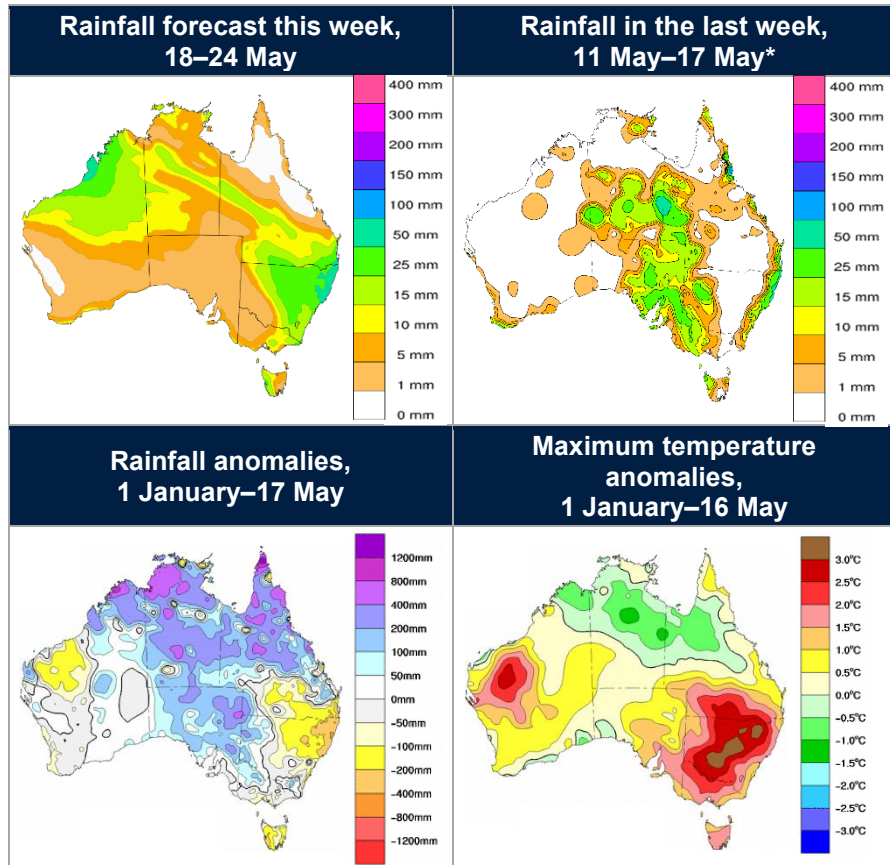
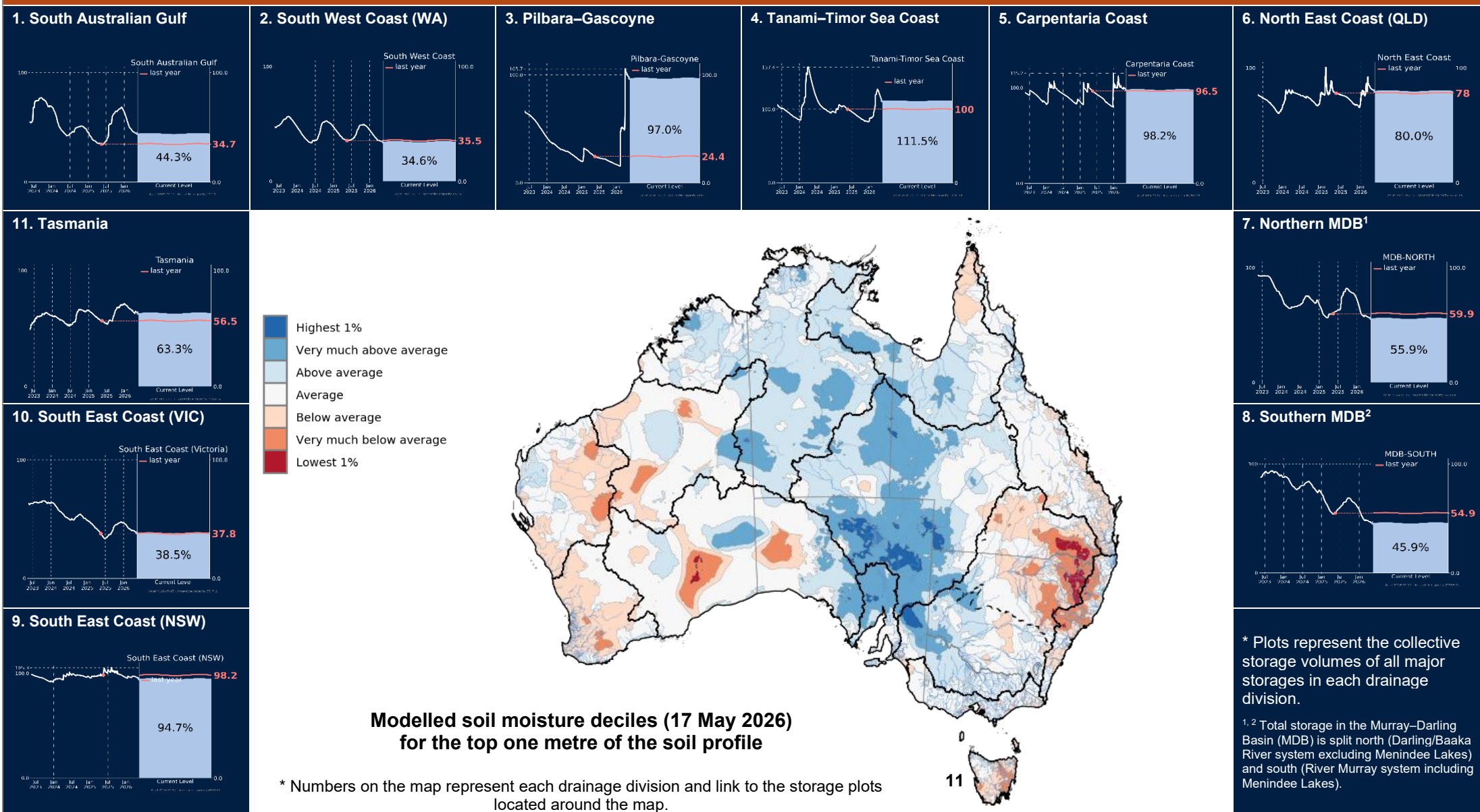




# Weekly Agriculture, Climate and Water Update – Monday 18 May 2026

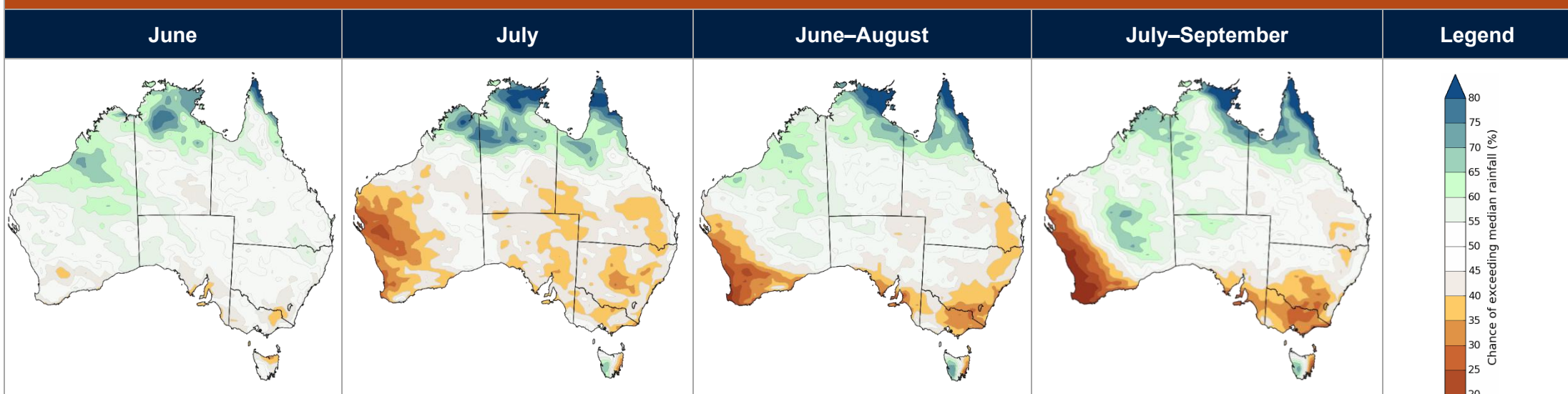
## Root zone soil moisture (map) and water storage levels (charts) as of 17 May 2026



### Key Points

- Year-to-date rainfall anomalies show large areas of northern and central Australia with rainfall anomalies of greater than 200 mm more rainfall than usual (based on the 1961–1990 average). Rainfall in some of these areas has been more than 400 mm above the historical average for this time of year.
- In contrast, large parts of eastern New South Wales, Tasmania, and the Pilbara region of Western Australia have received more than 100 mm below average rainfall (based on the 1961–1990 average). Along parts of the northern New South Wales coast, year-to-date rainfall anomalies are between 200 to 400 mm below average.
- Year-to-date daily maximum temperatures have generally been above average across southern Australia (relative to the 1961–1990 average). Large parts of New South Wales have been particularly warm, with temperatures 2 to 4°C above average across much of the state. Parts of the Pilbara and Gascoyne in Western Australia have also recorded temperatures up to 3°C above average.
- In contrast, northern Australia has experienced near-average to cooler-than-average temperatures, generally up to 1.5°C below average, associated with increased rainfall during the wet season.
- The June to August forecast shows below average rainfall is likely across parts of south and east. Above average rainfall is likely in western Tasmania.
- The Bureau has released the [northern wet season summary for 2025-26](#). Averaged across Australia, north of 26°S, the wet season (October 2025 to April 2026) rainfall was 683.8 mm, which was 44% above the 1961–1990 average of 476.4 mm, and the seventh-highest wet season total on record since 1900–01.

## Rainfall long-range forecasts – Issued 14 May 2026



Static maps showing the chance of exceeding average rainfall. For the latest detailed long-range forecast at your location please view online [here](#).

Email [water@bom.gov.au](mailto:water@bom.gov.au) if you would like more information about this Weekly Update or have any other climate and water related questions. Email [agriculture@bom.gov.au](mailto:agriculture@bom.gov.au) to request more information on agriculture impacts or provide feedback.



## Agriculture climate and conditions assessment as of 18 May 2026

### Summary

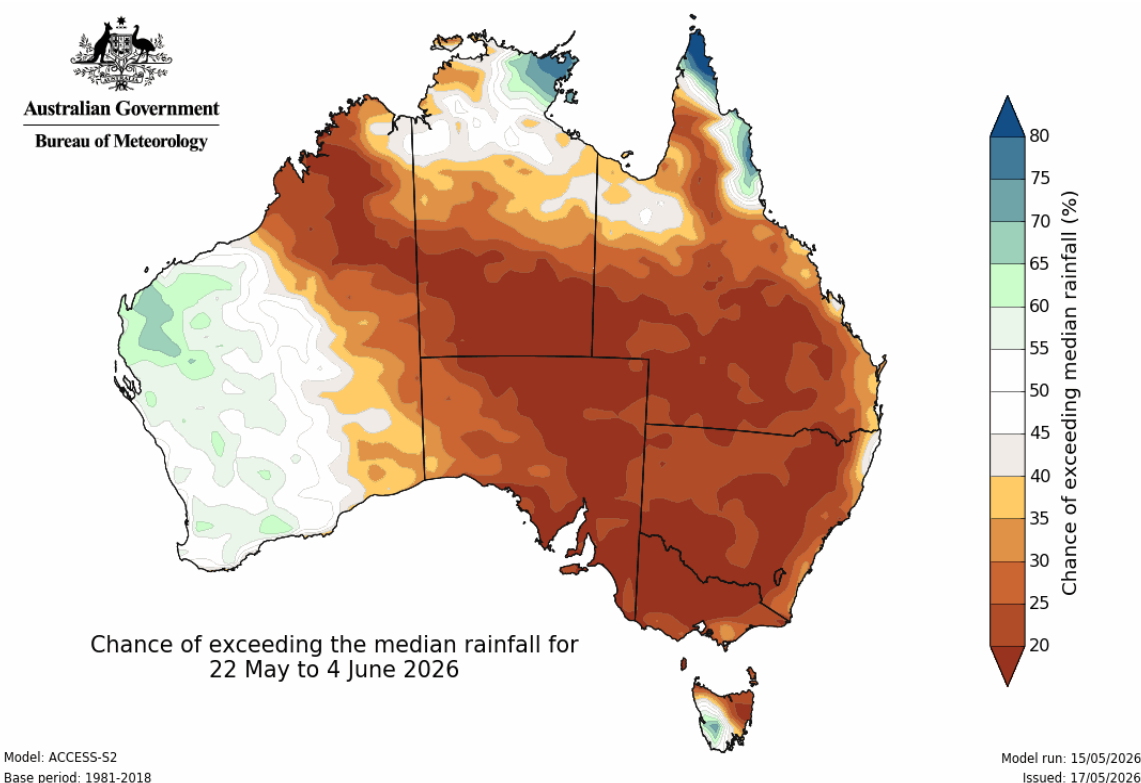
- From June to August, rainfall is likely to be below average across much of the Australian wheatbelt (see maps above).
- For most other areas, there is no clear rainfall signal, meaning roughly equal chances of above or below average rainfall.
- The dry signal over the three-month period is driven by stronger probabilities of below-average rainfall emerging later in the season.
- From June to August, maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be above average over most of Australia, although periods of frost are still possible.
- While there is an increased chance of above average rainfall across the far north, this forecast period falls during the northern Australian dry season, when most of the northern savannah regions typically receive very little rainfall.
- The Bureau's **long-range forecast** responds to all ongoing changes in our climate systems, and is updated regularly.

### Recent Conditions

February to April rainfall was well below average for western Tasmania and across large parts of **New South Wales** extending into **Southern Queensland**, where severe to serious rainfall deficiencies are now evident. This was compounded by highest on record daytime temperatures in April for the region. Well above average rainfall was recorded in the Northern Territory and a band extending through South Australia into western Victoria. Temperatures were very much below average for the **Northern Territory** and **central Australia** due to the very much above average wet season.

Below average soil moisture persists across **southern Queensland, inland New South Wales, northern coastal margins** and much of **Tasmania**, with conditions in the lowest 1% in parts of **north-east New South Wales** and the **Darling Downs-Granite Belts of Queensland**. Soil moisture has also declined across the **Western Australian wheatbelt**, now falling below average.

### Fortnight Outlook 22 May to 04 June



### Agriculture Watch Points



Early winter crop emergence and establishment in **Western Australia** is progressing well under mostly favourable conditions, though there is some caution as a drying trend emerges.



The **eastern wheat-sheep zone** is also seeing winter crop and pasture progress well supported by favourable conditions. Rainfall over the weekend of 16-17 May has increased soil moisture levels.



In **southern Queensland** and **inland New South Wales**, declining soil moisture is constraining winter cropping decisions, with some **Southern Downs** producers scaling back planting in response to dry conditions and high input costs. In horticultural regions in the **Granite Belt**, some growers are reducing or ceasing production with concerns growing around limited subsoil moisture and low on farm water storage levels over the next 6 to 12 months.



Stocking rates are being reduced across **northern New South Wales** and **southern Queensland** due to limited pasture growth under ongoing dry conditions. In response, more livestock are being moved onto agistment to western Queensland and along northern stock routes.



Pasture growth across most of the **northern rangelands in the Northern Territory** is expected to be above average through autumn following a wet summer, supporting feed availability.



Parts of the **Gascoyne and Pilbara regions of Western Australia** are experiencing a prolonged rainfall deficit which will limit pasture growth going into the dry season.

**El Niño is currently neutral**, but climate models **suggest a likely phase of El Niño this winter**. El Niño is only one of several factors influencing Australia's climate, and its impacts can vary from event to event.

The **Bureau's long-range outlook is the best guide to seasonal conditions**. It reflects probabilities of rainfall patterns across regions rather than certainty about what will occur at a local level, so **local forecasts should continue to be monitored** closely.



Conditions improving



Conditions unchanged



Conditions degrading

