

THE WEATHER IN NEW ZEALAND IN AUGUST 1987

General—Over most of New Zealand August was much drier and warmer than usual. A notable feature for the month was the lack of strong cold southerly conditions, which are usually fairly frequent at this time of year. In August there is usually plenty of snow for skiers, but this month some skifields had to be closed because there was too little snow. Westerlies predominated over the south of the South Island, while south-westerlies prevailed over the north of the country. Strong winds were more frequent than usual in the far south, but less frequent in the north. Mean sea level pressures were 5 to 6 hPa above normal in most places.

Rainfall—Totals were near, or just below normal in Bay of Plenty, Horowhenua, Nelson, Southland and Westland. Elsewhere totals were about half to one third of normal. In most east coast regions, including Auckland, Nelson and Wellington, very little rain fell from the 6th to the 20th, inclusive. The driest regions were Wairarapa, Wanganui and Manawatu, with totals of 25 to 35 percent of normal. Waingawa, Wanganui, Ohakea and Palmerston North all recorded their lowest August rainfall on record (records began in 1926, 1941 and 1959 respectively). It was also rather dry in parts of Canterbury and coastal Otago where rainfall was only 30 to 35 percent of normal. At Kelburn, Wellington, with rainfall 42 percent of normal it was the driest August there since 1964.

Temperatures—Mean temperatures were well above normal throughout much of the country. From New Plymouth northward they were 1°C above normal; elsewhere they were 1.5 to 2°C above normal. In inland South Canterbury they were even higher, being up to 3.5°C above normal. In some North Island places and many South Island places this was the warmest August on record. For example, Kelburn (Wellington), Lake Coleridge, Alexandra, The Hermitage, Onepoto (Lake Waikaremoana), Ohakea and Invercargill, where records began in 1862, 1918, 1929, 1930, 1935, 1940 and 1948 respectively.

Sunshine—Hours of bright sunshine were 110 to 120 percent of normal in most places in the North Island, and in Marlborough and North Canterbury. This was the second sunniest August at Waingawa since records began in 1930, with a total of 180 hours. The sunniest was in 1935 with 181 hours. It was rather cloudy in Westland, with only 60 to 80 percent of normal sunshine. Only 76 hours were recorded at Hokitika Airport, being the second lowest on record since records began there in 1964.

J. S. HICKMAN, Director.