

THE RAINFALL REVIEW

By Kate Finger (BCG)

Well, what a contrast the 2021 growing season was from 2020. Despite predictions from some climate models that this season could be 'above average', the year started off in the opposite direction with 'below average' conditions over summer and autumn. This was particularly noticeable in April when 95.2mm was recorded at Birchip in 2020, but zero in 2021. Fortunately, winter picked up and the break arrived but come early spring, many were again getting nervous. The tap did turn on in late September which was life saving for those hoping to get the headers out, but a headache for hay makers. Unfortunately, someone forgot to turn off the tap at the end of October and early November resulting in some harvest delays thanks to the negative Indian Ocean Dipole and La Niña events in action. So how did the growing season rainfall of 2021 compare to previous seasons? Table 1 looks at several locations across the Wimmera and Mallee and highlights where they fell on the decile scale as well as the main climate driver/s in action at the time.

Table 1. Growing Season Rainfall (mm) across the Wimmera and Mallee, number in brackets denotes decile for the period (April to October).

Location	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Ouyen	181 (4)	277 (9)	129 (2)	127 (2)	199 (5)	335 (10)	145 (2)	180 (4)	175 (4)	100 (1)
Manangatang	148 (3)	201 (6)	139 (3)	98 (1)	193 (6)	280 (9)	127 (2)	159 (4)	201 (6)	118 (2)
Swan Hill	157 (2)	214 (5)	155 (2)	108 (1)	192 (4)	285 (8)	146 (2)	188 (4)	183 (4)	147 (2)
Sea Lake	176 (4)	197 (5)	140 (2)	101 (1)	207 (6)	343 (10)	127 (2)	197 (5)	182 (4)	150 (2)
Birchip	196 (4)	242 (6)	185 (3)	111 (1)	265 (7)	365 (10)	145 (2)	163 (2)	259 (7)	175 (3)
Hopetoun	168 (3)	253 (7)	172 (3)	130 (1)	209 (5)	319 (9)	137 (2)	138 (2)	207 (5)	158 (2)
St Arnaud	337 (6)	329 (5)	279 (3)	189 (1)	343 (6)	513 (10)	178 (1)	241 (2)	311 (4)	284 (3)
Kerang	174 (2)	243 (6)	156 (2)	121 (1)	221 (5)	340 (9)	172 (2)	233 (6)	228 (5)	168 (2)
Warracknabeal	228 (4)	239 (4)	249 (5)	172 (2)	261 (6)	384 (10)	176 (2)	182 (2)	290 (7)	161 (1)
Longerenong	262 (5)	322 (7)	250 (4)	187 (2)	302 (6)	374 (9)	142 (1)	202 (2)	313 (7)	243 (4)
Nhill	198 (2)	291 (6)	238 (3)	232 (3)	334 (8)	339 (8)	122 (1)	203 (2)	339 (8)	156 (1)
Kaniva	339 (7)	330 (6)	292 (4)	299 (4)	400 (8)	428 (9)	180 (1)	213 (1)	388 (8)	282 (4)
Boort	180 (3)	281 (8)	197 (4)	160 (2)	253 (7)	433 (10)	159 (2)	207 (5)	267 (7)	177 (3)
Murrayville	149 (2)	240 (7)	155 (2)	114 (1)	208 (5)	317 (9)	142 (2)	179 (4)	203 (4)	106 (1)
Climate driver	<i>La Niña/ -IOD</i>	<i>La Niña</i>	<i>+IOD</i>	<i>+IOD</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>-IOD</i>	<i>El Niño/ +IOD</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>+IOD</i>