

Tropical Cyclone Sarina, 1955

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A tropical cyclone crossed coast just south of Mackay with the eye passing over Sarina and the bar down to 963 hPa. The Luggar *Barrier Princess* was lost with 8 hands. Widespread structural damage occurred in the region with heavy flood rains. The barometer dropped to 957 hPa the on vessel *Cape Hawke* just off Mackay at 2pm 7th with southwesterly winds Force 12 (hurricane) and over. Winds averaging 50 to 80 knot affected the coast between Cape Capricorn and Mackay and several buildings were unroofed at Yeppoon. Major floods occurred in the Flinders, Burdekin and Fitzroy Rivers.

Mean Sea Level

The cyclone can be seen to be large in size (Figure 1) which accounted for the destructive winds extending southwards to Yeppoon.

Rainfall

From Figure 2, following landfall the heavier rain can be seen to have affected the Burdekin and Fitzroy River catchments.

Flooding

The Sarina cyclone gave heavy rains over the central interior on 8th and 9th, the Burdekin catchment on 11th and some totals up to 300mm on the far north coast on 15th. These resulted in heavy flooding in the Fitzroy catchment with near record levels at Clive on 11th and Riverslea on 15th. The rains over the central interior brought moderate flooding in all south west rivers and serious flooding in the Thomson and upper Flinders rivers where near record levels were reached. Flooded streams were reported even in the far west of the State particularly in the Diamantina catchment.

Heavy flooding in the Burdekin River submerged the Inkerman Bridge from 23rd February to 29th March. Clare reported a peak of 11.0 metres on 19th. Sharp flooding of all coastal streams on the central and north coast occurred during 17th to 19th when additional rainfalls of 200 to 500mm were reported. Further north the streams flowing into Princess Charlotte Bay experienced floods which were claimed to be unequalled in the history of the white man.

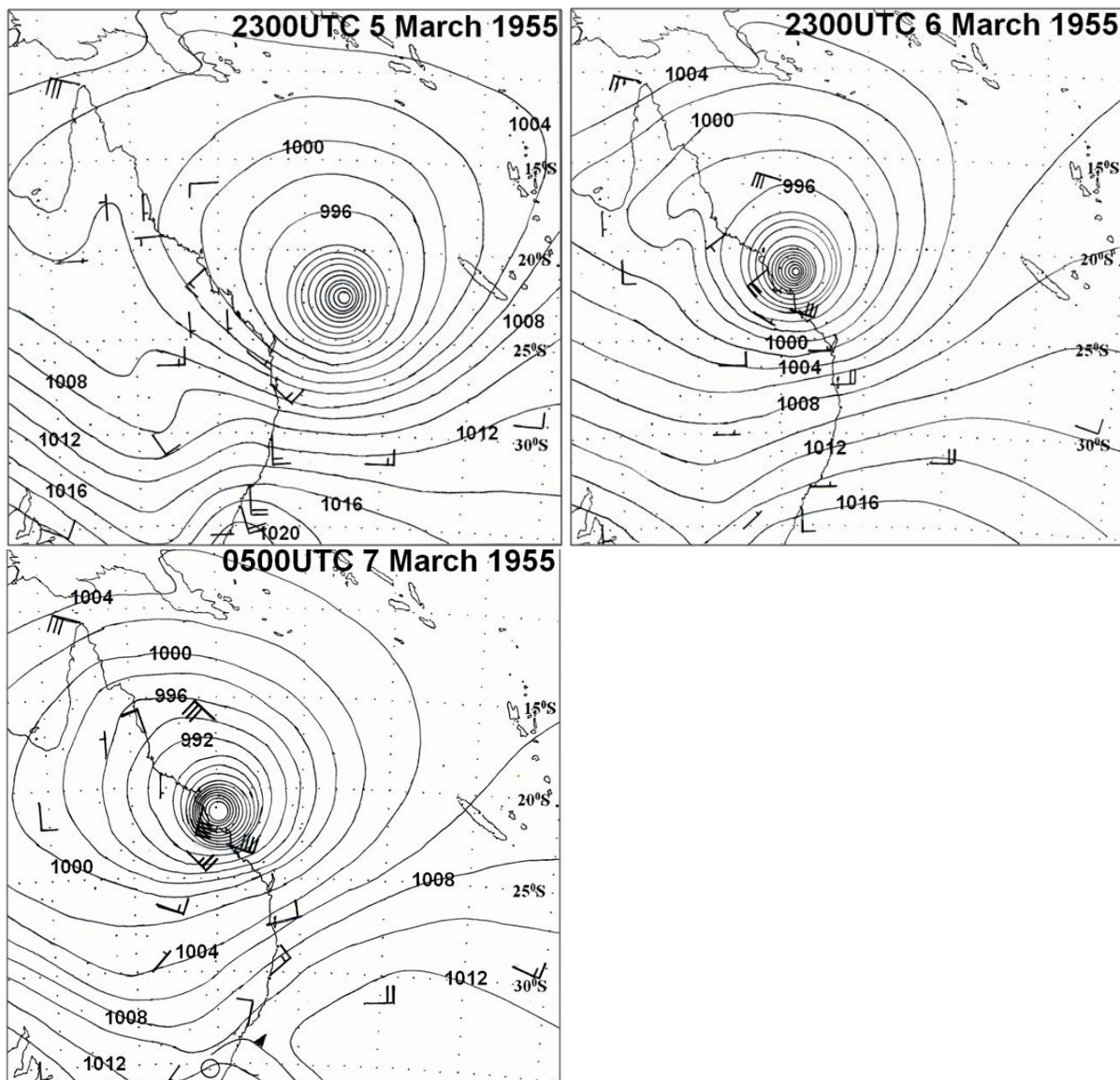


Figure 1 Mean Sea level analyses of the 1955 Sarina tropical cyclone making landfall.

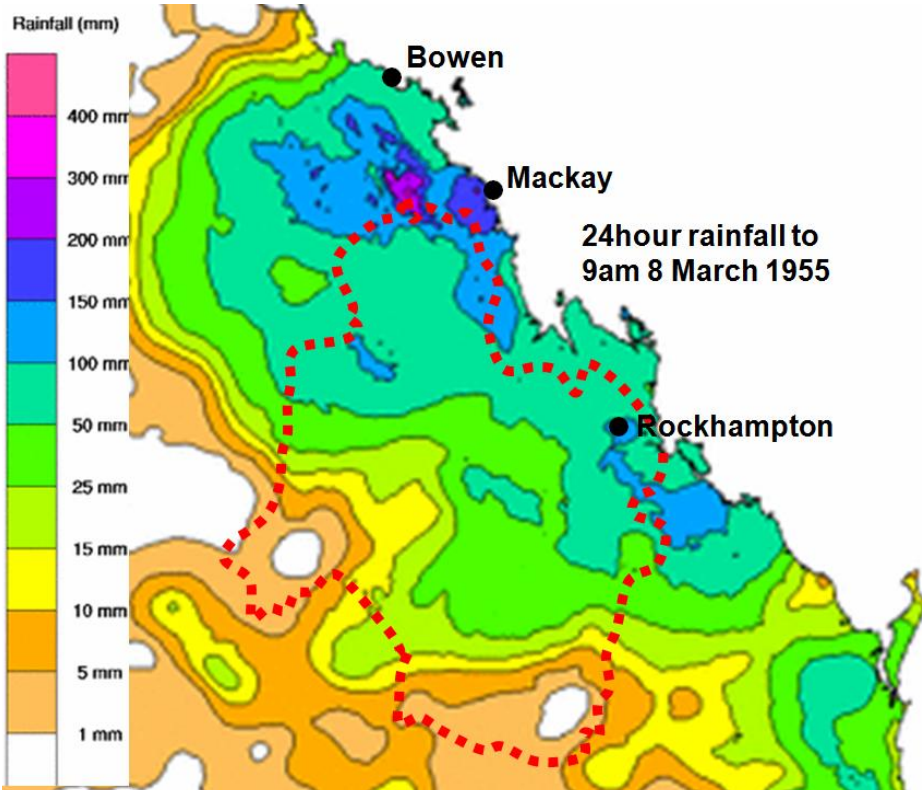


Figure 2 24hour rainfall to 9am 8 March 1955.