



Early Action Rainfall Watch

September 2026

The Early Action Rainfall (EAR) Watch provides sector managers with a brief summary of recent rainfall patterns, particularly for drought monitoring and the rainfall outlook for the coming months.

Issued: 15th September 2026

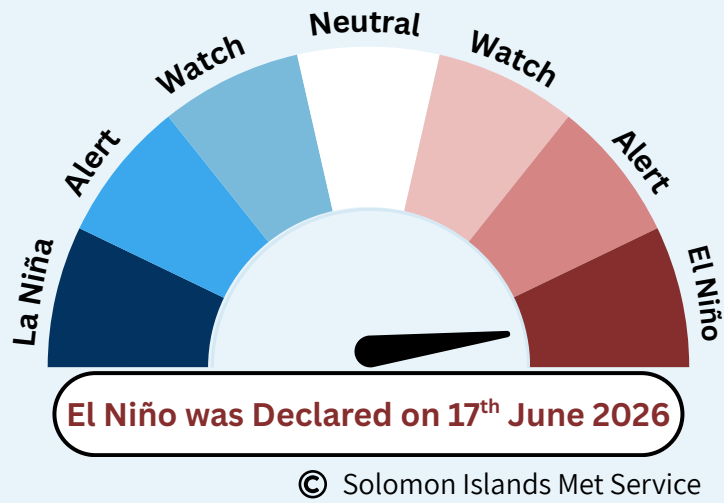
EL NINO SOUTHERN OSCILLATION (ENSO) UPDATE:

CURRENT STATUS OF ENSO:

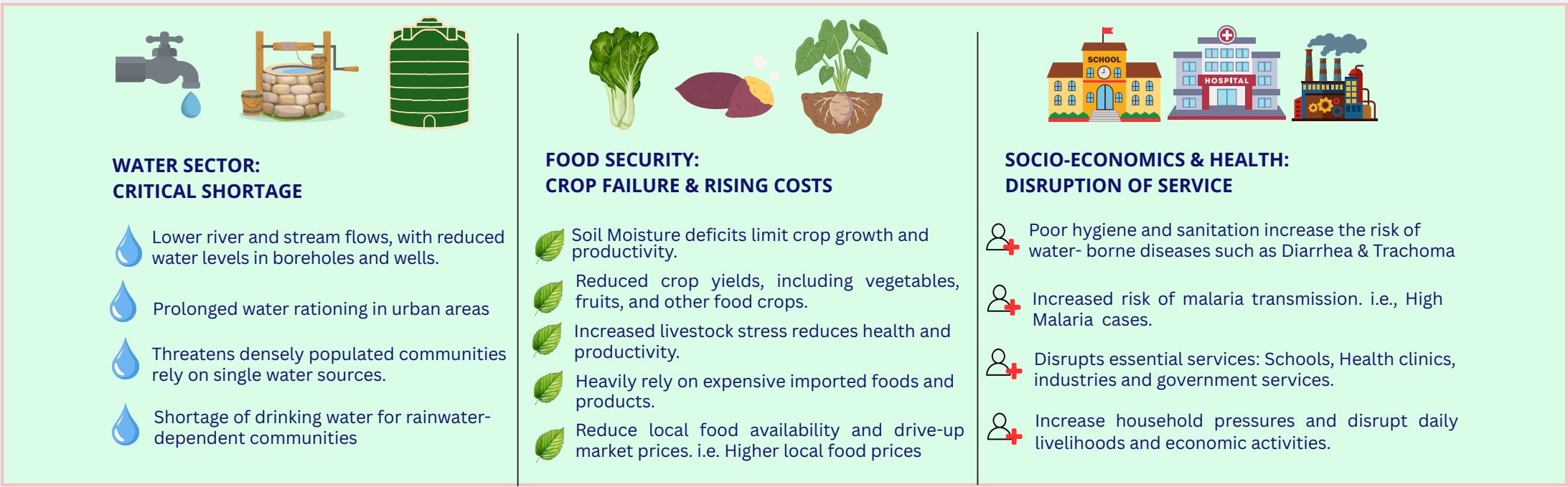
- El Niño** is firmly established in the tropical Pacific, including the Solomon Islands.
- Oceanic and atmospheric indicators remain well above the **El Niño** threshold.

ENSO OUTLOOK:

- The **El Niño** conditions are expected to strengthen further into the remaining months of the year 2026.
- Climate models forecast continued warming of Sea Surface temperatures (SSTs), reaching among the highest levels observed since 1950. This **El Niño** event is expected to reach peak intensity in late 2026 and persist into 2027.
- Below-normal rainfall associated with **El Niño** generally increases the risk of water shortages, especially for highly populated communities reliant on a single water source or communities that rely heavily on rainwater harvesting.
- El Niño** Doesn't mean no rainfall, but when there are prolonged dry spells, occasional rainfall may not be enough to offset the amount of water needed as water resources become depleted, increasing the risk of water shortages and drought.



Sector-Specific Risks Associated with El Niño-driven Rainfall Deficits:



Rainfall Status to August 2026:

A "Seriously Wet" rainfall condition has been experienced across the country over the past 1-month period, with Honiara and Henderson experiencing similar conditions over the past 3-, 6-, and 12-month periods. In contrast, Taro has been experiencing "Seriously Dry" rainfall conditions over the same 3-, 6-, and 12-month periods.

Rainfall Status	1-month to August 2026	3-Month to August 2026	6-Month February to August 2026	12-Month august 2025 to August 2026
Seriously wet	Munda, Honiara, Henderson, Auki, Kirakira, Tingoa & Lata	Honiara & Henderson	Honiara & Henderson	Honiara & Henderson
Very wet	-	-	-	-
No Alert	Taro	Tingoa, Kirakira, Lata, Munda & Auki	Munda, Auki, Tingoa, Kirakira & Lata	Munda, Auki, Kirakira, Tingoa & Lata
Very Dry	-	-	-	-
Seriously Dry	-	Taro	Taro	Taro

Table 1 categorizes existing stations nationwide by rainfall status—ranging from extremely dry to extremely wet conditions—based on the color-coded rainfall extremes shown in Figures 1–4 below.

RAINFALL MONITORING FOR THE PAST 1 MONTH AND 3 MONTHS.

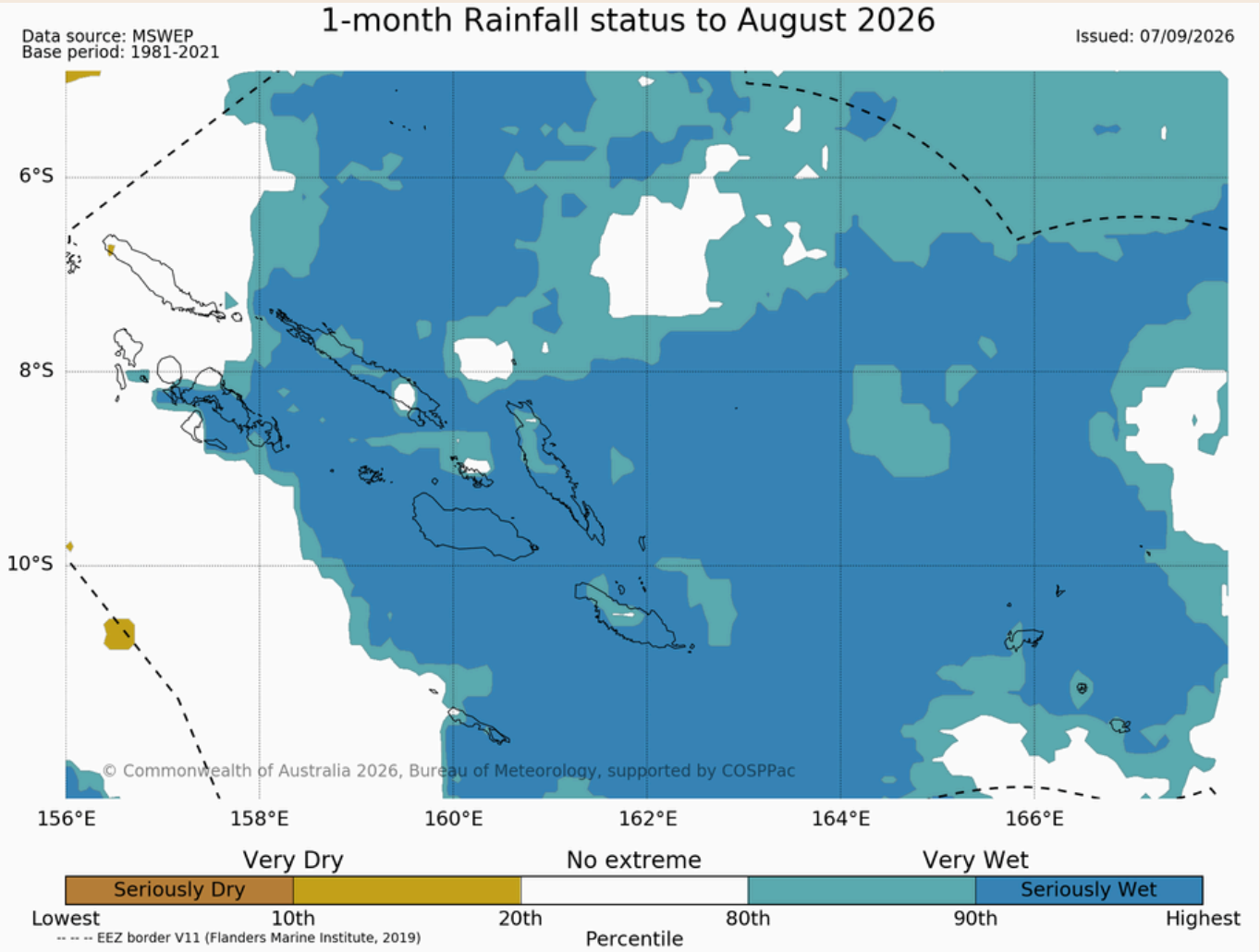


Figure 1: 1- Month to August 2026

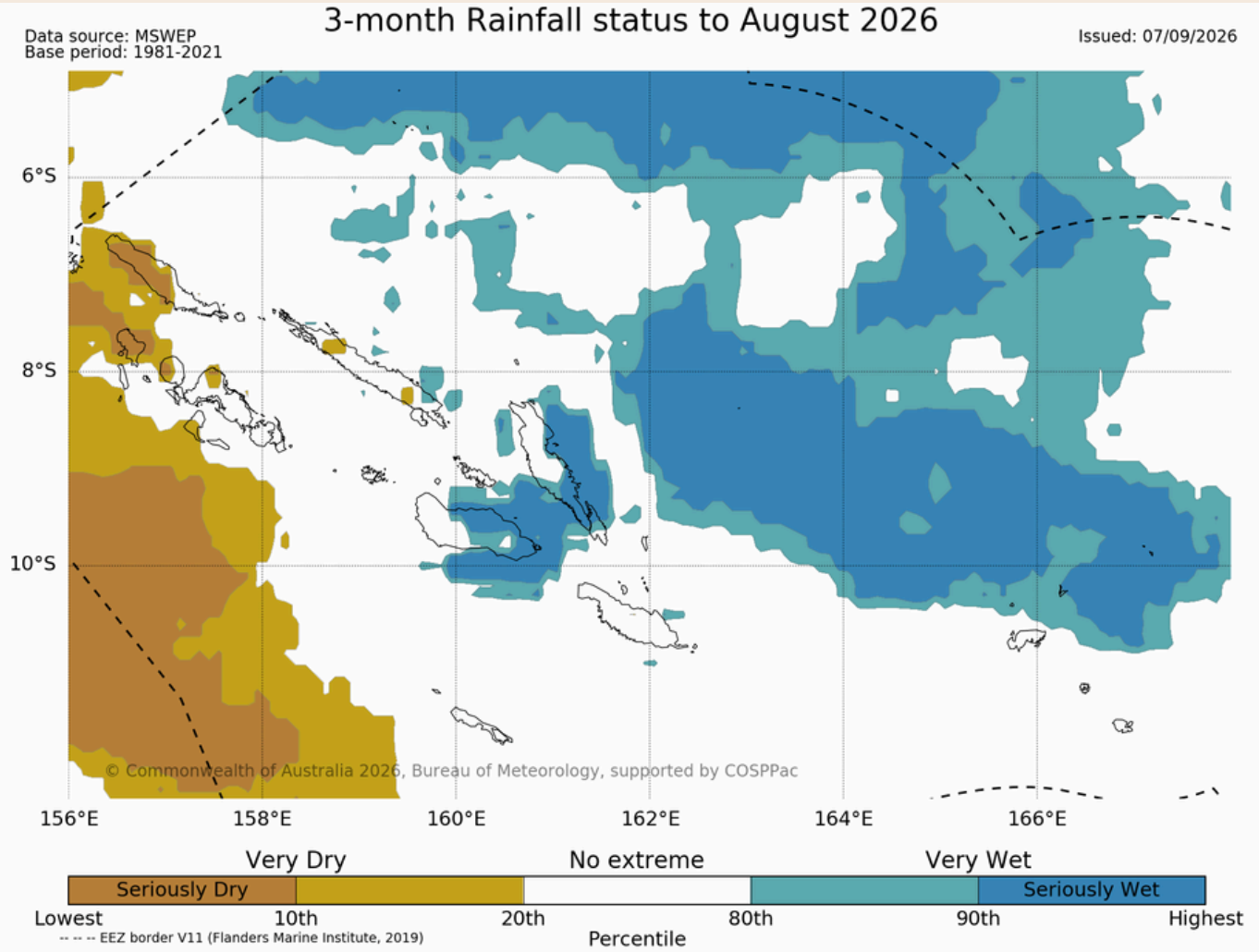


Figure 2: 3- Month to August 2026



RAINFALL MONITORING FOR THE LAST 6-MONTHS AND 12-MONTHS.

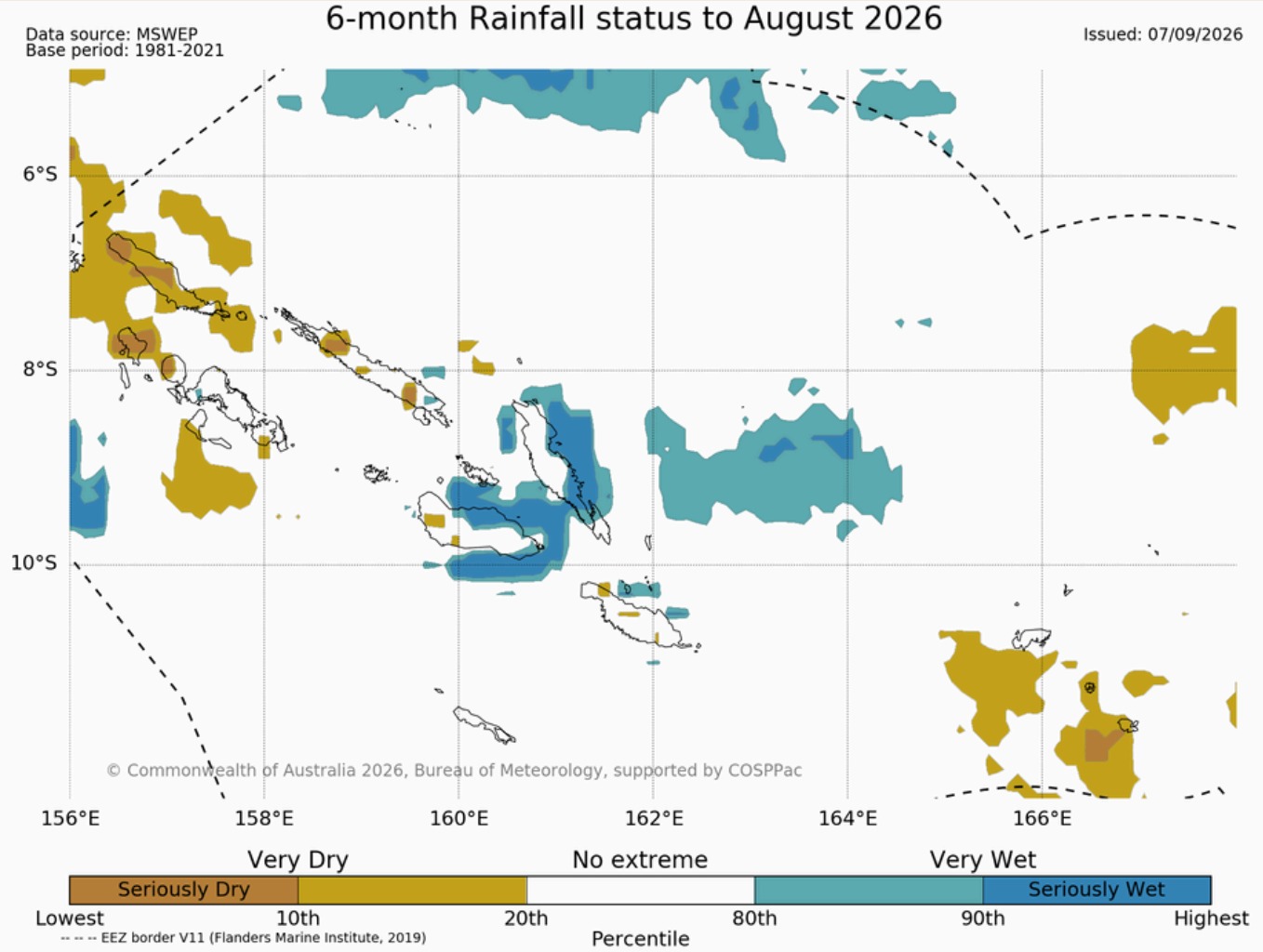


Figure 3: 6- Month to August 2026

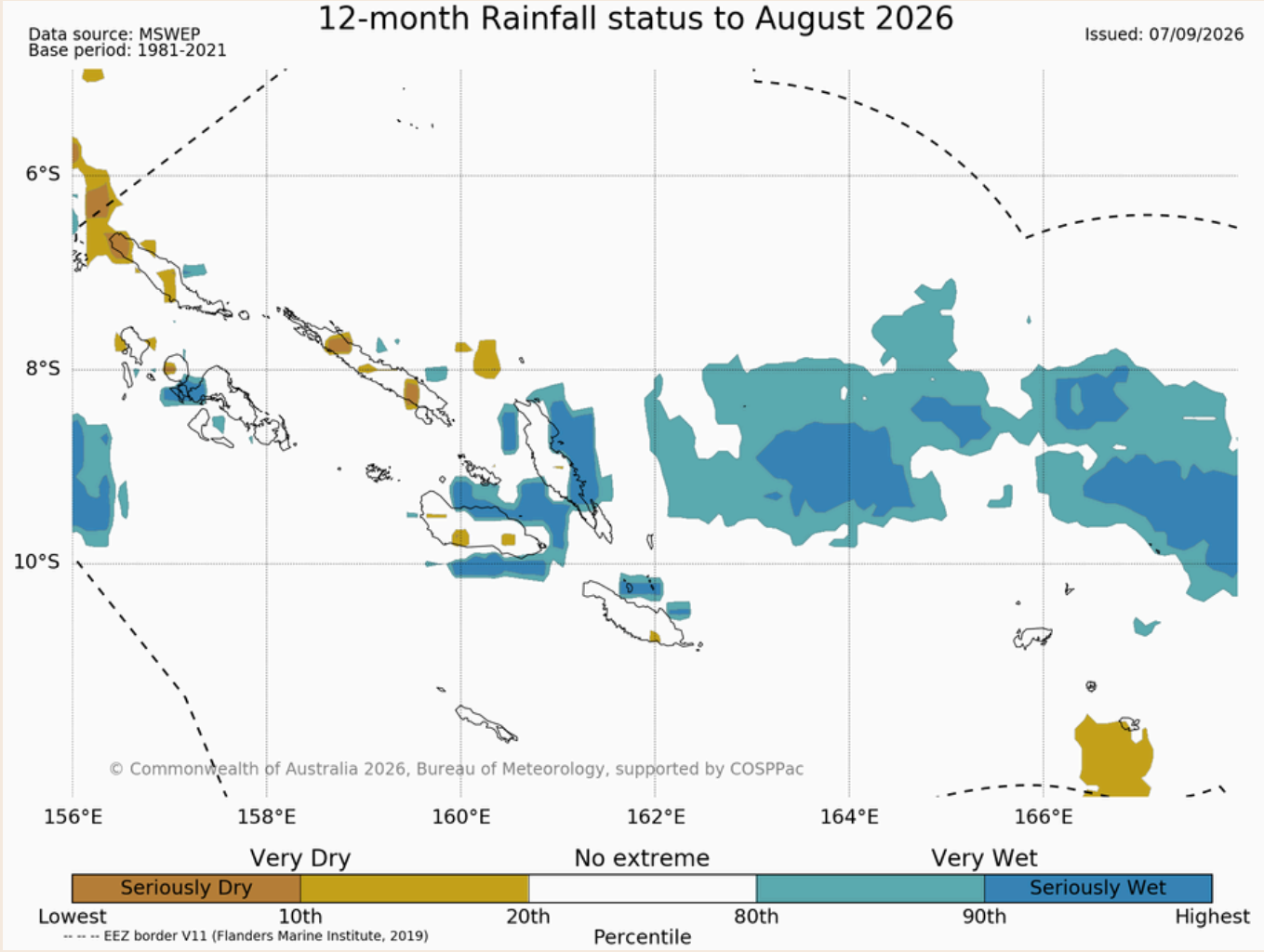
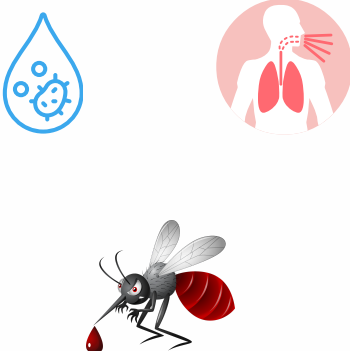
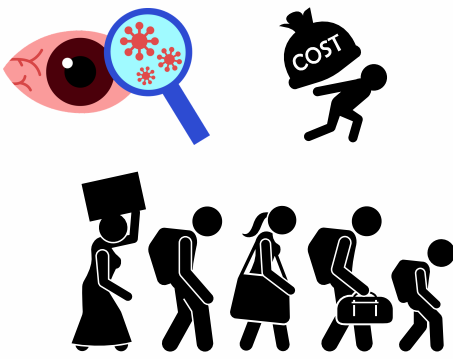


Figure 4: 12- Month to August 2026

RAINFALL EXTREME IMPACTS:

Table 2.0 outlines the potential sectoral impacts of rainfall deficiencies across various timescales, ranging from 1 to 12 months. These impacts are indicative estimates only and are subject to uncertainties related to island size, topography, geology, and soil type. For further details, please consult the respective sector offices.

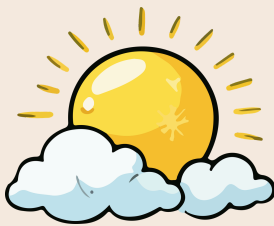
Sectors Affected	1-month period of extreme rainfall, possible impacts!	3-month period of extreme rainfall, possible Impacts!	6-month period of extreme rainfall, possible Impacts!	12-month period of extreme rainfall, possible Impacts!
Water Sector 	small watertanks (e.g. 44-gallon drums, 5000L watertank), small streams, shallow wells 	Bore holes, ground water, small wells, small streams, and rivers 	medium water sources (e.g. boreholes, springs, medium rivers, wells, large watertanks) 	Large water sources (e.g., large rivers, springs, boreholes, artisan wells). Water contamination 
Food Security 	shallow rooted agricultural crops (e.g. island cabbage, chinese cabbage, tomato, beans), kumara, cassava. Increases in pests and diseases. 	Root crops (e.g. yam, taro, pana, cassava, sweet potato, kumala), banana, cabbage, tomato, traditional vegetables, small livestock, pasture. Low water in fish ponds 	Shortage of cash crops (e.g. banana, young coconut, root crops, taro, yam, cassava, cocoa, kava, pana, sugarcane, lemon, grapefruit, orange trees, nut trees, pineapple, coffee), livestock (e.g. goats, horse, cattle), and honeybees. Low water table impacts fish food 	large trees (e.g. oil palm, coconuts, edu, kakake, cocoa, noni, breadfruit, mango. Reduced fish reproduction in fish ponds 
Socio-economic, environmental, and health 	water-borne diseases, mosquito-borne diseases (e.g malaria), respiratory diseases (e.g. cough), Mental stress 	water-borne diseases (e.g. hepatitis, typhoid), mosquito-borne diseases (e.g malaria), respiratory diseases (e.g. cough), skin disease, open defecation, malnutrition, and starvation. Schools and provincial hospitals closed down. Increase in domestic violence. Inflation, increase in government spending. 	Eye disease, water-borne diseases (e.g., dysentery), skin disease (hookworm) Mental health. Wildlife migration (e.g., birds, snakes, butterflies, etc.), bush fires Disputes over resources. Interruption to inter-island shipping. Hydropower generation affected (disruption of essential services), Relocation of villages 	Water pollution (e.g., algae bloom) Forced migration. High mortality, increases in crime (theft, looting etc.), increase workload (domestic chores e.g., water collections). Increase in poverty. 



RAINFALL OUTLOOKS:

October 2026:

A "High to very high chance of very dry" rainfall condition is expected across the country in October 2026.



October to December 2026:

A “ Very high chance of very dry” rainfall condition is expected across the country for the September to November 2026 season.



Rainfall Outlooks for September and September to November 2026

Status	1-Month Rainfall Outlook	3-Month Rainfall Outlook
Very High	-	-
High	-	-
Medium	-	-
Low Chance of Extreme	-	-
Medium	-	-
High	-	Taro
Very High	Taro, Mund, Honiara, Henderson, Auki, Kirakira, Tingoa & Lata	Mund, Honiara, Henderson, Auki, Kirakira, Tingoa & Lata

Table 3.0 categorizes the national rainfall outlook across active monitoring stations, while Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the probability of extreme rainfall events at individual stations and their surrounding communities over one- and three-month horizons.

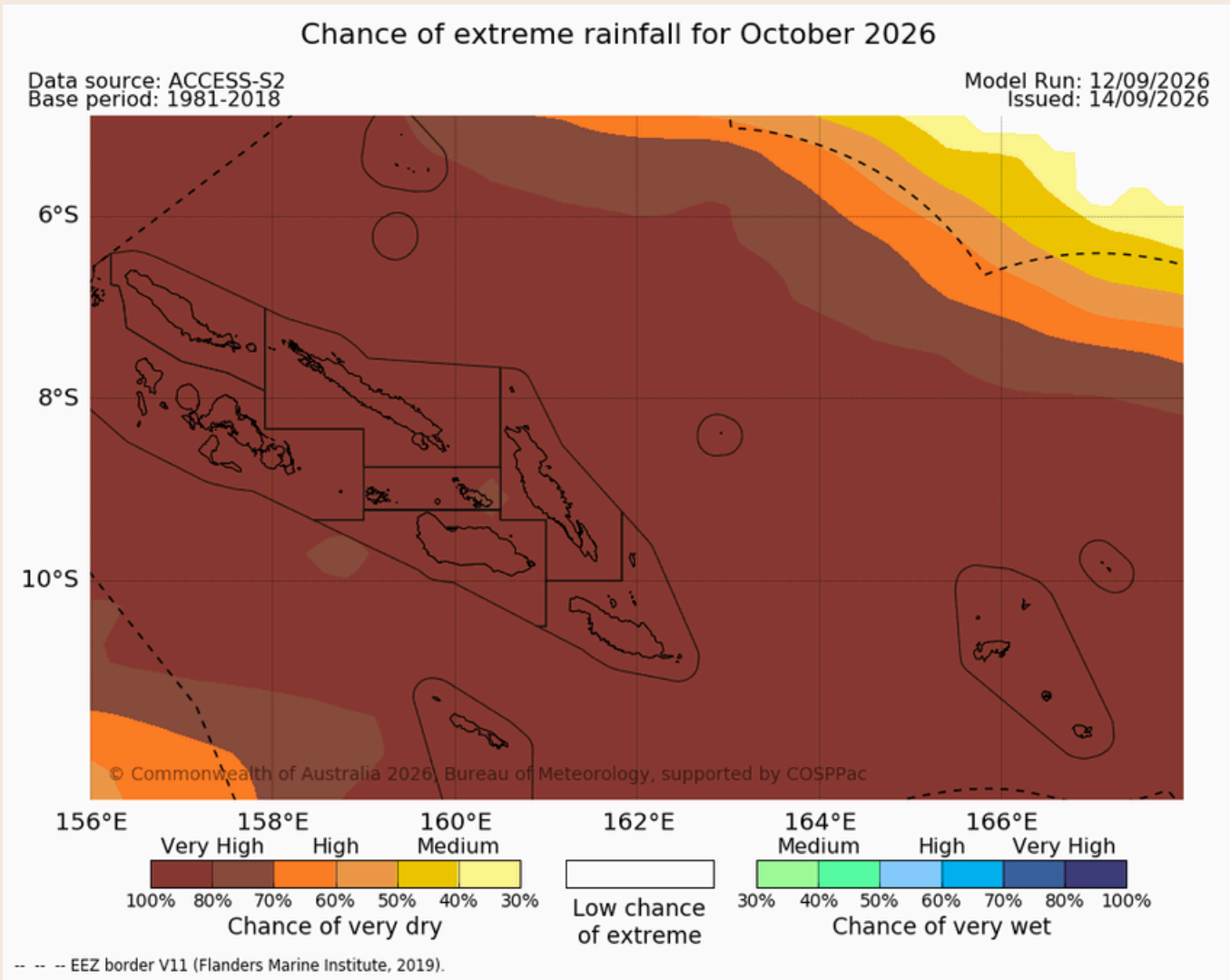


Figure 5: Chance of Extreme rainfall for September 2026

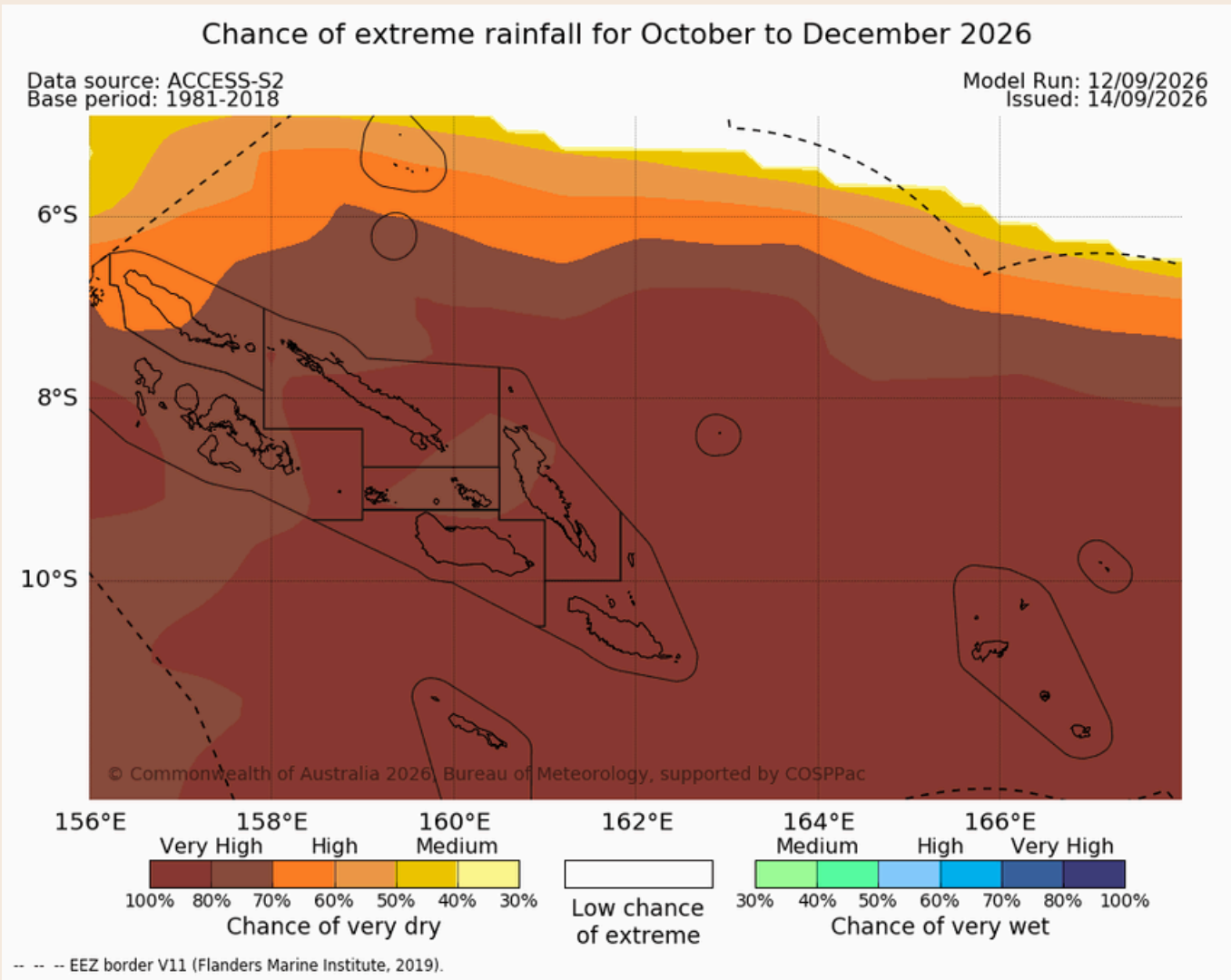


Figure 6: Chance of Extreme rainfall during October – December 2026



KEY TERMS & GLOSSARY



Rainfall Status

Estimates of moisture/water stress are based on recent rainfall compared with historical observations using the Percentile (Decile) Index. The Percentile Index is used to assess the rainfall status from the MSWEP dataset. MSWEP is a global precipitation product that combines rain gauges, satellite and, reanalysis data to a 0.1° resolution. Seriously Dry is defined as drought assessed by rainfall data only. A site is assigned 'No Alert' when rainfall has been near normal or slightly above or below normal for the period(s) in question. The 3-, 6- and 12-month timescales can accurately predict drought.



Rainfall Outlook (month and season)

The chance of extremes outlook maps presents the likelihood of Very Wet or Very Dry conditions. They are displayed by the chance that the outlook will result in rainfall in the top or bottom 20% of historical observations for the selected outlook period. Where there is white shading, it is less likely there will be either Very Wet or Very Dry conditions, rainfall is likely to be close to normal in this case. A very high chance of Very Dry (Very Wet) conditions is associated with the highest likelihood of rainfall being in the lowest (highest) 20% on record. A medium chance of Very Dry (Very Wet) conditions is associated with a lower but reasonable chance of rainfall being in the lowest (highest) 20% on record. The outlooks have been produced using the Australian Bureau of Meteorology ACCESS-S2 model.



Glossary

- 1. **ENSO** - El Niño Southern Oscillation.
- 2. **SST** – Sea Surface Temperature
- 3. **La Nina** – extensive ocean cooling in the Central and Eastern Pacific – associated with wetter than normal conditions.
- 4. **El Nino** – extensive ocean warming of the Central and Eastern Pacific – associated with drier than normal conditions.
- 5. **Past Rainfall** – rainfall that is observed in the past 1, 3, 6, and 12 months.
- 6. **Quintile** – based on a chance of extreme rainfall (very dry or very wet) using 5-category predictions.
- 7. **Very Dry** – rainfall in the lowest 20% of the historical record for that location and time period.
- 8. **Very Wet** – rainfall in the highest 20% of the historical record for that location and time period.
- 9. **Seriously Dry** – rainfall in the lowest 10% of the historical record for that location and time period.
- 10. **Seriously Wet** – rainfall in the highest 10% of the historical record for that location and time period.
- 11. **Chance of Very Dry** – percent chance of rainfall in the lowest 20% of the historical record for that location and month/season.
- 12. **Chance of Very Wet** – percent chance of rainfall in the highest 20% of the historical record for that location and month/season.
- 13. **Medium, High, and Very High** - refer to the percent probability level, where Very High has the highest confidence and represents the range 70% and above.

For further information, please contact:

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