



Australian Government

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and  
Resource Economics and Sciences

## Weekly Australian Climate, Water and Agricultural Update

25 August 2011

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

### Summary of key issues

- Rainfall received in southern parts of Australia this week will assist crop and pasture growth leading up to the peak growing period in spring.
- The rainfall will potentially benefit crops in northern New South Wales and south-west Western Australia, where rainfall deficiencies currently exist.
- Recent warm and wet conditions have increased the outbreak of some insect pest and fungal diseases with potential impacts on crops.
- The seasonal forecast for the September–November periods indicates wetter than normal conditions over south-west Western Australia and parts of north-east Australia with dryer than normal conditions in southern South Australia (Rainfall and Temperature Outlook, Bureau of Meteorology, 24 August 2011).
- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin increased this week by 143 gigalitres and remained at approximately 87 per cent of total capacity.
- The world wheat indicator price (US hard red winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$339 a tonne for the week ending 23 August 2011 compared with US\$331 a tonne last week.
- The world coarse grains indicator price (US no. 2 yellow corn free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$307 a tonne for the week ending 24 August 2011 compared with US\$309 a tonne in the previous week.
- After dropping below 500 cents per kilogram for the first time this year in the week ending 12 August, the lamb indicator price (weighted average saleyard price, Victoria) increased by around 3 per cent in the week ending 19 August, to 506 cents per kilogram.
- According to Dairy Australia, Australian milk production declined by 1.5 per cent year on year in July 2011 to 638 million litres due to wet conditions across southern Victoria.
- Beans, cauliflowers and brown onions recorded small price increases in the week ending 20 August 2011, while banana prices declined sharply, but most other fruit and vegetable prices were steady or slightly lower.

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# 1. Climate

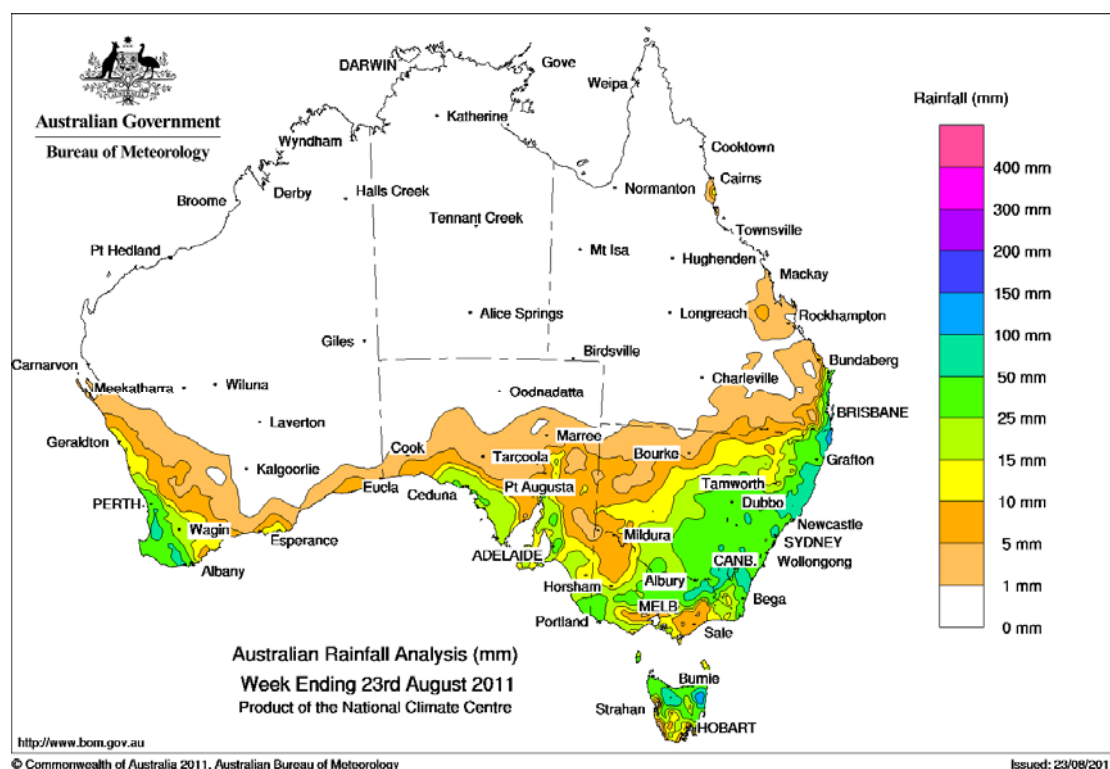
## 1.1. Notable events

- For the week ending 24 August 2011, rainfall was mostly recorded across south-west and south-east Australia. The highest measured total for the week was 166 millimetres at Gray in Tasmania. Rainfall received in southern parts of Australia this week will assist crop and pasture growth leading up to the peak growing period in spring.
- Heavy rain during the week resulted in flooding in northern Tasmania and southwest Western Australia. Fingal on Tasmania's east coast received its highest August rainfall total since at least 1882.
- The majority of the Western Australia's wheat belt has to-date received 80 to 90 per cent of the long term average winter rainfall. This will assist crop growth in the area.
- Recent warm conditions have aided the growth of fruit fly populations, with outbreaks reported in parts of Victoria. Early flowering canola crops in Western Australia have reportedly been damaged by diamondback moths which will potentially affect yields.
- Fungal disease caused by *Ascochyta* has been reported in lentil crops in York Peninsula in South Australia. Forecast warm and wet conditions over the next three months could provide ideal conditions for many fungal diseases to spread with potential impacts on quality and yield of pulse and other crops.
- The seasonal forecast for the September-November periods indicates wetter than normal conditions over south-west Western Australia and parts of north-east Australia with dryer than normal conditions in southern South Australia (Rainfall and Temperature Outlook, Bureau of Meteorology, 24 August 2011).
- Warmer than normal temperatures are forecast for the next three months over most of Australia with more than 70 per cent chance warmer night time temperature in most of the country.
- Current neutral El Niño Southern Oscillation conditions are forecast to continue through spring with a possibility of weaker La Niña reforming in the rest of 2011 (Bureau of Meteorology, 24 August 2011).

## 1.2. Rainfall this week

For the week ending 23 August 2011, rainfall was mostly received across south-east and south-west Australia with much of the continent received little or no rainfall. For further information, go to [www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/weeklyrain.shtml).

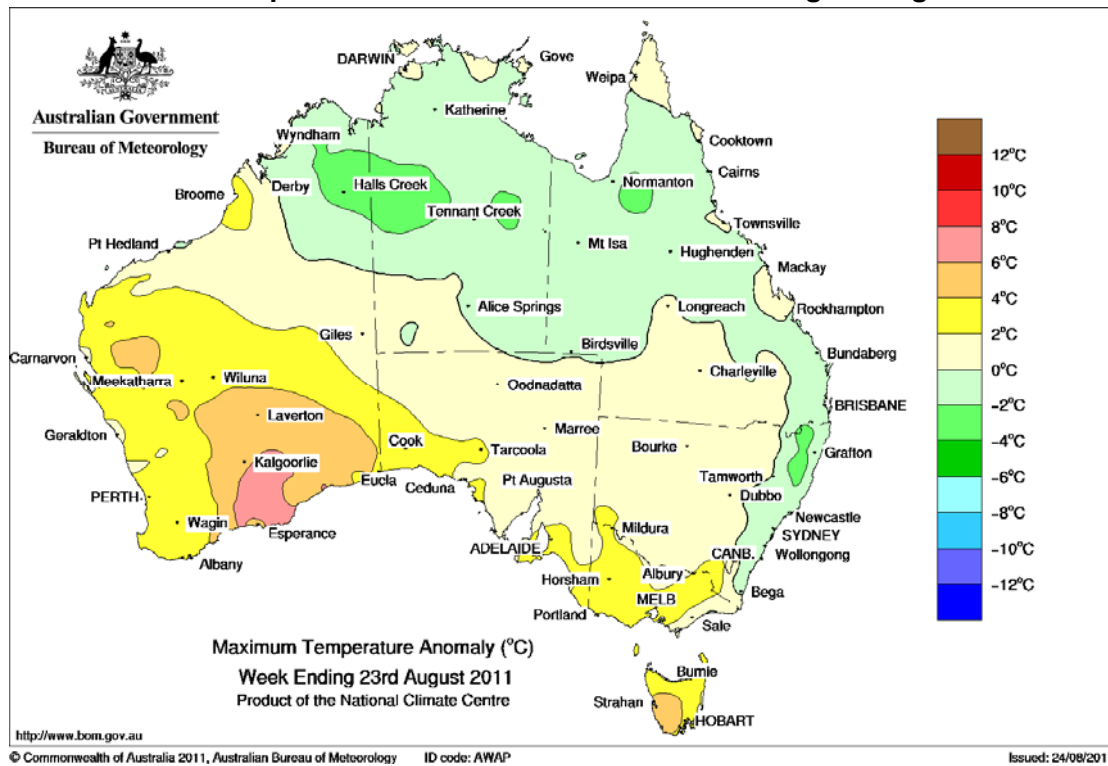
**Rainfall for the week ending 23 August 2011**



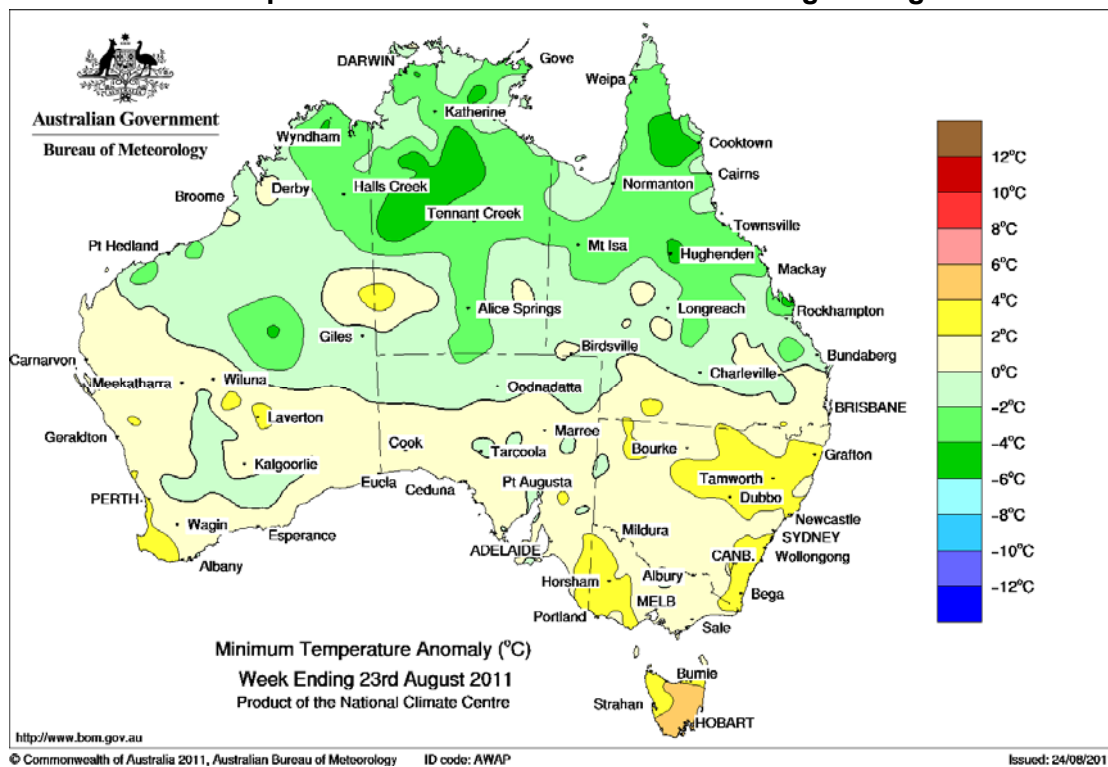
### 1.3. Temperature anomalies this week

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 23 August 2011**



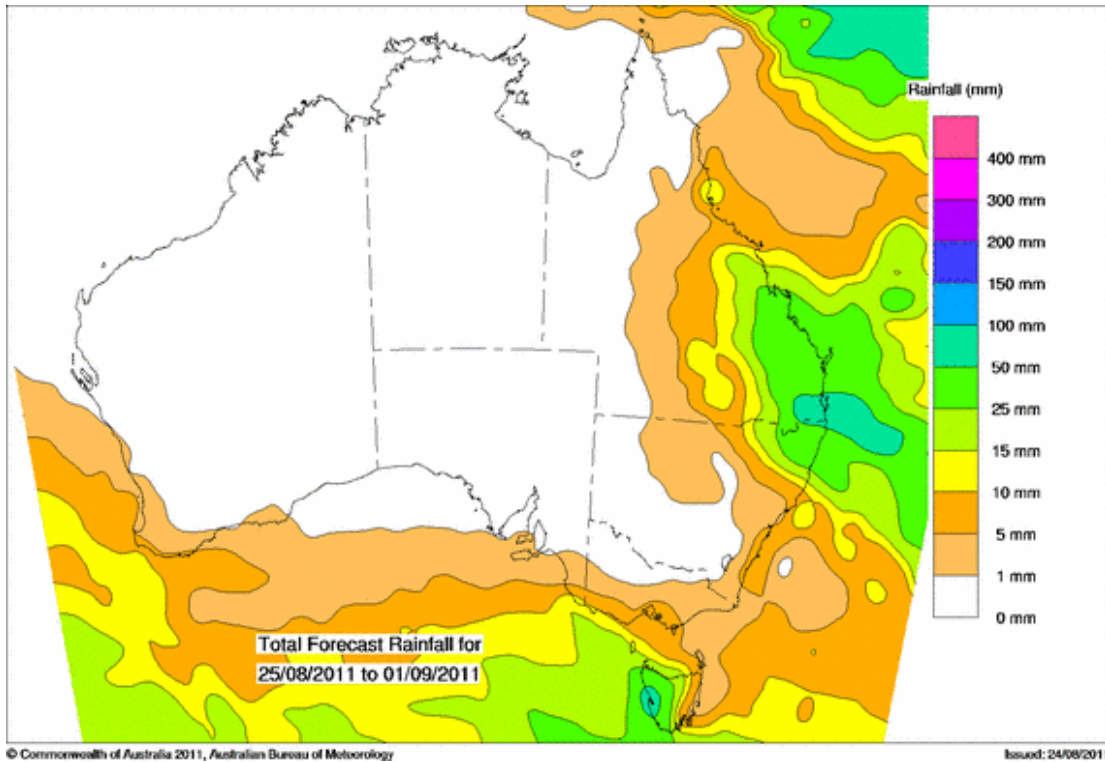
**Minimum temperature anomalies for the week ending 23 August 2011**



## 1.4. Rainfall outlook

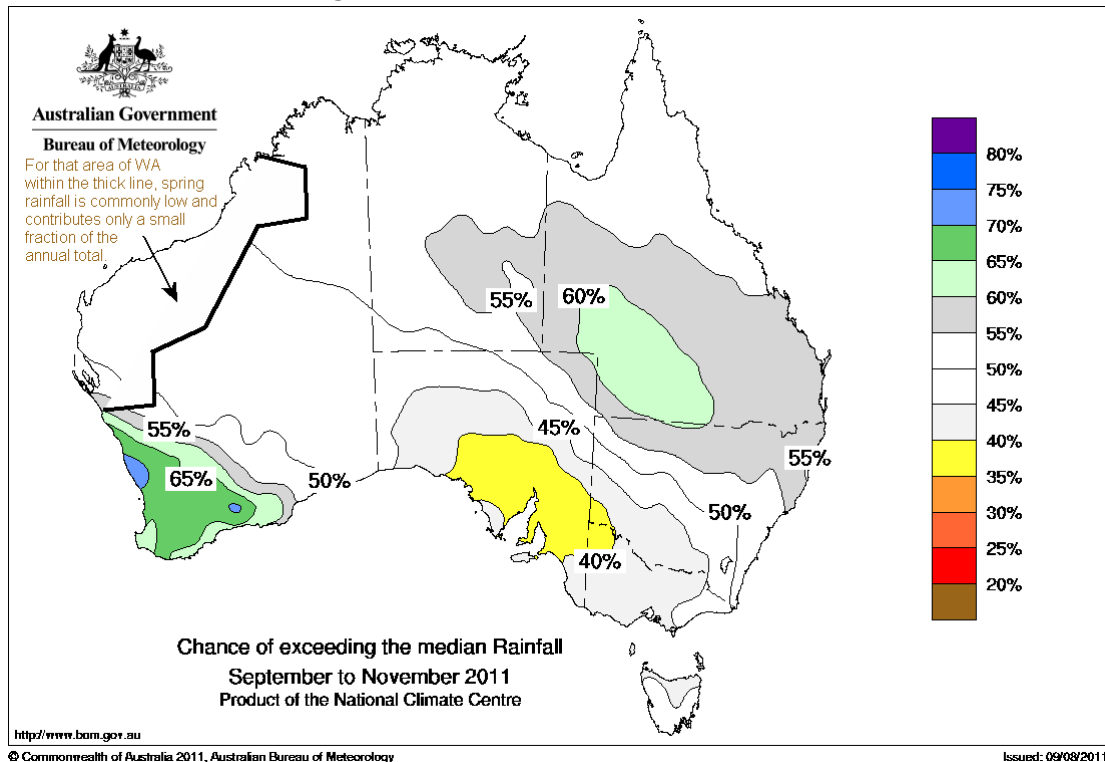
The rainfall forecast below is produced from computer models. As it contains no input from weather forecasters, it is important to also check local forecasts and warnings by the Bureau of Meteorology.

### Total forecast rainfall for the period 25 August–01 September 2011

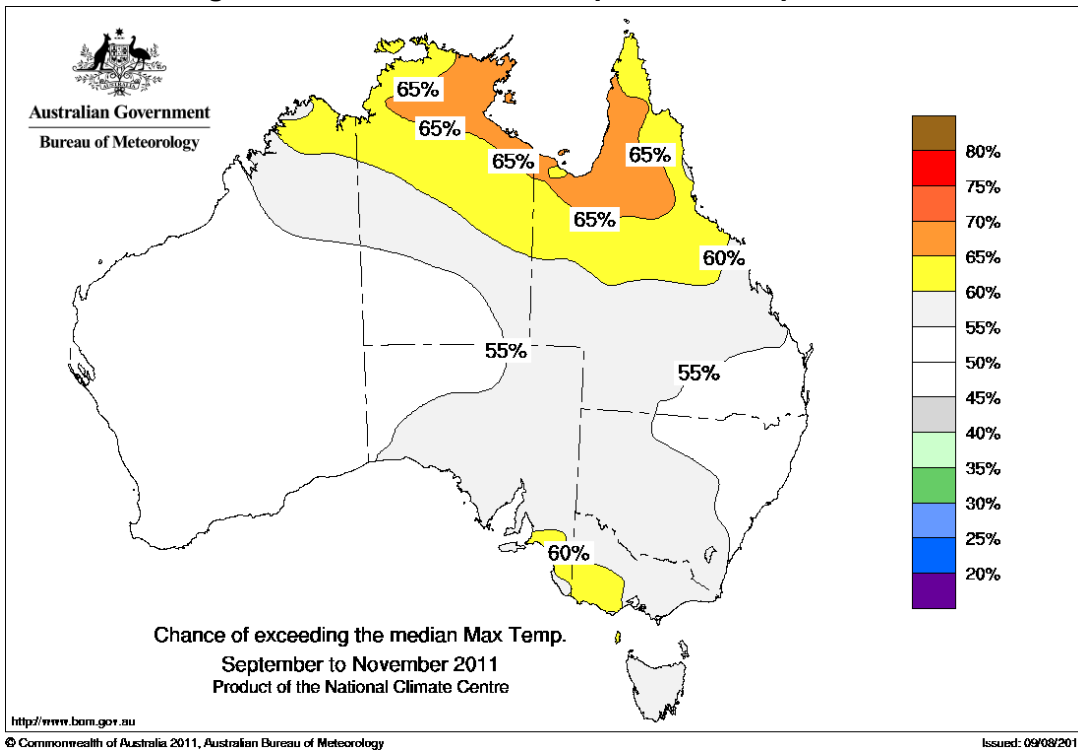


## 1.5. Seasonal outlook

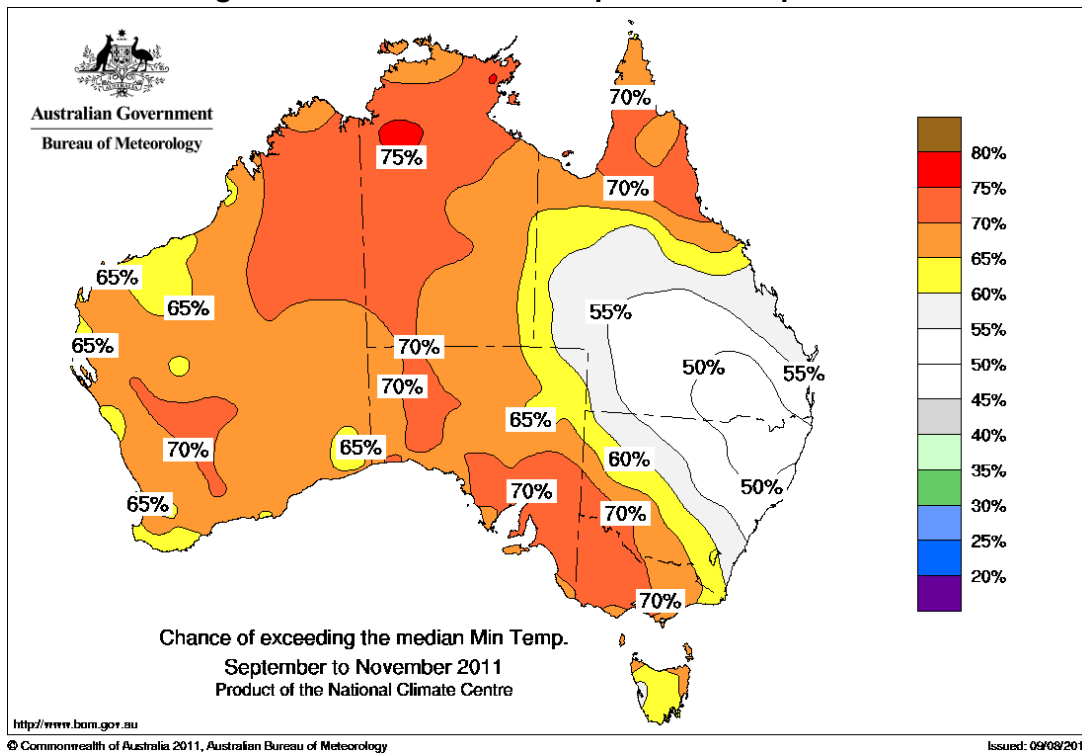
### Chance of exceeding the median rainfall – September to November 2011



### Chance of exceeding the median maximum temperature – September to November 2011



### Chance of exceeding the median minimum temperature – September to November 2011



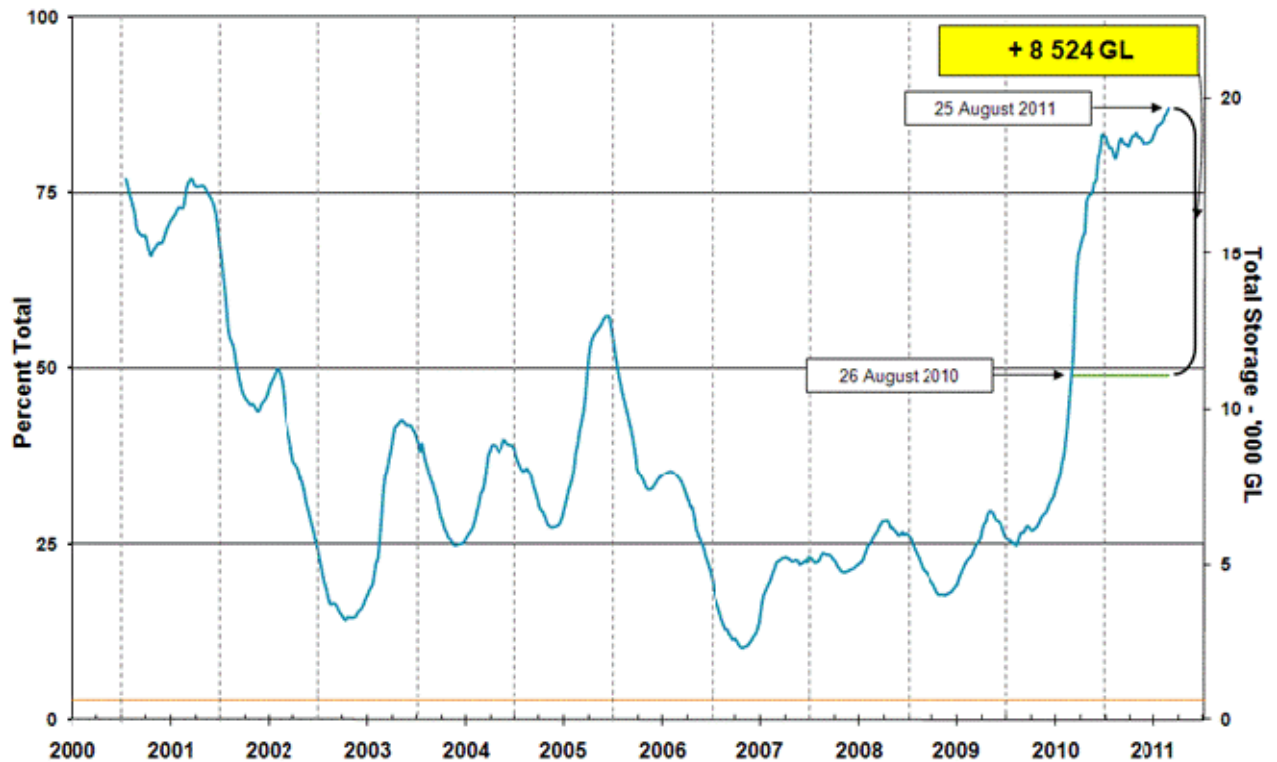
## 2. Water

### 2.1. Water availability and trading

- Water storage levels in the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) increased this week by 143 gigalitres (GL) to approximately 87 per cent of total capacity. This is 38 percentage point or 8 524 GL more than this time last year.

### 2.2. Water storages

Water storages in the Murray–Darling Basin (NSW, Victoria and Queensland)



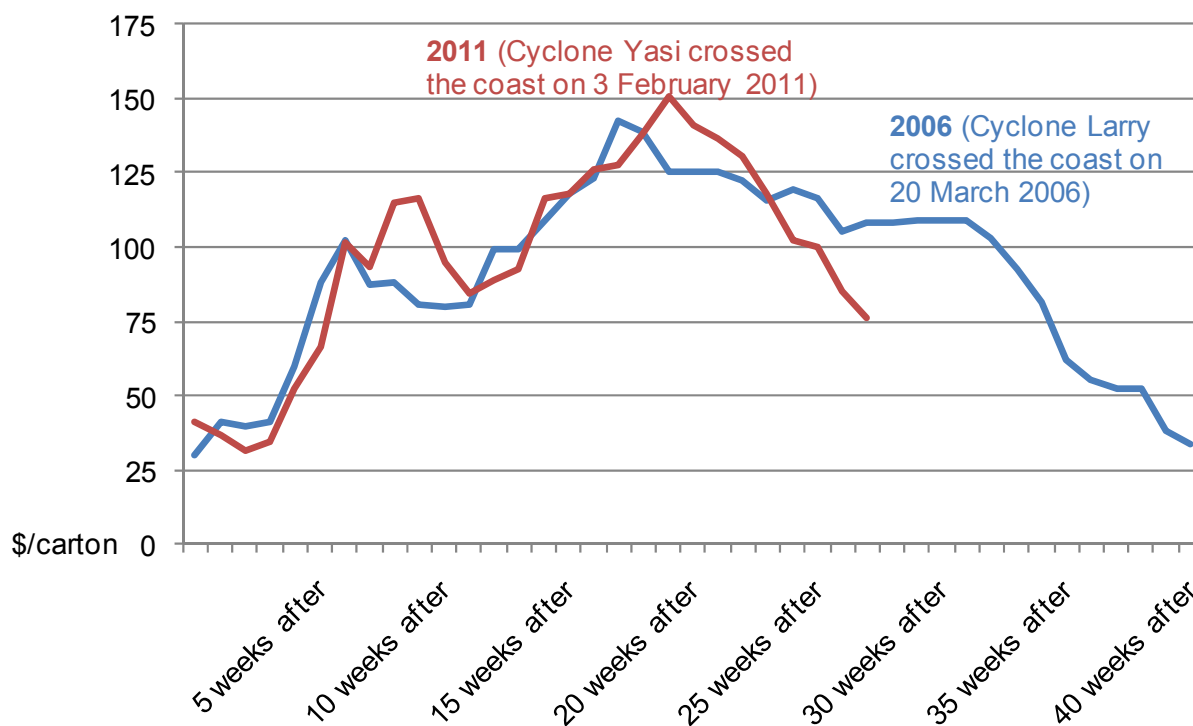
Information on irrigation water available in the Murray–Darling Basin from 1 January 2001 to 25 August 2011 is shown above. The green line indicates the storage level at the same time last year. The orange line indicates the amount of 'dead' or unusable storage.

## 3. Commodities

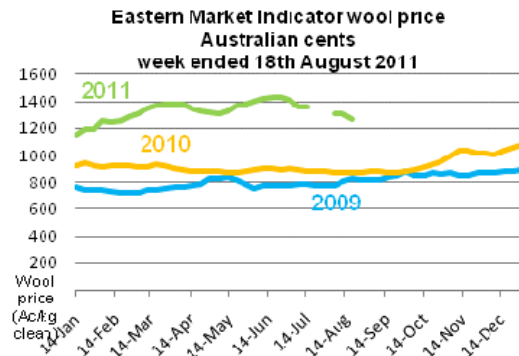
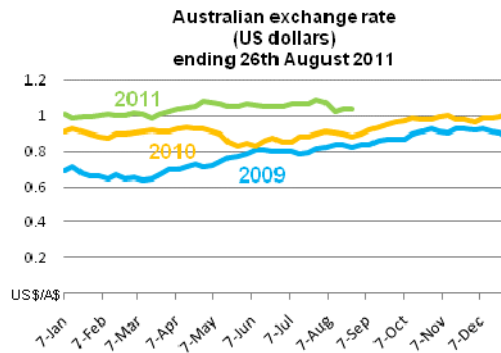
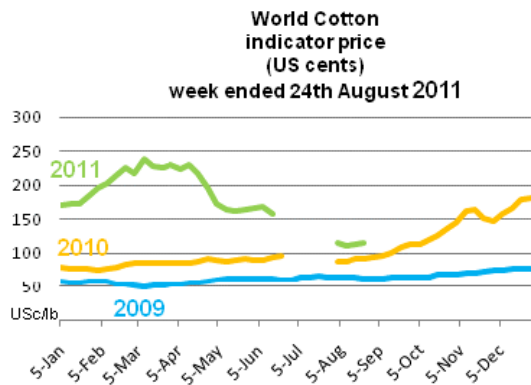
### 3.1. Production and commodities

- The world wheat indicator price (US hard red winter, free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$339 a tonne for the week ending 23 August 2011 compared with US\$331 a tonne last week.
- The world coarse grains indicator price (US no. 2 yellow corn free on board Gulf ports) averaged US\$307 a tonne for the week ending 24 August 2011 compared with US\$309 a tonne in the previous week.
- After dropping below 500 cents per kilogram for the first time this year in the week ending 12 August, the lamb indicator price (weighted average saleyard price, Victoria) increased by around 3 per cent in the week ending 19 August to 506 cents per kilogram.
- According to Dairy Australia, Australian milk production declined by 1.5 per cent year on year in July 2011 to 638 million litres due to wet conditions across southern Victoria.
- Fruit prices were largely steady in the week ending 20 August 2011 and any price declines were small with the exception of bananas. Banana wholesale prices appear to be returning to more normal levels in the aftermath of Cyclone Yasi faster than they did in 2006 after Cyclone Larry (figure A).
- Beans, cauliflowers and brown onions recorded small price increases, but prices of most vegetables were lower in the week ending 20 August 2011.

**Figure A: Banana wholesale prices, Melbourne wholesale market, 2011 compared to 2006**

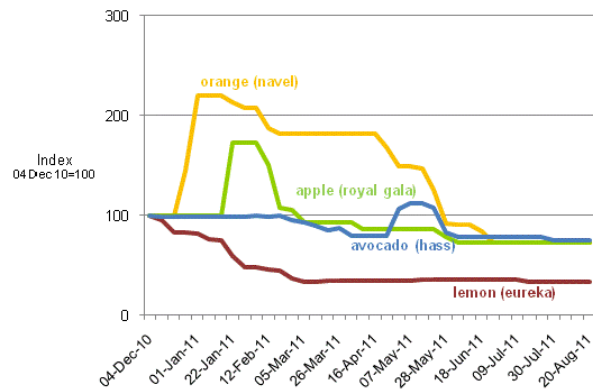
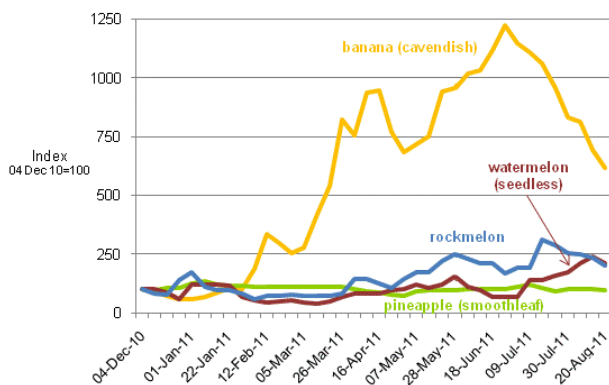


### 3.2. Selected world indicator prices

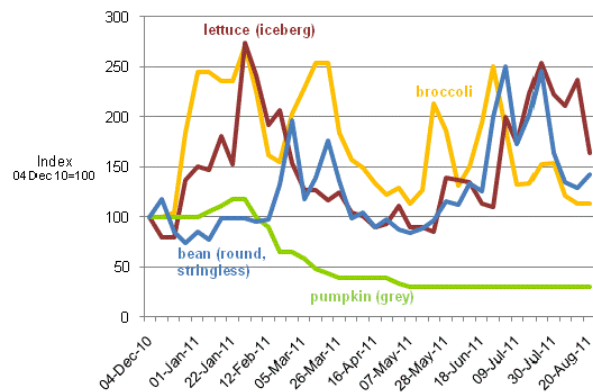
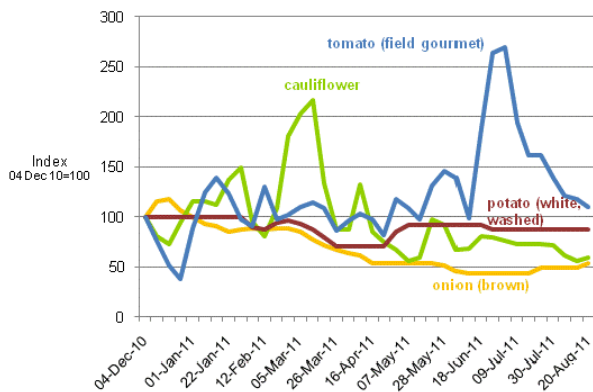


### 3.3. Recent movements in fruit and vegetable prices

#### Weekly wholesale prices for selected fruit, Melbourne market

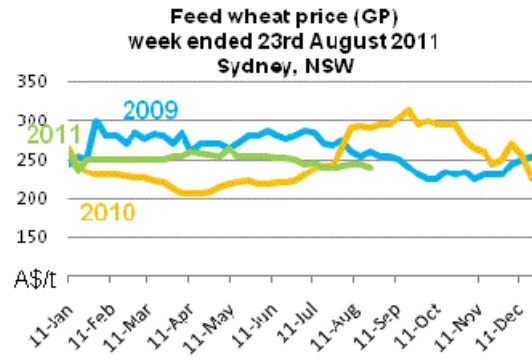
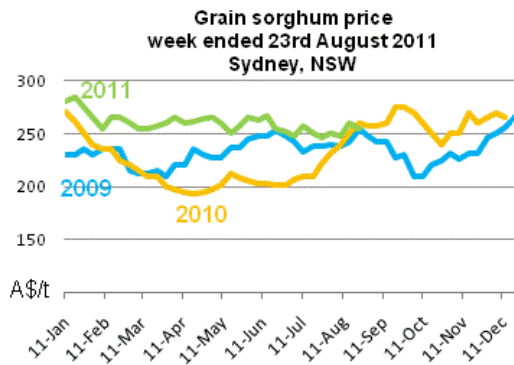
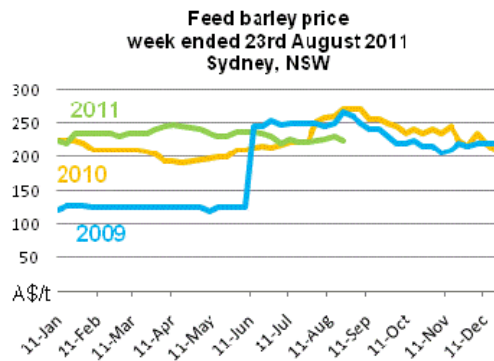
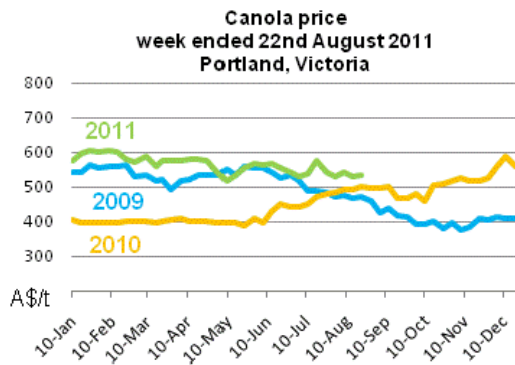


#### Weekly wholesale prices for selected vegetables, Melbourne market

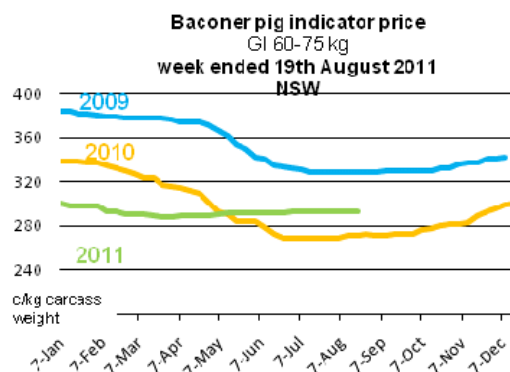
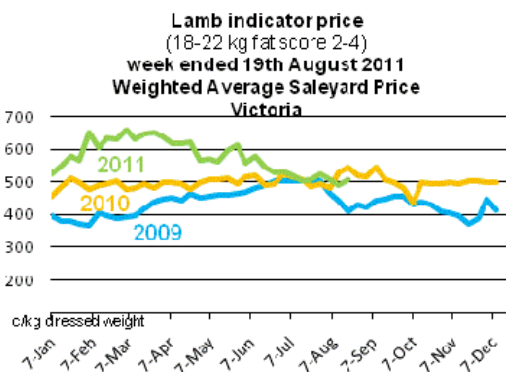
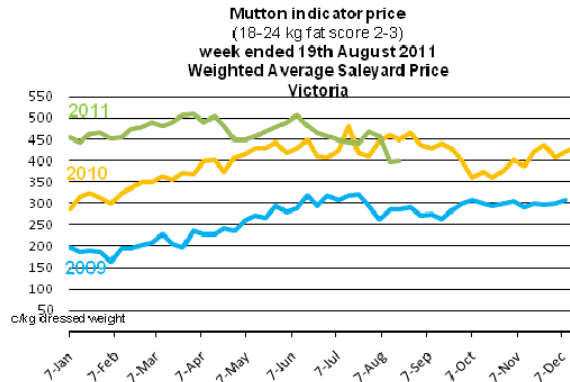
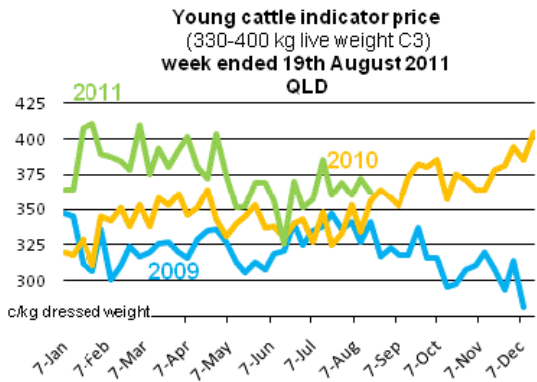




### 3.4. Crop indicator prices



### 3.5. Livestock 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: <http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/>
- Temperature anomalies: <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

#### Murray–Darling Basin

- Murray–Darling Basin Authority: [www.mdba.gov.au/water/waterinstorage](http://www.mdba.gov.au/water/waterinstorage)

#### 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