

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REFORM

Quarterly Climate Risk Assessment Q1 2026

CLASSIFICATION

PUBLIC

PROJECT

climate-risk

DATE

7 June 2026

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Executive Summary

Global surface temperatures exceeded the 1.5C threshold for the third consecutive quarter, with significant implications for Australian agricultural productivity and coastal infrastructure.

Key Findings

Temperature Anomalies

Mean surface temperature anomaly for Q1 2026 reached +1.62C above pre-industrial baseline, marking the highest quarterly average on record for the Southern Hemisphere.

Precipitation Patterns

Rainfall distribution showed increased variability, with:

- 23% above-average precipitation in northern tropical regions
- 18% below-average precipitation in south-eastern agricultural zones
- Record low snowpack in the Australian Alps

Recommendations

Three policy intervention domains require immediate attention:

1. Energy transition acceleration — Current trajectory insufficient to meet 2030 targets
2. Agricultural adaptation funding — Drought resilience programmes need 40% budget increase
3. Coastal infrastructure resilience — Sea-level rise projections require updated planning codes