



Words of Wisdom

Key messages about using Seasonal Forecasts; a selection of quotes overheard by Graeme Anderson

“Make decisions on what’s knowable first. After that forecasts are a useful ten percent”

“Just like forecasts for markets, the economy, prices – seasonal forecasts can’t predict the future. But, used carefully with background commentary from a trusted source – forecasts can help you map out your scenarios”

“All options are possible at any time, but some seasons a pattern can change the odds of what’s more likely”

“Beware the language of forecasters. ‘Neutral’ doesn’t mean average rainfall, it means that there’s a third chance of receiving either average, drier or wetter”

“A 70 per cent chance of wetter than normal is the same as 30 per cent chance of drier – so be careful you understand the probabilities and the language of any forecast”

“Seasonal forecasts tend to be worth paying more attention to in those years when a key climate driver is in an active phase”

“Best to squint your eyes when looking at a seasonal forecast maps.....it’s the ‘vibe’ you’re looking for, such as is there more or less moisture floating about this year”

“The commentary that sits behind the forecast is the key bit - it’s about the background conditions”

“All forecasts are wrong, but some are useful!”

“Forecasts tend to make more sense when you know about the key climate drivers that were behind your district’s big dry and wet periods”

“Climate change will turn up one month and one season at a time, so seasonal forecasting just becomes more important”

“Seasonal forecasts might only be of value or have a stronger signal every second or third year”

“All models have value – best to get a few opinions to get the overall vibe”

“If they do a hundred climate model runs for the next 3 months, when 80 runs are drier and 20 runs wetter, that’s where the 80 per cent chance of drier than median figure comes from”