

Gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting #11

A summary of activities tabled at meeting 11, undertaken in the period 7th March 2023 to 6th June 2023 to progress implementation of the Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030

Time 9:00am – 2:30pm

Date: Monday, 7 June 2023

Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC) members present		
Susanne Casanova	Chair - Representing Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM)	SC
Romy Carey	Representing the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA)	RC
Justin Dunning	Representing Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) – local government interests	JD
Dr Keith Ferdinands	Representing Northern Land Council (NLC)	KF
Shelley Haitana	Representing the Northern Territory tourism industry	SH
Sharon Jones	Representing NTG – Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL)	SJ
Louise Kean	Representing NTG – Parks and Wildlife	LK
Dr David Liddle	Representing Environment Centre Northern Territory (ECNT) / Gamba Grass Roots	DL
Dr Natalie Rossiter-Rachor	Representing Charles Darwin University (CDU) / National Environmental Science Program (NESP)	NR-R
Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee apologies		
Anna Boustead	Representing the Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN)	AB
Other attendees present:		
Colin Bird	Compliance Officer – Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit, Weed Management Branch (WMB), Department of Environment Parks and Water Security (DEPWS) (Guest speaker)	CB
Emma Burcher	WAC Executive Officer – WMB, DEPWS	EB
Emily Fagg	NTCA (future proxy for Romy Carey)	EF
Sharon Hillen	Chief Executive Officer – Coomalie Community Government Council (observer)	SH
Michelle Kassman	Mining Team Manager – Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (DITT) (Guest speaker)	MK
Cindy McIntyre	Senior Communications Officer – DEPWS (Guest speaker)	CM
Sam Washusen	Chief District Ranger – Parks and Wildlife, DEPWS (Guest speaker)	SW
Nigel Weston	Director – WMB, DEPWS	NW

#To demonstrate progress against the [Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030](#), the objectives of the 2020 – 2030 gamba plan being implemented have been noted beside each outcome listed below.

Summary of key outcomes against the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 –2030 (Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC) member updates):

Objective of plan	Key outcomes this quarter
2a, 2d, 4a, 4b	<p>National Landcare Program - Gamba prevention in West Arnhem (A zone) (5th year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment: Road corridors gamba removal to 50m off centreline or fence line (whichever closer) by contractor - Pt Stuart Rd & Pine Creek township, Barnjarn Aboriginal Land Trust (ALT) north of Katherine aerial spray 0.9 hr. • Various extension & communications: Gamba grass seasonal animation, signage for ALTs.
2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 4a	<p>Gamba Army (GA) Program - Supporting coordinated cross tenure gamba management (3rd year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finished for the season on May 26th 2023. GA coordinator yet to deliver data (reports on treatment etc.) back to the NTG. • There have been challenges around joint management of parcels that have swapped over from being fully GA managed to only having interior managed by GA and buffers (exterior) by NTG contractors. Going forward it would be good to have clearly stated purpose of GA management on parcels. If purpose was to clear up parcels and keep them clean – this hasn't happened and now these parcels are going backwards. • Program support gaps identified – a centralised point of knowledge for spatial stuff would be good – someone who knows all the scopes of all the contracts so can check for double ups or gaps. VCL needs more fire & weeds support.
1a 1b, 1c, 2a, 2c, 2d 1a, 2d, 3a	<p>National Landcare Program - Managing gamba grass for biodiversity conservation (1st year)</p> <p>Detection surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications towers and historic points across Aboriginal Land tenure Top End (approx. 80 sites visited, 6 detections). • Western Top End A zone boundary in vicinity of known infestation (2.5 ha resolution) over 79,878 ha, 28 hrs survey effort, 171 detections. • Kakadu A zone boundary in vicinity of previous detections over 25,087 ha at 1 ha resolution, 6 detections. • Kakadu Mudginberri core area 30,866 Ha, at 1 ha resolution, 89 detections. <p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road corridors gamba removal to 50m off centreline or fence line (whichever closer) by contractor - Kakadu Highway outside of KNP Arnhem Hwy Bark Hut section, approx. 9 days contractor. • Mudginberri & Gimbat in KNP (ground treatment plus 4 hrs aerial spray). • Western Top End A zone boundary – aerial spray (approx. 40 hrs conducted. Project paid for 20 hrs). <p>Communications, planning & advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage for ALTs. • Prioritisation maps & feedback from Australian Government key stakeholders. • Supporting Tiwi, Western Top End, West & East Arnhem groups to follow up historic points on ALTs.
2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f	<p>NTG – Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) - Crown Land weed control program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vacant Crown land (VCL) weed control contract for Darwin to Adelaide River was completed with over 200 parcels of land being treated for gamba grass and additional species. Treatment areas for

Gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting #11: Meeting summary

	<p>each site vary from buffers to complete eradication. A separate contract completed weed control over 96 VCL lots in the Katherine region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys are being undertaken on 10% of VCL lots under the contract to ensure management is effective and to guide contract variations to improve results as needed. • DIPL also provided \$200 000 in funding to DEPWS to support the ongoing work of the GA.
2a - 2f	<p>NTG - Department of Environment Parks & Water Security - Parks & Wildlife Gamba - Mary River National Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial spray completed approx. 360 ha gamba sprayed by rotary wing. • 51 hours (6000 L) of ground spraying achieved in the last 3 months. • Strategic aerial breaks sprayed and burnt to reduce fire in gamba management areas.
1a	<p>Gamba surveys and treatment if sighted - Nitmiluk National Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial survey completed of Nitmiluk National Park boundary. No gamba detected.
2a - 2f	<p>Darwin Urban Parks Gamba control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-faceted approach to gamba control in parks across Darwin by - spray contractors (Charles Darwin National Park (CDNP), Holmes Jungle, Buffalo Creek); Gamba Army (Knuckey Lagoon, CDNP, Holmes Jungle, Buffalo Creek); Adopt-a-Spot volunteers (Casuarina Coastal Reserve) and Rangers (all locations).
2a - 2f	<p>Adelaide River Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gamba sites targeted across Adelaide Rivers Parks, with a focus at Harrison Dam, Fogg Dam and Lambells Lagoon and road corridors and tracks to prevent seed spread by vehicles. • Aerial spraying undertaken at Fogg Dam and Djukbinj National Park. • Rangers working to prevent fires in sprayed areas to give native vegetation time to recover, increase shade and compete with existing gamba.
2a - 2f	<p>Litchfield National Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial and on ground contract spraying conducted. Round 1 completed. On ground spraying found to be more effective.
4a, 4b, 4c, 5c	<p>Gamba Grass Roots</p> <p>A variety of community engagement actions ranging from market stalls to social media. Responded and encouraged the public to respond to the "Have Your Say" survey. Advocacy activities including meeting with Territory politicians prior to the budget announcements and in the lead up to budget estimates. Working with various interest groups including Litchfield Tourist Association. Following on from the successful lobbying for Federal money in the lead up to the last election, a keen interest in how money will be expended under the Threatened Species arena and plans for Litchfield National Park.</p>
2a, 2c, 2d, 2e	<p>Casuarina Coastal Reserve Adopt-a-Spot pilot program conducted under the Parks and Wildlife Volunteers program</p> <p>The 2022/2023 wet season control work is ending. Much has been achieved on the ground with control of outlying infestations of gamba. The two-year pilot project is scheduled for evaluation over the 2023 dry season.</p>

Summary of Weed Management Branch (WMB) and Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit (GFMU) key outcomes against the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 - 2030:

Objective of plan	Key outcomes this quarter
5b, 1a-1c, 2b, 2d, 4a, 4c	<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your say survey uploaded online and survey finalised with 90 survey submissions received. Report of submissions provided to WAC. • Meetings with Clean Energy Regulator, Extractives Industry Association, Northern Australian Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) and PhD student from the University of Melbourne studying gamba grass. • Presentation to Extractives Industry Association members.

Gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting #11: Meeting summary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications Plan updated for financial year 2023 - 2024 and provided to gamba WAC for review and comment. • Gamba webpage (nt.gov.au/gamba) updated to a new format to improve useability.
2e	<p>Class B zone <3 Ha blocks impacted by gamba</p> <p>Spatial analysis to determine approximate number of less than 3 Ha blocks in the Class B zone that may be impacted by gamba grass. In the order of 5400 <3 Ha blocks (13.5% of <3Ha blocks) in the Class B zone may be impacted by gamba.</p>
1a-1c	<p>Class A zone gamba project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up - Darwin and Katherine Region, Parks Australia, TNRM, Kakadu, Aboriginal Ranger Groups. • Inspections in Katherine Region pastoral properties. • Register update for 2022/23 has commenced.
2a-2f	<p>Aerial survey gamba Darwin rural area</p> <p>Darwin Operations staff have undertaken aerial survey of gamba in the Darwin rural area to current gamba grass distribution, which can be compared against earlier aerial survey results of the area.</p>
5a	<p>Compliance inspections Darwin and Palmerston (outside GFMU area)</p> <p>Compliance inspections by Darwin Operations occurring. Final warnings have been sent and fines will be issued for non-compliant blocks.</p>
4a	<p>NR Maps</p> <p>NR Maps has been updated so a search can be undertaken for just one weed, improving the useability.</p>
4c, 5a	<p>Gamba grass compliance</p> <p>The gamba compliance program commenced for the season in October 2022, with an existing list of high priority properties from the previous compliance season and dry season complaints. By 31 May 2023, over 1400 inspections have been undertaken. The following correspondence was sent after the first round of inspections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 136 recognition letters (significant improvement) • 361 advice letters (attempt could be better) • 294 orders (unmanaged gamba infestations). <p>As the compliance program concludes, infringement notices are being considered for 50 non-compliant landholders. Residual gamba grass fuel loads will be registered with Bushfires NT and NT Fire & Rescue as wildfire hazards during the dry season, and may be addressed under the flammable material provisions of the <i>Bushfires Management Act</i>.</p> <p>The GFMU engages and promotes their work to various stakeholders, including NT Bushfires Council and Regional Committees, WAC, NTG Weed & Fire Working Group, GA, partner Council bodies, school events and articles/newsletters.</p>