

THE SPRING FORECAST

FOR MURRAY DARLING BASIN 2014



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THIS IS A GENERAL FORECAST WRITTEN FOR THE CENTRAL VICTORIAN REGION

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STRONG PLANETARY AND LUNAR INFLUENCES HAVE FADED

During Autumn the planetary and lunar influences were very strong. As a result, many well above-average rain events were generated and delivered the best Autumn break for many decades across most regions of the MDB. However, over Winter a cyclic and very dramatic decline of these forces has occurred. As I previously forecasted, most of the MDB regions have experienced a rapidly declining rainfall regime, moving from a typically 200% Autumn average to only about 20% of average rainfall during late Winter. Presently we are in the middle of the much dryer transition phase of the lunar air tide cycle. Furthermore, the planetary influences have now moved to a very low point in their cycle and will stay that way until next February. Consequently, rainfall during September and October has a high probability of being very patchy and unreliable across most regions of the MDB.

CONTINUING RECORD-HIGH ANTARCTIC SEA ICE – ANOTHER RAIN DIMINISHING FORCE

October 2013 smashed all previous Antarctic sea ice records and this long-term increasing trend has continued to this day, with new daily maximums being set for the majority of this year. It should also be noted that during the last 34 years, most of the below-average rainfall years have coincided with above-average sea ice years. Going hand-in-hand with the continued sea ice growth, the average MDB rainfall has suffered a progressive decline of about 25%. My studies indicate that these declining rainfall trends will continue for another 30 years, driven by sustained reduction in solar radiation levels (i.e. greatly reduced solar winds and sunspots numbers).

EI NINO DEVELOPMENT SLOWS

The above-mentioned record levels of Antarctic sea ice have resulted in cooler sea currents flowing up the west coast of South America. These currents are now cooling the warmer seas of the central Pacific. Hence the development of the present El Nino has been slowed and weakened for the time being.

The strongest El Nino events usually develop during the year of the lunar minimum standstill. The next lunar minimum standstill occurs during October 2015. Consequently, Winter-Spring 2015 has a very high probability of producing an El Nino event. However with the current record sea ice a strong El Nino is unlikely.

All the indicators that I know of are now pointing to a slowly-developing, weak, and long lasting El Nino event, impacting this and the next growing season. This will mean well below-average rainfall and stream flows during the life of this climate anomaly. This will place most irrigators under great hardship once more, with reduced allocations in many regions. Furthermore for many other political reasons I forecast an imminent collapse of many of the MDB irrigation systems within this decade.

THE FORECAST IN BRIEF: Sep-Oct to be mainly dry, with a high risk of frost damage.

Below-average sea surface temperatures presently dominate most of the critical regions around Australia. This condition will favor the development of blocking high-pressure systems in the Tasman Sea during Spring.

Therefore I forecast several periods of warmer than average weather during mid to late-Spring, and also that rainfall will remain well below-average broadly across the MDB for the Spring months. The low pressure and cold front systems traveling in from the south west will be weak and mostly unproductive. This is due to a massive slug of the coldest sea occupying most of the region between Africa and Tasmania.

The peak of the Summer rains this year are due to fall during the first few days of December, with follow up rains occurring again just after Christmas.

I wish a safe and productive harvest for all those that have managed to grow a crop in what has turned out to be a year of extremes.

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