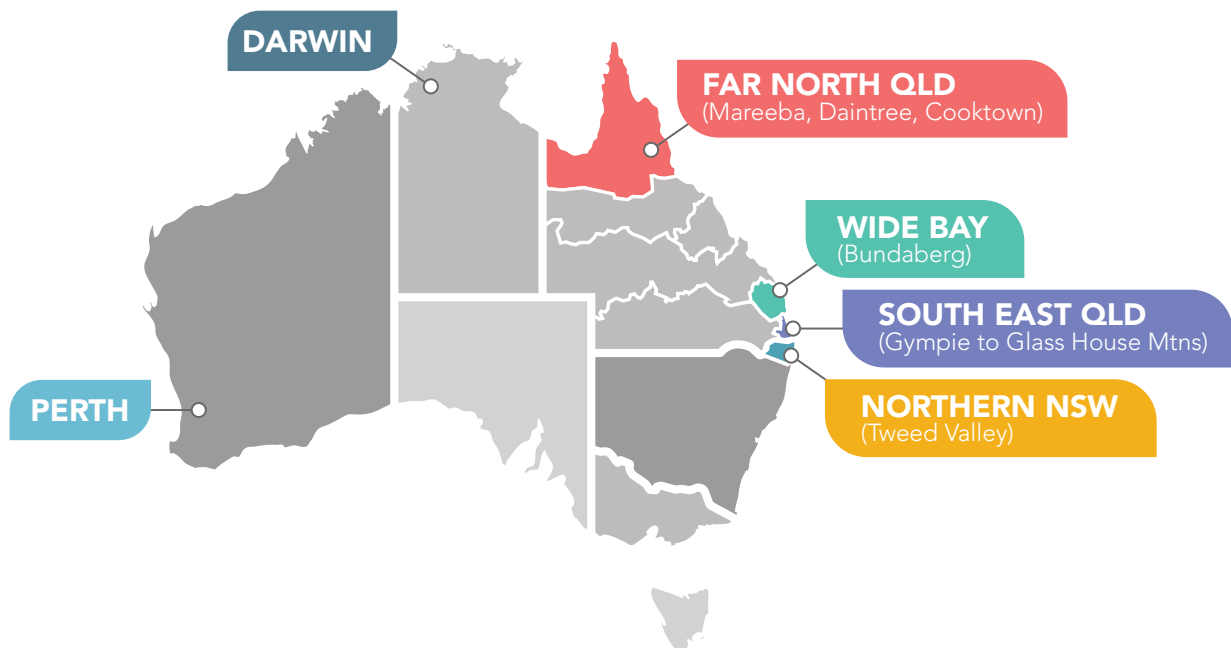


REGIONAL ROUND UP



WEATHER WATCH

NOVEMBER

An average month in the central and northern growing areas.

Wetter and cooler than average in SEQ and Northern NSW.

The Sunshine Coast received more than double the average rainfall across 17 days of rainy weather.

DECEMBER

Rainfall was below average in all growing regions except SEQ where the Sunshine Coast received 100mm more rain than usual.

Daytime temperatures were above long-term averages in most areas.

Far North Queensland growing areas were starved of rain with half the average rainfall at Mareeba.

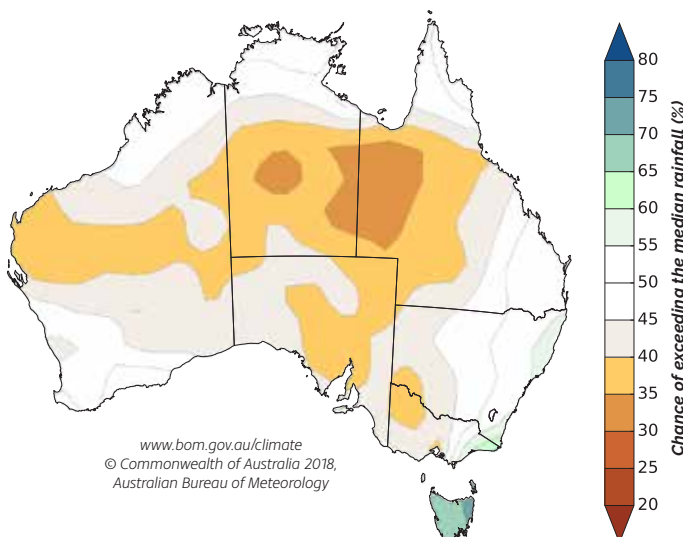
JANUARY

It was a dry and hot January for most of Queensland outside of the northern tropics. Mean maximum temperatures for Queensland as a whole were 2.26 °C above average, and the fifth-warmest on record.

Averaged across NSW, the mean maximum temperature was 3.8 °C above average, the third-warmest on record, and the highest since 1939.

RAINFALL OUTLOOK | MAR – MAY 2018

CHANCE OF EXCEEDING THE MEDIAN RAINFALL



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CLIMATE OUTLOOK OVERVIEW

(Issued 15 February 2018)

- Both daytime and night-time temperatures for the season are likely to be warmer than average in the northeast, central and southern parts of Australia. Eastern NSW, southeast Queensland and northwest Australia have roughly equal chances of a warmer or cooler than average three months.
- A drier than average March to May is likely for large parts of central Australia, including the southern NT, western Queensland, northwest Victoria and scattered parts of WA and eastern SA.

LONG TERM AVERAGE RAINFALL (mm)

WEATHER STATIONS	MAR	APR	MAY
Mareeba	157.8	42.3	12.0
Bundaberg	115.2	56.5	68.4
Sunshine Coast Airport	168.6	156.2	151.6
Murwillumbah	217.6	155.9	132.6

GROWER REPORTS

FAR NORTH QLD

The beginning of a new season for Far Northern Growers as coastal and inland growers have completed the new plantings for the 2018 crops. Weather-wise, coastal growers finished their 2017 growing season with punishing rainfalls in the extreme, while inland areas wish for rainfalls that would fill irrigation dams and replace underground bore water.

Tinaroo Dam is now at 36%, without a better than an average wet season Tinaroo Dam may not reach the 50% mark. Lakeland Downs is having similar conditions; catchment dams and water bores are critically low. Hopefully the wet season will deliver in time for concerned growers.

Good quality panama passionfruit continues to leave Mareeba for the southern market. Prices have been ordinary for Panama passionfruit since Christmas along with limes, stone fruits and other tropicals. It appears post-Christmas supply outgrows demand. Is this caused from an economic slump after Christmas spending?

One last thing - it would be great to have some information about the other FNQ growing areas to share so anyone who'd be willing to have a chat with me once a quarter, please get in touch with me at the farm on 4093-4437. Thanks!

Brian Westwood, Mareeba

BUNDABERG

Hello everyone. In the last two months Bundaberg has been uneventful in the wild, extreme weather department. January produced about 120mm of rain and the first four days of February produced an 'old fashioned' type rain event, a slow & steady, good soaking 80mm of rain. Like most areas, the summer crop volume was down on previous years.

The market prices reflected this and it was even worthwhile to pick & send between Christmas & New Year. Now in early February, the Pandora are about finished, and the Misty's are just trickling along. There seems to be a good flower & young fruit set so here's hoping March & April bring on a good crop. Until next time. Thanks.

Peter Griffiths, Bundaberg

SUNSHINE COAST

Hello everyone. It has been another dry summer here on the Sunshine Coast, but at least we had a good dam supply thanks to the spring top up we had. Production has been relatively light and the quality variable. The only good thing has been that the prices have held quite well this year, which suggests that nobody has set any production records this summer. Disease has not been much of an issue due to the dry, but of late we have had a lot of sting damage - either spotting bug or passion vine bug. There is always something.

As of the beginning of February, there is some new season fruit, with the quality somewhat improved. There must be a bit more fruit around as the price has stalled even though we don't have much. It has been a struggle keeping the young plants going this year. The harsh dry summer has taken some vigour out of their growth. Hopefully, the recent bit of rain will give them a boost. It appears that Easter will see us busy again and in the mean time we will catch up on some spraying and vine training. I hope that I catch up with some of you at one of the upcoming field days.

Jim Gordon, Yandina

TWEED AREA

I hope everyone had a great Christmas & New Year, even though it can be the busiest time on the farm. Our crop was late coming in starting around mid-to-late December, with the fruit only coming on strong during the January moon. The rest of the Tweed growers seemed to have had plenty of fruit at around the same time, however Christmas fruit was plentiful on some farms and not on others.

Fruit quality for us was very good with not a lot of small fruit. However, disease started to creep in early February with some rain around making it hard to spray. Another issue was the green fruit that the sweethearts would drop on a hot day. No amount of irrigation seemed to help - they just didn't handle the heat.

Our young vines have done well with some good fruit set. Of course, blind tipping was an issue again this year; it seems to get a little worse each year. A new variety can't come soon enough! Our farm seems to have gone straight into a new crop, with very little time between fruit. Our Autumn crop seems to be about to set with lots of flowers out. All the best.

Nick & Nerida Fornery, Newrybar

FAR NORTH QLD

(Mareeba, Daintree, Cooktown)

Mareeba (station 031210)	NOV	DEC	JAN
 MEAN (mm)	36.6 [46.6]	47.4 [86.8]	145.2 [208.8]
 MEAN DAYS >1mm	7 [4.1]	5 [7.3]	13 [11.8]
 MEAN (MAX °C)	30.3 [31.6]	32.6 [32.1]	31.6 [31.2]
 MEAN (MIN °C)	19.5 [19.2]	19.9 [20.7]	21.2 [21.4]

WIDE BAY

(Bundaberg)

Bundaberg (station 039128)	NOV	DEC	JAN
 MEAN (mm)	97.6 [85.7]	104.6 [127.6]	126.8 [174.2]
 MEAN DAYS >1mm	7 [5.6]	5 [6.2]	7 [7.8]
 MEAN (MAX °C)	27.7 [28.5]	30.5 [29.6]	31.4 [30.3]
 MEAN (MIN °C)	17.7 [18.8]	20.4 [20.5]	21.1 [21.5]

SOUTH EAST QLD

(Gympie to Glass House Mtns)

Sunshine Coast Airport (station 040861)	NOV	DEC	JAN
 MEAN (mm)	179.2 [85.8]	249.2 [147.5]	57.6 [145.5]
 MEAN DAYS >1mm	17 [7.0]	12 [10.0]	6 [10.3]
 MEAN (MAX °C)	26.1 [27.1]	29.1 [28.3]	29.9 [29.0]
 MEAN (MIN °C)	17.5 [17.9]	19.9 [19.8]	20.8 [21.3]

NORTHERN NSW

(Tweed Valley)

Murwillumbah (station 058158)	NOV	DEC	JAN
 MEAN (mm)	127.9 [124.9]	131.6 [168.3]	74.0 [208.5]
 MEAN DAYS >1mm	15 [9.8]	15 [10.9]	6 [12.1]
 MEAN (MAX °C)	25.6 [27.7]	29.7 [29.1]	30.7 [29.6]
 MEAN (MIN °C)	16.4 [16.7]	19.4 [18.5]	19.7 [19.8]

Figures in [] are long term historical averages.
All weather data from www.bom.gov.au

Thank you to Brian, Peter, Jim & Nick for their reports.