

THE WEATHER IN NEW ZEALAND IN JULY 1986

General—July was sunnier and slightly colder than normal throughout most of New Zealand.

South-westerlies prevailed over the whole of the country, and had their highest frequency for July at Invercargill Airport since 1976. Strong winds were much more frequent than usual for July, and their frequency at Invercargill Airport was the second highest on record (being over twice their normal frequency). Records began there in 1956.

Mean sea level pressures were well below average over the whole of New Zealand, and were 4 to 5 hPa below normal in most places. Very low mean sea level pressures were recorded throughout the country on the 11th. 970.9 hPa was recorded at New Plymouth Airport, which is the lowest recorded there for any month since records began in 1944.

Most farmers reported minimal pasture growth this month. Lambing has just started in some areas and most stock are in good condition, but some stock in Hawkes Bay were only just holding their condition.

On the 2nd of July the Police launch 'Lady Elizabeth' capsized just before noon in heavy seas during gale force southerly conditions near Barrett's Reef, just at the entrance to Wellington Harbour. Some waves were reported to be 10 metres high. Of the four crew, two were rescued by helicopter, one was missing, and one drowned.

About 1500 passengers were stranded at both Wellington and New Plymouth Airports as winds gusted to 110 kmph, causing Friendships and small aircraft to be grounded.

In Taranaki a large gum tree fell, due to strong winds, and killed fifteen dairy cows.

Snow—Snow fell to low levels in the South Island, and on the high country of the North Island on the 2nd, and again on the 6th in inland South Canterbury causing the closure of many roads.

Rainfall—Surface flooding occurred in Christchurch City after almost 30 hours of continuous rain on the 7th and 8th.

On the 25th and 26th heavy rain and gale force winds caused extensive damage in Ohura township (20 km west of Taumarunui). Some power lines were down, telephone lines cut, and roads closed due to land slips.

A state of emergency was declared after the Ohura river burst its banks and severe flooding resulted in the main street.

Over the North Island July's rainfall was above average in western regions from Manawatu to Auckland. Total monthly rainfall was just below 75 percent of average in Hawkes Bay. This was the eighth consecutive drier than normal month at Napier Airport. This is the driest year to date there since 1952, and total rainfall has been only 50 percent of normal.

Over the South Island total monthly rainfall for July was above average in all regions apart from Buller, Westland, Marlborough and Nelson. In parts of Canterbury and North Otago rainfall was over 200 percent of the normal for July. It was rather dry in Nelson where total monthly rainfall was 50 percent of normal.

Temperatures—Mean daily temperatures were about 0.5°C above average over the South Island in most regions to the south of Christchurch. Over the remainder of the country mean daily temperatures were about 0.5°C below average.

Sunshine—July was again another sunny month in most east coast regions from Hawkes Bay to Canterbury where total hours of bright sunshine ranged between 115 to 130 percent of normal. It was also sunnier than usual for July in Northland, Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki and Wellington.

Elsewhere total hours of bright sunshine for July were near normal.

J. S. HICKMAN, Director.