17th Pacific Islands Climate Outlook Forum Statement

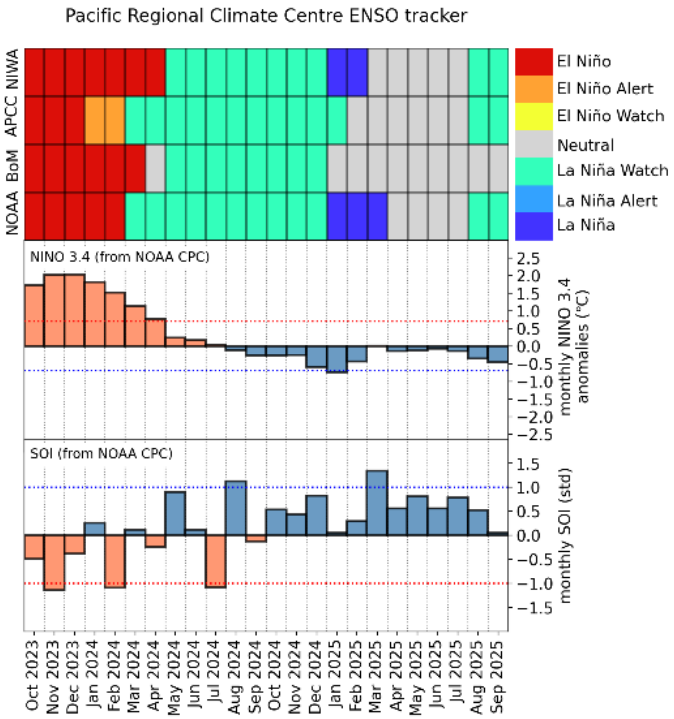
This statement was produced by the WMO RA-V Pacific Regional Climate Centre Network following the 17th Pacific Islands Climate Outlook Forum (PICOF-17) held on 22-23 October 2025, for use by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in the Pacific Islands. For more information, please see the background section and/or contact your local meteorological office.

Key messages

- The El Niño-Southern Oscillation status is currently borderline La Niña. La Niña conditions are very likely to become established over the coming three-month period (November 2025 – January 2026). La Niña or La Niña-like patterns are the most likely outcome for remainder of 2025. The event is likely to be short-lived, with a return to ENSO-neutral likely in the first quarter of 2026.
- The 2025/26 Southwest Pacific tropical cyclone (TC) season begins on 1 November 2025. Out-of-season TCs are rare during La Niña events. For the coming season normal to below normal numbers of TCs are favoured across the Southwest Pacific.
- The rainfall outlook over November 2025 to January 2026 favours below normal rainfall between Nauru and Kiribati, extending southwards between Tuvalu and northern French Polynesia, and a small region over the southernmost part of Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). Above normal rainfall is forecast over Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and then in a band south-eastwards to southern French Polynesia. Confidence in this outlook highest along the equator and in the far western Pacific, although there is acceptable skill for most of the off-equatorial Pacific region.
- Above-normal air temperatures are favoured beyond the near equatorial eastern Pacific Ocean for the coming season.
- Above-normal sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are favoured for most western Pacific countries, including COSPPac partner countries (Palau, FSM, RMI, Nauru, Kiribati, PNG, Solomon Is., Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Samoa, Niue, Cook Is.) in the south. Cooler SSTs are forecasted along the central equatorial Pacific, consistent with a developing La Niña event.
- Below-normal sea levels are favoured around Kiribati, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Niue, Southern Cook Islands and French Polynesia. Near-normal or above-normal sea levels are expected elsewhere, with higher levels in the western Pacific.
- Coral Beaching Alert levels 1 and 2 are favoured for PNG, FSM, RMI, Palau and Solomon Islands.

Issued: 30 October 2025
https://www.pacificmet.net/rcc

Climate in review – May to October 2025



- As of mid-October 2025, the **Pacific Regional Climate Centre ENSO tracker** (click here) is at La Niña Watch based on status reports from the majority of RCC-N members.
- According to the majority of RCC-N members, ocean temperatures at and below the surface in the central to eastern Pacific are currently cooler than usual at borderline La Niña thresholds. Below the ocean surface the West Pacific Warm Pool is warm, and a cool-to-warm west-to-east gradient is noted across the basin.
- Rainfall, trade wind and atmospheric pressure patterns highlight a transition towards La Niña, however these patterns have yet to be sustained.
- Overall, rainfall and air temperature predictions from PICOF-16 for May to October 2025 verified well when compared to observations over the same period.
- Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are mostly below average across most of the Pacific Ocean.
- Sea level anomalies were high in the western N. Pacific and low elsewhere.
- Coral bleaching occurred mainly in the western Pacific (PNG, Western Solomon Is., Palau, FSM, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, RMI)
- 2025 TC activity in the Western North Pacific (WNP) basin has, so far, been indicative of a climate pattern shifting towards La Niña, with TC genesis and tracks favouring areas west and north of the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI). TC impacts have been minimal for the USAPI thus far in 2025.
- Overall, 2025 TC activity in the WNP basin has been fairly similar to that of 2020-2022 and 2024 (La Niña or "La Niña-like" years).
- The general impacts of weather/climate recorded by NMHS for May to October 2025 affecting the water, transportation, Infrastructure, Health, Fisheries, Education, and Tourism sector.

Historical tropical cyclone trends, as a background for recent patterns

- Annual average TC occurrence in the Northwest is 23 systems and 9 systems in the Southwest Pacific Ocean from 1981 to 2025.
- Annual average for severe TC occurrence in the Northwest is 13 systems and 4 systems in the Southwest Pacific Ocean from 1981 to 2025.

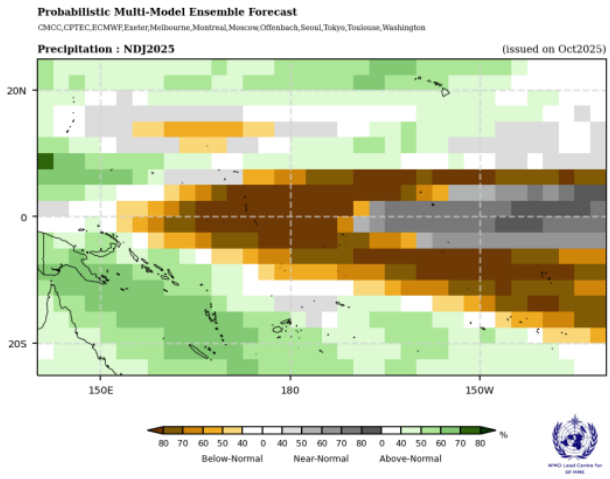
- There is a statistically significant decreasing trend for the average tropical cyclones (<995hPa), severe tropical cyclones (<970hPa) in the Northwest and Southwest Pacific for the period 1981 to 2025.
- There is no significant trend for the proportion of severe tropical cyclones in the Northwest and Southwest Pacific Ocean for the period 1981 to 2025.
- There has been a significant increasing trend in the percentage of winds greater than 34 knots in the subtropical Southwest Pacific for the period 1981 to 2025.
- There has been no significant trend in the percentage of winds greater than 34 knots in the subtropical Northwest Pacific for the period 1981 to 2025.

Climate outlook – November 2025 to April 2026

El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)

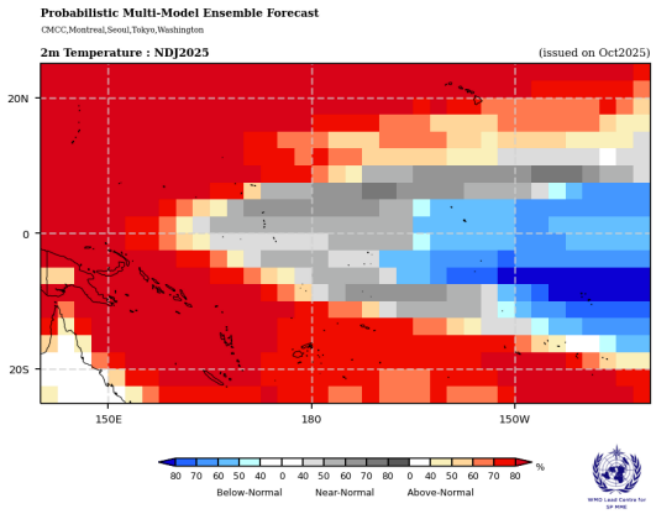
- Regardless of whether the criteria for La Niña is met over the coming months, climate models are forecasting La Niña-like patterns for the remainder of 2025 and early 2026, which is historically the usual time of year for ENSO events to begin to break down.
- Most Pacific RCC Network node on long-range forecasting members agree there is a moderate chance of La Niña emerging by the end of 2025.

Rainfall and Air Temperature



- Predictions of air temperature and rainfall for the coming November 2025 to January 2026 and February to April 2026 seasons are typical of La Niña-like patterns.
- The rainfall outlook over November 2025 to January 2026 favours below normal rainfall between Nauru and the Phoenix Islands (Kiribati), extending southwards between Tuvalu and northern French Polynesia, and a small region over the central FSM and RMI. Above normal rainfall is forecast over Palau, PNG and then in a band south-eastwards to southern French Polynesia. Confidence in this outlook highest along the equator and in the far western Pacific, although there is acceptable skill for most of the off-equatorial Pacific region.
- The La Niña-like rainfall outlook pattern continues over February to April 2026, albeit with reduced confidence due to the longer lead time of the forecast period. Below normal rainfall is forecast to persist over Nauru eastwards to northern French Polynesia, with above normal rainfall forecast over Palau and eastwards to RMI, as well as in a broad band from PNG south-eastwards to the southern Cook Islands.

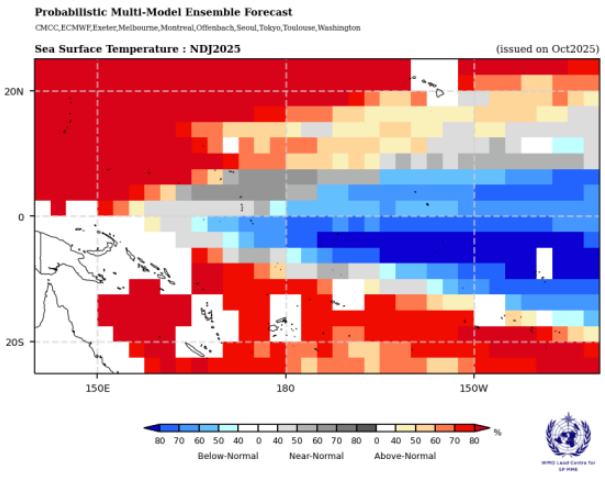
- Above normal air temperatures are favoured across the Pacific for November 2025 to January 2026 for all countries excluding a small band along the equator from Nauru eastwards to the Phoenix Islands (Kiribati) where near normal air temperatures are predicted, and for the Line Islands (Kiribati) south-eastwards over the northern Cook Islands and northern French Polynesia where below normal air temperatures are favoured. This air temperature pattern strongly aligns with the west-east sea surface temperature gradient pattern across the Pacific for the same season, indicating a reinforcing pattern between the ocean and atmosphere.



- The air temperature outlook for February to April 2026 is a similar pattern as for the previous season, with the exception for near normal air temperatures are forecast in the central equatorial Pacific, aligning with the seasonal breakdown of a La Niña-like pattern.
- There is excellent agreement between WMO lead centre multi-model ensemble (MME) and individual Pacific Regional Climate Centre Network member models or MME over the coming six months. Good agreement between high quality models is common during phases of El Niño and La Niña.
- The forecasts for both the mean sea level pressure and wind patterns for the coming season indicate the atmosphere is reflecting a La Niña-like pattern and aligns well with forecasted rainfall and air temperature patterns.

Ocean surface temperature, sea level & coral bleaching

- Above-normal SSTs are favoured for most western Pacific countries, including COSPPac partner countries in the south. Cooler SSTs are forecasted along the central equatorial Pacific, consistent with a developing La Niña episode.
- Below-normal sea levels are favoured around Kiribati, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Niue, Southern Cook Islands and French Polynesia. Near-normal or above-normal sea levels are expected elsewhere, with higher levels in the western Pacific.
- Countries should be prepared for higher than normal tides in the coming months.



- Coral Beaching Alert Levels 1 and 2 are favoured for PNG, FSM, RMI, Palau and Solomon Island.
- The fisheries convergence zone is projected to expand towards French Polynesia.

Tropical cyclones

- The Southwest Pacific TC season begins on 1 November 2025 and will continue until 30 April 2026. TCs have occurred out-of-season in the months of May, June and October but these occurrences are rare during La Niña.
- The TC forecast for the Southwest Pacific for the coming season is for normal to below normal activity (five to nine named TCs). The long-term average number of named TCs (1991-2020) is nine.
- Significant differences are expected between the western and eastern halves of the basin. The risk of impact from a TC is expected to be higher near the Coral Sea, and around New Caledonia and Vanuatu.
- Normal to reduced risk is anticipated for the central part of the basin, and reduced risk is expected for the eastern part of the basin.
- Analogue years suggest multiple TCs could intensify to at least category 3 strength.
- Monitoring multi-week weekly TC outlooks through the season is highly recommended as well as monitoring daily weather forecasts when the chance of TC occurrence is higher than normal;
- It does not take a direct hit or severe TC to cause considerable damage or life-threatening weather. When dangerous weather is forecast, please heed the advice of your local meteorological service, civil deference, or disaster management office.

Background

This statement has been crafted using the WMO Lead Centre for Long-Range Forecast Multi-Model Ensemble. Where an element forecast is not available (e.g., for TCs or coral bleaching), outlooks are obtained from Pacific RCC Network Node for LRF.

These outlook statements are for use by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs). They do not constitute an official outlook for any nation. For more information, please contact your local meteorological office.

The Pacific Islands Climate Services Panel and Pacific Regional Climate Centre (RCC) Network Node for Long Range Forecasting, in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), have been coordinating PICOF since 2015. PICOF is a platform used to discuss the seasonal outlook (ENSO, TCs, precipitation, temperature, and oceanic conditions) for the upcoming seasons, capacity build, and enable knowledge exchange between NMHSs and strengthen relationships between NMHSs and stakeholders.

PICOF is an important mechanism for sharing climate and ocean information, best practices, and lessons learnt on climate and ocean prediction and its likely implications on sectors where productivity is heavily dependent on the state of climate. PICOF is held twice a year: an in-

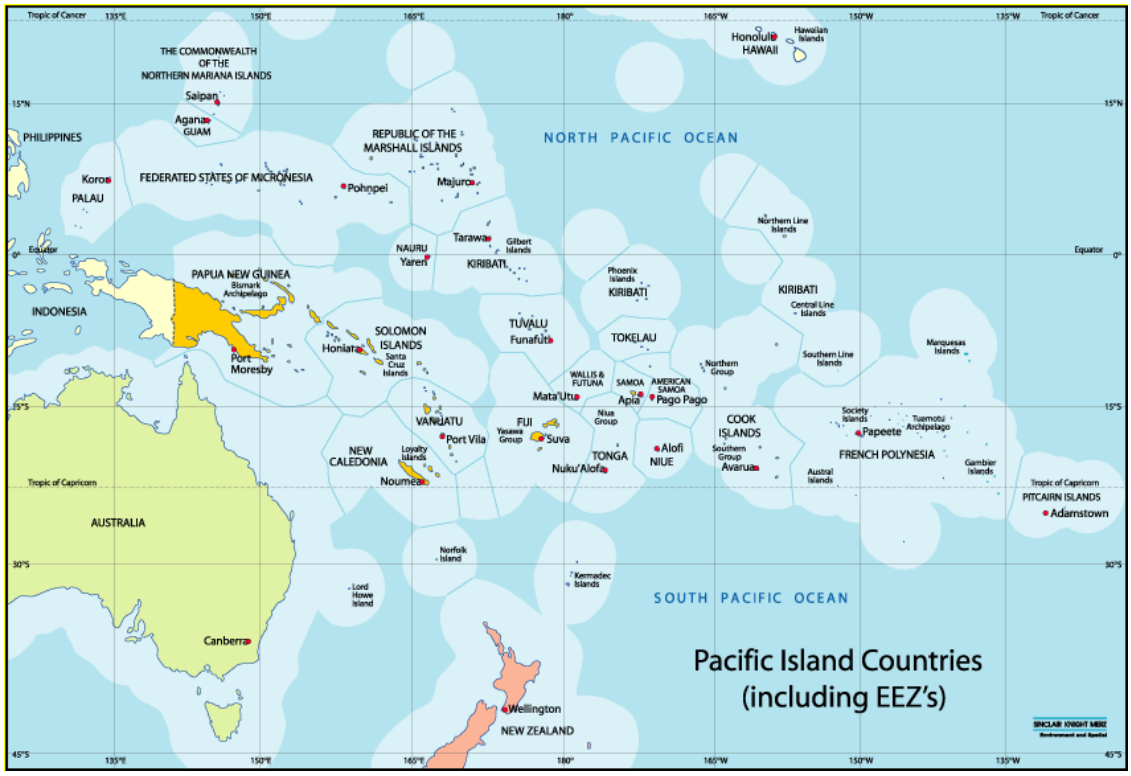
person session, when possible, in October, focusing on November to April and a virtual session in April, focusing on May to October.

PICOF-17 had attendees from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Chuuk and Pohnpei), New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America, and Vanuatu. Representatives from the following organisations also participated: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), Pacific Community (SPC), Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Météo-France, Earth Sciences New Zealand (ESNZ), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Climate Centre (APCC), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Close working relationships between Pacific rim and Pacific Island NMHSs, regional organisations, and WMO are critical to effective warning of climate hazards leading to early preparedness. Further enhancement of these relationships is essential, as well as relationships between NMHSs, their primary stakeholders, and the community. These can be frequent meetings such as one-on-one discussions, cluster group meetings, and national climate outlook forums.

In addition to the production of national seasonal climate outlooks, there is a need for simplified products and messaging especially for rural and remote communities. Sectoral impacts are most often related to prolonged drier or wetter than normal conditions. NMHSs should continue to develop climate products tailored for national sectors, relevant to their needs, and incorporating where possible traditional knowledge elements.

Figures & supporting information:



Map of the Pacific Islands region, including countries and territories involved in PICOF. Source.

Important links

https://twitter.com/pacific_rcc

https://www.facebook.com/PacificRegionalClimateCentre/

https://www.pacificmet.net/rcc