



SIGNIFICANT WEATHER – March 2005

SUMMARY

Tropical cyclone *Willy* developed north of Western Australia but had little impact on the Western Australian coast. Tropical cyclone *Ingrid* formed as a tropical low in the eastern Arafura Sea. It made landfall on the Kimberley coast of Western Australia, affecting population centres in Queensland, Western Australia and Northern Territory. Extensive tree damage and defoliation occurred. Heavy rainfalls near the Western Australian/Northern Territory border caused major flooding in the Northern Territory. Major damage also occurred to buildings on Elcho Island. This was unusual because it is the only cyclone in recorded history to impact as a severe tropical cyclone on the coastline of three different states or territories.

Tasmania recorded its lowest minimum temperature on record for March of -6.9°C on the 26th at Liawenee. The previous lowest for March was -5.1°C at Ross (Ellinthorp) on the 25th in 1965.

TROPICAL CYCLONES

Western Australia

Tropical cyclone *Willy* developed north of Western Australia on the 10th and tracked to the southwest eventually weakening westnorthwest of North West Cape on the 14th. Some offshore oil and gas activities were interrupted.

Queensland/Western Australia/Northern Territory

Tropical cyclone *Ingrid* formed as a tropical low in the eastern Arafura Sea and then strengthened to cyclone intensity in the Coral

Sea then moved back towards the west into the Gulf of Carpentaria on the 10th. It crossed the Queensland coast south of Lockhart River as a category 4 cyclone. Vegetation was stripped bare near the crossing point and there is evidence of a significant storm tide.

Ingrid rapidly intensified as it moved across the Gulf of Carpentaria reaching category 4 status on the 11th and category 5 status on the 12th when crossing Dysdale Island just north of Elcho Island. *Ingrid* continued on its consistent west northwestward track just north of the north coast of the Top End but began to weaken before crossing Croker Island. *Ingrid* tracked southwest across the Timor Sea and began to re-intensify reaching category 5 again on the morning of the 15th. After landfall on the Kimberley coast of Western Australia, north of Kalumburu, *Ingrid* weakened rapidly then turned to the southeast then finally weakened to below cyclone strength on the morning of the 17th near Wyndham.

Due to *Ingrid's* longevity and proximity to the coast, many population centres in the Northern Territory were affected, however the effects were localised and confined mainly to island communities. Many coastal and island communities lost power and communications. Extensive tree damage and defoliation occurred at Elcho Island, North Goulburn Island, Croker Island, the Cobourg peninsula, the northeast tip of Melville Island and near the landfall point on the north Kimberley Coast. At Croker Island extensive damage occurred to several buildings. There was major damage to buildings a school on the northern end of Elcho Island. A number of buildings also lost their roofs at Cape Don on the Cobourg Peninsula, in communities on the Tiwi Islands and at Kalumburu. There was extensive damage to infrastructure at Faraway Bay bush camp.

The Wessel Islands north of Gove recorded an average wind speed of 165 km/h. Gove airport experienced its record daily rainfall total for March of 192mm. The maximum wind gust recorded was north of the Top End at 207 km/h on McCluer Island. At Truscott on the north Kimberley coast 438mm of rain fell in the 24 hours to 9am on the 16th.

THUNDERSTORMS

Queensland

Severe wind gusts were reported near Noosa on the 21st. There were estimated wind gusts of 100 km/h on the Bruce Highway near Noosa and some trees and powerlines brought down at Tewantin and Kenilworth. Double Island Point recorded a gust to 93 km/h. 2cm sized hail was reported from Tewantin and Kenilworth.

On the 25th severe thunderstorms produced hail at Maryborough and Lady Elliot Island. Double Island Point Lighthouse recorded a gust to 104 km/h. 2cm sized hail was reported from Yeppoon (within 100km of Gladstone).

On the 26th there were reports of large hail in the Amberley area (near Ipswich, southwest of Brisbane). Hail 2-3cm in diameter with occasional golf ball sized hail was reported. Hail approximately 6cm in diameter was reported from the Mt Kanighan area (near Glenwood), causing car damage. Hail up to baseball size was reported from Glenwood where 18 homes received roof and window damage. Hail ranging from golf to cricket ball size was reported from the Deception Bay, Narangba, and Burpengary areas (adjacent suburbs north of Brisbane). Homes and cars were damaged. A 2-6 kilometre strip of tree damage was reported between Biggenden and Childers in the Wide Bay and Burnett district. A shed was unroofed and a cattle truck blown over at Bajool, southeast of Rockhampton. Small hail from the same storm was also reported from Rockhampton.

New South Wales

Severe thunderstorms occurred at the following locations:

- 2nd Katoomba, hail 2.4cm.
- 3rd Parramatta, hail 2cm,
Penrith, hail 2cm,
Quakers Hill, hail 2cm,
Rylstone hail 2-4cm, and heavy rain caused flash flooding.
Mudgee: thunderstorms caused flooding and damage to property in Mudgee/Blayney area.
- 16th Blackheath, hail 1-2cm. Heavy rain

On the 3rd lightning strikes destroyed trees at Fairfield and closed Sydney Airport for 90 minutes and hail was reported in northwest suburbs.

Victoria

On the 1st there was considerable localised damage across the Northeast district of Victoria. A severe thunderstorm with a possible tornado produced considerable localised damage at Wodonga where a couple of houses had their roof lifted. Many houses over a few blocks had damaged tiles. There were a number of trees completely flattened.

Northern Territory

A possible tornado was reported in the Darwin suburb of Coconut Grove on the evening of the 5th. Only minor damage was sustained.

On the 10th a waterspout was reported over Darwin Harbour.

Western Australia

On the 27th a severe thunderstorm hit Wongan Hills. A tree fell on an unoccupied house and power lines were downed but no other serious damage was recorded.

WIND

Queensland

A thunderstorm on the 17th caused gusty northeasterly winds that snapped tree branches around the town of Gingin.

New South Wales

Wind gusts greater than 90 km/h occurred on the following days:

- 3rd Scone 104 km/h.
- 4th Scone 102 km/h.
- 5th Thredbo 107km/h,
Cabramurra 102 km/h,
Green Cape 100 km/h,
Montague Island 100 km/h
- 22nd Montague Island 93 km/h,
Newcastle 91 km/h.
- 23rd Newcastle 102 km/h,
Sydney Airport 100km/h,
Norah Head 102 km/h,
Little Bay 93 km/h, Manly 93 km/h,
Kurnell 96 km/h, Kiama 91 km/h.
- 26th Evans Head 94 km/h.

On the 5th gale force winds brought down a tree branch at Bermagui (South Coast) which critically injured a woman in her tent at the caravan park.

On the 22nd and 23rd gale force winds caused power outages and minor damage in the metropolitan area. The ferry service was suspended on Sydney Harbour. Significant waves and swell averaged 6 metres with a peak of 11 metres.

Tasmania

Wind gusts in excess of 90 km/h were reported on:

- 1st Mount Wellington 102 km/h,
Maatsuyker Island Lighthouse 98 km/h,
Scotts Peak Dam 91 km/h.
- 2nd Mount Wellington 113 km/h,
Maatsuyker Island Lighthouse 104 km/h.
- 3rd Maatsuyker Island Lighthouse 98 km/h.
- 4th Maatsuyker Island Lighthouse 91 km/h.
- 5th Mount Wellington 94 km/h,
Tasman Island 91 km/h.
- 6th Tasman Island 102 km/h.

- 7th Maatsuyker Island Lighthouse 109 km/h,
Mount Wellington 107 km/h,
Hartz Mountain (Keoghs Pimple) 94 km/h,
Tasman Island 91 km/h.
- 8th Hartz Mountain (Keoghs Pimple) 91 km/h.
- 24th Tasman Island 93 km/h,
Mount Wellington 91 km/h,
Maria Island (Point Lesueur) 91 km/h.
- 27th Mount Wellington 96 km/h,
Tasman Island 91 km/h.

Northern Territory

A monsoon squall produced a wind gust of 89 km/h at Charles Point 28 kilometres west of Darwin on the 12th.

BUSHFIRES

Queensland

A fire was reported from the Deagon Wetlands on the 4th.

On the 5th a large bushfire was reported near the top of the D'Aguiar Ranges at Mt Samson.

On the 12th a fire burned out approximately 8 hectares of land on the ranges to the south east of Pittsworth. There were no reports of property damage.

On the 16th a bushfire burned close to homes on the Gold Coast Hinterland, though no damage was reported.

On the 22nd - 24th a fire was reported in the Murgon area. On the 24th a further fire was reported at Cedar Pocket, north of Gympie.

New South Wales

On the 7th and 8th a bushfire burnt out 462 hectares near Gilgandra (Central West Plains).

On the 29th and 30th a bushfire burnt out 400 hectares near Tamworth (North West Slopes).

Tasmania

A fire at Collinsvale on the 1st burnt 150 hectares after a car was deliberately set alight.

Persistent dry conditions in the northwest of the state late in the month caused several small scrub fires.

FLOODING

Queensland

Daintree River:

River levels at the Daintree Village reached a peak of 6.7 metres on the 12th causing minor to moderate flooding.

Northern Territory

Heavy rainfalls near the Western Australian/Northern Territory border caused flooding in many streams. The Wickham river at Williams Crossing peaked at a major flood level of 14.08 metres on the 18th. Downstream at Dashwood crossing, the Victoria river peaked at 12.70 metres just below moderate flood level on the 19th. The Victoria river at the Victoria River Crossing bridge then peaked at a minor flood level of 13.18 metres, closing the Victoria Highway from the 20th to the 24th.

DUST

New South Wales

On the 1st dust storms were reported from Ivanhoe (Lower West) and Hay (Riverina). Visibility was reduced to 400 metres at Ivanhoe with strong northwest winds.

TEMPERATURE

Tasmania

Liawenee recorded its lowest minimum temperature on record for March of -6.9°C on the 26th. The previous lowest for March was -5.1°C at Ross (Ellinthorp) on the 25th in 1965. This is the second lowest temperature recorded in

March in Australia, the lowest being -7.2°C at Kiandra in new South Wales on the 25th in 1964.

Western Australia

Record low maximum temperatures were recorded in many towns in the South West Land division on the 31st.

Highest Mean Maximum Temperature for March

Station	Actual $^{\circ}\text{C}$	Previous Highest $^{\circ}\text{C}$	Year	Years of Record
Queensland				
Townsville Aero	32.3	32.2	2002	64
Collinsville PO	34.1	34.1	1995	45
Western Australia				
Ongerup	28.9	28.3	1994	35

Highest Mean Minimum Temperature for March

Station	Actual $^{\circ}\text{C}$	Previous Highest $^{\circ}\text{C}$	Year	Years of Record
Western Australia				
Albany	17.2	16.9	1963	88
Albany Airport	15.5	15.3	1988	39
Badgingara RS	19.0	18.2	1988	31
Bencubbin	19.3	18.2	1980	52
Beverley	17.3	16.3	1974	34
Bridgetown Comp	15.3	14.2	1988	104
Brookton	17.3	16.0	1998	37
Carnarvon A/P	24.1	24.0	1974	58
Corrigin	17.4	16.3	1959	56
Donnybrook	16.5	16.3	1978	99
Dwellingup	15.9	15.5	1978	65
Gascoyne Junction	25.2	24.0	1990	37
Geraldton A/P	20.3	20.2	2000	62
Hyden	17.0	15.7	1992	30
Jurien Bay	19.1	18.5	1988	35
Katanning Comp	15.3	15.1	1978	110
Lake Grace Comp	17.1	15.7	1988	46
Lancelin	19.3	18.7	1983	37
Merredin	19.3	18.3	1978	39
Ongerup	15.4	15.1	2003	36
Onslow A/P	26.9	25.7	1999	38
Pemberton	15.2	15.1	1948	61
Pingelly	17.4	16.7	1988	33
Port Hedland A/P	26.4	26.0	2002	56
Southern Cross	18.2	18.0	1930	108
Wagin	16.3	15.1	1978	32

Highest Mean Maximum Temperature for March

Station	Actual $^{\circ}\text{C}$	Previous Highest $^{\circ}\text{C}$	Year	Years of Record
Western Australia				
Ongerup	28.9	28.3	1994	35

Lowest Mean Maximum Temperature for March

Station	Actual °C	Previous		Year	Years of Record
		Lowest °C	Year		

Tasmania

Orford (Aubin Crt)	18.9	19.1	1993	37
--------------------	------	------	------	----

Lowest Mean Minimum Temperature for March

Station	Actual °C	Previous		Year	Years of Record
		Lowest °C	Year		

Queensland

Uni of QLD Gatton	15.3	15.3	1935	83
-------------------	------	------	------	----

Highest Daily Maximum Temperature for March

Station	Actual °C	Date	Previous		Year	Years of Record
			Highest °C	Year		

Queensland

Thargomindah PO	44.4	2	42.8	1962	46
-----------------	------	---	------	------	----

Western Australia

Bridgetown Comp.	41.5	23	41.2	2004	48
------------------	------	----	------	------	----

Donnybrook	42.4	23	41.8	2004	45
------------	------	----	------	------	----

Kalumburu	40.9	12	39.0	2003	62
-----------	------	----	------	------	----

Mission					
---------	--	--	--	--	--

Manjimup	41.0	23	39.7	2004	45
----------	------	----	------	------	----

Pemberton	40.0	23	39.6	1998	45
-----------	------	----	------	------	----

Port Hedland A/P	45.9	1	44.5	1990	56
------------------	------	---	------	------	----

Northern Territory

Daly Waters AWS	41.5	10	41.0	1952	34
-----------------	------	----	------	------	----

Mango Farm	38.5	11	37.1	1988	24
------------	------	----	------	------	----

Highest Daily Minimum Temperature for March

Station	Actual °C	Date	Previous		Year	Years of Record
			Highest °C	Year		

Western Australia

Eneabba	29.2	5	29.0	1990	30
---------	------	---	------	------	----

Eucla	26.5	11	26.1	1965	44
-------	------	----	------	------	----

Mandora	29.6	21	29.0	1983	33
---------	------	----	------	------	----

Onslow A/P	30.2	2	29.6	1945	38
------------	------	---	------	------	----

Northern Territory

Yuendumu	28.0	4	27.9	1992	39
----------	------	---	------	------	----

Jabiru A/P	27.6	11	27.5	1988	26
------------	------	----	------	------	----

Lowest Daily Maximum Temperature for March

Station	Actual °C	Date	Previous		Year	Years of Record
			Lowest °C	Year		

Queensland

Nambour DPI	21.2	31	21.4	1980	40
-------------	------	----	------	------	----

Western Australia

Albany A/P	13.8	31	14.6	1982	39
------------	------	----	------	------	----

Beverley	15.4	31	15.9	1969	34
----------	------	----	------	------	----

Bridgetown Comp.	12.4	31	14.1	1968	48
------------------	------	----	------	------	----

Brookton	14.4	31	15.6	1969	38
----------	------	----	------	------	----

Cape Naturaliste	13.2	31	14.9	1990	47
------------------	------	----	------	------	----

Dalwallinu Comp.	16.2	31	16.7	1968	46
------------------	------	----	------	------	----

Donnybrook	13.2	31	15.3	1990	44
------------	------	----	------	------	----

Dwellingup	14.0	31	14.4	1968	43
------------	------	----	------	------	----

Eneabba	19.0	31	20.9	1975	30
---------	------	----	------	------	----

Geraldton A/P	18.5	31	19.4	1964	62
---------------	------	----	------	------	----

Katanning Comp.	13.0	31	14.4	1969	48
-----------------	------	----	------	------	----

Kimberley RS	24.9	17	25.1	2000	37
--------------	------	----	------	------	----

Manjimup	10.7	31	12.3	1968	45
----------	------	----	------	------	----

Mount Barker	12.6	31	13.8	2001	34
--------------	------	----	------	------	----

Mullewa	18.0	31	18.1	1975	33
---------	------	----	------	------	----

Narrogin	12.6	31	13.3	1969	36
----------	------	----	------	------	----

Pemberton	11.5	31	12.8	1968	44
-----------	------	----	------	------	----

Pingelly	13.7	31	16.5	1985	33
----------	------	----	------	------	----

Wagin	13.1	31	15.8	1997	32
-------	------	----	------	------	----

Wyndham	25.6	16	26.7	1979	35
---------	------	----	------	------	----

Northern Territory

Wave Hill	23.9	17	24.0	1974	30
-----------	------	----	------	------	----

Gove Airport	25.6	20	26.0	1994	26
--------------	------	----	------	------	----

Lowest Daily Minimum Temperature for March

Station	Actual °C	Date	Previous		Year	Years of Record
			Lowest °C	Year		

Victoria

Longerenong	1.2	26	1.6	2004	65
-------------	-----	----	-----	------	----

Mangalore A/P	1.5	6	2.8	1967	46
---------------	-----	---	-----	------	----

Tasmania

Bushy Park (Bushy Park Estates)	-1.8	26	-1.3	1995	71
---------------------------------	------	----	------	------	----

RAINFALL**Western Australia**

Thunderstorms caused widespread heavy rain across much of the South West Land division. Some rainfall totals to 9am included 51mm at Yearling, 44mm at Kindinin and 40mm at Bencubbin. This was the first major rain event of the season.

Between the 31st of March and the 1st of April widespread rainfall was reported across the South West Land division on 31st March due to a low pressure system over northern parts supported by a strong middle level trough. Some minor flooding was reported in the Great Southern district and on the south coast. Heavy rain and flooding continued into early April.

Highest Monthly Rainfall on Record for March

Station	Actual mm	Previous		Year	Years of Record
		Lowest mm	Year		

Queensland

Bamaga	647.4	626.0	1977	33
--------	-------	-------	------	----

Northern Territory

Gove Airport	524.0	514.6	1988	30
--------------	-------	-------	------	----

Lowest Monthly Rainfall on Record for March

Station	Actual	Previous	Year	Years of Record
	mm	Lowest mm		
Queensland				
Collinsville PO	2.6	4.8	1966	66
Moranbah Water Tr	0.2	1.2	2000	30
Brooweena Lahey St	3.0	6.1	1969	61
Archerfield Airport	3.6	4.6	1965	73
Tasmania				
Bushy Park (Bushy Park Estates)	7.4	7.9	1916	132

Highest Daily Rainfall on Record for March

Station	Actual	Previous	Year	Years of Record
	mm	Date Highest mm		
Northern Territory				
Rosewood	168.0	17	137.0	1943 110
Gove Airport	192.0	12	129.0	1988 30
Mataranka Station	102.8	19	101.2	1994 24
Western Australia				
Colorado	45.0	28	40.6	1934 92
Gosnells City	36.0	28	29.2	1997 42
Lissadell	209.0	17	137.0	1977 99
Perth A/P	34.2	28	31.8	1960 60
Spring Creek	140.0	17	124.0	1935 57
Wyndham	182.4	17	140.7	1973 36

Note: Some statistical records mentioned in this report are based on data that have yet to be fully validated