

THE WINTER FORECAST

FOR CENTRAL VICTORIA 2007

Predicted by Kevin Long as at 1/6/2007 ph. 03 5441 2394

During late April and May Central Victoria was blessed with 3 jet-stream driven rain systems from the northwest, These yielded the best autumn rains for many years, approximately 150mm average across the region over 40 days.

Given the present overall climate drivers we have done very well.
However, there is only a small chance that this concentration of rain will be repeated in the near future.
That is what is still needed to restore the now near empty reservoirs.

The ocean temperatures southwest of Australia have remained below average during the last year.
These present stable cool sea temperature conditions have shown little ability to produce rain bearing low pressure or cold front systems from the south. So during winter we can expect our primary weather drivers, **the southern low pressure and cold front systems**, to be weak as they rise up through the "Bight".

The sea temperatures to the northeast of Australia have warmed to about average in recent weeks due to the developing La Nina system. But some below average areas still remain. I believe the northeast rain systems will remain weak during winter as a result.

The Southern Oscillation Index (SOI), which during April dropped to minus 10, has recovered somewhat to about minus 2 as at 24/5/2007, this condition combined with the other drivers, points to close to average rain during winter.

The next MJO phase 5, due late June, is likely to produce our next rain peak of about 45mm for this area. The Pacific, Indian and Southern Ocean's sea temperatures are still not conducive to producing regular, above average rains for this area during this winter.

Due to the improved general conditions I now raise my prediction for the second half of the year from 80% to 90% of average rain for Central Victoria.
This rain should promote good crop growth, the best we have seen for many years.

However I also predict that central Victorian reservoirs will again miss out on the heavy saturating rains from the northeast, due to the intensifying "Chinese effect" that has consistently been reducing the intensity of the northeast rain events during the last 15 years.

The dry conditions of the sub-soils and the empty dams, created by **unsustainable water management**, together with the predominantly light misty rain events, that have become the norm during recent winters, have placed us all at crisis point.

These accumulating conditions will most likely result in less than 20% of the long-term average inflows this year!
Coliban Water, and G-MWater take note!!!! Make sure your "ship" is ready to weather the conditions, for you may be left up the dry creek without a paddle.

UP DATE 1-8-07

I now have to revert back to my original prediction given early in January, that is, only 80% of average rain for the second half of this year. This is due to the earlier than expected peaking of the current La Nina cycle and the almost total lack of above average sea temperatures (seasonally adjusted), anywhere close to Australia at present.

I now forecast a higher than average risk of frost damage again this spring.

I believe there to be only a small chance of reasonable inflows to central Victorian Reservoirs for the rest of this season.

This is due to several reasons:-

- the rapid decline of the SOI, + 10 on 26th June diving to -11.9 on 24th July and now hovering around zero,
- the below average sea temperature northwest of Broome around to Sydney, now developing,
- the dominating below average ocean temperatures in the southern Ocean, south through to Africa, still remaining.

This leaves us mainly reliant on weak cold fronts, averaging 5mm per band, and some week low pressure system developing during winter and spring. Jet stream enhancement from the northwest will remain week.

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