

Northern Territory Pastoral Feed Outlook July 2023 to November 2023

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. This edition summarises modelled pasture growth in November 2023.

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.

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[Sturt Plateau District](#)

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[Gulf District](#)

[Barkly District](#)

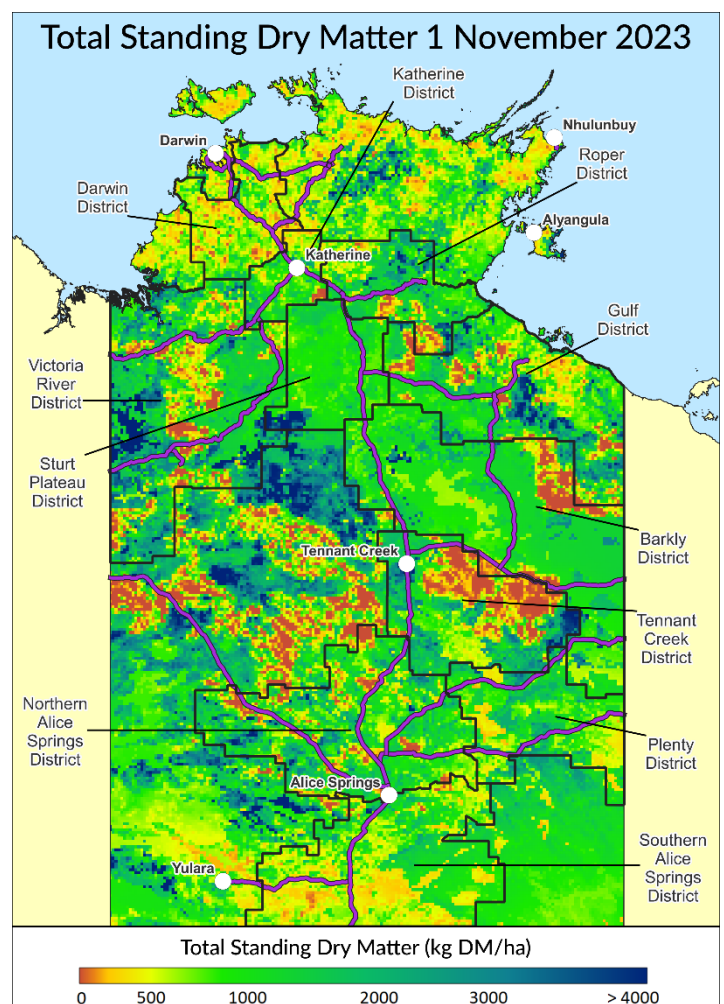
[Tennant Creek District](#)

[Northern Alice Springs District](#)

[Plenty District](#)

[Southern Alice Springs District](#)

For further information about this Outlook, please contact Chris Materne on 08 8951 8135.



Summary of current situation and trends – all districts – October 2023

Warmer and drier than usual conditions are persisting across much of the NT, driven largely by active **El Niño** conditions and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole. Several districts have already experienced major bushfires- including the Barkly, Tennant Creek, VRD & Alice Springs districts, exacerbated by hot, dry conditions and high biomass levels after a bumper season.

Modelled pasture growth predictions over the next 3 months suggest that growth is likely to be average to below average for most of the northern districts. However, there are still areas which are predicted to produce above average growth in some of the southern districts, including the Barkly, Tennant Creek & Northern Alice Springs.

Modelled Total Standing Dry Matter (TSDM) includes fire scars up until the end of October. There has been significant areas affected by fire since then so the current TSDM will have changed in some areas.

Long range climate drivers and models suggest warmer and drier than usual conditions are likely for much of Australia from November 2023 to January 2024. The ENSO Outlook is currently at active **El Niño** and Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) observations are strongly positive which typically exacerbates the drying effect of El Niño.

The fire risk has increased and remains high across much of the NT in the previous quarter. While the risk in the Darwin region has reduced slightly due to more regular shower and storm activity, the fire situation across the NT remains volatile and unpredictable.

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
2023/24 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

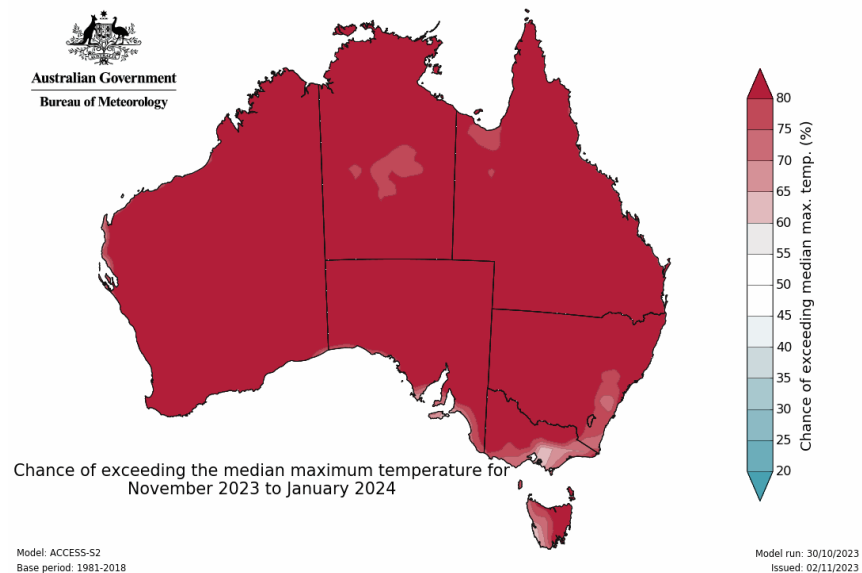
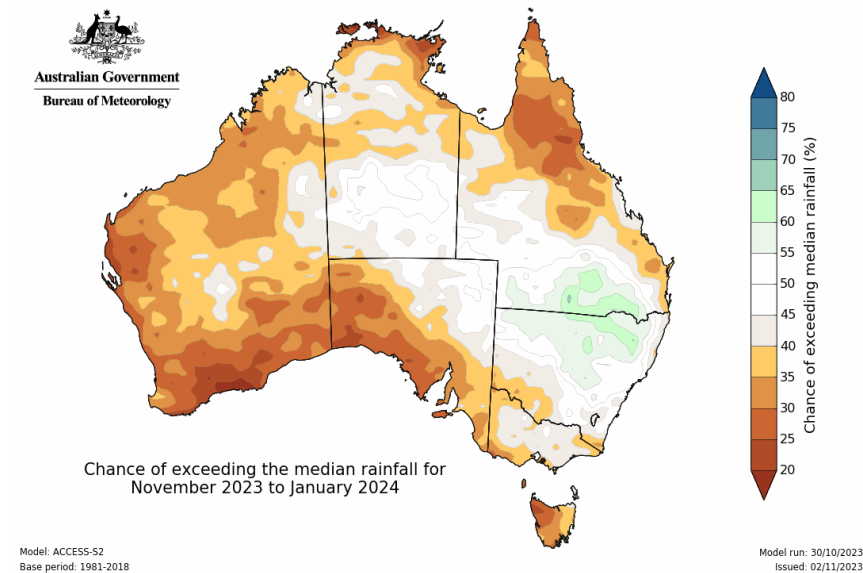
Northern Territory Seasonal Outlook as at October 2023*

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.

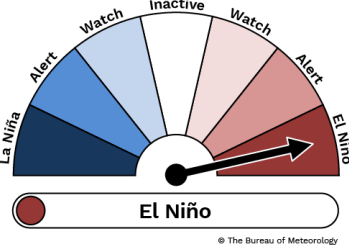
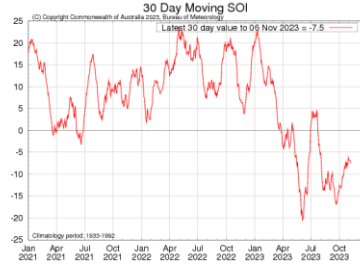
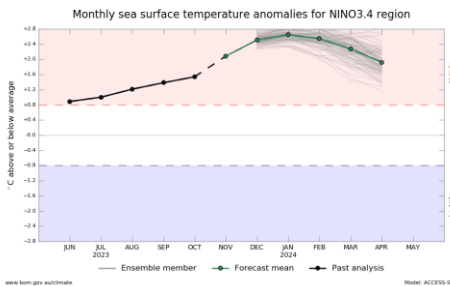
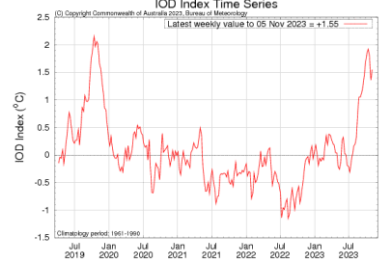
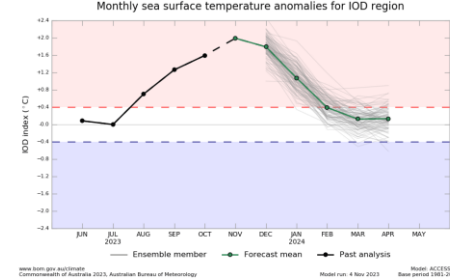
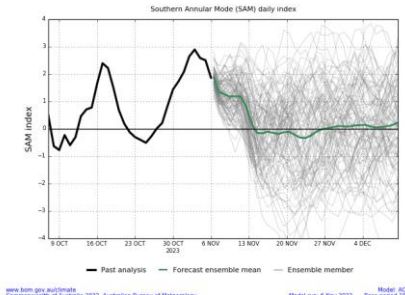
The BoM outlook for November 2023 to January 2024 indicates that:

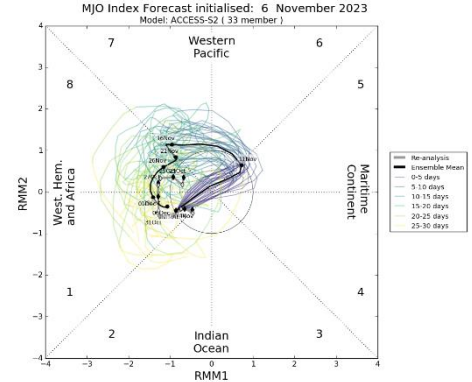
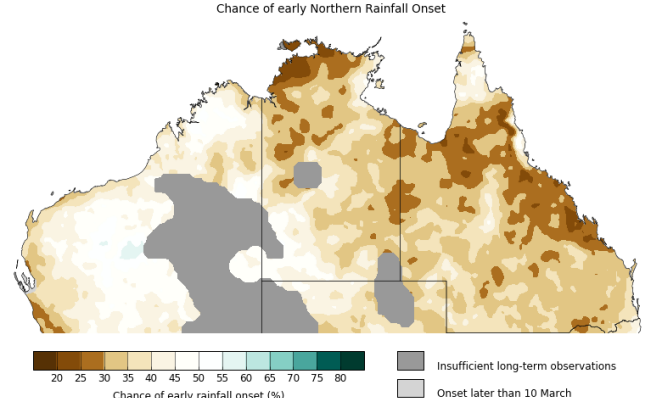
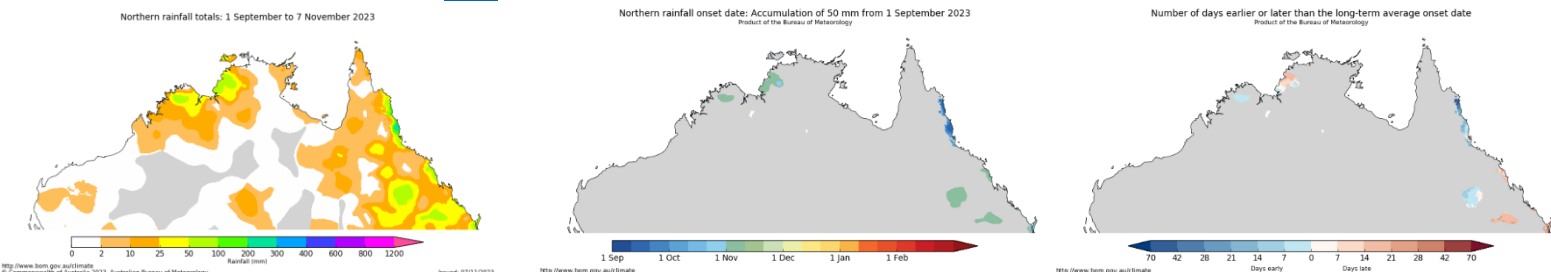
- The chance of exceeding the median rainfall is average to low over most of the NT with the lowest likelihood across the north coast as well as the Sturt Plateau and southern VRD. Past outlook accuracy is moderate (45-65%).
- **Warmer** than average days are very likely across the entire NT, with moderate to very high past accuracy (55-100%).
- The entire NT is predicted to have a high (70-80%) chance of **warmer** than average nights with moderate to very high past accuracy (50-100%).



Influencing Climate drivers

- This forecast reflects the status and forecasts for several climate drivers, including a current active El Niño and a strongly positive Indian Ocean Dipole.

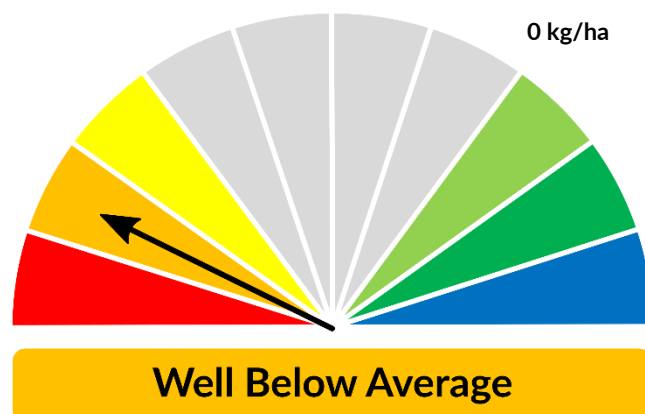
<p>Climate Influences</p> <p>El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) ENSO status: El Niño active</p>  <p>Pacific Ocean Update (As at 8 November 2023) Next Update: 21 November 2023</p>	<p>Comments (sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology)</p> <p>The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) has shifted to El Niño.</p> <p>Surveyed climate models suggest that Pacific sea surface temperatures are likely to undergo some further warming over the next 2 to 3 months and remain above El Niño thresholds into early autumn 2024.</p> <p>El Niño events typically lead to reduced rainfall and warmer temperatures across much of northern and eastern Australia.</p> <p>To see larger versions of these images, go to the Outlook and SOI tabs at Pacific Ocean Update</p>  
<p>Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) Current outlook: Positive</p> <p>Indian Ocean Update (As at 8 November 2023) Next Update: 21 November 2023</p>	<p>The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) remains positive.</p> <p>The IOD index for the week ending 5 Nov 2023 was +1.55 °C, with IOD values for the current positive event being close to those observed during the strong positive event of 2019. All surveyed international climate models suggest the positive IOD event will continue at least into December.</p> <p>To see larger versions of these images, go to the Outlook tab and IOD Time Series</p>  
<p>Southern Annular Mode (SAM) Current outlook: Neutral</p> <p>Southern Ocean Update (As at 8 November 2023) Next Update: 21 November 2023</p>	<p>The SAM is positive, becoming neutral.</p> <p>The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) index is currently positive, but expected to return to neutral values in the coming days.</p> <p>Neutral SAM during spring generally has no strong effect and is usually associated with typical climate conditions for Australia.</p> <p>To see larger versions of these images, go to the Outlook tab and Southern Ocean Update</p> 

Seasonal Indicator	Comments (sourced from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology & the NT Department of Industry, Tourism & Trade)
<p>Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)</p> <p>Outlook: Weak</p> <p>Tropics Update</p> <p>(As at 8 November 2023)</p> <p>Next Update: 21 November 2023</p>	<p>The MJO is currently weak but likely strengthening.</p> <p>Approximately half of the surveyed climate models suggest that the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) will strengthen and move into the western Pacific region in the next week or so. This would result in an increased chance of showers and rain over northern parts of the NT and Queensland.</p> <p>The MJO typically has a greater effect on tropical, northern areas of Australia during the wet season months. When coinciding with an active monsoon period, a positive MJO phase can lead to increased duration and intensity of monsoonal rainfall.</p> 
<p>Wet Season Onset</p> <p>Outlook 2023/24: Late</p> <p>Northern Rainfall Onset Outlook</p> <p>(As at 31 Aug 2023)</p> <p>Next Update: 27 June 2024</p>	<p>A later than normal start to the 2023/24 wet season is forecast for most of the NT.</p> <p>The final issue of the northern rainfall onset outlook for the 2023-24 season indicates a 60%-70% chance of a later than usual rainfall onset for most of the NT. The likelihood increases to 75-80% for northern and eastern regions as well as parts of the VRD. This outlook is largely due to the current El Niño conditions.</p> <p>The northern rainfall onset date occurs when the rainfall total reaches 50 mm since the 1st of September. It is considered approximately the amount of rainfall required to stimulate plant growth.</p>  <p>© Commonwealth of Australia 2023, Australian Bureau of Meteorology</p> <p>Model Run: 28/08/2023 Issued: 31/08/2023</p>
<p>Observations 2022/23: Late</p> <p>(As at 7 November 2023)</p>	<p>The onset observations can be found here</p>  <p>http://www.bom.gov.au/northern/</p> <p>© Commonwealth of Australia 2023, Australian Bureau of Meteorology</p> <p>Issued: 07/11/2023</p>

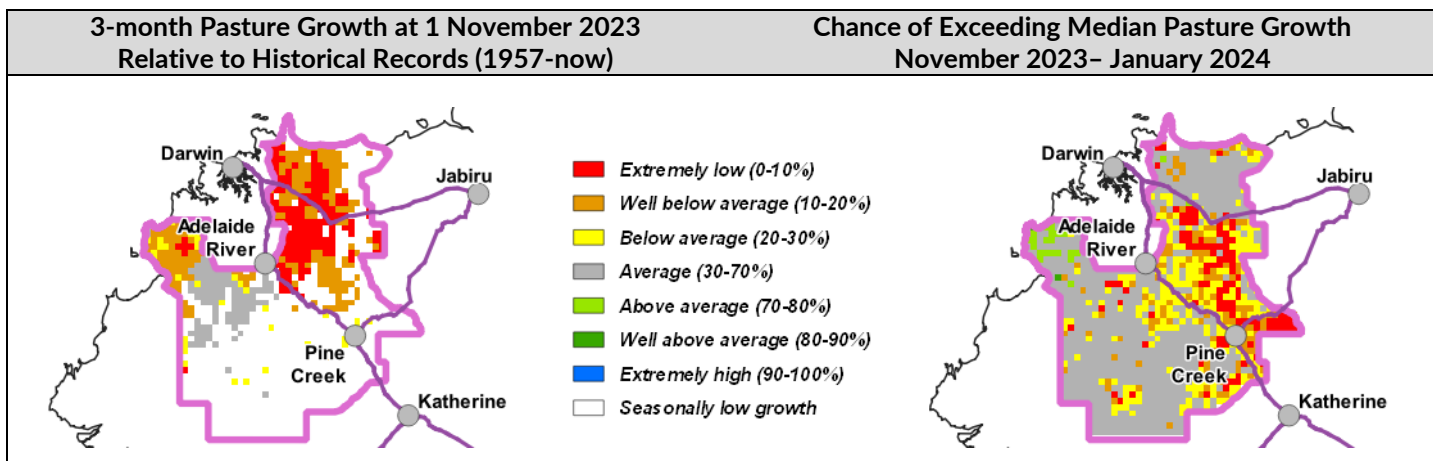
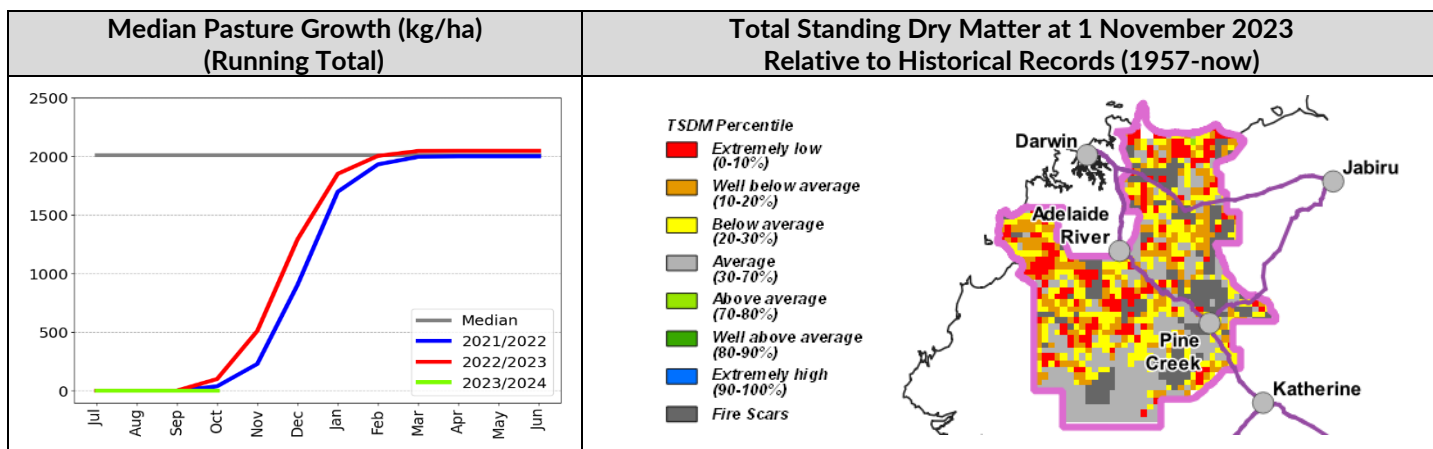
Darwin District

- The northern part of the Darwin district is producing **below average** pasture growth, while seasonally low growth is still being experienced in southern parts of the district.
- Relative biomass levels are **low** to **average** across the district.
- Over the next 3 months, the chance of exceeding the median growth across most of the district is also **low** to **average**, due to **El Niño** conditions and a predicted later than usual wet season onset.
- 45% of the district has burnt since 1 January; 14% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



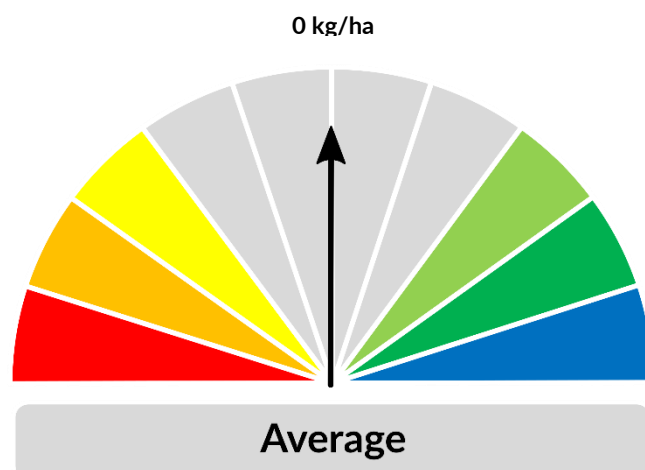
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	84%	14%	2%	<1%



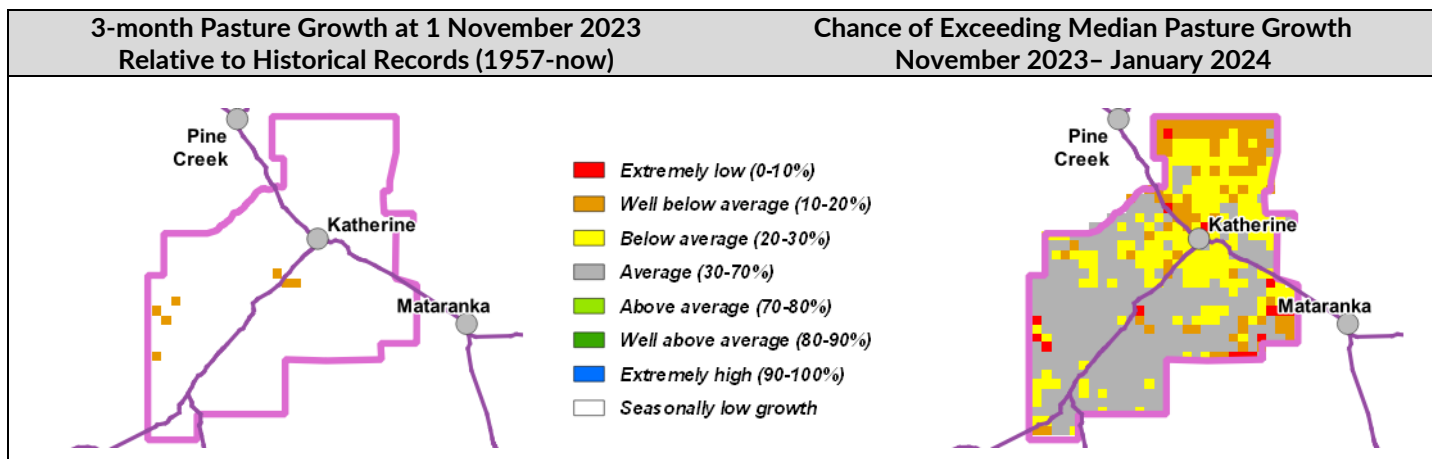
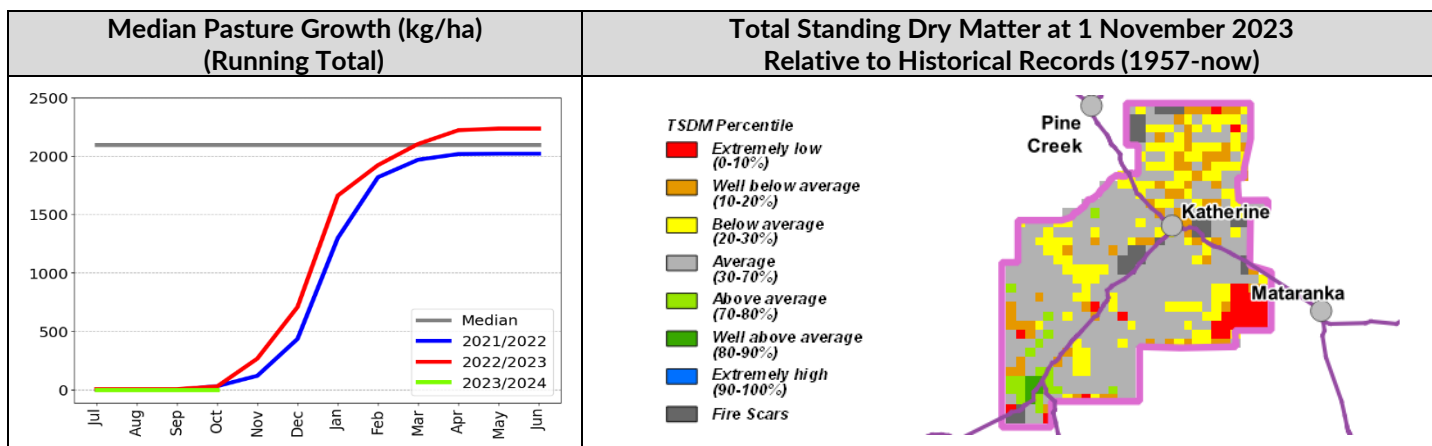
Katherine District

- The Katherine district is experiencing typical, seasonally low pasture growth for this stage of the 2023/2024 season, which is considered **average** for this time of year.
- Biomass levels are generally **low** to **average** across the district with slightly **above average** levels in the south west.
- Over the next 3 months, the chance of exceeding the median growth across most of the district is also **low** to **average**, due to **El Niño** conditions and a predicted later than usual wet season onset.
- 21% of the district has burnt since 1 January; 3% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



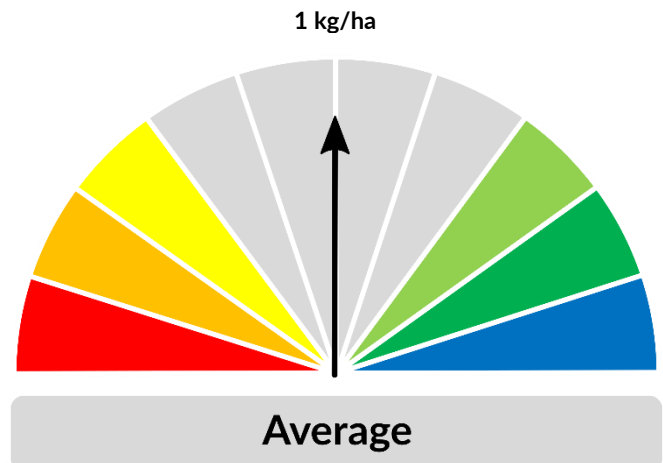
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	52%	42%	5%	1%



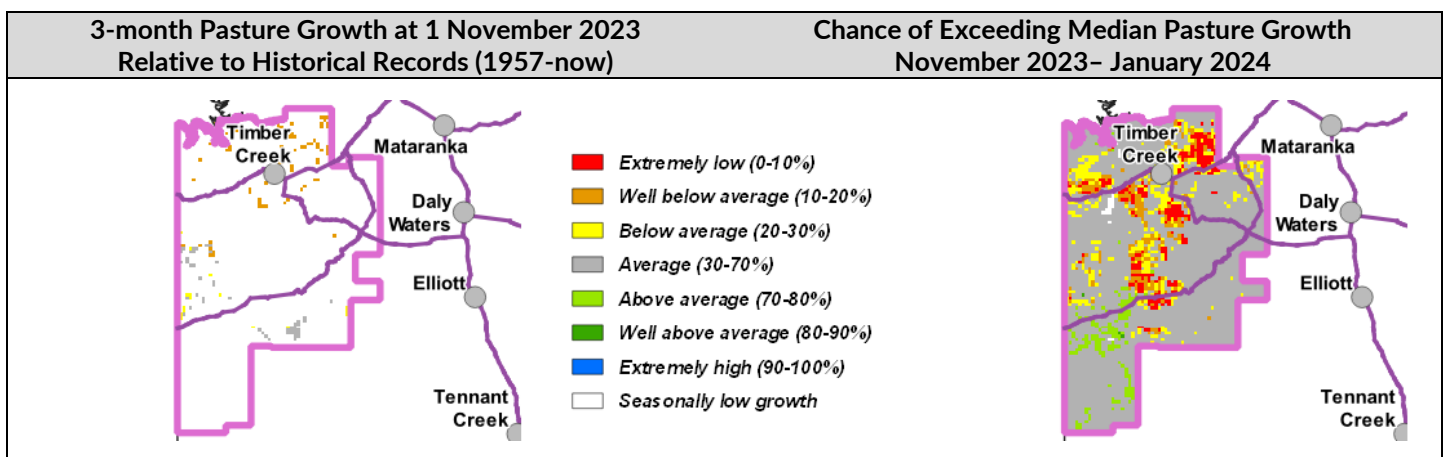
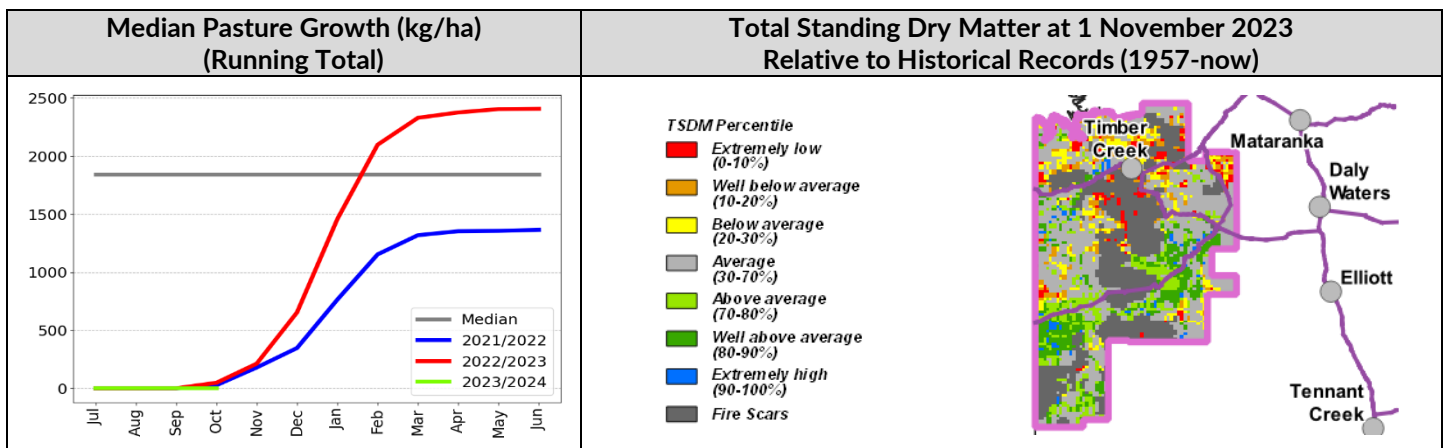
Victoria River District

- The majority of the VRD is experiencing typical, seasonally low pasture growth at this stage of the 2023/2024 season, which is considered **average** for this time of year.
- Relative pasture biomass levels across the district are mixed, with generally **above average** levels in the southern parts and **low** to **average** further north.
- Over the next three months the chance of exceeding median growth is **low** to **average** for most of the district with some **above average** growth likely in the south.
- 36% of the district has burnt since 1 January; 29% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



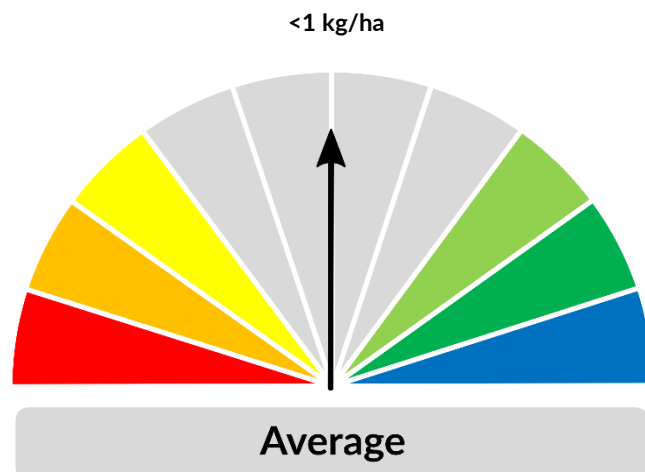
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	30%	42%	17%	11%



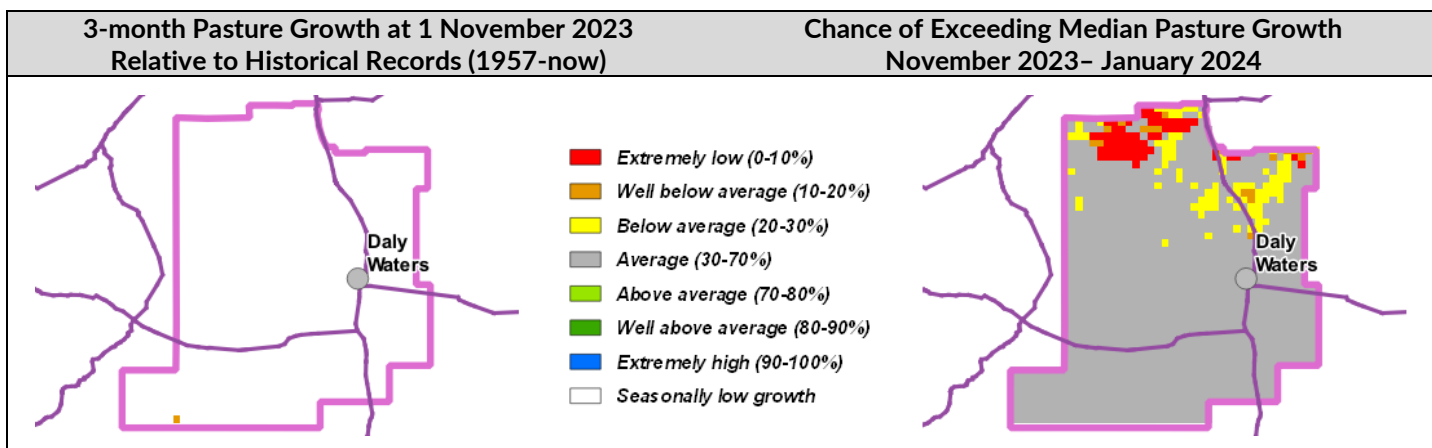
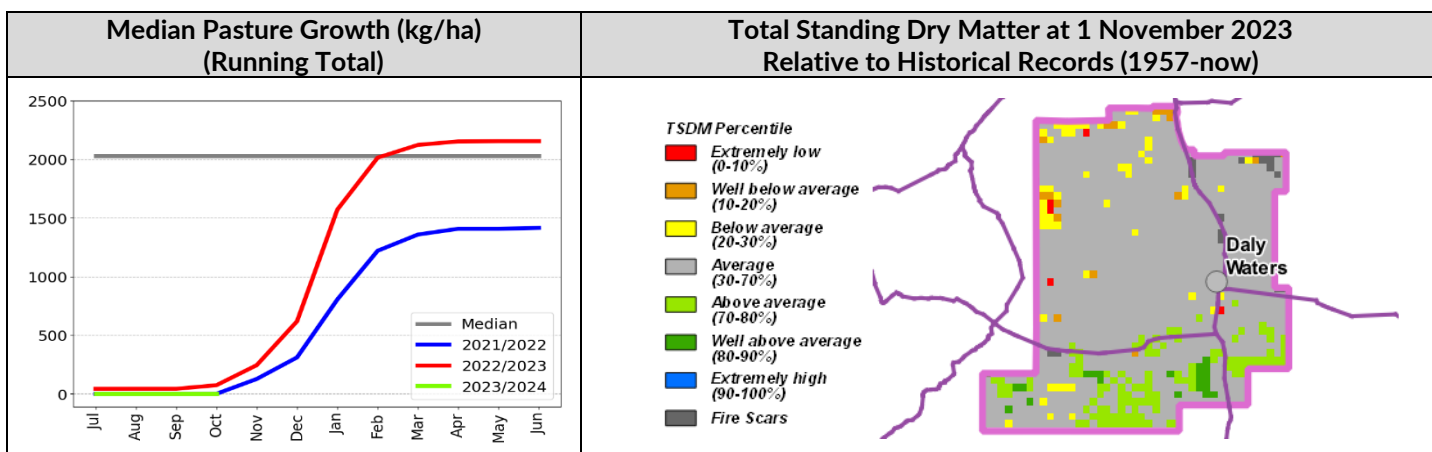
Sturt Plateau District

- The Sturt Plateau district is experiencing typical, seasonally low pasture growth at this stage of the 2023/2024 season, which is considered **average** for this time of year.
- Pasture biomass levels are generally **average** across the district, with some **above average** levels in the south and small scattered areas with below average biomass.
- Over the next 3 months the chance of exceeding median growth is **average** over most of the district and **below average** in parts of the north.
- 1.7% of the district has burnt since 1 January 2023. 1.4% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



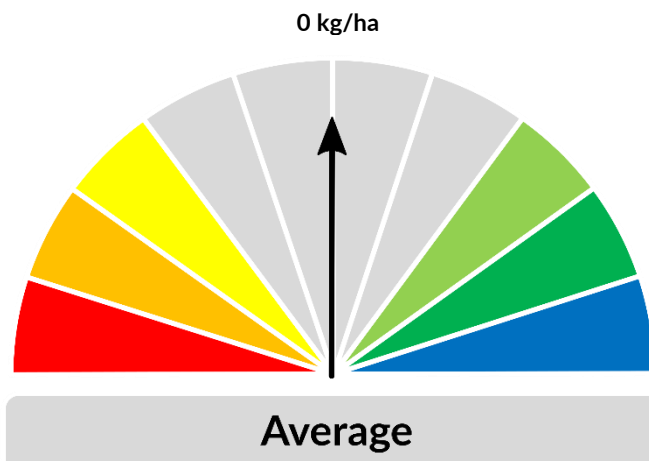
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	23%	71%	1%	5%



Roper District

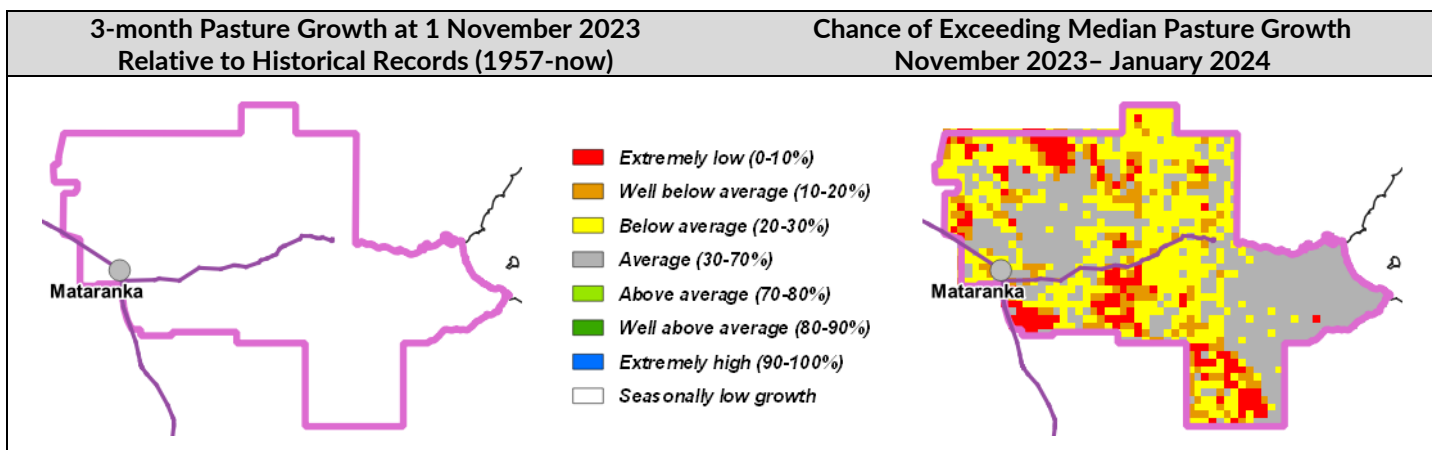
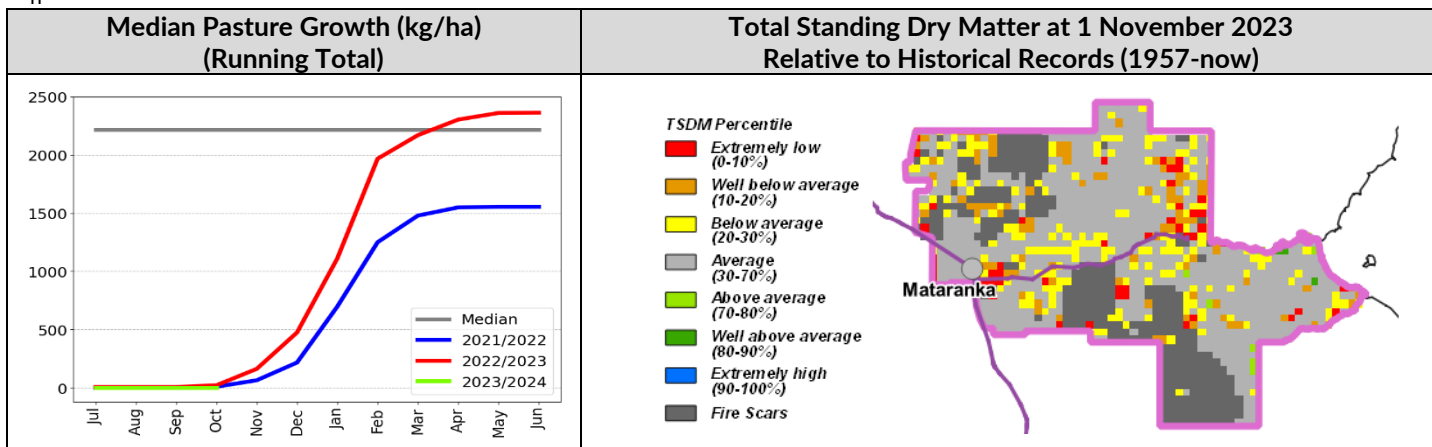
- The Roper district is experiencing typical, seasonally low pasture growth at this stage of the 2023/2024 season, which is considered **average** for this time of year.
- Pasture biomass levels are generally **low** to **average** across the district.
- Over the next 3 months the chance of exceeding median growth is **very low** to **average** across most of the district, reflecting current **El Niño** conditions and a predicted later than usual wet season onset.
- 30% of the district has burnt since 1 January 2023; 18% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	37%	46%	12%	5%

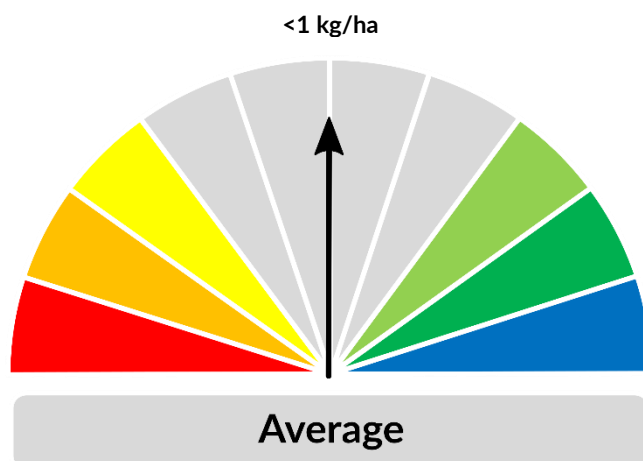
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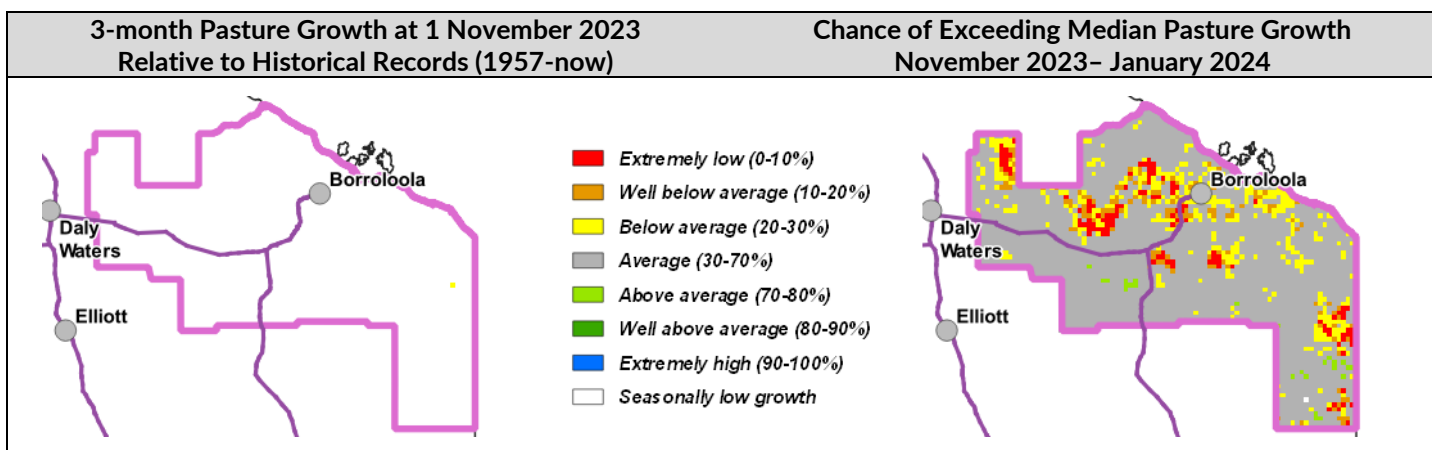
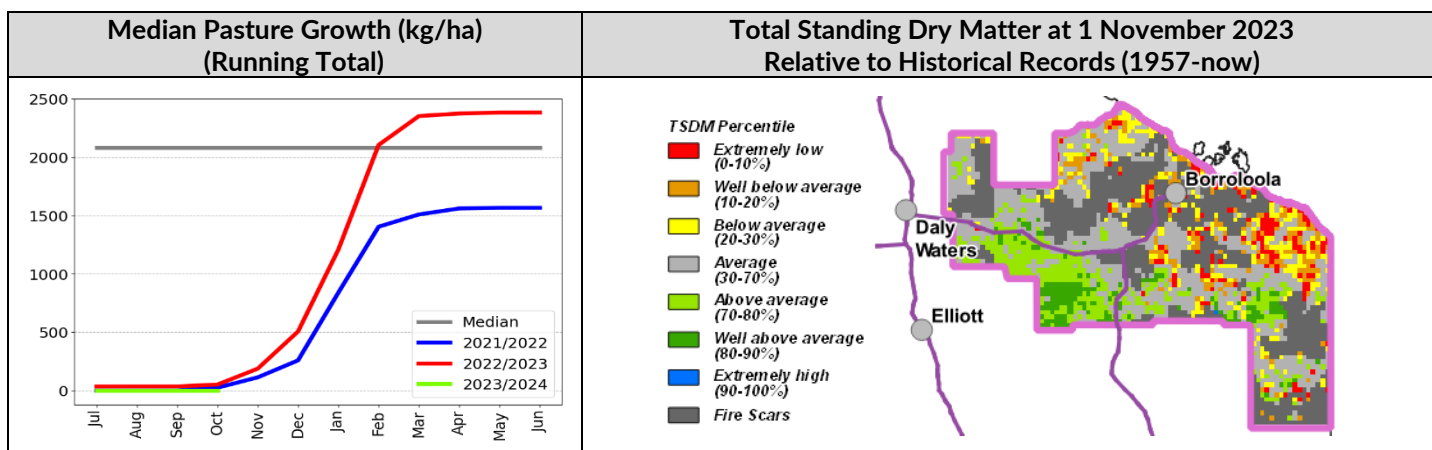
Gulf District

- The Gulf district is experiencing typical, seasonally low pasture growth at this stage of the 2023/2024 season, which is considered **average** for this time of year.
- While pasture biomass levels are **low** to **average** across much of the district, some areas in the southern and eastern parts are still showing **above average** levels.
- Over the next 3 months the chance of exceeding median growth is **below average** to **average** across the district, reflecting current **El Niño** conditions and a predicted later than usual wet season onset.
- 31% of the district has burnt since 1 January 2023; 26% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



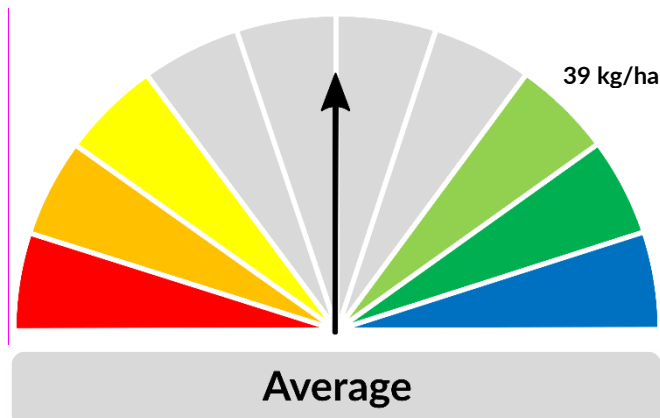
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<1,000kg/ha	1,000 - 2,000kg/ha	2,000 - 3,000kg/ha	>3,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	100%	0%	0%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	39%	41%	13%	7%



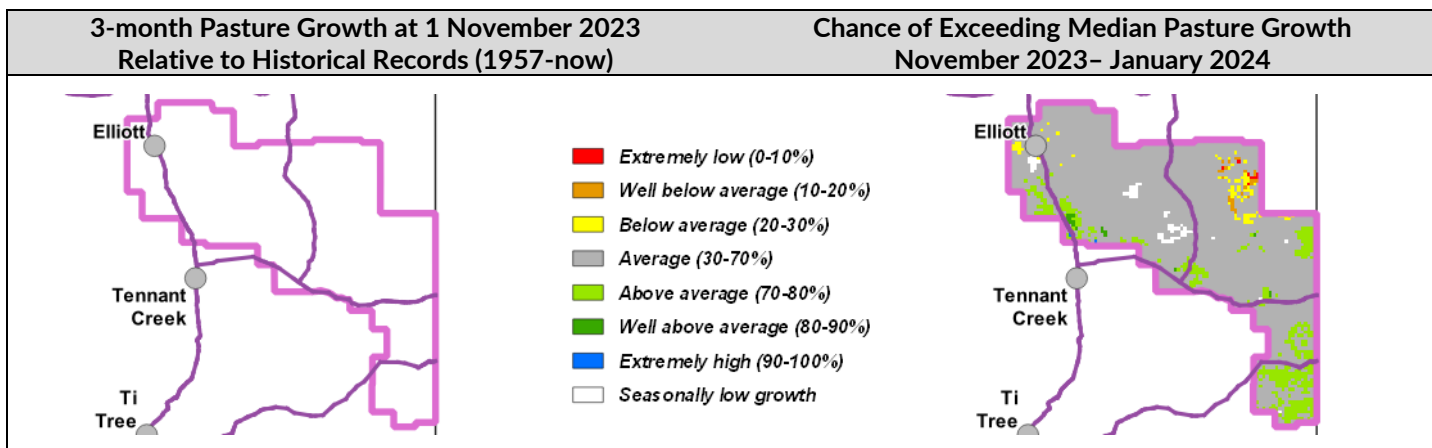
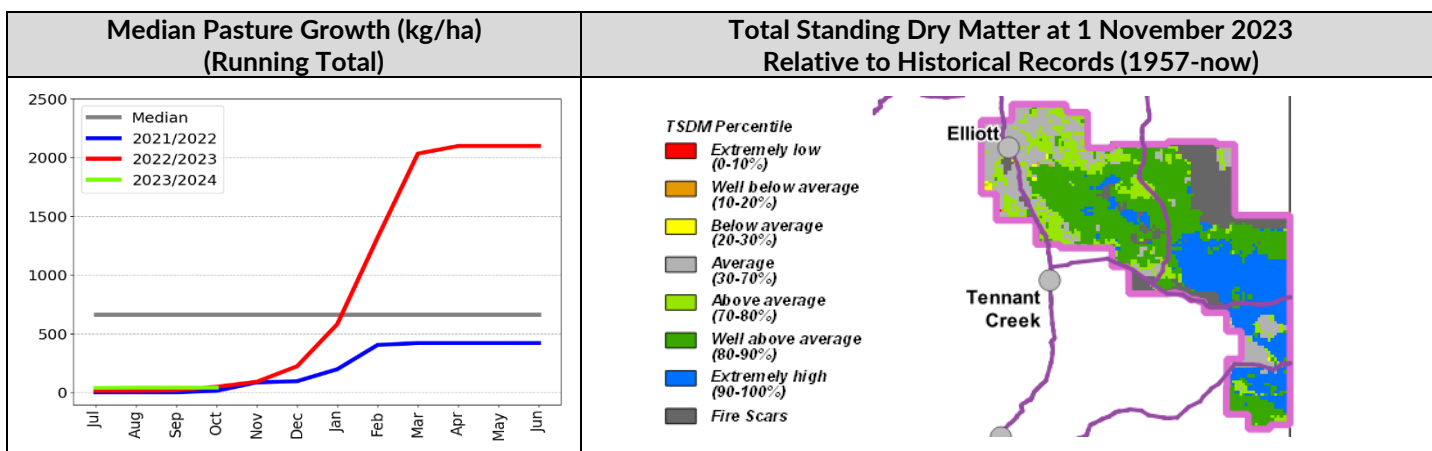
Barkly District

- The Barkly district is experiencing typical, seasonally low pasture growth at this stage of the 2023/2024 season, which is considered **average** for this time of year.
- Pasture biomass levels are still **above average** to **extremely high** across most of the district after the high rainfall and pasture growth during the previous wet season.
- Over the next 3 months pasture growth is likely to be average across much of the district, with a higher likelihood of **above average** growth in the southern parts and **below average** growth in the northeast.
- 12% of the district has burnt since 1 January 2023 with nearly all of those fires occurring after 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



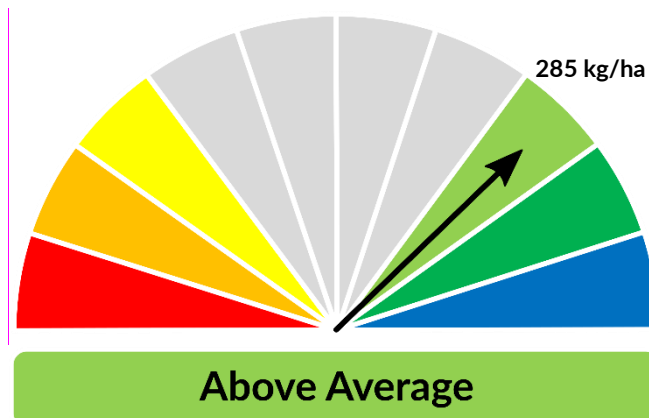
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	92%	8%	<1%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	7%	3%	19%	71%



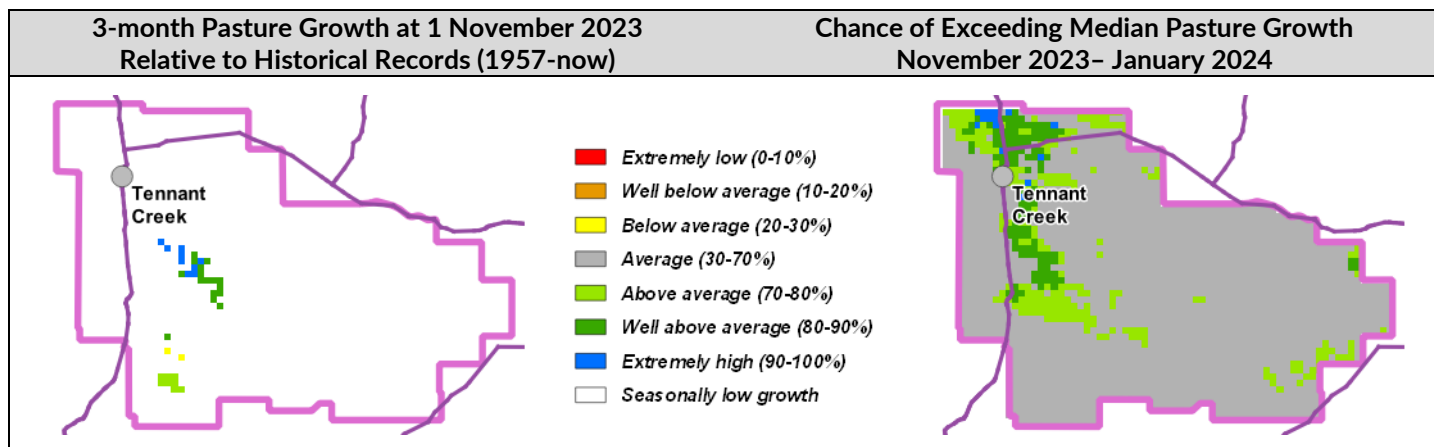
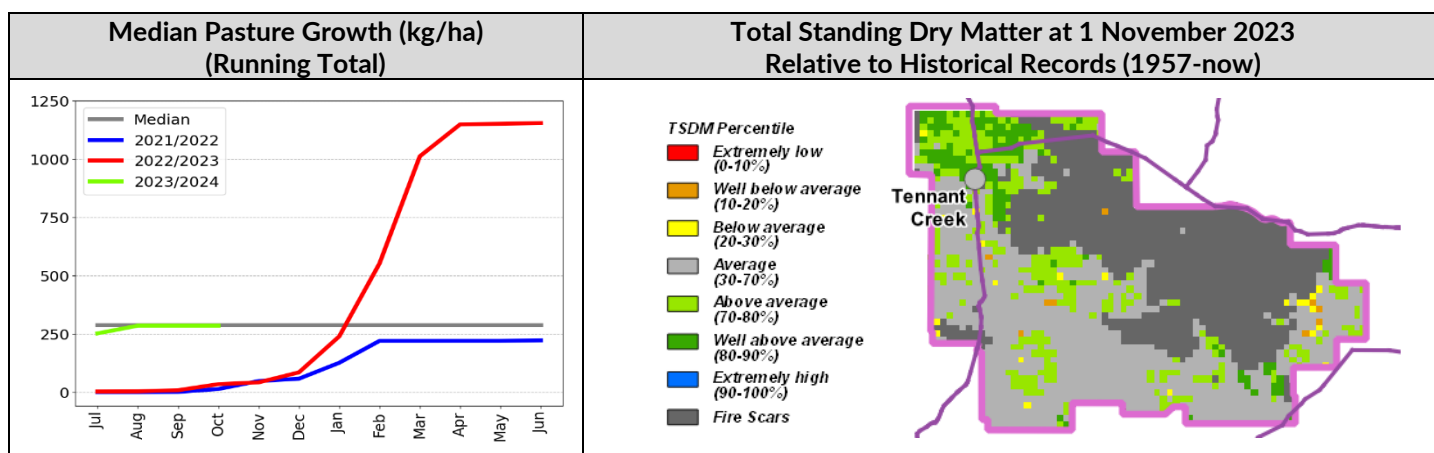
Tennant Creek District

- Most of the Tennant Creek district has experienced seasonally low pasture growth over the last 3 months, with some isolated areas showing **above average** growth.
- Pasture biomass levels are still **above average** in the north of the district after high growth during the previous season, although large areas of standing dry matter have been impacted by widespread fires.
- Over the next 3 months, the chance of exceeding median growth is **average** across much of the district with some areas of **high** growth likely, particularly in the northwest.
- Approximately 36% of the district has burnt since 1 January 2023; 35% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



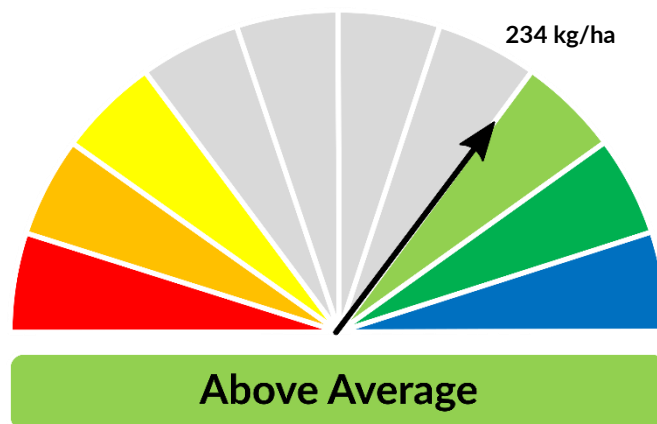
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	37%	61%	2%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	24%	8%	17%	51%



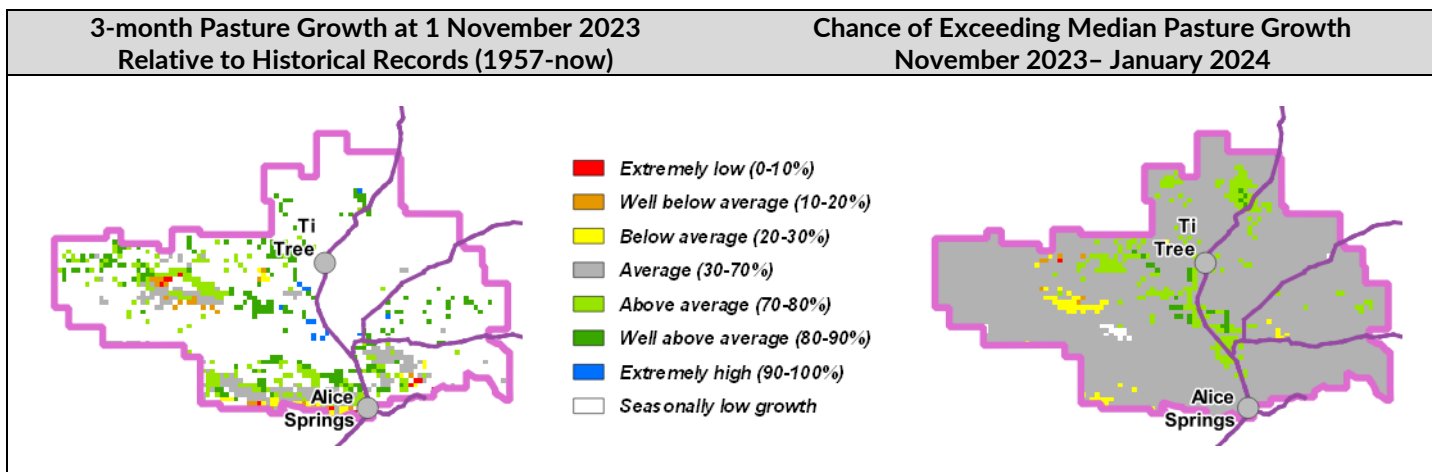
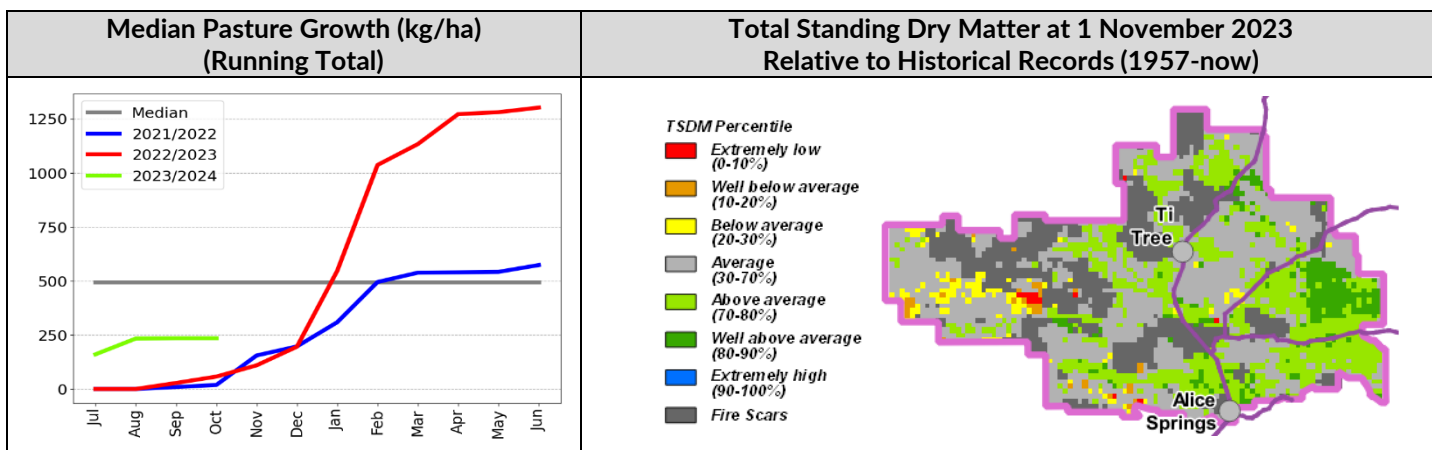
Northern Alice Springs District

- While much of the district has experienced seasonally low growth over the last 3 months, scattered areas across the district are showing growth, with overall levels slightly **above average**.
- Pasture biomass is generally **average** to **well above average**, although areas of lower biomass levels are seen in western parts of the district. However recent fires have heavily impacted biomass levels across ¼ of the district.
- Over the next 3 months, pasture growth is predicted to be **average** to **above average** for most of the district.
- 26% of the district has burnt since 1 January 2023; 24% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



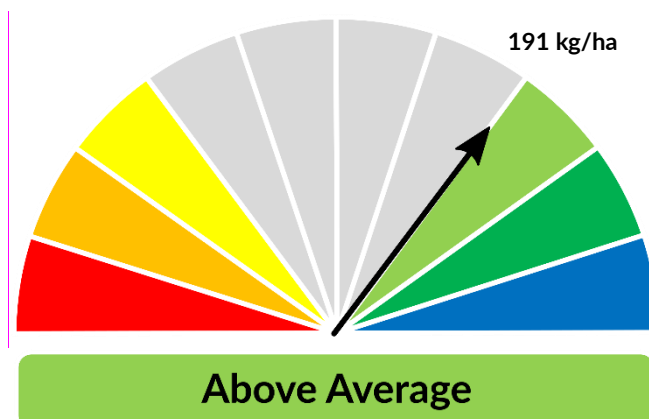
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	53%	33%	14%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	8%	7%	23%	62%



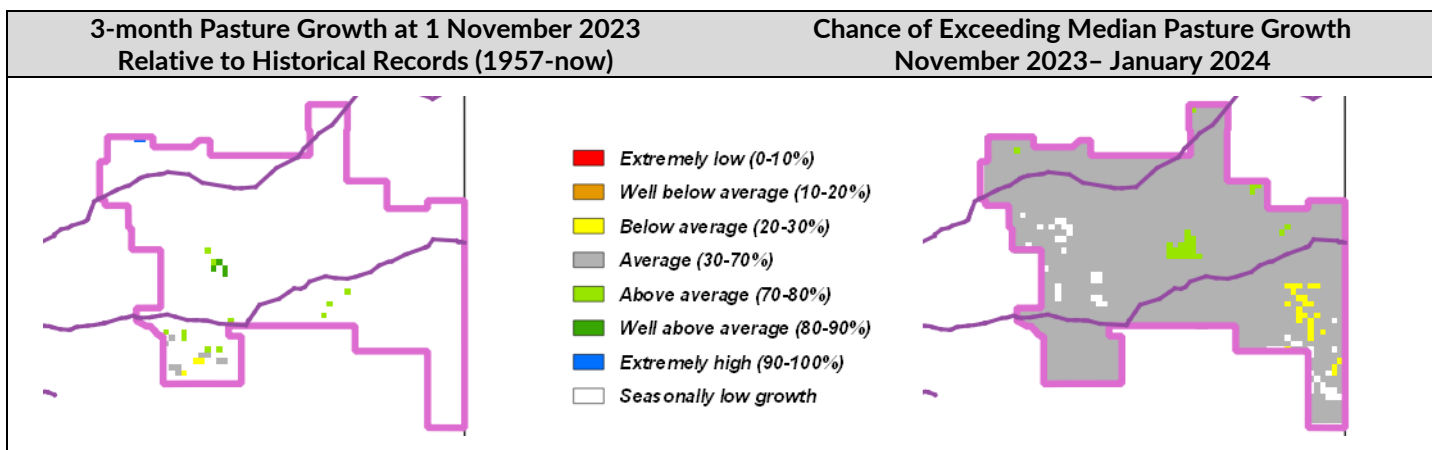
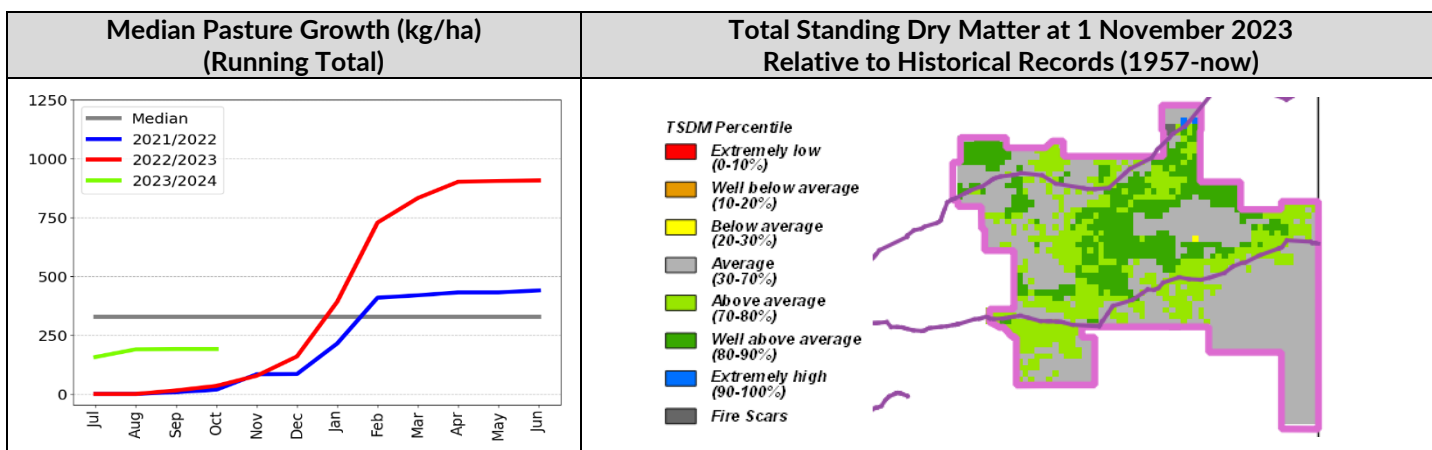
Plenty District

- While most of the district has experienced seasonally low growth over the last 3 months, scattered areas across the district are showing **average** to **above average** relative growth.
- Pasture biomass levels are still **average** to **well above average** across most of the district.
- Over the next 3 months, pasture growth over most of the district is likely to be generally **average** overall.
- Less than 1% of the district has burnt since 1 January 2023.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



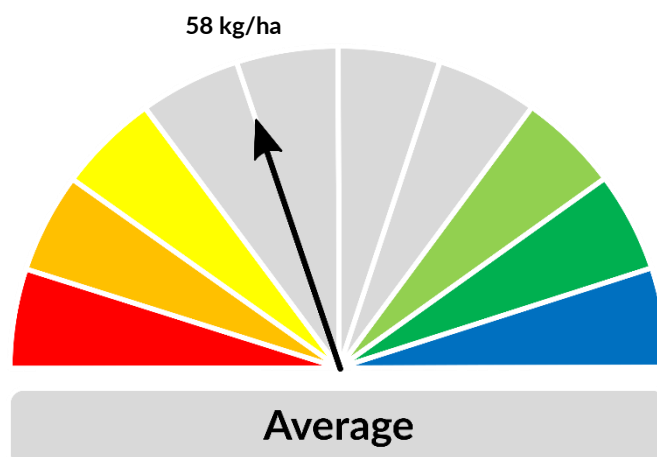
As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	64%	34%	2%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	1%	12%	30%	57%



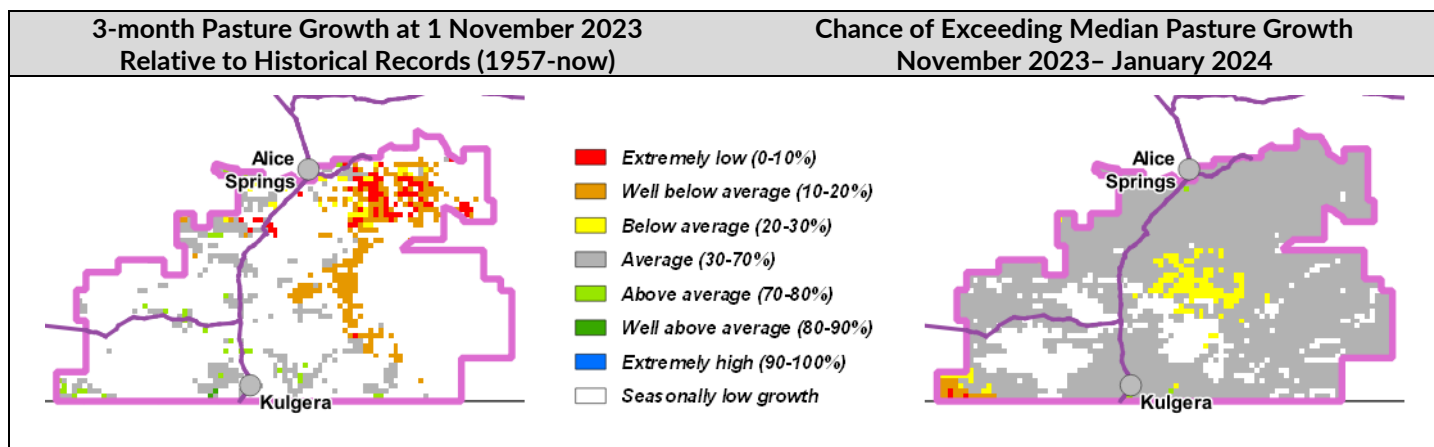
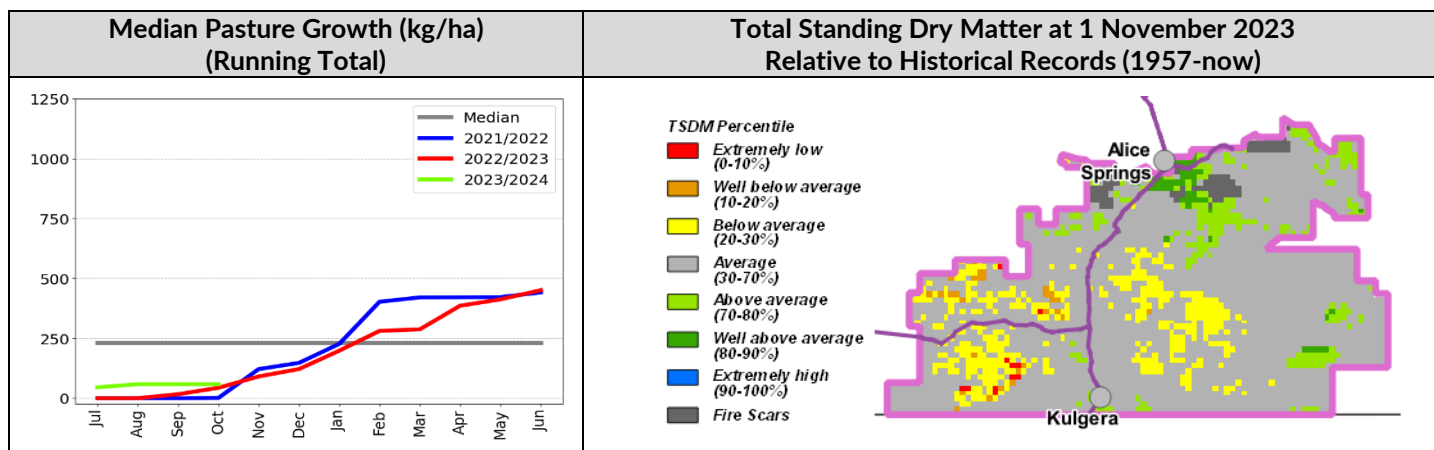
Southern Alice Springs District

- Much of the district has experienced seasonally low growth over the last 3 months. However, scattered areas across the northeastern half of the district are showing **low** growth while areas across the southwestern half are showing **average** to slightly **above average** relative growth.
- Relative pasture biomass was mostly average with areas of **below average** in the southwest to **above average** in northern parts of the district.
- Over the next three months, pasture growth is predicted to be generally **average** with smaller areas of below average and seasonally limited growth.
- 4% of the district has burnt since 1 January 2023. 3.3% has burnt since 1 July.

2023/24 Pasture Growth



As at 1 November 2023				
(% of district)	<250kg/ha	250 - 500kg/ha	500 - 1,000kg/ha	>1,000kg/ha
Pasture Growth (July-November)	96%	4%	<1%	0%
Total Standing Dry Matter	5%	24%	35%	36%



Pasture information

The pasture and fire 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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