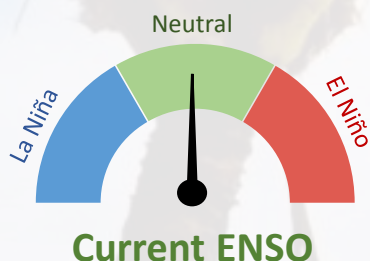


### Recent



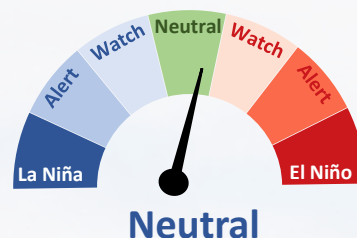
El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions are currently **neutral**.

Sea Surface Temperatures are near average across the central Equatorial Pacific.

The Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) is weakly negative (-0.2 for February 2017).

**85%** chance for ENSO neutral conditions to continue over **March – May 2017**.

Chance for El Niño conditions over the **September – November 2017** season **50%**



### Forecast

## ENSO situation summary

The tropical Pacific is currently in an **ENSO** (El Niño – Southern Oscillation) **neutral state**. Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the central equatorial Pacific Ocean remain near or slightly below average, with a value of -0.09°C in the NINO3.4 region for the month of February.

**In the sub-surface ocean**, warmer than average temperatures (+2.0°C anomalies) are present in the western equatorial Pacific but remain near or slightly below average across the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.

The **Southern Oscillation Index (SOI)** is close to zero with a value of -0.2 for February 2017. While large-scale circulation patterns are generally consistent with an ENSO-neutral state, ongoing rounds of equatorial westerlies may suggest an atmospheric tendency toward a future El Niño event.

International guidance favours **ENSO-neutral conditions with high probability (85% chance) over the next three month period (March-May 2017)**. Later during the year, **the chances for a return to El Niño conditions increase substantially to reach over 50% in August – October 2017**. Note however that ENSO forecasts going beyond the northern hemisphere spring are known to be less reliable than at other times of the year (the so-called “spring predictability barrier”).

### Rainfall outlook for March-May 2017

**Below normal rainfall** for Kiribati and Nauru.

**Normal or below normal rainfall** for Tokelau, Tuvalu and Northern Cooks Islands.

**Normal or above normal rainfall** for Tonga, Austral Islands, Southern Cook Islands, Marquesas, Solomon Islands, Wallis & Futuna, Marshall Islands, Guam, Northern Marianas, American Samoa, New Caledonia, Society Islands and Tuamotu Islands.

**Above normal rainfall** for the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.

**No guidance** for Papua New Guinea, Niue, Fiji, Samoa and South Vanuatu.

ISLAND	PROBABILITY (%)			OUTLOOK	CONFIDENCE
	Below	Normal	Above		
FSM	20	35	45	ABOVE	High
Palau	20	35	45	ABOVE	Moderate
Tonga	20	40	40	AVG - ABOVE	Moderate-High
Austral Islands	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	High
Cook Islands (Southern)	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	High
Marquesas	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	Moderate-High
Solomon Islands	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	Moderate-High
Wallis & Futuna	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	Moderate-High
Marshall Islands	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	Moderate
Guam	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	Moderate
N. Marianas	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	Moderate
American Samoa	25	35	40	AVG - ABOVE	Moderate
New Caledonia	25	40	35	AVG - ABOVE	High
Society Islands	25	40	35	AVG - ABOVE	High
Tuamotu Islands	25	40	35	AVG - ABOVE	High
Pitcairn Island	30	40	30	NEAR NORMAL	Moderate
Vanuatu (North)	30	40	30	NEAR NORMAL	Moderate
Fiji	30	35	35	CLIMATOLOGY	Moderate
Niue	30	35	35	CLIMATOLOGY	Moderate
Papua New Guinea	30	35	35	CLIMATOLOGY	Moderate
Samoa	30	35	35	CLIMATOLOGY	Moderate
Vanuatu (South)	35	35	30	CLIMATOLOGY	Moderate
Cook Islands (Northern)	35	40	25	AVG - BELOW	Moderate-High
Tokelau	40	35	25	AVG - BELOW	High
Tuvalu	40	35	25	AVG - BELOW	Moderate-High
Kiribati (Eastern)	45	35	20	BELOW	High
Central Kiribati (Phoenix)	45	35	20	BELOW	Moderate-High
Nauru	45	35	20	BELOW	Moderate
Kiribati (Western)	50	30	20	BELOW	Moderate-High

Note: Rainfall estimates for Pacific Islands for the next three months are given in terms of tercile probabilities (e.g. 20:30:50). These are derived from the averages of several global climate models. They correspond to the odds of the observed rainfall being in the lowest one third of the distribution, the middle one third, or the highest one third of the distribution. For the long term average, it is equally likely (33% chance) that conditions in any of the three terciles will occur. \*If conditions are climatology, we expect an equal chance of the rainfall being in any tercile.

The Island Climate Update bulletin is currently being produced by NIWA in association with the Pacific Island Meteorological Services and other supporting meteorological organisations.

The Island Climate Update is prepared as soon as possible following the end of the month, once the data and information are received from the Pacific Island meteorological services. Delays in data collection and communication occasionally arise. While every effort is made to verify observational data, NIWA does not guarantee the accuracy and reliability of the analysis and forecast information presented, and accepts no liability for any losses incurred through the use of this advisory and its contents.

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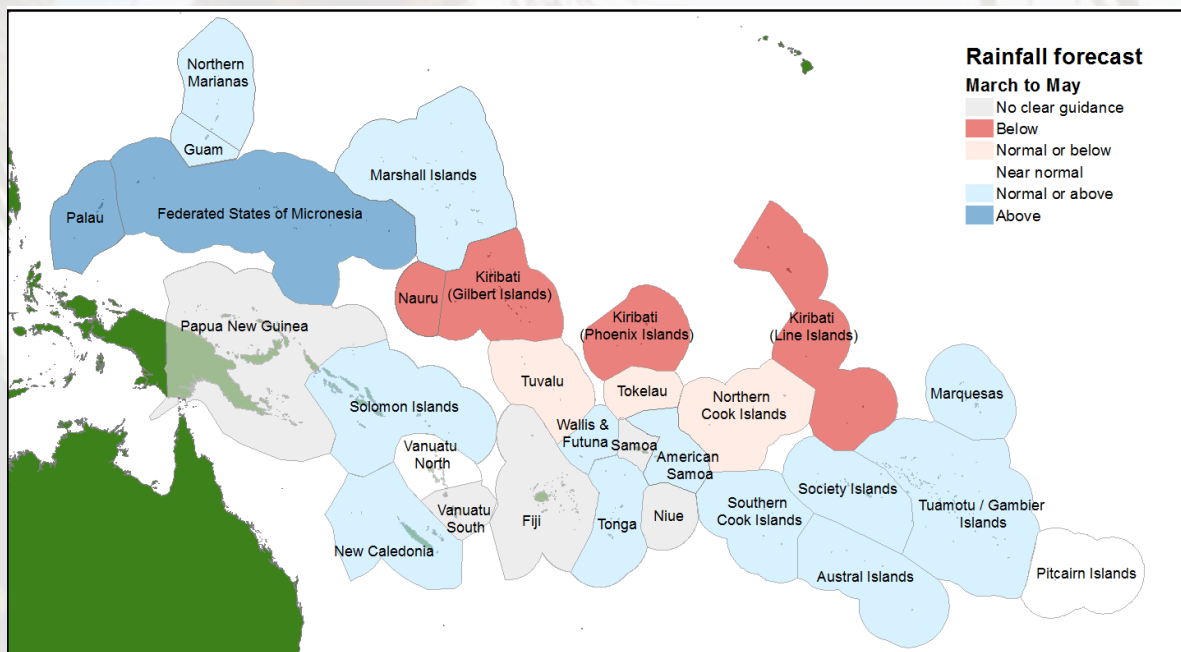
For more information see: <http://www.niwa.co.nz/climate/icu>

# The Island Climate Update

Drought Watch

March 2017

## March to May 2017 rainfall forecast

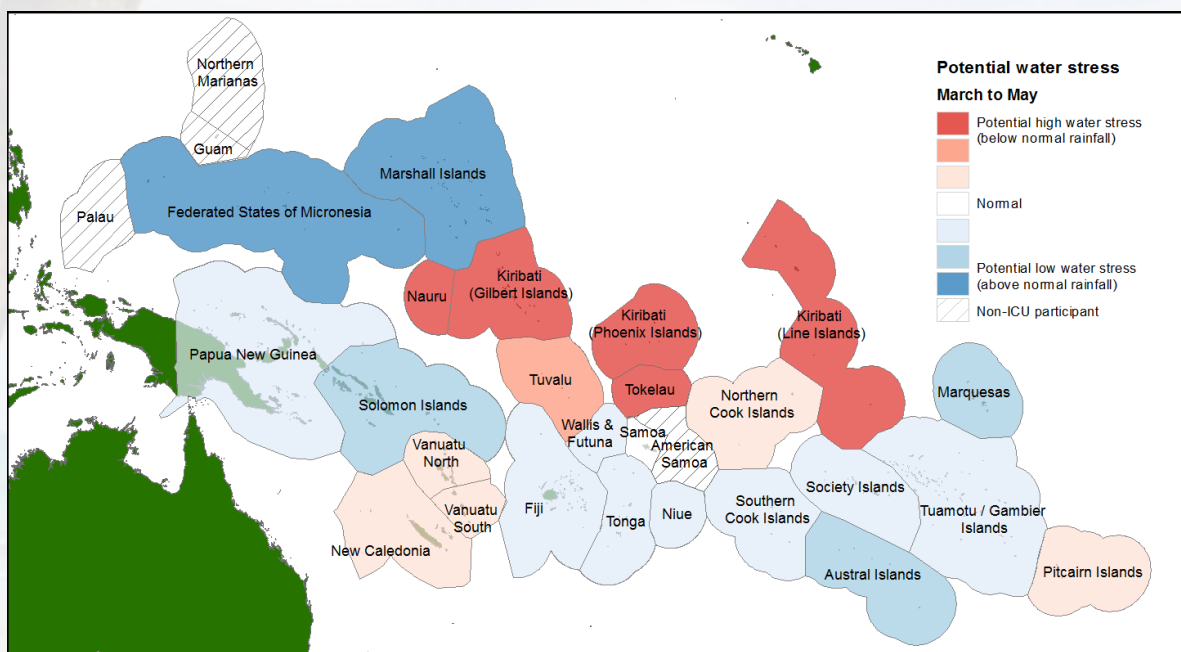


## Regional drought potential advisory

Based on rainfall anomaly classification over the past six months and forecast rainfall anomaly classification over the next 3 months

**Nauru, Kiribati:** Below or well below normal rainfall experienced over the past 6 months in the Gilbert Islands and Nauru and 5 of the past 6 months in the Line and Phoenix Islands. Below normal rainfall is forecast over the next 3 months.

**Tokelau, Tuvalu:** Below normal rainfall experienced over 5 of the past 6 months in Tokelau and 4 of the past 6 months in Tuvalu. Normal or below normal rainfall is forecast over the next 3 months.



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