NAMS
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL MONITORING SYSTEM

Climate and Agricultural Update

National Report

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Contributors

The information contained in this report is regularly sourced from the following organisations:

ORGANISATION

Bureau of Meteorology	http://www.bom.gov.au/
Bureau of Rural Sciences	http://www.brs.gov.au/
Department of Primary Industries, New South Wales	http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/
Snowy Hydro Limited	http://www.snowyhydro.com.au/
Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE)	http://www.abare.gov.au/
Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia	http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/
Goulburn-Murray Water	http://www.g-mwater.com.au/
Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries	http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/
New South Wales Department of Water and Energy	http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/
Meat and Livestock Australia	http://www.mla.com.au/

Department of Primary Industries and Resources SA Government of South Australia Primary Industries and Resources SA	http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/
Department of Primary Industries, Victoria, Australia Victoria The Place To Be	http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/
Murray-Darling Basin Authority MURRAY–DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY	http://www.mdba.gov.au/

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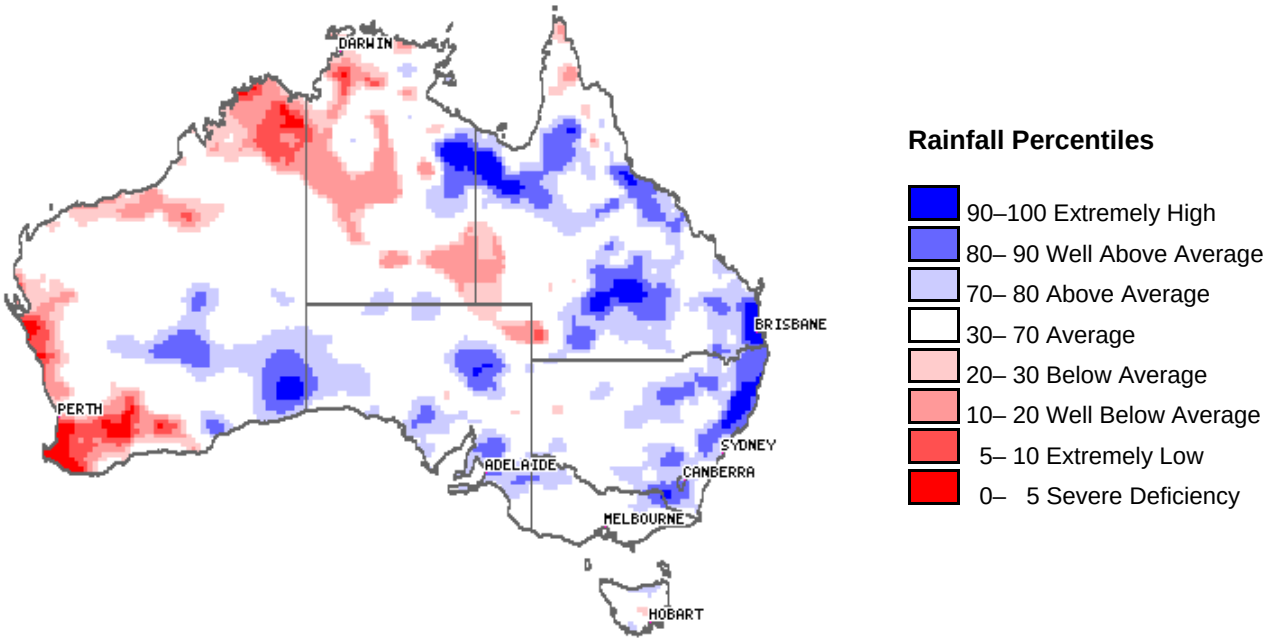
1.0 Rainfall and temperature

1.1 Rainfall

Spatial rainfall analyses are based on historical monthly rainfall data provided by the Bureau of Meteorology. For further information on rainfall data and the interpretation of percentile analyses go to http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/austmaps/.

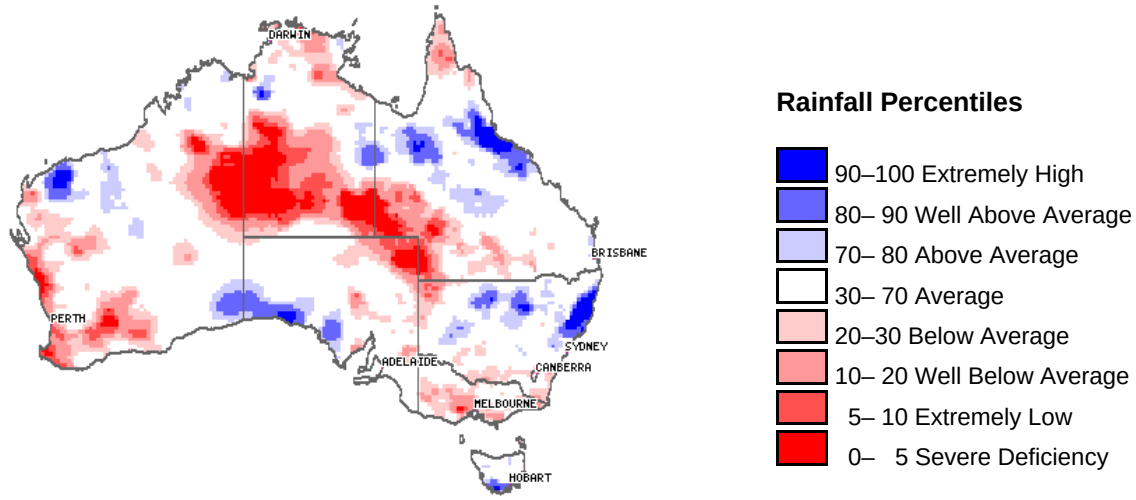
Rainfall over the last month (April 2009)



Rainfall percentiles for April 2009

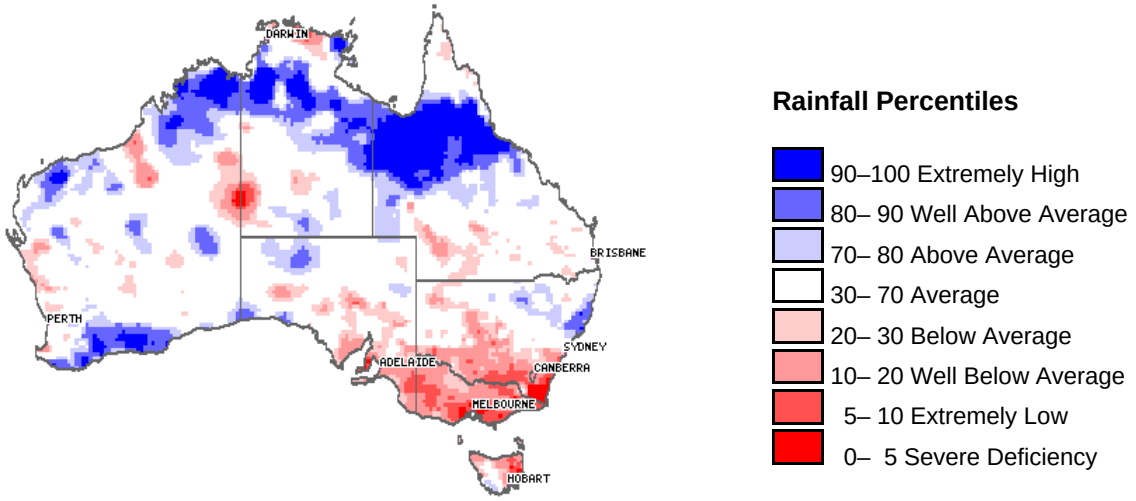
Rainfall in April 2009 was 20 per cent below average for the continent (fifty second lowest of 110 years). The Northern Territory and Western Australia experienced notably below average rainfall (58 per cent and 45 per cent below average, respectively). Rainfall across the other states and territories was between 1 and 14 per cent below average with the exception of New South Wales, which recorded rainfall 3 per cent above the long-term average.

Ongoing or emerging rainfall situations



Rainfall percentiles for the last three months
February 2009–April 2009

During the past three months, areas of central Australia, Victoria, south-west of Western Australia, southern New South Wales and south-western Queensland recorded below average rainfall. Areas of above average rainfall remain in the north-east of Queensland, northern New South Wales, and southern South Australia to south-eastern Western Australia.

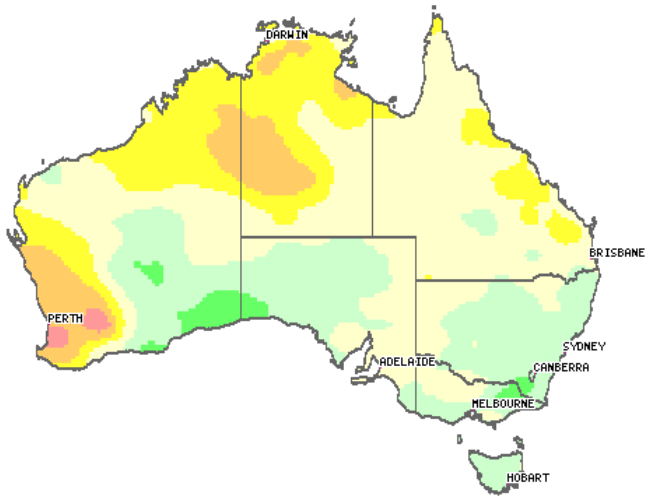


Rainfall percentiles for the last 12 months
May 2008–April 2009

For the 12 month period from May 2008 to April 2009, above average rainfall was recorded across northern Australia and in parts of Western Australia and northern New South Wales. 12-month rainfall deficiencies eased slightly in central and northern South Australia due to well above average rainfall late in 2008 and above average rainfall in March 2009. Rainfall was well below average across the south-east of the continent, with areas in southern Victoria, south-eastern New South Wales and north-eastern Tasmania in the lowest tenth percentile range.

1.2 Maximum and minimum temperature anomalies

Spatial temperature analyses are based on historical monthly temperature data provided by the Bureau of Meteorology. These temperature anomaly maps show the departure of the maximum and the minimum temperature from the long-term average. Temperature anomalies are calculated with respect to the reference period 1961–1990. For further information on temperature anomalies go to: http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/austmaps/.



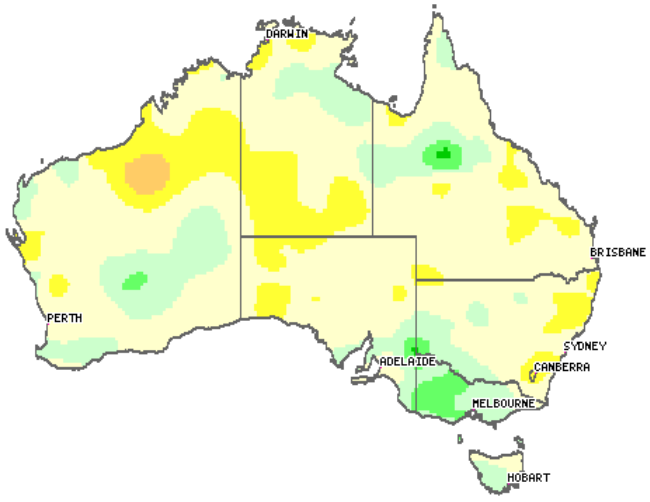
Monthly mean maximum temperature anomalies
April 2009

Temperature Anomalies (°C)

- > 6
- 5 to 6
- 4 to 5
- 3 to 4
- 2 to 3
- 1 to 2
- 0 to 1
- -1 to 0
- -2 to -1
- -3 to -2
- -4 to -3
- -5 to -4
- -6 to -5
- < -6

Maximum temperatures in April 2009 averaged over Australia were 0.56 °C above average (twentieth highest on record). Most of the northern half of the country experienced maximum temperatures slightly above average, but the highest maxima were recorded in south-western Western Australia (3–4 °C above average).

Maximum temperatures were below average across Tasmania, most of New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, and in south-eastern Western Australia. Maximum temperatures were 1–2 °C below average at several locations in the south of the continent.



Monthly mean minimum temperature anomalies
April 2009

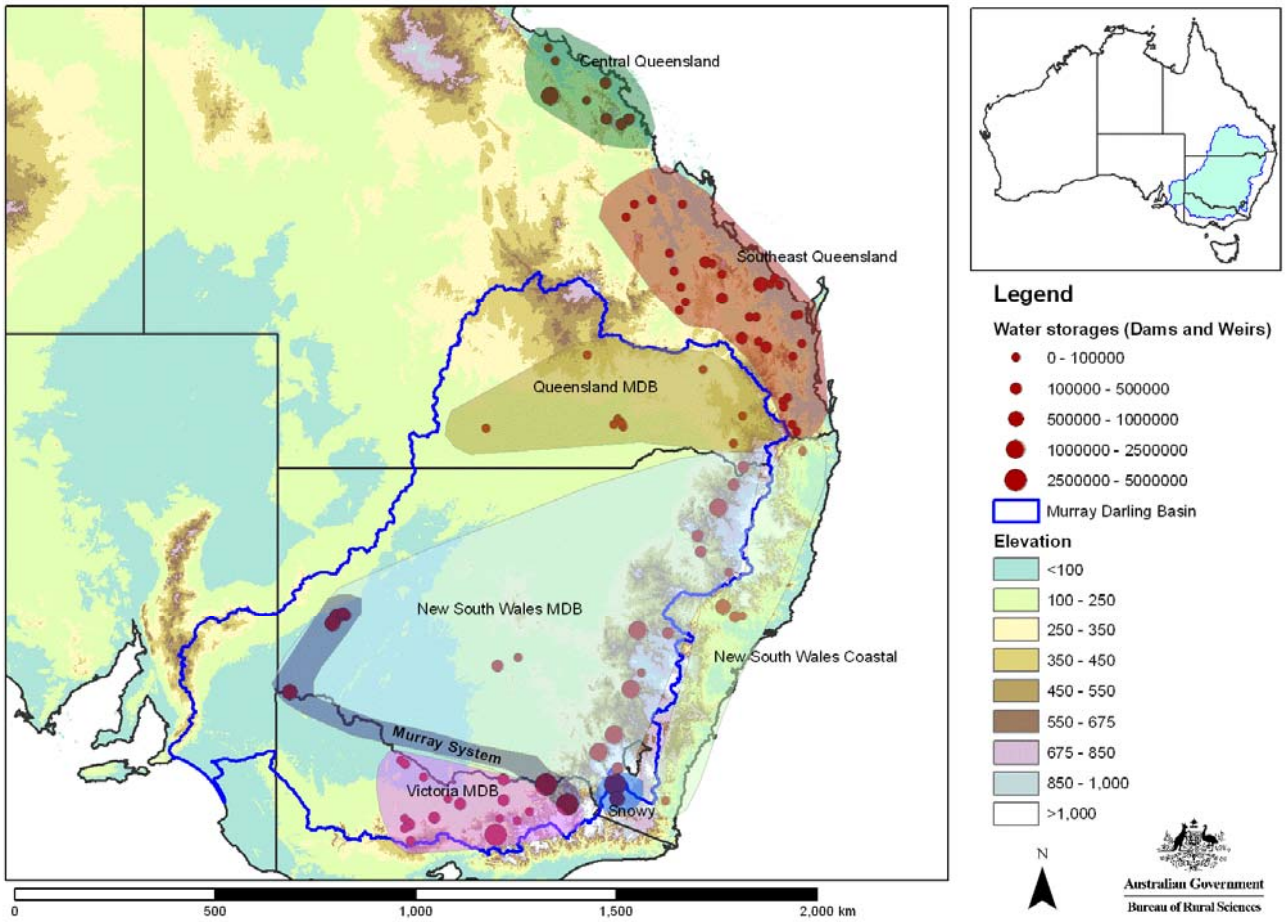
Temperature Anomalies (°C)

- > 6
- 5 to 6
- 4 to 5
- 3 to 4
- 2 to 3
- 1 to 2
- 0 to 1
- -1 to 0
- -2 to -1
- -3 to -2
- -4 to -3
- -5 to -4
- -6 to -5
- < -6

Minimum temperatures in April 2009 averaged over Australia were 0.37 °C above the long-term average (twenty-third highest). The highest minima were recorded in the north-western Western Australia (2–3 °C above average).

Minimum temperatures were below average at a range of locations across the continent and the lowest minimum was recorded in central Queensland (2–3 °C below average).

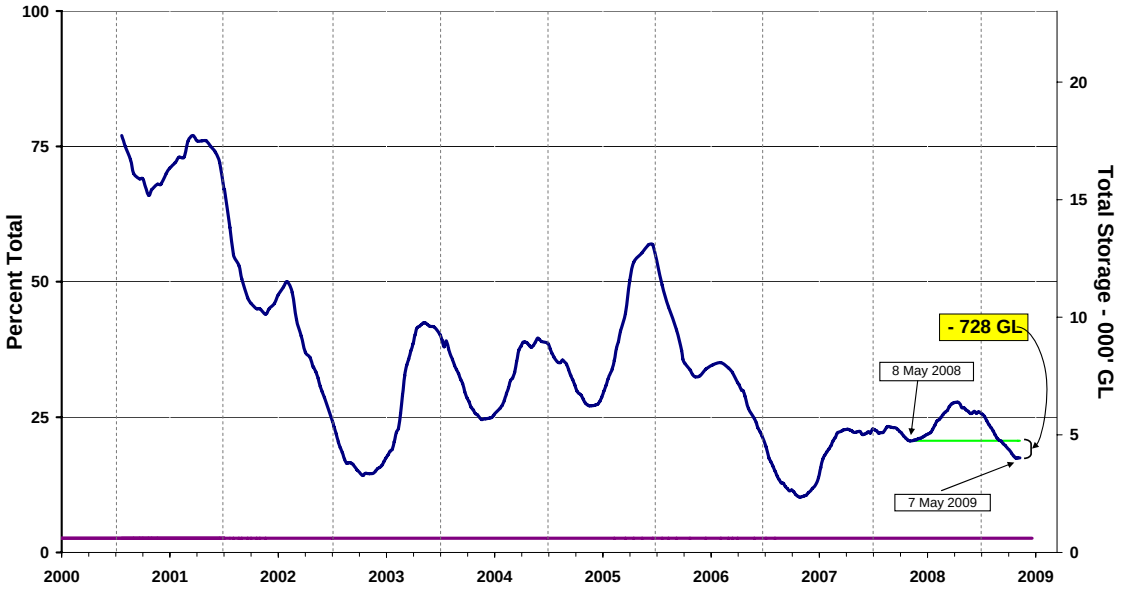
2.0 Water storages and announcements



Water storages in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The blue line indicates the extent of the Murray-Darling Basin. The shaded areas denote the coverage of the individual reporting regions. Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Water storages (current at 7 May 2009)

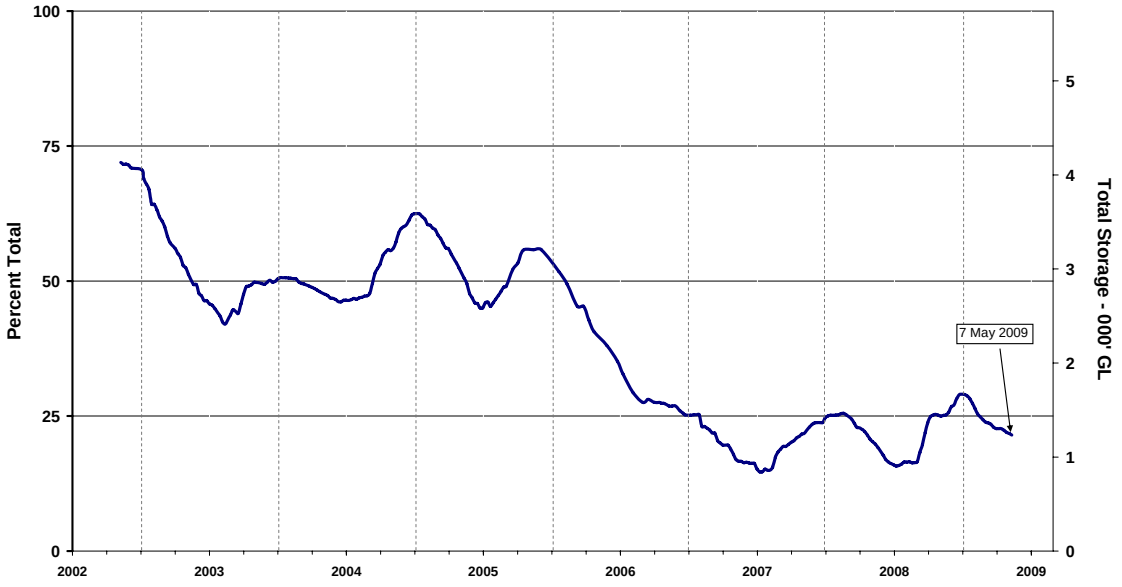
Water storage in the MDB (New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland)



Water storage levels in the Murray-Darling Basin from 1 January 2001 to 7 May 2009. The green line shows the storage level at the same time last year and the purple line shows the dead storage (not calculated).
Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Over the past month storage levels within the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) have decreased. Storage levels generally fall at this time of the year because of the seasonal irrigation drawdown. Storage levels for irrigated agriculture on 7 May 2009 were at 4021 gigalitres (GL) (17.47 per cent of a total capacity of 23 020 GL), a decrease of 199 GL (0.86 per cent of total capacity) over the month. Current storage levels are approximately 728 GL less than at the same time last year.

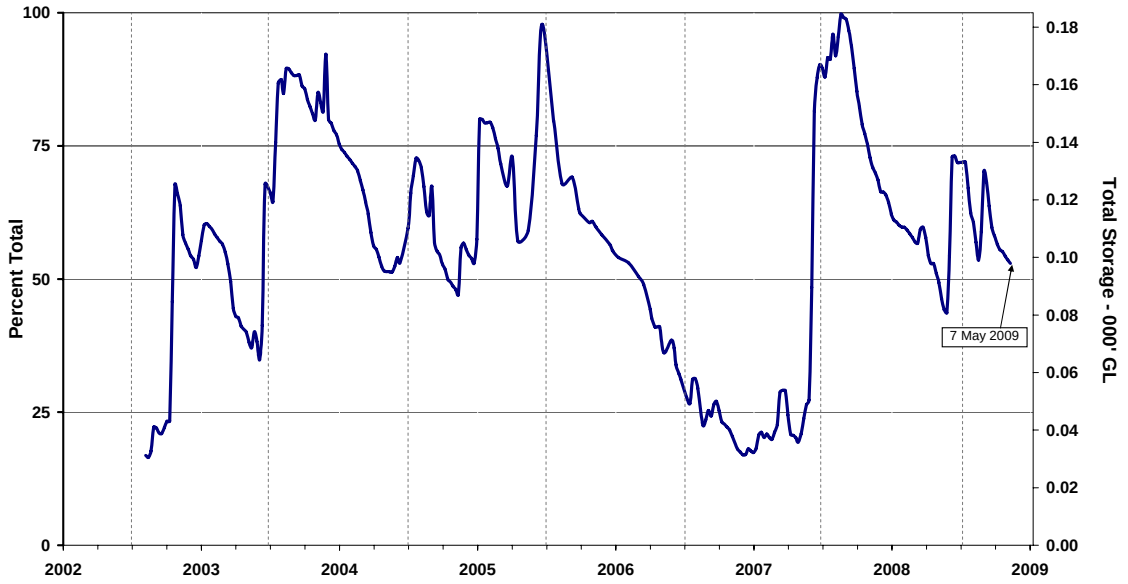
Water storage in the Snowy Scheme



Water storage levels in the Snowy Scheme from 6 November 2002 to 7 May 2009.
Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

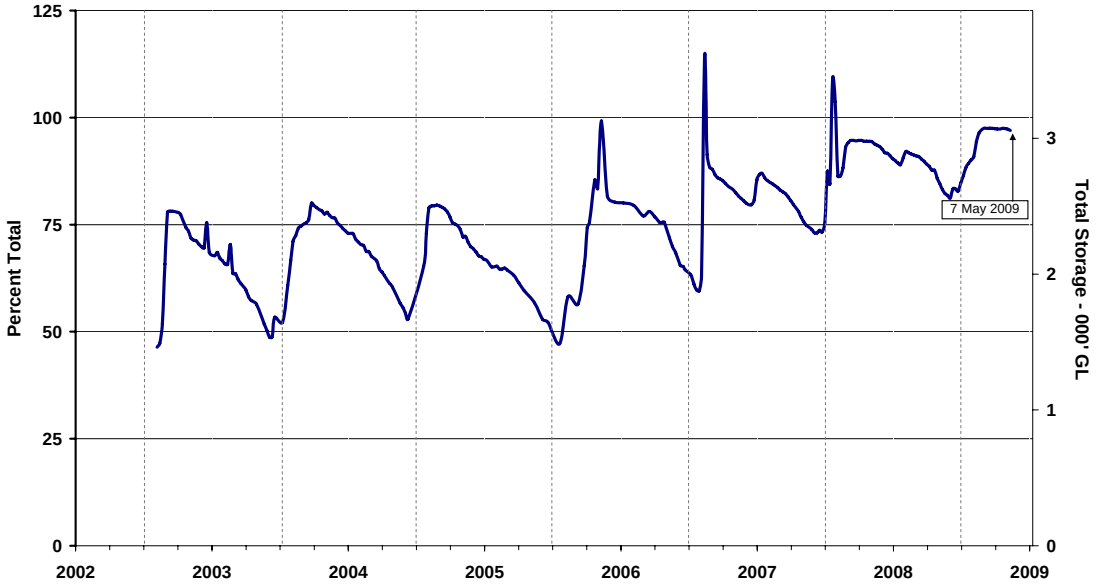
The figure 'Water storage in the MDB' (above top) does not include the capacities of Lake Eucumbene, Tantangara Reservoir and Lake Jindabyne (collectively the Snowy Scheme) which are reserved for hydro-electricity generation and irrigation purposes. Current levels in the Snowy Scheme storages are 1235 GL (21.5 per cent of a total capacity of 5744 GL) (see figure above). This is a decrease of 68 GL (1.18 per cent) from the same time last year.

Water storage in Queensland



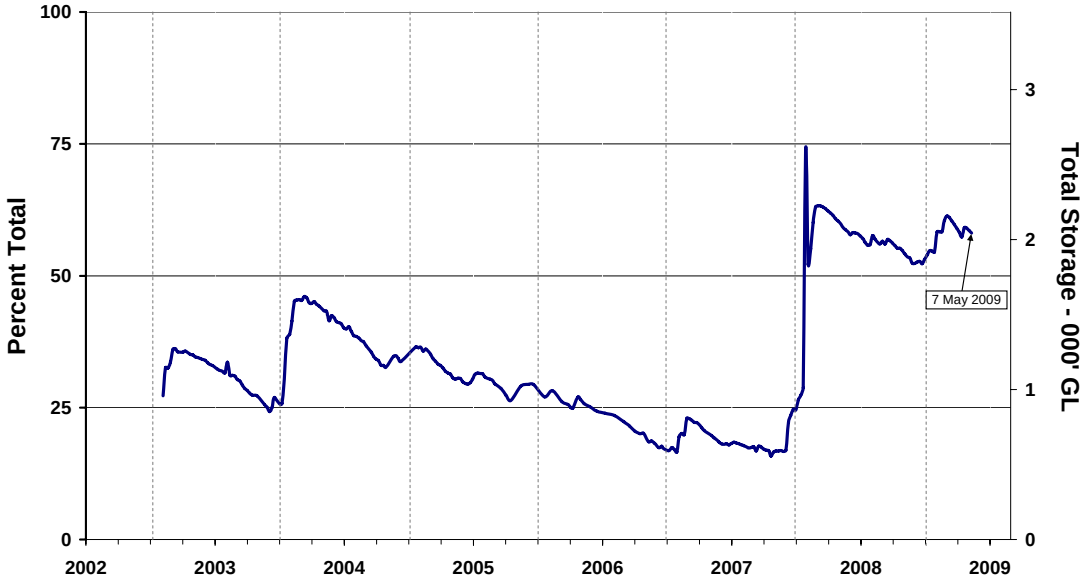
Water storage levels in Queensland MDB from 3 February 2003 to 7 May 2009.
Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Storage levels in Queensland MDB decreased by 7 GL to 98 GL (52.96 per cent of a total capacity of 185 GL) over the last month (see figure above). This storage level is approximately 33 GL lower than at the same time last year.



Water storage levels in central Queensland from 3 February 2003 to 7 May 2009.
Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

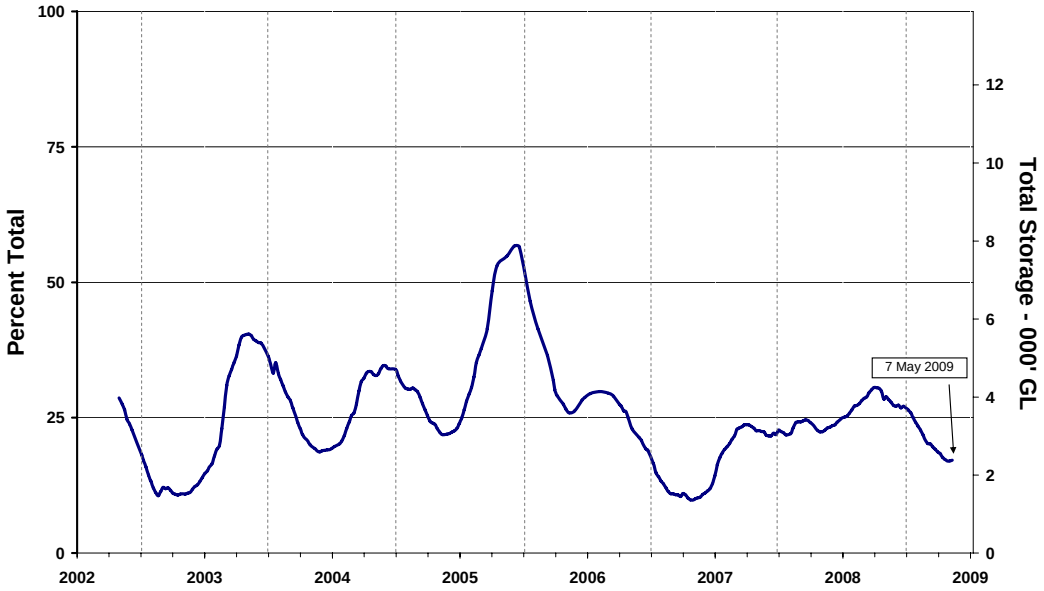
In central Queensland storage levels were virtually unchanged, decreasing by 11 GL to 3061 GL (97.02 per cent of a total capacity of 3155 GL) over the last month (see figure above). This storage level is approximately 99 GL higher than at the same time last year.



Water storage levels in south-east Queensland from 3 February 2003 to 7 May 2009.
Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

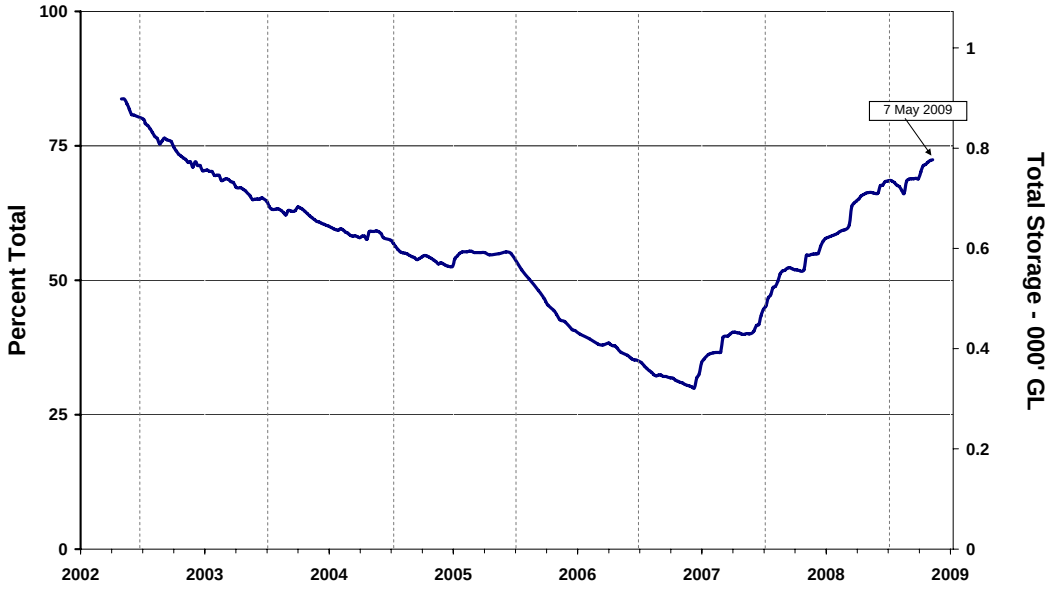
In south-east Queensland storage levels were virtually unchanged, decreasing by 6 GL to 2044 GL (58.11 per cent of a total capacity of 3517 GL) over the last month (see figure above). This storage level represents a decrease of 38 GL (1.9 per cent) compared to the same time last year.

Water storage in New South Wales



Water storage levels in New South Wales MDB from 28 October 2002 to 7 May 2009.
Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

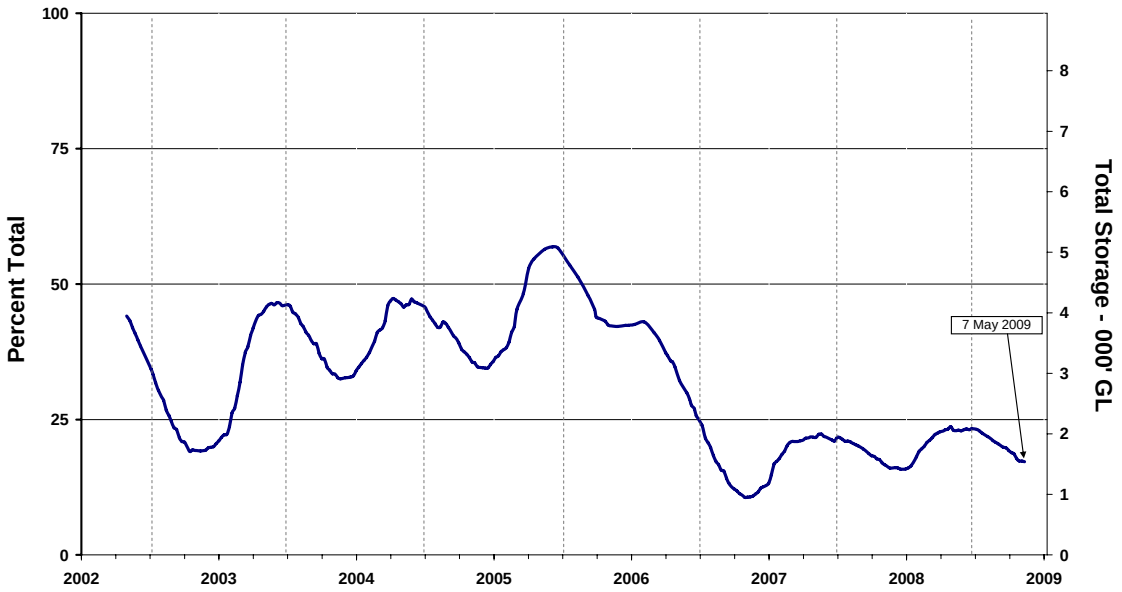
Storage levels in the New South Wales MDB decreased by 172 GL to 2380 GL (17.14 per cent of a total capacity of 13 884 GL) over the last month (see figure above). This storage level is approximately 774 GL less than at the same time last year.



Water storage levels in coastal New South Wales from 28 October 2002 to 7 May 2009.
Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

In coastal New South Wales, storage levels increased by 24 GL to 777 GL (72.41 per cent of a total capacity of 1073 GL) over the last month (see figure above). This storage level is approximately 191 GL higher than at the same time last year.

Water storage in Victoria

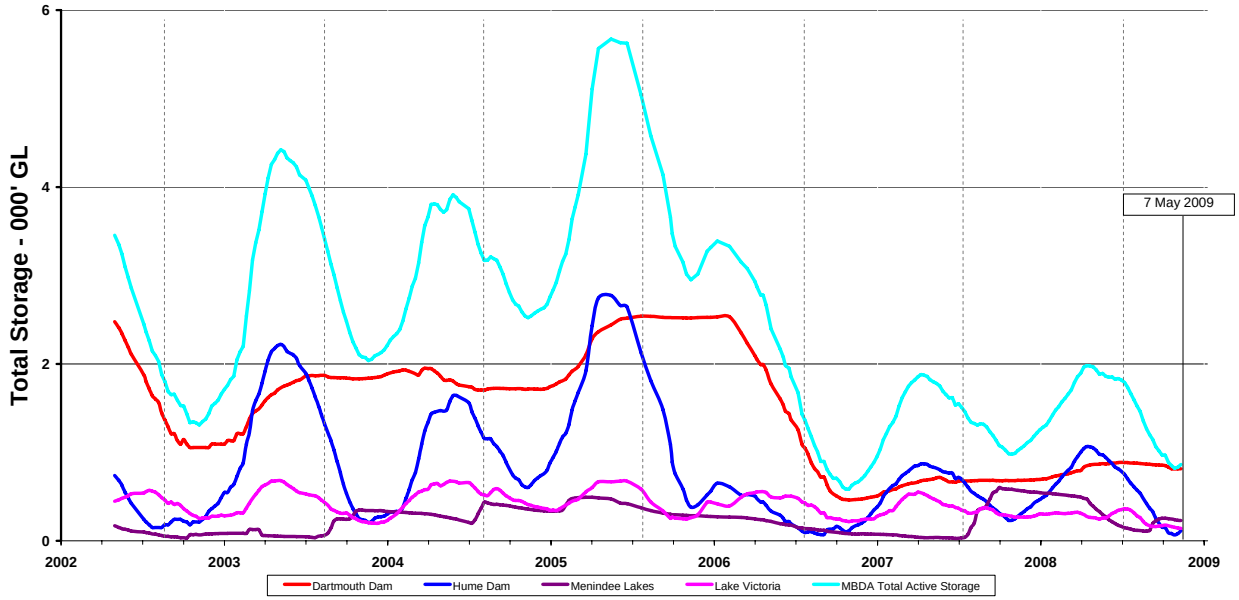


Water storage levels in Victoria MDB from 28 October 2002 7 May 2009.
Source: Bureau of Rural Sciences

Storage levels in Victoria MDB decreased by 150 GL to 1530 GL (17.19 per cent of a total capacity of 8903 GL) over the last month (see figure above). This storage level is approximately 76 GL higher than at the same time last year.

Murray-Darling Basin Authority water storages

- April rainfall was average to above average across the Basin with the upper and lower Murray receiving above average rainfall. Temperatures throughout the southern Basin were average to below average. Daily maximum temperatures in the upper Murray were 1 to 2 °C below the long-term average for April. Despite average rainfall and cool weather, system inflows in April were around 50 gigalitres (GL), slightly higher than the minimum recorded in 2007 (42 GL), but well below the long-term average of 230 GL. These low April inflows can be attributed to the very dry River Murray catchments as a result of low surface soil moisture content and depleted groundwater systems feeding the creeks and streams.
- Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) active storages at the end of April declined to 860 GL (10 per cent capacity) which is slightly lower than this time last year (1020 GL) and well below the long-term average of 4400 GL.
- The total volume of water in all Basin storages managed by the MDBA, or by State governments, decreased over the last month. At the start of May 2009, Basin storages held about 4021 GL (17.47 per cent). Storage in the Snowy Mountains reservoirs (managed by Snowy Hydro) remains low, with Lake Eucumbene at only 18.6 per cent capacity. Storage in Menindee Lakes under New South Wales control is at 13 per cent capacity (about 233 GL) compared to 33 per cent at this time last year. Despite this low level, it is sufficient to assure Broken Hill's water supply for at least 21 months and allow delivery of high security allocations and carryover in 2009–10.
- Storage in Hume Dam decreased by 41 GL to 82 GL (or 3 per cent capacity) during April 2009. The recent rain has enabled the release from Hume Dam to be reduced to the minimum flow of 600 megalitres/day (ML/day) at Heywoods.
- Storage in Dartmouth Dam decreased by 54 GL during April 2009 to 814 GL (21 per cent of capacity). The release is being gradually reduced from 500 ML/day to the normal minimum release of 200 ML/day. This decrease is due to decreasing river losses and declining demands further downstream. The majority of the water that now remains in Dartmouth Dam will provide a reserve for critical human needs and also meet individual carryover requirements of irrigators for 2009–10.
- The flow to South Australia was reduced in the last week of April from 3500 to 3000 ML/day and was further reduced over the first few days in May to 1900 ML/day due to the decreasing river losses and demands.
- The storage in Lake Victoria has decreased during April by 31 GL to around 144 GL (or 21 per cent capacity).
- The trend of MDBA water storages at 7 May 2009 is shown in the figure below.



Water volumes in the Murray-Darling Basin Authority Storages from 28 October 2002 to 7 May 2009.
Source: Murray-Darling Basin Authority

For further information on water storages, go to:

Snowy Scheme
http://www.snowyhydro.com.au/lakeLevels.asp?pageID=360&parentID=6

Queensland
http://www.sunwater.com.au/pdf/water/CurrentStorageSummary.pdf

New South Wales
http://www.statewater.com.au/indexes/index.asp

Northern Victoria
http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/storage-levels/

Murray–Darling Basin Authority
http://www.mdba.gov.au/

2.2 Water announcements

Announcements for New South Wales (current at 1 May 2009)

- On 1 May 2009, the New South Wales Department of Water and Energy announced that there would be no changes to water allocations in the New South Wales river systems. The water allocations for all licence holders remain unchanged until the end of the 2008–09 water year, as summarised in the table below.

Water system	High Security Licences (%)	Change (%)	General Security Licences (%)	Change (%)
NSW Murray Valley	95	0	9	0
Murrumbidgee Valley	95	0	21	0
Lower Darling	100	0	50	0
Macquarie Valley	100	0	10	0
Hunter Valley	100	0	100	0
Lachlan Valley	30	0	0	0
Border Rivers	100	0	0	0
Peel Valley	100	0	80	0

- The recent rain across the southern valleys has started to wet up the catchment, however, the situation for the 2009–10 year in the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys remains concerning.
- There is sufficient water available in both Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys to ensure that critical human needs in 2009–10 can be met and any further inflows are being set aside to ensure that conveyance losses are met.
- At this stage not all water carryover will be deliverable on 1 July, but if the rainfall continues there is a high probability that it will be deliverable early in the irrigation season. The carryover will continue to be delivered cooperatively with the other basin states.
- The Menindee Lakes are currently at 13 per cent of capacity compared to 33 per cent at this time last year. Despite this low level, it is sufficient to assure Broken Hill's water supply for at least 21 months and allow delivery of high security allocations and carryover in 2009–10.
- The Department of Water and Energy reminds licence holders that applications for all trades in New South Wales will close on 31 May 2009. Licence holders will be limited to 95 per cent of entitlement in the Murrumbidgee and 100 per cent of entitlement in the Murray including carryover and allocation.
- A full assessment will be carried out mid-May with details available in the Murray and Murrumbidgee critical water planning communiqués, available on the 15 May from the Department's website: www.dwe.nsw.gov.au.

Announcements for Victoria (current at 6 May 2009)

- The final seasonal allocations in the Goulburn System for 2008–09 were announced by Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW) on 1 April 2009 (see below).

Water system	High-reliability share (%)	Change (%)
Murray	35	0
Broken	0	0
Goulburn	33	+2
Campaspe	0	0
Loddon	0	0
Bullarook Creek	0	0

- The resource improvements that occur between 1 April and the end of June 2009 will be assigned towards system operations and allocations in the 2009–10 season.
- Goulburn-Murray Water will update the allocation outlook for 2009–10 on Friday 15 May 2009.

Announcements for South Australia (current at 15 April 2009)

- On 15 April 2009, the South Australian Minister for the River Murray, Karlene Maywald, announced that River Murray irrigation allocations will remain unchanged at 18 per cent for the rest of 2008–09 season. Due to ongoing drought conditions across the Murray-Darling Basin, there was no increase in the amount of water available to South Australia, with 40 GL flowing into the system in March.
- Inflows during March 2009 were very close to the worse-case scenario predictions, while February and January 2009 inflows were slightly below the previous historical minimum inflows.
- The volume of water held in Hume Dam, Dartmouth Dam, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes is currently at 1273 GL (14 per cent capacity) compared with 1771 GL last year (19 per cent capacity). It is significantly below the long-term average of 5020 GL for this time of year (54 per cent capacity).
- Allocation updates will continue to be issued on the fifteenth of each month or on the first business day thereafter, if it falls on a weekend.

For further information on water announcements, go to:

Murray-Darling Basin Authority
http://www.mdba.gov.au/

Goulburn-Murray Water
http://www.g-mwater.com.au/news/media-releases/

New South Wales Department of Water and Energy
http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au/

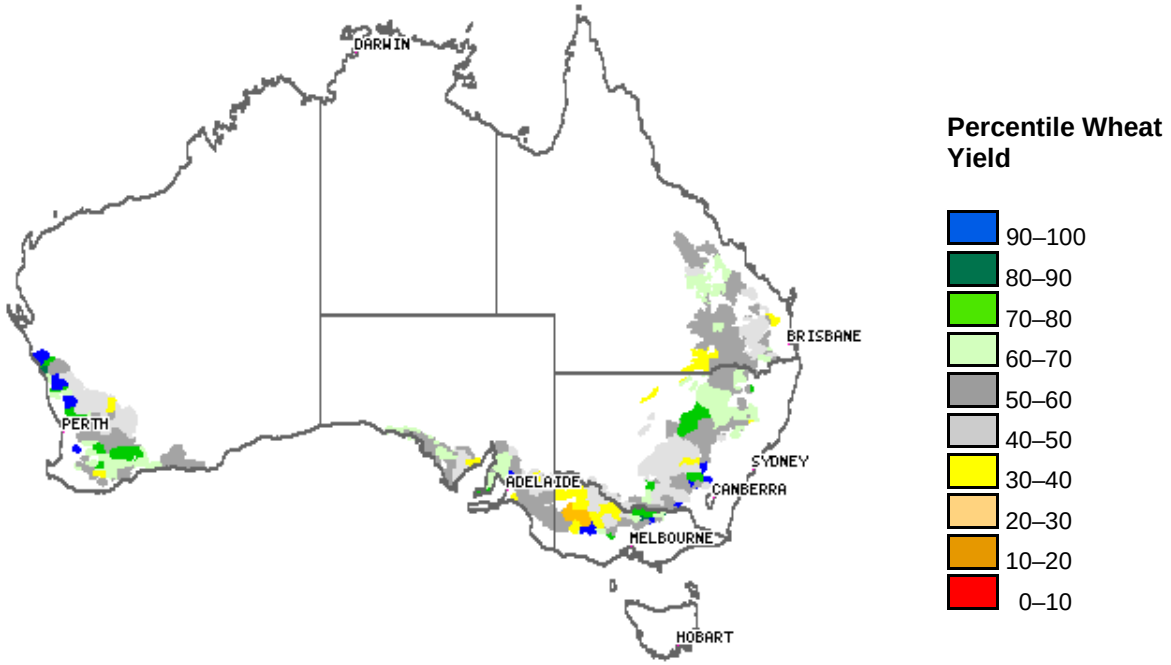
South Australian Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation
http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/media.html

3.0 Crop and livestock production

3.1 Crops

Winter Crops

Predicted wheat yields for the coming season are provided by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, as shown in the figure below. The forecast is based on a wheat stress index model that incorporates water availability, climate data and a soil moisture profile. The following figure shows median shire wheat yield forecasts across Australia based on climate data up to the end of the forecast month and projecting forward based on the long-term median calculated over all available years.



Predicted shire wheat yields for the 2008 cropping season at 1 May 2009 ranked relative to all years (1901–2005).

Australia:

- The predicted median wheat yield for Australia at 1 May 2009 is 2.14 tonnes per hectare (t/ha). This is close to the long-term median of 2.04 t/ha (Seasonal Wheat Outlook, May 2009, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries).

New South Wales:

- The predicted median wheat yield for New South Wales at 1 May 2009 is 2.35 t/ha. This is close to the long-term median of 2.29 t/ha (Seasonal Wheat Outlook, May 2009, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries).
- 15 to 50 mm of rain fell across the southern tablelands, slopes, plains and parts of the central west in late April. The rain has triggered widespread winter crop sowing in these regions. With many northern grain growing areas already having full or near-full soil moisture profiles, it is anticipated that there will be a strong start to the winter cropping season across much of New South Wales. However, conditions to the west of the ranges in the northern tablelands are less favourable and producers around Nyngan and Hillston are holding off until sowing rains arrive.http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/state/grains-and-cropping/general/south-stoked-ready-to-sow/1499782.aspx).

South Australia:

- The predicted median wheat yield for South Australia at 1 May 2009 is 1.98 t/ha. This is 0.04 t/ha higher than the long-term median (Seasonal Wheat Outlook, May 2009, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries).
- Most agricultural areas in South Australia received between 30 and 50 mm of rain over the last weekend in April boosting forecast wheat yields to 3.5 million tonnes in 2009–10 from 2.4 million tonnes harvested in 2008–09.
  http://www.businessspectator.com.au/bs.nsf/Article/Australias-southeast-crop-lands-boosted-by-rain-RH5JE?OpenDocument, http://sj.farmonline.com.au/news/state/grains-and-cropping/general/rain-launches-09-season/1499735.aspx
- Seeding has commenced in many areas for cereals for feed, canola, beans. Some wheat and barley for grain has also been sown. Seeding is expected to progress rapidly during the first few weeks of May, although some areas will need follow-up rainfall to enable seeding to be completed. Total crop area is not expected to change significantly, but the area of wheat, durum, canola and chickpeas may be up slightly with a reduction in the area of feed barley.
  http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/104711/apr09cpr.pdf

Victoria:

- The predicted median wheat yield for Victoria at 1 May 2009 is 2.23 t/ha. This is 0.13 t/ha less than the long-term median (Seasonal Wheat Outlook, May 2009, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries).
- Most of the state received rainfall between 15 and 50 mm over the last weekend in April, with heavier falls in the north-east and parts of the western districts. Only parts of the northern and central Wimmera received less than 20 mm. Victorian Mallee farmers who are moving into their core winter crop sowing window received good rainfall. Crops that have been sown will require follow-up rain due to the dry subsoil layers.
  http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/grains-and-cropping/general/1-billion-dollar-week-for-southeast-wheatbelt/1502017.aspx?src=enews

  http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nrenfa.nsf/LinkView/A9C83A24F2EEB71BCA2575AF001FB95C987715D08D0205F9CA2573E100030E40/$file/DSC%2088%20May%207%20-%202009.pdf

Western Australia:

- The predicted median wheat yield for Western Australia at 1 May 2009 is 2.15 t/ha. This is close to the long-term median of 2.13 t/ha (Seasonal Wheat Outlook, May 2009, Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries).
- The majority of Western Australian grain production areas are still waiting for rainfall to start of the 2009 winter cropping season. There have been few rainfall events between February and April to build soil moisture. Most areas have less than 5 mm of soil moisture and growers are relying on a solid break to commence sowing. Cropping programs are likely to be modified with each week the dry conditions continue. Current cropping costs and a forecast wheat price of around $300 per tonne are not encouraging a very large cropping program. http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/content/LWE/CLI/SeasonalUpdateMay09.PDF

Summer Crops

Australia:

- Total Australian wine grape production is forecast to fall by 13 per cent to 1.6 million tonnes in 2008–09, as a result of ongoing shortages of water for irrigation and high temperatures in early 2009 (*Australian wine grape production projections to 2010-11, ABARE, March 2009*).

Victoria:

- The Victorian bushfires of 2009 have placed significant stress on grape and wine producers. For 2008–09, forecast yields for all varieties in all regions of Victoria (other than the Murray Valley) have been reduced by 30 per cent relative to 2007–08. This decline reflects the expected impact on wine grape production of high temperatures and the bushfires (including smoke taint). Prices for wine grapes are substantially lower than they were last year despite the reduced harvest.
  http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nrenfa.nsf/LinkView/F39B4BFBA6C77669CA25758C000E3D8B987715D08D0205F9CA2573E100030E40/$file/_DSC%20%2387%20Apr%202%20-%202009.pdf

Western Australia:

- A variety of summer crops, such as sorghum, are ready to be harvested in Esperance. The wine grape harvest is complete, with average yields and good quality fruit.
  http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/content/LWE/CLI/SeasonalUpdateMay09.PDF

3.2 Livestock

Beef cattle

- Meat and Livestock Australia's National Livestock Reporting Service (NLRS) indicates that direct-to-slaughter cattle prices showed very little change throughout April. Access to suitable lines was constricted by the shorter operating weeks around Easter, followed by good rainfall. The lack of supply coming forward, coinciding with a rising Australian dollar, also encouraged most contributors to adopt a 'wait and see' approach (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News).
  http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Mondays+livestock+summary.htm
- Average weekly cattle slaughter fell by 15 per cent across the eastern states during April compared with the previous year. One of the major factors contributing to the lower average weekly slaughter was the public holidays over Easter that reduced slaughter operating days. The improved season throughout New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria also influenced slaughter patterns during April (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News).
  http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Monday+livestock+summary.htm
- During the first week in May 2009 the Eastern Young Cattle Indicator (EYCI) lost 5.25¢ on the previous week to settle at 311.5¢/kg carcase weight (cwt). The trade steer indicator improved 1¢ – to 176¢ while feeder steers eased 2¢ – to 167¢/kg. Japan ox held firm at 162¢ and US cow finished 1¢ cheaper at 122¢/kg (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News).
  http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Fridays+livestock+summary.htm
- Beef exports from Australia to Japan at the end of April were slow to modest. Trimming prices, however, remain firm, supported by strong hamburger demand from the United States and Japan (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News).
  http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Golden+Week+improves+beef+demand+in+Japan.htm
- Australian exporters sent 5297 tonnes shipped weight (swt) of beef to Korea during the first half of April this year. Contributing to the low export volume for the period were tighter cattle supplies caused by heavy rainfall and reduced slaughter days around Australia over the Easter period (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News).
  http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Korean+wholesale+prices+hold+firm.htm
- Australian beef held the largest share of shelf space in Malaysian high-end retail stores during April. Australian chilled beef accounted for around 77 per cent of the total shelf space available, up from 73 per cent in April 2008 (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News).
  http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Australian+beef+holds+strong+in+Malaysia.htm

Sheep and lambs

- Lamb slaughter increased 7 per cent on the five-year average and is the highest level since 2000 when data was first collected. In the period January to April 2009, 5.4 million lambs were slaughtered across Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland. This is 4 per cent higher than records from 2008. The persistent dry conditions during late summer and into autumn across southern Australia encouraged producers to offload lambs (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News). http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Lamb+and+sheep+market+wrap-up.htm
- Lamb supply has started to taper off, which is typical for this time of year (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News). http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Lamb+and+sheep+market+wrap-up.htm)
- Supply at saleyards declined in the later part of the month due to widespread rainfall across parts of the eastern states. Victoria and South Australia were the most affected (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News). http://www.mla.com.au/NR/exeres/E5E0654B-8795-4F8A-86DA-DCCC0D1E770A.htm
- Despite a tapering off in supply over the country, numbers of sheep at markets remain higher than last year. They are uncharacteristically high for this time of year in NSW and Western Australia, indicating a continued shift from sheep to cropping (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News). http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Victorian+and+SA+rains+raise+local+prices.htm
- Prices are well above those of the previous year due to intense demand, recent rain and tight supply (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News). http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Lamb+and+sheep+market+wrap-up.htm)

Pigs

- The swine flu issue has disrupted the global trade of pork, with the major importing countries placing bans on imports of pork from North America (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News). http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Swine+flu+puts+pork+trade+in+disarray.htm
- Swine flu has significantly impacted on the trade of pork in the Korean market (Meat and Livestock Australia, Market News). http://www.mla.com.au/TopicHierarchy/News/MarketNews/2009/Swine+flu+impacts+Korean+market.htm

For further information on crops and livestock, go to:

Australian Bureau of Statistics
http://www.abs.gov.au/

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
http://abareconomics.com/

Meat and Livestock Australia
http://www.mla.com.au/

Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia
http://www.agric.wa.gov.au/

New South Wales Department of Primary Industries
http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/news/

Primary Industries and Resources South Australia
http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/grains/cpr/

Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/fieldcrops/

The Land Farmonline
http://theland.farmonline.com.au/

Victorian Department of Primary Industries
http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au

4.0 Climate Outlook

4.1 El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)

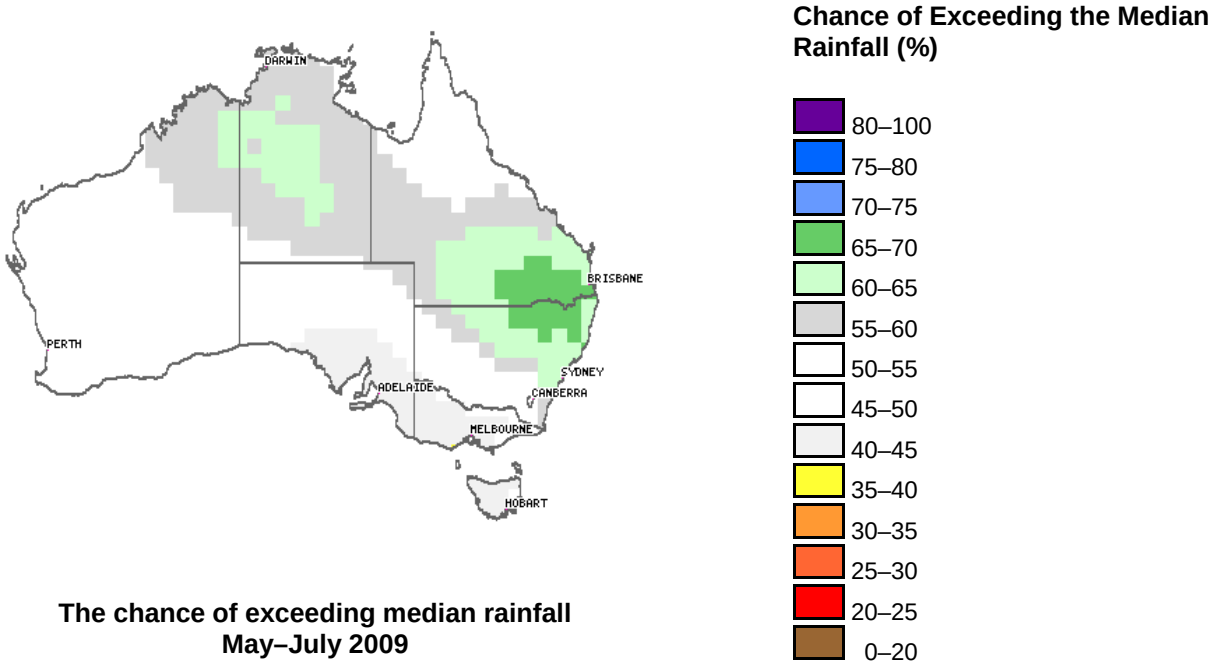
In the statement released on 7 May 2009, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology announced that climate indicators across the equatorial Pacific are in the neutral range. Both the surface and sub-surface waters of the equatorial Pacific Ocean have continued to warm over the past few weeks. This warming resulted in near average ocean temperatures across most of the tropical Pacific and slightly warmer than average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the east. Trade winds have weakened. The SOI rose from zero in March to +9 in April, however, the current (5 May) 30-day value has fallen slightly to +7 and remains in the neutral range.

Most international coupled climate models predict further warming of Pacific Ocean, with SSTs remaining in the ENSO-neutral range until at least mid-winter. About half of the models surveyed predict that this warming will be sufficient for the development of El Niño conditions later in 2009, but in the southern hemisphere autumn, the model predictions have minimum skill levels. As the period from March to June is the preferred El Niño genesis period, Pacific conditions and model predictions will continue to be monitored closely for any indications of an event. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral. The typical development period for an IOD event is late autumn to early winter, so this indicator will be monitored closely for any signs of an emerging event.

For further information on the Bureau of Meteorology interpretation of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation go to http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/.

4.2 Rainfall Outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology provides seasonal outlooks that are statements about the probability of wetter or drier than average weather over a three-month period. The outlooks are based on the statistics of chance (the odds) taken from Australian rainfall, temperature and sea surface temperature records for the tropical Pacific and Indian Oceans. They are not categorical predictions about future rainfall and they do not indicate the expected rainfall amount for the three-month outlook period.

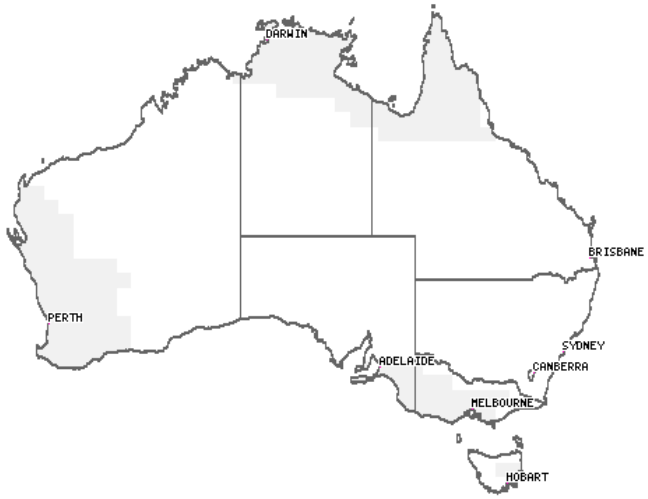


The chance of exceeding median rainfall May–July 2009

The national rainfall outlook for May to July 2009 suggests higher than average rainfall across north-eastern New South Wales, south-eastern Queensland, the Northern Territory and north-eastern Western Australia. Across the rest of the country, the chance of exceeding the median rainfall during the coming three months is between 40 and 60 per cent, meaning that above average rainfall is about as equally likely as below average.

The pattern of seasonal rainfall odds across Australia is mainly a result of warm conditions in the Indian Ocean in January, February and March 2009, while the Pacific Ocean had little contribution to this forecast.

4.3 Temperature Outlook



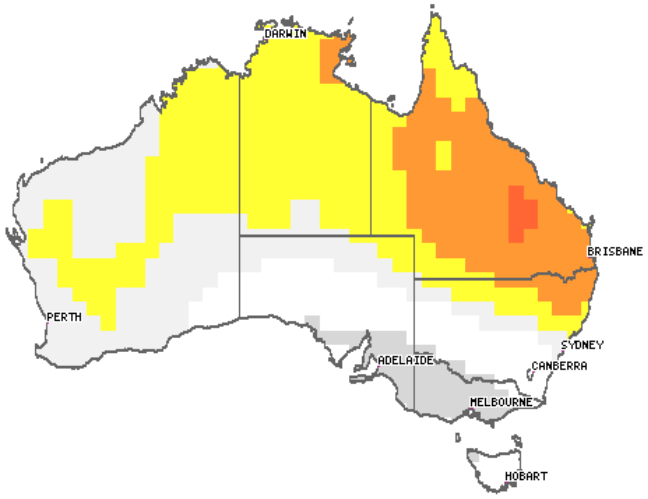
3 Month Temp. Max Outlook (%)

80–100
75–80
70–75
65–70
60–65
55–60
50–55
45–50
40–45
35–40
30–35
25–30
20–25
0–20

The chance of exceeding median maximum temperatures May–July 2009

The chance of exceeding the median maximum temperature for the May to July 2009 is between 45 and 60 per cent across the entire country, meaning that warmer than average days are about as equally likely as cooler than average.

The pattern of seasonal temperature odds across Australia is mostly a result of warm conditions in the Indian Ocean in January, February and March, while the Pacific Ocean had little contribution to this forecast.



3 Month Temp. Min Outlook (%)

80–100
75–80
70–75
65–70
60–65
55–60
50–55
45–50
40–45
35–40
30–35
25–30
20–25
0–20

The chance of exceeding median minimum temperatures May–July 2009

The national outlook for minimum temperatures from May to July 2009 suggests that night-time temperatures are likely to be above average over much of northern Australia. The chance of exceeding the median minimum temperature is highest in central Queensland (70–75 per cent).

History shows that the effect of Pacific and Indian oceans on minimum temperatures in the May to July period is moderately consistent over large parts of the country, with the exception of South Australia and Victoria.

For further information on the Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlooks go to http//www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/.