

# Gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting #21

A summary of activities tabled at meeting 21, undertaken in the period 14 October 2025 to 3 February 2026 to progress implementation of the Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030. Activities are those undertaken by the Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee members and Weed Management Branch.

**Time** 9:00am – 3:15pm

**Date:** Wednesday, 4 February 2026

Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee members present		
Susanne Casanova	Chair – Representing Territory Natural Resource Management	SC
Natasha Clayton	Representing the Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association (NTCA)	NC
Gary Fisher	(Proxy) Representing the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI)	GF
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
Kerri O’Brien	Representing the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE), (Vacant Crown Land)	KB
Adrain McKenzie	Bushfires NT (new member to be appointed)	AM
Matthew Phillips	Representing the Northern Territory tourism industry	MP
Anna Pickworth	Representing the Indigenous Carbon Industry Network	AP
Tom Price	Representing the Northern Land Council (NLC)	TP
Dr Natalie Rossiter-Rachor	Representing Charles Darwin University (CDU) / National Environmental Science Program (NESP)	NR-R
Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee apologies		
Sharon Hillen	Representing the Local Government Association of the NT	SH
Shane Tepper	Representing the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI) (new member to be appointed)	ST
Other attendees present:		
Diego Alvarez Cortes	Manager Gamba Eradication and Biodiversity Conservation Project, NLC	DAC
Emma Burcher	Weeds Planning Officer – Weed Management Branch (WMB), DLPE	EB
Roni Opden	Manager Planning and Science, WMB, DLPE	RO
Shelley Inglis	Manager Compliance and Operations, WMB, DLPE	SI
Karl Tattersall	Gamba Coordinator Parks and Wildlife, DTH	KT
Liesl Wilson	Director Weed Management, 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 where updates were provided)**

Objective of plan	Key outcomes this quarter
2a, 2c, 2e, 2f	<p><b><u>Parks and Wildlife – Department of Tourism and Hospitality</u></b></p> <p><b>Mary River National Park:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground spraying gamba along Arnhem Highway and Leichardt Point sections of the park.</li> <li>• Planning work in progress for ground contract sprayers to back up previously treated areas at the Western end of the park.</li> </ul> <p><b>Adelaide River Parks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Djukbinj flood plain track. Second year of treatment for this area. The infested area is approximately 100 hectares and ranges from sporadic plants to heavy monoculture. Work in this area includes 5 days of contracted treatment not included in the staff numbers. Staff = 9 working days and 12 x 600 Litre tanks.</li> <li>• Windows on the Wetlands. This is the second year of treatment. The infested area is approximately 22 hectares and ranges from sporadic adult plants and medium density juvenile plants. Staff = 14 working days and 18 x 600 litre tanks.</li> <li>• Other locations, road verges, and opportunistic: 20 staff days, 29 x 600 Litre tanks.</li> <li>• Total – 43 working days and 59 x 600 litre tanks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Darwin Parks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunistic and amenity spraying.</li> <li>• Seasonal startup of Gamba Grass Adopt a Spot group.</li> <li>• Contractor liaison for gamba grass component of Darwin Harbor Catchment Waterways Project.</li> <li>• Planning work for ground contract sprayers to follow up previously treated areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Litchfield National Park:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have been concentrating on all visitor nodes and areas away from the Tabletop.</li> <li>• 448 litres (concentrated) – close to 4,500 litres mixed chemical applied and 396 hours spent controlling gamba.</li> </ul>
1a, 1b, 1c, 2c, 3a, 4a, 4b and 5b	<p><b><u>Northern Land Council (NLC) – Gamba Eradication Biodiversity Conservation (GEB) Project</u></b></p> <p><b>Community engagement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borrooloola region weeds and gamba grass workshop delivered by TNRM on behalf of GEB.</li> <li>• TNRM delivery of gamba grass workshop in Wadeye on behalf of GEB.</li> <li>• GEB project stall at TNRM Conference.</li> <li>• GEB presentation at Groote Eylandt Weeds Meeting.</li> <li>• GEB update at Katherine Regional Weeds Reference Group Meeting.</li> <li>• Meeting with WMB to discuss all potential target areas for the coming control season in the Katherine, Gulf and Victoria River regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Engagement/early ops and planning with Ranger groups including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marthakal Rangers, Mimal Rangers, Mutjung Rangers, Namultja Rangers, Warddeken Rangers, Thamarrurr Rangers, Yirralka Rangers, Malak Malak Rangers, Jawoyn Rangers, Timber Creek Rangers, Mardbalk Rangers, Njanjma Rangers, Djelk Rangers, Garawa/Waanyi Garawa Rangers, Wagiman Rangers, ASRAC Rangers.</li> </ul> <p><b>West Arnhem regional meeting and workshop:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One day gamba grass workshop delivered by TNRM.</li> <li>• Regional meeting involving rangers from Warddeken, Njanjma, Mardbalk and the Kakadu Gamba project discussing:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Opportunities for gamba grass management collaboration</li> <li>○ Identification of high-risk areas for gamba</li> <li>○ Initial planning of these collaborative actions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Daly River Port Keats Aboriginal Land Trust (DRPKALT) / Elizabeth Downs Boundary Area:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground truthing and spraying outlier gamba grass infestations and core infestation (application of glyphosate and residuals in remote outlier areas).</li> <li>• Thamarrurr Rangers – Early inspection and ground truthing of low confidence gamba grass data around Wadeye and surrounding areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elcho Island training and control works:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early treatment of significant patches that were difficult to access last season.</li> <li>• Delivery of training to East Arnhem Regional Council (EARC) workers and Marthakal Rangers in collaboration with Batchelor Institute.</li> <li>• Integration of EARC to take over management of gamba sites.</li> </ul> <p><b>Katherine Region early gamba treatments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timber Creek early treatment of known gamba site at Turkeys Nest on Fitzroy Station.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manbulloo Station early treatment of known gamba infestation by Big Rivers Conservation and Land Management (BRCLM) (application of glyphosate and residuals).</li> </ul>
1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 3a, 4a, 4b, 5a	<p><b><u>Crown Land Estate (CLE) – Department of Lands, Planning and Environment Darwin Weed Management Program</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weed control activities commenced in early January 2026.</li> <li>New 2025-30 Crown Land Weed Management Program tender is under assessment. Seven (7) tender submissions were received and priced well over the estimate of \$3.5M over the term of the contract (five (5) years). Scope is being reviewed to identify any requirements that can be amended / clarified to possibly reduce cost. The tender assessment panel is aiming to award by March 2026.</li> <li>Interim measures have been implemented to ensure the Crown Land Weed Management Program progresses. Two (2) contractors have been engaged to commence weed spraying of 15m buffers from boundaries and all accessible tracks and trails in the Darwin Region to the Rural Area, including Adelaide River and Batchelor.</li> </ul> <p><b>Katherine Weed Management Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Katherine Weed Management Program contract was awarded on 4 February 2026 for a period of 12 months with two extension options. The 36-month term of this contract will provide much improved continuity of weed treatment in the Katherine Region.</li> <li>The 2024-25 weed management program, with the help from the GEBC Project, included aerial mapping and spraying of remote and inaccessible locations. All sites in this eradication zone (Class A) were treated, except some sites on Manbulloo Station, along the King River due to unseasonal late rainfall causing wet conditions.</li> <li>Katherine CLE Weed program for 2025-26 commenced early November 2025 and is expected to be completed by May 2026.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gamba Litchfield Neighbours Project (GLNP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLE has received \$60,000 in funding allocation to increase weed management services, targeting gamba grass across Crown land sites in Batchelor and surrounding areas.</li> <li>The anticipated outcomes for the increased treatment areas are to exceed compliance with the minimum requirements of the 2020–2030 Gamba Plan on Crown land, improve contract management, reduce seed spread and reinfestations, reduce fuel loads and enhance community perception of treatment of gamba grass on Crown land.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mineral Titles Consideration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLE to continue consultations with the Department of Mining and Energy (DME) in relation to weed management under Exploration Licences, Extractive Mineral Exploration Licences and other Mineral Titles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mapping, Reporting, Comms - Weed and Fire Working Group 13 November 2025</b> CLE update and discussion points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raised the idea for gamba grass information flyers to go into rural PO Boxes to reach those who are tenants on rural properties and/or have limited access to the internet / social media.</li> <li>Status of the Darwin Weed Management Program contract tender process.</li> <li>GLNP – Identify areas of expanding gamba treatment, concentrating on vacant Crown land in the Batchelor township area and surrounds.</li> <li>Landcare Groups – Crown Land Licence applications.</li> <li>Continued discussions about ‘Goyder Roads’ in relation to confirming who owns/ or is responsible for maintaining them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Landcare Groups – Crown Land Licences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLE has four Landcare group Crown Land Licence (CLL) applications in the following areas: Ludmilla Creek (Richardson Drive/Nemarluk Drive /Douglas Parade and Dickward Drive); Holtze; Johnston/ Zuccoli/Mitchell Creek and Bees Creek /Virginia.</li> <li>The Landcare groups licence conditions will include undertaking weed management on vacant Crown land within the licenced area. The weed management scopes target declared and non-declared weed species and are expected to complement CLE’s weed management program delivered over these areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rail Corridors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLE, Bushfires NT and WMB have been in discussion regarding compliance around weed and fire management throughout rail corridors.</li> </ul>
4b	<p><b><u>DLPE (Crown Land Estate, Environment, Land Resources) – Research Biocontrol</u></b></p> <p>DLPE has pledged \$150,000 per year for the next five years to support CSIRO’s research into biocontrol agents for gamba grass.</p>

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1a, 2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 4b	<p><b><u>Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM)</u></b>  <b>Land for Wildlife (LFW) Top End</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gamba treatment support provided to eight privately owned properties registered in the LFW Top End program hosted and funded by TNRM. Support included mapping infestations and glyphosate spraying as well as drafting individual weed management plans for property owners using the NTG template available online.</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural Heritage Trust funded protecting species</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative gamba treatment (glyphosate spraying and hand-pulling small tussocks) with the Jawoyn Rangers around creek lines in the Bat Dreaming site, Barnjarn Aboriginal Corporation.</li> </ul> <p><b>TNRM support for NLC GBEC project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 x Gamba grass ecology workshops delivered in communities to increase gamba identification awareness, understanding of gamba grass population ecology, seedbanks, establishment and spread risk in the area. Workshops were delivered to: Li-Anthawirriyarra, Waanyi Garawa, and Namultja rangers in Borroloola (2 days), Thamarrurr Development Corporation in Wadeye (1 day) and at the GBEC West Arnhem Regional Meeting in Oenpelli (1 day).</li> </ul>
4b	<p><b><u>CDU/NESP - Development of mapping protocols</u></b></p> <p>Natalie Rossiter-Rachor and Samantha Setterfield have continued to develop and test the <i>Weed aerial mapping protocols</i> as an Ecological Monitoring System Australia (EMSA) protocol with the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN). This is part of the National Environmental Science Program (NESP) 'Supporting strategic management of invasive grasses' project. The aerial mapping protocol has been tested via mapping gamba in Litchfield NP, Mary River NP and used by Rio Tinto to map gamba at the Weipa mine site. The aim is for public release as an EMSA protocol in 2026 and will be free to download and use.</p>
2c and 2d	<p><b><u>Community - Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group - Casuarina Coastal Reserve Adopt-a-Spot program conducted under the Parks and Wildlife Volunteers Program</u></b></p> <p>Field control of gamba has continued this wet season. There has been good progress with gamba control under this program, with only occasional outlier infestations remaining in the adopted spots.</p>
2g	<p><b><u>Community - Landcare NT - Darwin Harbour Catchment Waterways Project</u></b></p> <p>A survey of weed occurrence has been completed for four urban catchments, Ludmilla Creek, Mitchell Creek, Rapid Creek and Sandy Creek. Preparation of tenders for weed control is in progress.</p>

**WMB Updates:**

<b>Objective of plan</b>	<b>Key outcomes this quarter</b>
1a, 1d, 1e	<p><b>Class A zone</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow up with stakeholders about gamba grass records requiring follow up. NR Maps update in progress for display of Gamba Grass Management Units (1 ha, 1 km and 10 km grids).</li> <li>Meeting with GEBC to discuss priorities for 2026 survey across Katherine Region.</li> <li>Reviews of the Class A zone permits and A/B zone boundary in process of being finalised.</li> </ul>
2a, and 2c-2f	<p><b>Gamba Action Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program commenced on 28 November 2025 and runs through until 1 May 2026. Program is running well this season. Katherine GAP opens this week.</li> </ul>
4a, 4b, 5b	<p><b>Communications and liaison</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular communications as per the Gamba Action Program.</li> <li>Gamba grass requirements distributed to Litchfield Council Councillors, MLA's, City of Darwin and City of Palmerston for distribution in newsletters or through other means. The requirements leaflet was also distributed to Darwin real estates for distribution to owners and occupiers of land they manage through their agencies targeting both owners and renters.</li> <li>Information packs prepared to hand out to new landholders managing gamba grass at the Fred's Pass GAP distribution point.</li> <li>Liaisons with Parks and Wildlife about access to gamba grass data, project planning for the Litchfield National Park.</li> <li>Survey to inform gamba management in the Class B zone has been prepared and set up at Fred's Pass GAP distribution centre to fulfil annual survey requirements of the Gamba Plan.</li> </ul>
2a, 2d, 2e, 4b	<p><b>Gamba Litchfield Neighbours Project (GLNP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gamba grass field day held in Batchelor as part of the GLNP to educate the community about gamba grass and provide access to herbicide for gamba grass control.</li> <li>Funds transferred to CLE for GLNP and WMB and CLE have agreed to additional blocks to be worked on with funding.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Funds to be provided to Coomalie Council for GLNP. WMB working with Coomalie Council to engage consultant for weed plan.</li></ul>
5a	<b>Compliance Program targeting Class B zone</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Compliance program underway for 2025-26 season. New gamba compliance officer has commenced with the WMB in January 2026. Stakeholder meetings with roads and railway.</li></ul>