

Northern Territory Pastoral Feed Outlook - June 2019

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 and relative fire risk. You can subscribe to receive the Outlook [here](#).

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 June 2019](#)

Individual District Summaries:

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[Katherine District](#)

[Victoria River District](#)

[Sturt Plateau District](#)

[Roper District](#)

[Gulf District](#)

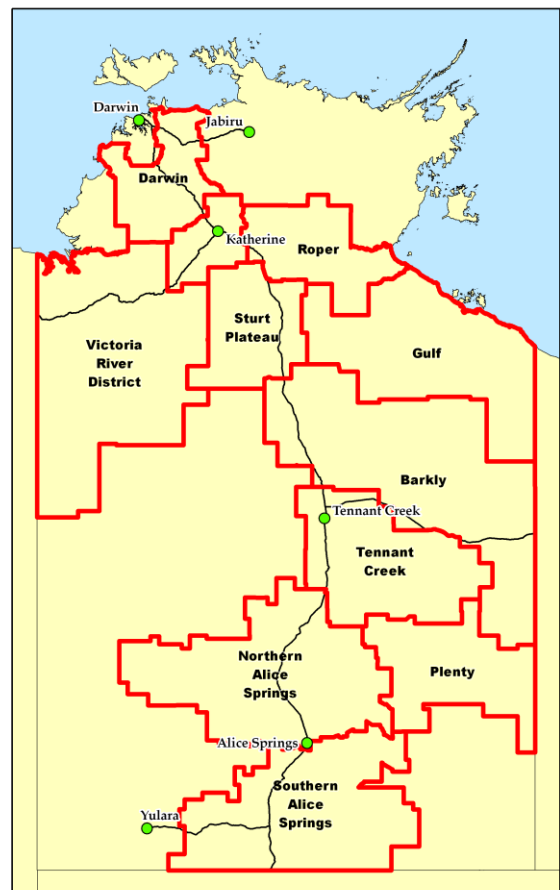
[Barkly District](#)

[Tennant Creek District](#)

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[Plenty District](#)

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Summary of current situation and trends – all districts – June 2019

Feed conditions have dramatically deteriorated in several districts in the past eight months. The predicted late onset to the northern wet season materialised and total rainfall has been some of the lowest on record in some districts. Although areas in the Tennant Creek and Plenty districts received rain from ex-cyclone Trevor, as at 1 June 2019, a large part of the NT from about Larrimah down to Alice Springs has experienced below-average pasture growth during 2018/19. Large areas are experiencing extremely low growth (lowest 10% of years on record). Significant areas of the Barkly and Alice Springs districts, in particular, are currently showing low to extremely low levels of standing dry matter (<500kg/ha). BOM forecasts suggest there is an average to below-average chance of exceeding median rainfall in the coming months in most districts.

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
2018/2019 total pasture growth	↓	↔	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↔	↓	Arrows indicate trend compared to the long-term median (for this time of year).
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

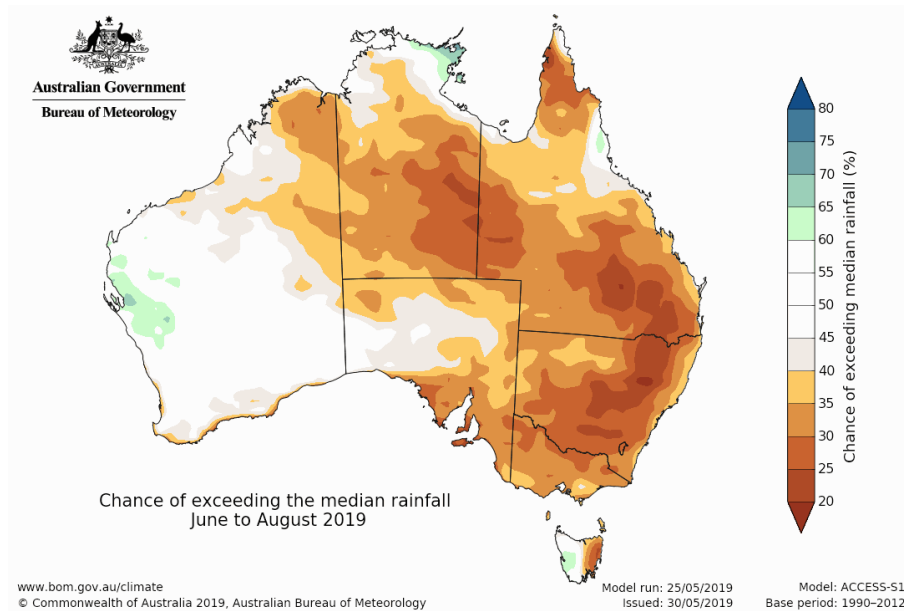
Northern Territory Seasonal Outlook as at June 2019*

Sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)

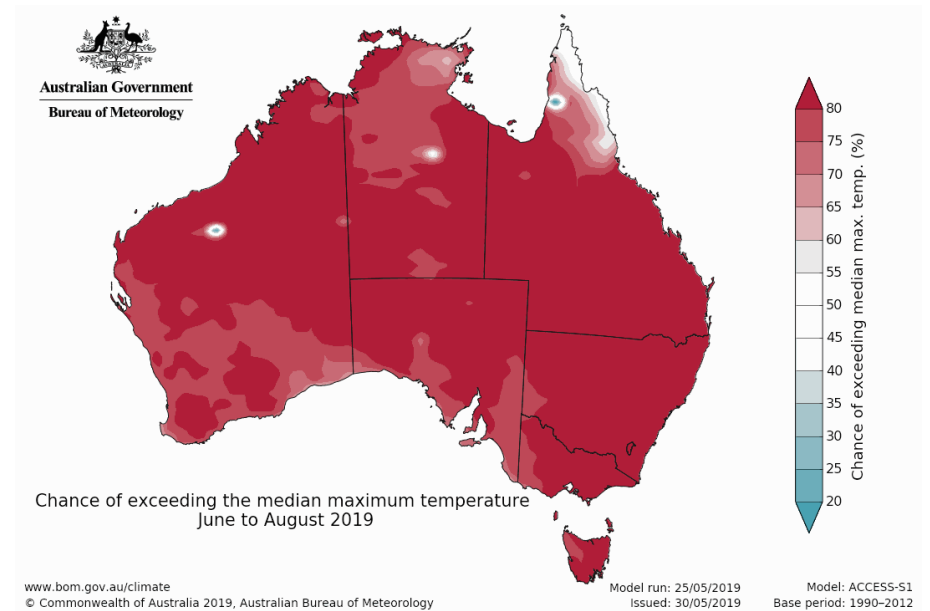
*This seasonal outlook was correct at the time of publication. For the most up-to-date seasonal outlook, please go to the [“climate outlook”](#) section of the BOM website.

The outlook for June to August 2019 indicates that:

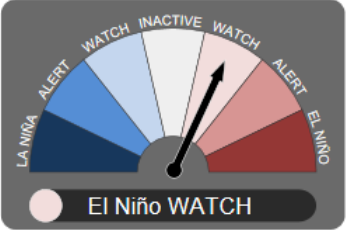
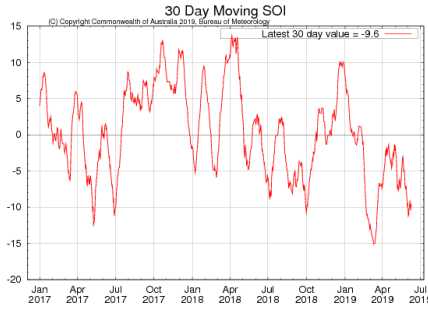
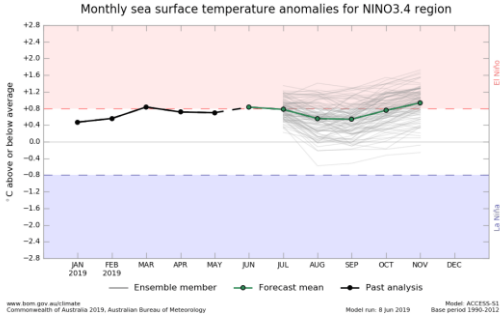
- **Drier** conditions are expected across most of the NT
- **Warmer** than average days and nights are likely for almost the entire NT

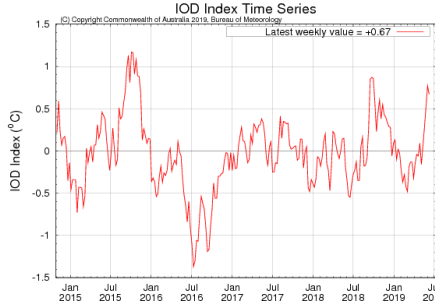
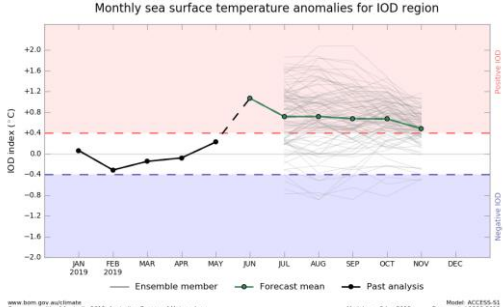


Chance of exceeding the median rainfall
June to August 2019



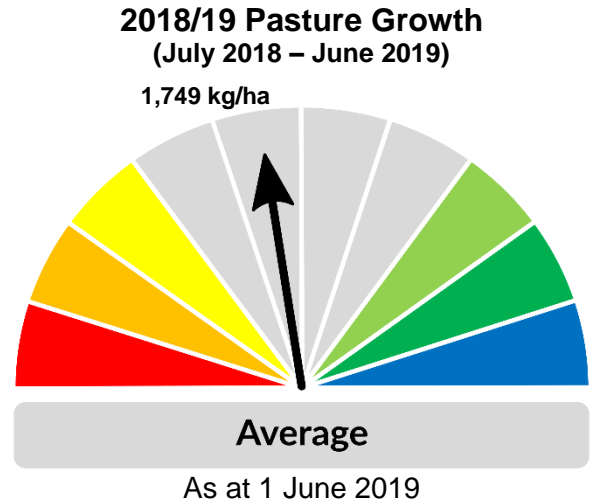
Chance of exceeding the median maximum temperature
June to August 2019

Seasonal Indicator	Comments (sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology)
<p>El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Bureau of Meteorology ENSO Wrap-Up</p> <p>Current outlook: Neutral ENSO status: Watch</p> 	<p>The El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is currently neutral</p> <p>The tropical Pacific Ocean and atmosphere remain near El Niño thresholds, therefore the ENSO Outlook remains at El Niño WATCH, meaning there is approximately a 50% chance of El Niño developing, however models indicate the tropical Pacific Ocean will ease away from El Niño levels, remaining neutral during winter.</p>   <p><i>El Niño typically results in below-average rainfall for southern Australia during autumn and for eastern Australia during winter and spring.</i></p> <p>To see larger versions of these images, go to the SOI and Outlooks tabs at Bureau of Meteorology ENSO Wrap-Up</p>

<p>Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) Bureau of Meteorology ENSO Wrap-Up</p> <p>Current outlook: Positive</p>	<p>Positive IOD likely for winter</p> <p>Indian Ocean temperature forecasts show a positive IOD through the southern winter, which is likely to be the dominant climate driver for Australia.</p> <p>In the Indian Ocean, waters off Sumatra have cooled over the past fortnight, with the IOD index now exceeding positive thresholds for three weeks. All but one of the climate models suggest positive IOD values will persist through winter and into spring. To be considered a positive IOD event, positive thresholds need to be maintained for at least two months.</p> <p><i>Typically, a positive IOD brings below-average winter-spring rainfall for southern and central Australia.</i></p> <p>This is currently being reflected in the rainfall outlook for the coming months.</p> <p>To see larger versions of these images, go to IOD Time Series and the Indian Ocean tab at Bureau of Meteorology ENSO Wrap-Up</p>  
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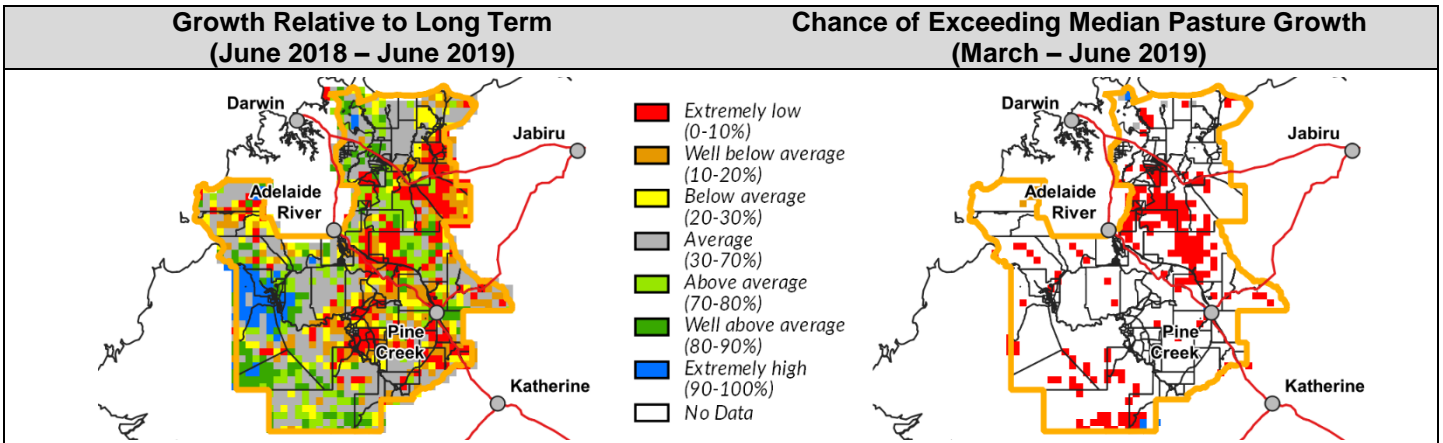
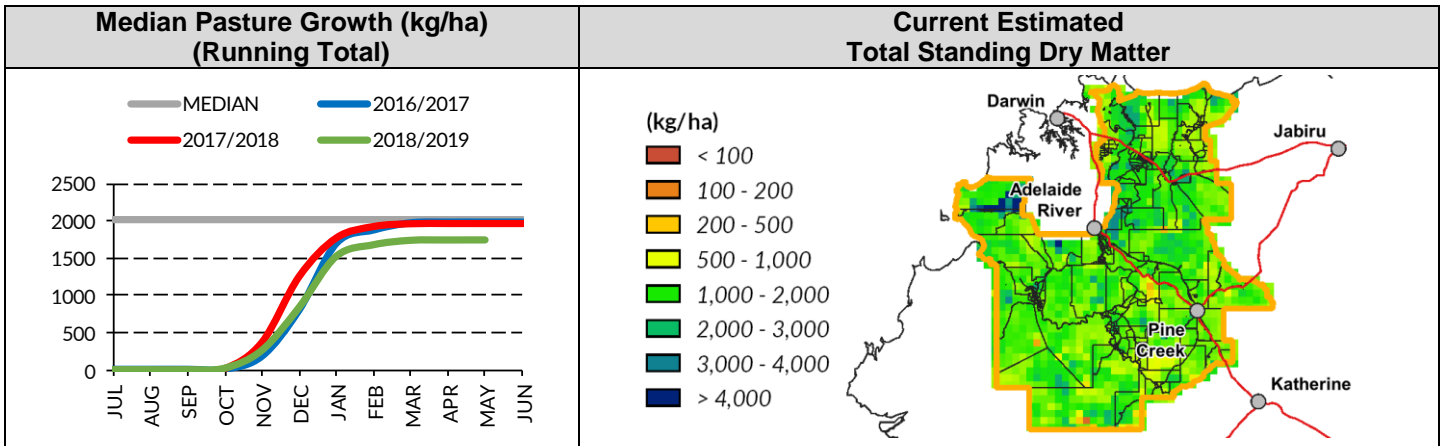
Darwin District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole has been about average. However, the inconsistent rainfall across the district has resulted in wide variation.
- Some pockets of the district experienced well below-average growth and others well above-average growth.
- The previous two seasons (2017/18 and 2016/17) were considered average for pasture growth.
- 24% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018. 15% of this has occurred since 1 January 2019.



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.

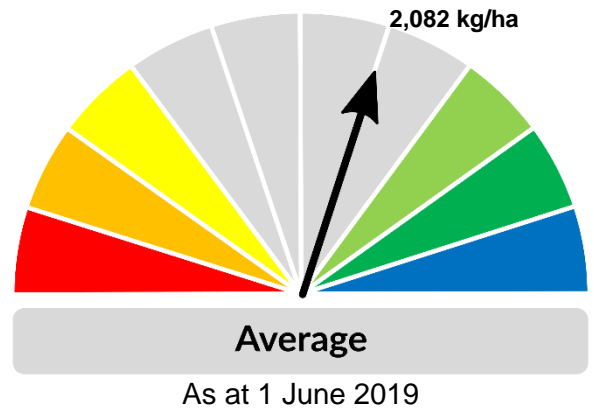
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	0%	70%	28%	2%
Total Standing Dry Matter	2%	68%	25%	5%



Katherine District

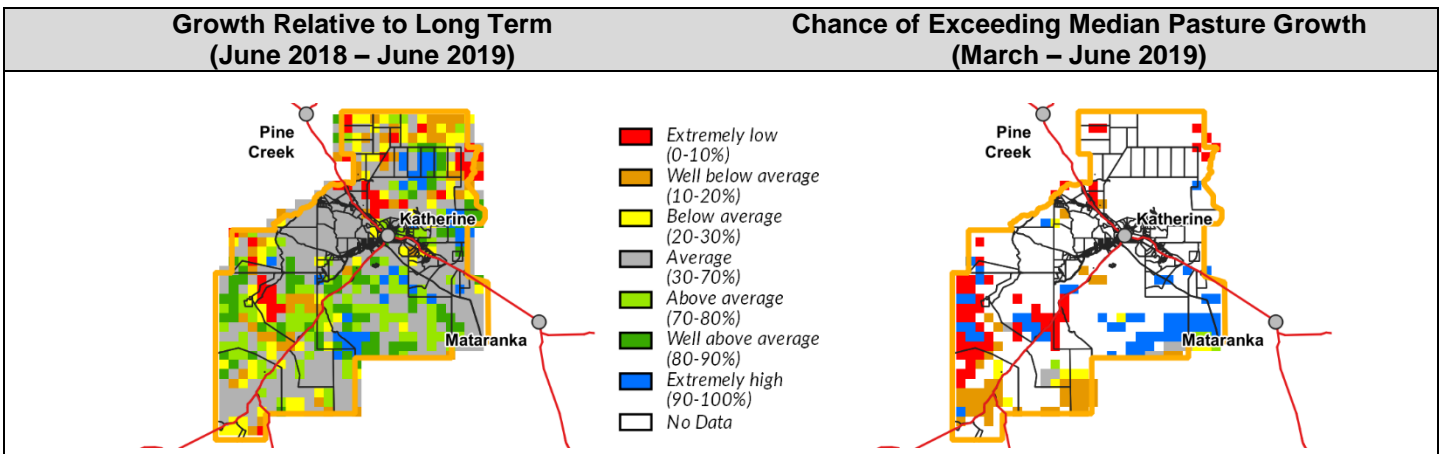
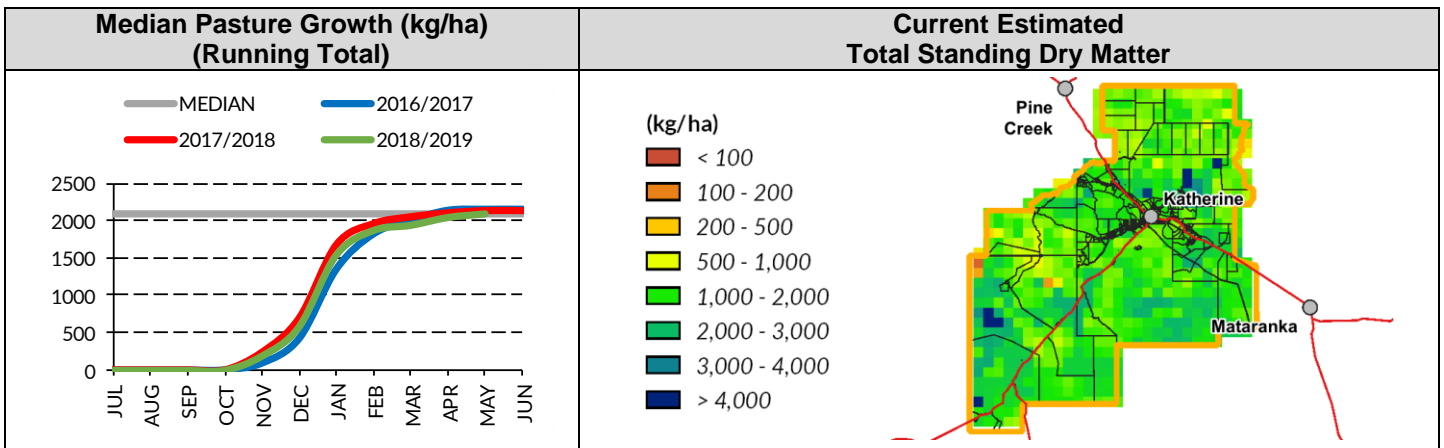
- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole has been average. However, the inconsistent rainfall across the district resulted in wide variation.
- Small scattered areas experienced well below-average growth whilst others had well above-average growth.
- The previous two seasons (2017/18 and 2016/17) were considered average for pasture growth.
- 32% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018. 10% of this has occurred since 1 January 2019.

2018/19 Pasture Growth (July 2018 – June 2019)



In a typical wet season, pasture growth in the Katherine 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.

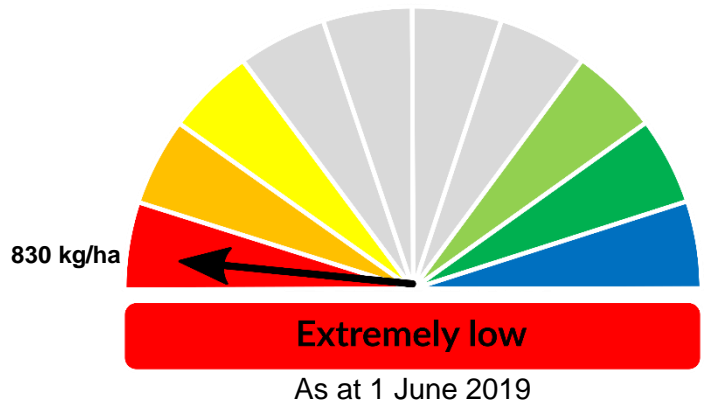
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	0%	39%	61%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	1%	53%	37%	9%



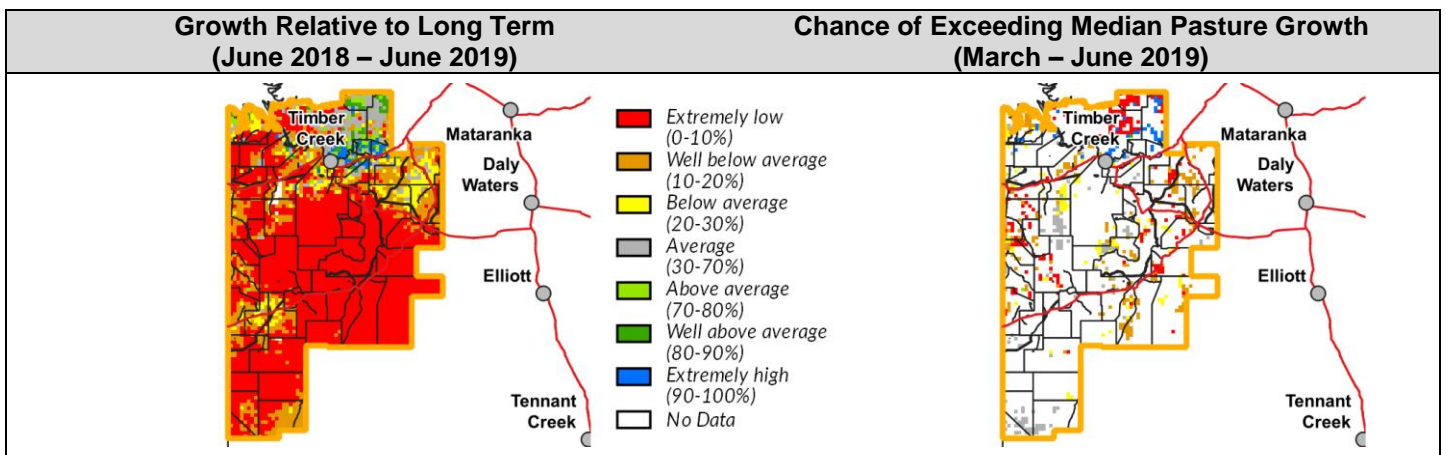
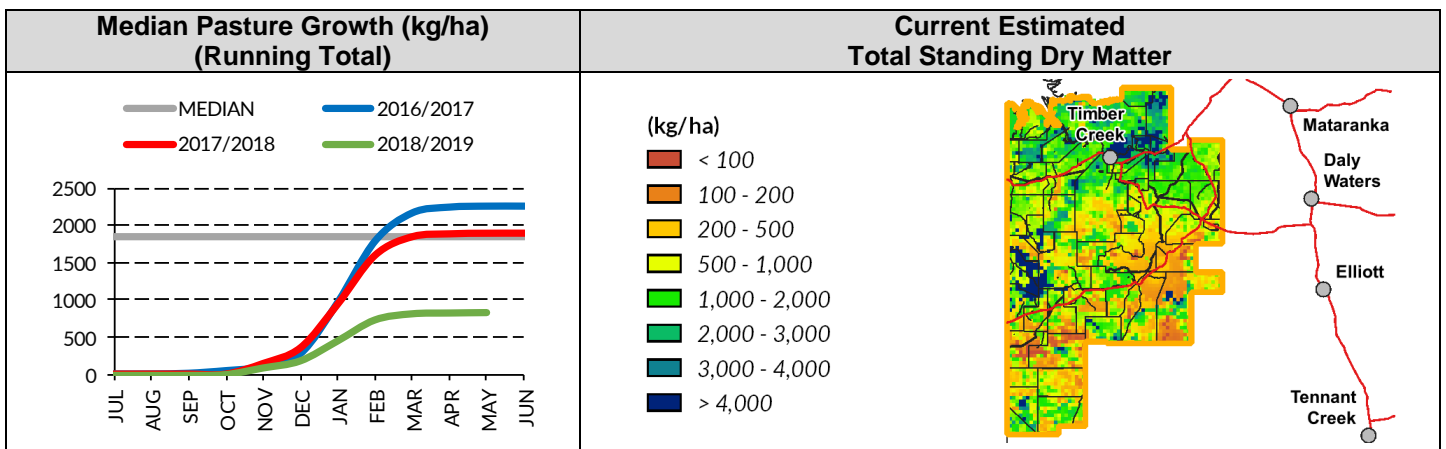
Victoria River District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was considered extremely low (lowest 6% of years on record or about a 1 in 20 year event).
- The far north-east corner was the exception, showing average to above-average growth.
- The two years prior were good seasons - 2017/18 was similar to the long-term median whilst 2016/17 was above-average.
- Large areas in the south are currently showing extremely low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- 16% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018. 2% of this has occurred since 1 January 2019.

2018/19 Pasture Growth (July 2018 – June 2019)



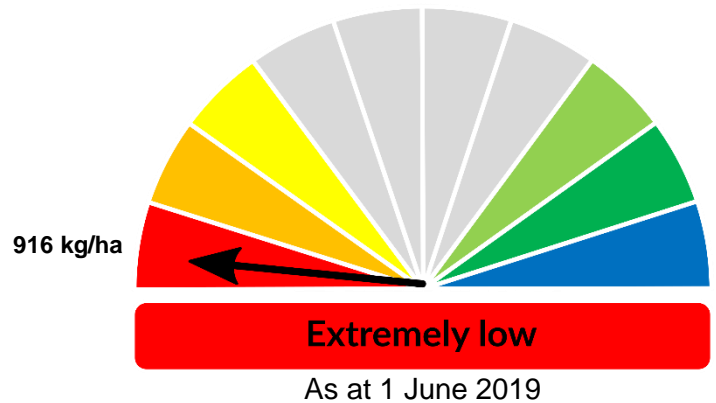
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	54%	25%	18%	3%
Total Standing Dry Matter	36%	37%	16%	11%



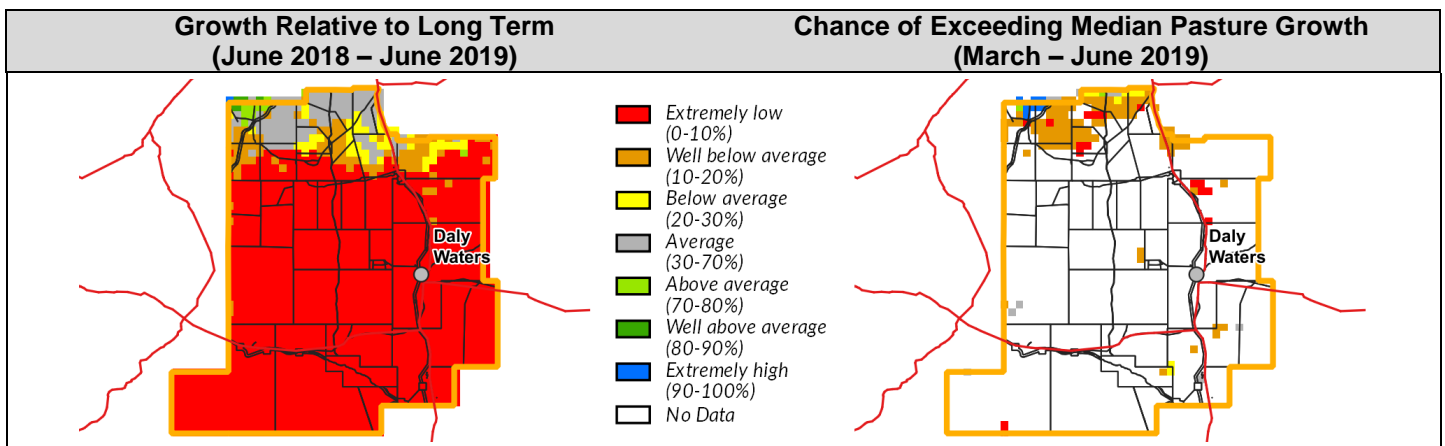
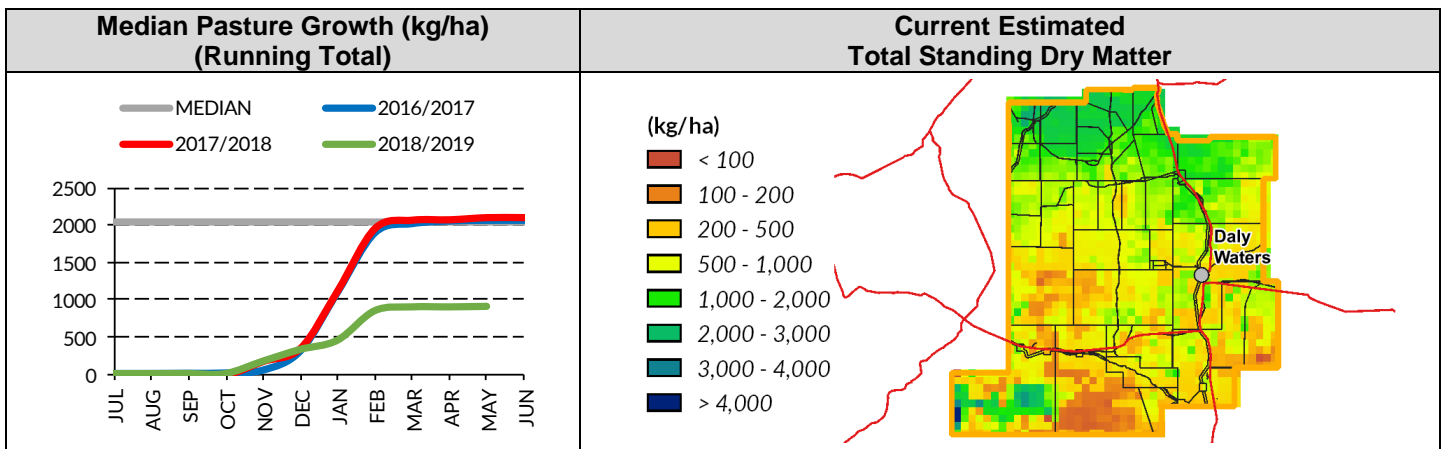
Sturt Plateau District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was extremely low (lowest 3% of years on record or about a 1 in 30 year event).
- A small area in the north of the district was the exception, experiencing average growth.
- Half of the district is now showing low levels of pasture biomass (<1,000kg/ha), including areas in the south showing extremely low levels (<500kg/ha).
- The previous two seasons (2017/18 and 2016/17) were considered average for pasture growth.
- 12% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018.

2018/19 Pasture Growth
(July 2018 – June 2019)



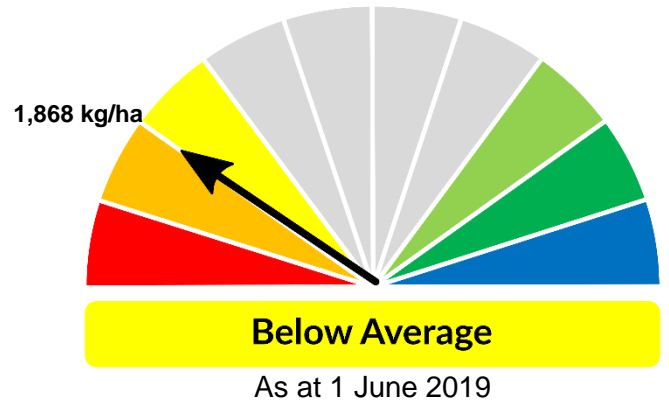
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	56%	32%	12%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	50%	37%	12%	1%



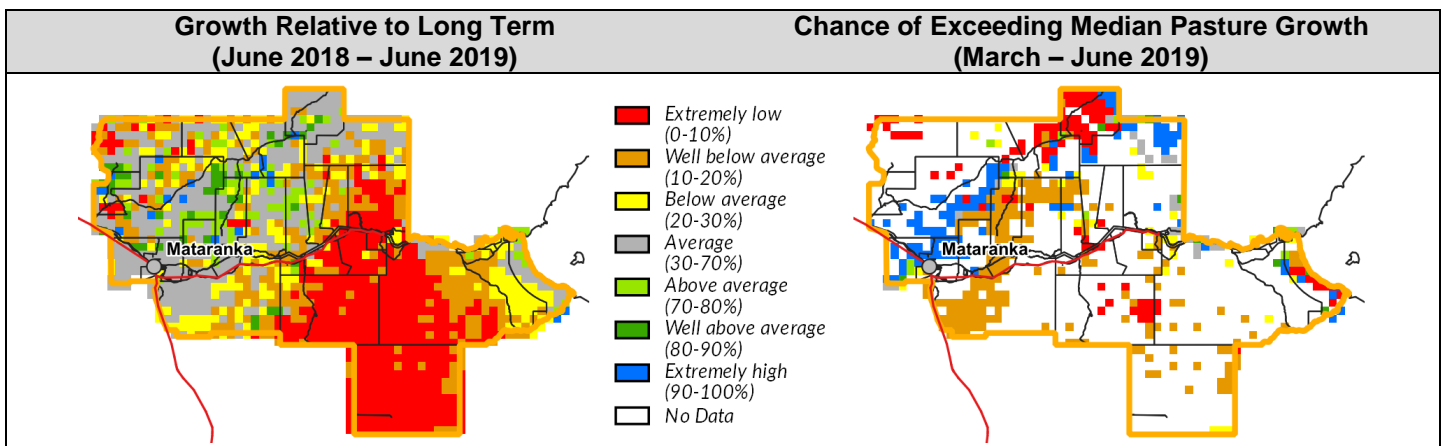
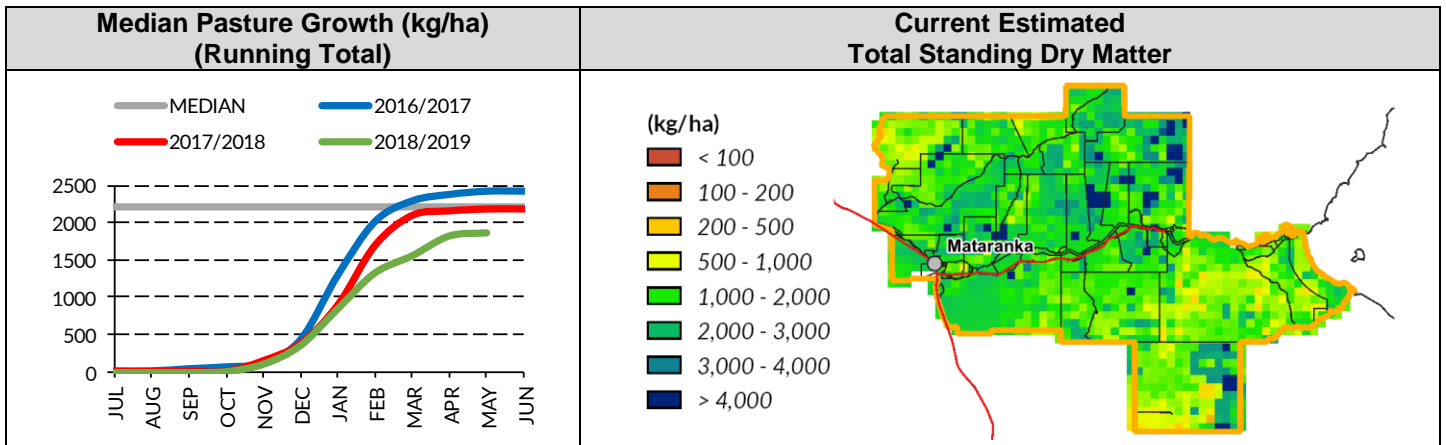
Roper District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was below-average (lowest 21% of years on record). However, growth was very variable across the district.
- The western half of the district has generally experienced average to above-average growth, while the eastern half has experienced below-average to extremely low pasture growth (lowest 10% of years on record).
- Pasture growth in 2017/18 was similar to the long-term median, but slightly lower than the above-average season in 2016/17.
- 29% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018. 5% of this has occurred since 1 January 2019.

2018/19 Pasture Growth
(July 2018 – June 2019)



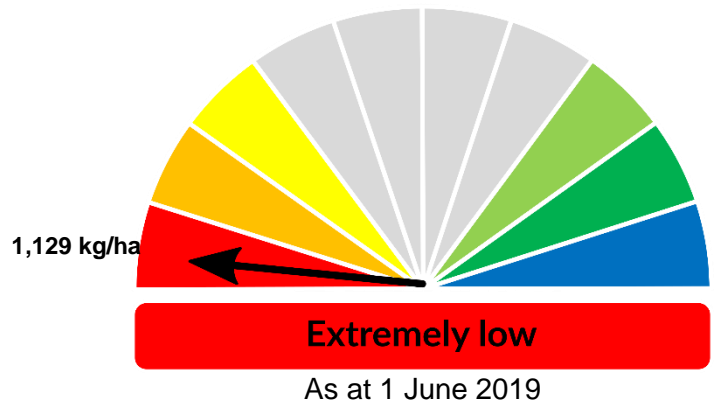
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	3%	57%	39%	1%
Total Standing Dry Matter	4%	46%	36%	14%



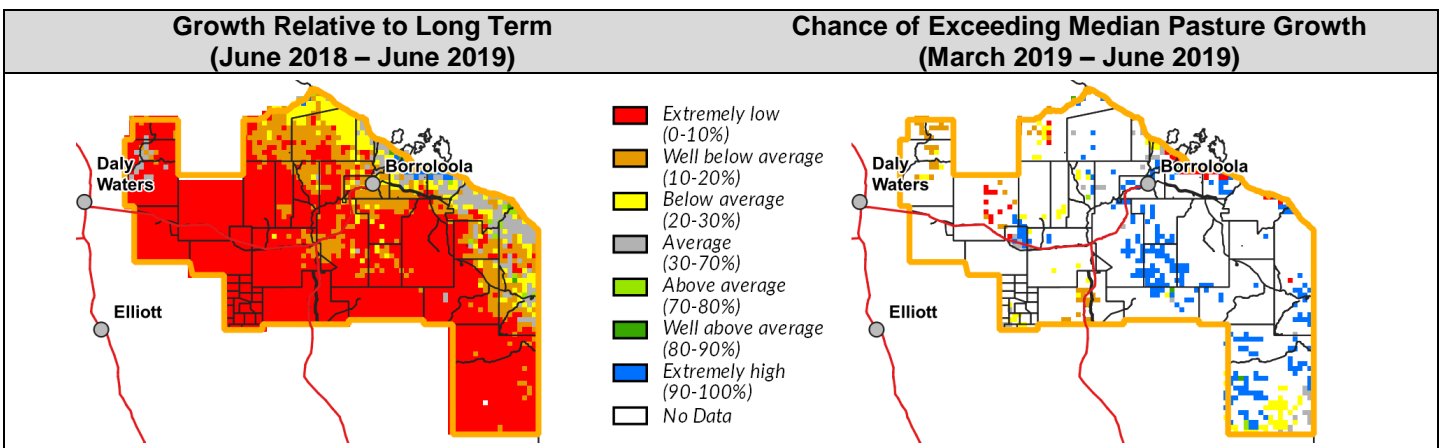
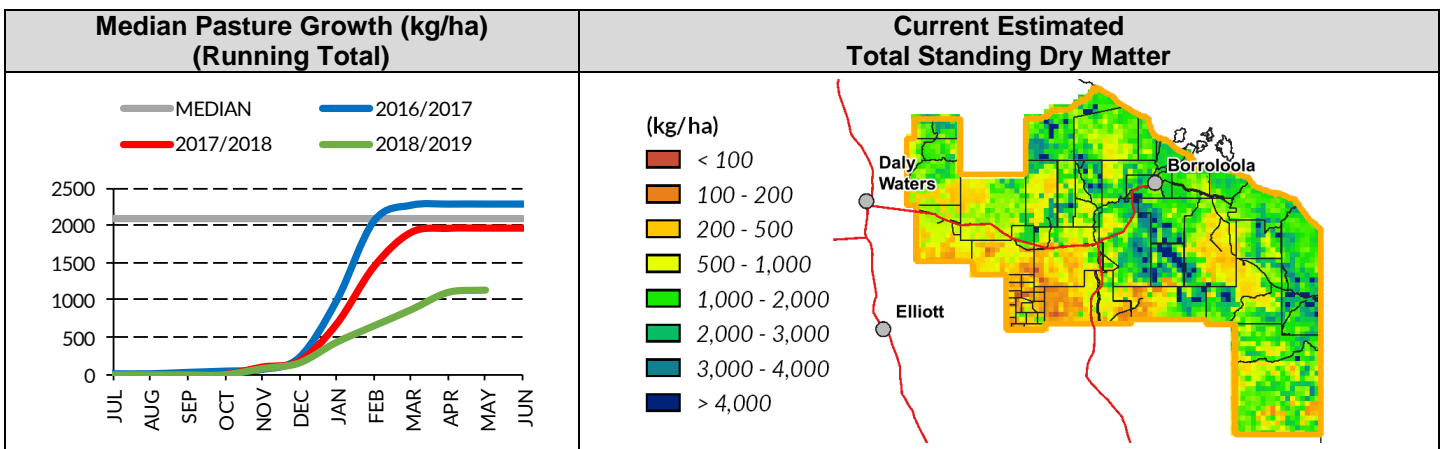
Gulf District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was extremely low (lowest 6% of years on record or about a 1 in 20 year event).
- A narrow strip along the coast to the south-east of Borroloola was the exception, with average growth.
- Pasture growth in 2017/18 was similar to the long-term median, but lower than the good season in 2016/17.
- Large areas across the district are currently showing low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- 21% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018. 2% of this has occurred since 1 January 2019.

2018/19 Pasture Growth
(July 2018 – June 2019)



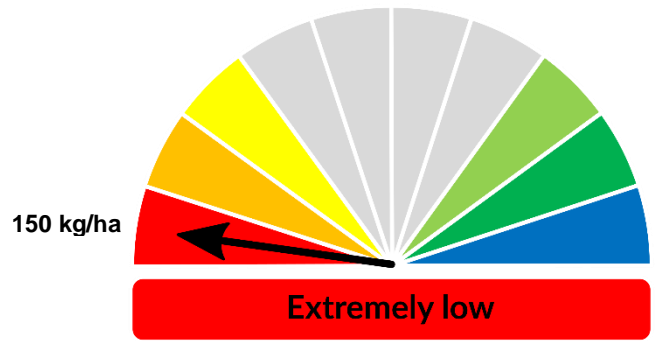
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	45%	43%	12%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	28%	42%	19%	11%



Barkly District

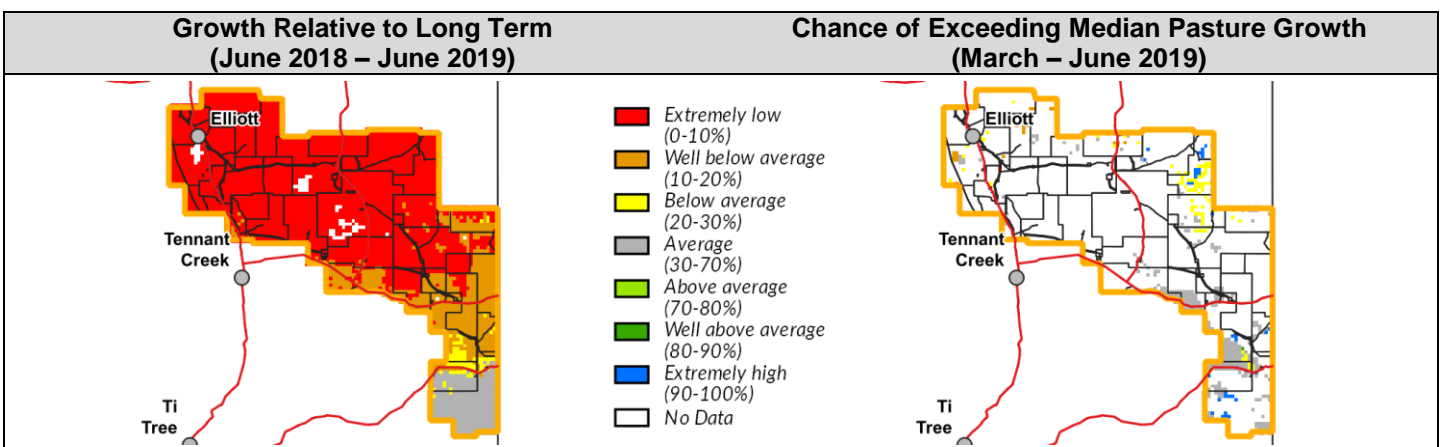
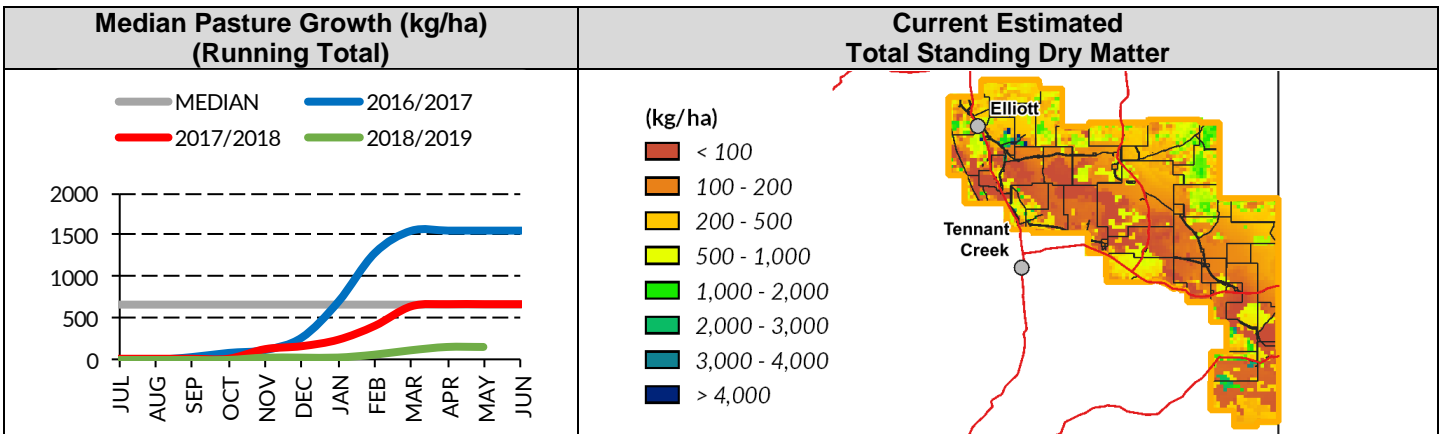
- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole was extremely low (lowest 3% of years on record or about a 1 in 30 year event).
- Much of the district has experienced extremely low to no pasture growth with the exception of the far south, which has had average growth after receiving rainfall from ex-cyclone Trevor.
- The majority of the district is showing very low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha). Large areas are showing extremely low levels (<100kg/ha).
- 4% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018.

2018/19 Pasture Growth (July 2018 – June 2019)



As at 1 June 2019

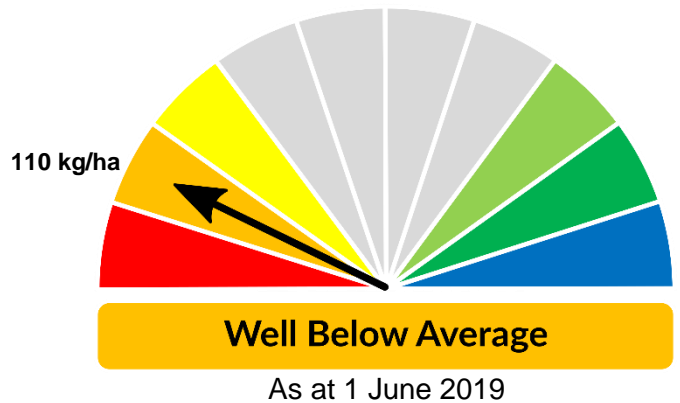
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	75%	21%	4%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	42%	22%	22%	14%



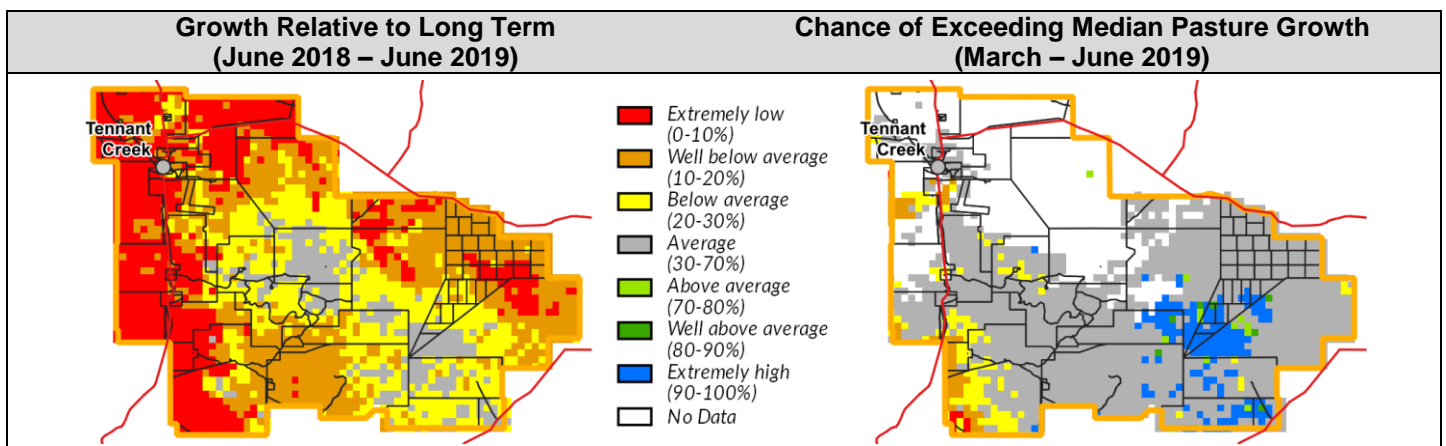
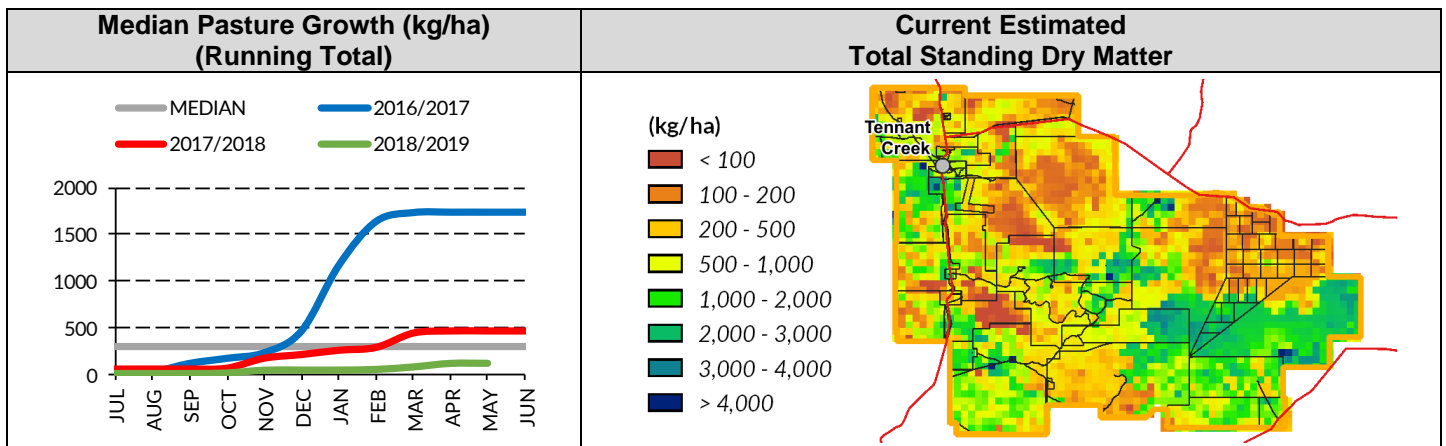
Tennant Creek District

- Some central and south-eastern areas have experienced average growth largely due to ex-cyclone Trevor. However, the wider district has experienced below-average growth (lowest 30% of years on record) to extremely low growth (lowest 10% of years on record)
- This followed two above-average wet seasons.
- 30% of the district is now showing low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha), with some areas showing extremely low levels (<200kg/ha).
- 3% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018.

2018/19 Pasture Growth (July 2018 – June 2019)



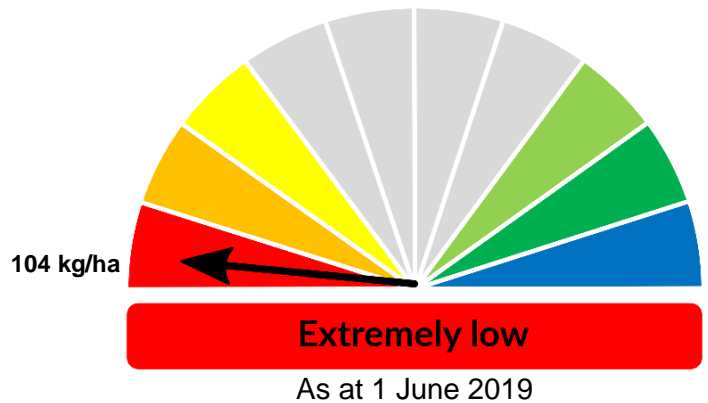
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	80%	17%	3%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	15%	15%	28%	42%



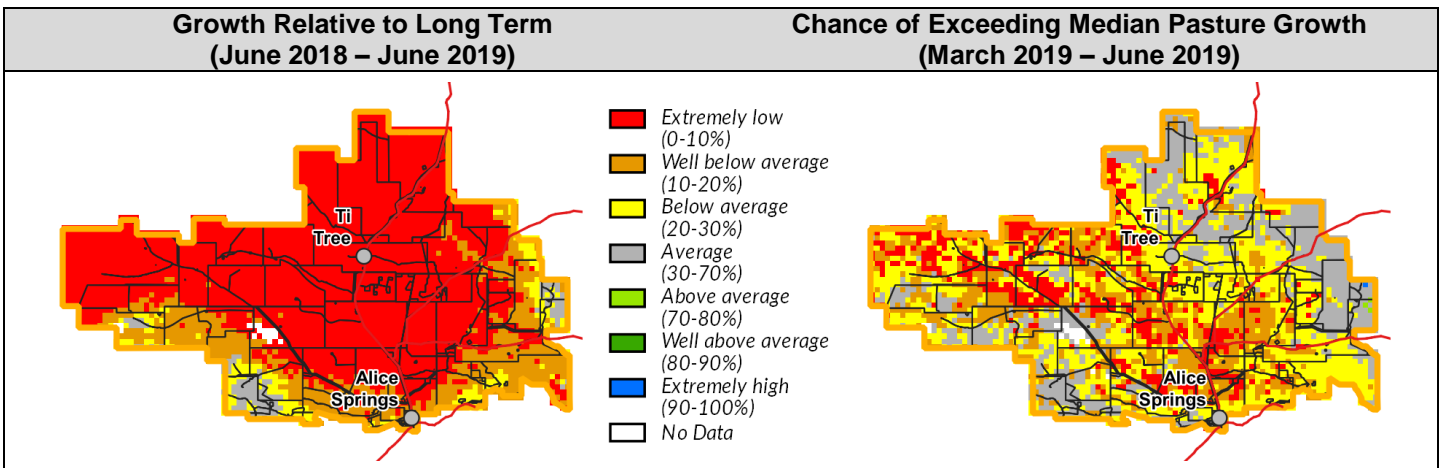
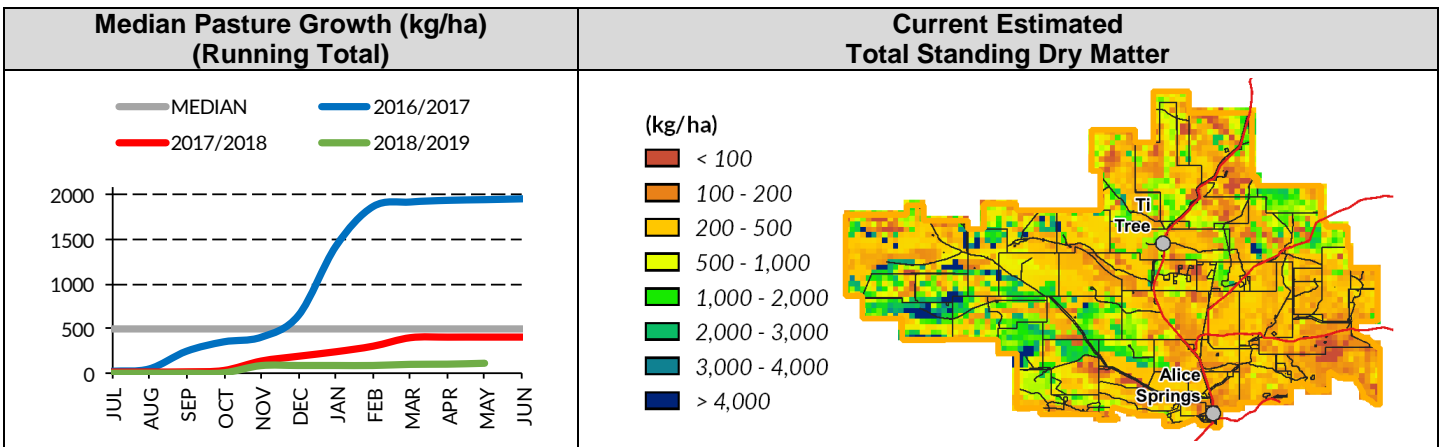
Northern Alice Springs District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole has been extremely low (lowest 6% of years on record or about a 1 in 20 year event).
- This followed a slightly below-average year in 2017/18 and a well-above average year in 2016/17.
- Patchy rain across the southern parts of the district in November 2018 resulted in some pasture growth but conditions have deteriorated again in the past seven months, with virtually no growth being experienced.
- 43% of the district is now showing low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- 4% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018.

2018/19 Pasture Growth
(July 2018 – June 2019)



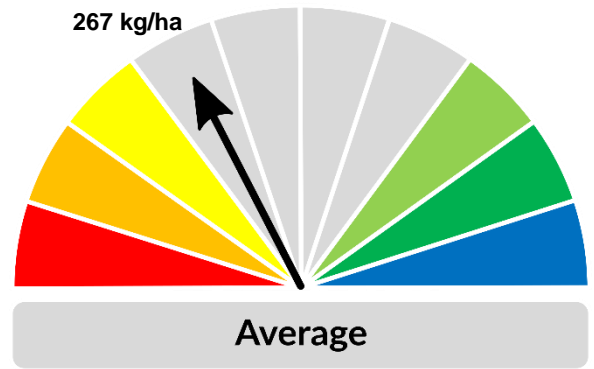
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	94%	6%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	10%	33%	30%	27%



Plenty District

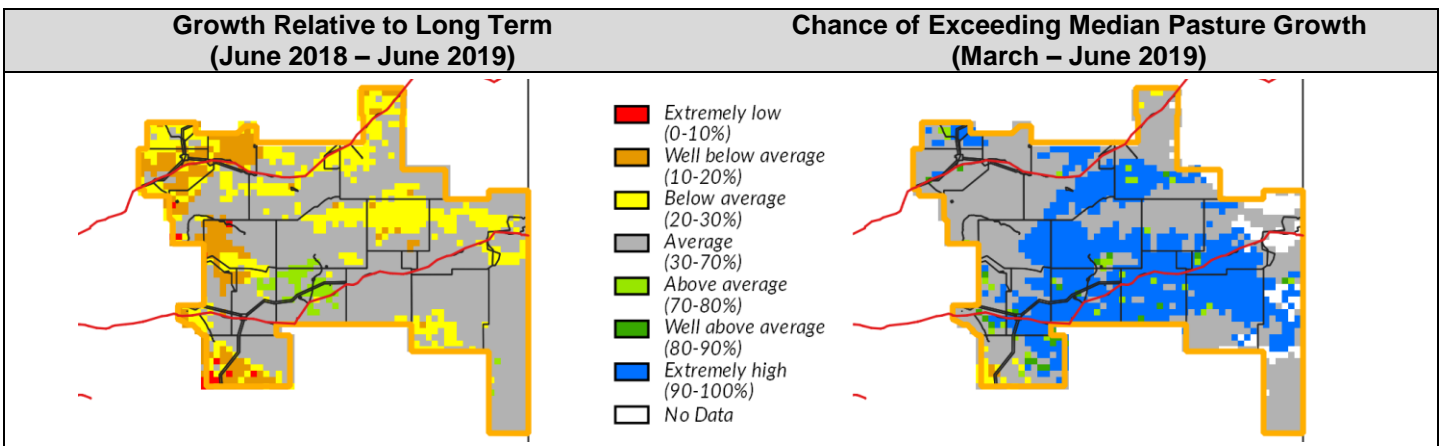
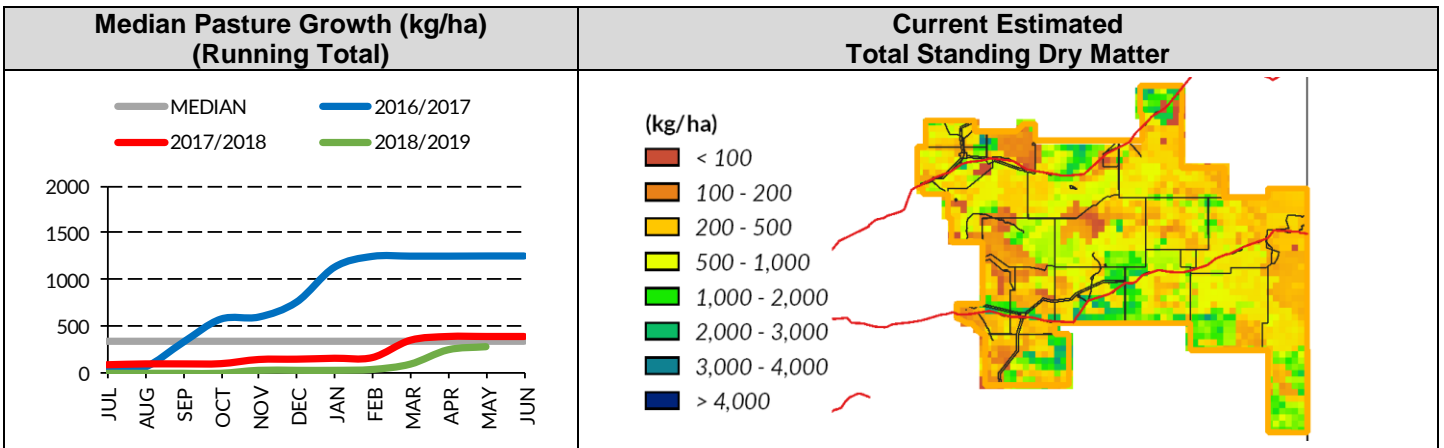
- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole has been average, largely thanks to rain received from ex-cyclone Trevor.
- The exception is scattered areas in the west and central parts of the district, which are showing below-average (lowest 30% of years on record) to well below- average growth (lowest 20% of years on record).
- This followed an average year in 2017/18 and a well-above average year in 2016/17.
- 30% of the district is currently showing very low pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- Less than 1% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018.

2018/19 Pasture Growth (July 2018 – June 2019)



As at 1 June 2019

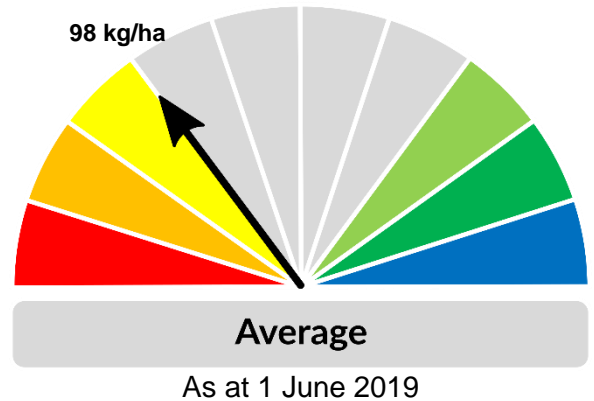
As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	47%	30%	23%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	7%	23%	41%	29%



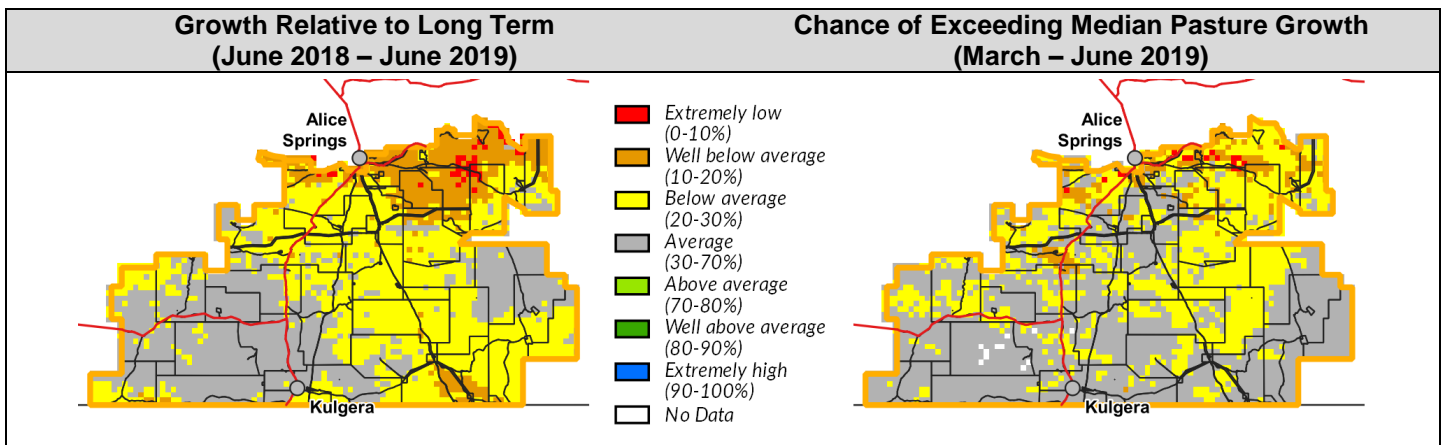
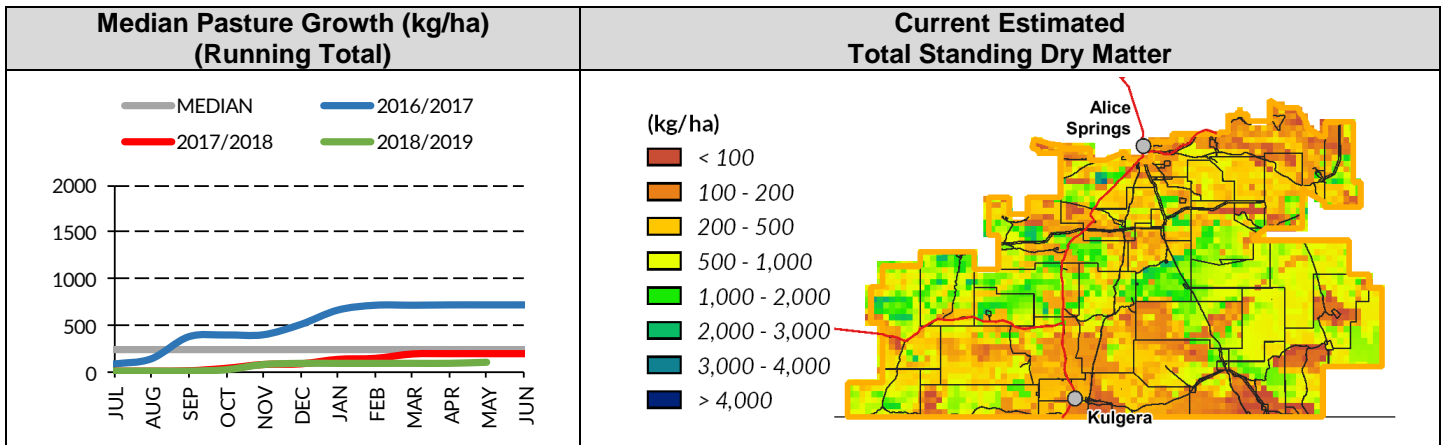
Southern Alice Springs District

- The 2018/19 pasture growth for the district as a whole has been below-average (lowest 29% of years on record).
- Although much of the south-west has had average pasture growth, the far north-eastern corner has experienced well below-average growth (lowest 20% of years on record).
- This followed a slightly below-average year in 2017/18 and a well-above average year in 2016/17.
- 36% of the district is now showing low levels of pasture biomass (<500kg/ha).
- 1% of the district has been burnt since 1 July 2018.

2018/19 Pasture Growth
(July 2018 – June 2019)



As at 1 June 2019				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
2018/19 Pasture Growth	92%	8%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	15%	21%	33%	31%



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.

Disclaimer

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