

# THE WINTER FORECAST

## FOR CENTRAL VICTORIA 2009



As predicted by Kevin Long ph. 5441 2394 18-5-2009

### THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

During the first five months of this year, cold water anomalies have been the dominant feature in the seas to the south of Australia. As a result of these below-average sea surface temperatures, slow-moving blocking high pressure systems have been common, resulting in long periods of dry weather. Only two rain-bearing periods have developed so far. The first one for the year occurred in March, followed 44 days later by another period in April. The total rainfall has been helped along by the occasional shower on only a few other days. The developments in the eastern Pacific indicate that the next El Nino phase is about to begin. The Chinese Effect continues to over-power the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) causing the IOD to remain in the "dry weather phase" for south-eastern Australia (Refer to new section in my website "The Chinese Effect").

### THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

The ocean temperatures to the north-west of Australia have remained generally below-average. This condition means the North West Jet Stream flows will have little positive effect during Winter. This Winter the southern cold fronts and low-pressure systems will remain weaker than average. The SOI is rapidly declining at present. Eventually the negative SOI may help to drag some moisture in from the north-west during mid-Winter.

The sea temperatures in the east of the Pacific have been warming in recent months, indicating the end of the neutral La Nina phase. This means we are now entering the dryer part of the climate cycle.

### THE FORECAST

#### *Climate change is gaining strength!*

Early June has only a 20% chance of producing a small rain event, coinciding with the MJO in Phase 5. The best chance for some reasonable Winter rain will be around mid-July, at the next MJO Phase 5. The August rainfalls will taper off to be light and misty due to the early effects of El-Nino.

Summing up, it appears most areas of Central Victoria will struggle to accumulate 60% of average Winter rain. The big risk this year, like last year, is the likely failure of the September/October rainfall. In early September it appears the high-pressure systems will move back to their more southerly position, again reducing the cold front rain. This will leave us almost totally reliant on the 40-60 day rain cycle that is controlled by the MJO. There is a high risk of more slow-moving high-pressure systems ("blocking highs") canceling out one or more of these rain cycles. This would bring an abrupt end to the growing season – just as in 2008.

**The low rainfall prediction I released in the Summer forecast is now looking a little too optimistic. With only 54mm in the Bendigo rain gauge so far, it appears we are heading towards a "true drought year" in the range of 200-250mm. (Bear in mind that the last three years have been the better years of the usual four-year cycle). 2009 could rival the extreme drought year of 1982, which had only 206mm.**

These accumulating drier conditions will most likely result in record low inflows – about half those of 2008/09. If this occurs, irrigation allocations for Eildon and Hume will be less than 15% for 2009/10. The rest on zero.

### **IF COMMUNITIES ARE TO SURVIVE, INEFFICIENT SMALL FARM DAMS MUST BE ELIMINATED!**

This will return water to the main reservoirs. Rural "stock and domestic" water must be delivered by a new Statewide Piped Stock and Domestic System to fill only tanks and troughs. This infrastructure project will ensure the survival of both rural and city communities. Existing plans to do this must be fast-tracked within the next 12-18 months. **Communities must drive this initiative as a matter of immediate survival.**

May the best of the remaining rain fall on you. Kevin Long.