AEMO Summer Readiness Briefing 2026

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18 November 2026

The Bureau of Meteorology



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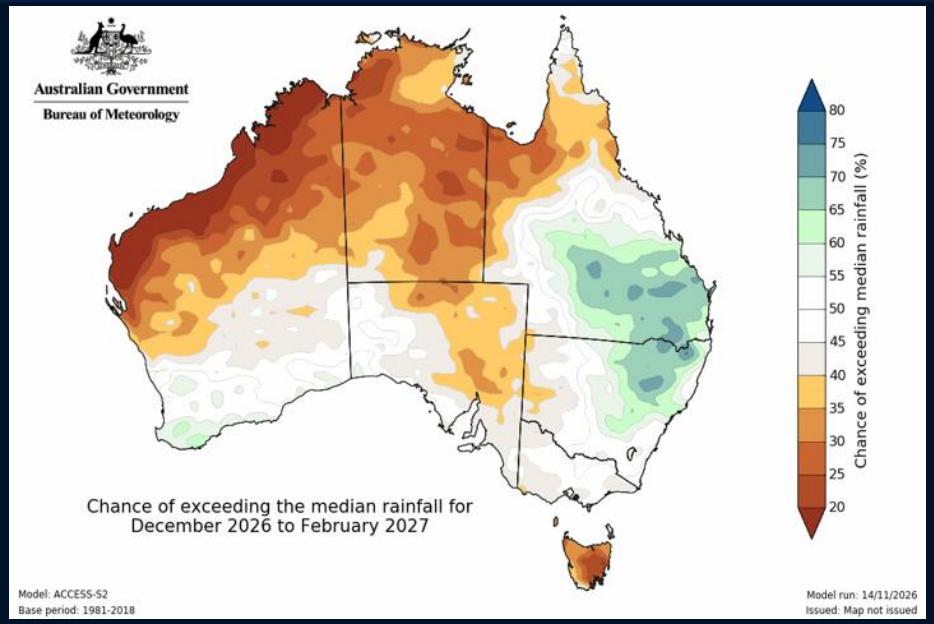
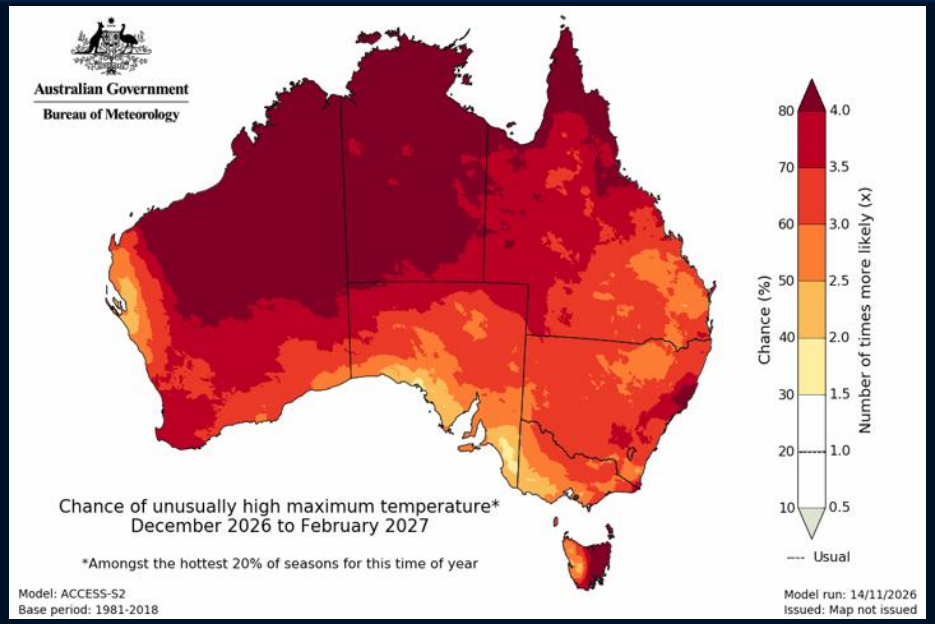
Key Messages

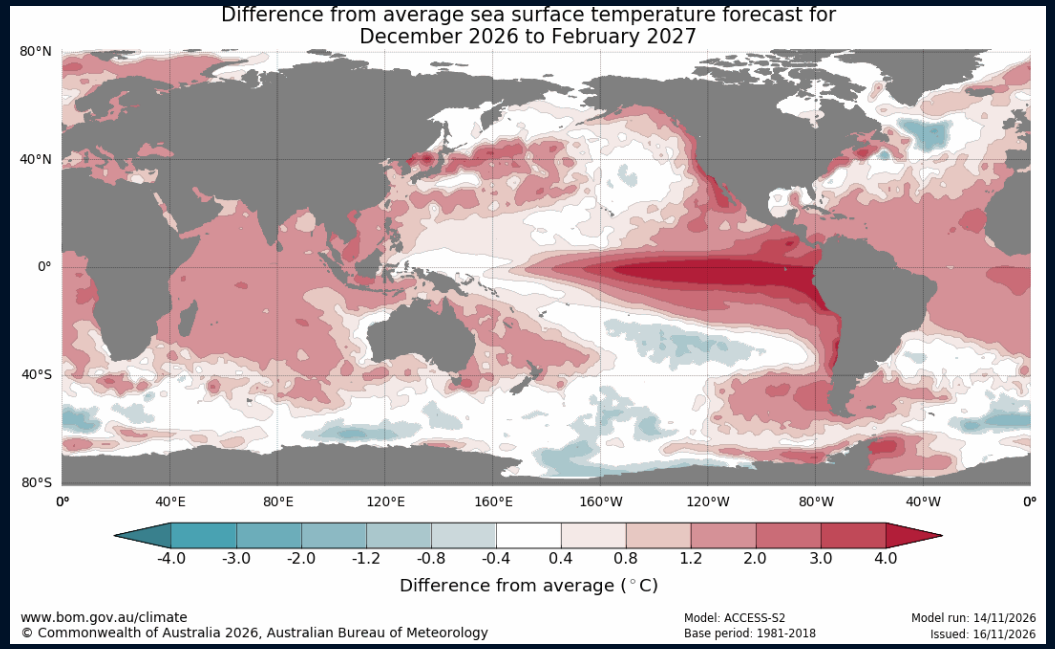


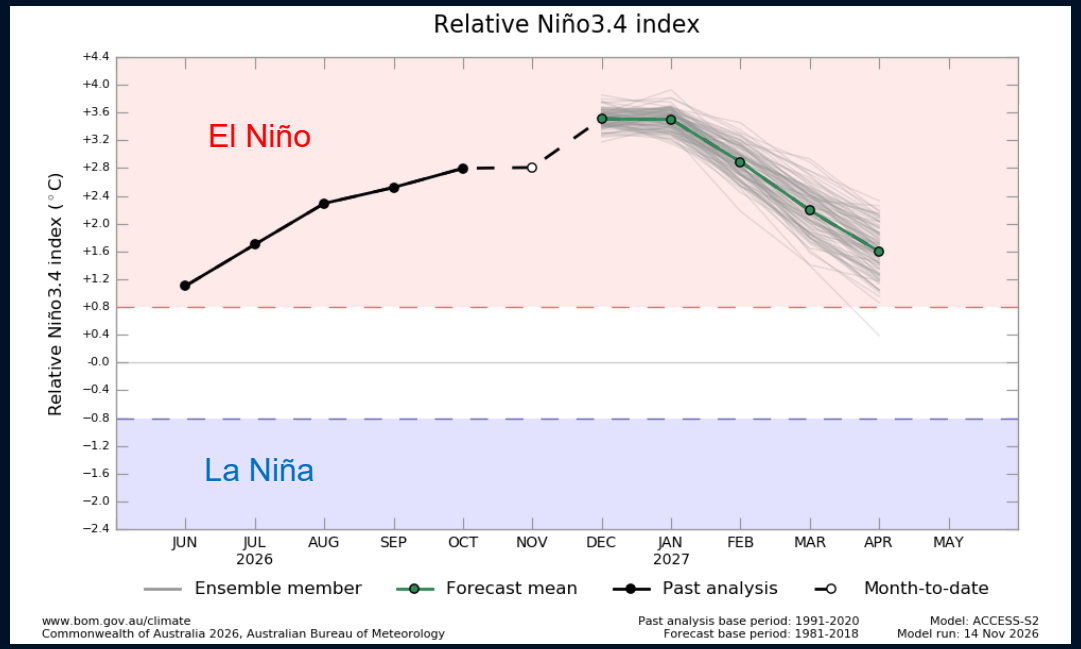


High risk weather season forecast:

- El Niño is firmly established and likely to persist through summer (though generally has biggest impact during spring)
- Unusually warm conditions likely continuing through summer for much of the county – increased heatwave risk
- Wetter than average conditions expected through parts of NSW and QLD, with an enhanced flood risk in NE NSW and SE QLD
- Drier than average conditions expected in the far southeast of the country
- Enhanced fire danger possible in parts of the country, including the far southeast

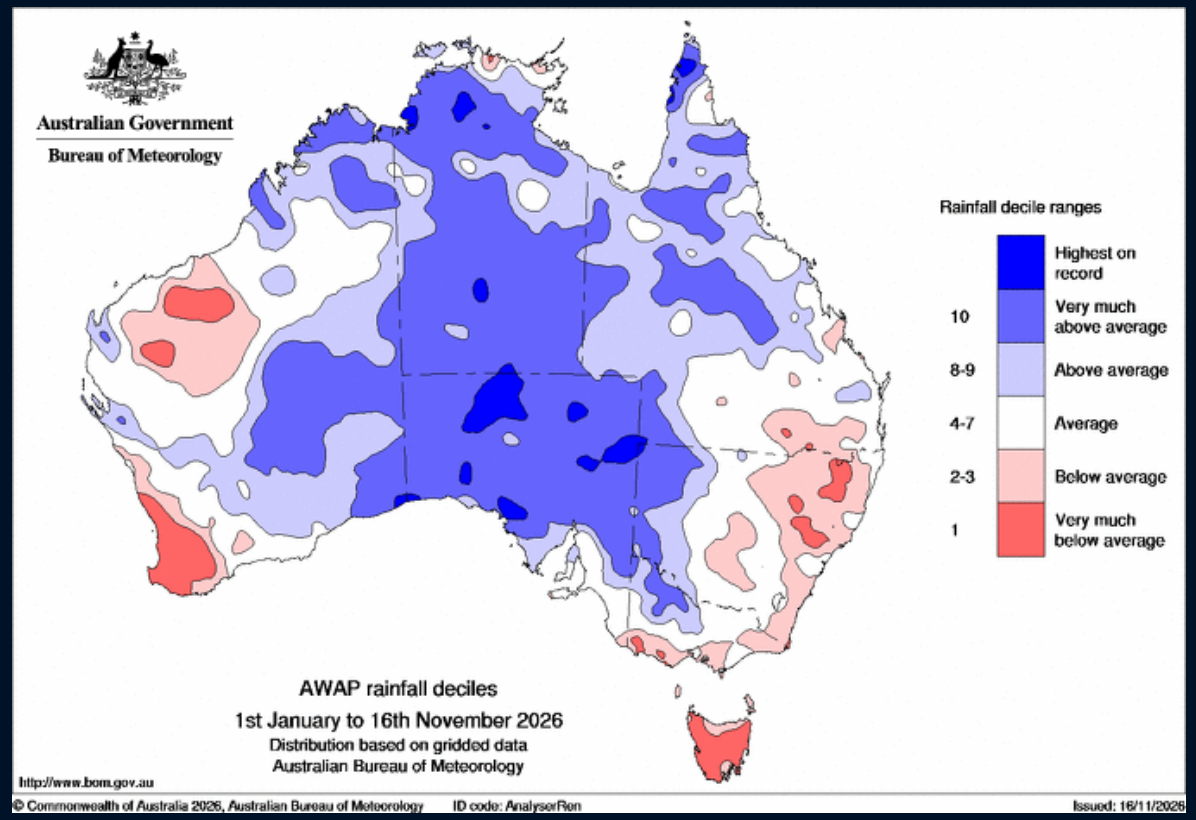
El Niño

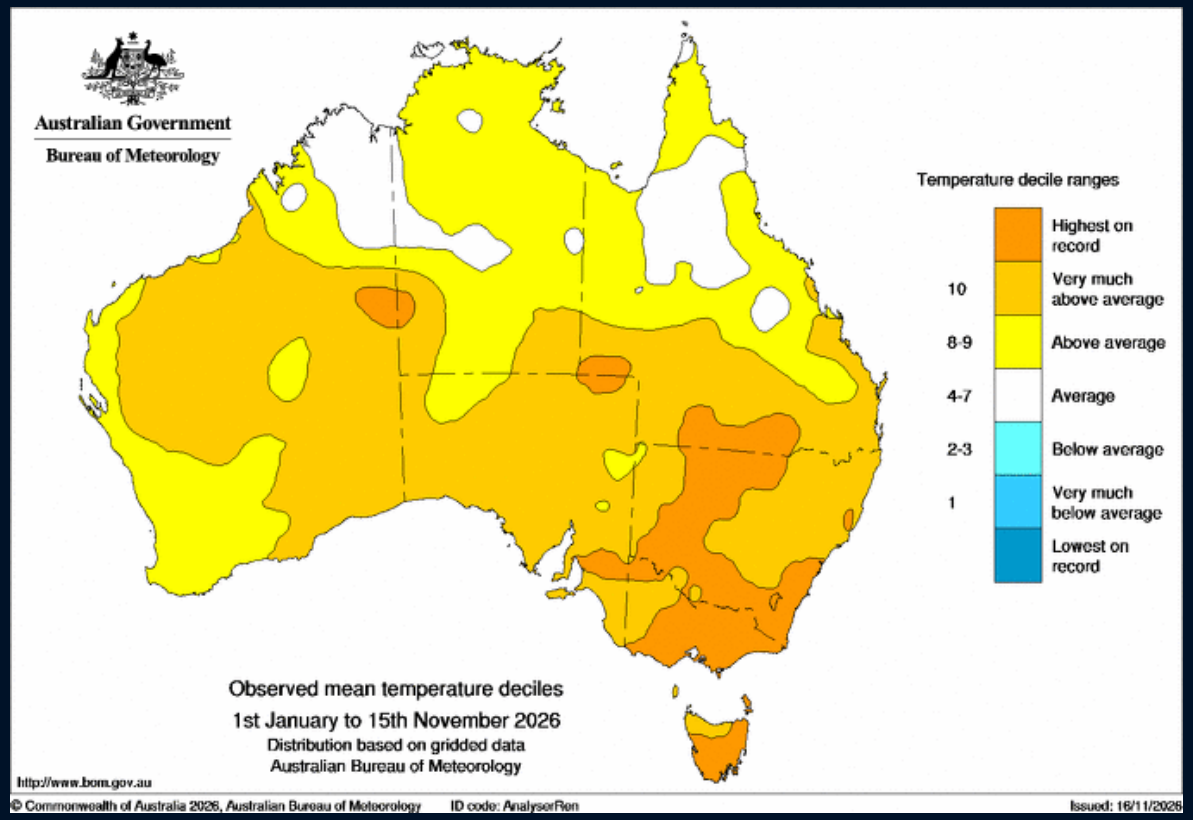




- An El Niño is firmly established and expected to further strengthen. It is likely to be strongest since records began in 1950, with El Niño likely to peak in December.
- However, the strength of an El Niño event doesn't always match its impact on seasonal rainfall patterns in Australia.
- El Niño often brings drier conditions to central and eastern Australia in winter and spring, with its influence waning during summer. El Niño also typically brings warmer temperatures through the southern half of the county. However, Australia's weather is also shaped by other climate factors that can enhance or offset the influence of El Niño.

Year-to-date 2026

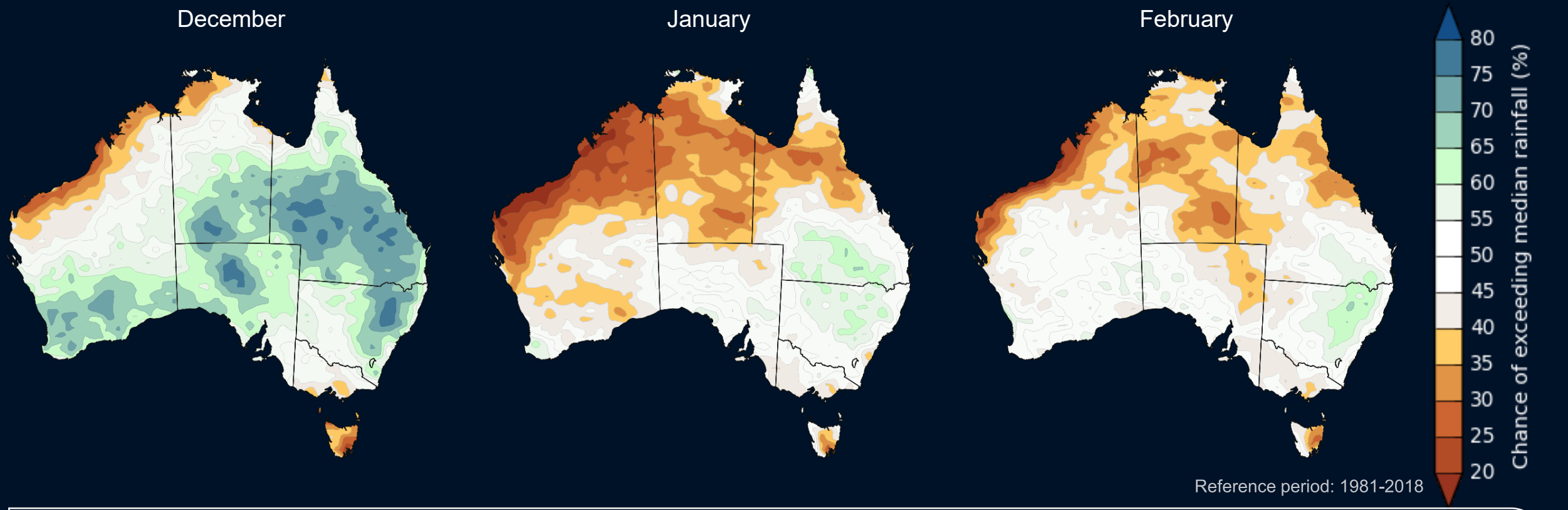




- **Rainfall**: Well above average through southern/central Australia.
  - Rainfall deficiencies persist in parts of the southwest, east, and southeast
  - Tas lowest rainfall overall since 2008
- **Temperature**: Well above average nationally. Tracking warmest on record for NSW, Vic and Tas, 5th warmest nationally.

Rainfall: Chance of above median

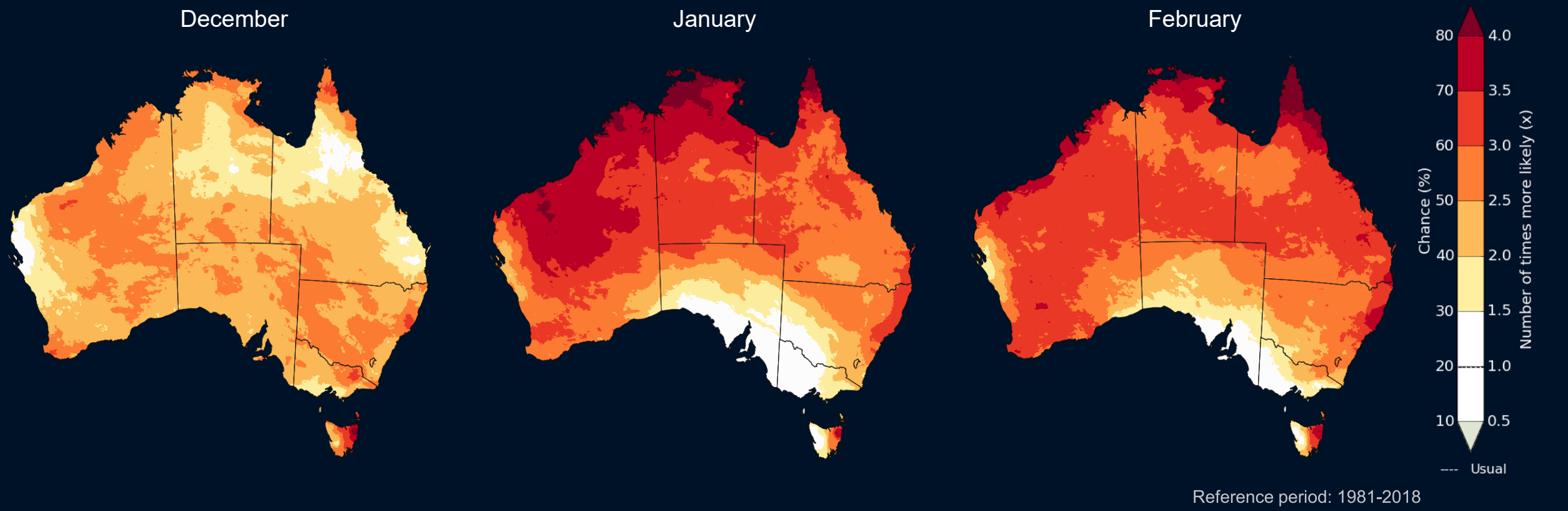
December 2026, January 2027, February 2027



- For the 3 months to February 2027, rainfall is likely to be above average for parts of south-eastern Qld and north-eastern NSW, below average for the north and far south-east, including Tasmania and southern Vic.
- The wet signal in the east is most pronounced during December

Maximum temperature: Chance of unusually warm

December 2026, January 2027, February 2027

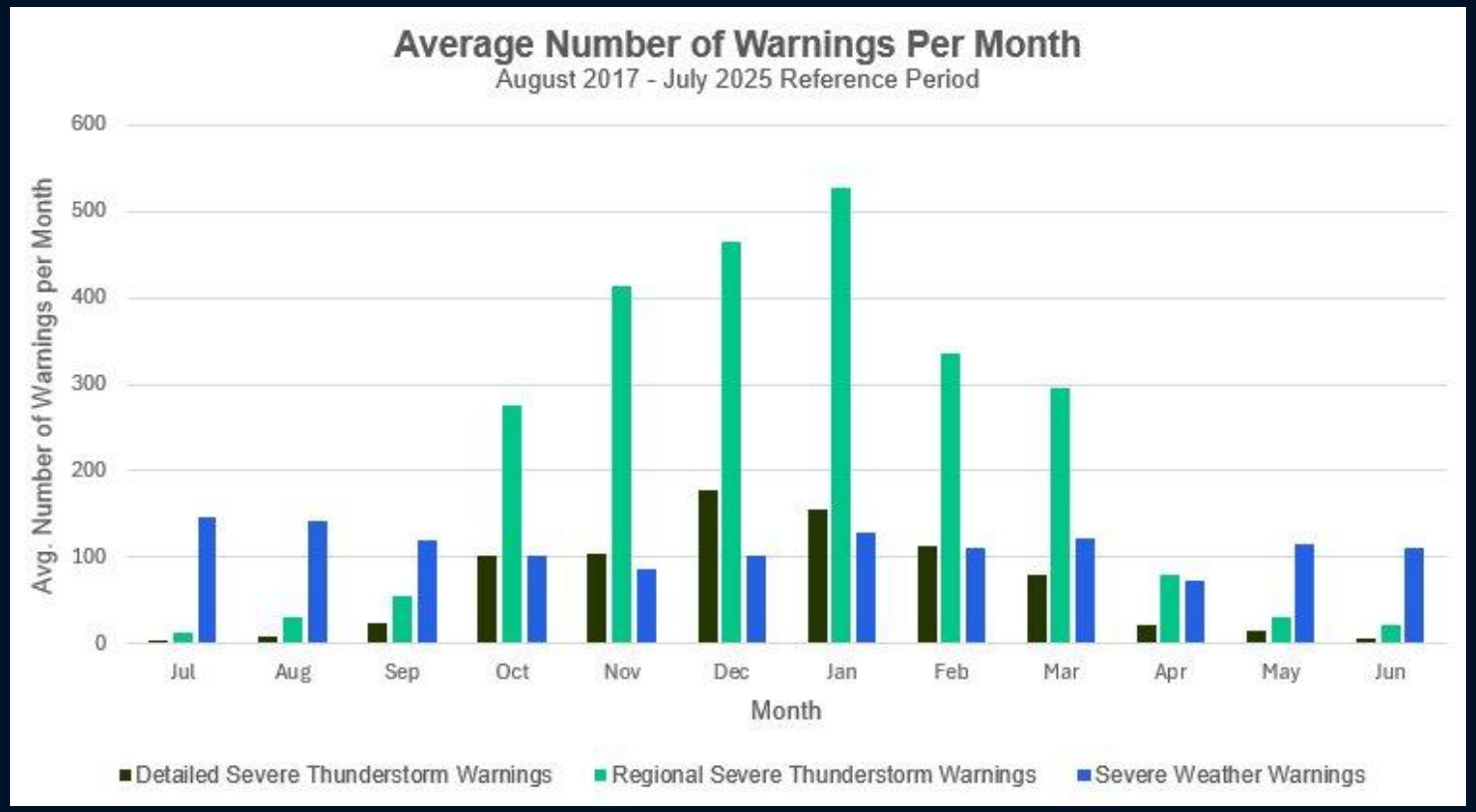


Reference period: 1981-2018

- Increased likelihood of unusually warm maximum temperatures (in the top 20% of the historical range) across much of Australia

Storm Risk

November–January 2026

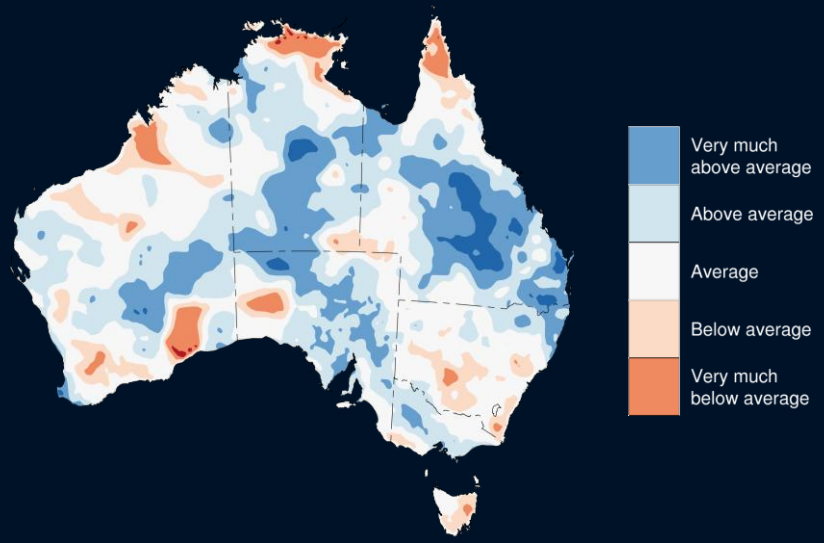


- November to January is peak severe storm season
- East coast heavy rainfall risk may be elevated this year as warmer than average ocean temperatures can provide increased moisture and energy

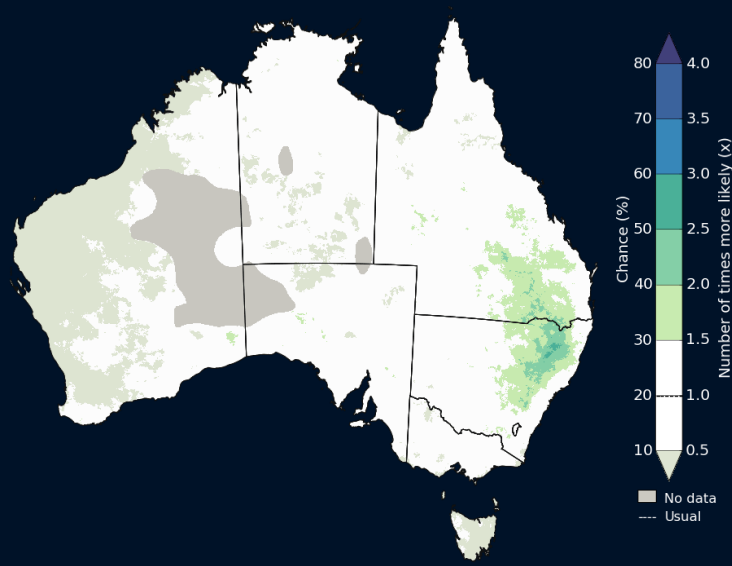
Flood risk

December 2026–February 2027

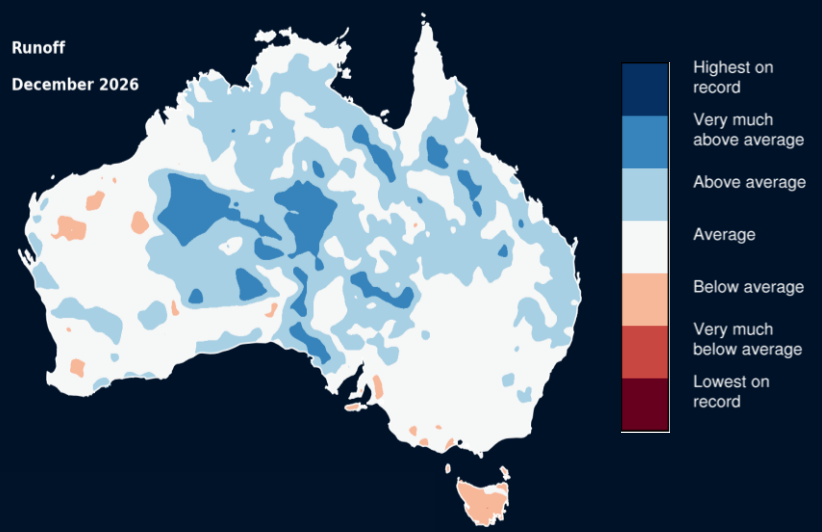
11 November 2026
Observed top metre soil moisture



December–February
Forecast chance of unusually high rainfall



December 2026
Forecast runoff

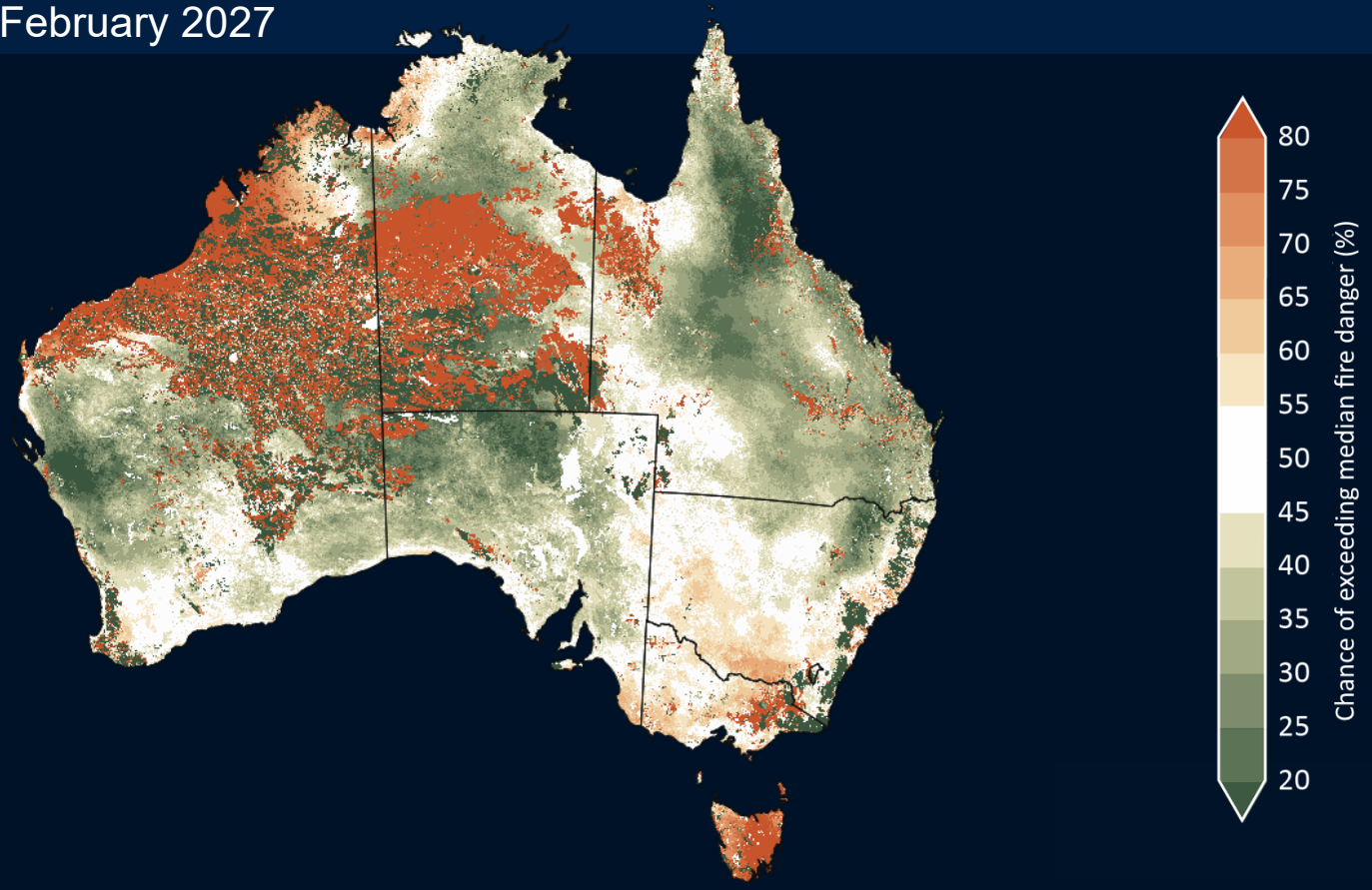


- Moving into the season of enhanced flooding risk – this risk may be further enhanced in parts of SEQld and NE NSW, with wet soils and forecast above average rainfall
- Flood risk is often driven by major weather events that are difficult for long-range forecast models to predict, especially at longer lead times.

Fire risk

Chance of exceeding median Fire Danger

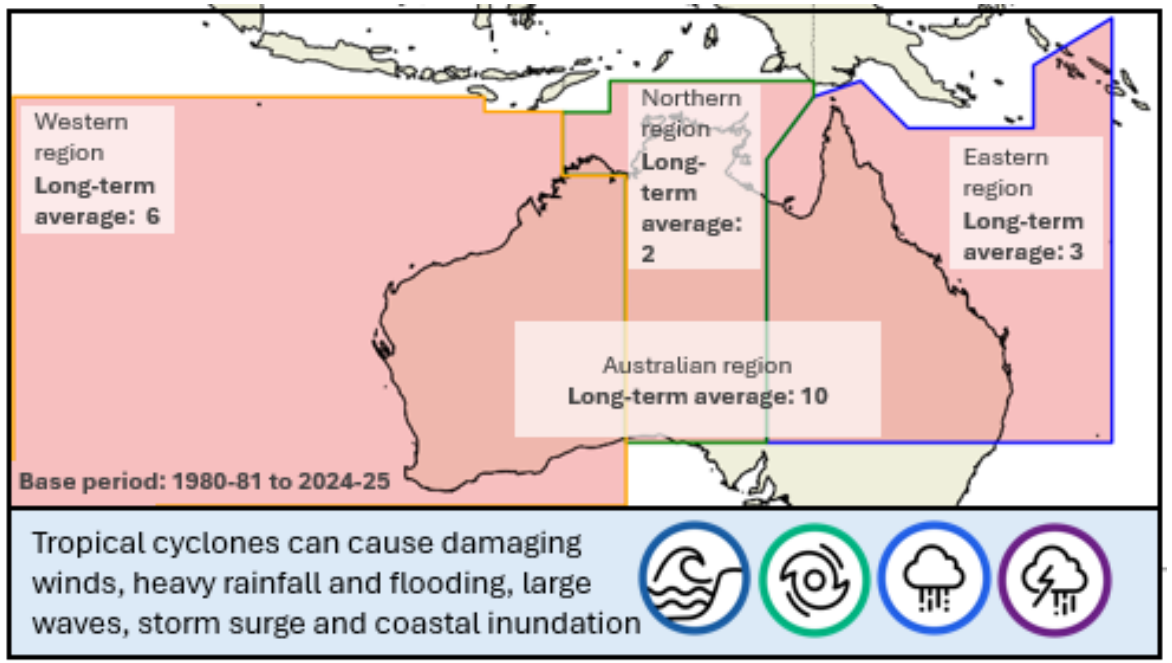
December 2026–February 2027



- High chance of exceeding median AFDRS: Tas persistent through the season, Vic and S NSW (Jan peak)
- **Underestimated fire danger issue:** Forest in E Vic, E NSW (Dark green areas)
- Fuel state conditions can change rapidly. Destructive bushfires can occur in a 'normal' or 'below-average' fire season

Tropical cyclone season: Nov - Apr

Average number of tropical cyclones per season
1980-81 – 2024-25





- On average, there are 10 TCs in the Australian region each season; 4 making landfall (all seasons since 1980-81).
- El Niño years typically see a reduced number of Tropical Cyclones compared to neutral and La Niña years (7 to 8, compared to 10 to 11).
- There has always been at least one TC impact the Australian coast each season.
- Tropical cyclone formation is rarely evenly spread throughout the season; quiet periods are often followed by bursts of activity.
- **The Bureau no longer issues a pre-season Tropical Cyclone Outlook, though 7 day outlooks will continue to be issued**

Long Range Forecast – Severe Weather

Summary Outlook - Summer

HAZARD	LIKELIHOOD COMPARED TO RECENT YEARS
Extreme heat	Above average, increased risk of heatwaves.
Bushfire	Pockets of enhanced fire risk across the country, due to a warm/dry outlook or high fuel loads.
Storm	Peak period for severe storms is Nov-Jan. Potential for enhanced heavy rainfall hazard with east coast severe storms.
Tropical Cyclone	Cyclone season is from November to April. We typically see below average TCs during El Nino years, though warmer than average waters could contribute to increased Severe TC risk.
Flood	Potential elevated risk in parts of central and eastern Aus due to forecast rainfall.