

# Cyclone Alfred

Event Recap



## Overview

*Cyclone Alfred, the seventh named storm in the Australian cyclone season, impacted southeast Queensland and New South Wales North Coast, especially the densely populated area of Brisbane, with a high potential to cause significant damage due to high winds, flooding, and storm surge. Alfred made landfall near Brisbane at around 23:30 AEST (13:30 UTC) on 7 March later than the previous landfall predictions. Economic and insured loss impacts are expected to reach at least into the hundreds of millions AUD.*

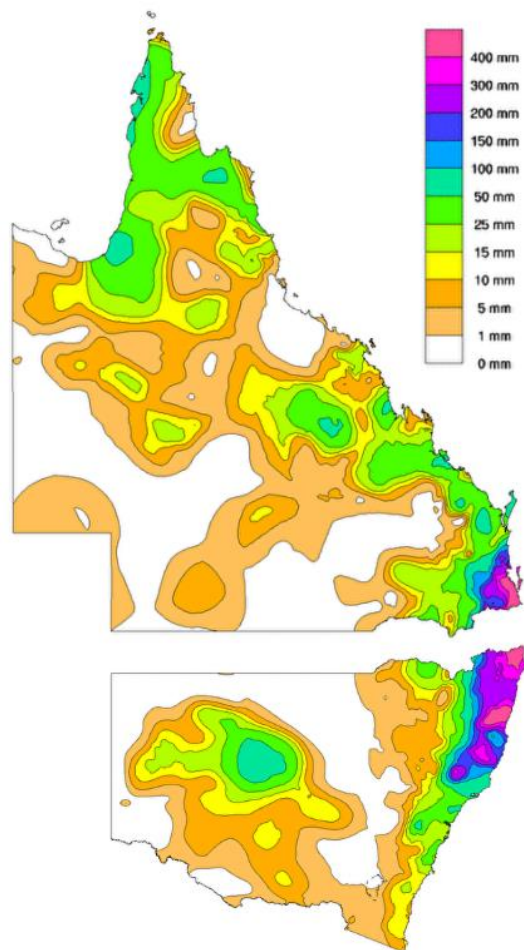
## Meteorological Recap

On February 20, a tropical low was identified by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) in the Coral Sea. Two days later, the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) classified this system as a tropical storm based on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale (SSHWS). On the same day, BoM upgraded the system to a Category 1 storm according to the Australian Tropical Cyclone Intensity Scale (ATCIS) and named it **Alfred**. By February 28, the storm reached its peak intensity (Category 4 status on both intensity scales) while moving south. After turning sharply west towards the eastern Australia coast on March 3, watches and warnings were issued for New South Wales and southeast Queensland, including the area of Brisbane, which was last issued a cyclone watch in 2019.

As of March 6, Alfred's approach to Brisbane has slowed down, delaying its landfall. The storm was initially expected to generate severe wind gusts and cumulative rainfall of more than 300 mm (11.8 inches), with locally higher amounts.

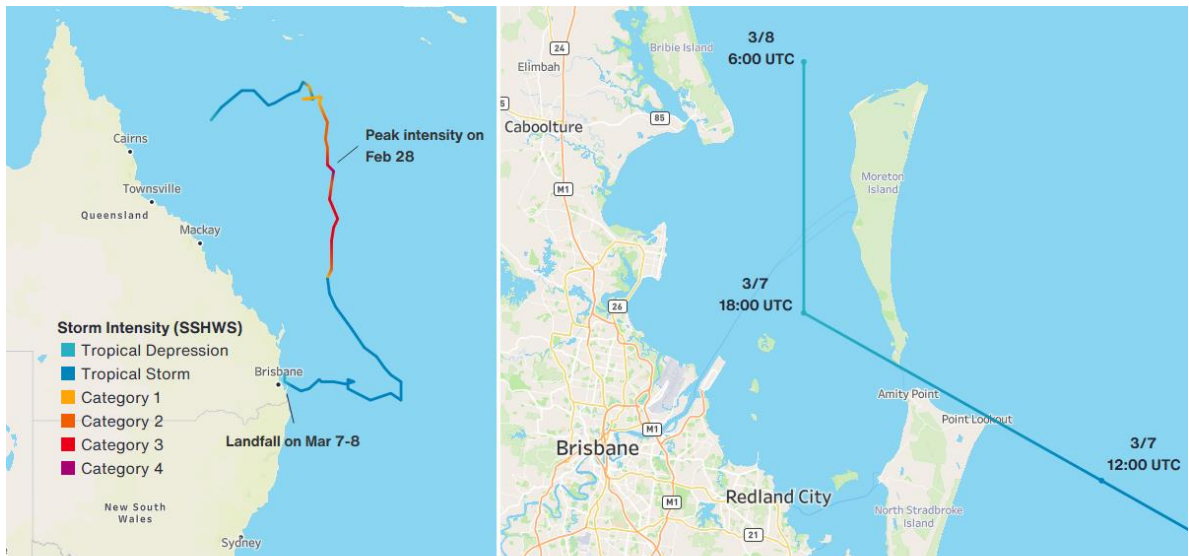
While not unprecedented, the storm's impact was highly anticipated due to the rare nature of the storm and the concentration of exposure affected. Alfred was the first storm to cross the coastline in the southeastern Queensland since 1974.

Parts of Brisbane received over 490 mm (19.3 in) of rain during the event. The highest weekly total was 1,329 mm at Springbrook Road, QLD.



**7-day rainfall accumulation (Mar 4-10)**

Source: BoM



Data: JTWC, BoM

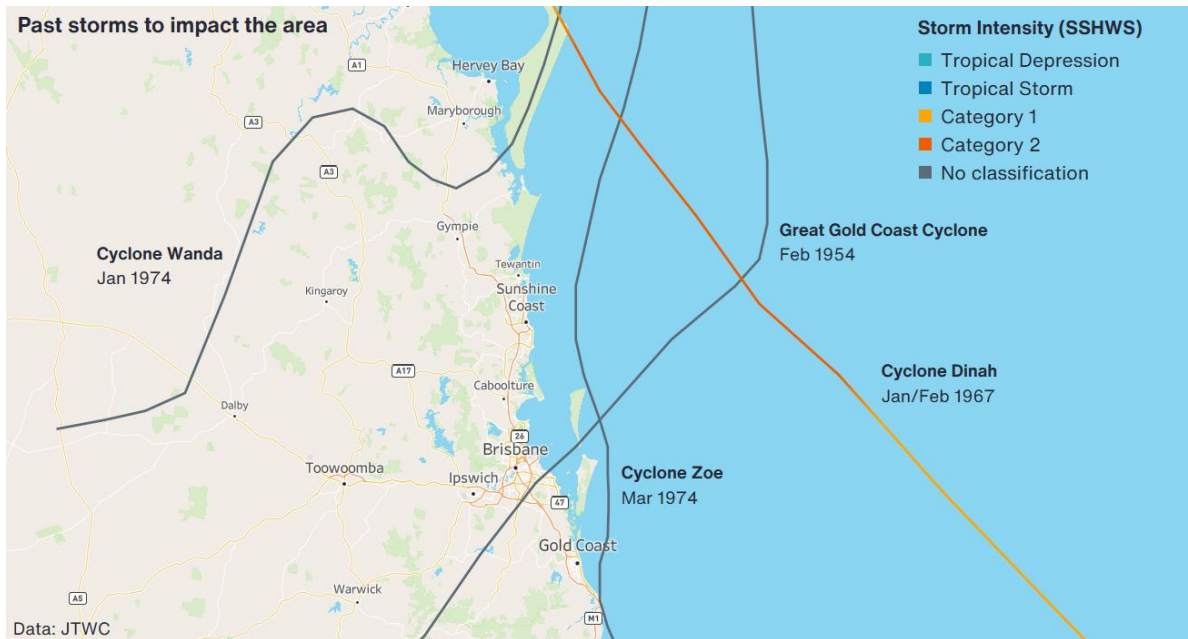
Location (State)	Maximum Daily Total (mm/in)
Nimbin, NSW	485.0 / 19.1
Nambour Daff, QLD	365.0 / 14.4
Brisbane Road, QLD	334.0 / 13.1
Carole Park, QLD	331.0 / 13.0
Karalee, QLD	295.8 / 11.6

Location (State)	7-day Rainfall Total, Mar 5-11 (mm/in)
Lower Springbrook, QLD	1,329.0 / 52.3
Lower Springbrook, QLD	1,038.8 / 40.1
Meldrum, NSW	742.0 / 29.2
Lowanna, NSW	740.0 / 29.1
Binna Burra, QLD	730.0 / 28.7

### Historical Comparison

Four major historical events were comparable to Cyclone Alfred from meteorological standpoint and disaster impacts in southeast Queensland and northeast New South Wales:

- **The Great Gold Coast Cyclone (February 1954)** – made landfall in the town of Coolangatta; significant flooding and wind damage, although the area was much less populated at this time
- **Cyclone Dinah (Jan/Feb 1967)** – made landfall on K’gari (formerly Fraser) Island; much of the damage was due to significant storm surge and strong winds
- **Cyclone Wanda (January 1974)** – although a very weak/ex-tropical cyclone, this storm produced historic rainfall, becoming one of the worst floods in recorded history for southeast Queensland and northeast New South Wales
- **Cyclone Zoe (March 1974)** – followed just after Wanda, made landfall in the town of Coolangatta; resulted in more major flooding. Zoe was the last cyclone to make landfall near Brisbane



## Event Details



**Flooding damage from Cyclone Alfred in QLD (left) and NSW (right)**

Source: Queensland FD (left), New South Wales SES (right)

Storm Alfred caused significant damage and disruption in **Queensland** and **New South Wales**. Over 20,300 properties faced storm surge risk, with more than 450,000 properties losing power in Queensland - the largest disaster-related outage in the state's history. There was at least one death, dozens injured, and several people missing. The Gold Coast experienced substantial coastal erosion and high exposure areas were severely affected. By March 9, Queensland's State Emergency Service (SES) received over 3,670 emergency calls - the highest number in 24 hours for Queensland SES. Meanwhile, New South Wales SES responded to nearly 12,800 calls and conducted at least 85 water rescues since Alfred began.

## Financial Loss

Cyclone Alfred was declared an insurance catastrophe by the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) on March 9. The ICA reported over 22,000 claims as of March 11, with the majority of claims originating from Queensland. Although it is too early to determine the eventual financial impact and its implications on the local re/insurance market, the preliminary numbers show a significant burden on the insurance sector. However, economic and insured loss impacts are expected to reach at least into the hundreds of millions AUD.

State	Home	Motor	Commercial	Total
New South Wales	1,546	113	76	1,735
Queensland	18,914	1,069	682	20,665
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,460</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>22,400</b>

*Claims from Alfred as of March 11 (Source: Insurance Council of Australia)*

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## Source Information

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Bureau of Meteorology of Australia (BoM)  
Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC)  
Insurance Council of Australia (ICA)  
New South Wales State Emergency Services (SES)  
Queensland Fire Department (FD)

## Contacts

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