Throughout the southern half of Queensland, April rainfall has been very much below average and the rainfall deficiencies in the southern third of the State have been exacerbated. As very little rain is usually recorded during the next few months over the areas of Queensland that are affected by drought there is little prospect of relief before August or September.

A similar situation applies over the eastern half of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Unless exceptional rain occurs during winter, rainfall deficiencies will persist until at least spring.

Over the Northern Territory the wet season appears to have finished and the next five to six months are normally dry.

The map shows the extent and severity of rainfall deficiencies as at the end of April while the tables provide statistics of rainfall in and near the affected areas.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

DROUGHT REVIEW

AUSTRALIA

NUMBER 118

Issued May 1980

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

GPO Box 1289K
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

STATEMENT ON DROUGHT ISSUED BY THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF METEOROLOGY 6 MAY 1980

The acting Director of Meteorology, Mr R.B. Crowder, said today that most of the eastern half of New South Wales, parts of the Australian Capital Territory, eastern Victoria and the southern third of Queensland, were still experiencing serious or severe rainfall deficiencies at the end of April.

During the latter half of April, substantial and widespread rain fell over a large area of South Australia, Victoria and southwestern New South Wales. The rain was sufficient to break the five-month drought over this area. In many places falls of over 100 millimetres were recorded.

The rain-bearing system that alleviated the drought did not extend into Gippsland in Victoria, or to the South Coast, Southwest Slopes and Southern Tablelands of New South Wales. Consequently these areas are relatively dry and require substantial rainfall to overcome the existing deficiencies.

In Tasmania rainfall was close to, or above, average during April, with some good falls in the northeast. This relieved the dry conditions over most of the State, but there are still areas on the east coast near Swansea that require further rain to overcome the previous rainfall deficiencies.

Widespread rain fell over Western Australia during the third week of April as a series of cold fronts crossed the southern half of the State, bringing the first significant rain to this area since last spring and providing relief from the very dry conditions. These systems brought the first substantial rain to pastoral areas for several years. Follow-up rains during the next few months are needed to replenish water supplies and soil moisture.