

El Niño is underway in the tropical Pacific



Australian Government
Bureau of Meteorology

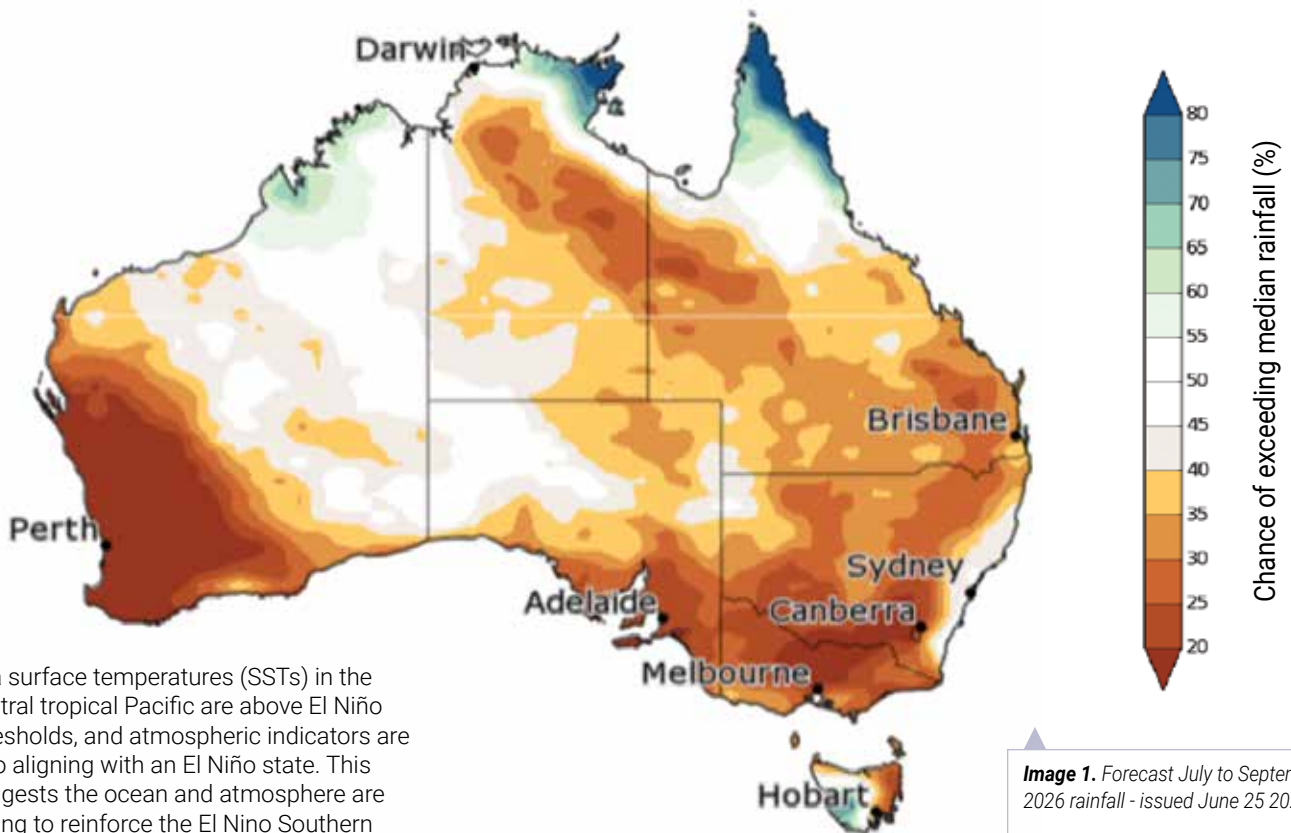


Image 1. Forecast July to September 2026 rainfall - issued June 25 2026

- Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the central tropical Pacific are above El Niño thresholds, and atmospheric indicators are also aligning with an El Niño state. This suggests the ocean and atmosphere are acting to reinforce the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) state, which is likely to strengthen and sustain this event until at least the end of the year.
- The latest relative Niño3.4 index value for the week ending 14 June 2026 is +0.92 °C, above the El Niño threshold (+0.80 °C). All models, including the Bureau's, forecast the tropical Pacific to continue warming in the coming months.
- Atmospheric indicators, such as trade winds, pressure and cloud patterns are now showing signs consistent with El Niño. Trade winds are either reversed or weaker than average across most of the tropical Pacific, cloud patterns near the Date Line have started to shift to a more El Niño-like state and the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) has shown a steady decline in recent months, with the 30-day SOI (to 14 June) dropping to -23.3.
- Forecasts are pointing towards a strong to very strong El Niño event, based on the extent of warming in the central tropical Pacific. Around half of the models indicate this event could peak at levels among the highest observed since 1950.
- A strong El Niño signal in the Niño3.4 region does not necessarily mean strong impacts on Australia's climate; ENSO is only one of many factors that can influence Australia's seasonal weather and climate.

- The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral. As of 14 June 2026, the IOD index is -0.13 °C. Models suggest a positive IOD event is likely in the southern hemisphere winter-spring. However, model forecasts show a large variation in both the timing and strength of this potential event.
- The SST analysis for the week ending 14 June 2026 shows waters are average to above average around most of Australia. Waters are especially warm along the New South Wales and eastern Tasmania coasts (peaking at around 3 to 4 °C above average). This SST pattern is forecast to continue in the coming months.
- More broadly, global sea surface temperatures have been very warm, with May 2026 global SSTs the warmest May on record (since 1900).
- The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) index is positive as of 13 June 2026. It is forecast to return to neutral in late June.
- The [long-range forecast](#) provides the best guidance on likely rainfall and temperature patterns in the coming months, taking into account all influences from the oceans and atmosphere. ■■

