

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment and Energy portfolio**

**Question No:** 234  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Agency  
**Program:** Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)  
**Topic:** BoM forecasts  
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**Question Date:** 27 February 2017  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Roberts asked:**

Senator ROBERTS: I will send you a copy of some material put together by Dr Bill Johnston who is a retired New South Wales Department of Natural Resources senior research scientist. He and his colleagues undertook regular weather observations and ran a site that was used by the Bureau of Meteorology. He and other people have compared rain outlooks, which the bureau has provided, and they contradict what actually occurred. It is the same with the temperature forecasts, which contradict what occurred just months later.

CHAIR: Is there a question here?

Senator ROBERTS: I had to explain the background. My question is: why do independent checks of BoM one- and three-month forecasts show 70-plus abject failures? I can give you 18 that I can send you on notice.

Dr Johnson: I would be happy to take those on notice. My colleague Mr Webb who leads our forecasting area might want to comment on this as well.

**Answer:**

There is no such contradiction.

The one- and three-months outlooks are not deterministic but probabilistic, providing the likelihood of above or below-median rainfall or temperature over the outlook period.

The skill is provided on the Bureau's public website at [www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/about/](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/about/).