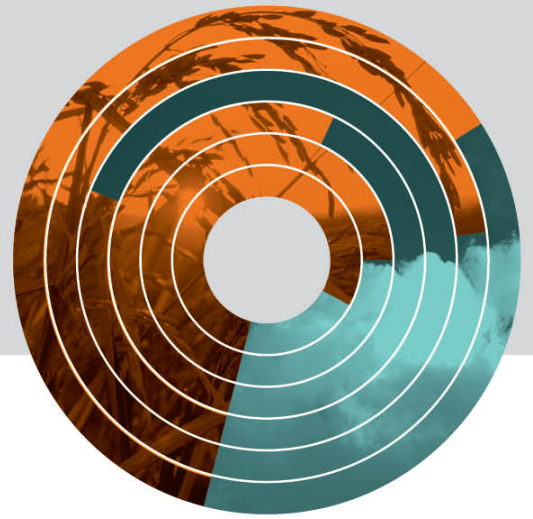




# Weekly Australian Climate, Water and Agricultural Update



22 March 2012

The full report is available from [www.daff.gov.au/abares](http://www.daff.gov.au/abares)

## Summary of key issues

- Floodwaters in southern New South Wales are causing damage to crops and rural infrastructure as they move downstream.
- Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements for primary producers are in place for 59 local government areas in New South Wales.
- Cyclonic and monsoonal conditions have caused localised damage but provided welcome rainfall for inland grazing enterprises in northern Australia.
- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin decreased this week by 22 gigalitres and stayed at approximately 91 per cent of total capacity.
- Vegetable prices were generally higher in the week ending 17 March 2012, but fruit prices were largely unchanged.
- The world sugar indicator price averaged US25.5 cents a pound in the week ending 21 March 2012, up US1.5 cents a pound from the previous week.
- Indian cotton acreage is expected to fall in 2012–13 in response to the Indian Government's policy to restrict cotton export permits and the impact on domestic cotton prices. Indian cotton growers are expected to increase planting of oil based commodities in 2012–13, such as groundnut, castor and soybeans.
- The Australian canola indicator price (Portland, Victoria) averaged \$510 a tonne in the week ending 19 March 2012, compared with \$497 a tonne in the previous week.
- The Queensland young cattle price fell 31 cents to 371 cents a kilogram in the week ending 16 March 2012. Prices in New South Wales and South Australia rose by 16 cents and 3 cents to 401 and 365 cents a kilogram, respectively.
- Saleyard lamb prices fell in all states in the week ending 16 March 2012. The largest decline was in New South Wales where the indicator price decreased by 8 per cent to 456 cents a kilogram.

# 1. Climate

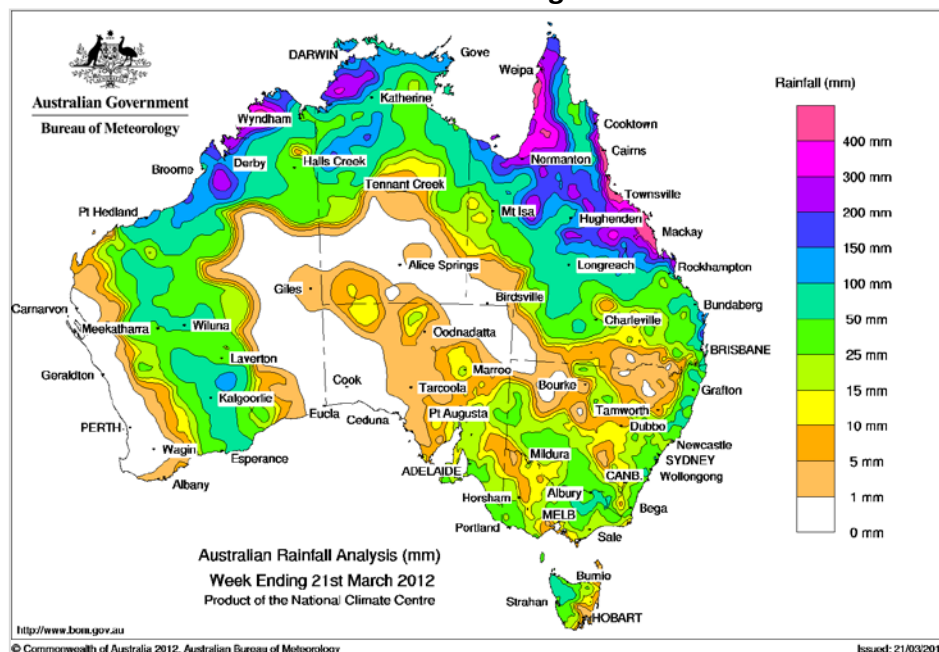
## 1.1. Notable events

- For the week ending 21 March, heavy rainfall was received across northern Australia, with significant falls recorded throughout inland eastern and western Australia. The highest measured total for the week was 904 millimetres at Mt Jukes near Mackay in Queensland.
- Floodwaters in southern New South Wales are causing damage to crops and rural infrastructure as they move downstream. Producers are assessing damage.
- Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements for primary producers are in place for 59 local government areas in New South Wales.
- Moderate to major flood warnings are in place for the Darling River at Bourke and the Murrumbidgee River at Narrandera in New South Wales. Minor to major flood warnings are in place for the Burdekin, Connors, Isaac, Mackenzie and Fitzroy rivers in Queensland.
- Cyclone Lua crossed the Pilbara coast on Saturday last week, causing some localised damage, but provided rainfall for inland cattle stations.
- A tropical low and monsoon trough caused flooding in northern Queensland prompting graziers to move stock to higher ground. Sugar cane plantations around Mackay have reportedly suffered some damage.
- Wetter conditions are favoured over large parts of eastern Australia between April and June 2012. Drier conditions are favoured for parts of southeast South Australia, western and central Victoria and Tasmania (Bureau of Meteorology National Seasonal Rainfall Outlook, 21 March 2012).
- Warmer daytime temperatures are favoured over the tropical north and southern Australia between April and June 2012, while cooler daytime temperatures are favoured for parts of central and eastern Australia. Warmer night time temperatures are more likely over southern Western Australia and north-east Australia (Bureau of Meteorology National Seasonal Temperature Outlook, 21 March 2012).

## 1.2. Rainfall this week

For the week ending 21 March 2012, heavy rainfall was received mostly across northern Australia. For further information, go to [www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml).

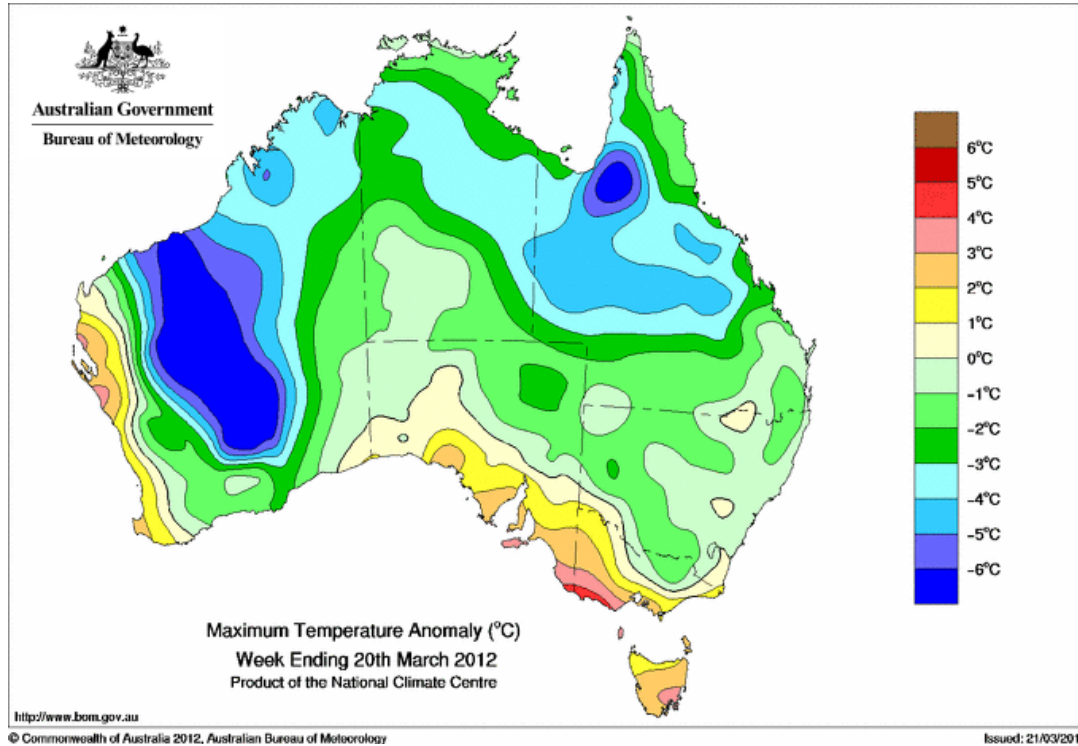
**Rainfall for the week ending 21 March 2012**



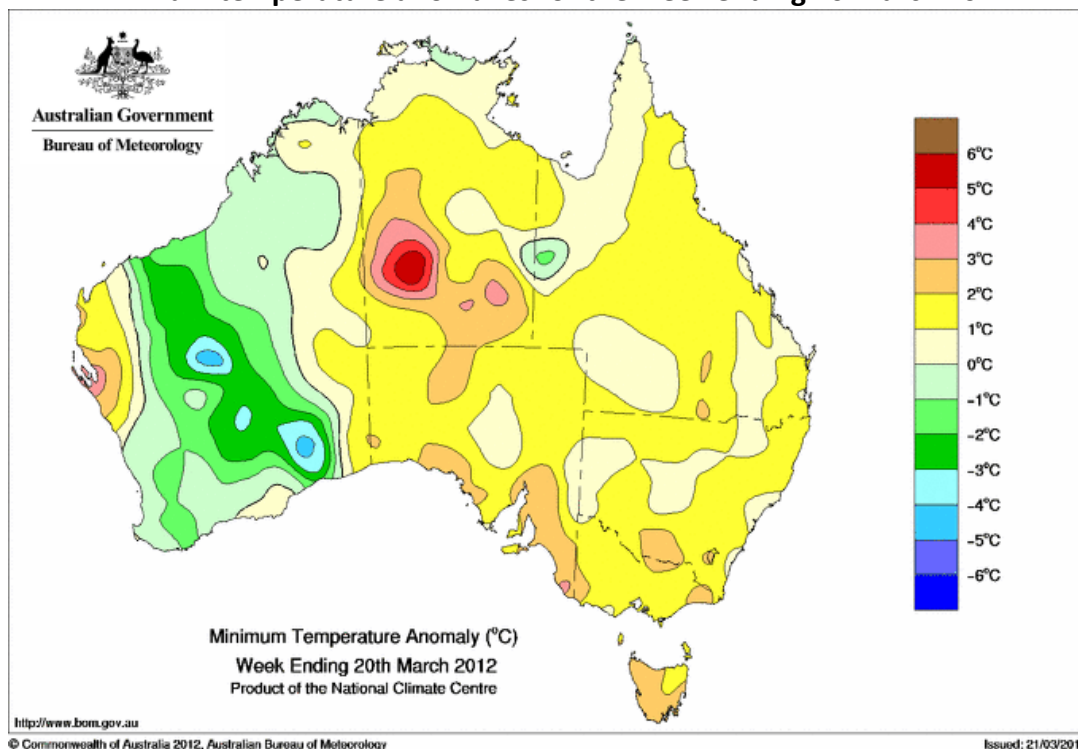
### 1.3. Temperature anomalies this week

Spatial temperature analyses are based on historical weekly temperature data provided by the Bureau of Meteorology. These temperature anomaly maps show the departure of the maximum and minimum from the long-term average. Temperature anomalies are calculated using high resolution gridded datasets from 1911 onwards. For further information on temperature anomalies, go to [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/).

**Maximum temperature anomalies for the week ending 20 March 2012**



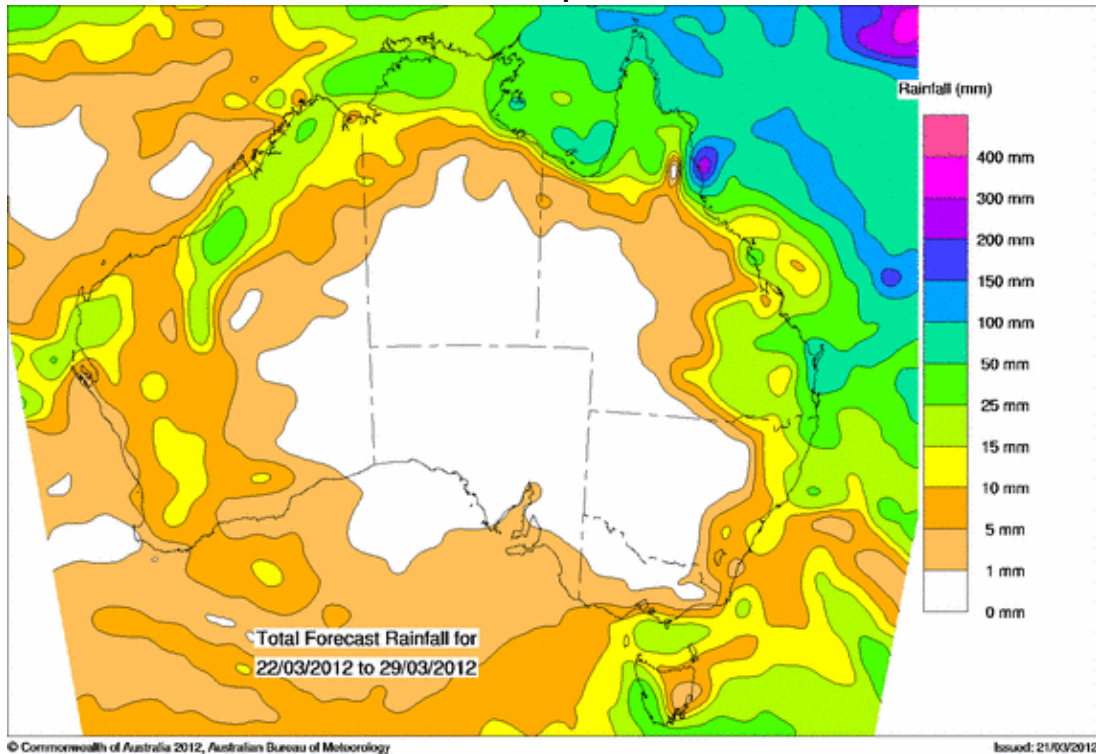
**Minimum temperature anomalies for the week ending 20 March 2012**



## 1.4. Rainfall outlook

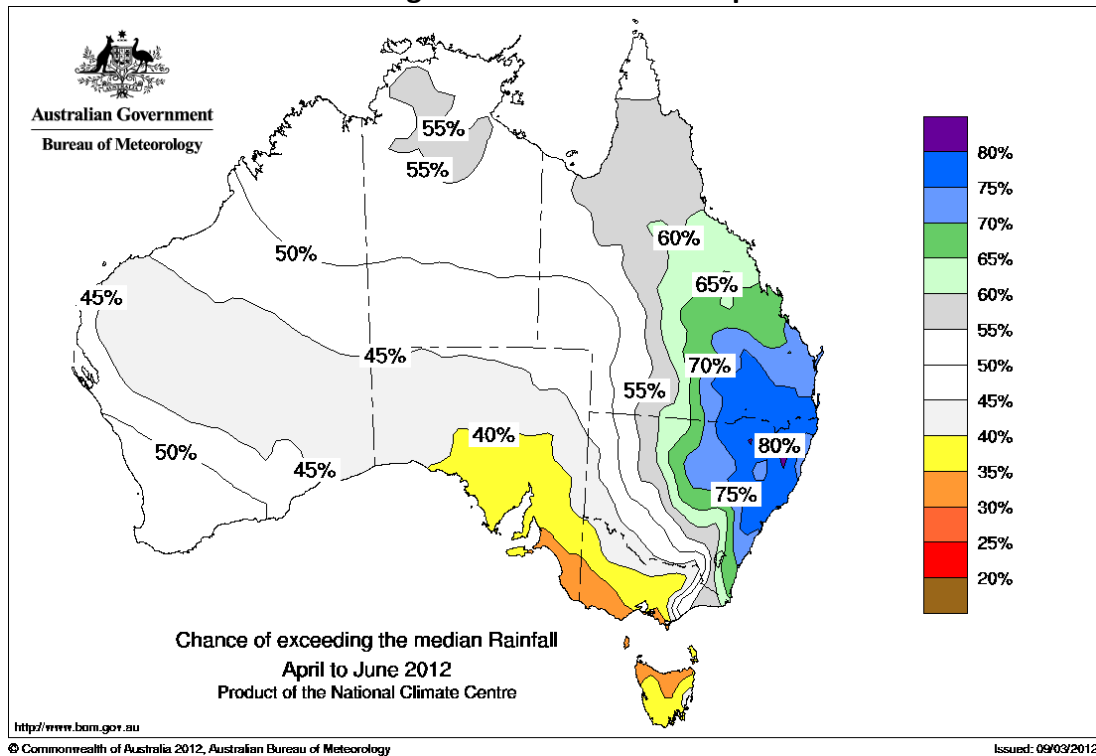
The rainfall forecast below is produced from computer models. As it contains no input from weather forecasters, it is important to also check local forecasts and warnings by the Bureau of Meteorology.

**Total forecast rainfall for the period 22 to 29 March 2012**

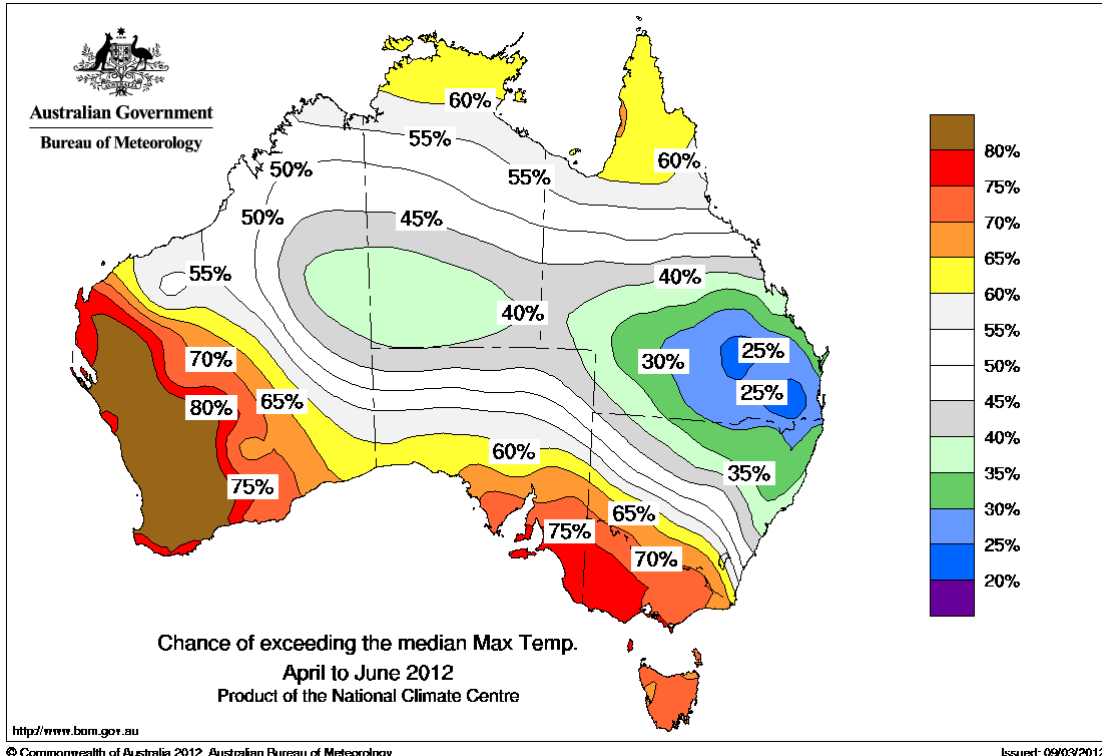


## 1.5. Seasonal outlook

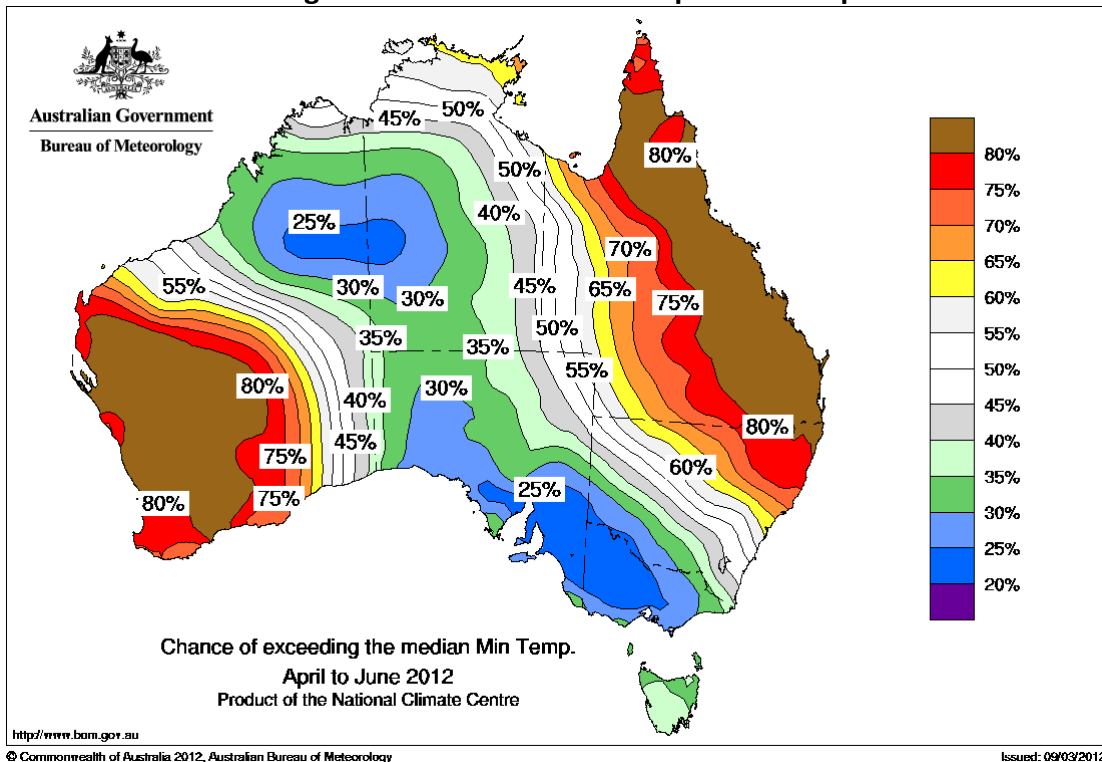
**Chance of exceeding the median rainfall – April to June 2012**



## Chance of exceeding the median maximum temperature – April to June 2012



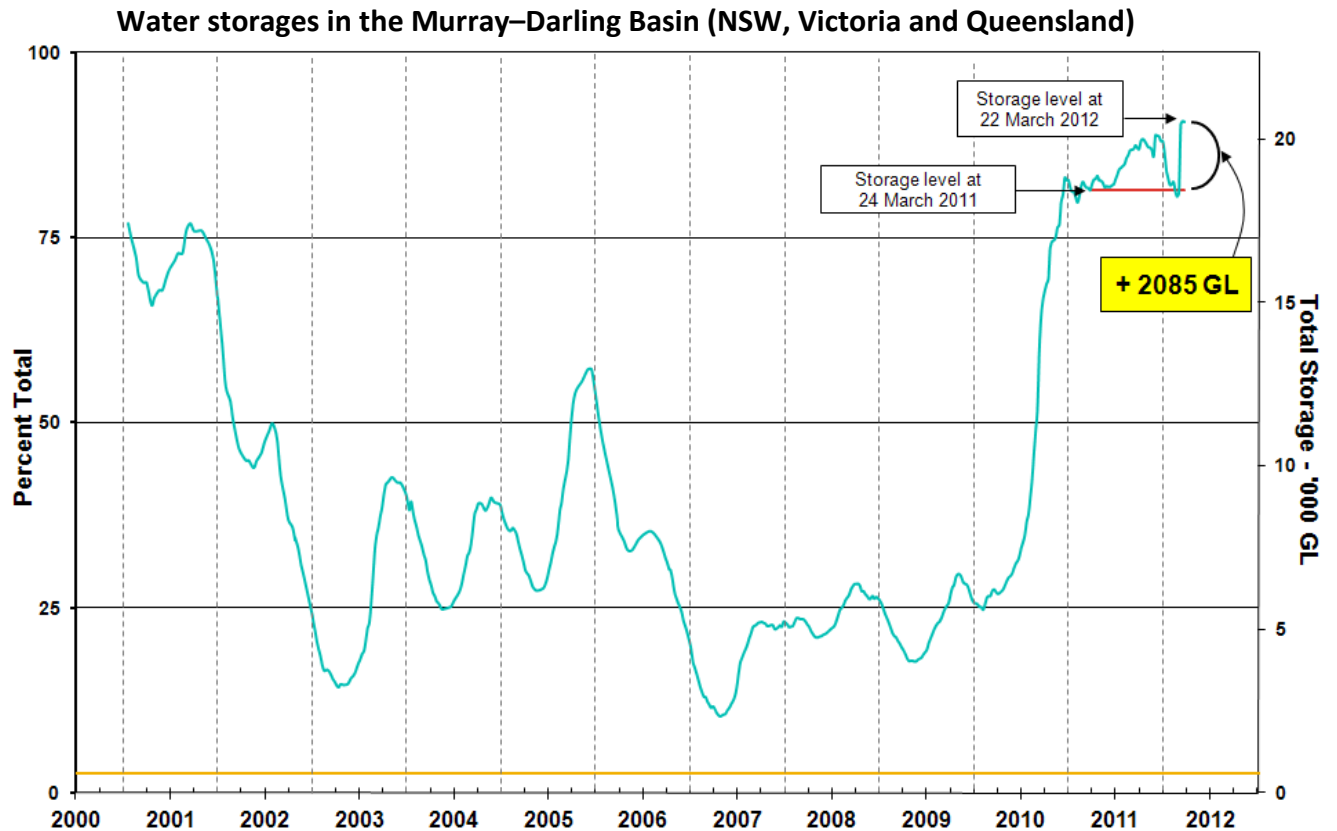
## Chance of exceeding the median minimum temperature – April to June 2012



## 2. Water

### 2.1. Water availability

- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB) decreased this week by 22 gigalitres (GL) and stayed at approximately 91 per cent of total capacity. This is 9 percentage points or 2085 GL more than this time last year.
- General security water allocations in the NSW Bega and Brogo valley increased this week to 70 per cent of entitlement. All other allocations remain unchanged.



Information on irrigation water available in the Murray–Darling Basin from 1 January 2001 to 22 March 2012 is shown above. The top horizontal (red) line indicates the storage level at the similar time last year. The bottom horizontal (orange) line indicates the amount of 'dead' or unusable storage.

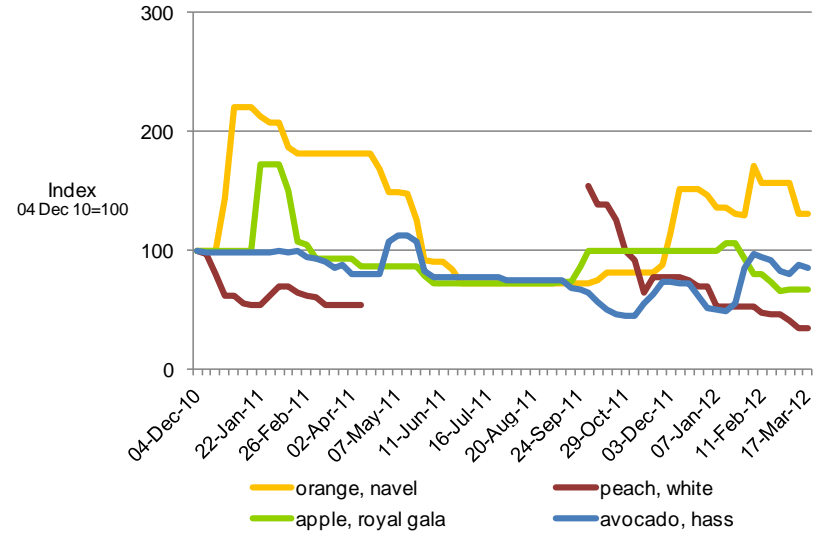
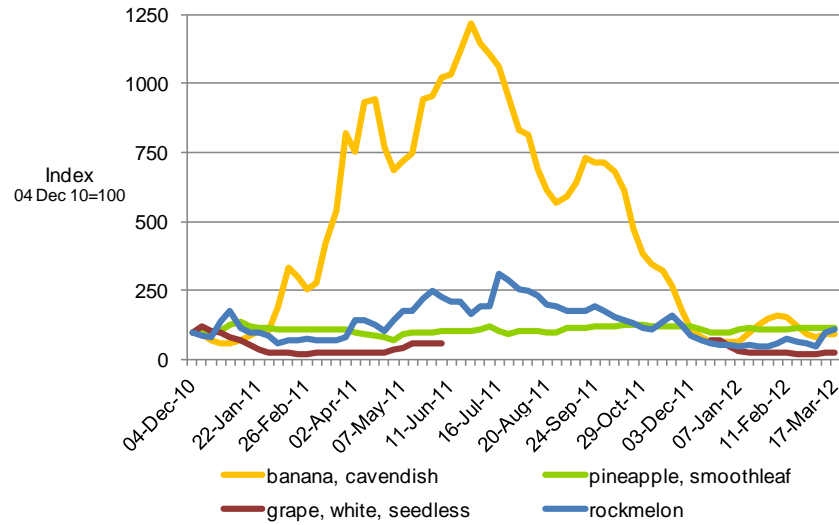
## 3. Commodities

### 3.1. Production and commodities

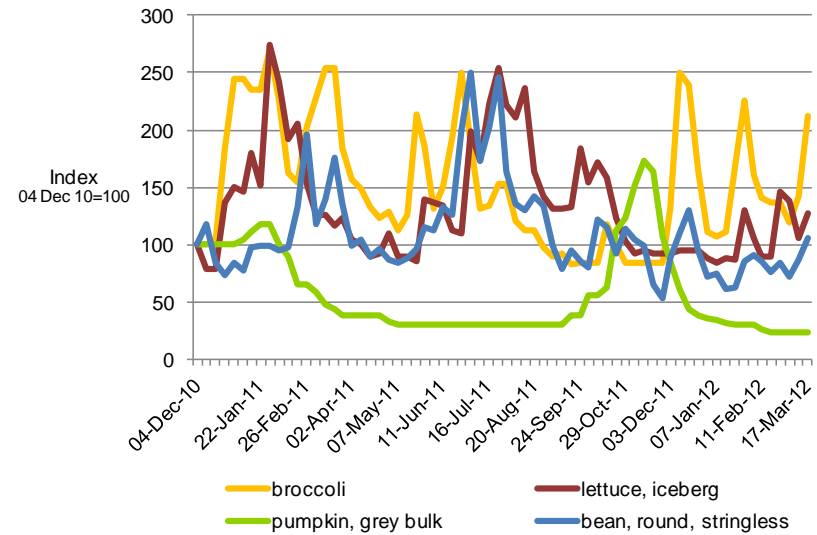
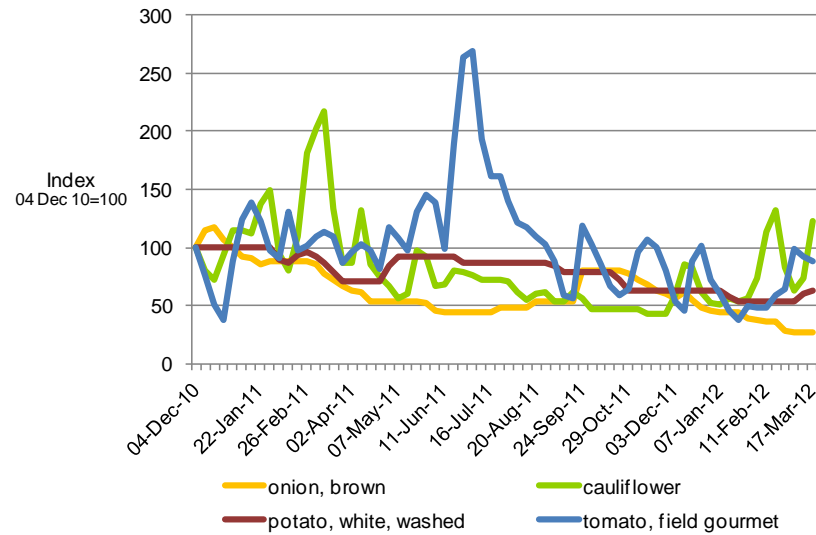
- While fruit wholesale prices were largely unchanged in the week ending 17 March 2012, wholesale prices of a number of vegetable types increased (see Section 3.2).
- The world cotton indicator price (the Cotlook 'A' index) averaged US97.9 cents a pound in the week ending 21 March 2012. This is significantly lower than this time last year when the price was US225.3 cents a pound.
- Indian cotton acreage is expected to fall by 15 per cent in 2012–13 in response to the Indian Government's policy to restrict cotton export permits and the impact on domestic cotton prices. Indian cotton growers are expected to increase planting of oil based commodities in 2012–13, such as groundnut, castor and soybeans.
- The world sugar indicator price (Intercontinental Exchange, nearby futures, no. 11 contract) was around US25.5 cents a pound in the week ending 21 March 2012, US1.5 cents a pound higher than the previous week. The current strength in the sugar market largely reflects continuing dryness in the centre-south region of Brazil.
- The Eastern Market Indicator price for wool increased by almost 2 per cent in the week ending 15 March 2012 to 1239 cents a kilogram clean.
- The world canola indicator price (Rapeseed, Europe, cif Hamburg) averaged US\$635 a tonne in the week ending 20 March 2012, 18 per cent higher when compared to the same time last year.
- The Australian canola indicator price (Portland, Victoria) averaged \$510 a tonne in the week ending 19 March 2012, compared with \$497 a tonne in the previous week.
- The world coarse grains indicator price (US no. 2 yellow corn, free on board Gulf ports) remained at an average of US\$284 a tonne in the week ending 21 March 2012.
- The world wheat indicator price (US hard red winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$297 a tonne in the week ending 20 March 2012, compared with US\$295 a tonne in the previous week.
- The Queensland young cattle price fell 31 cents to 371 cents a kilogram in the week ending 16 March 2012. Young cattle prices in Victoria also fell by 5 cents to 383 cents a kilogram. Prices in New South Wales and South Australia rose by 16 cents and 3 cents to 401 and 365 cents a kilogram, respectively.
- Saleyard lamb prices fell in all states in the week ending 16 March 2012. The largest decline was in New South Wales where the indicator price decreased by 8 per cent to 456 cents a kilogram.

### 3.2. Recent movements in fruit and vegetable prices

Weekly wholesale prices for selected fruit, Melbourne market

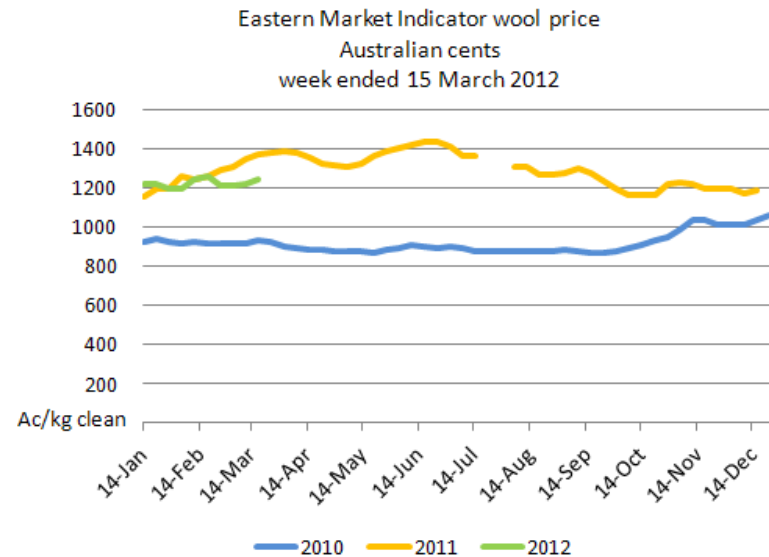
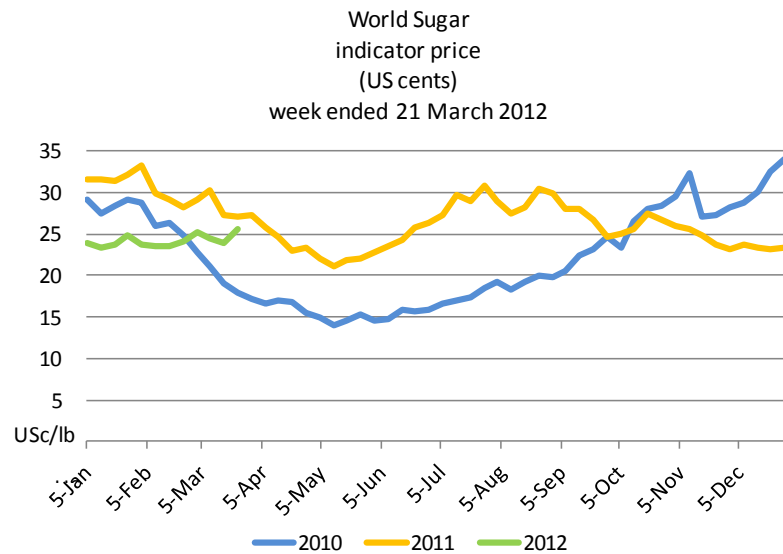
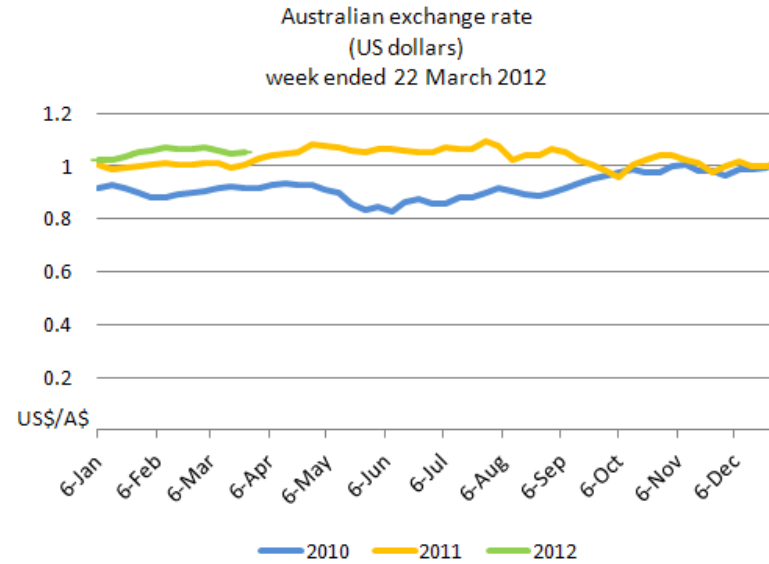
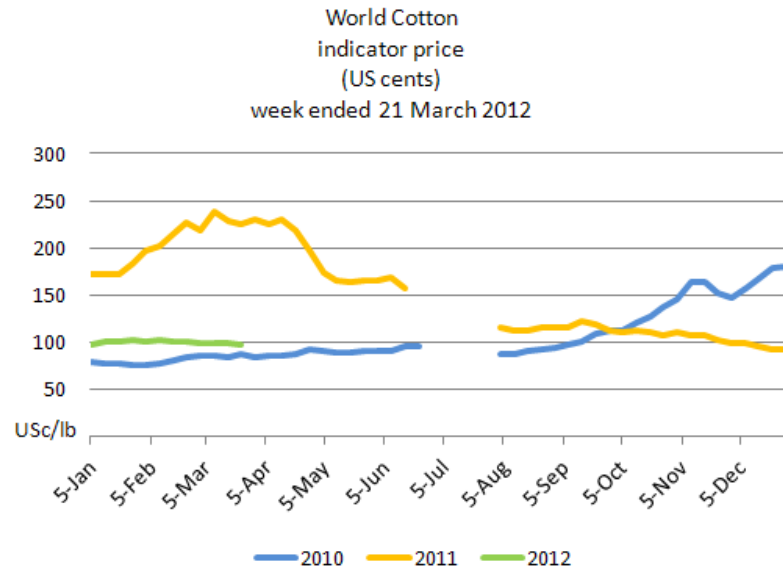


Weekly wholesale prices for selected vegetables, Melbourne market

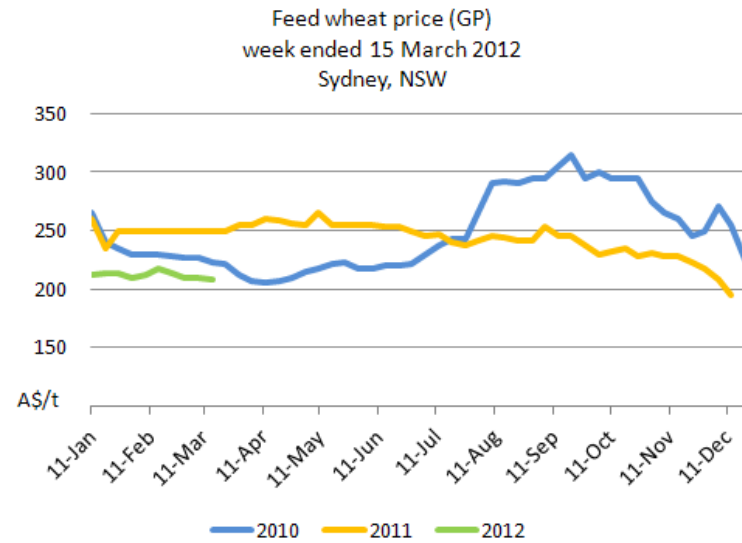
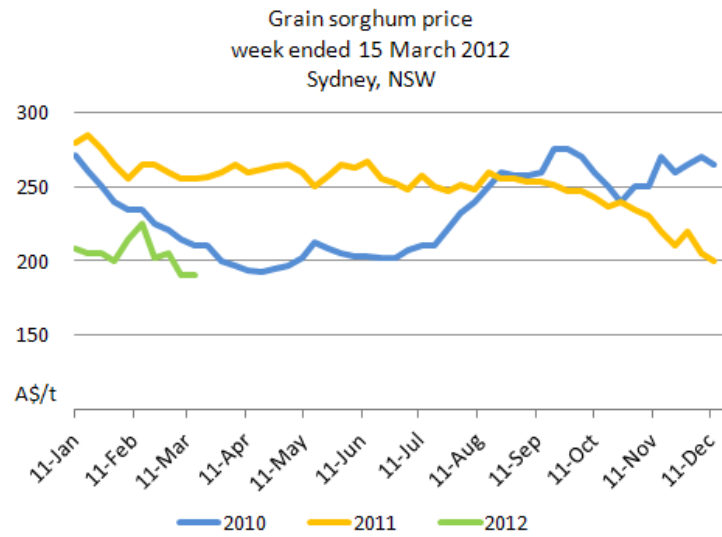
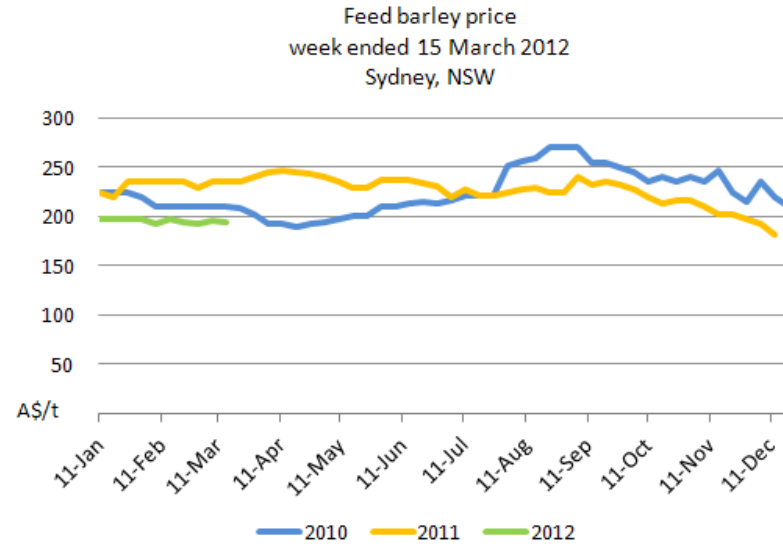
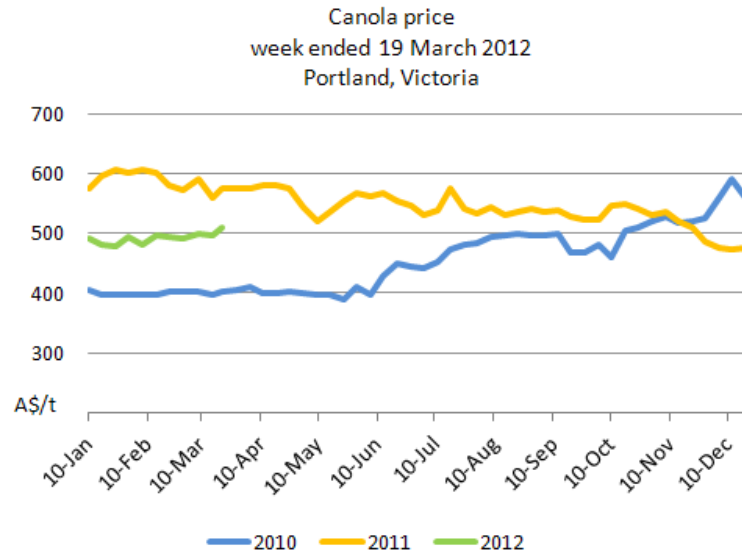




### 3.3. Selected world indicator prices



### 3.4. Crop indicator prices





## 4. Data attribution

### Climate

#### Bureau of Meteorology

- Weekly rainfall totals: [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/rain/index.jsp](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/rain/index.jsp)
- Monthly and last 3-months rainfall percentiles: [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/)
- Temperature anomalies: [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/)
- Rainfall forecast: [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/rainfall/pme.jsp](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/rainfall/pme.jsp)
- Seasonal outlook: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead)
- Drought statement: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/drought.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/drought/drought.shtml)
- ENSO Wrap-Up: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/)
- Soil moisture (BoM, CSIRO and the former Bureau of Rural Sciences): [www.eoc.csiro.au/awap/](http://www.eoc.csiro.au/awap/)

### Water

#### New South Wales

- New South Wales Water Information: <http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au/>
- New South Wales Office of Water, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water: [www.water.nsw.gov.au/Home/default.aspx](http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/Home/default.aspx)
- Available water determinations register: [www.wix.nsw.gov.au/wma/DeterminationSearch.jsp?selectedRegister=Determination](http://www.wix.nsw.gov.au/wma/DeterminationSearch.jsp?selectedRegister=Determination)
- Snowy Hydro: [www.snowyhydro.com.au/lakeLevels.asp?pageID=47&parentID=61&grandParentID=4](http://www.snowyhydro.com.au/lakeLevels.asp?pageID=47&parentID=61&grandParentID=4)

#### Queensland

- Sunwater: [www.sunwater.com.au](http://www.sunwater.com.au)
- seqwater: <http://seqwater.com.au>

#### South Australia

- SA Water: [www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/TheRiverMurray/River+Murray+Levels.htm](http://www.sawater.com.au/SAWater/Environment/TheRiverMurray/River+Murray+Levels.htm)
- South Australian Department of Water: [www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/](http://www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/)

#### Victoria

- Goulburn–Murray Water: [www.g-mwater.com.au](http://www.g-mwater.com.au)

#### Water trading

- Waterexchange: [www.waterexchange.com.au](http://www.waterexchange.com.au)

### Commodities

#### Fruit and vegetables

- Datafresh: [www.datafresh.com.au](http://www.datafresh.com.au)

#### Mutton, lambs, wheat, barley and grain sorghum

- The Land: hardcopy or online at <http://theland.farmonline.com.au/markets.aspx>

#### Cattle, mutton, lambs and pigs

- Meat and Livestock Australia: [www.mla.com.au/Prices-and-markets](http://www.mla.com.au/Prices-and-markets)

#### Canola

- Weekly Times: hardcopy