

# Tasmanian Seasonal Conditions Insights Commentary

For **OCTOBER 2025**

## KEY POINTS

October 2025 brought varied rainfall across Tasmania, with western regions such as Queenstown and Strathgordon receiving over 300 mm, while eastern and southeastern areas, including Hobart and Launceston, recorded less than 100 mm. Most of the state experienced average rainfall, with some pockets in the west slightly above average. Despite short-term improvements in surface soil moisture and runoff, deep soil moisture remained very low across much of the state, indicating persistent long-term dryness. Runoff was exceptionally high in the west and south, reflecting strong catchment responses, while eastern regions remained dry.

The Bureau of Meteorology's 3 month long-range forecast for November to January suggests average rain and above-average temperature conditions though most of Tasmania, with below average rain in southwestern Tasmania. Forecast above-average temperatures for the next 3 months and increased evapotranspiration from temperatures and wind may offset rainfall gains, impacting water availability and farm planning.

Agricultural conditions in October 2025 were mixed. Pasture growth remained below target early in the month statewide, prompting continued supplementary feeding and the start of irrigation in the Midlands district. By mid-month, silage cutting commenced in parts of the north which is later than normal and hay prices fell due to improved feed availability, though on-farm stocks remain low. High winds and variable rainfall affected crop management and establishment, with some areas experiencing waterlogging and others moisture deficits. Fertiliser prices fluctuated, with urea prices dropping and MAP (Mono Ammonium Phosphate) and DAP (Di-Ammonium Phosphate) prices rising due to export restrictions.

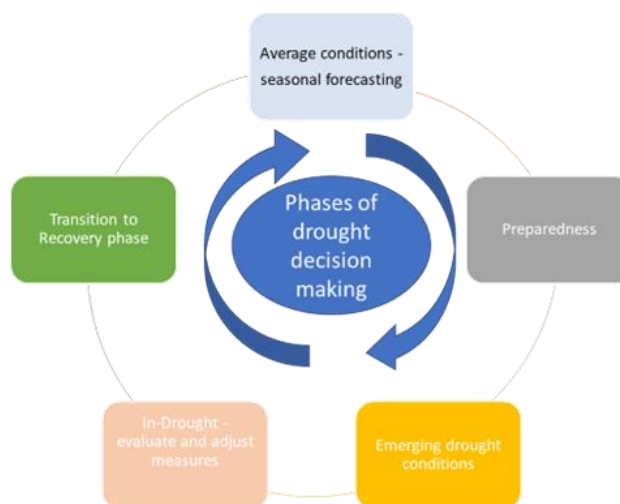
Water access for October varied from last year, with an increased amount of flood and opportunistic takes resulting from good rainfall received. This reflects the impact of

average rainfall combined with high runoff, which increased river flows during October 2025, compared to the below-average rainfall experienced in October 2024.

Social-economic indicators show that sentiment improved with the rainfall, though caution remains in the southeast and demand for support services remains steady. Regional updates show positive conditions on King Island, Flinders Island and northern Tasmania, while the southeast continues to manage drier conditions through destocking and supplementary feeding. No inter-island freight disruptions were reported.

### Drought Cycle Status

Under the Monitoring Seasonal Conditions and Drought Framework, when all indicators (meteorological, hydrological, agronomic and socio-economic) are combined, it indicates an overall improvement, with the Derwent Valley and Central Highlands shifting to 'average seasonal conditions' status in October. For the South, there remains a continuing watching brief as less rainfall has been received in October, however good rainfall has been received in the first week of November, with further forecast rainfall in the second week.



Drought Phases	Districts
<b><i>Average Seasonal Conditions</i></b>	North East, East Coast, Flinders Island, King Island, Circular Head, West Coast, Derwent Valley, Central Highlands,
<b><i>Preparedness</i></b>	South East, Tasman Peninsula
<b><i>Emerging Drought Conditions</i></b>	Nil
<b><i>In Drought</i></b>	Nil
<b><i>Transition to Recover</i></b>	Nil

# Primary Indicator - Rainfall

## ***Climate Overview***

In October 2025, western Tasmania recorded the highest rainfall, while eastern and southeastern regions remained much drier. Despite short-term improvements in surface soil moisture and runoff, deep soil moisture across most of Tasmania remained very low, reflecting long-term deficits from a generally dry year, and the Bureau of Meteorology's long-range forecast suggests warmer conditions with variable rainfall, raising concerns for water availability and fire risk in the coming months.

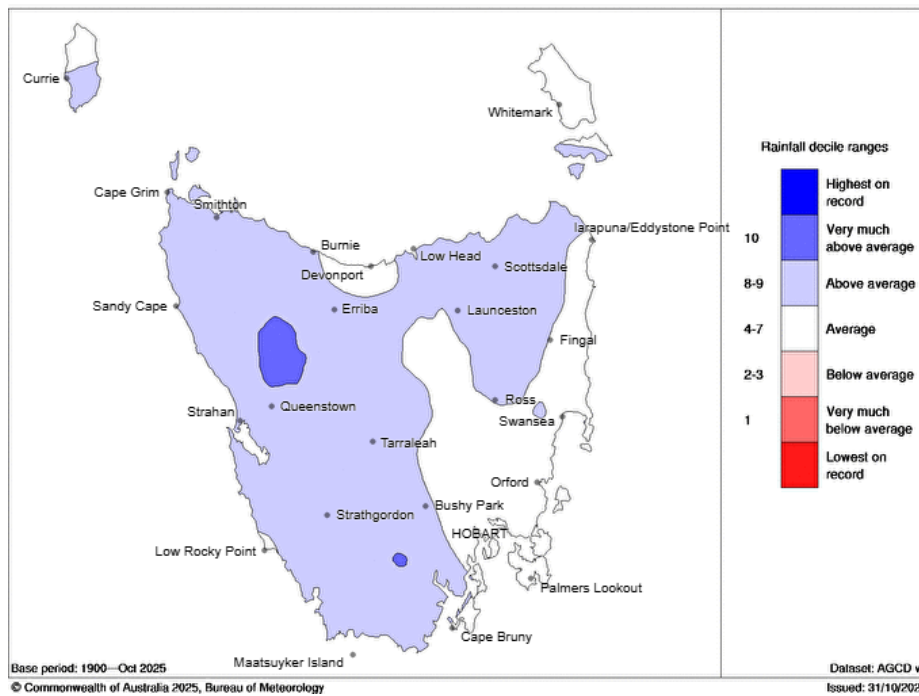
## ***Precipitation***

Western Tasmania recorded the highest rainfall in October 2025, with totals exceeding 300 mm around Queenstown and Strathgordon, while eastern and southeastern regions, including Hobart and Launceston, were much drier with less than 100 mm. Most of the state experienced average rainfall conditions, with large areas in the west and central regions falling within the average decile range (4–7). A few pockets in the west near Queenstown were above average (decile 8–9). There were no areas with extreme rainfall anomalies, indicating a generally typical month overall.

The Bureau of Meteorology's long-range forecast for November to January indicates average rainfall and warmer temperature conditions across most of Tasmania, with drier-than-average conditions likely in the southwest. Soil moisture in western Tasmania remains above average following recent rainfall, although some southern areas are still relatively dry.

Daytime and overnight temperatures are forecast to be above average, with an increased chance of unusually warm nights. Climate drivers include a neutral El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and a negative Indian Ocean Dipole, which typically supports increased spring rainfall in southern and eastern Australia. The forecast also highlights an elevated risk of fire in south-eastern Australia as the warmer months approach. Despite recent short-term improvements in soil moisture and runoff, long-term dryness remains a concern, particularly in the Southern Midlands and Central Highlands, where further rainfall is needed to support recovery. Warmer-than-average temperatures may also increase evapotranspiration, potentially offsetting rainfall gains.

Tasmanian rainfall deciles October 2025  
 Australian Gridded Climate Data



**FIGURE 1: TASMANIAN RAINFALL DECILES FOR OCTOBER 2025**

Over the 12-month period from November 2024 to October 2025, most of Tasmania experienced below average rainfall, with large areas in the south, east, and parts of the west falling in the 2–3 decile range. Several regions, including parts of the southeast and southwest coasts, recorded very much below average rainfall (decile 1). There were no areas with above average rainfall, indicating a generally dry year across the state.

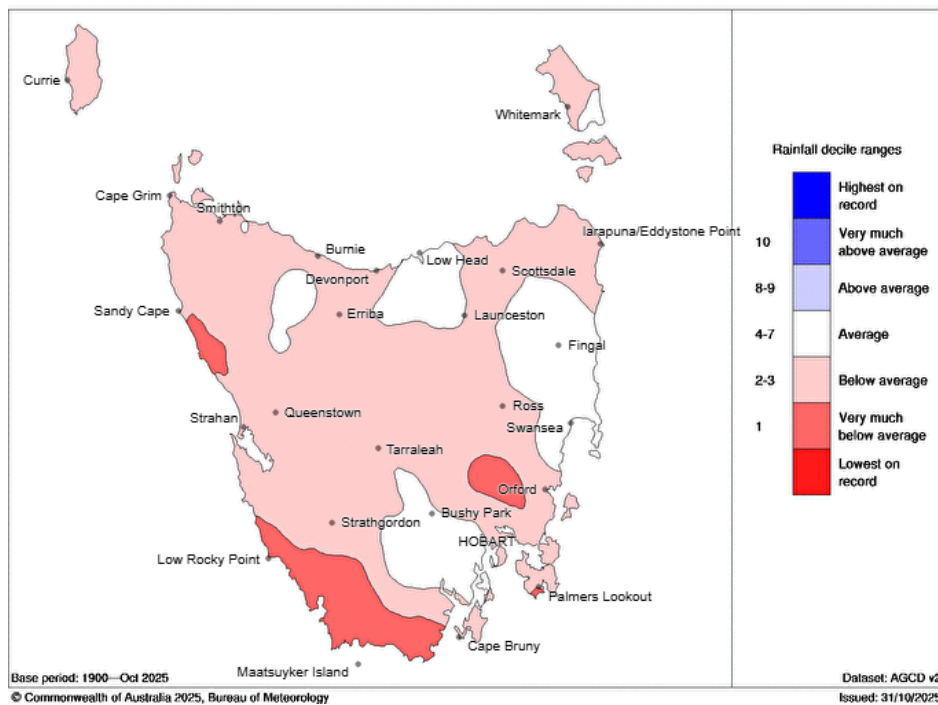


FIGURE 2: RAINFALL DECILES FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO END OCTOBER 2025 FROM BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

**Root Zone Soil Moisture:**

Surface-level soil moisture was generally near to above average, ranking at the 61st percentile. Western and southern regions showed the highest moisture levels, while parts of the east were slightly below average.

**Runoff:**

Runoff was exceptionally high, ranking at the 90th percentile, with the greatest concentrations in the west and south. This indicates that rainfall exceeded infiltration capacity in these areas, leading to strong catchment responses and increased river flows, while eastern regions had average to dry conditions.

**Deep Layer Soil Moisture:**

Despite improved surface conditions, deep soil moisture remained very much below average across most of Tasmania, particularly in the west, southwest, and central highlands. Long-term moisture deficits persist in deeper layers due to extended dry periods over the past year, limiting water availability for deep-rooted vegetation.

**Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration (SPEI):**

The SPEI Index shows that most of Tasmania was in normal condition, but central and northern areas were moderately dry, and the southern region was very dry.

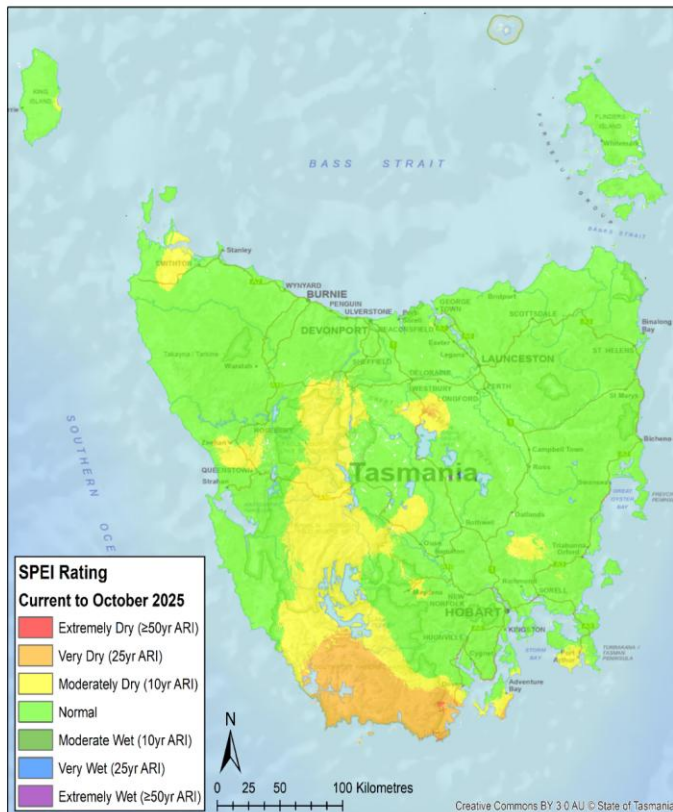
**Five Monthly Indicator:**

The five-month rainfall trend has remained positive across most areas of Tasmania, with a positive improvement seen from last month in the Southern Midlands, East Coast and Tasman Peninsula. Continual rainfall is still needed to see these areas maintain a positive trend.

**Overall Interpretation:**

The combination of high runoff and low deep soil moisture highlights a short-term recovery at the surface but ongoing challenges for long-term water storage. Western Tasmania benefited most from recent rainfall, while eastern and southern areas continue to experience drier conditions both at the surface and at depth, consistent with SPEI indicators of persistent dryness.

For further information please refer to the Australian Water Outlook (<https://awo.bom.gov.au/>).



**FIGURE 3: REGIONAL 12-MONTH STANDARDISED PRECIPITATION-EVAPOTRANSPIRATION INDEX (SPEI) TO END OCTOBER 2025.**

# Secondary Indicators

## Hydrological Monitoring

**Key Message:** Water access for October varied from last year, with an increased amount of flood and opportunistic takes resulting from good rainfall received. Tasmanian Irrigation (TI) reports improvements in dam storages and all irrigation schemes opening with 100 per cent allocation for the 2025-26 season.

## NRE Tas Water Operations

During the reporting period, the NRE Tas Water Compliance Team conducted 42 assessments, resulting in:

- 5 restrictions,
- 12 flood take notices
- 10 opportunistic take notices
- 12 easements
- no low flow warnings due to reduced river flows.

Assessment and notice figures have changed compared to October last year. While restriction notices were slightly fewer, there was a marked increase in flood and opportunistic take notices. This reflects the effect of average rainfall combined with high runoff, which boosted river flows in October 2025, in contrast to the below-average rainfall of October 2024.

Flood take notices were issued for the Liffey, Macquarie, Meander, and Nile Rivers, as well as for Western Creek and Quamby Brook, providing Surety 8 licence holders the opportunity to take water. Opportunistic take notices were issued for the Mersey, North Esk, Ringarooma, and St Patricks Rivers, allowing water users to take volumes in excess of their normal entitlements.

For further information please refer to the NRE Tasmania Water Information Web Portal (<https://portal.wrt.tas.gov.au/Data>).

## Tasmanian Irrigation

All TI irrigation schemes are now open and operating for the season. Every entitlement holder across all schemes has received a 100% allocation to their annual entitlement, a strong start that reflects recent favourable seasonal conditions.

In particular, the Southern Highlands scheme has benefited from rainfall throughout October and November. This enabled water harvesting and allowed the scheme to reach full allocation, ensuring growers have the resources they need for a productive season.

For further information please refer to the Tasmanian Irrigation website (<https://tasmanianirrigation.com.au/>).

## Streamflow

The Bureau of Meteorology's October–December 2025 outlook indicates generally favourable streamflow conditions across Tasmania, with high flows expected in many northern, western, and south-western catchments. Eastern Tasmania may experience low flows due to ongoing dry conditions.

September observations showed a mix flows across monitored sites. High flows were observed at 112 sites, particularly in the north, south-west, and west and some parts of the east. Near-median flows occurred at 66 sites, while low flows were recorded at 75 sites, especially in eastern catchments, reflecting local variations in rainfall.

*For further information refer to BoM's Seasonal Streamflow Forecasts (<https://www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf/>).*

## Economic Indicators

**Key Message:** *October provided Tasmanian producers with a stable economic environment.*

Red meat exports have remained strong, while oil prices, food retail spending, and the exchange rate have been relatively stable, translating to stability in primary produce markets. Dairy export prices are expected to moderate in the short term due to increasing supply from the United States and Europe, as well as New Zealand approaching its peak production period. Inflation has picked up, with the September quarter rate at 3.2 per cent, compared to 2.1 per cent in the June quarter. Rising inflation affects producers through increased input costs.

## Agronomic Indicators

**Key Message:** *Tasmanian pasture growth remained below target in early October, prompting supplementary feeding and irrigation amid variable rainfall, strong winds, and mixed crop conditions.*

Pasture growth improved slightly during October but remained below the target of 75 kg DM/ha/day early in the month, requiring continued supplementary feeding in some areas. Wet conditions in early October caused waterlogging and pugging damage in parts of the state, while other regions—particularly the Northern Midlands and King Island—experienced moisture deficits and began irrigating to maintain productivity. Rainfall was highly variable across Tasmania, with excessive strong winds recorded across the entire state. Some sites, such as Cressy, recorded significant totals (up to 51 mm) late in the month, yet high evapotranspiration (ET0) consistently outpaced rainfall, driving soil moisture back toward refill points. Soil moisture declined to depth (up to 80 cm) at several monitoring sites, and irrigation was flagged as necessary to avoid yield penalties. Despite temporary saturation in some areas, overall conditions highlighted the strong influence of ET0 during spring, reinforcing the need for close monitoring of plant-available water and irrigation scheduling. Lucerne flea was observed in pastures, but reports remained below intervention thresholds. Producers were advised to continue monitoring pest activity during pasture walks.

Silage cutting commenced later than usual, towards the end of October in the Northern Midlands and Meander Valley, with wet paddocks across the North West limiting access and causing some bogging. Due to lower stocking rates from recent seasonal conditions, some producers grass seed crops have taken advantage of the opportunity to take a cut for silage to remove growth pre-lockup for seed rather than grazing.

According to the Dairy Australia Hay and Grain Report (31 October), hay prices fell to their lowest levels in over a year, reflecting increased (though below target) grass growth and improved paddock feed following October rain:

- Pasture hay: \$200–\$220/t
- Lucerne: \$300–\$350/t
- Cereal hay (wheat and oaten): \$250–\$280/t

Buyer urgency eased as feed availability improved, but on-farm hay stocks remain low after last season's shortfall and extended feeding out period since early Autumn. Some grain crops with excessive ryegrass infestations are reportedly being cut for hay early (before ryegrass seed set) for management, and it is anticipated that there will be a concerted effort to conserve fodder this year to refill sheds.

The excessive wind throughout September and October has delayed many crop management programs across the State but yield penalties will not be known until closer to harvest. The windy conditions have kept crops dry, which has aided crop management.

Poppy paddocks are still being sown, with final sowing reports and notifications for resows due in early November. Crops established early have benefitted from recent rainfall, however, those sown later have resulted in patchy establishment from rainfall and wind burn.

Fertiliser prices have been mixed, with demand increasing for spring nutrition programs and planting. Urea prices dropped slightly in October to around \$800/tonne, but MAP/DAP prices increased significantly to \$1200/tonne due to the ban on exports from China.

*For further information please refer to the Dairy Australia / Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture pasture reports (<https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/tasmania/pasture-growth-report>) and hay and grain reports (<https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/industry-reports/hay-and-grain-reports>).*

## Social Indicators

**Key Message:** *Rainfall has improved sentiment in most areas, but south-east remains on a cautious*

October brought a sense of optimism to many farming communities in Tasmania. Improved rainfall in most regions boosted pasture growth and water supplies, which eased stress for producers after a challenging year. This has had a positive flow-on effect socially—farmers are feeling more confident, community and farm extension events like workshops and field days are well attended, and there's renewed focus on planning for the future, such as fodder conservation and succession discussions.

However, not all areas share the same outlook. In the Southeast, ongoing dry conditions mean some producers are still under pressure, relying on supplementary feeding and destocking strategies, and there are some reports of wind/storm damage on some orchards.

Rising input costs and inflation continue to weigh on household budgets and farm businesses. While conditions have improved and spirits are lifting, social resilience remains important as communities navigate uneven seasonal conditions and economic challenges.

For further information please refer to FMD Rainfall Analyser – Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/drought/fmd/fmd-rainfall-analyser>

## Freight and Logistics

**Key message:** No reported disruptions or delays reported, regular freight operations across Bass Strait.

There are no known areas of concern for freight to King Island or Flinders Island as of 5 November 2025.

Cattle movements for King and Flinders Island remain lower than in previous years, likely due to lower stocking rates following destocking last year to manage the dry conditions.

For further information please refer to TasPort's shipping schedule (<https://tasports.com.au/shipping-schedule-all>).

**Prepared by:**

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Tasmania**

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### **FEEDBACK:**

AgriGrowth Tasmania values the contribution of stakeholders and encourages feedback via email: [farmpoint@nre.tas.gov.au](mailto:farmpoint@nre.tas.gov.au) or by phoning 1300 292292. This report is prepared to assist Government with drought decision-making and for monitoring of seasonal conditions generally. We welcome your comments on what is working well, areas for improvement, and any additional topics you would like to see included in future updates. Your input is essential to ensure this report remains accurate, relevant, and beneficial to the Tasmanian agricultural sector.