



**Australian Government**  
**Bureau of Meteorology**

**Tropical Cyclone *Rhonda***

17 – 20 February 1986

Perth Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre  
Bureau of Meteorology

**A. Summary**

Tropical cyclone *Rhonda* formed north of the Pilbara and moved in a general south southwesterly direction passing west of NW Cape as a category three cyclone. *Rhonda* then moved south off the west coast and weakened on 21 February. The low then caused heavy rain over the southern parts of the Central West Coastal district and in the Lower West Coastal districts including the Perth metropolitan area.

**B. Meteorological Description**

Tropical cyclone *Rhonda* formed in an area of moderate monsoonal activity approximately 550 km north of Dampier. The developing low pressure system moved west, southeast and then southwest before settling on a sustained south southwesterly track.

After the initial low formation near 15.8°S, 116.2°E (0000 UTC on 17 February) cyclonic strength was reached near 17.85, 114.8°E (0900 UTC 18 February). The lowest pressure of 968hPa was analysed at 0000 UTC 20 February near 23.3°S, 112.5°E.

The track of *Rhonda* followed the coast of Western Australia at a distance of between 90 and 200 km offshore. Steering was maintained by a middle and upper-level high pressure system centred over inland Australia. As the cyclone steered around the western side of the high, the direction of movement changed from south-south-westerly to south-south-easterly, until the system was forced across the coast near Perth by increasing north-westerly winds ahead of an approaching southern depression.

The cyclone had weakened to a low on 21 February off the west coast near Geraldton. However it caused heavy rain over the southern parts of the Central West Coastal district and in the Lower West Coastal districts.

**C. Impact**

No wind damage was reported. However, heavy rain over the southern parts of the Central West Coastal district and in the Lower West Coastal districts caused some flooding. In Perth over 100 traffic accidents were attributed to

the wet conditions.

#### D. Observations

##### *Wind*

The strongest sustained wind reported was 63 km/h at Barrow Island at 0400 UTC 19 February when the cyclone was 200 km to the northwest of the island. Sustained gale force winds did not reach the coast.

##### *Rainfall*

Twenty-four hour rainfall totals of up to 101 mm were recorded with 88 mm falling in the Perth metropolitan area.

Table 1 Best track summary for Tropical Cyclone *Rhonda* 17 – 21 February 1986. Note: Add 8 hours to convert to WST. Refer to best track database for complete track details.

Year	Month	Day	Hour (UTC)	Position Latitude S	Position Longitude E	Max wind 10min knots	Central Pressure hPa	Rad. of Gales nm
1986	02	17	0000	15.7	116.3	30	1002	
1986	02	17	0600	15.7	115.3	30	1002	
1986	02	17	1200	16.1	115.3	30	1001	
1986	02	17	1800	16.5	115.7	30	1001	
1986	02	18	0000	16.8	115.2	30	1001	
1986	02	18	0600	17.6	114.9	30	1000	
1986	02	18	1200	18.0	114.6	40	994	
1986	02	18	1800	18.4	114.4	45	992	
1986	02	19	0000	19.0	114.3	55	985	
1986	02	19	0300	19.3	114.1	55	984	125
1986	02	19	0600	19.6	113.8	55	984	
1986	02	19	0900	20.0	113.6	55	982	
1986	02	19	1200	20.4	113.4	60	978	
1986	02	19	1600	20.9	113.2	65	976	
1986	02	19	1800	21.6	113.2	70	974	
1986	02	19	2100	22.3	113.1	75	970	
1986	02	20	0000	23.3	112.5	75	968	
1986	02	20	0300	23.8	112.3	75	968	
1986	02	20	0600	24.4	112.2	75	970	
1986	02	20	0900	25.0	112.1	75	970	
1986	02	20	1200	25.6	112.1	65	975	
1986	02	20	1600	26.3	112.3	60	980	
1986	02	20	1800	26.6	112.6	55	985	
1986	02	20	2100	27.1	112.8	45	990	
1986	02	21	0000	27.5	112.9	40	995	

Note: Radius of gales field incomplete.

Figure 1. Track of Tropical Cyclone *Rhonda* 17 – 21 February 1986.  
All times in WST.

