



# WINTER FORECAST

## SOUTHERN MDB REGIONS 2019

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### PATCHY START TO GROWING SEASON 2019 – A RECORD DRY YEAR IS STILL ON THE CARDS

With few exceptions, there has been near-record low rainfall for most regions of Australia (about one third of average). At first glance most paddocks currently look okay with a carpet of green ... but this is very deceptive.

**QLD and NSW** North of the Murray remains very dry, having missed out on the usual monsoon-driven rain. (Bathurst 30mm in May) Southern QLD and most of NSW have little chance of any decent rain in next 5 months.

**VICTORIA** Most regions had good general rain fall in May, during the peak of the Southern Air Tide (2-3 May). As expected, the southwest region received the best of these rains .... The grain areas of the Mallee have had a good start from the Lunar Air Tide with 60-100 mm, but will need more in Aug/Sep for grain fill .... Gippsland has been in a rain shadow from Tasmania and has generally missed out this year.

### SMALL POSITIVE WEATHER INFLUENCES:

**Planetary forces of Jupiter and Saturn.** These will be at their strongest in late-June / early-July and will assist general, low-level rain development. However (as stated in previous forecast) these forces are at their weakest in a 297-year cycle, so I do not expect any flooding rains this Winter.

**Antarctic sea ice near record low** Early this year the Antarctic “sea ice extent” had grown a little (to slightly above record lows). During Autumn the rate of ice growth slowed, and we are presently back almost to record low extent for this time of the year. I view this as a small positive driver for this year’s Winter rainfall.

**El Nino weakening** The central eastern Pacific has cooled a little over recent weeks. When considered alongside the slower growth of Antarctic sea ice, this indicates the next swing back to neutral ENSO may have commenced. Keep a close eye on the ENSO trends during the rest of this year.

### NEGATIVE WEATHER INFLUENCES:

**Weak Air Tide** The peak “Southern Air Tide” had been expected to enhance rainfall in the first week of Winter. Unfortunately, this effect will probably be blocked out by a large, slow-moving high pressure system in the Great Australian Bight. This will greatly reduce the chances of drought breaking rain in Winter.

**Cool Sea Surface Temperature (SST's)** Australia is currently ringed by the coolest SST anomalies in the world, apart from an area near Sydney (about the size of Tasmania). Most warm water was drawn away from the east coast by recent consistently negative SOI. Cool SST's are a powerful driver of drought for most inland regions.

### THE WINTER FORECAST

**IN BRIEF: Best rains in late-June and early-July.**

I predict only a few small, concentrated rains events for Australia in the form of weak, slow moving storm systems. This is due to a combination of weak and cool natural climate drivers. This is a very rare event to be observed.

The strongest surges of the Southern Air Tides to enhance Winter rainfall will occur in the first weeks of June and July, but a strong high-pressure system will produce generally dry inland conditions for the first half of June.

**Eastern Australia’s best chance of a little mid-Winter rain** will come from an occasional Jetstream flow from the warm central Indian Ocean. In the Pacific, El Nino is forecast to weaken during the second half of this year.

Dryland crops will be almost totally reliant on patchy early-Spring rains for survival. Very little hay will be grown this year, due to various combined natural drying forces. Frost danger will be high for many crops planted early.

**Extended record dry conditions (similar to those of 1982) are likely across most of Eastern Australia** This is due to the low-point of the 37.2-year Lunar Air Tide cycle. (See web document “Lunar Air Tides Explained”).

I forecast the MDB will generally receive about 30% of average rainfall for the year and produce very little runoff.

I wish you all the best for the 2019 growing season. Kind regards, Kevin.

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