



# National Drought Facts:

(Data courtesy Departments of Agriculture, Bureau of Meteorology, Treasury)

- About 60 per cent of Australia's agricultural land is covered by the federal government drought exceptional circumstances (EC) declaration.
- The number of areas drought-declared by the Commonwealth has increased from 36 in May last year to 56 at the end of March this year.
- 96 per cent of NSW agricultural land is covered by Commonwealth exceptional circumstance declarations. In Queensland the figure is 58 per cent, Western Australia 41 per cent, Victoria 39 per cent and South Australia 24 per cent.
- The drought is close to its worst ever in Gippsland, Victoria; in the ACT and inland south-eastern NSW and in Queensland between Townsville and Rockhampton.
- A recent Treasury report estimates 100,000 jobs in the agricultural sector have been lost, with those remaining losing close to half their income.
- Latest forecasts indicate the total commitment for helping farmers through this drought will reach \$1.1 billion by the end of 2005-06.

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# Drought facts for NSW:

(Data courtesy State Department of Primary Industry.)

Drought figures for New South Wales have reached the worst levels in six months.

The official drought figures released on May 7, 2004 showed:

**Drought-declared:** 70.7 per cent, up from 63.7 per cent in April.

**Marginal:** 15.7 per cent, up from 15.3 per cent.

**Satisfactory:** 13.6 per cent, down from 21 per cent.

## Per cent of NSW in Drought:

April 2003:	99.5%
May:	92.2%
June:	88.3%
July:	87.8%
August:	89.1%
September:	76.8%
October:	78.9%
November:	66.3%
December:	61.5%
January 2004	61.3%
February	49.7%
March	53.4%
April	63.7%
May	70.7%

- Last month was the fifth warmest April on record, with more than 20 days of maximum temperatures exceeding the monthly average.
- Rainfall for the month was again well below average – including around the Mildura area in western NSW which received the lowest rainfall ever recorded.
- The longer-term trend, according to the Bureau of Meteorology, is even more stark – with the south-eastern portion of Australia receiving below-normal rainfall for the best part of eight years.
- Only north-eastern NSW looks to be in decent shape, with parts of the Moree, Walgett, Narrabri and Coonamble Rural Lands Protection Boards receiving some relief between February and April.”



**The continued dry conditions will result in the following impacts being felt in both the country and the cities:**

- Subsoil moisture in the majority of the State is virtually nonexistent. Without well above average falls in the next two months, the State's winter crops are at risk.
- Prospects for crops such as canola and lupins in the south of the State are now dismal, with conditions in all cropping regions except the north-east too dry for planting.
- Farmers have until late June or early July to sow their wheat crops without yield loss, but significant rain will be needed before then to achieve even reasonable yields.
- Livestock producers throughout the State are again selling stock. This is further impacting on stock numbers that have not yet recovered from the effects of the disastrous conditions in 2002-2003.
- A reasonable cereal crop in 2003 and a recovery in the amount of feed stored on-farm at least means that feed prices so far are being held at affordable levels.

**Areas that have moved back into drought:**

- The southern portion of the Narrandera Rural Lands Protection Board
- The entire Hay RLPB
- The north-western portion of the Riverina RLPB. The remainder of this area went from satisfactory in April to marginal status in May.
- The eastern two-thirds of the Murray RLPB
- The southern portion of the Coonamble RLPB

**Areas that have moved from satisfactory back to marginal:**

- The Maitland RLPB
- The Hunter RLPB
- The Gloucester RLPB
- Most of the Armidale RLPB
- South-eastern portion of the Narrabri RLPB

**Areas that have improved:**




- The south-eastern portion of the Walgett RLPB has moved from marginal to satisfactory



## **Levels for Dams in Key Agriculture Areas:**

	<b>Early May</b>	<b>Early April</b>	<b>End of February</b>
Copeton Dam	24%	25%	25%
Eucumbene Dam	40.3%	42%	42%
Pindari Dam	67%	68%	68%
Keepit Dam	36%	36%	35%
Split Rock Dam	25%	26%	26%
Burrendong Dam	10%	11%	13%
Carcoar Dam	7%	10%	14%
Wyangala Dam	10%	11%	13%
Burrinjuck Dam	39%	41%	43%
Blowering Dam	8%	13%	24%

# Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Boundaries

	<b>Currently Declared EC Areas</b>
	<b>Currently Declared Interim or Prima Facie Areas</b>
	<b>Currently Declared EC Buffer Area</b>

