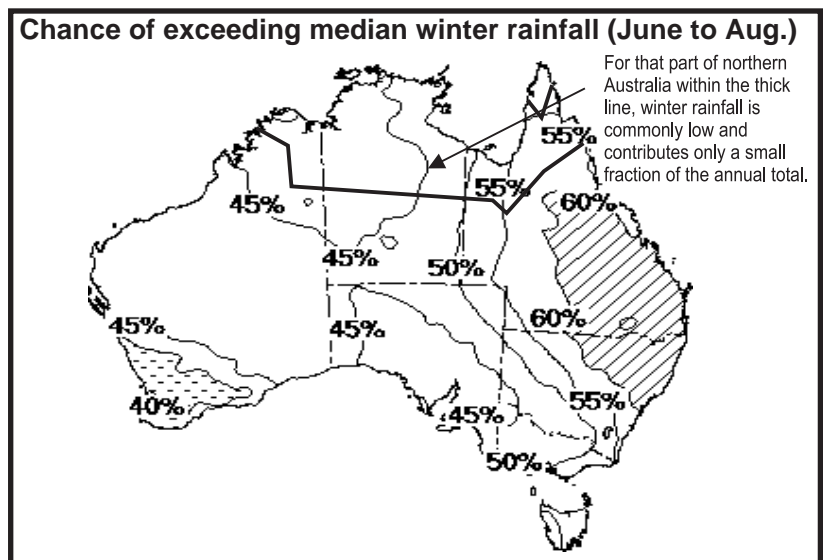
In contrast to the east of the country, the Bureau's winter rainfall outlook shows that below average seasonal rainfall is the more likely outcome in southwest WA (*see map*). Here the chances of above median rainfall for the **June to August** period are between 35 and 40%, meaning **BELOW** median falls have a 60 to 65% chance of occurring. So with climate patterns like the current, about 6 winters out of 10 are expected to be drier than average in this part of the State, whilst about 4 out of 10 are wetter.

However, the Bureau's winter rainfall outlooks have mainly low reliability over southwest WA (*see background*).

The overall pattern of probabilities is almost entirely a result of warmer than average temperatures in the Indian Ocean.

## **Background Information:**

- The Outlook probabilities are based on recent Indian and Pacific Ocean temperatures. The tropical Indian and western tropical Pacific were warmer than average in April.
- 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.
- April's value of the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) was -5, two points above the March value of -7. The approximate SOI for the 30 days ending 12th May was +3.
- 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](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/australia_detail.shtml).
- This outlook represents a summary. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are shown on page 3.



*The national text and a colour map are on the WEB at [http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/rain\\_ahead.shtml](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 (WST) Monday to Friday by contacting the Climate and Consultancy section in the Bureau's Perth Office: (08) 9263 2222.