

18th SESSION OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM PICOF - 18

23 - 24 April, 2026 | Nadi, Fiji





Overview of the TCs over November to April

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Presentation outline

- Key messages from the 2025 – 2026 Tropical Cyclone Outlook (issued October 2025)
- Background rationale and direction of travel
- Named storms during the 2025 – 2026 TC season
- Key Points /takeaways about the verification

The [Southwest Pacific tropical cyclone outlook](#) issued by New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) in conjunction with MetService and Pacific meteorological services was issued on **8 October 2025**

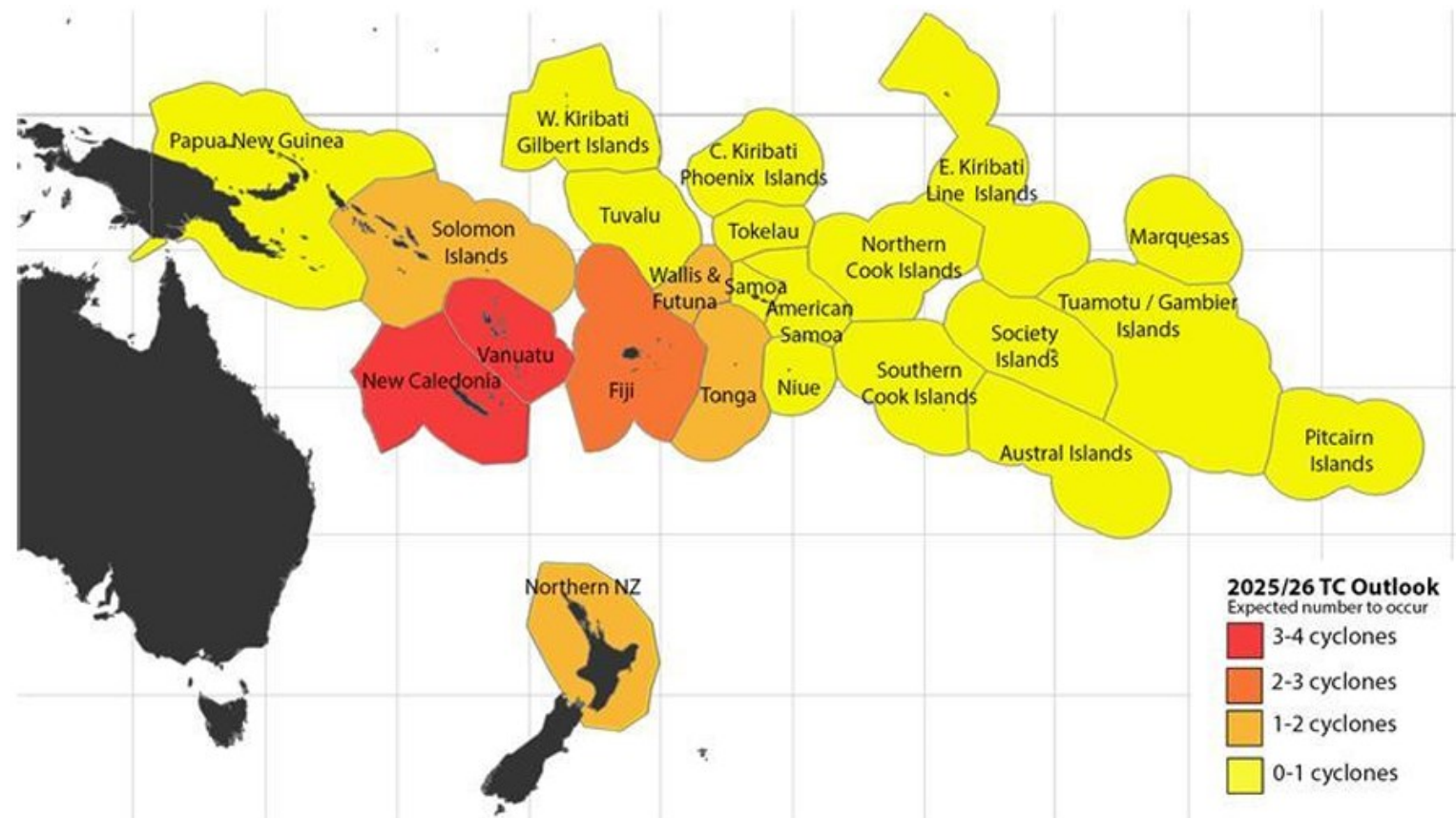


Figure 2: Number of predicted named tropical cyclones interacting with an island group for the 2025-26 season

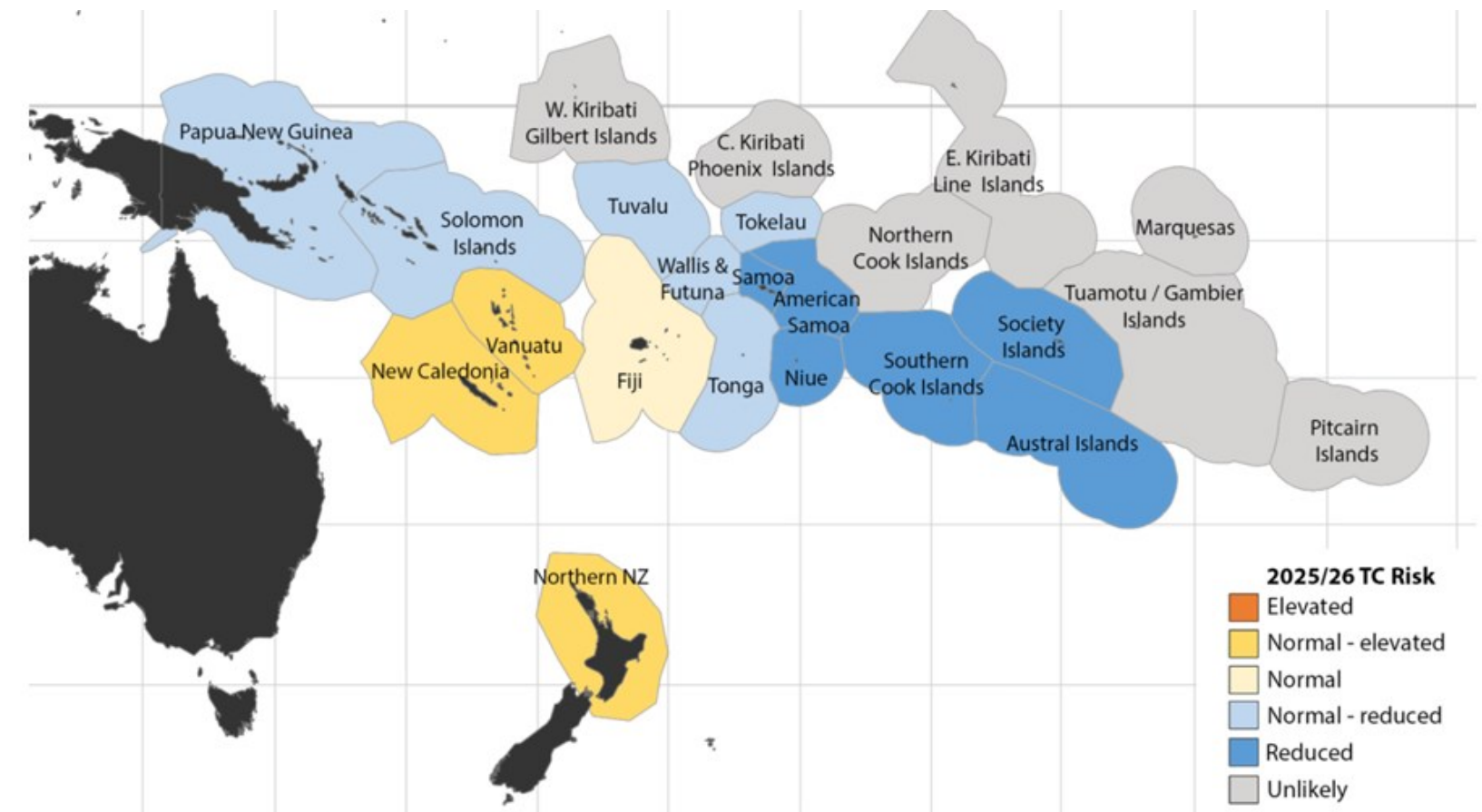
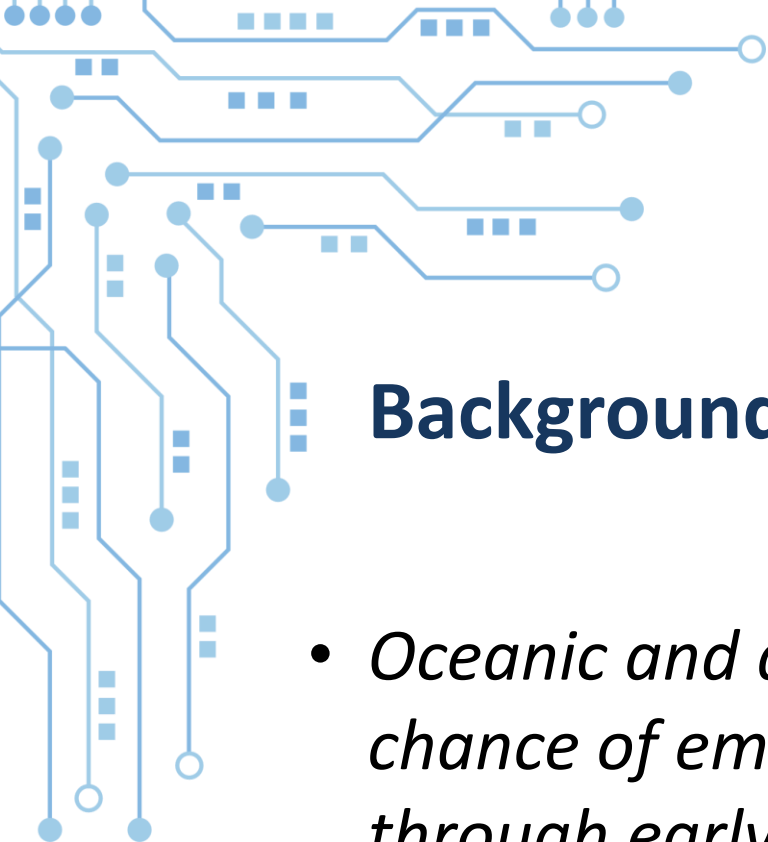


Figure 1: Tropical cyclone risk for the 2025-26 season

Overall, “normal to below normal activity.” was indicated in the TC outlook, issued October 2025 (**5 to 9 named TCs**)

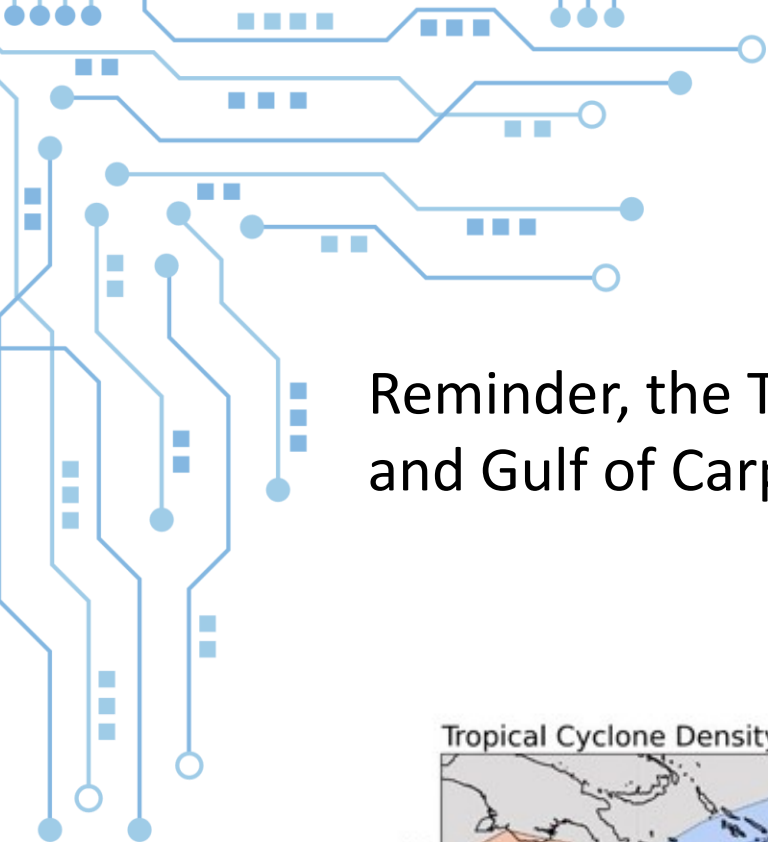
The risk of impact from a TC is expected to be **higher near the Coral Sea, and around New Caledonia and Vanuatu**

Normal to reduced risk is anticipated for the **central part of the basin, and reduced risk is expected for the eastern part of the basin.**

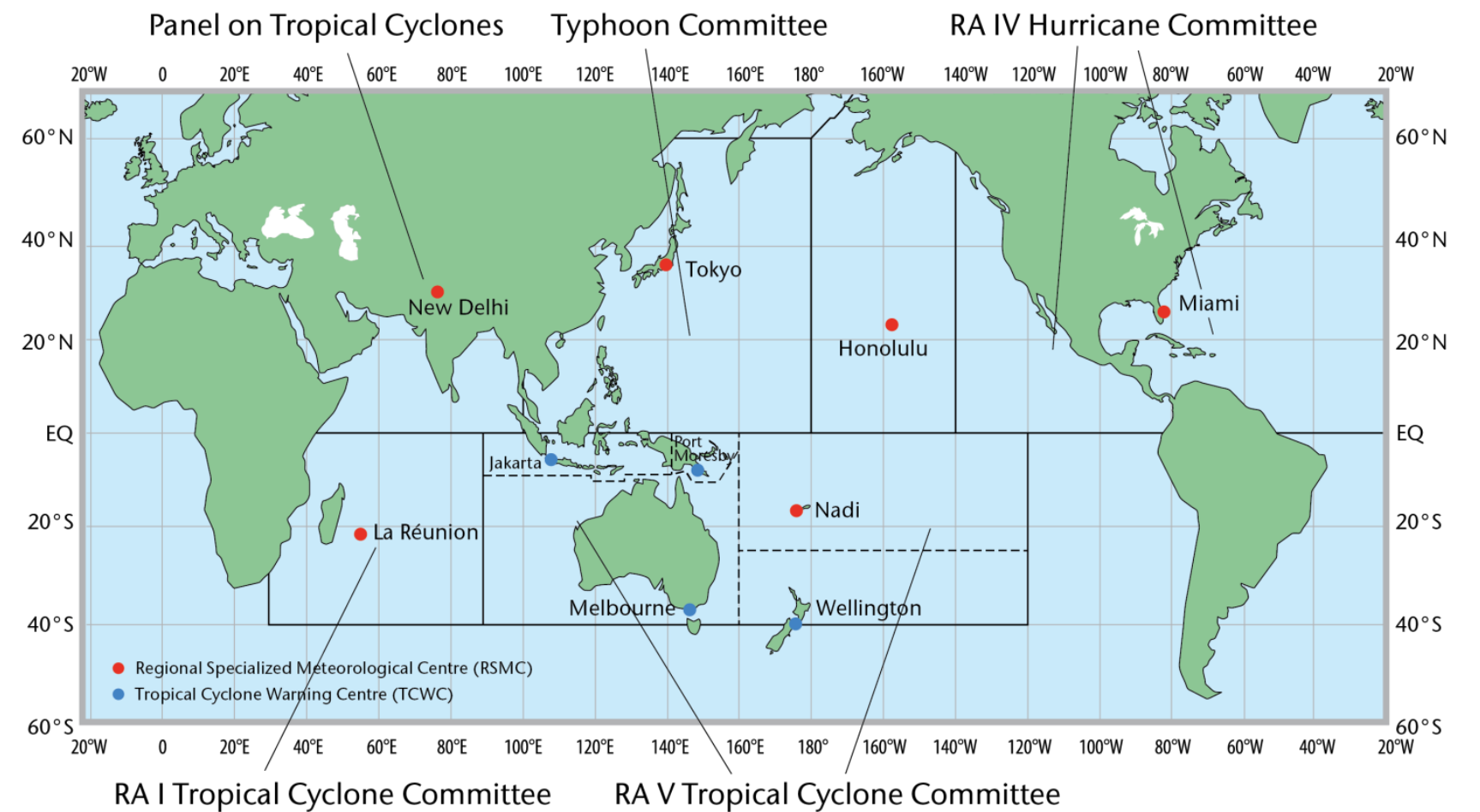
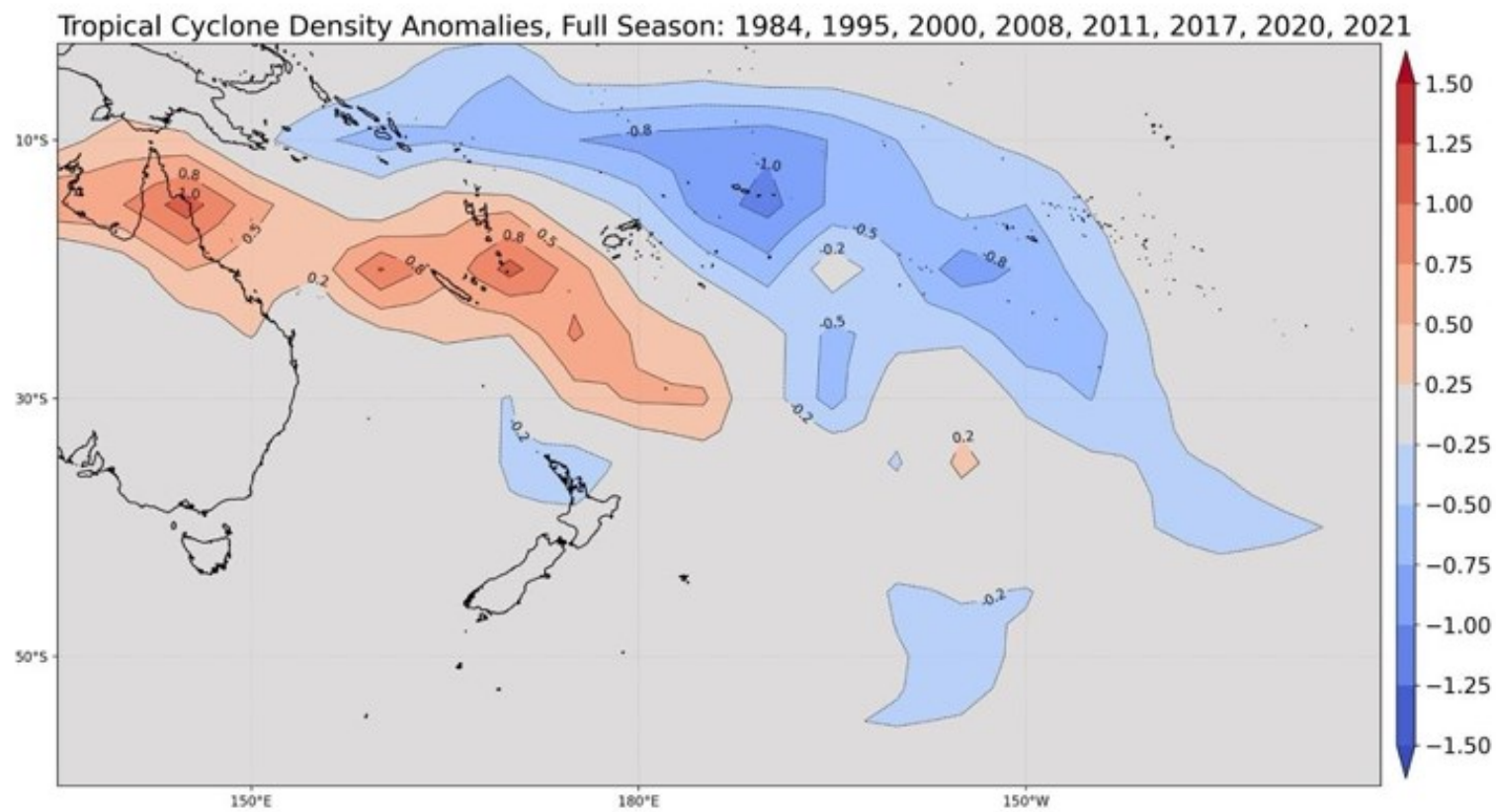


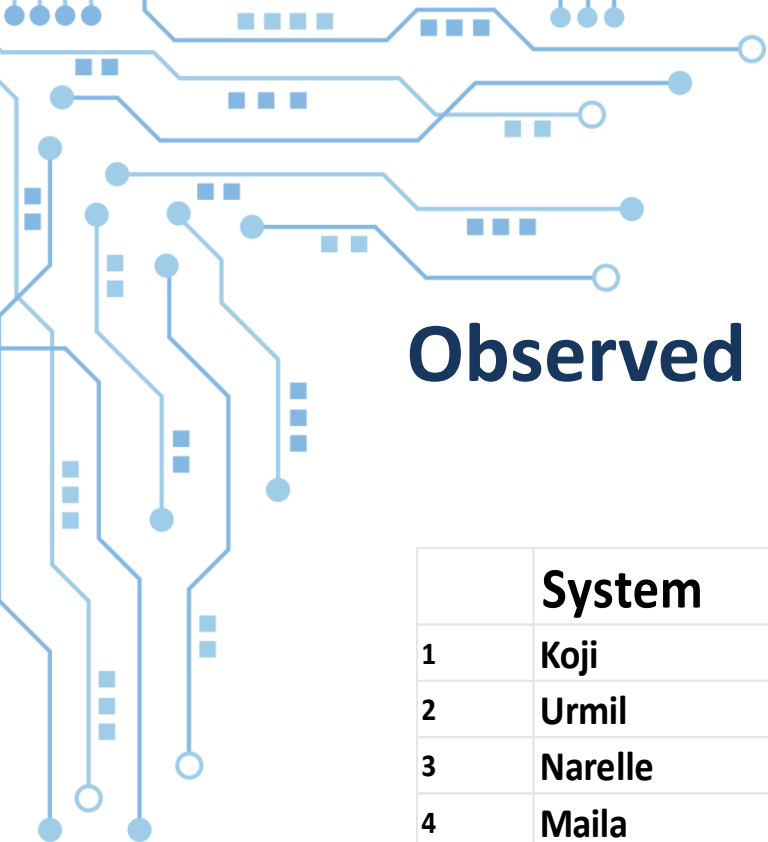
Background rationale for the TC Outlook and direction of travel

- *Oceanic and atmospheric forecasts for ENSO suggest **weak-to-moderate La Niña conditions** have an 85% chance of emerging by October-December 2025. La Niña conditions, should they develop, are likely to persist through early 2026, with **deterioration of the event during the back half of the TC season in February-April 2026***
- *Based on past seasons with similar background climate conditions to the present, TC activity in the coming season is expected to be **normal to slightly elevated in the region between Vanuatu and New Caledonia and in the north Tasman Sea to the north and northwest of New Zealand during the late season***
- *There is a clear signal for an **elevated risk of tropical cyclones developing and tracking over waters located west of the International Date Line during both the early and late season, but with increased risk focused on the Coral Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria during the early season***



Reminder, the TC Outlook domain of analysis (see below composite TC density map, analog method) includes the Coral Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria (Southwest Pacific basin **east of 135°E**)





Observed named storms in the domain (east of 135°E) - to date

| | System | Dates (UTC) | Origin / primary basin | Notes |
|---|---------|---------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Koji | 7–11 Jan 2026 | Coral Sea (Australian region) | Short-lived, high rainfall impacts in QLD |
| 2 | Urmil | 26 Feb – 1 Mar 2026 | Southwest Pacific (RSMC Nadi) | Formed late February; affected Vanuatu / nearby waters |
| 3 | Narelle | 15–28 Mar 2026 | Coral Sea → Gulf of Carpentaria → NT → WA | Long-lived, multi-basin, Cat 5 at peak |
| 4 | Maila | 1–12 Apr 2026 | Solomon Sea / Coral Sea (Australian region) | Cat 5 system, major impacts in PNG & Solomon Islands |
| 5 | Vaianu | 3–13 Apr 2026 | Southwest Pacific (RSMC Nadi) | Severe TC; later ex-TC impacts in NZ |

5 named storms (lower bound of the 5 to 9 named storms forecast range)

2 – 4 named tropical cyclones may reach severe Category 3 or higher status

→ 3 severe TCs recorded:

→ Narelle, Maila, Vaianu

TC Koji

Tropical Cyclone Koji was a short-lived, broad tropical cyclone that affected Northern Queensland, Australia during January 2026. The seventh named storm of the 2025–26 Australian region cyclone season, Koji originated from a tropical low-pressure area in the north Coral Sea. On 7 January, the disturbance was designated as *Tropical Low 12U* by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) while moving southward. Three days later, the low intensified into a category 2 tropical cyclone on the Australian scale and was assigned the name *Koji*. Shortly after, Koji began quickly to weaken and was downgraded to a tropical low the following day. Koji then crossed the northern coast of Queensland between Ayr and Bowen.

Despite falling below tropical cyclone strength prior to landfall, remnant moisture from Koji generated thunderstorms that produced rainfall up to 700 millimetres (28 in) in portions of Queensland, resulting in severe flash flooding. Energy companies reported that 23,000 homes were left without power at the height of the storm. Damage was the most severe in the town of Clermont, where 71 homes were inundated. Following the storm, disaster funds and donations were made to communities affected. The Premier of Queensland reported that over 50,000 cattle had been lost during the storm. One resident sustained an economic loss of AU\$200,000 (US\$142,000) from Koji. Despite the severity of the damage, no deaths were reported.



Tropical Cyclone Koji



Cyclone Koji intensifying offshore Queensland on 10 January

Meteorological history

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Formed | 7 January 2026 |
| Dissipated | 10 January 2026 |
| Category 2 tropical cyclone | |
| <i>10-minute sustained (BOM)</i> | |
| Highest winds | 95 km/h (60 mph) |
| Lowest pressure | 989 hPa (mbar); 29.21 inHg |

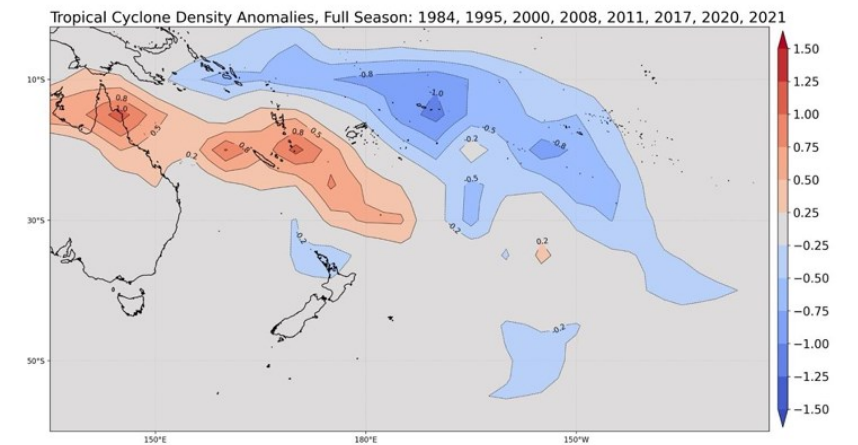
Tropical storm

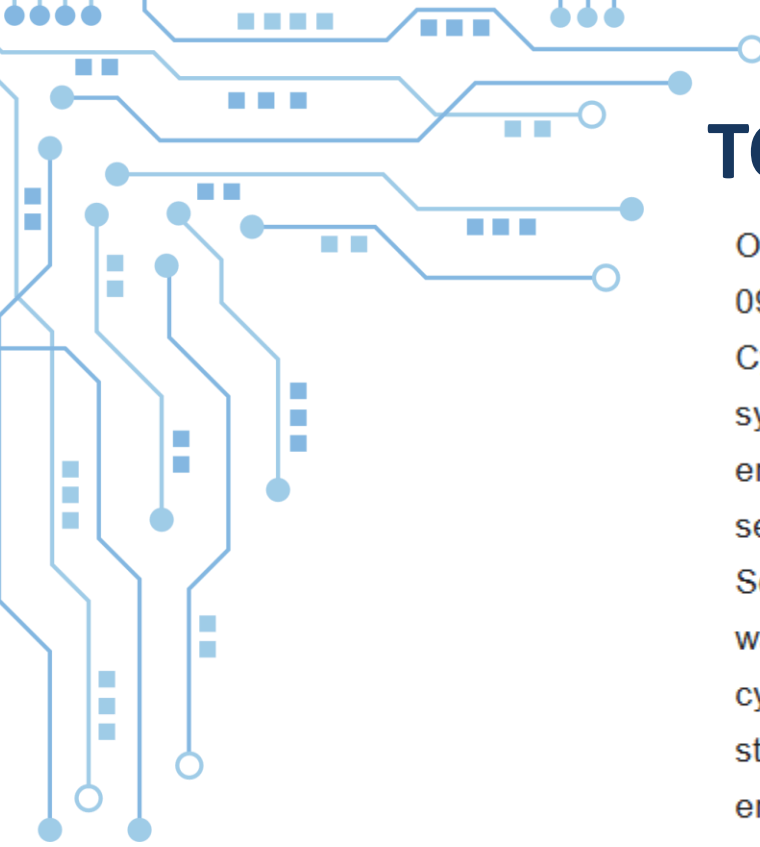
| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| <i>1-minute sustained (SSHWS/JTWC)</i> | |
| Highest winds | 75 km/h (45 mph) |
| Lowest pressure | 988 hPa (mbar); 29.18 inHg |

Overall effects

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Fatalities | None |
| Damage | \$50 million (2026 USD) |
| Areas affected | Papua New Guinea, Queensland |

Part of the 2025–26 Australian region cyclone season

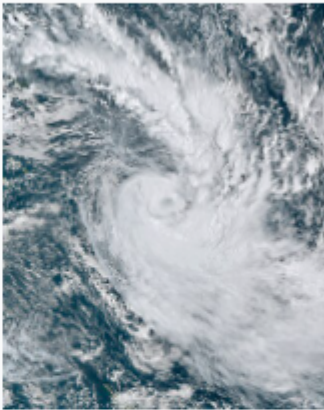
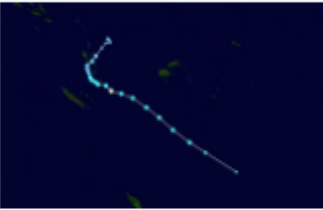


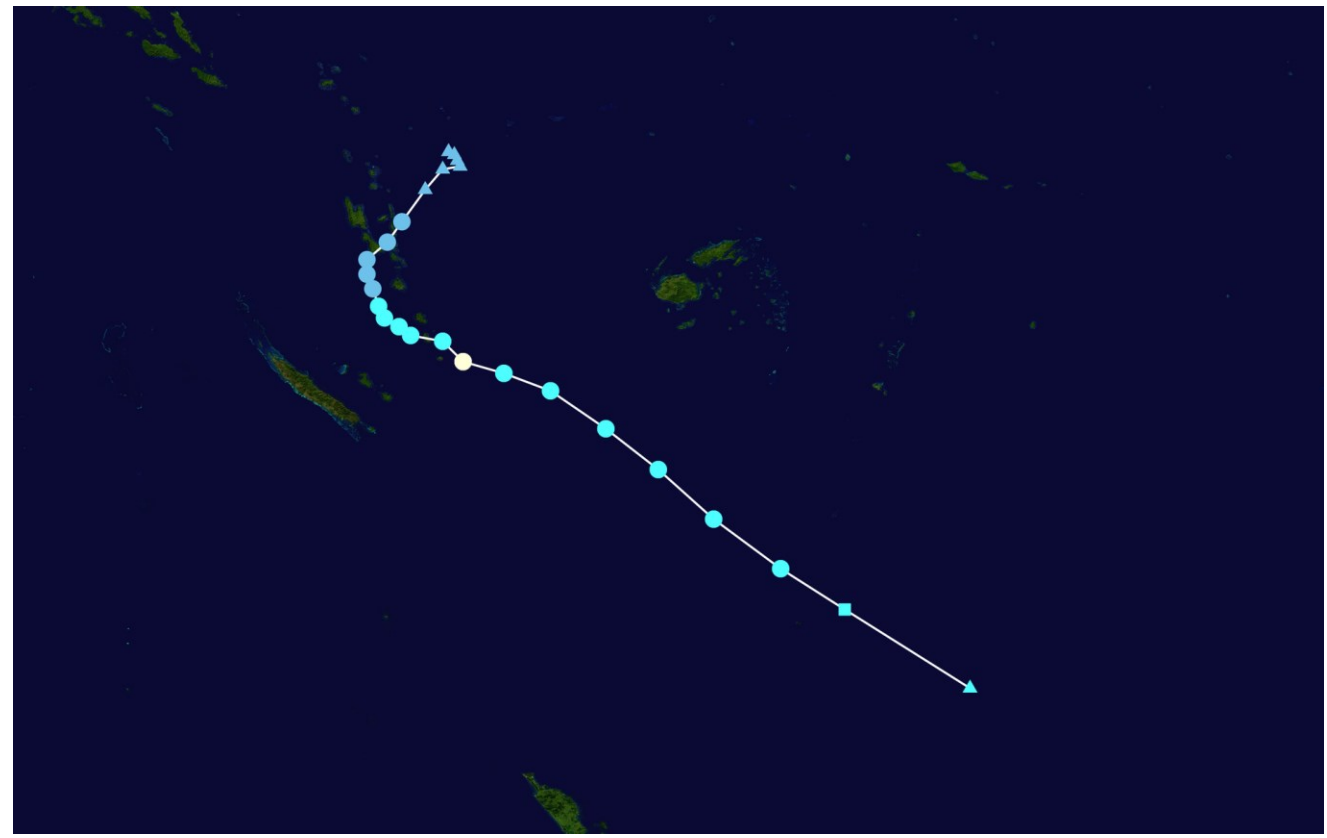
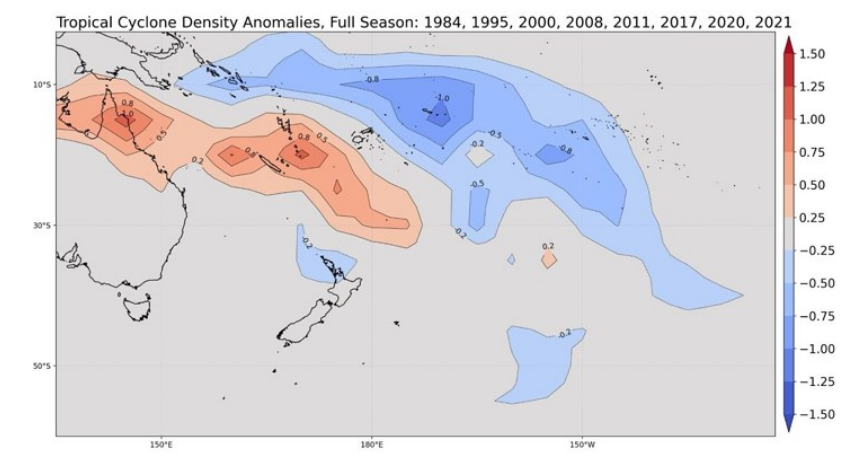


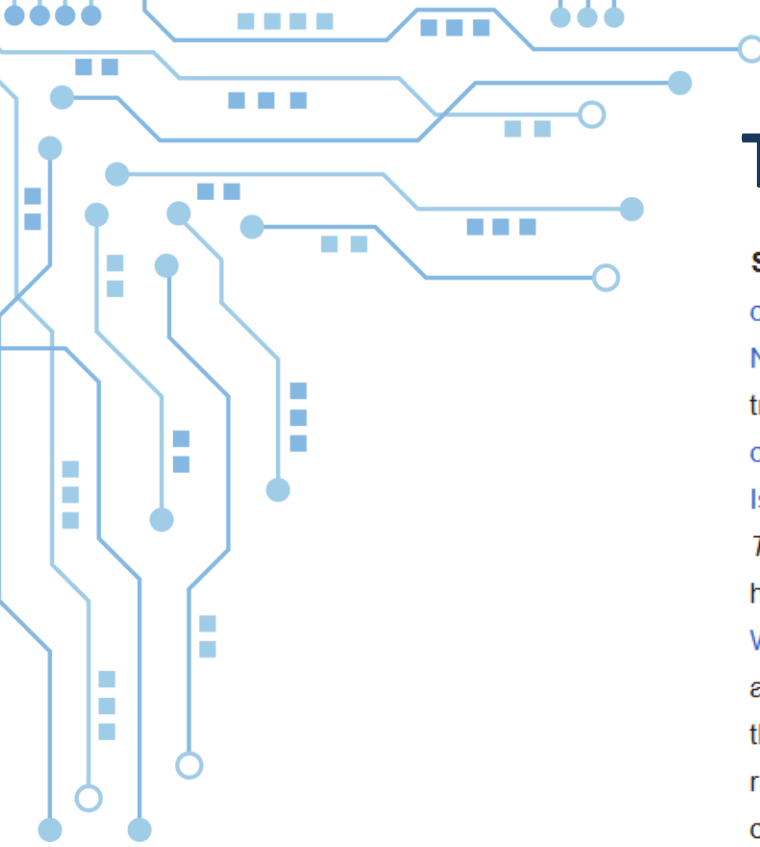
TC Urmil

On 25 February, the Fiji Meteorological Service began tracking Tropical Disturbance 09F, followed by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center issuing warnings on Tropical Cyclone 23P a day later. On 27 February after continued organization from the system, the Fiji Meteorological Service upgraded 09F to Tropical Cyclone Urmil, ending a 319 day long period in the basin without a named storm,^[citation needed] and set the record for the latest first named tropical cyclone during a season in the South Pacific, beating the former record set by [Tropical Cyclone Bart](#) in 2017 which was named on 21 February.^[11] By February 28, Urmil peaked as a Category 2 cyclone on the Australian scale and Category 1 on the SSHWS. It quickly lost that status as it continued southeastwards whilst weakening. Extratropical transition ensued, and Urmil was last noted on 2 March, approximately a thousand kilometers northeast of East Cape, New Zealand.^[citation needed]

Outer rainbands and strong winds associated with Urmil impacted Fiji. A child drowned in Namoli at Kaleli Settlement.^{[12][13]}

| | |
|---|---|
| Category 2 tropical cyclone (Australian scale) | |
| Category 1 tropical cyclone (SSHWS) | |
|  |  |
| Duration | 26 February – 1 March |
| Peak intensity | 100 km/h (65 mph) (10-min); 980 hPa (mbar) |





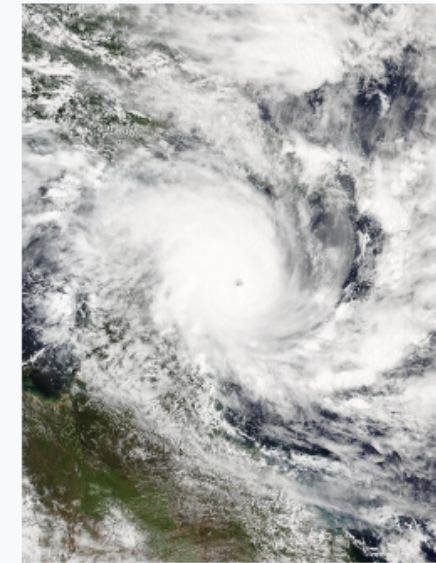
TC Narelle

Severe Tropical Cyclone Narelle was a powerful, unusual and long-lived tropical cyclone that made multiple landfalls in [Australia](#), specifically in the [Kimberley region](#), [Far North Queensland](#), and the [Top End](#), in March 2026. The twenty-first tropical low, tenth tropical cyclone, and sixth severe tropical cyclone of the [2025–26 Australian region cyclone season](#), Narelle formed from a tropical disturbance south of the [Solomon Islands](#) on 15 March. During its formative stages, the cyclone was designated as *Tropical Low 34U* by the [Bureau of Meteorology](#), and initially moved to the east, before heading southwards and away from the country. Around this time, the [Joint Typhoon Warning Center](#) (JTWC) also upgraded the system to a tropical cyclone, designating it as *27P*.^[1] Shortly thereafter, the system intensified to a Category 1 tropical cyclone on the Australian scale, and was assigned the name *Narelle* by the BoM.^[2] Narelle saw rapid development over the following days, intensifying into a Category 5 severe tropical cyclone (Category 4 on the [Saffir-Simpson scale](#)) the following day. Then, the storm made landfall on the Cape York Peninsula on 20 March as a Category 4 storm on the Australian scale, just to the south-southeast of Cape Sidmouth. Narelle eventually weakened to a Category 2 cyclone on the Australian scale before emerging over the [Gulf of Carpentaria](#).

By 21 March, the cyclone resumed strengthening and attained a secondary peak as a Category 3 cyclone on the Australian scale, or a high-end Category 1 on the Saffir-Simpson scale. Later that evening, the storm made landfall in [East Arnhem](#) with winds of with the same winds and a pressure of around 973 hPa (mbar). Following its second landfall, Narelle weakened to a tropical low as it trekked across the northern periphery of [Northern Territory](#) during 22 March. The following day, it emerged over the [Joseph Bonaparte Gulf](#) for a short time before making a third landfall in [Kimberley](#) as a Category 1 cyclone on the Australian Scale (tropical storm on the Saffir–Simpson scale) with winds of 75 km/h (47 mph). Narelle would continue to traverse the northeastern corner of Western Australia as a tropical low over the next day, maintaining minimal tropical storm status on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

Early on 24 March, it would emerge over the far eastern Indian Ocean. Now a much larger and broader system, Narelle began its final intensification episode. On 26 March, the cyclone would achieve a fourth peak as a Category 4 tropical cyclone on the Australian scale (high-end Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale), with a large eye being evident. Narelle began weakening later that day, and by the next morning, it made its fourth and final landfall in [Western Australia](#), just south of [Coral Bay](#) as a Category 3 cyclone on the Australian scale. Narelle weakened into a remnant low overnight, eventually becoming a broad [extratropical cyclone](#) south of Australia the following day.

Severe Tropical Cyclone Narelle



Narelle at its primary peak intensity approaching [Queensland](#) on 19 March

Meteorological history

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Formed | 15 March 2026 |
| Remnant low | 27 March 2026 |
| Dissipated | 28 March 2026 |

Category 5 severe tropical cyclone

10-minute sustained (BOM)

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Highest winds | 215 km/h (130 mph) |
| Highest gusts | 295 km/h (185 mph) |
| Lowest pressure | 931 hPa (mbar); 27.49 inHg |

Category 4-equivalent tropical cyclone

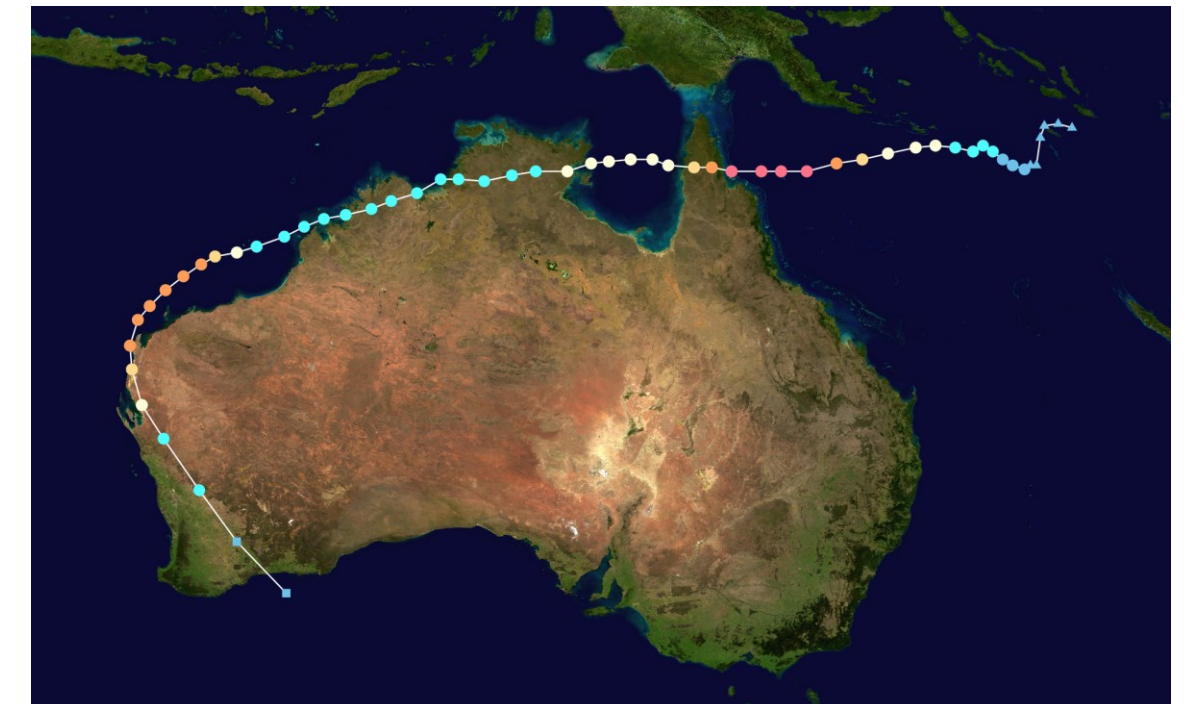
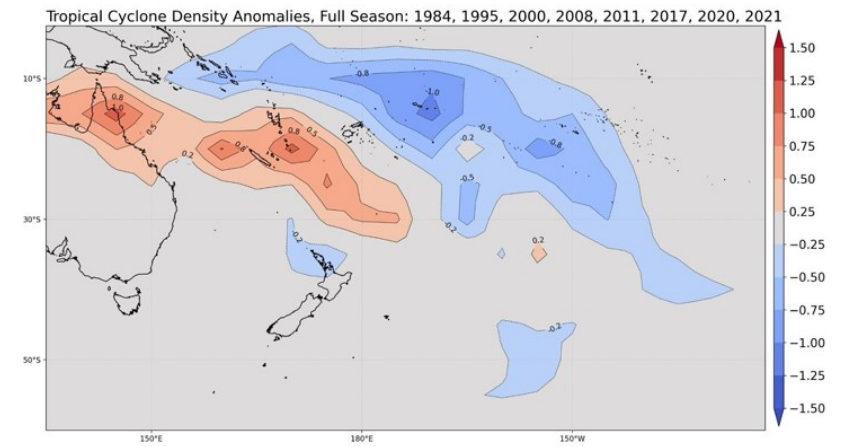
1-minute sustained (SSHWS/JTWC)

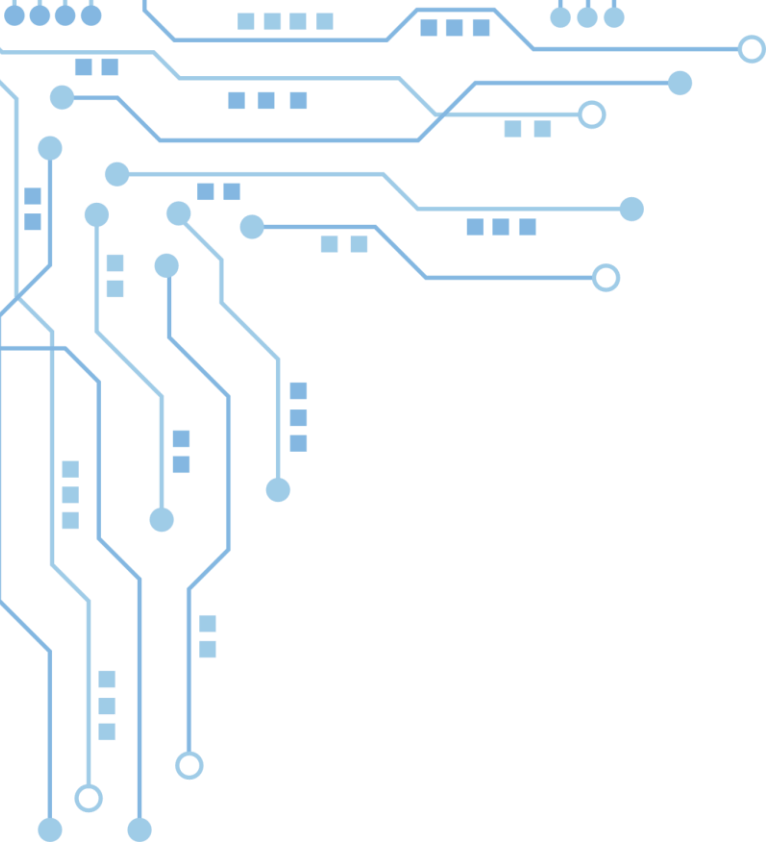
| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Highest winds | 240 km/h (150 mph) |
| Lowest pressure | 928 hPa (mbar); 27.40 inHg |

Overall effects

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Fatalities | None |
| Damage | \$500 million (2026 USD) |
| Areas affected | Queensland (particularly Cape York Peninsula), Northern Territory (particularly East Arnhem), Western Australia (particularly Kimberley and Gascoyne) |

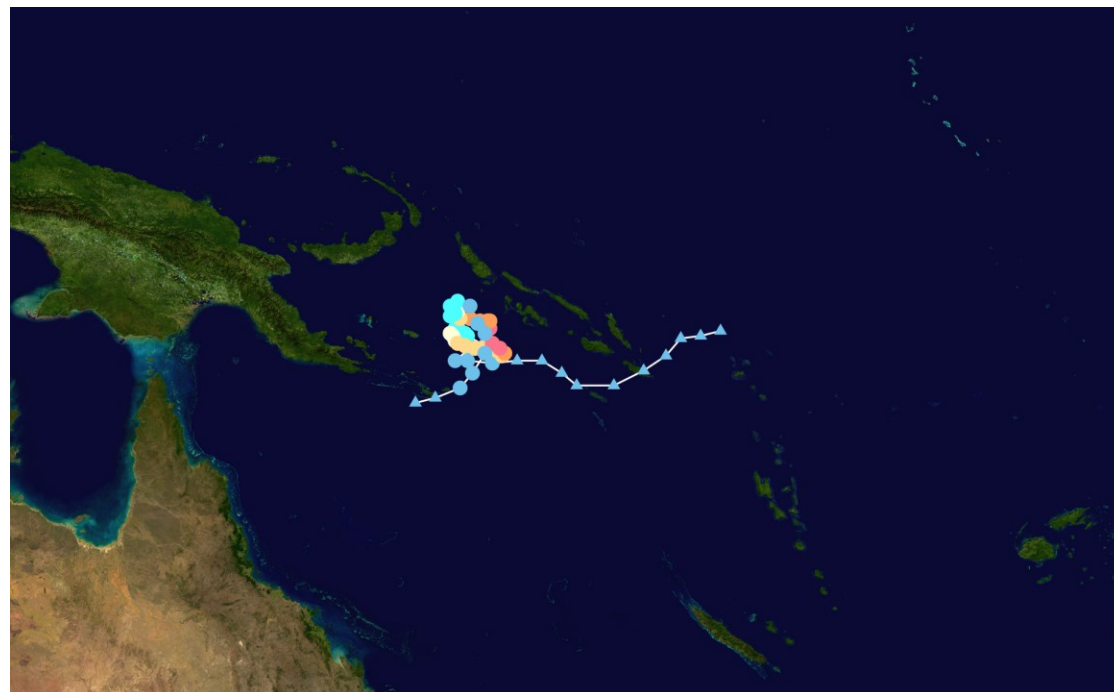
Part of the [2025–26 Australian region cyclone season](#)



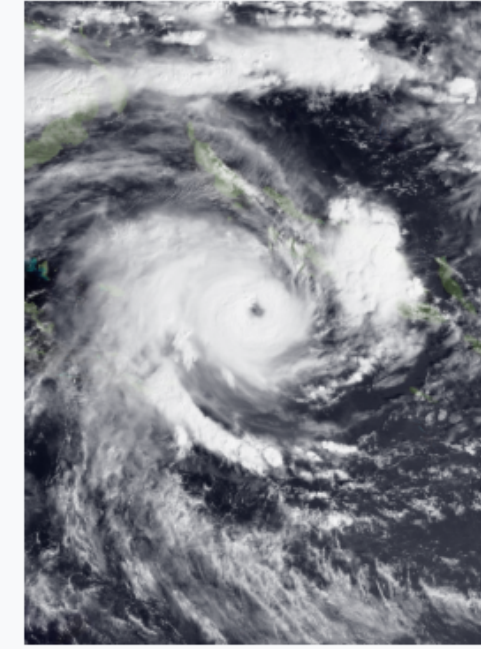


TC Maila

Severe Tropical Cyclone Maila was a very erratic and extremely rare tropical cyclone in the [Australian region](#), becoming the first tropical cyclone to be named by the Tropical Cyclone Warning Center in [Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea](#) since [Cyclone Guba](#) in 2007. It was also the strongest tropical cyclone in the Port Moresby's area of responsibility in recorded history.^[a] Maila was the twenty-third tropical low, eleventh tropical cyclone, and seventh severe tropical cyclone of the [2025–26 Australian region cyclone season](#). The origins of Maila stemmed from a tropical low, designated 37U by the [Bureau of Meteorology](#), which was first designated on 2 April, located between [Papua New Guinea](#) and the [Solomon Islands](#). The tropical low crossed the [155th meridian east](#) into Port Moresby's area of responsibility on 4 April, where it would begin to consolidate, being given the name *Maila*. Later that day and was upgraded to a Category 1 cyclone on the [Australian scale](#). Maila began to quickly strengthen while moving sluggishly and erratically, and by the next day, the cyclone was upgraded to a Category 3 severe tropical cyclone, or a Category 1 on the [Saffir-Simpson scale](#). Over the next few days, Maila would slowly drift eastward whilst maintaining Category 3 status on the Australian scale, by 7 April, the cyclone would resume its intensification, reaching Category 4 status on the Australian scale, or Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale. Its rapid intensification would continue into the next morning, where it achieved Category 5 status on the Australian scale and Category 4 on the Saffir-Simpson scale.



Severe Tropical Cyclone Maila



Maila near peak intensity over the [Solomon Sea](#) on 7 April

Meteorological history

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Formed | 1 April 2026 |
| Remnant low | 10 April 2026 |
| Dissipated | 12 April 2026 |

Category 5 severe tropical cyclone

10-minute sustained (BOM)

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Highest winds | 215 km/h (130 mph) |
| Highest gusts | 295 km/h (185 mph) |
| Lowest pressure | 924 hPa (mbar); 27.29 inHg |

Category 4-equivalent tropical cyclone

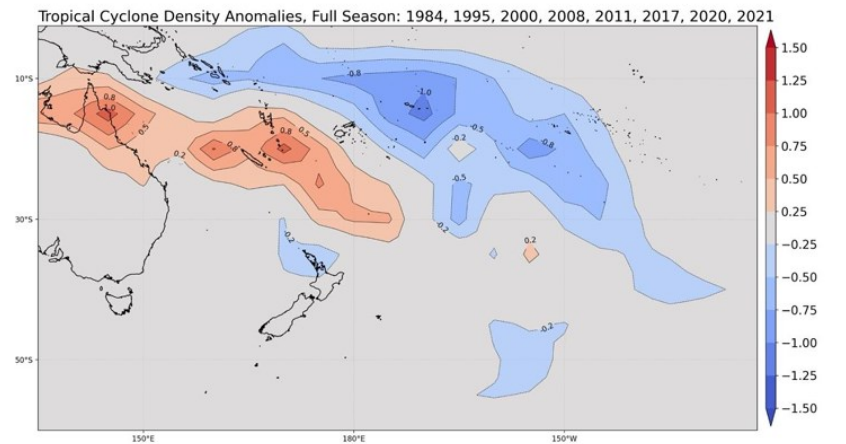
1-minute sustained (SSHWS/JTWC)

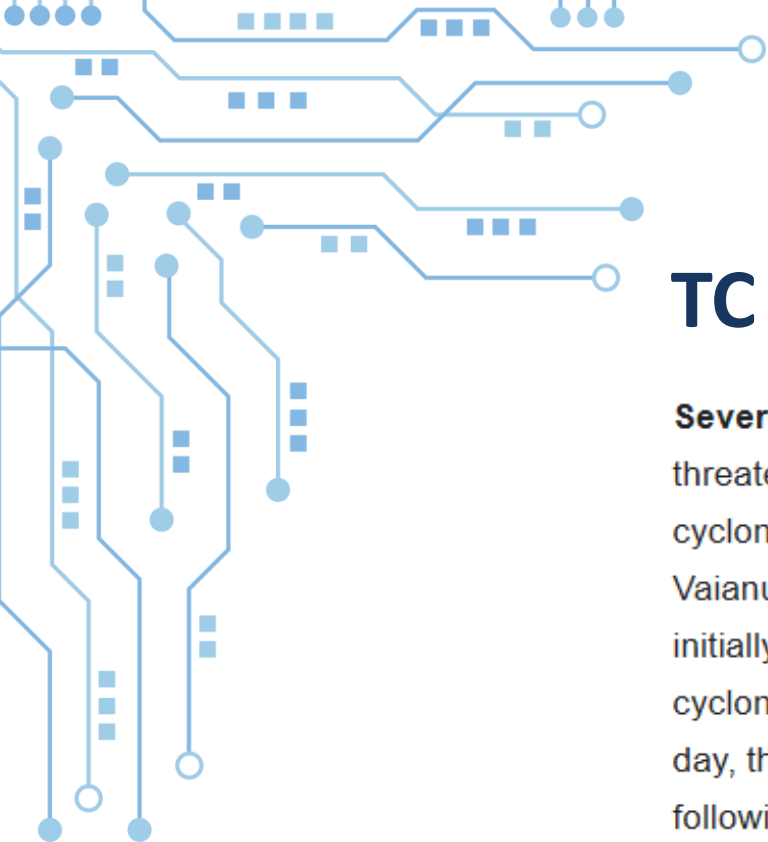
| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Highest winds | 230 km/h (145 mph) |
| Lowest pressure | 930 hPa (mbar); 27.46 inHg |

Overall effects

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Fatalities | 25+ |
| Injuries | 1+ |
| Missing | 4+ |
| Damage | Unknown |
| Areas affected | Solomon Islands , Papua New Guinea |

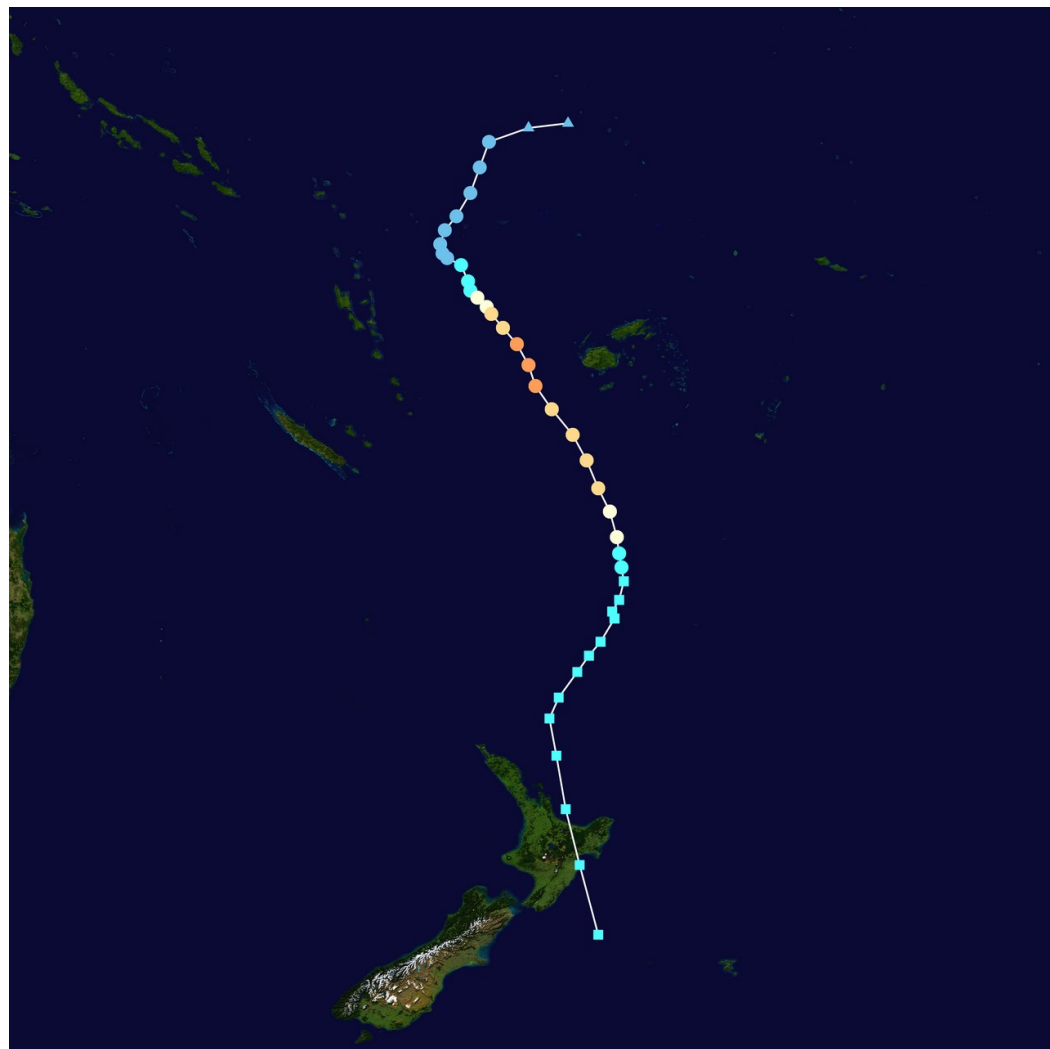
Part of the [2025–26 Australian region cyclone season](#)



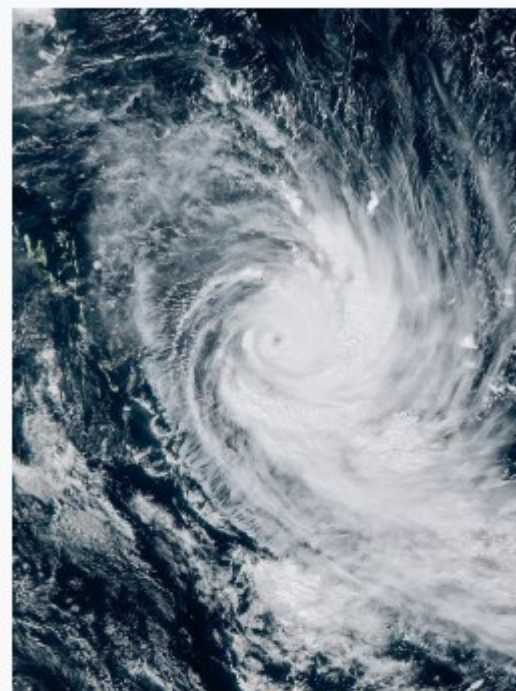


TC Vaianu

Severe Tropical Cyclone Vaianu was a strong tropical cyclone in the South Pacific that threatened and then struck the North Island of New Zealand. The second named cyclone and first severe tropical cyclone of the 2025–26 South Pacific cyclone season, Vaianu formed from a tropical disturbance west-southwest of Tuvalu on 3 April, and was initially designated as 11F. The disturbance strengthened to a full-fledged tropical cyclone two days later on 5 April, gaining the name *Vaianu*; at 03:00 UTC of the same day, the JTWC designated the cyclone as 31P. Further strengthening ensued the following day, with the system being upgraded to a severe tropical cyclone by the Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS).



Severe Tropical Cyclone Vaianu



Vaianu at its peak intensity while approaching Fiji on 6 April (UTC; 7 April, local time)

Meteorological history

Formed 3 April 2026
Subtropical 9 April 2026
Dissipated 12 April 2026

Category 3 severe tropical cyclone

10-minute sustained (FMS)

Highest winds 155 km/h (100 mph)
Lowest pressure 945 hPa (mbar); 27.91 inHg

Category 3-equivalent tropical cyclone

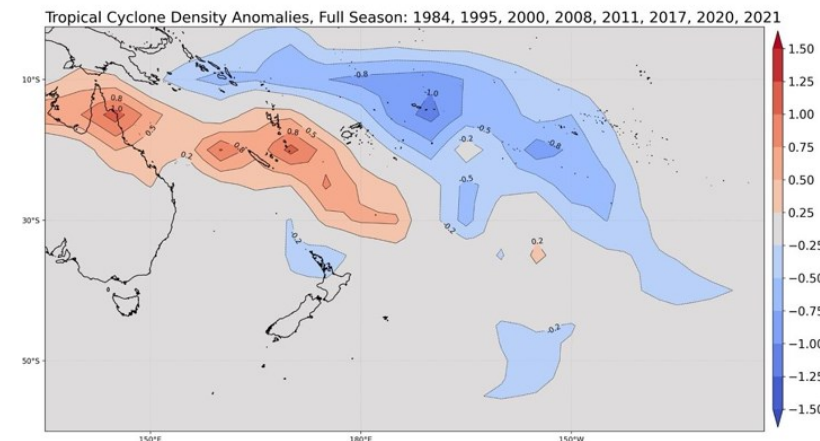
1-minute sustained (SSHWS/JTWC)

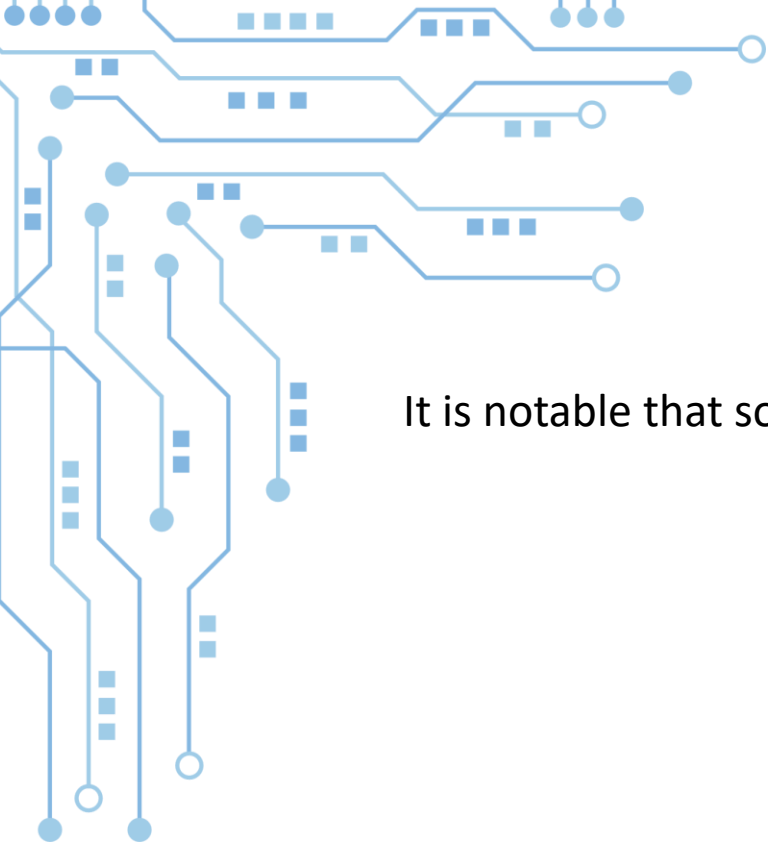
Highest winds 185 km/h (115 mph)
Lowest pressure 954 hPa (mbar); 28.17 inHg

Overall effects

Damage \$1.5 million (2026 USD)
Areas affected Fiji · New Zealand

Part of the **2025–26 South Pacific cyclone season**



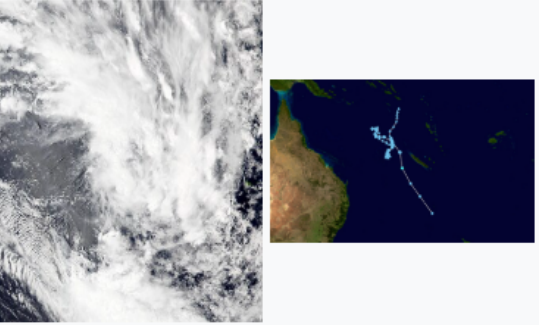


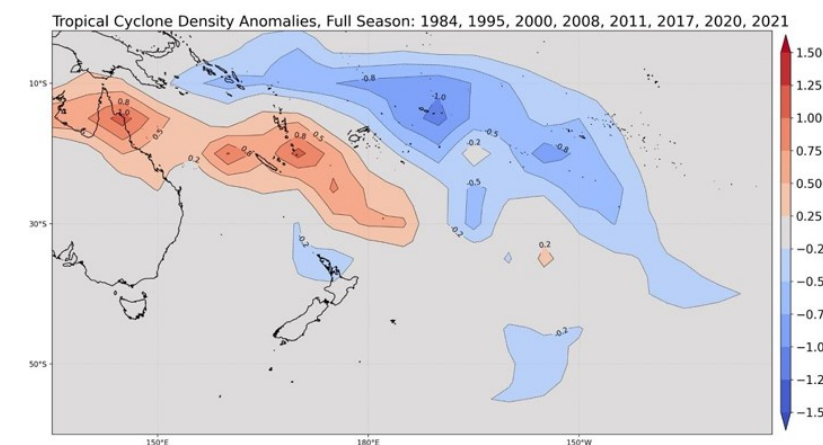
It is notable that some of the **early season un-named systems** still went on to produce severe weather in Aotearoa, with both **TD05F** and **TD10F** being impactful in NZ.

Tropical Disturbance 05F [\[edit\]](#)

See also: [January 2026 New Zealand storms](#)

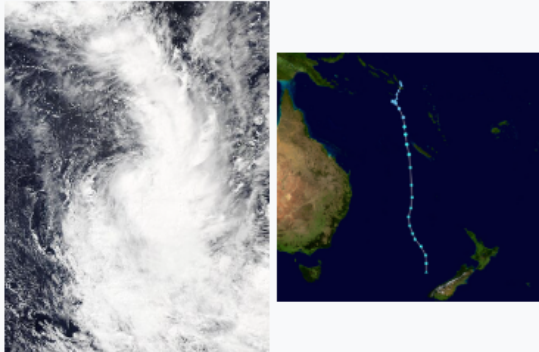
Tropical Low 14U entered the South Pacific basin from the Australian region late on the night of 19 January. It was designated Tropical Disturbance 05F by the [Fiji Meteorological Service](#) upon crossover. On 21 January, the system transitioned into an extratropical cyclone and had severe impacts in northern New Zealand. MetService issued Red Warnings for heavy rainfall in some regions of the North Island.^[8] Ten people were confirmed dead.^{[9][10]}

| Tropical disturbance (Australian scale) | |
|---|--|
| Subtropical storm (SSHWS) | |
|  | |
| Duration | 19 January (Entered basin) – 20 January |
| Peak intensity | 65 km/h (40 mph) (1-min); 994 hPa (mbar) |



Tropical Depression 10F [\[edit\]](#)

On 21 March at 21:00 UTC, the Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) designated Tropical Disturbance 10F and stated that the potential for a tropical cyclone is low in the next 48 hours. 10F was located in a favourable environment with low wind shear and good poleward outflow.^[14] On 22 March at 02:30 UTC, the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) issued a Tropical Cyclone Formation Alert, citing that there is convective banding developing around the low-level circulation, while the system was located south of [Honiara](#), Solomon Islands. The storm encountered warm sea surface temperatures of 28–29°C and strong poleward outflow.^[15] On 23 March at 03:00 UTC, the JTWC designated Tropical Storm 28P based on a 22 March 22:51 UTC ASCAT-C pass revealing winds of 35 mph–40 mph (55 km/h–65 km/h) in the eastern quadrant.^[16] Later that day at 20:00 UTC, the FMS increased the winds to 45 kt (85 km/h) and the pressure to 995 mb (29.38 inHg).^[17] On 24 March at 03:00 UTC, the JTWC issued its final warning as the system headed into the baroclinic zone and cooler sea surface temperatures of 24°C.^[18]

| Tropical depression (Australian scale) | |
|---|--|
| Tropical storm (SSHWS) | |
|  | |
| Duration | 22 March – 24 March |
| Peak intensity | 85 km/h (50 mph) (1-min); 994 hPa (mbar) |

Key Points / takeaways

Overall verification

The season is just at the **lower end of the forecast range (5 named storms)** so far, with remaining time insufficient to reasonably expect a large late-season catch-up given the very late onset.

Spatial verification

Forecast signal:

Elevated risk in the Coral Sea/western domain

Reduced risk east of the Date Line (Samoa, Cook Islands, Society/Austral Islands)

Observed:

All named systems occurred west of the Date Line

No named TCs affected Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Society or Austral Islands

→ **Good verification in terms of spatial pattern of enhanced / decreased activity**

ENSO and regime consistency

ENSO evolved toward weak La Niña, **as anticipated**

Suppressed genesis east of the Dateline and activity focused west of the Dateline **consistent with La Niña composites analogs**

The record-late first cyclone in the Southwest Pacific basin per se suggests suppression from sub-seasonal variability (e.g., unfavorable MJO phasing) beyond what seasonal outlooks can resolve

THANK YOU

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**PACIFIC REGIONAL
CLIMATE CENTRE NETWORK**



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An initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States formed by the European Union



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Pacific
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Earth Sciences
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