

# National Climate Centre

*guiding responses to global change*

One of the National Climate Centre's main aims is to help New Zealanders manage for climate extremes, including droughts. Dry conditions occurred throughout much of the country from January to the beginning of May in

2003. These led to public concern about dwindling water storage in hydroelectricity dams, stress on farmers, water restrictions for irrigation and urban supply, and algal blooms in some lakes and rivers. The dry conditions were some of the most widespread seen in the last 25 years, although it was still rather wet in Northland and the Coromandel.

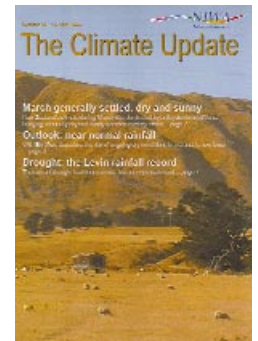
The Centre kept people informed about conditions during this period through climate maps and articles in the monthly newsletter *The Climate Update*, public talks, media interviews, and material on the website. We briefed government and industry policy analysts on seasonal climate outlooks, and correctly predicted the end of the dry conditions in early May.

Keeping people informed about the present climate and likely seasonal developments is only one aspect of the Centre's work. We spend a lot of time providing data, maps, and advice about climate extremes in particular locations,

and how often they occur. This helps companies and individuals plan developments, infrastructure, and land-uses that are resilient to climate and its variation. Our work ranges from helping people pick new areas with low frost risk for niche horticultural crops to advice on heavy rainfall frequencies for urban stormwater drainage design.

*The Climate Update*, a free monthly newsletter which is also available on our webpage, summarises the previous month's air temperatures, rainfall, soil moisture, and river flows. It also provides regional seasonal climate outlooks, and updates the public on matters of interest, such as the development of El Niño conditions across the Pacific. The Centre also prepares the monthly *The Island Climate Update* in collaboration with staff from weather and climate agencies from Australia and the Pacific Islands. We produce regular media releases on climate conditions and outlooks. We travel regularly through the country, giving talks to groups of farmers, local government officials, and others. We also provide quarterly climate briefings to agricultural sector representatives and government officials through the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and information for regional assessment of climate hazards, including advice on how these might vary in the future because of climate change.

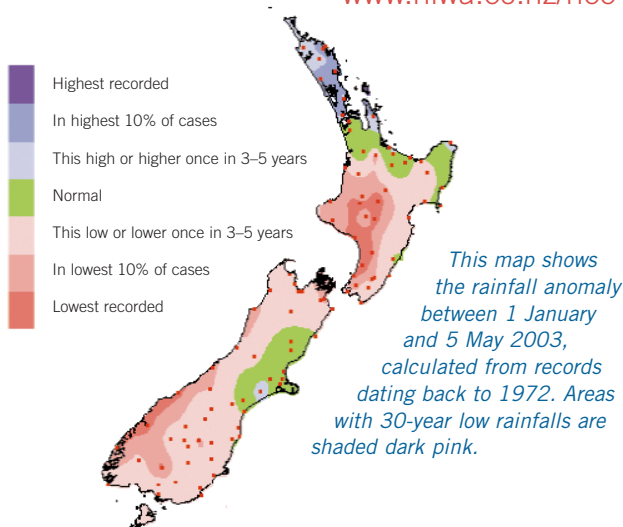
[www.niwa.co.nz/ncc](http://www.niwa.co.nz/ncc)



Lake Tekapo



Andrew Tait



The drought caused severe restrictions on water use on the Kapiti Coast.