Summary of key issues

- During the week ending 15 March 2017 rainfall was mostly recorded in eastern and northern Australia, as well as isolated areas of Western Australia. Little or no rainfall was recorded across large areas of central and southern Australia.

- In the past week a series of severe thunderstorms brought heavy rainfall, floods and hail to northern New South Wales and south-eastern Queensland. Parts of south-eastern Queensland have now recorded twice the average monthly rainfall for March. These events and continued rainfall over the coming days are likely to ease short-term rainfall deficiencies, increase soil moisture levels and benefit pasture growth across a number of agricultural regions.

- During the week ending 14 March 2017 maximum temperatures were between 4°C and 8°C above average in parts of south-eastern Australia, and between 2°C and 4°C below average in northern Western Australia. Minimum temperatures were close to average across Australia.

- The forecast for the next eight days indicates that rainfall in excess of 25 millimetres is expected across large areas of northern and eastern Australia, with totals forecast to exceed 150 millimetres in northern coastal New South Wales and parts of the Top End in the Northern Territory.

- Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB) decreased during the week ending 16 March 2017 by 321 gigalitres (GL) to 15,578 GL and are at 69 per cent of total capacity.

- Australia exported record volumes of wheat in January 2017, with over one third going to India.

- Tight world cotton supplies have resulted in world cotton prices being up over 30 percent compared to the same time last year.

- Brazilian sugarcane processors have increased production of sugar at the expense of ethanol resulting in local imports of ethanol being up 218 per cent year-on-year, in the first 11 months of 2016–17 (April to March) season.
1. Climate

1.1. Rainfall this week

During the week ending 15 March 2017 rainfall was mostly recorded in eastern and northern Australia, as well as isolated areas of Western Australia. Little or no rainfall was recorded across large areas of central and southern Australia. The highest recorded weekly total was 271 millimetres at Noosaville, north of Brisbane in Queensland.

In the past the week, a series of severe thunderstorms brought heavy rainfall, floods and hail to northern New South Wales and south-eastern Queensland. Rainfall exceeding 100 millimetres in 12 hours was recorded in some locations. Parts of south-eastern Queensland have now recorded twice the average monthly rainfall for March. These events and continued rainfall over the coming days are likely to ease short-term rainfall deficiencies, increase soil moisture levels and benefit pasture growth across a number of agricultural regions.

The rainfall analyses and associated maps utilise data contained in the Bureau of Meteorology climate database, the Australian Data Archive for Meteorology (ADAM). The analyses are initially produced automatically from real-time data with limited quality control. They are intended to provide a general overview of rainfall across Australia as quickly as possible after the observations are received.

For further information go to http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/rainfall/

Rainfall for the week ending 15 March 2017

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Issued: 15/03/2017
1.2. Temperature anomalies this week

During the week ending 14 March 2017 maximum temperatures were between 4°C and 8°C above average in parts of south-eastern Australia, and between 2°C and 4°C below average in northern Western Australia. Minimum temperatures were close to average across Australia (see maps below).

Maximum temperature anomalies for the week ending 14 March 2017

Minimum temperature anomalies for the week ending 14 March 2017

Note: 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 temperatures from their long-term averages. Temperature anomalies are calculated using high-resolution gridded datasets from 1911 onwards. For further information go to [http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/temp/index.jsp](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/awap/temp/index.jsp).
1.3. Rainfall forecast for the next 8 days

The forecast for the next eight days indicates that rainfall in excess of 25 millimetres is expected across large areas of northern and eastern Australia, and parts of Western Australia. Rainfall totals are forecast to exceed 150 millimetres in northern coastal New South Wales and parts of the Top End in the Northern Territory. Little to no rainfall is forecast for large areas of central Australia during this period (see map below).

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

**Total forecast rainfall (mm) for the period 16 to 23 March 2017**
2. Water

2.1. Water availability

Water storage levels in the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB) decreased during the week ending 16 March 2017 by 321 gigalitres (GL) to 15,578 GL and are at 69 per cent of total capacity. This is 37 percentage points or 8,248 GL more than at the same time last year.

Information on irrigation water available in the Murray–Darling Basin from 1 January 2001 to 16 March 2017 is shown above. The top horizontal (short dash) line indicates the storage level during a similar time last year. The bottom horizontal (long dash) line indicates the amount of ‘dead’ or unusable storage.
3. Commodities

3.1. Market focus

Wheat exports

Australia exported record volumes of wheat in January 2017, according to recent export data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Demand for milling wheat has been strong from India since the Indian government removed the wheat import duty in December 2016. More than a third of Australia’s wheat exports were destined for India in January. This policy change was driven by a low quality domestic harvest in 2016 and a drawdown in stocks. Indian import demand is expected to remain strong until at least March 2017, when the Indian domestic harvest will commence.

Cotton

The world cotton indicator price (Cotlook ‘A’ Index) was US86.6 cents a pound in the week ending 15 March 2017, up over 30 per cent compared with the same week in 2016. This year on year price increase reflects tighter global cotton supplies—particularly in India, the world largest producer. According to the Cotton Corporation of India, as at 2 March 2017 the volume of seed cotton (Kapas) received at mills was around 3.7 million tonnes (lint equivalent), down from 3.9 million tonnes at the same time in 2016.

Sugar

Brazil imported 1.1 billion litres of ethanol in the first 11 months of 2016–17 (April to March) season, 218 per cent more than was imported in the same period in 2015–16. This rise reflects a decline in domestic ethanol production in 2016–17 due to mills focusing more on sugar production in response to relatively high sugar prices. In the week ending 15 March 2017, the world sugar indicator price (Intercontinental Exchange, nearby futures, no. 11 contract) was 19 per cent higher than in the same week in 2016.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Week ended</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Latest price</th>
<th>Price week prior</th>
<th>Weekly change</th>
<th>Price 12 months prior</th>
<th>Year on year change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selected World Indicator Prices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Dollar - AUD/USD Exchange Rate</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
<td>US$/A$</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>-1% ⇩</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0% ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat - US no. 2 hard red winter wheat, fob Gulf</td>
<td>14-Mar</td>
<td>US$/t</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>-2% ⇩</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>-5% ⇩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coarse Grains - US no. 2 yellow corn, fob Gulf</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
<td>US$/t</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>-4% ⇩</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>-1% ⇩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola - Rapeseed, Europe, fob Hamburg</td>
<td>14-Mar</td>
<td>US$/t</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>-3% ⇩</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>12% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton - Cotlook 'A' Index</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
<td>USc/lb</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>&lt;1% ⇩</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>32% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar - Intercontinental Exchange, nearby futures, no.11 contract</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
<td>USc/lb</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>-4% ⇩</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>19% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool - Eastern Market Indicator</td>
<td>09-Mar</td>
<td>Ac/kg clean</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1% ⇧</td>
<td>1,223</td>
<td>24% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool - Western Market Indicator</td>
<td>10-Mar</td>
<td>Ac/kg clean</td>
<td>1,556</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>&lt;1% ⇧</td>
<td>1,315</td>
<td>18% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selected domestic crop indicator prices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milling Wheat - ASW1, track quote, Port Adelaide, SA</td>
<td>08-Mar</td>
<td>A$/t</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>4% ⇧</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>-19% ⇩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed Wheat - General purpose, Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
<td>A$/t</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>-8% ⇩</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>-24% ⇩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed Barley - Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
<td>A$/t</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>2% ⇧</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>-15% ⇩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola - Portland, Vic.</td>
<td>13-Mar</td>
<td>A$/t</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>-2% ⇩</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>&lt;1% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain Sorghum - Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
<td>A$/t</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>4% ⇧</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>11% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selected domestic livestock indicator prices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef - Eastern Young Cattle Indicator</td>
<td>10-Mar</td>
<td>Ac/kg cwt</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>&lt;1% ⇩</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>2% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutton - Mutton indicator (18-24 kg fat score 2-3), Vic</td>
<td>10-Mar</td>
<td>Ac/kg cwt</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>-4% ⇩</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>44% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb - Eastern States Trade Lamb Indicator</td>
<td>09-Mar</td>
<td>Ac/kg cwt</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>0% ●</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>22% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig - Eastern Seaboard (60.1-75 kg), average of buyers &amp; sellers</td>
<td>03-Mar</td>
<td>Ac/kg cwt</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>-2% ⇩</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>-11% ⇩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat - Eastern States (12.1-16 kg)</td>
<td>06-Mar</td>
<td>Ac/kg cwt</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>0% ●</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>25% ⇧</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live cattle - Light steers ex Darwin to Indonesia</td>
<td>04-Mar</td>
<td>Ac/kg lwt</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0% ●</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>0% ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live sheep - Live wether (Muchea WA saleyard) to Middle East</td>
<td>06-Mar</td>
<td>$/head</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4% ⇧</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>13% ⇧</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Previous week price for Canola – Rapeseed, Europe, fob Hamburg is from week ended 14 February 2017.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Week ended</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Latest price</th>
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<th>Price 12 months prior</th>
<th>Year on year change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy - Whole milk powder</td>
<td>07-Mar</td>
<td>US$/t</td>
<td>2,782</td>
<td>3,189</td>
<td>-13%</td>
<td>1,974</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy - Skim milk powder</td>
<td>07-Mar</td>
<td>US$/t</td>
<td>2,118</td>
<td>2,574</td>
<td>-18%</td>
<td>1,802</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy - Cheddar cheese</td>
<td>07-Mar</td>
<td>US$/t</td>
<td>3,435</td>
<td>3,590</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>2,528</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy - Anhydrous milk fat</td>
<td>07-Mar</td>
<td>US$/t</td>
<td>5,635</td>
<td>5,693</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>3,254</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Global Dairy Trade prices are updated twice monthly on the first and third Tuesday of each month.
3.2. **Selected world indicator prices**

- **World wheat indicator price**
  - US No. 2, hard red winter wheat, fob Gulf
  - Week ended 14 March 2017

- **World coarse grains indicator price**
  - US corn No. 2, fob Gulf
  - Week ended 15 March 2017

- **World canola indicator price**
  - Europe fob Hamburg
  - Week ended 14 March 2017

- **World cotton indicator price**
  - Cotlook ‘A’ index
  - Week ended 15 March 2017
3.3. Global Dairy Trade (GDT) weighted average prices

- **Whole milk powder price**
  - 7 March 2017

- **Skim milk powder price**
  - 7 March 2017

- **Cheddar cheese price**
  - 7 March 2017

- **Anhydrous milk fat price**
  - 7 March 2017
3.4. Selected domestic crop indicator prices

Grain sorghum indicator price
Sydney, NSW
Week ended 15 March 2017

Feed barley indicator price
Sydney, NSW
Week ended 15 March 2017

Feed wheat indicator price
General Purpose, Sydney, NSW
Week ended 15 March 2017

Milling wheat indicator price
ASW1, track quote, Port Adelaide, SA
Week ended 8 March 2017
Canola indicator price
Portland, Victoria
Week ended 13 March 2017

A$/t

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

2015 2016 2017
3.5. Selected domestic livestock indicator prices

Eastern Young Cattle Indicator
Week ended 10 March 2017

Eastern States Trade Lamb Indicator
Week ended 9 March 2017

Mutton indicator price in Victoria
(18–24 kg fat score 2–3)
Week ended 10 March 2017

Pig Indicator price Eastern Seaboard
(60.1–75 kg)
Week ended 3 March 2017
Goat indicator price Eastern States (12.1–16 kg)
Week ended 6 March 2017

Live cattle indicator price
light steers ex Darwin
Week ended 4 March 2017

Live sheep indicator price
wether ex Western Australia
Week ended 27 February 2017
3.6. Movements in selected fruit and vegetable prices – week ended 11 March 2017

- Weekly wholesale prices for blueberry, pineapple (smoothleaf), watermelon (seedless) & banana (cavendish)

- Weekly wholesale prices for kiwifruit (hayward), strawberry, apple (royal gala) & avocado (hass)

- Weekly wholesale prices for onion (brown), cauliflower, potato (white, brushed) & tomato (field gourmet)

- Weekly wholesale prices for broccoli, lettuce (iceberg), pumpkin (grey bulk) & bean (round stringless)
4. Data attribution

Climate
Bureau of Meteorology
- Soil moisture: Bureau of Meteorology (Australian Water Resources Assessment Landscape model)

Water
New South Wales

Queensland
- Sunwater: www.sunwater.com.au
- Seqwater: http://seqwater.com.au

South Australia
- South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources: http://www.environment.sa.gov.au

Victoria
- Goulburn–Murray Water: www.g-mwater.com.au

Commodities
Fruit and vegetables
- Datafresh: http://www.freshstate.com.au

Pigs
- Australian Pork Limited: www.australianpork.com.au

Canola
- Weekly Times: hardcopy

Dairy

World wheat, canola
- International Grains Council

World coarse grains
- United States Department of Agriculture

World cotton
- Cotlook

World sugar
- New York Stock Exchange - Intercontinental Exchange

Wool
- Australian Wool Exchange

Milling wheat
• ProFarmer

**Domestic wheat, barley, sorghum**
• The Land: hardcopy or online at http://theland.farmonline.com.au/markets

**Domestic canola**
• The Weekly Times: hardcopy

**Cattle, beef, mutton, lamb, goat and live export**