

Summary - The 2017 Season

June 2017 key points:

- Dry conditions continue over most of the cropping regions of Western Australia.
- The only significant rainfall event in the last four weeks was patchy and occurred on 20th May, continuing the trend for the year.
- Rain in the western areas of the Kwinana / Albany port zones and the Esperance port zone was generally around 10mm, with heavier isolated falls.
- Rain was less in the eastern areas of the Kwinana port zone and most of the Geraldton port zone with areas in the far-east and north missing out on rain completely.
- Department of Agriculture and Food WA, Grains Industry Directorate, reports, “climate models are indicating below average seasonal rainfall being more likely for June to August.”
- Most seeding is now finished except for pockets of growers that missed out on recent rainfall events. Small areas, mainly of wheat, may still go in up until mid-June if rain falls in the medium and higher rainfall zones. This will enable the spreading of seeding dates for frost mitigation.
- The area of crop planted has not changed significantly from the GIWA May Crop Report. There is a general decrease of intended cropping paddocks due to the lack of rain and projections of a low decile rainfall year. Most of the reduction in plantings has been wheat, as canola and lupin areas were committed earlier in the season. The barley area has increased slightly in line with a strengthening of price during the seeding period.

2017 WA Crop Area Estimates (hectares)

Port zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Field pea	State total
Kwinana	2,631,000	487,000	436,000	136,000	124,000	9,000	3,823,000
Albany	794,000	462,000	331,000	59,000	39,000	6,000	1,691,000
Esperance	539,000	290,000	281,000	6,000	9,000	15,000	1,140,000
Geraldton	912,000	48,000	147,000	8,000	178,000	1,000	1,294,000
Totals	4,876,000	1,287,000	1,195,000	209,000	350,000	31,000	7,948,000
% change from May 2017	-0.4%	0.5%	-0.4%	-3.7%	-0.6%	0.0%	-0.4%

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DAFWA and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.

Geraldton Zone

Seeding has finished for the majority of the Geraldton port zone. The lupin and canola areas are unchanged or down slightly in some regions from last month as the areas were committed earlier in the season. Most canola that has come up is very patchy with some growers considering following paddocks in the north-eastern areas if rain does not fall during the first few weeks of June. Lupin establishment has been fairly good in some areas that received rain, with adequate plant density although most are patchy or have not germinated. Lupin paddocks will need good follow up rains to make average yields as most of the lupin belt does not have the soil water reserves present further south of the state.

The germination on the ameliorated sands looks good and is vastly different to the untreated ground. This observation is reflected across the state. Recent conditions have been very warm and dry with 28 degrees Celsius and north-east winds. Yield Prophet work shows crop potential in the region to be just 50 percent of the average from previous years.

There will be a slight reduction in the wheat area for the region as most growers dropped off a paddock or two as the dry conditions continued from last month. Cereal crops in the eastern areas of the zone are up and have good reserves of soil water from the rains in February. Wheat areas closer to Geraldton and to the north are either patchy or not out of the ground.

Kwinana Zone

The Midlands

Most of the Midlands have finished seeding with the exception of areas closer to the coast where it has been very dry. Some paddocks of cereal may still go in if it rains during June. The majority of wheat, barley and oat area has gone in as planned. Sub-soil moisture ended up being too deep for growers to follow down and many crops went in dry. Some of the dry sown crops are germinating or have germinated from the rain at the end of May but there is a big strip of country from Moora / Watheroo / Marchagee / Coorow / Pithara / Dalwallinu to Buntine with not enough rain to germinate. There is also a very dry patch around Dandaragan.

The lupin and canola area may be less than originally planned and germination is patchy, particularly on the heavier country.

Pasture feed is really tight with most growers' hand feeding stock.

Kwinana West

The western edge of the Kwinana port zone is mostly okay. Germination has been patchy in some cases but most paddocks are up or coming with reasonable plant density. Around 70 percent of the crops are okay with about 30 percent just average and patchy.

There are noticeable differences showing up in germinating crops where the summer weeds were sprayed out soon after they germinated, compared to those left for a few weeks longer before being spraying out. Those that had weeds growing for longer are patchy and plant density is lower.

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DAFWA and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.

On reflection, some growers could have sown deeper to chase sub-soil moisture but the fear of a wind or heavy rainfall event held them back.

The wheat and barley area will be down slightly from earlier predictions as some paddocks at the end of programs were left out to pasture. Lupin crops are mostly going well, although the majority of early sown canola crops are very patchy.

Crop protection for weed control is going to be difficult as many crops have plants at varying growth stages within paddocks.

Kwinana East

Crops in eastern regions of the zone continue the trend of patchy rainfall across the state. Some areas around Tammin / Kellerberrin and Narembeen, areas south of Southern Cross and south of Merredin are receiving good rainfall with nearby properties very dry. Not much crop has germinated with good plant density north of the Great Eastern Highway. This gets worse further north with some properties having no crop up at all. This is very frustrating for growers as most of the zone, except for the northern parts, still has good reserves of sub-soil moisture that they cannot get to.

The intended area of wheat planted could be down as much as 15 to 20 percent in the east and north-east areas of the zone due to the lack of good rains in May. The likelihood of average grain yields is dropping off and it is unlikely more crop will be sown even if it rains in the next few weeks.

Albany Zone

Western Albany

The western areas of the Albany port zone are in good shape considering the limited rainfall for this time of the year. Most crops are up and have reasonable plant density. The crops are not as patchy as is the case in the north and east of the state and most have at least average yield potential. However, rainfall will need to be above average to get anywhere near the yields of last year. Most of the region missed out on the summer rains and crops are still very young with a long way to go for this time of the year.

Seeding has almost wound up with no major changes in the crop areas from last month. Some paddocks near the end of programs were left out to pasture as many growers were carrying higher numbers of livestock into the winter and pasture growth has been very slow.

There are major problems with young crops contending with high numbers of mites, weevils, slaters, earwigs, snails and slugs depending on where you are in the region.

Southern Albany

Most of the Southern Albany zone except for the areas north of Ongerup, Jacup and east of Katanning are in reasonably good shape with growers 85 to 90 percent through their seeding programs. The only crop left to go in are areas that were too wet or where there has been some spreading out of seeding dates for frost mitigation. Crop that has been planted has germinated fairly well with 10 to 15 percent somewhat patchy. Most of the region has

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DAFWA and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.

good soil moisture and crops are growing nicely with the unseasonably warm conditions over the last few weeks.

The impact of summer spraying programs are showing up in this region, with paddocks where weeds were sprayed out early germinating better than those left for several weeks.

There has been some switching of wheat paddocks into barley, although the overall change in crop areas has not changed much from last month.

Insects and bugs are causing problems in the later germinating paddocks.

Eastern Albany (Lakes Region)

Most growers have finished seeding in the region. If it rains, there may be some pasture paddocks sown to wheat over the next few weeks where the country has been too hard to sow until now. If there is no rain in the first few weeks of June the overall impact in reduced plantings of wheat could be a few percent.

Most of the region has moisture following the rain at the end of May, although there are some very dry pockets east of Hyden, north of Kulin and south of Lake Grace and Newdegate.

Canola germination is patchy in accordance with most of the state and this will make it very difficult to predict grain yields later in the year. Pasture growth is poor and most growers are hand feeding livestock.

Esperance Zone

The Esperance port zone is in good shape compared with the rest of state. The zone looks good from Ravensthorpe right through to the eastern areas. Sowing is nearly complete with most crops going into moisture and germinating fairly well. There have been no significant changes to the intended crop area in the last month.

Most of the issues for the zone are related to a good season rather than a poor season, with snails, slugs, slaters and earwigs causing some damage to emerging crops. There were some reports of barley rust and powdery mildew on volunteer wheat earlier in the year but the new emerging crops are currently clean. There are also reports of early blackleg infection on canola and in barley, spot type net blotch is likely to be a problem as the season progresses. At this stage of the season most of the zone is presenting for above average grain yield potential.

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DAFWA and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.

Season Outlook

Ian Foster, Grains Industry Directorate, DAFWA

The past few months have seen well below average rainfall across agricultural areas. Much of the northern and central regions have received less than 20 percent of normal rain since April. Estimated stored soil water at early June still indicates substantial water storage over large parts of the central and southern agricultural regions and continuing lower stores over much of the north and north-east.

The seasonal rainfall outlook for June to August 2017 continues a high level of agreement among models for below average rainfall being most likely over most of WA. See overview:

- A majority of climate models indicate an El Niño event is likely to develop in the Pacific Ocean, as well as an Indian Ocean Dipole-positive event in the tropical Indian Ocean in 2017. The El Niño event may be weak, and is developing slowly at present.
- Current conditions in the Pacific and Indian Oceans are a mix of neutral and developing indicators.
- Seasonal climate outlooks for rainfall over WA from Australian and international climate models are indicating below average seasonal rainfall for WA being likely for June to August.
- Assuming the outlook for below average seasonal rainfall unfolds as indicated, crop and pasture performance is likely to be determined by timing of key rainfall events and access to stored soil water.

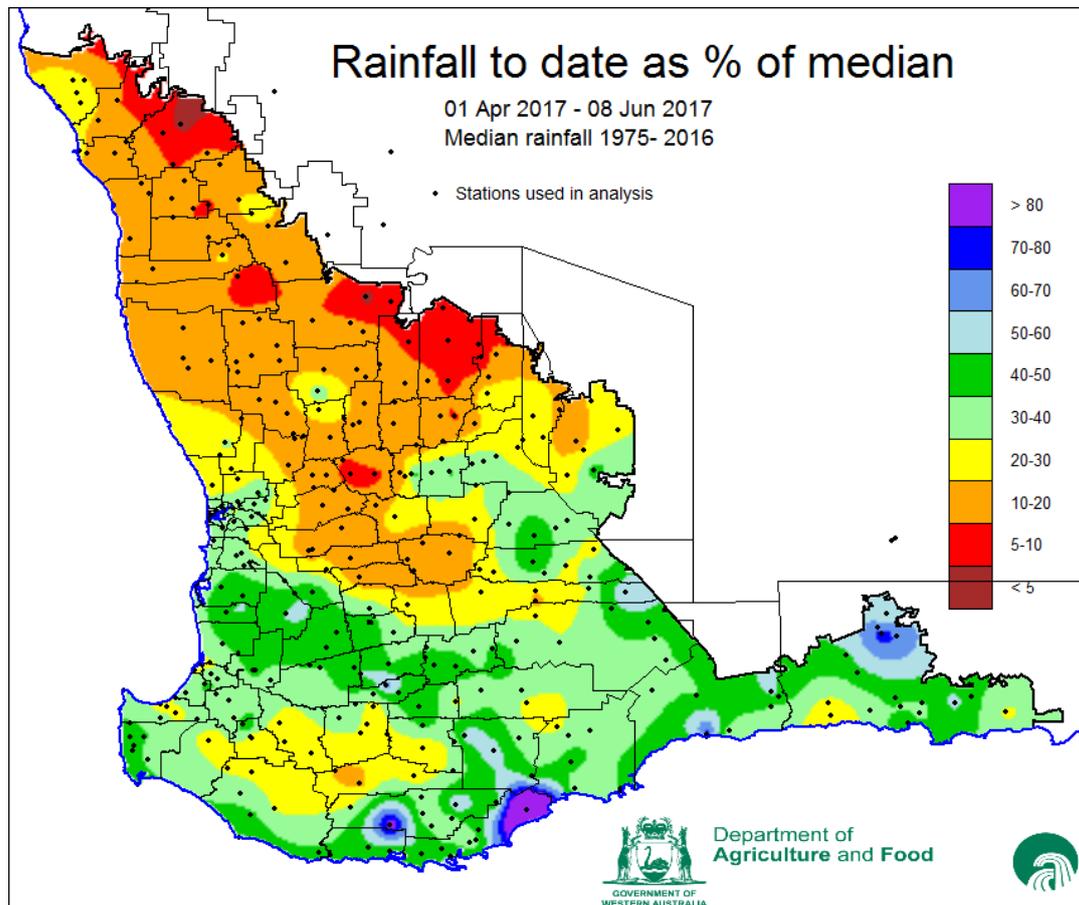


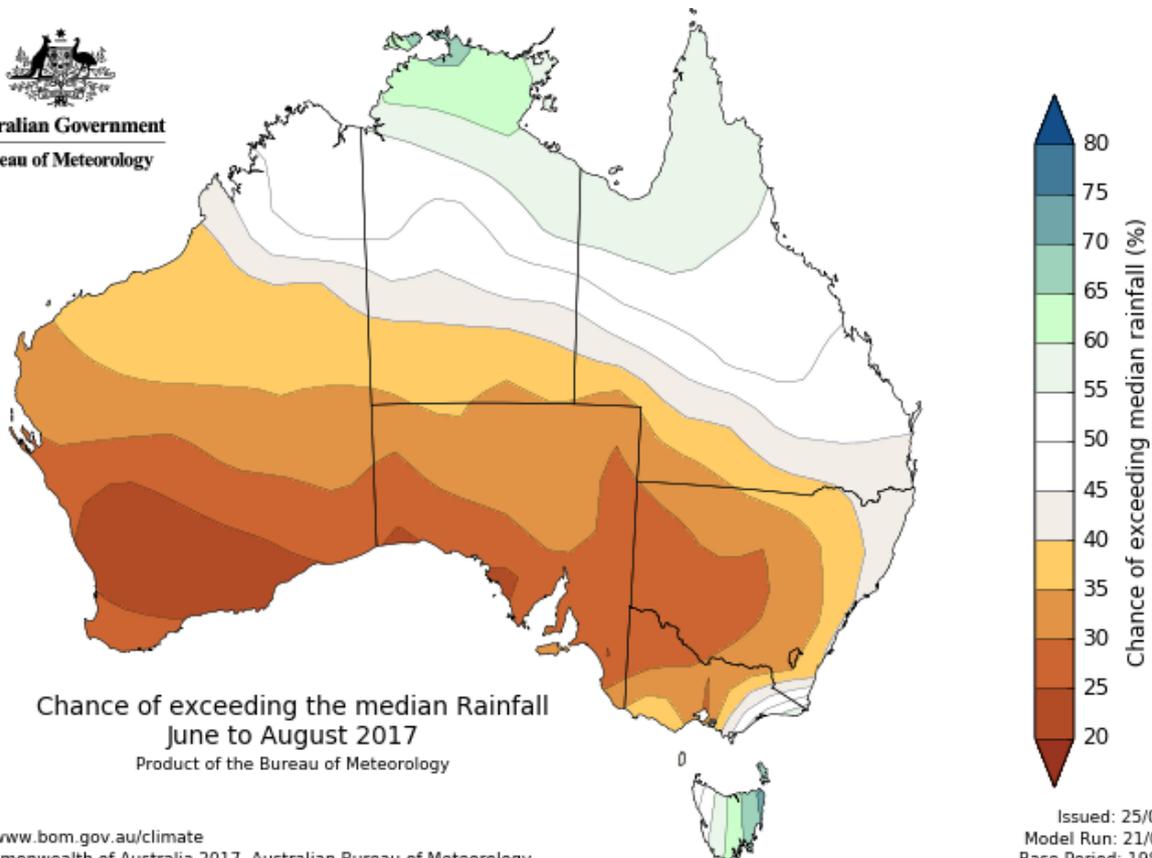
Figure 1. Rainfall totals to date since 1 April 2017, expressed as a percentage of median rainfall. Rainfall data from Bureau of Meteorology and Patched Point database.

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DAFWA and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.

Bureau of Meteorology: Seasonal rainfall outlook June to August 2017

Summary

- June is likely to be drier than average over southern and central WA, SA and western parts of NSW and Victoria.
- Winter (June to August) rainfall is likely to be below average over the southern half of mainland Australia. While there is a tendency for eastern Tasmania to be wetter than average for winter, model accuracy in eastern Tasmania for this period is low.
- Outlooks are being influenced by warmer than average tropical Pacific sea surface temperatures and a cooler than average eastern Indian Ocean.



<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate>
© Commonwealth of Australia 2017, Australian Bureau of Meteorology

Additional information can be sourced from:

- [DAFWA: Seasonal Climate Information](#)
- [DAFWA: Soil Water Tool](#)
- [BoM: WA Seasonal Rainfall Outlook, next 3 months](#)
- [BoM: Decile rainfall for March to May 2017](#)
- [BoM: Landscape soil water balance](#)

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DAFWA and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.