

The 2026 Grain Season – The majority of the Western Australian Grainbelt looks deceptively good

The crop stages in all areas of the Western Australian cropping regions except patches of the Great Southern and some areas southeast of Merredin are a month ahead of where they normally are due to the early start and up until recently, warm winter growing conditions. Crops look exceptionally good and you could be deceived that we are on track for another massive year of grain production. Whilst this could still be the case, the variance in potential tonnage could be plus or minus twenty per cent from what is estimated at the moment.

The niggling prospect of a drier and hotter spring that has been forecast by global climate models for most of the year, is strengthening rather than going away. This could swing the crop potential negatively very quickly if the forecasts end up being correct. Most crops are carrying a lot of top growth and sub-optimal subsoil moisture reserves at the moment, which means that they will transpire themselves to death if the heat is turned up early and there is not enough rainfall to support this biomass.

On the other hand, the current potential is at least equal to 2025 which was a record production year of 27.3 million tonnes, 2 million tonnes more than the previous record year in 2022. To hit this, most regions that are currently in good shape will need to receive another 50 mm of rain and the areas that experienced a later start will need another 100 mm of rain.

Total crop area is similar to 2025 although the canola area this year is 400,000 ha more than 2025, largely replacing wheat area which usually yields about twice that of canola in all rainfall regions. Even though this year has a large total area of crop planted, the large area of canola will tend to keep a lid on total tonnage. To counter this the barley area has increased by 15 per cent from 2025. As barley generally outyields wheat this should help maintain total grain tonnage. In addition, the barley crop is more advanced than wheat and is in sensational shape, reducing the risk that it will crash.

Nitrogen use this year is down by 10-15 per cent per hectare from previous high production years and while soil organic nitrogen was much higher than normal at the start of the year, the total nitrogen pool to fuel high yields is down, effectively putting a cap on potential top end production.

All crops have come through to now with little weed pressure and leaf diseases are just starting to build up in the southern regions. Insects in canola will be a risk moving into spring as it is already clear from crop observations that Diamond Back Moth (DBM) and aphid numbers are much higher than normal for this time of the year.

The lupin area is down from 2025 although the crops have benefited from the unseasonably warm conditions during May and June with most having very good canopy cover. The drop in total oat area from 2025 was mostly influenced by a reduction in oats planted for hay, with the area of oats planted for grain increasing slightly, mostly in the low rainfall areas from the early sowing opportunity. The early sown oat crops in the low rainfall regions suffered a little until the rain kicked into gear in June, although they now are in very good shape.

Pulse crop plantings are similar to 2025 and those that were sown early, particularly the beans, have better growth than in recent years which should support good grain yields.

The crop tonnage potential is “in the balance” as is typical for this time of year, although what is clear is the swing in variance could be huge with an exceptionally well set up crop needing more rain than is forecast to fall to fill this potential.

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DPIRD, CBH, DAS and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.

This potential for quite a high variance between upper and lower production estimates has become a reoccurring theme in recent years with growers seemingly being able to set high crop yield potential in a range of physical and geopolitical environments, and this year is no exception.

The advanced stages of most of the crops this year means potentially less heat shock risk and less reliance on finishing rains, although crops will be at vulnerable frost risk stages for longer.

Considering what we were faced with at the start of the growing season no one could have foreseen that we now are potentially looking at another record production year if things go our way from now on.

2026 Season GIWA July 2026 Western Australia Crop Production Estimates (tonnes)

Port Zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Pulses	State Total
Kwinana	4,578,600	2,950,000	1,620,000	460,000	290,000	50,000	9,948,600
Albany	1,270,000	2,400,000	1,220,000	320,000	160,000	30,000	5,400,000
Esperance	1,250,000	1,430,000	990,000	28,000	40,000	50,000	3,788,000
Geraldton	2,450,000	240,000	560,000	2,500	270,000	1,000	3,523,500
Totals	9,548,600	7,020,000	4,390,000	810,500	760,000	131,000	22,660,100

Note: 1) the grain totals reported are for whole farm production. This includes on-farm seed and feed requirements as well as trade outside of the CBH network.
2) Production estimates are based on crop status at the time each new Crop Report is released, and assume seasonal conditions are average for the remainder of the growing season.

2026 Season GIWA July 2026 Western Australia Crop Area Estimates (hectares)

Port Zone	Wheat	Barley	Canola	Oats	Lupins	Pulses	State Total
Kwinana	1,990,700	1,040,000	1,070,000	342,000	168,000	25,000	4,635,700
Albany	420,000	800,000	622,000	158,500	70,000	20,000	2,090,500
Esperance	430,000	360,000	420,000	35,000	20,000	50,000	1,315,000
Geraldton	810,000	85,000	300,000	2,000	185,000	1,000	1,383,000
Totals	3,650,700	2,285,000	2,412,000	537,500	443,000	96,000	9,424,200

Note: Oat tonnage refers to estimated grain production whilst early area estimates are for total area planted and includes oats intended for hay.

Geraldton Zone

The early emerged cereal crops have heads starting to emerge. Canola crops are well into podding as are lupin crops. The early planting and warm conditions have meant growth stages have pushed along to being well in front of normal. But not all crops are this advanced and the region needs a mild August for

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DPIRD, CBH, DAS and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.

the later emerged crops to increase grain yield potential and for the region to produce the very high tonnage that it is set up for at the moment.

Day temperatures have been in the mid- 20's lately and crops are starting to wilt during the middle of the day as the large canopies draw heavily on the subsoil moisture reserves. Some of the wetter areas are still very wet and have needed aerial application of nitrogen and crop protection treatments.

Nitrogen rates have ended up being close to those planned before the outbreak of war in the Middle East as the continued rainfall has given growers the confidence to continue to push grain yield potential.

Blackleg infection levels in the lower canopy of canola crops are higher than normal due to the constant rainfall and fungicide applications have been required.

The chasing of moisture deep at sowing time that was once considered a risk has paid off big time this year as those that did manage to get crops up early are well in front of those that emerged later due to the dry spell in May. This technique requires attention to detail with seeder bar setup but is worth the effort. The deeper sowing also brings with it improved herbicide crop safety which aids in crop weed competition.

The region is set up nicely for another very good year, although to hit the highs of 2025 the later emerged crops will need a good run from now on.

Kwinana Zone

Kwinana North Midlands

The region is probably better placed this year than last year with most growers sitting on between 180-250 mm of year-to-date rainfall. Crops are more advanced than this time last year and most of the establishment issues have sorted themselves out now.

Most early canola crops are at 30-40 per cent flower. The better crops are those that were sown deeper to get below the non-wetting layer and reach the subsoil moisture. These were able to germinate before the soil dried out. Anything that went in shallow struggled for plant density early and even though they have mostly filled out now, grain yield potential is lower. The contrast between those sown deep versus shallow side-by-side at the same time is very evident now.

Growers have been pushing various soil amelioration tactics on the higher yielding soil types recently and this is really showing up in a year like this with improved emergence and the ability to maintain growth during dry spells.

Cereals look good and they have all year. The increase in barley area in the region has benefited from the early sowing and even though many paddocks are carrying more frost risk than normal, the risk of heat shock will be less.

The high soil nitrate levels measured at the start of seeding has now largely been taken up from the combination of very rapid winter growth, stubble breakdown and a little less fertiliser used originally up front. Cereal crops seemingly looked "washed out" overnight and with the supply and price of nitrogen easing lately, growers have been quick to top up with nitrogen to maintain grain yield potential. There was less hesitancy to top up with nitrogen in the region as the rainfall to date should support this extra growth. Applied nitrogen is now back up to where growers would have been in a more normal season.

Bugs are starting to get active with the warmer weather and whilst mice are seemingly under control, growers are actively monitoring mice numbers to stay in front with baiting before populations get out of control.

Kwinana South

Crop condition in the Kwinana South zone mirror those in the North Midlands region despite year-to-date rainfall being less and sub-soil moisture reserves being lower. These will need topping up for the region to hit similar yields to those likely to be achieved further north.

Rainfall has come in flushes with periods of dry spells in between and whilst the rainfall has been adequate to keep crops growing, growers have been cautious with topping up nitrogen in case rainfall for the remainder of the season is insufficient to support the extra growth. This risk averse approach is understandable, although it will limit the top end yields if rainfall does pick up in the spring.

Canola across the zone is beginning to flower which is earlier than normal, and some earlier emerged cereals are starting to run up.

Crops look outstanding and have excellent grain yield potential. Growth has rocketed along under recent warm daytime temperatures. Applied nitrogen rates have been 15-20 units less than normal for cereals, but canola has been pushed harder due to it being earlier emerged and potentially more profitable.

The challenge with late nitrogen top-ups is reconciling that visual look with an assessment of what moisture the sub-soil has in reserve, and what the season can realistically deliver through to grain fill.

Lupins and the small area of pulses are looking particularly good this year, benefiting from the warm daytime temperatures. Mild frosts without prolonged cold periods have kept these temperature sensitive crops ticking along.

The earlier emerged barley crops have started running up and unfortunately will be at vulnerable growth stages right in the middle of the high frost risk period. If they get through unscathed, yields will be very good.

Leaf disease pressure has stalled recently in the cereals with the drier conditions. For canola, fungicide timing is being managed carefully, with the preference for aligning applications to genuine disease pressure and environmental risk rather than applying by the calendar or for operational convenience. Some high-potential canola paddocks were candidates for premium fungicide products, but product availability has limited its use.

Kwinana North East

Crops in the region are resembling the 2021 and 2022 seasons for crop performance and potential. Although some growers may have missed the boat by being too conservative with fertiliser programs based on the pessimistic rainfall forecasts which have now instead turned into a high decile year for rainfall.

For these low rainfall regions, it is too late now for urea and the price of urea ammonium nitrate (UAN) has not come down as quickly which is complicating the decisions for those contemplating further nitrogen top-ups.

The large area of canola in the region continues to power ahead and is well into flowering. There is, however, a patchwork of maturity with canola, depending on when it emerged. The earlier emerged canola crops have 2.0 t/ha plus potential whilst the later emerged crops will still likely return good profits.

Bugs are going to be a significant risk for all canola crops in the region, with DBM and aphids easily detected in most crops already.

Cereal crops in the far eastern regions and those above the Great Eastern Highway are in very good shape and large areas are on track for 2.0 t/ha plus. The early emerged barley crops look like they could go 3.0-4.0 t/ha particularly if they jag another 10-15mm of rain this coming weekend.

The later emerged cereals that came up in early June are way behind and will struggle unless the spring is mild and wet.

The warm temperatures have pushed crop growth ahead of where most growers are comfortable, pushing them into the frost risk window.

If the region receives some rain this weekend and another 10-20 mm in August and 10 mm in September without significant frost, the region will return an above average tonnage.

Albany Zone

Albany West

Crops are now feeling the effects of recent rainfall that has topped up soil profiles to now being saturated, particularly in the southern parts of the region. The crops that emerged later in the season are the most affected, although even some of the early sown crops that had an opportunity to pump some water out before the wet set in are suffering as well.

Canola crops are just coming into full flower in the last week or so and cereals are behind in growth stage from recent years. This region is behind in growth stage compared to much of the crop further north and east which may work out in its favour if the spring is a bit frosty.

There is still plenty of time for crops to recover and push into the higher grain yield brackets if the next few months are average as far as rainfall and temperature go.

Albany South

As the season has progressed crops have kept improving from ok to “not too bad” in the last two weeks. The canola which was down on plant density has now filled in following the rain and warm weather in June. The canola crops that established well at the start are now very good with yield potential close to recent record production years.

At the moment about 30 per cent of canola crops are in better shape than last year, although another 30 per cent suffered from patchy emergence due to non-wetting issues, fertiliser toxicity and induced dormancy or a combination of these factors. The remainder of the canola area is in average condition. Whole paddocks with establishment issues have been managed for cost rather than yield as some of these are too far behind to be able to make a profit.

Blackleg is just starting to get going, but most growers will have this covered with a combined early sclerotinia fungicide application.

The barley has looked good all year and now has very high grain yield potential. Some leaf disease is starting up in the barley, although growers have been quick to apply fungicides before it gets out of hand. A lot of the wheat is on the heavy soils that were too dry to emerge evenly at the start, or the lighter soils that did not get a chance to wet up properly earlier on. Also, the drier areas north of the Ranges where rain has been light on all year is mostly wheat. Consequently, the average wheat yields in the region will be well below barley this year.

Faba bean crops look good for a change, and some reasonable yields are expected this year.

A standout this year has been the success of tiled drains in the lower lying areas of paddocks installed to ameliorate the impact of waterlogging. In some cases, these areas which are usually the worst performing portions of paddocks will be the best performing areas of paddocks, particularly where the waterlogging has crept further up the slope.

The oat area is up slightly on long term averages and is mostly looking very good.

Albany East (Lakes Region)

The Lakes region crop potential variability has reduced in the last month with the drier areas picking up some good falls of rain in June. Many crops in the west are well behind in growth stage and will struggle to hit average grain yields unless the spring is milder and wetter than average.

Areas to the south and east are very good, as are areas to the north bordering on the south-eastern portion of the Kwinana Northeast zone.

Overall, the region is not lining up for the exceptional yields that the last couple years have delivered due to the quite varied nature of emergence patterns influenced by stripy rainfall events earlier in the season. Some areas have only just exceeded 100 mm of year-to-date rainfall.

Esperance Zone

Things are looking very good across the whole zone with many commenting that it is one of the best seasons in recent memory.

Crops were ticking along nicely from the coast to the drier regions in the north until the deluge of rain a couple of weeks ago. The coastal areas became waterlogged, and the wet areas migrated further north than normal. Canola on the sand-over clay and poorly drained areas has really suffered and grain yield potential in these areas has dropped away from what it was.

Nitrogen use efficiency is reduced in these waterlogged areas and growers are topping up with nitrogen by air to help support growth recovery.

The recent warm temperatures are mind-boggling for Esperance and have pushed crop growth stages ahead of where they normally are. Year-to-date rainfall will theoretically support some very high grain yields away from the waterlogged areas.

The most advanced barley crops in the northern portions of the zone are at flag-minus-one leaf stage to early head emergence. Leaf diseases are starting to get going now although growers are onto it to maintain current yield potential. Barley leaf rust has been detected in many of the currently grown barley varieties, but fungicides have done a good job to keep it under control.

Canola is at 50 per cent flowering in some paddocks and some paddocks have been at peak flowering for a month or more. Sclerotinia petal-on-leaf early infection is now visible in some canola, and the first signs of stem infection has been observed in recent days.

All pulses look good and this is one of the best years for pulse growth for a while.

Insect numbers are starting to increase in all crops which is normal for the region, with most growers having plans in place to ensure damage is kept to a minimum.



Season Outlook, July 2026

Meredith Guthrie, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Climate summary

Rainfall

Rainfall from 1 April to 6 July saw Pemberton record the highest rainfall total of 503 mm, while Ongerup received just 49 mm (Figure 1). The FAO crop soil moisture map, averaged across 10 soil types for 6 July, indicates generally good soil moisture levels across the South West Land Division (Figure 2) following rainfall in June. However, conditions remain dry in parts of the Central Wheatbelt and the Great Southern.

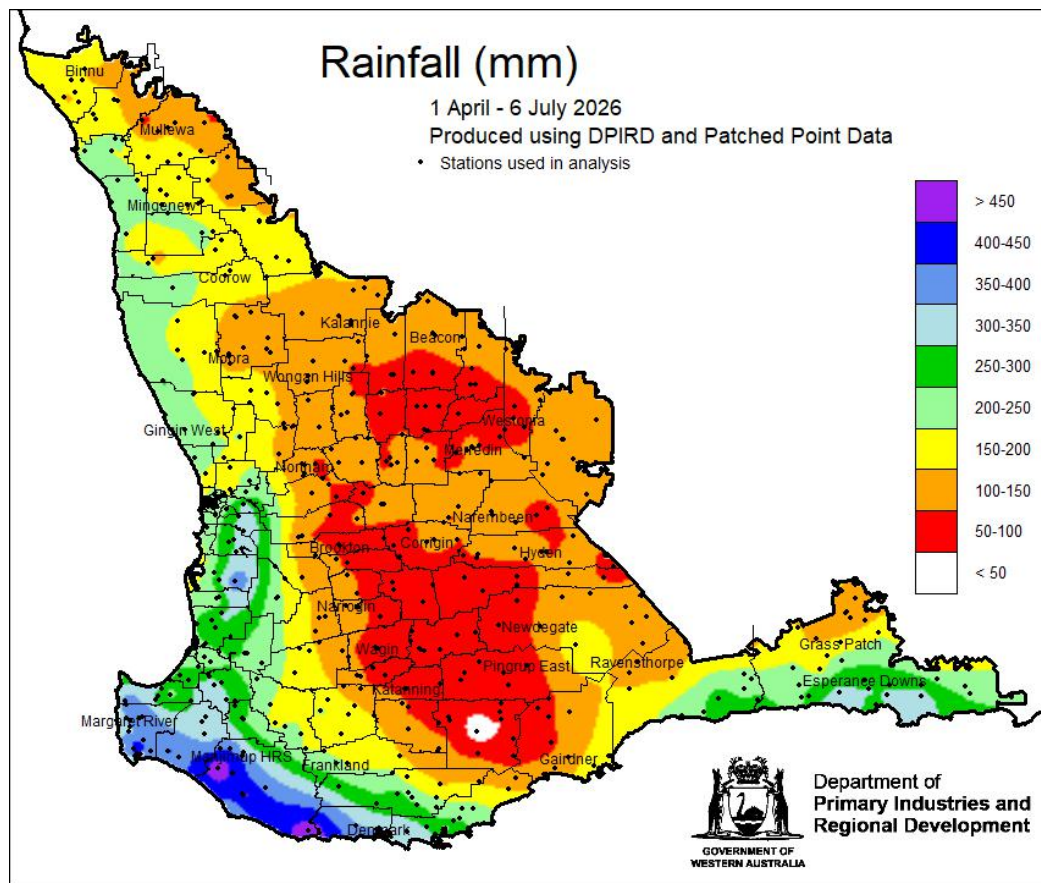


Figure 1 Rainfall from 1 April to 6 July 2026 for the South West Land Division (SWLD). Pemberton has the highest total of 503 mm and Ongerup has the lowest total of 49 mm.

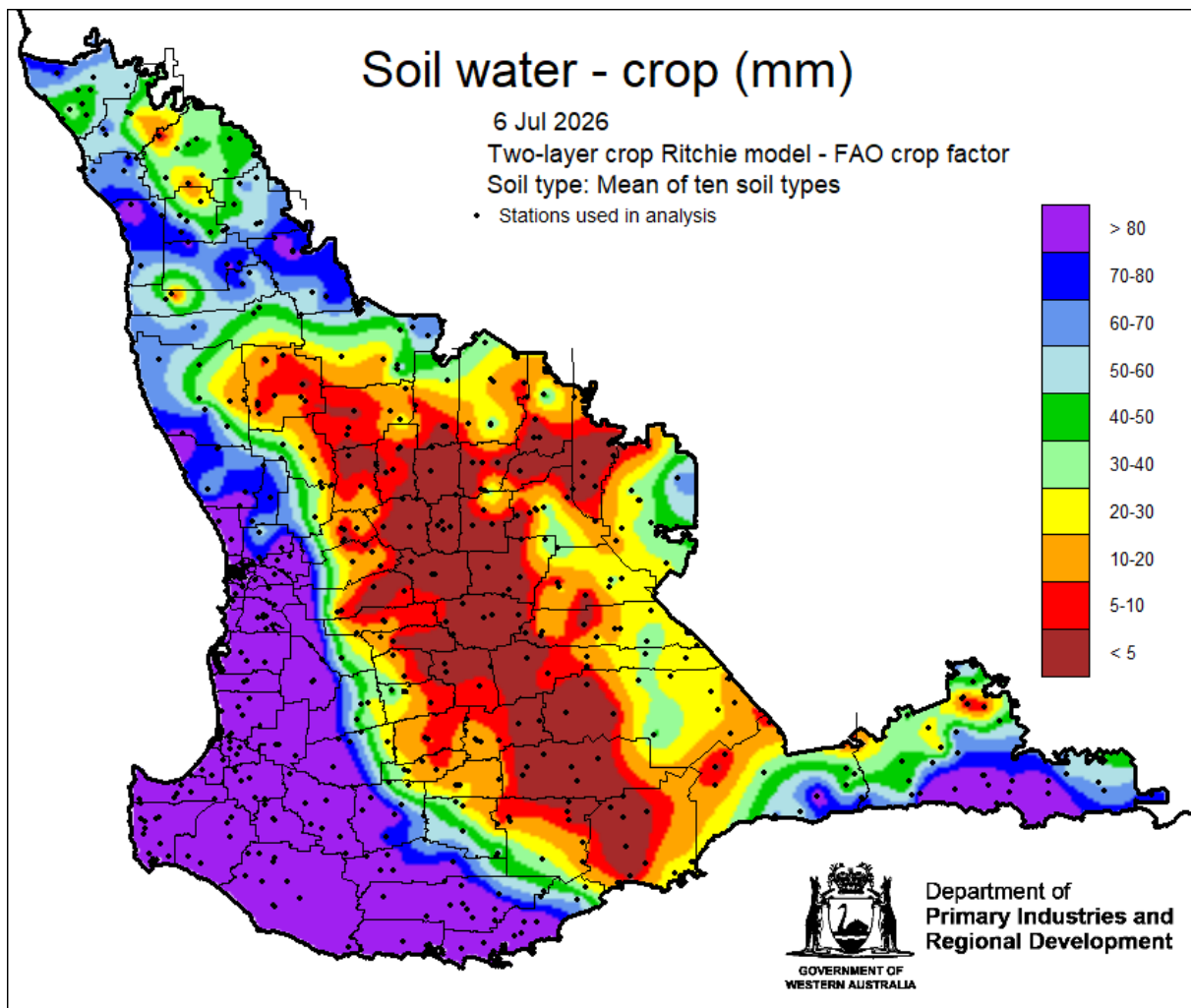


Figure 2 Plant available soil water map for the SWLD using rainfall up to 6 July 2026, uses the FAO crop factor method and represents the mean of ten soil types. The map indicates generally good levels of soil moisture.

Forecast

The July to September rainfall outlook from the Climate Copernicus website, which combines output from nine global climate models, including the Bureau of Meteorology's ACCESS model, indicates that below-median rainfall is most likely across the SWLD (Figure 3). The skill of global climate models is generally good at this time of year.

C3S multi-system seasonal forecast ECMWF/Met Office/Météo-France/CMCC/DWD/NCEP/JMA/ECCC/BOM
 Prob(precipitation > median)
 Nominal forecast start: 01/06/26
 Unweighted mean
 JAS 2026

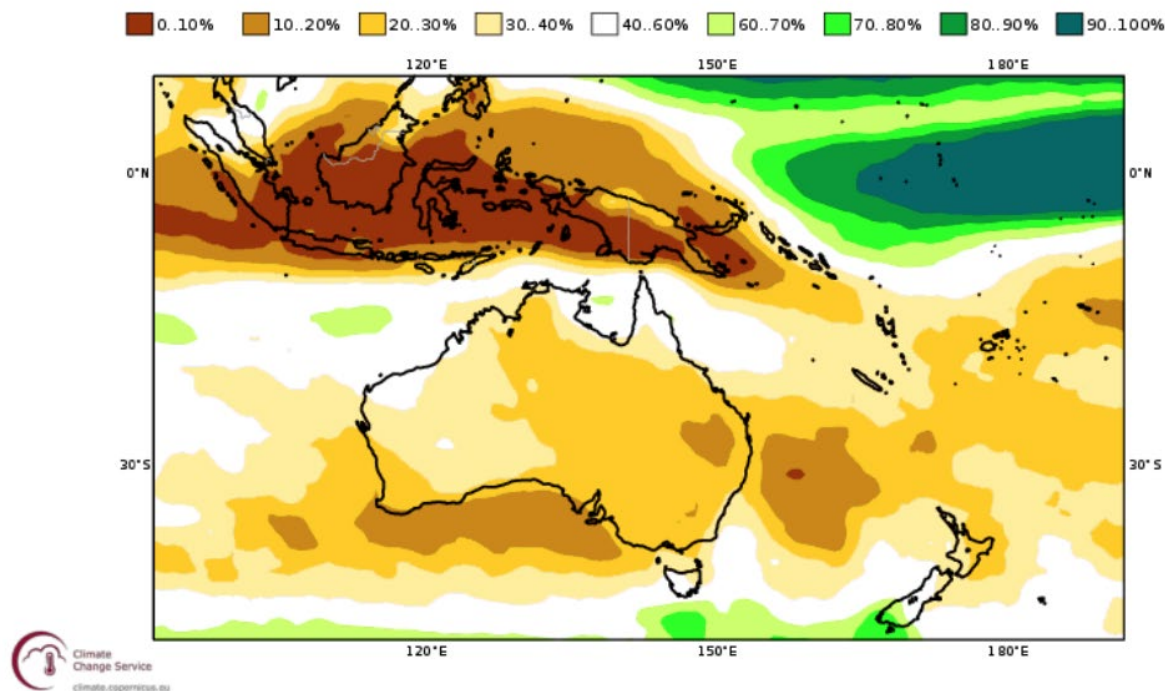


Figure 3. Probability of exceeding median rainfall for Australia in July to September 2026 from Climate Copernicus, which is a median of 9 climate models. Indicating below median rainfall is expected for the South West Land Division.

An El Niño has become established in the Pacific Ocean and is expected to persist until at least the end of the year. Most climate models indicate a positive Indian Ocean Dipole developing from September, along with an increased prevalence of high-pressure systems during winter and spring. Together, these climate drivers are likely to reduce rainfall and bring higher temperatures across the SWLD.

Temperature

In June, maximum temperatures were average across most of the SWLD and below average along the south coast and into the Esperance shire. Minimum temperatures were also average across the SWLD. Outlooks for maximum and minimum temperatures indicate that conditions are likely to be warmer than normal for July to September. Despite the outlook for warmer-than-normal minimum temperatures, frost remains a risk in frost-prone areas. Reduced cloud cover associated with high-pressure systems can increase overnight heat loss, leading to colder surface temperatures and favourable conditions for frost formation.

Additional information is available from:

- [DPIRD: Weather stations](#)
- [DPIRD: Soil Water Tool](#)
- [DPIRD Rainfall to Date Tool](#)
- [DPIRD Seasonal Climate Outlook newsletter](#)
- [BoM: Rainfall totals for cool season 2025/26](#)
- [BoM: Rainfall outlook for the next week](#)
- [BoM: Seasonal Rainfall Outlook](#)
- [BoM: Australian Water Outlook](#)

Important Disclaimer: The Grain Industry Association of Western Australia Inc. (GIWA) does not make any representations or warranties about the accuracy, reliability, currency, completeness or suitability for any particular purpose of any information in, or referred to in, this publication. GIWA accepts no liability whatsoever, by reason of negligence or otherwise, arising from any use or release of information in, or referred to in, or linked to in this publication, or any error, inaccuracy or omission in the information it contains.

GIWA gratefully acknowledges the support of DPIRD, CBH, DAS and contributions from independent agricultural consultants and agronomists in the production of this report.