

National Climate and Water Briefing

24 September 2015

While El Niño is dominating the global climate, Australia's winter rainfall patterns more closely reflect the influences of a positive Southern Annular Mode and a warm Indian Ocean. El Niño continues to strengthen in the Pacific Ocean, and is likely to peak in December. The upcoming severe weather season is likely to see more hot days and increased bushfire risk in the southeast, primarily due to the El Niño influence.

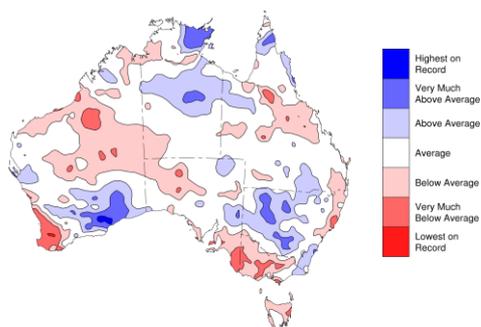
Climate influences and conditions

Climate influences

- El Niño conditions in the Pacific Ocean are well established and continue to strengthen
- Warm Indian Ocean basin with positive Indian Ocean Dipole pattern
- Southern Annular Mode currently neutral, following positive phase through first half of 2015

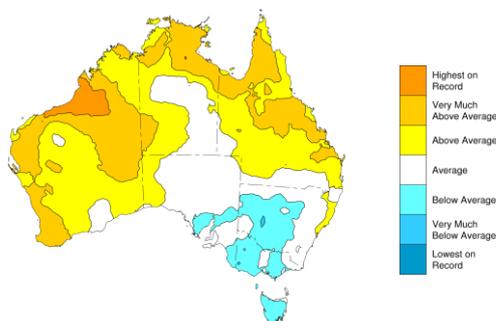
Recent conditions

- Winter rainfall and snow mostly influenced by positive Southern Annular Mode and warm Indian Ocean



Rainfall deciles, June–August 2015

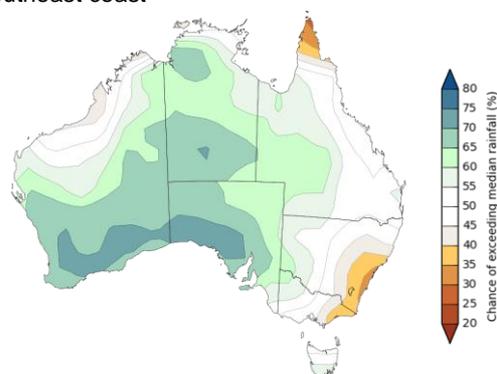
- Winter temperatures generally below average in the southeast; above average elsewhere



Maximum temperature deciles, June–August 2015

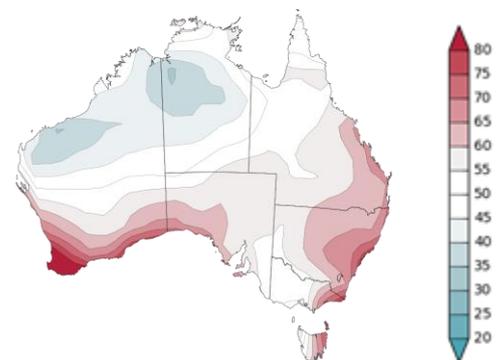
Climate outlook

- Wetter-than-normal conditions likely for most of southwestern Australia; drier-than-normal for southeast coast



Chances of exceeding median rainfall, October–December 2015

- Warmer-than-normal days likely for the southeast coast and far southwest



Chances of exceeding median maximum temperature, October–December 2015

Streamflow outlook

- Low flows expected at 158 locations
- Near-median flows more likely at 48 locations
- High flows more likely at 21 locations



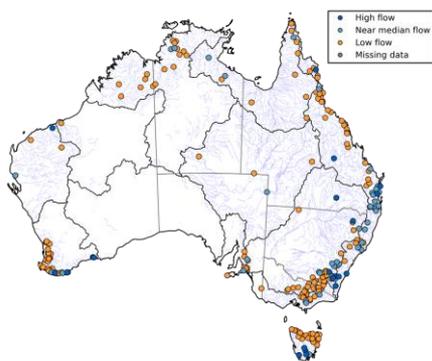
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Severe weather outlook

Flood risk

- Major widespread flooding less likely during El Niño
- Large number of low streamflow forecasts support the notion of reduced widespread flooding risk



- Localised floods can occur in any season with significant weather systems, regardless of catchment conditions and soil moisture

Seasonal bushfire assessment

- Elevated risk as shown below

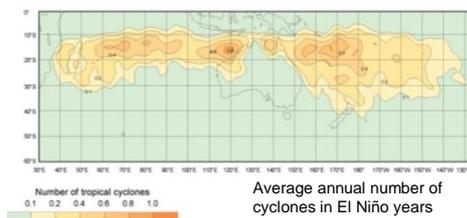
SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA SEASONAL BUSHFIRE OUTLOOK 2015-16



- Expected dry conditions for southeastern Australia

Tropical cyclone outlook

- Tropical cyclones are always a risk regardless of background climate conditions
- Typically fewer tropical cyclones form in El Niño years and Queensland's east coast sees fewer coastal crossings



- In El Niño years, the first tropical cyclone tends to cross the Australian coast between late December and mid-January
- Official tropical cyclone seasonal outlook due 12 October

Severe thunderstorms

- Typical active storm season expected
- Southeastern Queensland and northern New South Wales always prone to severe thunderstorms

Heatwave potential

- Elevated likelihood of heatwaves
- Above-average temperatures likely
- Dry soils mean less evaporative cooling

More information

Rainfall and temperature outlook
www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks

Seasonal streamflow forecasts and water storage
www.bom.gov.au/water

Severe weather warnings
www.bom.gov.au

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