Northern Territory Pastoral Feed Outlook December 2017

The purpose of this quarterly outlook is to summarise information relevant to the pastoral industry such as current feed supplies, seasonal conditions, the development of drought conditions in central Australia and fire risk.

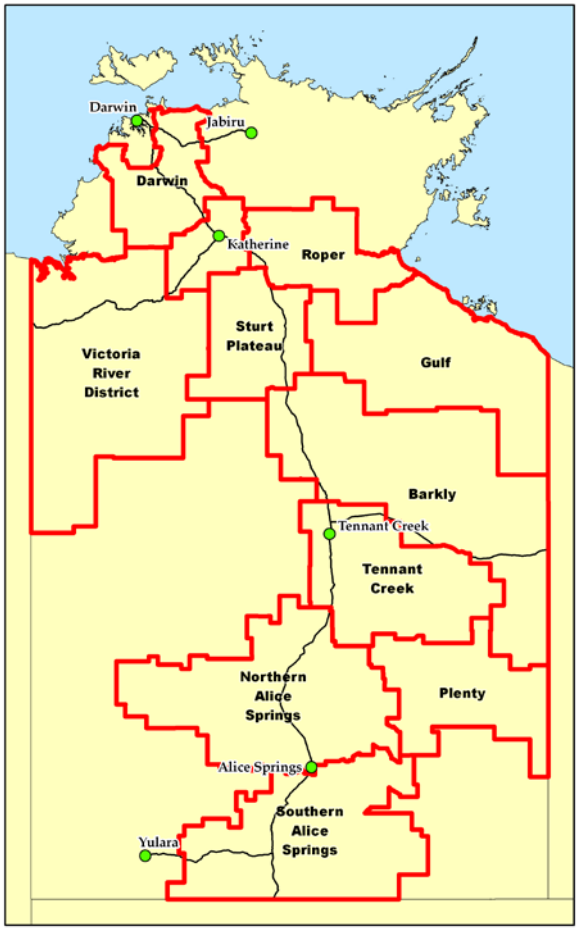
You can see the entire document and all districts by continuing to scroll through this file. If you are interested in selected sections, you can click on the links below.

[Summary of current situation & trends - all districts]

[Northern Territory Seasonal Outlook – as at December 2017]

Individual District Summaries:

- Darwin District
- Katherine District
- Victoria River District
- Sturt Plateau District
- Roper District
- Gulf District
- Barkly District
- Tennant Creek District
- Northern Alice Springs District
- Plenty District
- Southern Alice Springs District



NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Summary of current situation & trends - all districts – December 2017

KEY | Green = low risk | Orange = watch | Red = high risk

KEY ↑ = increasing trend ↓ = decreasing trend ↔ = steady

	Northern Territory Pastoral Districts											
Indicator	**Darwin**	**Katherine**	**VRD**	**Sturt Plateau**	**Roper**	**Gulf**	**Barkly**	**Tennant Creek**	**Northern Alice Springs**	**Plenty**	**Southern Alice Springs**	**Comments**
2017/2018 total pasture growth	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	Arrows indicate trend compared to the long-term mean.
Current estimated standing biomass	↔	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↔	Arrows indicate trend since previous quarter.
Current fire risk	↓	↓	↓	↔	↓	↓	↓	↓	↔	↔	↓	Arrows indicate the trend since previous quarter.
Current seasonal outlook	↓	↓	↓	↓	↔	↓	↔	↓	↓	↓	↑	Arrows indicate the trend since previous quarter and taking into account the forecasted model predictions.

For further information about this Outlook, please contact Chris Materne on 08 8951 8135 or Dionne Walsh on 08 8999 2178

Northern Territory Seasonal Outlook

as at December 2017

Sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology
http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/

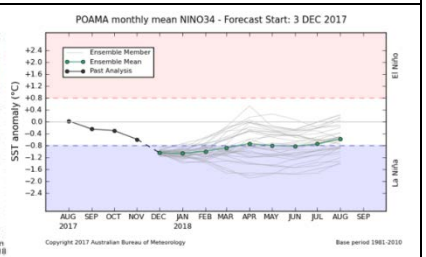
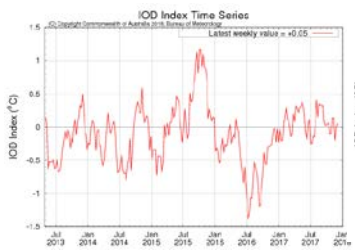
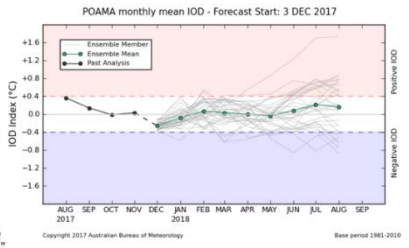
The national outlook for December 2017 to February 2018 indicates that:

- **Drier** than average conditions are expected across much of the NT.
- **Warmer** than average days and nights are more likely across the entire NT.

Typically when the tropical Pacific cools towards La Niña levels, the western Pacific and seas around northern Australia warm significantly, but models suggest this is not likely to occur this summer. Likewise, La Niña periods typically see warmer than average waters develop in the eastern Indian Ocean. This season, near average to cooler waters are forecast to remain in this area, while warmer waters remain off Africa.
The combination of ocean patterns, and the likely weak La Niña itself, is why Australia does not have significant and widespread increased chances of a wetter and cooler summer.

Chance of exceeding the median rainfall
December 2017 to February 2018

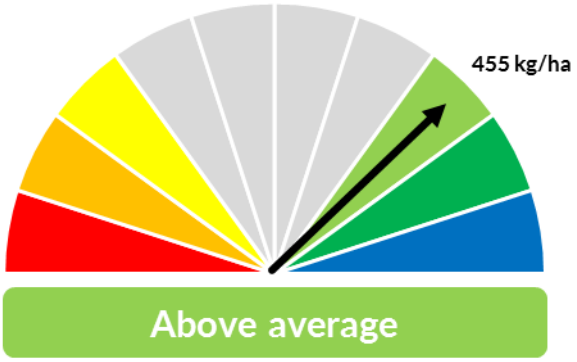
Chance of exceeding the median max. temp.
December 2017 to February 2018

Seasonal Indicators	Comments (sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology)	
El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/ Current outlook: LA NIÑA **ENSO status**  **Current status:** LA NIÑA	**La Niña established in tropical Pacific** This 2017-18 La Niña event is forecast to be short-lived and weak, with sea surface temperature patterns in the western Pacific and eastern Indian Ocean not typical of La Niña. As a result, there's little push towards widespread wetter conditions across much of the country. La Niña typically brings above average rainfall to eastern Australia during late spring and summer, however sea surface temperature patterns in the Indian Ocean and closer to Australia are not typical of a La Niña event, reducing the likelihood of widespread above average summer rainfall.	 
Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/#tabs=Indian-Ocean Current outlook: **Neutral**	**IOD also neutral.** The influence of the IOD on Australian climate is weak during December to April. This is because the monsoon trough shifts south over the tropical Indian Ocean changing wind patterns, which prevents the IOD pattern from being able to form. However, to the south of the traditional Indian Ocean Dipole regions, cooler than average sea surface temperatures in the eastern Indian Ocean may be limiting the feed of moisture over Australia, and opposing more typical La Niña influences.	 

Darwin District

- There has been a good start to the wet season, with 73% of the district receiving above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking slightly ahead of this time last year
- 75% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 42% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (13% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 69% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

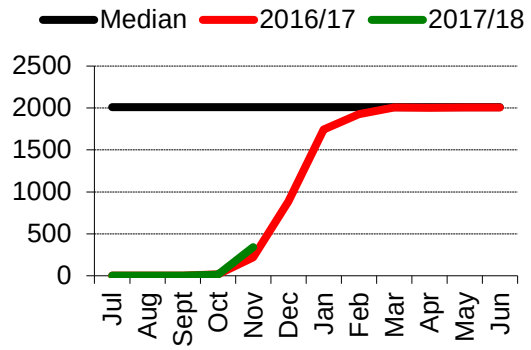


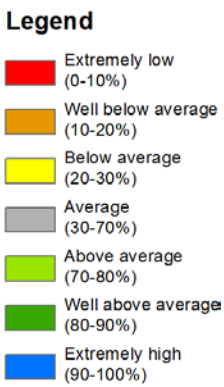
as at 1 December 2017

In a typical wet season, pasture growth in the Darwin region tends to be limited by available soil nitrogen rather than soil moisture. Therefore a poor wet season may not generally affect the total quantity of pasture grown on upland country.

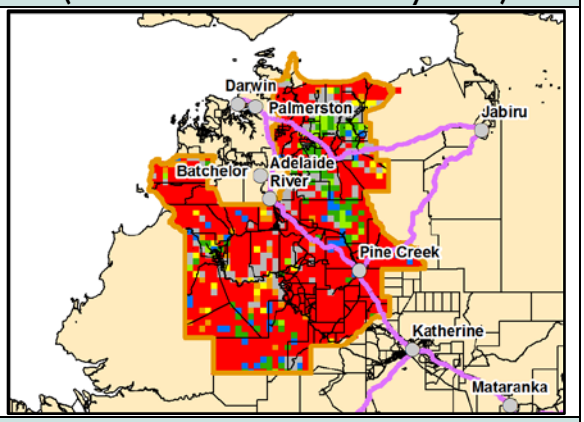
As at 1 December 2017				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	94%	6%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	42%	46%	10%	2%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

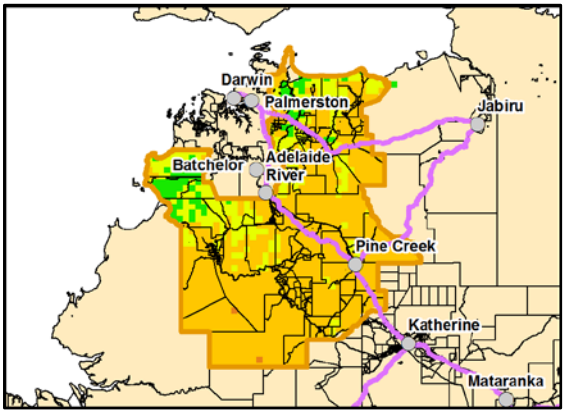


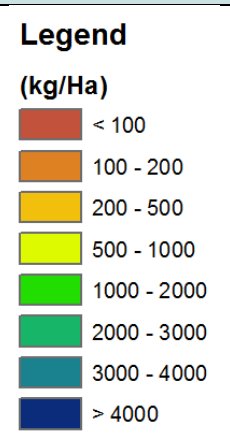


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

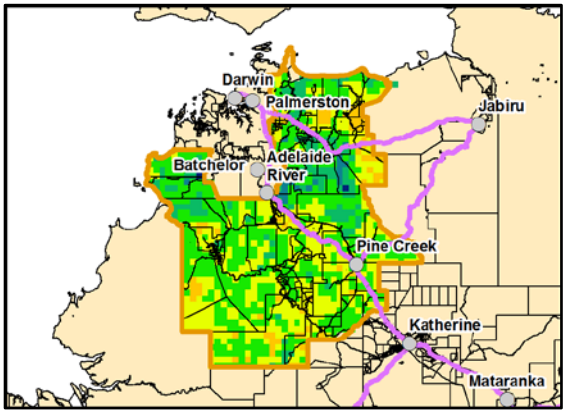


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





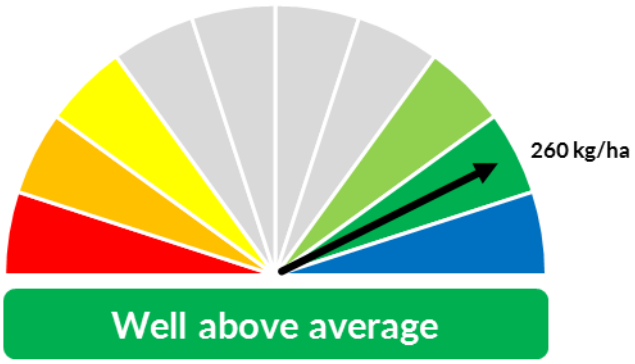
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Katherine District

- There has been a good start to the wet season, with 75% of the district receiving above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking slightly ahead of this time last year
- 72% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 28% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (11% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 96% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

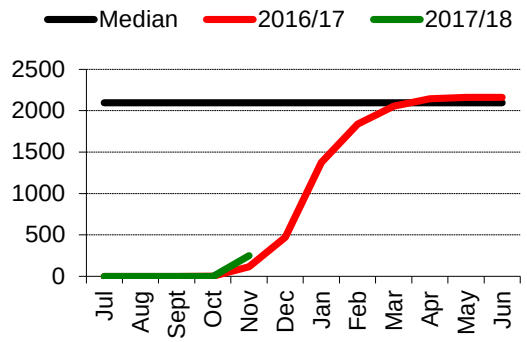
2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

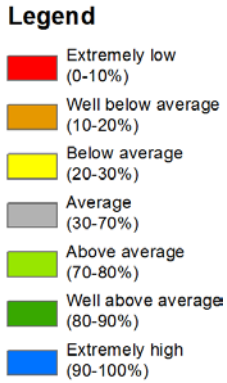


as at 1 December 2017

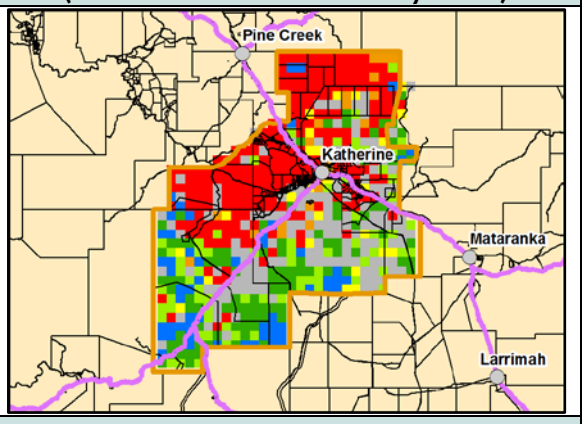
As at 1 December 2017				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	37%	53%	9%	1%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

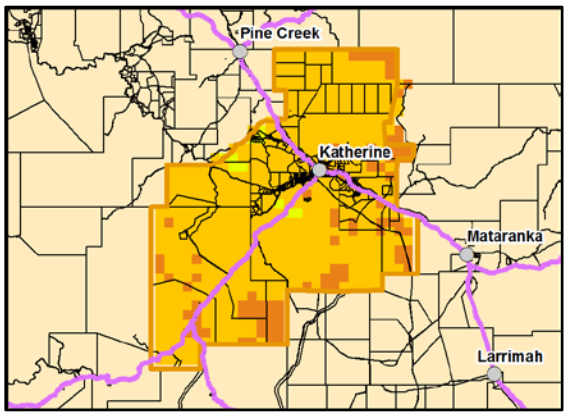


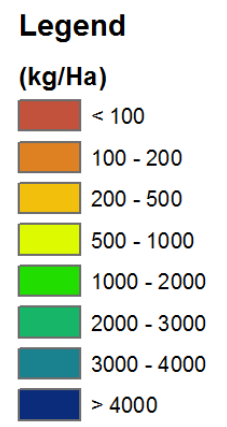


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

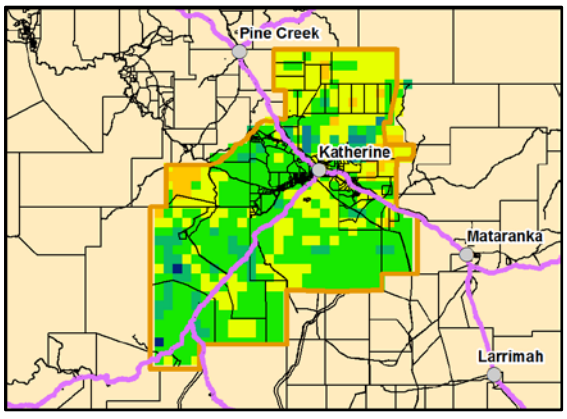


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





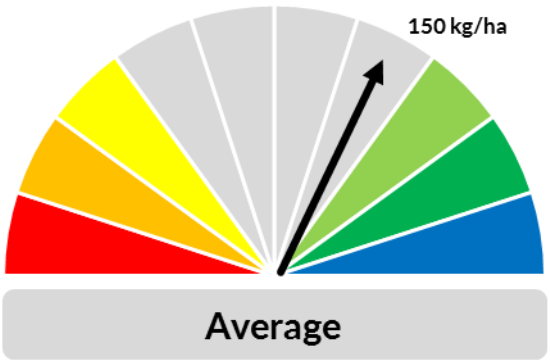
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Victoria River District

- There has been a reasonable start to the wet season, with average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking similar to this time last year
- 71% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 23% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (16% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 98% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

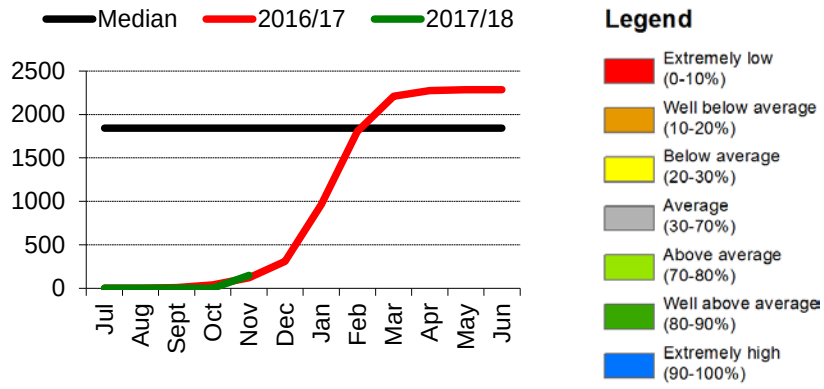
2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far



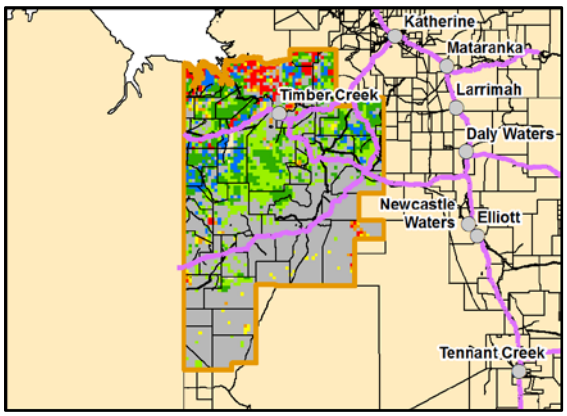
as at 1 December 2017

As at 1 December 2017				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	15%	46%	22%	17%

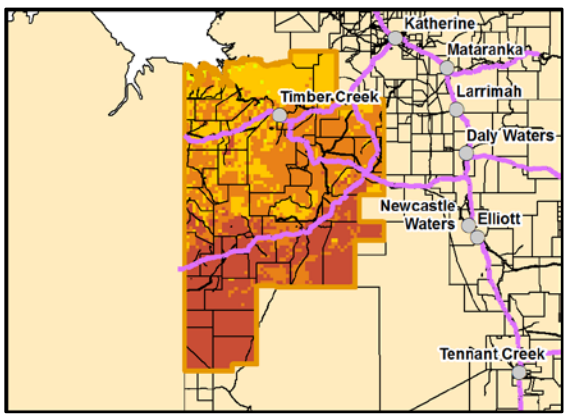
2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

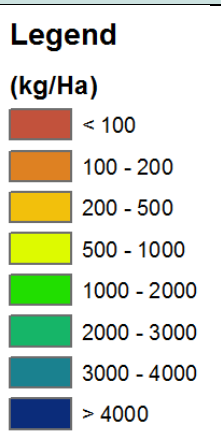


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

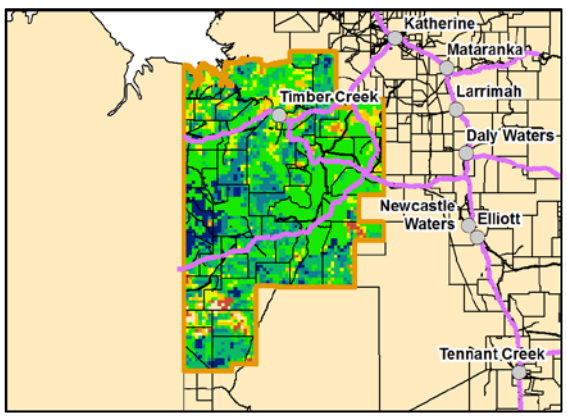


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





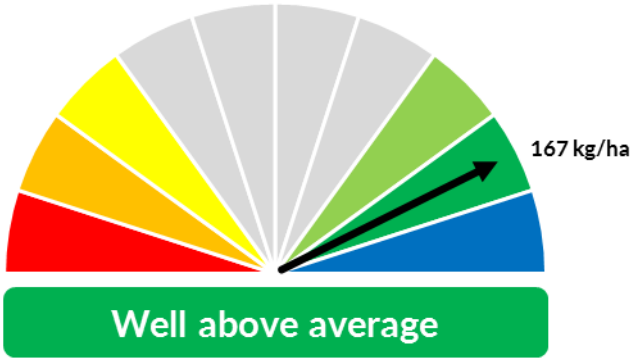
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Sturt Plateau District

- There has been a good start to the wet season, with 83% of the district receiving above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking slightly ahead of this time last year
- 87% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 18% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (14% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 99% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

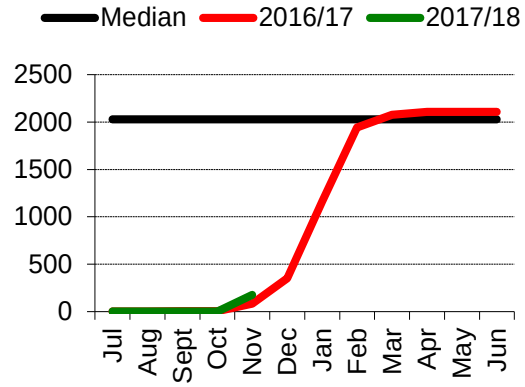


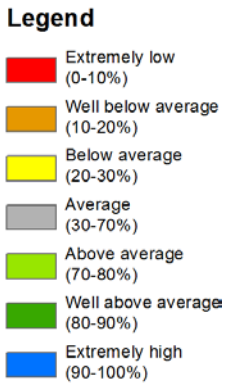
as at 1 December 2017

As at 1 December 2017

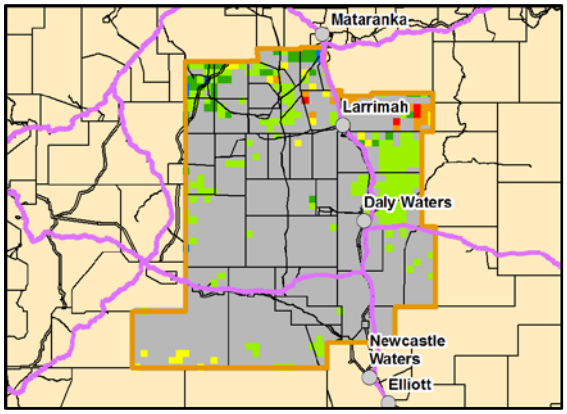
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	30%	62%	5%	3%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

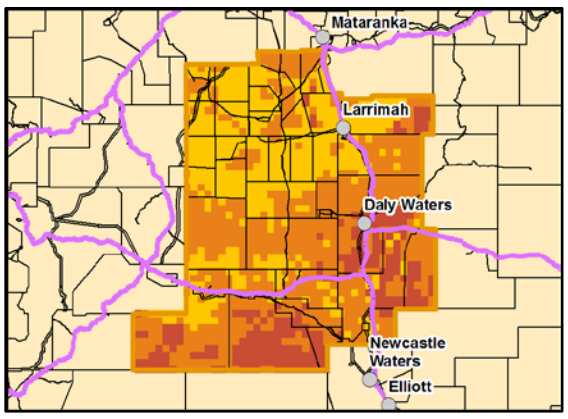


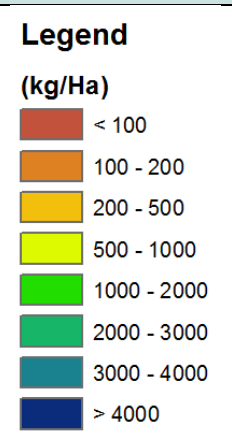


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

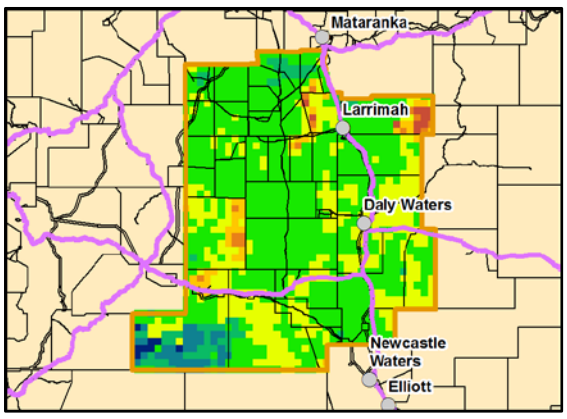


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





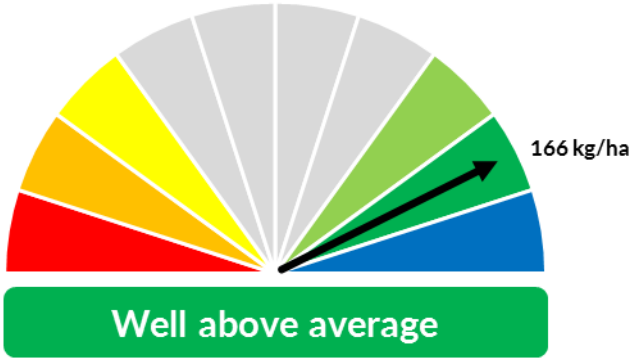
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Roper District

- There has been a good start to the wet season, with 65% of the district receiving above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking similar to this time last year
- 78% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 24% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (13% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 98% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

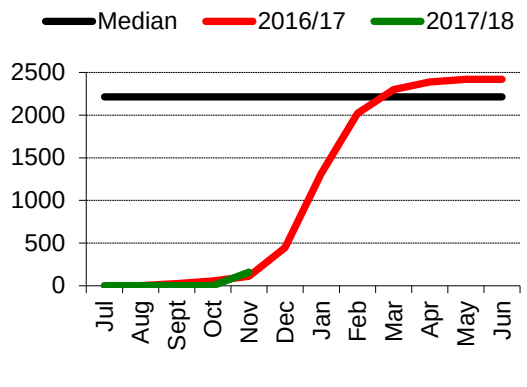


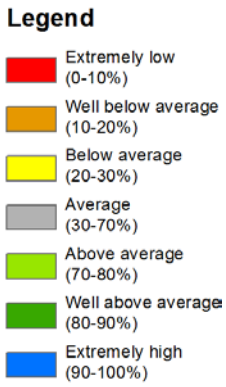
as at 1 December 2017

As at 1 December 2017

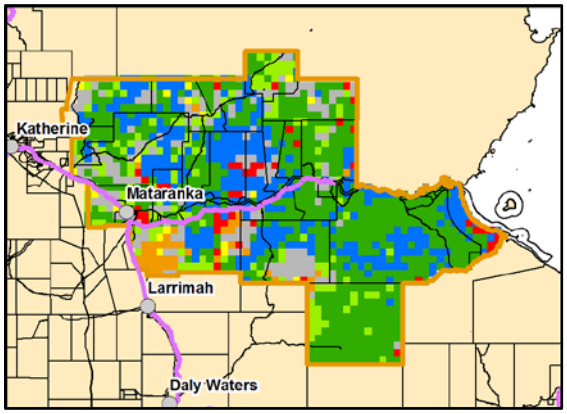
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	22%	48%	21%	9%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

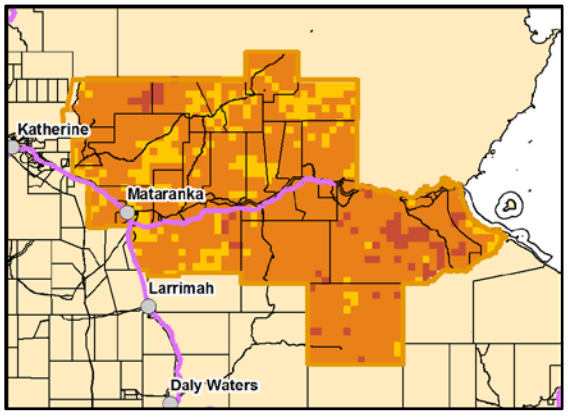


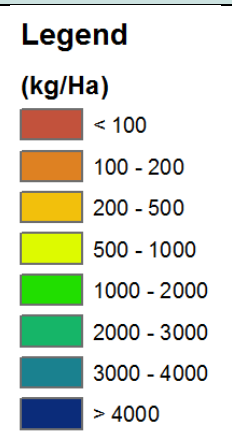


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

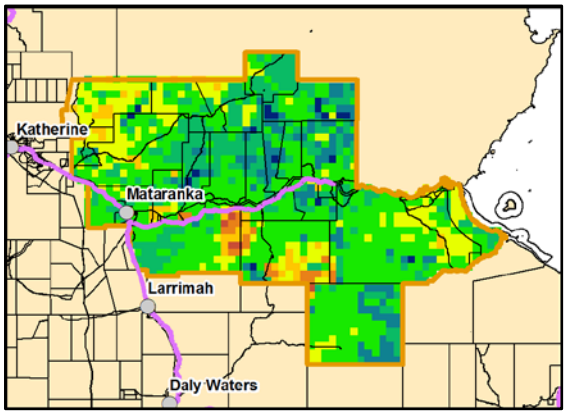


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





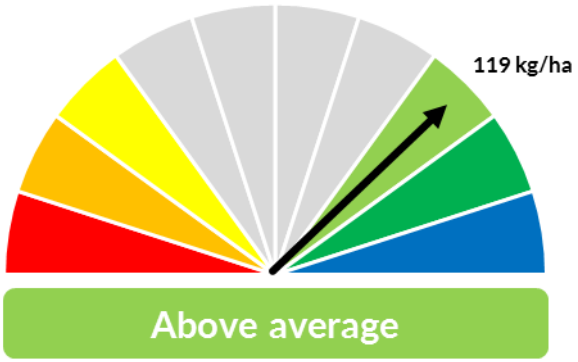
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Gulf District

- There has been a good start to the wet season, with 73% of the district receiving above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking similar to this time last year
- 72% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 15% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (12% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 98% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

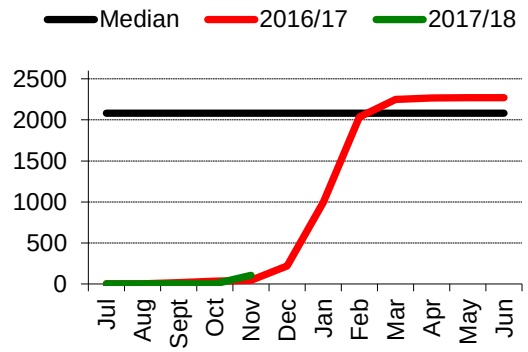


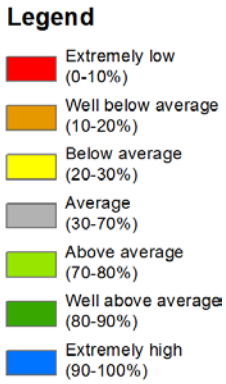
as at 1 December 2017

As at 1 December 2017

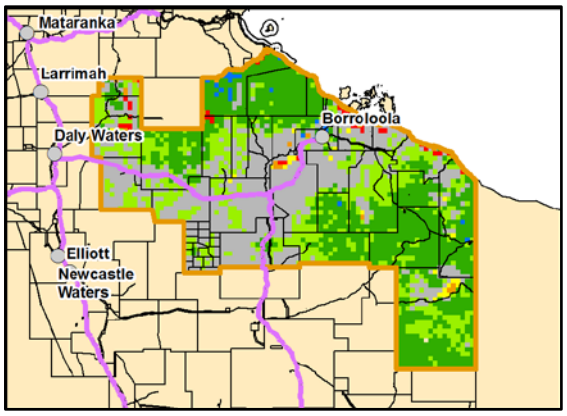
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	33%	38%	16%	13%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

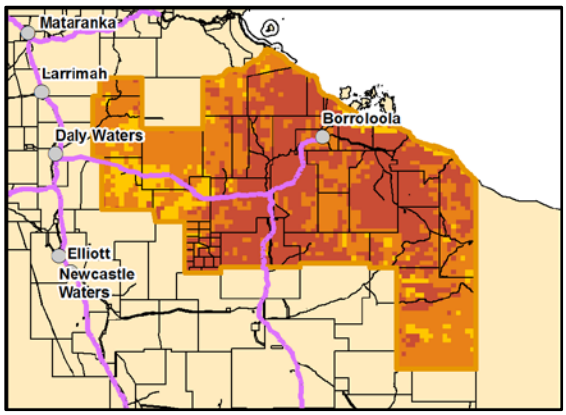


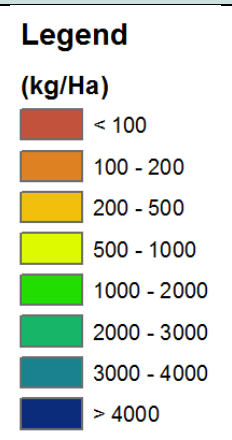


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

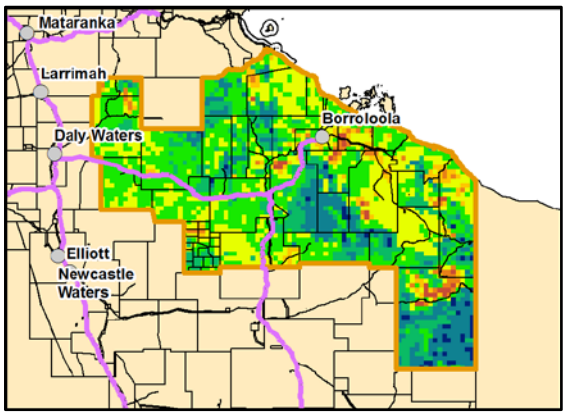


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





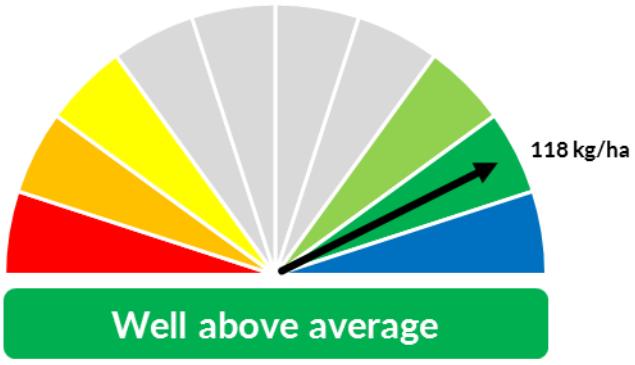
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Barkly District

- There has been a good start to the wet season, with 94% of the district receiving above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking similar to this time last year
- 95% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 7% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (6% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 87% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

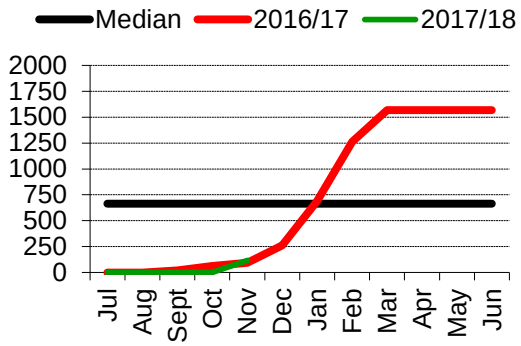


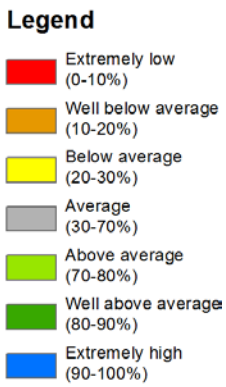
as at 1 December 2017

As at 1 December 2017

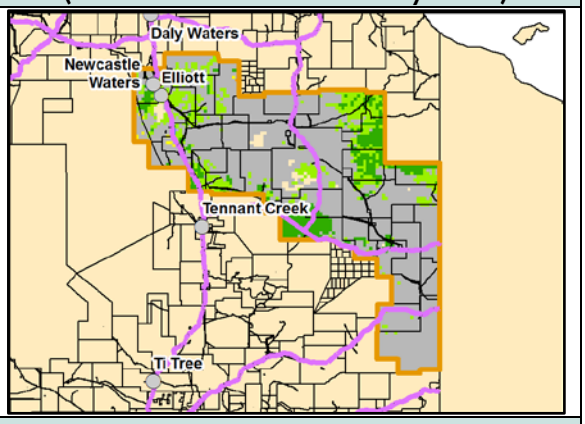
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	98%	2%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	5%	10%	44%	41%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

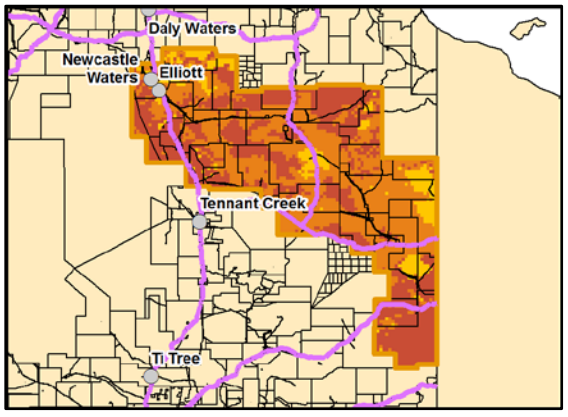


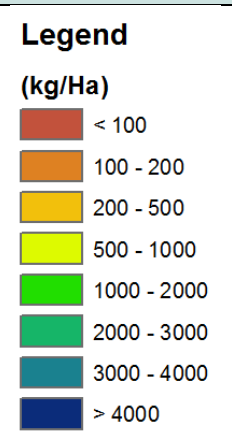


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

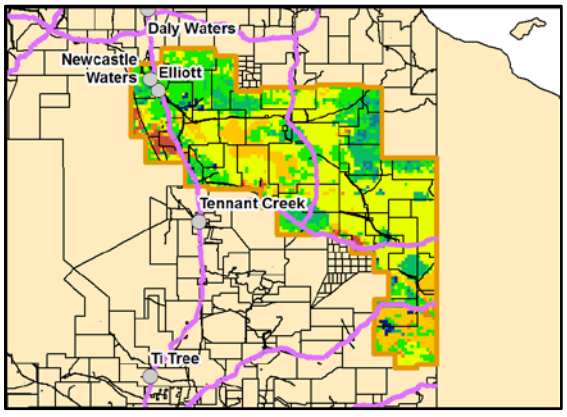


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





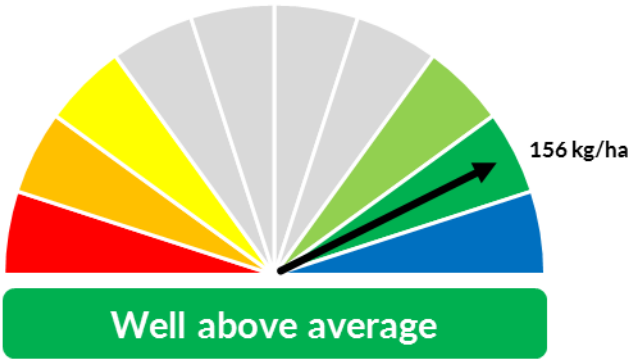
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Tennant Creek District

- There has been a good start to the season, with 98% of the district receiving above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking slightly behind this time last year
- 88% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 21% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (20% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 91% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

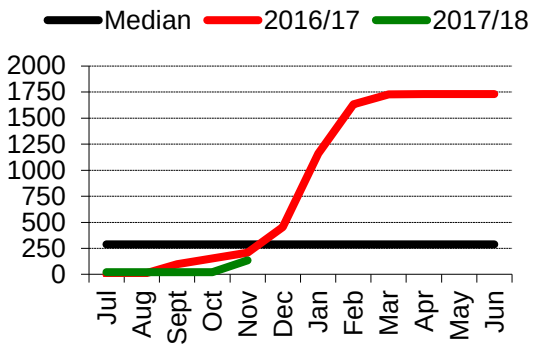
2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

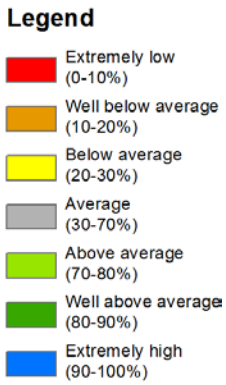


as at 1 December 2017

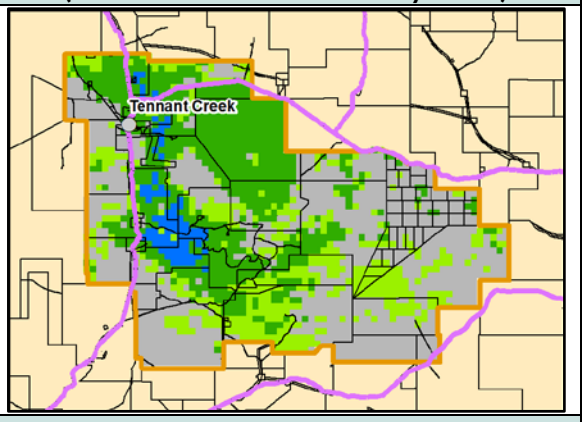
As at 1 December 2017				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	88%	12%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	8%	2%	6%	84%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

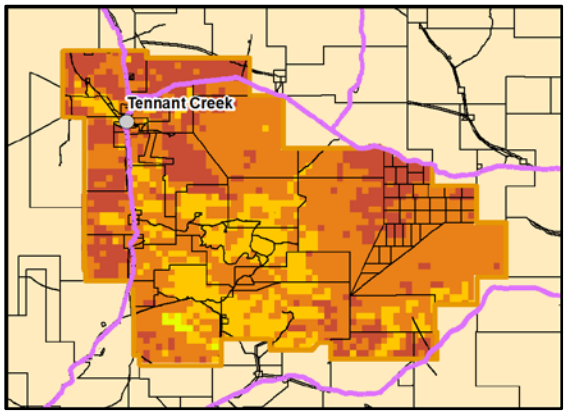


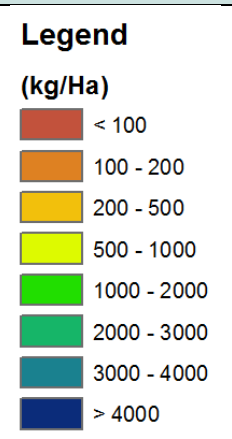


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

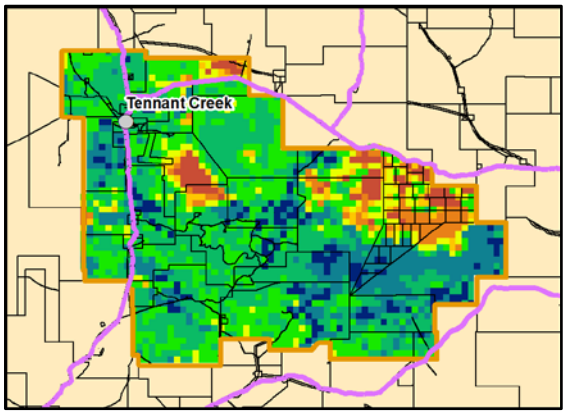


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





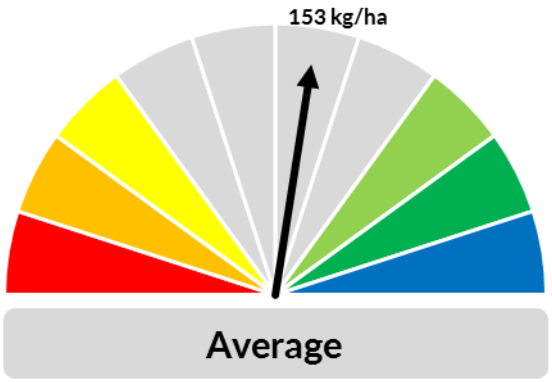
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Northern Alice Springs District

- There has been a reasonable start to the season, with 99% of the district receiving average to slightly above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking behind this time last year
- 94% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 7% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017 (6% of this since 1 July 2017)
- 100% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

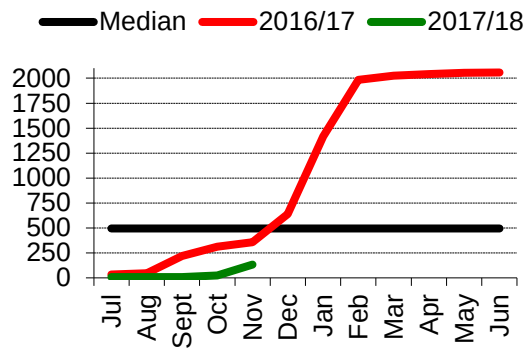
2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

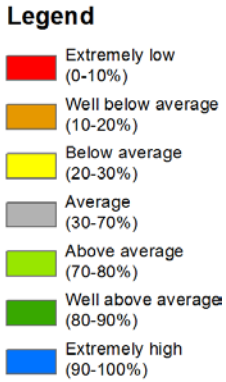


as at 1 December 2017

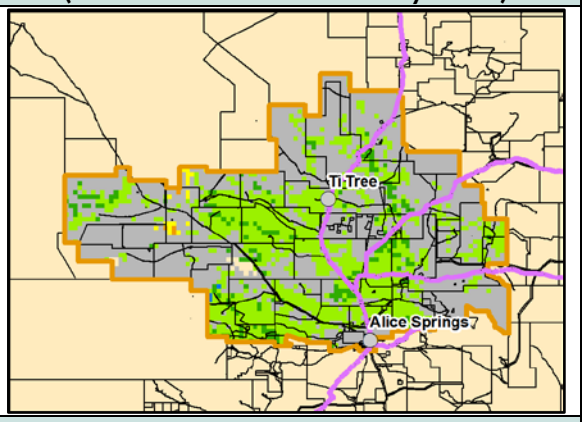
As at 1 December 2017				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	88%	12%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	2%	3%	10%	85%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

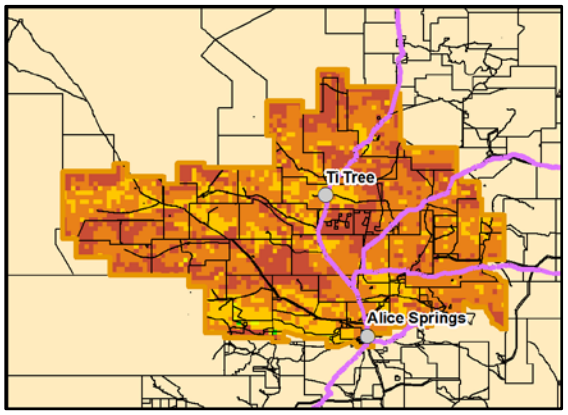


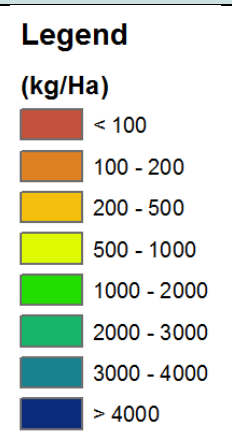


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

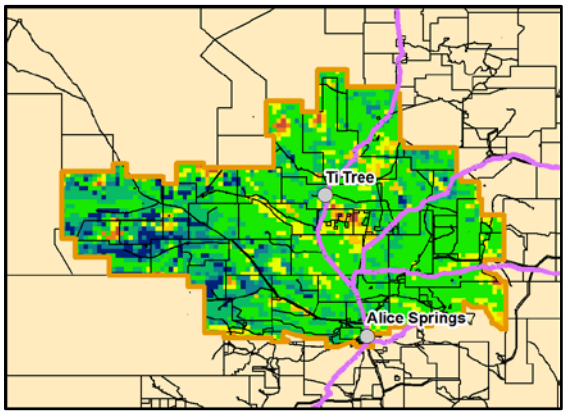


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





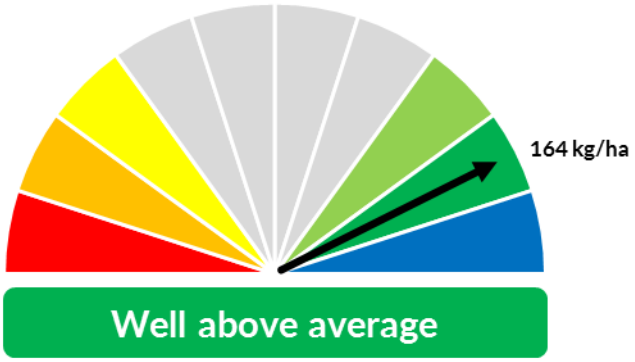
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Plenty District

- There has been a good start to the season, with 78% of the district receiving above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking well behind this time last year
- 100% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 0% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017
- 100% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

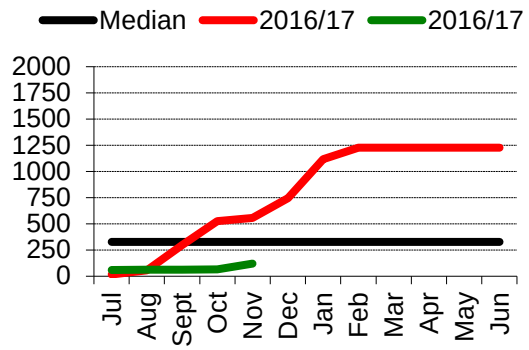


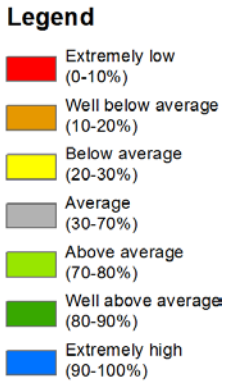
as at 1 December 2017

As at 1 December 2017

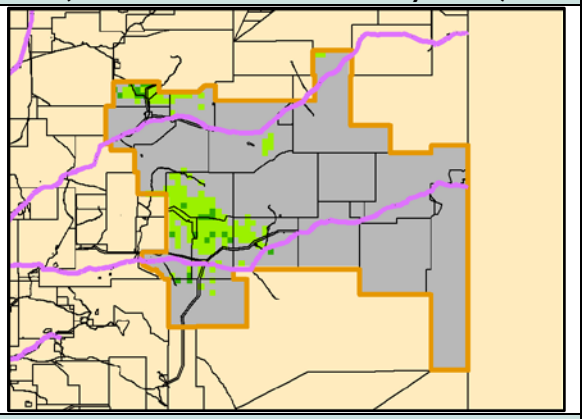
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	80%	16%	4%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	<1%	5%	34%	61%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

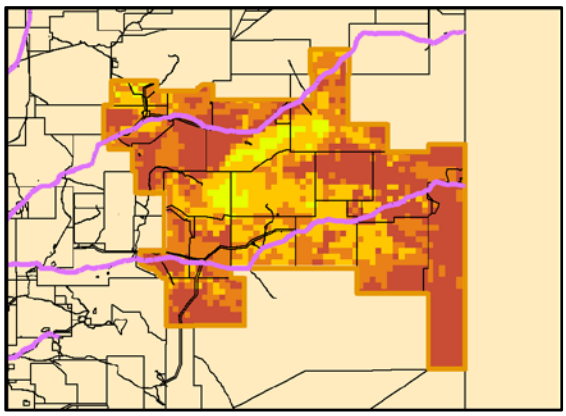


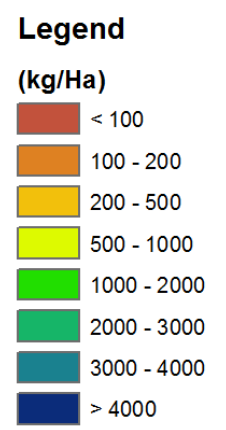


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

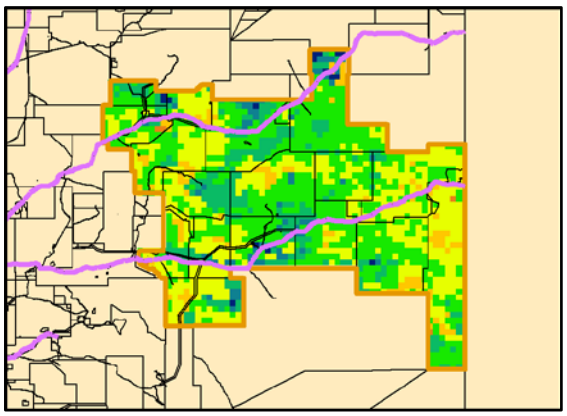


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





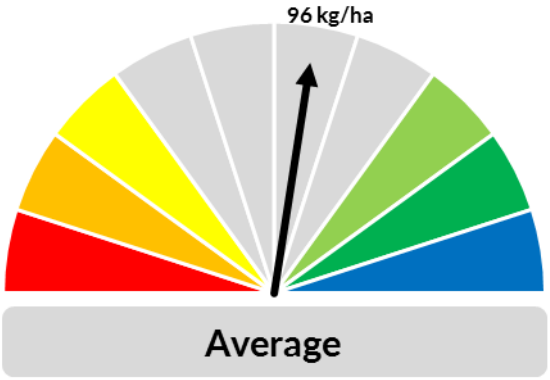
Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Southern Alice Springs District

- There has been a reasonable start to the season, with 97% of the district receiving average or slightly above-average pasture growth for this time of the year
- Pasture growth is tracking well behind this time last year
- 97% of the district currently has average or above-average total standing dry matter
- 0% of the district has been burnt since 1 January 2017
- 97% of the district had a high fire risk as at 1 December

2017/18 Pasture Growth So Far

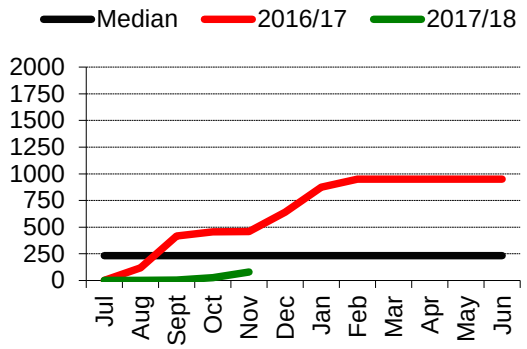


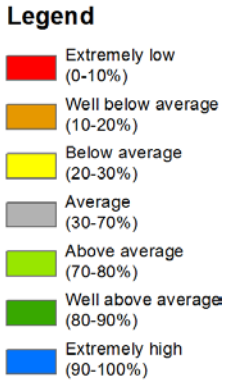
as at 1 December 2017

As at 1 December 2017

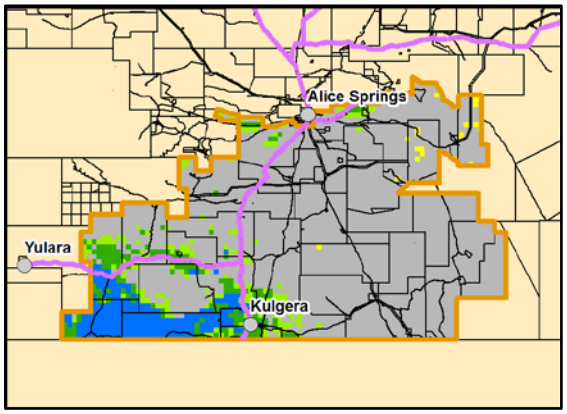
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2017/18 Pasture Growth	97%	3%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	1%	8%	33%	58%

2017/18 Median Pasture Growth (kg/ha) (Running Total)

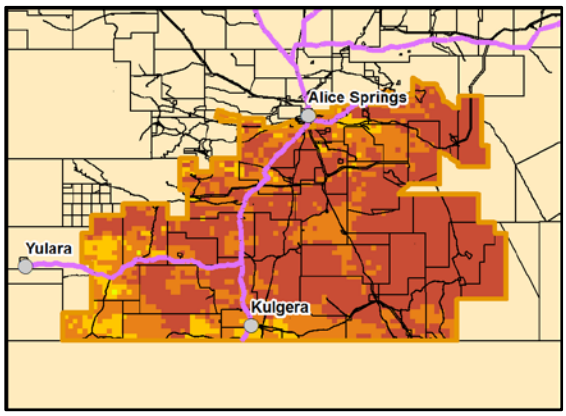


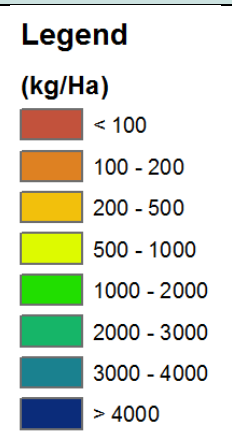


Chance of exceeding Median Pasture Growth (December 2017 - February 2018)

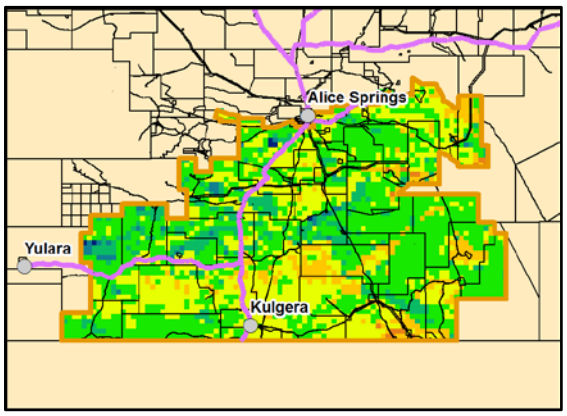


Total 2017/18 Pasture Growth (July – December 2017)





Current Estimated Total Standing Dry Matter



Pasture Information

The pasture and fire risk information in this document is derived from AussieGRASS. AussieGRASS is a model that simulates pasture growth and standing biomass using climate data, vegetation mapping, fire history and regional estimates of grazing pressure. The model can be used to track simulated pasture growth and total standing pasture biomass at the landscape scale.

Note that the model does not use stocking rate data for individual properties. Where stock numbers are significantly higher or lower than typical for a district, model estimates of total standing dry matter may be erroneous.