

# Gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting #18

A summary of activities tabled at meeting 18, undertaken in the period 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to progress implementation of the Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030. Activities are those undertaken by the Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee members, the Weed Management Branch and the Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit.

**Time** 9:00am – 3:30pm

**Date:** Wednesday, 12 March 2025

## Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee members present

Susanne Casanova	Chair – Representing Territory Natural Resource Management	SC
Louise Kean	Representing the Department of Tourism and Hospitality (DTH), (Parks and Wildlife)	LK
Dr David Liddle	Representing Environment Centre Northern Territory (ECNT) / Gamba Grass Roots	DL
Sharon Hillen	Representing the Local Government Association of the NT	SH
Kerri O'Brien	Representing the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE), (Vacant Crown Land)	KB
Tom Price	Representing the Northern Land Council (NLC)	TP
Dr Natalie Rossiter-Rachor	Representing Charles Darwin University (CDU) / National Environmental Science Program	NR-R

## Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee apologies

Natasha Clayton	Representing the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association	NC
Vacant position	Representing the Northern Territory tourism industry	-

## Other attendees present:

Emma Burcher	Weeds Planning Officer – Weed Management Branch (WMB), DLPE	EB
Norman Greenfield	Chief District Ranger, Litchfield Operational Manager, Parks and Wildlife – DTH	NG
Roni Opden	Manager Planning and Science, WMB	RO
Anna Pickworth	ILSC member to be appointed as new Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN) Representative	AP
Sean Spicer	Gamba Grass Coordinator, Kakadu National Park, Parks Australia	SS
Liesl Wilson	A/Director, WMB, DLPE	LW

#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: (committee member updates)

Objective of plan	Key outcomes this quarter
2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f and 2g	<b>Parks and Wildlife – Department of Tourism and Hospitality</b> <u>Darwin Urban Parks:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cobourgh – ongoing surveillance, no new detections or current known infestations.</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Berry Springs – Work adjacent to Lake Bennett and around Manton Dam Recreation Area. Some work in Berry Springs Nature Park, however access issues due to boggy conditions. Access issues for Blackmore River Conservation Reserve due to boggy conditions.</li> <li>Howard Springs are on top of their gamba grass program and rangers undertaking work in Howard Springs National Park and around Shoal Bay and Tree Point.</li> <li>Casuarina Team – Contractors working on gamba grass through the Strategic Pest Management Program in Charles Darwin National Park (CDNP), Casuarina Coastal Reserve (CCR) and Holmes Jungle National Park (HJNP). Gamba Army also working in CDNP. Gamba Army attempted work in Buffalo Creek Management Area however too wet, and access issues. Rangers have undertaken spraying in CDNP and Knuckey Lagoons Conservation Reserve. Wet season burns implemented in gamba grass infestation north of Buffalo Creek Road for follow up herbicide application.</li> </ul> <p><u>Mary River National Park:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>246 litres of glyphosate concentrate used (19,680 Litres of chemical) and 260 hours of staff time. Majority of efforts were along the Arnhem Hwy and Leichardt Point in the North Wildman Block along with sporadic plants along Pt Stuart roadside. The team had excellent access and able to spray growing flush plants. Objective was to clean up previously managed areas and buffer zones with repeated visits.</li> </ul> <p><u>Adelaide River Parks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gamba grass treated at Fogg Dam/Lambells/ Black Jungle, Harrison Dam and Window on the Wetlands (WoW). Contractors and Rangers treated WoW.</li> </ul> <p><b>Litchfield National Park:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program is halfway through its season with another 2 months of activities to be completed. Another 3 rounds of ground contract spraying, 2 rounds of aerial spraying and a follow up aerial re-survey at the end of the season to be completed before commencing fire operations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Acacia Land Management</b> - There have been 3 revisits through the Eradication Zones 1- 5 with Acacia Land Management so far this year focussing on treating/ control of the regrowth in these areas as identified from the CDU aerial survey last year. These areas have been backed up with helicopter operations with the bigger infestations and isolated areas where Acacia Land Management have not been able to access with Land cruiser and or side by side ATVs.</li> <li><b>Weed Walkers</b> - Have been treating the more isolated areas on foot with backpack spraying. This has been followed up by helicopter operations where infestations have been too large to treat.</li> <li><b>Parks Staff</b> - Have been treating all the visitor node sites, walking tracks, roadsides, firebreaks and campground areas including Sandy and Surprise Creek campgrounds on the floodplains.</li> <li><b>Gamba Army</b> - will commence field control operations to establish and or widen buffer zones around the intensive use zones of Florence/ Buley areas and then work towards the Central Valley areas.</li> <li>General observation – lack of significant rainfall has enabled access to sites to treat gamba grass, i.e. sites have not been hampered by localised flooding events experienced in previous years. Control activities will continue as access allows.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Katherine Region:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nitmiluk is undertaking gamba grass survey of Nitmiluk and surrounding areas of Jawoyn land mid-March to April. This will include survey of gamba grass spread from the north-west around Pine Creek and seeing how far south-east it has travelled.</li> </ul> <p>Victoria River District (VRD) – no gamba grass sighted.</p>
2a, 2c, 2d, 2e and 2f	<p><b>Vacant Crown Land (VCL) Weed Management Program – Darwin Region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first treatment of weed control has been completed across VCL in the Darwin, Batchelor and Adelaide River areas. This program encompasses 143 clusters which covers 200+ parcels of land. Of these 200 plus sites, 5 parcels have had limited treatment or reduced scope due to changed tenure / new development (Holtze and Strauss Water Treatment Plant).</li> <li>The current 36-month Weed Management Program (WMP) is due to expire June 2025, with Crown Land Estate (CLE) Officers currently rescoping a new 60-month WMP to be procured, advertised and awarded before the next season (October 2025).</li> <li>CLE Officers have been liaising with Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI), Department of Mining and Energy (DME), and the WMB to minimise duplication of weed</li> </ul>

	<p>control where appropriate. It has been agreed that where there is no defined boundary between a road corridor and VCL (i.e. a firebreak) the 15-meter buffer from the transport weed program will suffice. This will allow program funds to be directed to other VCL priority areas. The DME have provided information of which titles over VCL include weed management provisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLE Officers have been in discussion with WMB and Parks and Wildlife on the new Government action on gamba grass within the 'Litchfield Loop'. Maps have been provided for gamba grass density on VCL within the Batchelor Township to support forward planning.</li> </ul>
1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f and 2g	<p><b>VCL Weed Management Program – Katherine Region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WMB provided CLE Officers with a list of 23 VCL sites that sit within 500m of the Class A (eradication Zone). 17 of the parcels have been added to the Katherine Weed Management Program (WMP) for treatment this season. The remaining 6 parcels were considered inaccessible. Due to the limited access, CLE Officers have engaged with the GEBC Project to have the sites included in NLC's aerial surveys of the Katherine River corridor.</li> <li>The Katherine Region WMP on VCL has been awarded and contractors commenced the first treatment in February 2025.</li> <li>CLE notes that previous WMP procurement for VCL in the Katherine Region has been ad hoc, or for a 12-month period. The possibility of a 36 or 60 month plan for ongoing weed management is under consideration, pending funding.</li> <li>The CLE Officer recently visited the Katherine Region and noted gamba grass near the Katherine CDU campus. This was reported to DLI Katherine. There were reports of 'large gamba grass infestations' within VCL in the Pine Creek area. CLE Officers reported two clusters of visual gamba grass on VCL in the township. This will be treated within the current WMP scope.</li> </ul>
2a – 2f	<p><b>Coomalie Community Government Council</b></p> <p>Presentation provided to the WAC to update on gamba grass management across Coomalie Community Council area.</p>
4a and 4b	<p><b>Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) – Land for Wildlife</b></p> <p>Collaborative Gamba Grass Roots &amp; TNRM/Land for Wildlife half day workshop delivered to Land for Wildlife members and other landholders and community members, to support and encourage successful gamba grass management on private blocks.</p>
2a, 2d and 2e	<p><b>TNRM – Gamba Army</b></p> <p>18 weeks of spraying have been delivered to date since the beginning of the wet season, with 1255 hours of Quikspray treatment applied (285 x 400L tanks of mix). Treatment has targeted VCL blocks in the greater Darwin area (33 sites, 1004 hours), Buffalo Creek and CDNP (2 parks, 44 hours), Litchfield Shire (3 sites, 72 hours over) Department of Corrections (1 site, 55 hours) and Department of Health (1 site, 65 hours).</p>
4b	<p><b>TNRM – Conference workshop</b></p> <p>Half day workshop hosted by TNRM in collaboration with WMB to showcase collective on-ground gamba grass management action in the context of the <a href="#">Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030</a>. The workshop was delivered to TNRM conference audience (rangers, community groups, land managers, Government staff, program deliverers/funders). Workshop content included learnings from recent/current programs.</p>
1a, 2c and 4b	<p><b>TNRM support for NLC GBEC project</b></p> <p>Gamba grass ecology workshop delivered to Wardaman and Wagaman rangers, to increase understanding of gamba grass population ecology, seedbanks, establishment and spread risk.</p>
1a 1b 1c, 3a, 4a and 4b	<p><b>Northern Land Council (NLC) – Gamba Eradication Biodiversity Conservation (GEBC) Project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remote gamba grass engagement across West Arnhem, East Arnhem, Daly, Katherine and VRD.</li> <li>Healthy country planning with Jawoyn. Liaison with Mangarri and Mimal Traditional Owners to garner support for GEBC project with key people.</li> <li>Organising Extravagamba Workshop scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> March. This workshop is mobilising remote land managers to the Coomalie area to see and experience gamba grass in Coomalie Region to learn about gamba grass identification, survey, control and impacts.</li> <li>GEBC regional ranger workshops delivered in Katherine and Pine Creek. A Western Arnhem Region Workshop had to be cancelled due to sorry business in the region. Gamba grass survey and aerial control in the Eastern Daly Region.</li> <li>Liaison with gamba grass permit holders and offer to control gamba grass on 2 permit leases (under GEBC Project) if permits are surrendered. Negotiations still underway on operations.</li> </ul>

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2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, and 2f	<b>NLC – GEBC Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment of project funds toward CSIRO biological agent research, contingent on other parties also supporting funding for research.</li> <li>Aerial control of gamba grass on Port Keats Road underway.</li> </ul>
4a and 4b	<b>Community – Gamba Grass Roots Landcare Group – Empowering Landholders</b> In collaboration with TNRM Land for Wildlife, private landholders and WMB a community forum was held at Livingstone Recreation Reserve on Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> February. The forum focused on empowering rural landholders to address gamba grass.
2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f and 4a	<b>Community – Gamba Grass Roots Landcare Group - Education plus lobbying for support and resources</b> Open day/market stalls. Meetings with MLAs. A gamba grass petition with over 700 signatures tabled in the Legislative Assembly. A press release by Minister Boothby on 11 <sup>th</sup> February stated with regard to Litchfield National Park “... will deliver targeted eradication and prevention efforts while maintaining an annual investment of \$250,000 for the Gamba Grass works” and “Ms Boothby acknowledged the work of dedicated park rangers and conservation groups, including the volunteers of Gamba Grass Roots ... ”
2c and 2d	<b>Community – Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group - Casuarina Coastal Reserve Adopt-a- Spot program conducted under the Parks and Wildlife Volunteers Program</b> Continued gamba grass control in 13 “adopted spot” localities in Casuarina Coastal Reserve.
2c and 2d	<b>Community – Weedwalkers Top End Landcare Group</b> In collaboration with Parks and Wildlife the Weedwalkers Top End Landcare Group conducted gamba grass control at remote sites in Litchfield National Park.
2g	<b>Community - Landcare NT - Darwin Harbour Catchment Waterways Project</b> Proposal out for tender to map grassy weeds in four urban catchments.

**WMB and GFMU Updates:**

Objective of plan	Key outcomes this quarter
1a	<b>Class A zone</b> Follow up with landholders about gamba grass on properties and liaison with GEBC Project and Kakadu Gamba Eradication Project.
1d and 1e	<b>Review gamba grass Class A permits and A/B zone boundary</b> Reviews commenced and agenda papers to be discussed at gamba grass WAC meeting 18.
2a, and 2c-2f	<b>Gamba Action Program and liaison with Gamba Army</b> Gamba Action Program (GAP) continuing and scheduled to end on Friday 2 May 2025, or until supplies run out. Ongoing liaison with Gamba Army.
3a	<b>Liaison Parks and Wildlife</b> Liaison with Parks and Wildlife about property weed management planning.
4a and 4b	<b>Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WMB staff attended the TNRM Conference gamba grass workshop in November 2024 and presented on the <a href="#">Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030</a>, GAP and weeds data collection. NT Herbarium staff also presented on tracking the eradication of gamba grass across the NT gamba grass Class A zone.</li> <li>WMB led a gamba grass identification workshop at the 2025 North Australia Savanna Fire Forum (Indigenous Carbon Industry Network Conference) on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025.</li> <li>WMB staff attended the Gamba Grass Management Workshop on Saturday 22 February 2025 and presented on, gamba grass identification, legal requirements, GAP and Fire Ready Program and gamba grass compliance program.</li> <li>Continuing to liaise with the Australian Institute Conveyancers Northern Territory (AICNT) and the GFMU about meeting to discuss gamba grass legal requirements.</li> <li>Other general communications occurring:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facebook posts,</li> <li>Distribution of A3 gamba grass regulation poster, magnets and DL size regulation brochures to MLA offices and other locations.</li> <li>Gamba grass communications messaging commenced - back of bus.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5a	<b>Compliance Program</b> Implementation of compliance program well underway with inspections through Darwin rural area and various Darwin suburbs.
2f and 5a	<b>Compliance Program and Assistance</b> Implementation of compliance program and Fire Ready Assistance Program continuing.