



SIGNIFICANT WEATHER – May 2004

SUMMARY

Winds were the feature of the month with many states reporting gale force winds early in the month. Tasmania reported snow from the 2nd to the 4th. Towards the end of the month the passage of a cold front caused strong to gale force winds over the southern half of the continent. Western Australia experienced cold conditions on the 31st in the Southwest which set record low maximum temperatures.

THUNDERSTORMS

New South Wales

On the 7th at Shellharbour (Illawarra) large hail 2 to 3cm in size caused roof damage to a supermarket at Shellharbour and structural damage to houses.

Tasmania

Storm activity was reported in the north of Tasmania from the night of the 15th to the morning of the 16th. A house was damaged by a lightning strike in Launceston and there were reports of power losses to several thousand premises from strikes to electricity transformers.

Northern Territory

On the 18th overnight thunderstorms produced 24 hour rainfall totals of 196mm at Gove Airport and 284mm at Yirrkala in northeastern Arnhem Land.

On the 31st overnight thunderstorms produced a 24 hour rainfall total of 182mm at McCluer Island near the north coast of the Top End of which about 150mm fell in 5 hours.

SNOW

Tasmania

Snow from the 2nd to the 4th closed some elevated roads.

WIND

New South Wales

The following wind gusts were reported:

4th Thredbo 104 km/h, Bombala 91 km/h
11th Green Cape 98 km/h, Thredbo 91 km/h,
Montague Island 91 km/h
12th Montague Island 94 km/h
18th Thredbo 117 km/h
24th Thredbo 107 km/h
29th Green Cape 100 km/h

Victoria

On the 2nd gale to storm force west to southwesterly winds affected Victoria. Wilsons Promontory recorded a 10 minute mean wind of 133 km/h with gusts to 148 km/h during the afternoon. The maximum wind gust at Falls Creek was 90 km/h.

On the 3rd strong to gale force westerly winds continued with Wilsons Promontory recording a maximum wind gust of 100 km/h

On the 4th strong northwesterly winds shifted gusty southwesterly as a cold front moved across Victoria. The strongest wind gusts were 130 km/h at Wilsons Promontory, 107 km/h at Falls Creek, 96 km/h at Mt Buller, 95 km/h at Mt Hotham and 90 km/h at East Sale.

On the 11th gale force southerly winds affected the Alpine areas of Victoria. The highest gust was 104 km/h at Falls Creek.

On the 12th gale force winds continued in the Alpine region. Mt Hotham recorded a mean wind of 102 km/h with gusts to 124 km/h.

On the 18th gale force northwesterly winds shifted westerly as a cold front crossed Victoria. The strongest gusts were 113 km/h at Wilsons Promontory, 109 km/h at Mt Hotham, 93 km/h at Mt Buller and 90 km/h at Mt Gellibrand. A severe thunderstorm moved over Altona during the early afternoon. Damage included tiles blown off roofs, tree branches (up to 25cm diameter) broken and powerlines cut. The narrow path of damage suggests that it was caused by a tornado. A waterspout was seen over Port Phillip near Dromana and four separate waterspouts were seen over Port Phillip near Sandringham.

On the 28th gale force winds affected southern Victoria. Wilsons Promontory recorded a gust of 124 km/h.

On the 31st gale force north to northwesterly winds affected Victoria. The highest gusts were 128 km/h at Wilsons Promontory and 100 km/h at Aireys Inlet.

Tasmania

Many gusts over 90 km/h were reported especially on the 2nd to the 5th, the 19th and the 20th and the 28th to the 31st. Storm force mean winds were reported from some sites. Wind debris (combined with snow) closed some roads and cut power to some areas in the south on the 4th.

High winds and heavy swells caused damage and delay to the Spirit of Tasmania III ferry as it crossed Bass Strait on the 3rd. Several vehicles on board were also damaged. High winds and heavy seas again caused delays on the 12th.

Extensive wind damage was reported to several houses in Devonport on the 15th associated with a line of thunderstorms.

Winds on the 31st caused some minor damage in Bicheno and cut power to several

thousand premises in the Midlands and the Fingal Valley.

South Australia

During the morning of the 17th strong, gusty northerly winds over Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island briefly reached gale force at Cleve with a peak gust of 91 km/h. Gale force northerly winds exceeded 75 km/h for 3 hours at Cape Willoughby with maximum gusts to 124 km/h.

Strong north to northwest winds were experienced on the morning and early afternoon of the 31st briefly reaching gale force at Hindmarsh Island.

Western Australia

On the 8th a moderate front caused isolated severe winds that damaged the roofs at Halls Head near Mandurah. One house was badly damaged.

On the 9th and 10th the first major low cold front of the season delivered gales and heavy rain to the Lower West district of Western Australia. The initial front on the 9th caused rainfall in excess of 20mm along the Lower West coast with Roleystone recording 47mm, Wellington Mill 44mm and Busselton 31mm, of which 16.6mm fell in 10 minutes. Strong winds brought down trees and power lines but property damage was very isolated. A stand of 20 tall trees at Cowaramup near Margaret River was felled in a 100 metre wide swathe indicating a possible tornado. Ocean Reef recorded a gust of 104 km/h at 11.20am. A storm surge of 0.5-0.7 was recorded enhancing tides near the west coast to 1.8 metres.

The slow moving low passed to the south of Western Australia on the 10th producing gales, particularly in the South West district. Cape Leeuwin recorded several wind gusts over 100 km/h including one of 120 km/h. Little damage was reported.

On the 30th strong northwesterly winds ahead of a moderate cold front caused minor damage along the western south coast. A large tree fell on a house in Albany. Cape Leeuwin recorded mean wind speeds of 80 km/h with gusts to 100 km/h.

TEMPERATURE

Western Australia

On the 31st the Southwest of Western Australia experienced a very chilly day following the passage of a moderate cold front overnight. Locations such as Corrigin (8.9°C) and Hyden (9.0°C) in the Great Southern, Cunderdin (10.6°C) and Northam (10.4°C) in the Central Wheat Belt and Pearce RAAF (11.5°C) in the Lower West set new records for the lowest May daily maximum temperatures.

Highest Mean Maximum Temperature for May

Station	Actual °C	Previous Highest °C	Year	Years of Record
Queensland				
Brigalow Res. Stn	27.3	27.2	1973	34

Highest Mean Minimum Temperature for May

Station	Actual °C	Previous Highest °C	Year	Years of Record
Queensland				
Burketown PO	20.5	20.5	1992	104
Northern Territory				
Maningrida	23.1	22.9	1992	36

Lowest Mean Maximum Temperature for May

Station	Actual °C	Previous Lowest °C	Year	Years of Record
New South Wales				
Byron Bay	20.9	21.0	1992	30

Lowest Mean Minimum Temperature for May

Station	Actual °C	Previous Lowest °C	Year	Years of Record
New South Wales				
Pindari Dam	3.6	3.8	1994	33
Tenterfield	1.5	1.6	1935	98
Murrurundi	1.5	1.9	1927	98
Gosford	6.6	6.6	1966	51
Wellington Research	5.1	5.2	1965	59
Parramatta	8.0	8.6	1976	37
Prospect Dam	8.2	8.4	1982	40
Wollongong	10.3	10.4	2000	34
Nerriga	0.8	1.8	2001	34

Highest Daily Maximum Temperature for May

Station	Actual °C	Date	Previous Highest °C	Year	Years of Record
New South Wales					
Nelson Bay	24.5	04	24.4	1971	35

Lowest Daily Maximum Temperature for May

Station	Actual °C	Date	Previous Lowest °C	Year	Years of Record
Western Australia					
Beverley	10.2	31	12.6	1993	33
Brookton	10.6	31	11.2	1993	35
Broome A/P	18.8	29	19.8	1997	64
Corrigin	8.9	31	10.7	1993	46
Cunderdin	10.6	31	11.8	1951	53
Hyden	9.0	31	11.1	1971	30
Kalumburu Mission	21.0	29	23.9	1968	46
Kellerberrin	10.5	31	11.5	1993	45
Lake Grace Comp	9.6	31	10.8	1993	40
Narembeen	11.0	31	12.2	1971	32
Northam	10.4	31	13.0	1976	36
Pearce	11.5	31	13.0	1995	42
Wyndham	21.0	29	21.1	1968	36
Northern Territory					
Yuendumu	9.2	29	12.0	2004	33
Jabiru A/P AWS	26.6	30	27.0	1979	25
Timber Creek	19.5	30	21.4	2004	23
Mango Farm	24.0	30	24.6	2004	21

Lowest Daily Minimum Temperature for May

Station	Actual °C	Date	Previous Lowest °C	Year	Years of Record
Queensland					
Amberley AMO	-1.3	31	-1.2	2000	62
Gympie	0.6	29	1.0	2002	39
New South Wales					
Wilcannia	-0.4	20	-0.4	1987	48
Collarenebri	-1.2	31	-1.0	1994	40
Barraba	-6.2	31	-5.9	1982	39
Pindari Dam	-2.8	31	-2.5	1982	33
Casino	1.6	31	2.2	1997	40
Kempsey	1.0	30	1.4	1994	40
Mount Seaview	-0.6	30	-0.1	1970	36
Murrurundi	-5.0	29	-5.0	1987	40
Burrinjuck Dam	-0.7	28	-0.6	1967	40
Western Australia					
Beverley	-0.2	27	0.0	1993	34

Highest Daily Minimum Temperature for May

Station	Actual °C	Date	Previous Highest °C	Year	Years of Record
Western Australia					
Kalumburu Mission	26.4	20	26.0	1994	46

Highest Daily Rainfall on Record for May

Station	Actual mm	Date	Previous Highest mm	Year	Years of Record
Western Australia					
Country Downs	78.0	23	49.4	1989	31
Ruby Plains	52.0	07	51.4	1997	61
Warmun	50.0	06	47.8	1941	96
Northern Territory					
Papunya	54.3	18	44.5	1968	38
Uluru Rangers	34.6	18	16.6	1997	36
Alcan Minesite	207.5	19	125.8	1983	33
Kulgera	47.0	18	33.6	1990	33
Warramunga	51.8	27	38.0	1992	33
Gove Airport	187.4	19	91.4	1990	28
Channel Island	48.0	20	14.8	1995	27
Yirrkala	284.4	19	148.0	1990	23

RAINFALL**Highest Monthly Rainfall on Record for May**

Station	Actual mm	Previous Highest mm	Year	Years of Record
Northern Territory				
Bradshaw	49.5	43.5	1903	58
Papunya	143.3	110.0	1979	39
Beatrice Hill	82.7	56.0	1987	36
Alcan Minesite	385.6	331.2	1983	34
Kulgera	82.5	56.4	1990	34
Gove Airport	396.0	241.8	1990	29
Channel Island	70.8	16.8	2001	28
McMinns Lagoon	103.8	95.0	1987	24
Yirrkala	431.4	348.2	1990	23

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

Lowest Monthly Rainfall on Record for May

Station	Actual mm	Previous Lowest mm	Year	Years of Record
Queensland				
Belgamba	0.0	1.2	1975	32
Darlington	4.4	9.4	1988	30
New South Wales				
Lower Creek	3.2	9.2	1982	43
Tabulam	13.6	16.6	1975	34
Byron Bay	9.0	20.2	1970	54
Wooli Beach	0.3	19.0	1975	42
Whiporie	3.0	3.0	1966	40
Green Pigeon	6.6	7.6	1970	39
Grafton	4.0	12.5	1970	38
Alstonville	10.6	35.4	1970	38
Murwillumbah	2.4	9.4	1988	32
Smoky Cape	1.4	1.5	1957	66
Taree	5.2	7.4	1957	123
Dungog (Main Creek)	2.8	4.8	1982	45
Rose Bay	12.8	23.0	1993	77
Berowra	6.6	6.6	1982	102
Goulburn	2.6	4.4	2001	33