

Gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting #14

A summary of activities tabled at meeting 14, undertaken in the period 12th September to 27th November 2023 to progress implementation of the Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030. Activities are those undertaken by Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee members, the Weed Management Branch and the Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit

Time 9:00am – 2:00pm

Date: Tuesday, 28 November 2023

Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee members present

Susanne Casanova	Chair – Representing Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM)	SC
Emily Fagg (proxy)	Representing the Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association (NTCA)	EF
Louise Kean	Representing NTG – Parks and Wildlife, Department of Environment Parks and Water Security (DEPWS)	LK
Dr David Liddle	Representing Environment Centre Northern Territory (ECNT) / Gamba Grass Roots	DL
Dr Natalie Rossiter-Rachor	Charles Darwin University (CDU) / National Environmental Science Program	NR-R

Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee apologies

Anna Boustead	Representing the Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN)	AB
Romy Carey	Representing the NTCA	RC
Shelly Haitana	Representing the Northern Territory tourism industry	SH
Sharon Jones	Representing NTG – Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL)	SJ
Dr Keith Ferdinands	Representing the Northern Land Council (NLC)	KF

Other attendees present:

Robert Allnut	Acting Mobile Workforce Program Leader, Litchfield Council (to be appointed as one of two new members representing the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT)	RA
Emma Burcher	Weeds Planning Officer – Weed Management Branch (WMB), DEPWS	EB
Sharon Hillen	Chief Executive Officer Coomalie Council (to be appointed as one of two new representatives for LGANT)	SH
Roni Opden	Manager – Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit (GFMU), DEPWS	RO
Nigel Weston	Director – WMB, DEPWS	NW
Matt Sheehan (Guest speaker)	Director / Senior Consultant, Wild Matters	MS
Timothy Burrow (Guest speaker)	Chief Executive Officer, Extractives Industry Association	TB

#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, 3a	<p>Parks and Wildlife DEPWS</p> <p>Nitmiluk National Park – no gamba grass detected during aerial or ground survey to date.</p> <p>Bullwaddy Conservation Reserve – an inspection was conducted this year and no gamba grass plants were found.</p> <p>Darwin Urban Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casuarina Coastal Reserve - Adopt A Spot pilot program was successful and will reoccur as a dedicated program. • Gamba Army funding announced to assist with gamba grass control including at parks across the Darwin Parks estate. <p>Mary River National Park – No gamba grass work undertaken yet. Awaiting favourable conditions for growth to commence management. Wet season burning commenced.</p> <p>Adelaide River Parks – No gamba grass work undertaken yet. Awaiting favourable conditions for growth to commence management.</p> <p>Litchfield National Park – No gamba grass work undertaken yet. Awaiting favourable conditions for growth to commence management. Preparation and planning underway for both Federal Govt. project and local park projects. Wet season burning commenced.</p>
1a, 1b, 3a	<p>Managing Gamba Grass for Biodiversity Conservation in priority areas of the Top End 2022 - 2023 (co-ordinated by TNRM and funded through the Australian Government)</p> <p>Program: Australian Government, Supporting Communities Manage Pest Animals and Weeds - On-ground management - focused on Threatened Species Strategy (2021-2031) Action Plan priority species and places.</p> <p>Purpose: engage key regional land managers and stakeholders to identify, plan and initiate gamba grass management in priority areas of the Northern Territory's Top End, as a precursor to the Australian Government's delivery of a \$9.8 million gamba grass election commitment ear-marked for 2023-2026.</p> <p>Outcomes of this recently completed 8 month long, \$540,000 program were shared at the TNRM Annual Conference, via a poster and on-stage presentation.</p> <p>Outputs from the program included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13,437,205 hectares of Aboriginal Land Trust checked for gamba grass • 400 isolated gamba grass detections made • 300 patches/hectares of treatment applied • 2 x detection survey methodologies developed • 12 x independent ranger groups engaged and supported to undertake surveys and/or treatment on Indigenous Protected Areas • 3 x surveillance plans created for priority areas • 1 x overarching prioritisation matrix created. <p>TNRM achieved these outputs through adoption of a collaborative model across the Top End, engaging 30 different land management and support agencies including 18 different First Nations ranger groups. TNRM worked with groups to identify their gamba grass management needs. Following this, the agencies worked together to jointly undertake identified activities, which included aerial and ground surveys and treatments, data collection and curation, and targeted mapping and communicating. TNRM's Australian Government reporting for this project has been completed (as at Nov 2023).</p>
1a, 1b, 3a	<p>Protecting the extraordinary natural values of the Northern Territory's Top End 2018-2023 (co-ordinated through TNRM and funded through the Australian Government)</p> <p>Program: National Landcare Programme - Regional Land Partnerships.</p> <p>Purpose: reduce threats to the natural heritage outstanding universal value of World Heritage properties through the implementation of priority actions.</p> <p>Gamba grass management outcomes associated with this recently completed 5 year program were shared at the TNRM Annual Conference, via on-stage presentation, in conjunction with outputs from the above listed program. TNRM's Australian Government reporting for this project has been completed (as at Nov 2023).</p>

Gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting #14: Meeting summary

2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3a	<p>Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group in collaboration with Parks and Wildlife Casuarina Coastal Reserve Adopt A Spot program conducted under the Parks and Wildlife Volunteers Program. A presentation highlighting the collaboration between the NT Government and the local community at Casuarina Coastal Reserve to address gamba grass was delivered to the International Conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration held in Darwin in late September 2023. A pre-conference field trip focused on the gamba grass issue near Darwin was attended by the Advisory Board of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the Board of the Society for Ecosystem Restoration. A positive reaction was received to the good news story about collaboration to address an invasive species at Casuarina Coastal Reserve. A review of the two year pilot Adopt A Spot program has been completed and the program will continue as a joint Parks and Wildlife, and Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group initiative. The community manage outlying gamba infestations within 13 adopted spots. The area of individual "spots" ranges from 2.5 to 22.3 ha.</p>
4a	<p>Gamba Grass Roots Community engagement is continuing as we move into the wet season.</p>

WMB and GFMU Updates:

Objective of plan	Key outcomes this quarter
1a	<p>Class A zone Project planning meeting within WMB to discuss and allocate areas for different staff to follow up on across the Class A zone. Preparing for follow up across Class A zone.</p>
2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f	<p>Gamba Action Program Preparations underway for Gamba Action Program to commence on 1 December 2023.</p>
Requirement of Weeds Management Act 2001	<p>Review of Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030 Progressing review of the Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030, in line with the Weeds Management Act 2001. Additional gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting held in October 2023 to discuss the plan review.</p>
4a	<p>Communications Implementation of elements of the gamba grass communications plan that has been developed in line with the Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030.</p>
5a	<p>Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit Compliance and enforcement program for gamba grass and firebreaks in the Class B zone, across Vernon Arafura and Savanna fire regions. Includes education, assistance and enforcement. During 2023 over 6000 firebreak inspections were undertaken across the Top End and Savanna Fire Protection Zones. 1163 properties were found non-compliant on their first inspection of the year. Of these, 512 landholders failed to act after being notified. Based on compliance history held on record for year 2022, 155 official warnings were served and 21 infringements have been issued for 2023. Another 21 infringements are pending.</p>