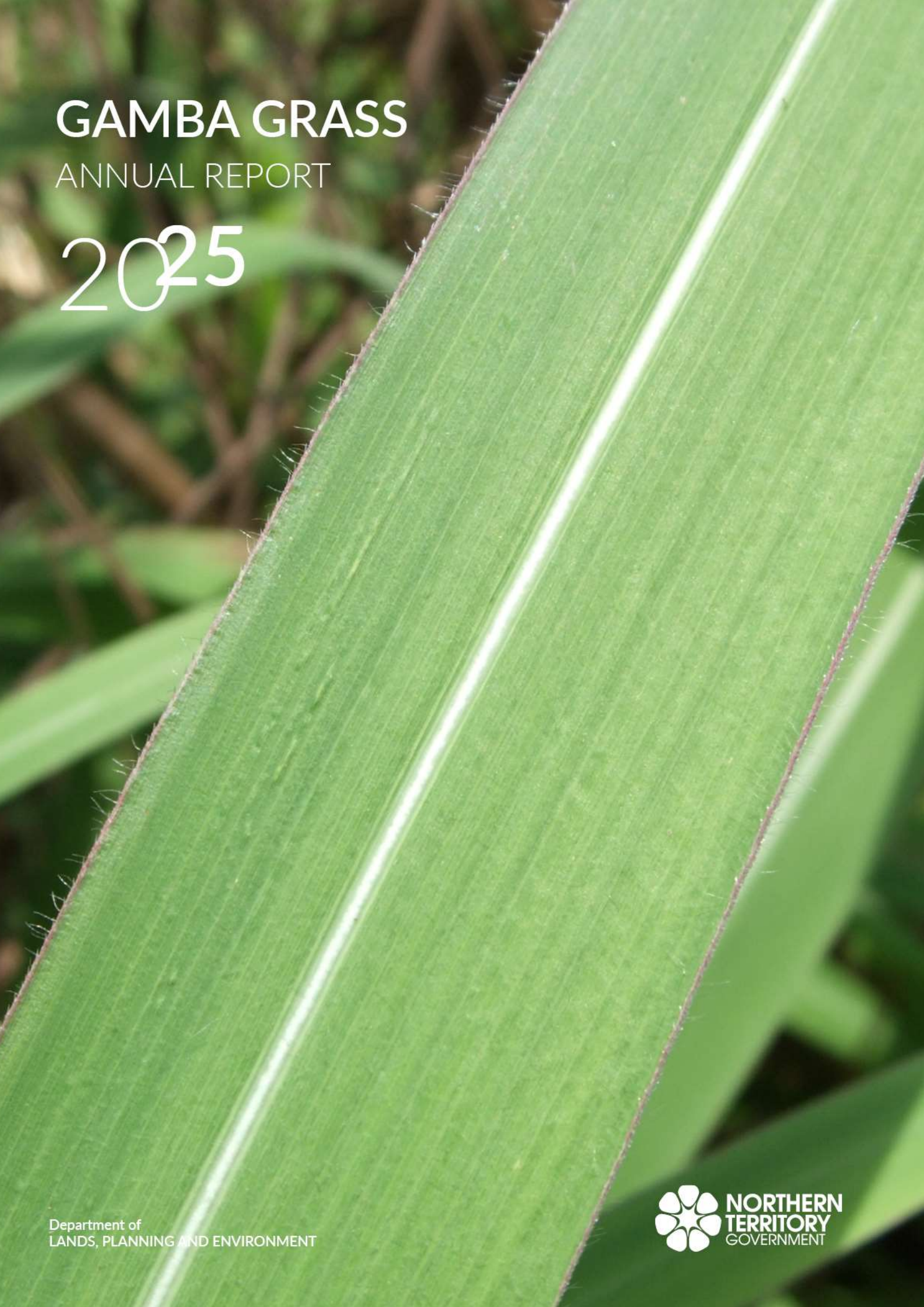

GAMBA GRASS

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

Department of
LANDS, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

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Acronyms	Full form
ASRAC	Aboriginal Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation
BOMP	Biodiversity Offset Management Plan
CLE	Crown Land Estate
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CLE	Crown Land Estate
DEPWS	Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
DIPL	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
DLI	Department of Logistics and Infrastructure
DLPE	Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
DORC	Darwin Off Road Cyclists
DTH	Department of Tourism and Hospitality
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)
ERA	Emergency Response Area
GAP	Gamba Action Program
GEBC	Gamba Eradication and Biodiversity Conservation
GEMCO	Groote Eylandt Mining Company
GFMU	Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit
GGMU	Gamba Grass Management Unit
GLNP	Gamba Litchfield Neighbours Project

Acronyms	Full form
IES	Indigenous Essential Services
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
LGANT	Local Government Association of the Northern Territory
MLA	Members of Legislative Assembly
NESP	National Environmental Science Program
NLC	Northern Land Council
NTG	Northern Territory Government
TNRM	Territory Natural Resource Management
TAP	Threat abatement plan to reduce the impacts on northern Australia's biodiversity by the 5 listed grasses
TSAP	Threatened Species Action Plan 2022–2032
VCL	Vacant Crown Land
WAC	Weed Advisory Committee
WMB	Weed Management Branch

Contents

1. Executive summary

The Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030 (the gamba plan) (DEPWS 2020) was developed in 2020 to set out the legal requirements for managing gamba grass in the Northern Territory. The gamba plan outlines strategic goals, objectives and actions, to improve gamba grass management outcomes across the Northern Territory. In 2024, a review of the gamba plan was completed and the plan amended to improve operability. This included updates after amendments were made to the *Weeds Management Act 2001* (the Act) in January 2023. This Gamba Grass Annual Report 2025 (this report) demonstrates progress against implementation of the revised gamba plan (DEPWS 2024) from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

Implementation against strategic goals, actions and objectives outlined in the gamba plan are typically on track. This is demonstrated throughout the report and in Appendix 1.

Performance indicators flagged in Appendix 1 as, 'progress but some concerns' are as follows:

- By July 2023, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as b) active management.
- By July 2025, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as c) monitoring phase.
- By July 2026, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as d) eradicated[1].
- An annual compliance program is developed and implemented to assess compliance with this plan and compliance action is taken against properties not complying.

The Weed Management Branch (WMB) have developed an eradication register for tracking the eradication of gamba grass across the Class A (eradication) zone. A total of 2,327 Gamba Grass Management Units (GGMUs) (1 ha grids) were assessed in the reporting period, comprising 992 active GGMUs (gamba grass present), 275 GGMUs under monitoring and 1,060 GGMUs locally eradicated. Significant Australian Government funding has gone into monitoring and follow up of gamba grass across the Class A zone since funding was announced in 2022. This has led to significant gains in follow up of known gamba grass infestations across this zone and revealed additional, previously unknown infestations, setting back timeframes towards eradication.

Progress was made, but some concerns were raised with the gamba grass compliance program for the Class B zone during this reporting period, which was run differently to previous years due to departmental changes. This resulted in some learning curves and additional challenges.

Performance indicators flagged in Appendix 1 as, 'significant concerns with progress' are as follows:

- Reduction in area affected by gamba grass in target areas.
- By July 2023, complete a social marketing study (subject to funding) to identify community perceptions, needs and barriers regarding gamba grass management.

Target areas have recently been discussed with the Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC) and are outlined in this report under Goal 2. However, a process for monitoring a reduction in gamba grass across these areas does not currently exist. Notwithstanding, gamba grass effort by different stakeholders is presented within this report, as well as areas affected by gamba grass.

As outlined in the 2024 gamba grass annual report, a social marketing study has not been completed, however annual Have Your Say surveys have been used to seek feedback on community perceptions, needs and barriers to gamba grass management. A Have Your Say survey was undertaken for a 6-week period in 2025 and key results, where permission was provided, are included in this report.

A key highlight for this year is the prioritisation and endorsement for Phase 1 exploratory research into a suitable biocontrol agent for gamba grass. The Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) has pledged funding

[1] For more information on active management, monitoring phase, and eradication status, see glossary of Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 - 2030.

as well as provided support to CSIRO to secure additional funding from a number of stakeholders within the Northern Territory in order for this important work to commence.

The WAC continues to oversee implementation of the gamba plan and have been discussing key issues hindering the gamba plan's goals. These issues are outlined under Goal 4, along with knowledge gaps that may also hinder implementation of the gamba plan and key lessons learned over the reporting period.

2. Purpose of this report

This report has been prepared to fulfil the requirements of the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030 (2024 Revision) (the revised gamba plan) (DEPWS 2024). The revised gamba plan requires all performance indicators and measures to be reported annually to assess performance and to determine whether the stipulated actions are contributing towards the identified outcomes at a Northern Territory level. Where issues with progress are identified the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment will be advised.

This is the fifth annual report to be published since the gamba plan was first developed in December 2020. The reporting period is from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

How to interpret this report

This report documents progress against each performance indicator in the revised gamba plan. An extract from the revised gamba plan is presented in Appendix 1, refer Tables 17 to 21, showing all goals, objectives, strategic actions, performance indicators and performance measures and how they are related.

Each performance indicator in Appendix 1 has been colour-coded representing progress against the revised gamba plan. Colours in Appendix 1 indicate progress made as follows:

Performance Indicators
On track
Progress but some concerns
Significant concerns with progress

3. About the gamba plan

The gamba plan was finalised and approved by the former Minister for Environment in December 2020. The gamba plan was developed in accordance with the *Weeds Management Act 2001* (the Act) and sets out the legal requirements for managing gamba grass by land owners and occupiers in the Northern Territory. The gamba plan outlines strategic goals, objectives and actions, to improve gamba grass management outcomes across the Northern Territory.

The gamba plan was drafted by the WMB in collaboration with the statutory Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC), which was appointed by the former Minister for Environment in April 2020. In 2024, a three year review was completed by the WMB in conjunction with the WAC, and the gamba plan was amended to improve operability and undertake updates after legislative amendments were made to the Act in January 2023. The WAC continues to oversee implementation of the revised gamba plan by all stakeholders involved in its implementation.

Gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*) is a declared weed under section 7 of the Act and has a split classification as a Class A and B weed for different areas of the Northern Territory (see Figure 1).

- The gamba grass Class A zone means gamba grass is to be eradicated in all areas of this zone.
- The gamba grass Class B zone means gamba grass growth and spread is to be controlled.

These areas are based on the known distribution and density of gamba grass. As such, different goals and objectives apply to these zones to limit the impacts of gamba grass on the natural environment, life, property and infrastructure.

Figure 1: Gamba grass management zones: Class A (Eradication) and Class B (Growth and spread to be controlled).

Collaboration with key stakeholders to inform annual report

A Have Your Say survey was conducted in 2025 seeking community feedback on implementation of the revised gamba plan. Key feedback has been provided throughout this report. WAC members, their represented stakeholders and a range of other stakeholders have also been invited to provide information for inclusion into this report. Feedback received has been incorporated.

4. Community feedback on gamba grass management and plan progress

A Have Your Say survey was conducted for 6 weeks during April to May 2025. A total of 17 submissions were received. The survey asked a number of questions in relation to community opinion on gamba grass management. Following are the questions asked and percentage of responses against each pre-set response:

Q. How are you tracking towards achieving your Class B zone requirements, of maintaining gamba free buffers prior to seeding, keeping clean areas clean, and reducing gamba?

- Management is on track – 28%
- Management is partially on track – 22%
- Management is not on track – 11%
- I don't have gamba grass on my property – 11%
- NA – I am not a land owner managing gamba grass – 22%
- Other – 6%

Q. What factors are a barrier to your ability to manage gamba grass?

- Nothing is hindering me from managing gamba grass on my land - 11%
- Time - 32%
- Money - 21%
- Knowledge - 4%
- I don't have any gamba grass on my land to manage – 7%
- Other - 25%

Q. Do you prioritise environmental and cultural assets when managing your gamba grass?

- Yes – 81%
- No – 13%
- Other – 6%

Q. Please provide any other feedback you would like to share, such as success stories related to gamba grass management, any learnings, gamba grass management that you are involved in, or information you believe is needed.

Word for word feedback is provided below, where permission was provided:

- *For DORC to assist Parks & Wildlife, equipment is the biggest requirement. Like a side/side buggy with a spray tank. As DORC only have 20Lt back packs and that is not enough.*
- *The Adopt-a-spot program in Casuarina Coastal Reserve is a fantastic example of how the community can mobilise to control Gamba and contribute to great environmental outcomes. More support for community programs such as these is needed.*

- *I believe of all the weeds to stuff over gamba wasn't one. And now buffel. Those who care for the environment should be concerned equally about Neems. I do value reducing/stopping the spread into areas in Northern Arnhem land. Wardekken areas etc. The high rainfall areas that allow Gamba to thrive. Something like Elsey National Park could do with an infestation of Gamba. It is a cesspool of weeds and feral animals anyway.*
- *Mimal Rangers have successfully kept our management area free of gamba and we would like to thank our rangers, neighbors and Katherine based groups who have worked to contain the spread. We also would like to acknowledge the need for weeds branch NTG to have capacity to do on ground extension and training has been one of the more successful weed management strategies.*
- *Everyone has to do it, all my neighbors property are covered with it pushing my boundry fences over nearly. I have no hope.*
- *I have cleared 20+acres of gamba and mission grass on my own after a period of years. If a woman in her 50s can do it, on a tiny budget a whole government department should be able to eradicate it on a grand scale. I got rid of mine after 20 years fire fighting in the rural area and seeing how destructive and frightening the fires are. Insurance companies could get involved here too and consider not paying out on gamba infested properties. Alternatively, discounts on rates could be offered for those who do eradicate it. More NTG funding and staff could see it done in a few years. It IS possible!!*
- *Spent 16 years trying to control and eradicate Gamba but this Wet season has seen massive growth. There is no landscape approach to control so re-infestation is inevitable, especially from pastoral properties and road verges. Very disappointed herbicide benefit to landholders diminished and is now seemingly extinguished. The only option I could foresee for my property at my age and its degree of ruggedness would be a spraying drone. I would need a subsidy for the high cost but expect nothing would be delivered by local, Territory or Commonwealth governments. Government agronomists introduced the weed for the benefit of pastoralists so both have responsibility not the landholder with an inherited burden. In an equitable scenario every cow/steer on a ship out of Darwin should deliver an environmental levy to fund ecosystem restoration.*
- *There should not be such a massive delay between inspections being done and letters being sent. this year the inspection was done in January 2025 and letter not received until 2 a half months later. and then gave land holder only 2 weeks to get compliant. and the officer was not contactable when trying to call to discuss about genuine reasons.*

Photo 1: Gamba Eradication and Biodiversity Conservation (GEBC) project staff conducting on ground control of gamba grass in the gamba grass Class A zone (photo provided by GEBC Project)

5. Progress against goals in the gamba plan

Goal 1 - Eradicate gamba grass from the Class A zone

Objective:

1a: Understand the distribution of gamba grass in the Class A zone.

Strategic Action "By July 2021, design a mapping and monitoring program for the Class A zone. By July 2021, commence the mapping program in the Class A zone. By July 2022, complete the mapping program and continue monitoring in the Class A zone."

Performance indicator: "By July 2022, the extent of gamba grass has been assessed for land parcels identified in the monitoring and mapping program."

As reported in the Gamba Grass Annual Report 2023 (DEPWS 2023), a mapping and monitoring program (DEPWS 2022A) has been developed for the Class A (eradication) zone. This program is available to the public at Gamba grass mapping and monitoring program for Class A (eradication zone).

The objectives of this program aim to determine the extent of gamba grass across the Class A zone on properties already known to have gamba grass and to track the progress towards eradication of gamba grass in this zone.

Progress towards eradication is measured by the WMB through a yearly assessment. The assessment of gamba grass in the Class A zone in this report was undertaken between 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025. Any gamba grass data collected after 31 May 2025 will be included in next year's assessment.

Progress towards eradication is tracked through gamba grass management units (GGMUs) that are assigned a status of 'active', 'monitoring' or 'locally eradicated'. The area of a GGMU is approximately 1 ha (100 m x 100 m) and may span across individual properties and roads and must include at least one gamba grass plant. During the 2025 assessment, a status has been assigned to GGMU's as follows:

- 'Active' status has been assigned:
  - For any GGMU which was previously 'active' and has not met the requirements to change to 'monitoring', or
  - For any GGMU containing new gamba grass records in the 2025 assessment year.
- 'Monitoring' status has been assigned:
  - For any GGMU which was previously 'monitoring', has not had any gamba grass recorded in the 2025 assessment year and has not met the requirements to change status to 'locally eradicated'.
  - For any GGMU 'active' in the 2024 assessment where:
    - The GGMU has been surveyed for gamba grass in the 2025 assessment year (1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025), and
    - No gamba grass was found, and
    - At least 12 months have passed between the last gamba grass detection (in a previous assessment year) and the most recent gamba grass survey.
- 'Locally eradicated' status has been assigned:
  - For any GGMU which was previously 'locally eradicated' that has not had any gamba grass recorded in the 2025 assessment year.
  - For any GGMU that were assigned a 'monitoring' status in the 2024 assessment where:
    - The GGMU has been surveyed during the 2025 assessment year (1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025), and
    - No gamba grass was found, and
    - At least 12 months have passed since the survey that changed the status of the GGMU to 'monitoring.'

Circumstances that trigger changes between phases that are an exception to the above rules are included in detail in the Gamba grass mapping and monitoring program for Class A (eradication zone).

All land in the Class A zone with gamba grass records will continue to be evaluated to determine the current presence or absence of gamba grass. Evaluation is being conducted through a number of methods, including:

- Field surveys conducted through Australian Government funding of $9.8 million directed towards gamba grass in the Class A zone.
- Field surveys conducted by the landholder and/or WMB.
- Letters / survey forms sent to landholders asking to report on gamba grass presence / absence.

The assessment of the eradication of gamba grass excludes the GGMUs within the two existing permit areas. This is because gamba grass is permitted to grow in the permit areas and is not included in the eradication program. Rather, they are closely monitored and audited by the WMB in conjunction with the landholders.

Assessment of Gamba Grass Management Units

The WMB have completed the assessment of GGMUs for the 2025 assessment year for the gamba grass Class A zone. There were a total of 2,327 GGMUs assessed for the 2025 assessment year. Of these, 992 (43%) were assessed as 'active', 275 (12%) were assessed as 'monitoring', and 1,060 (45%) were assessed as 'locally eradicated'. A comparison of the total GGMUs assessed as 'active', 'monitoring' and 'locally eradicated' in 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 is presented in Figure 2. The total GGMUs for each year between 2008 and 2025 is presented in Figure 3. The increase in GGMUs from the 2024 to the 2025 assessment year is 576 units. This is demonstrated in Figure 4, which also demonstrates a comparison of the total GGMUs assessed from 2022 to 2025 against the proportion of 'active' units for each year.

Any data discrepancies in total GGMU counts in this report to previous years can be attributed to the reassessment of previous year's GGMU data when undertaking the 2025 assessment. For example, where new data has been obtained for previous years, this may trigger a change to a GGMU status or where a record may have been missed during an assessment. As presented in last year's 2024 Gamba Grass Annual Report, this occurred when a large amount of historical data was provided by stakeholders, adjusting the total GGMU count for previous years.

Note that gamba grass on roads within the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI) previously Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) Katherine Management Region are normally under an ongoing monitoring and control program. Therefore, in the 2023 assessment of GGMUs the main roads in this region were considered to have been searched for gamba grass. Absence was inferred during this period where no new presence was recorded and a number of roads status changed from 'active' to 'monitoring.' The status of these roads has remained in a 'monitoring' phase in future assessment years unless an absence point was recorded for the gamba grass record, in which case the unit was shifted to 'locally eradicated'.

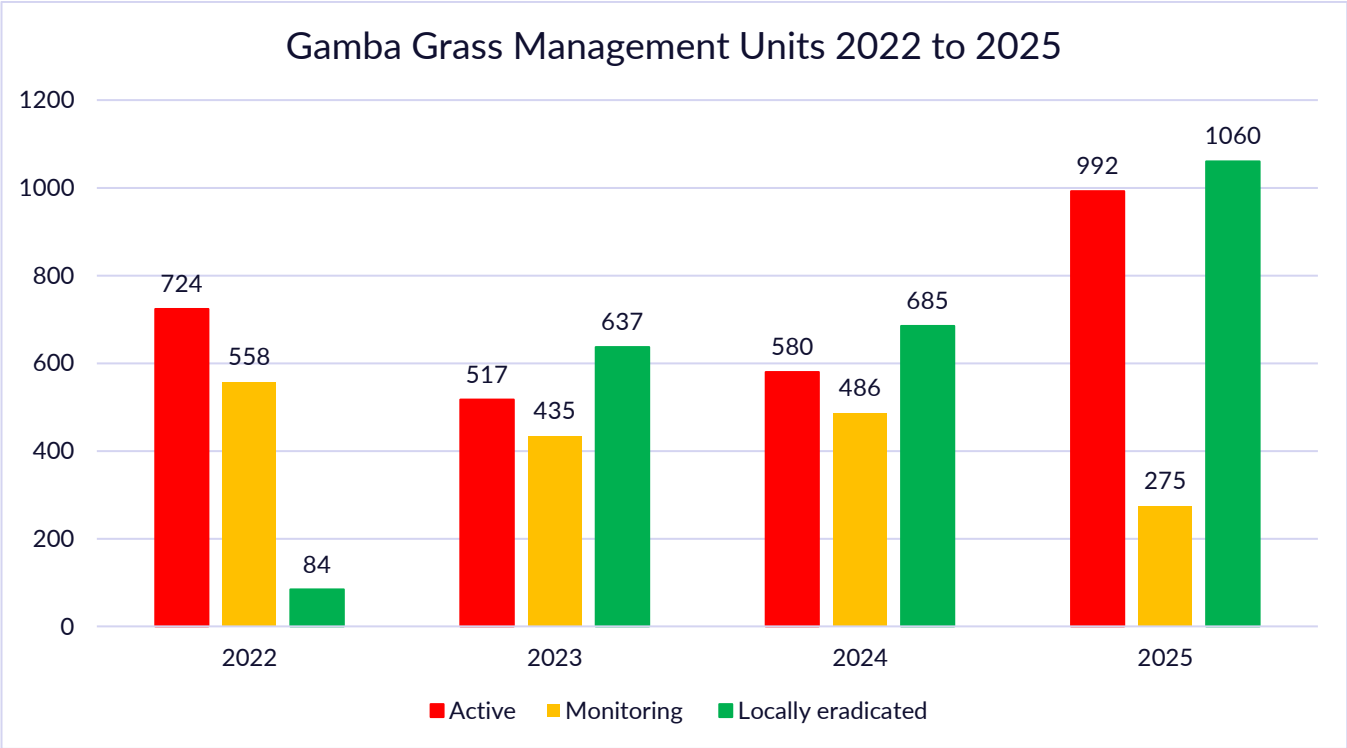

Figure 2: Assessment of GGMUs across the Class A zone from 2022 - 2025.

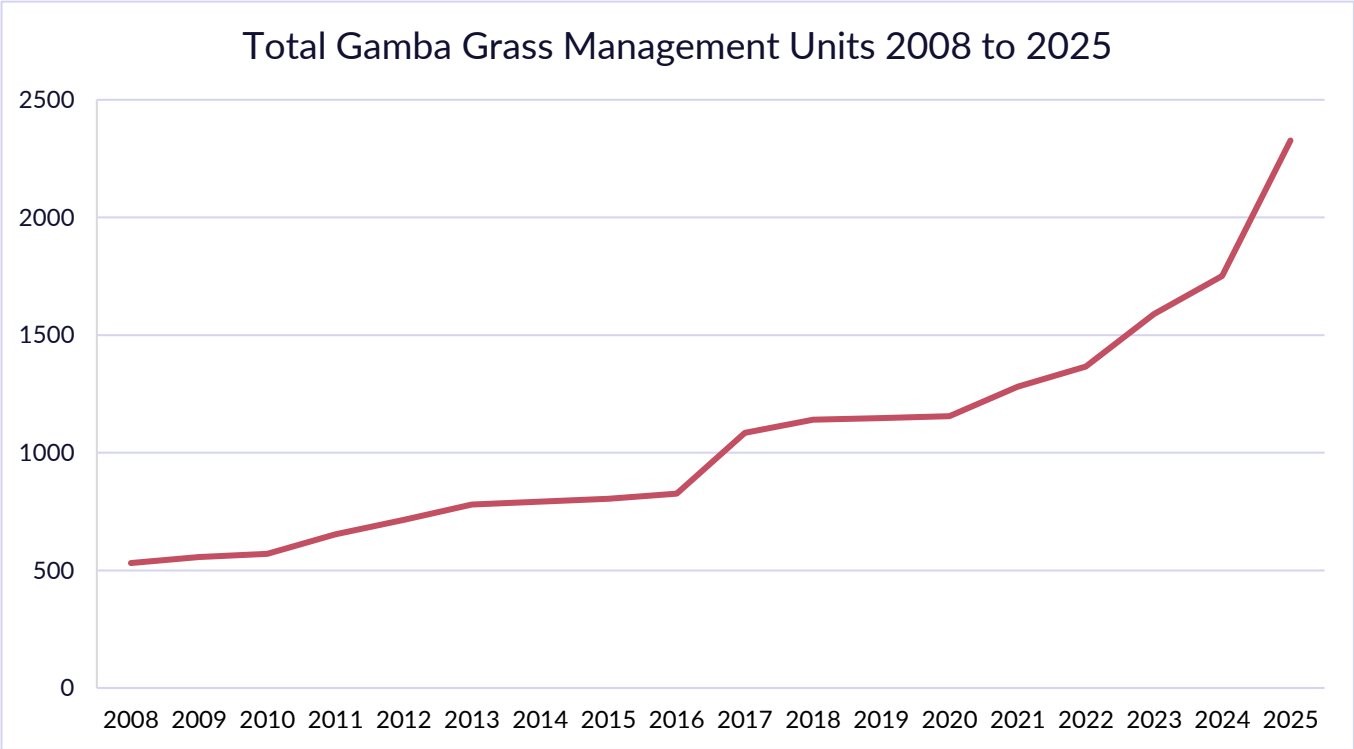

Figure 3: Total GGMUs in the Class A zone since 2008. All records (noting that a record could be a single plant, or a patch) prior to 2008 are included in the 2008 value.

Photo 2: WMB's Weeds Data Analyst presenting the NT WeedMate App and gamba grass data collection at the 'Extravagamba' event for ranger groups, facilitated by the Northern Land Council – Gamba Eradication and Biodiversity Conservation Project helping to facilitate data collection in the Class A zone

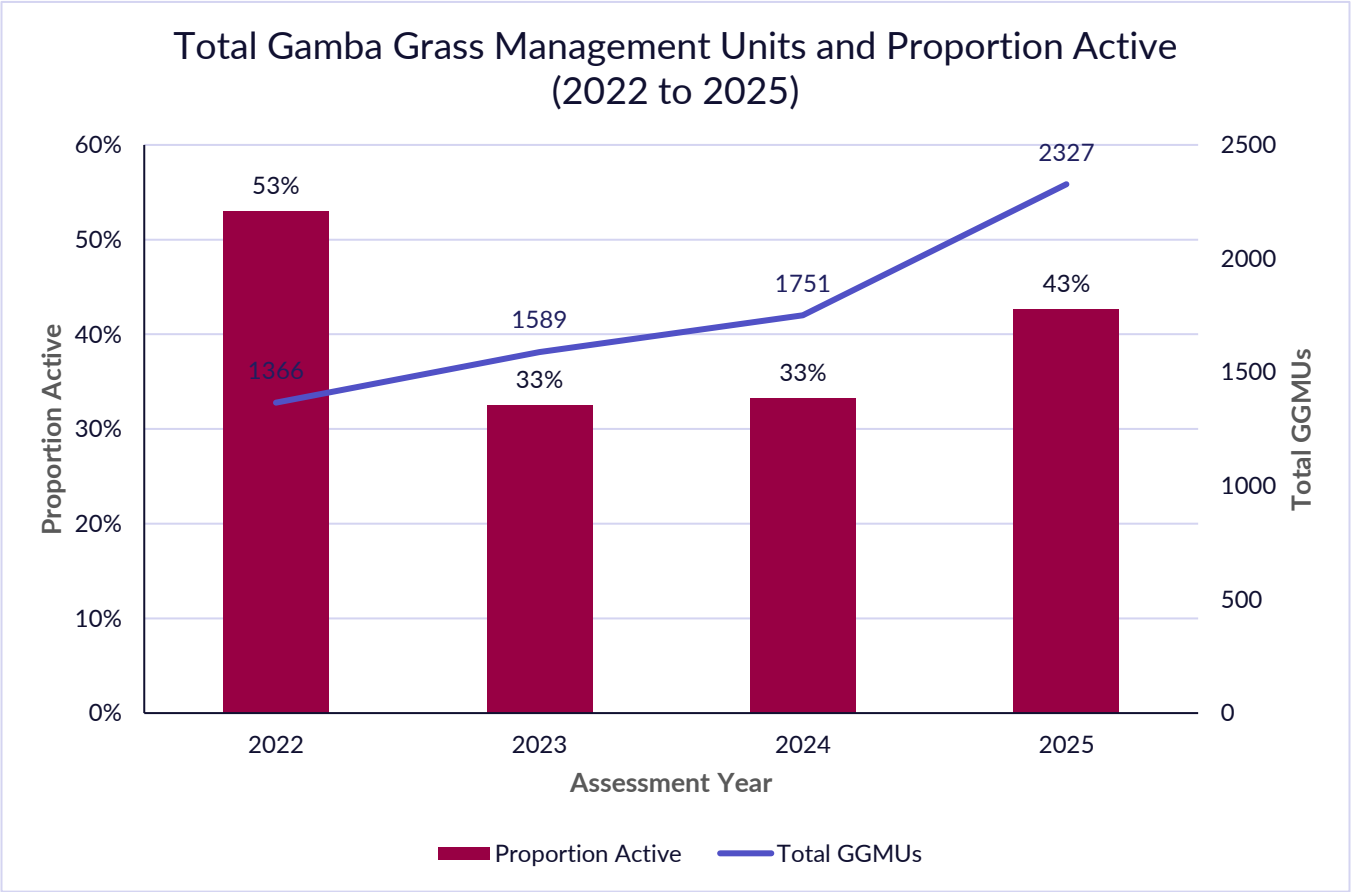

Figure 4: Comparison of the total number of GGMUs assessed against the proportion of 'active' units for 2022 – 2025.

Assessment of gamba grass management units across different regions of the Class A zone

The WMB has also assessed the GGMUs in the Class A zone across eight different regions to demonstrate progress towards eradication of gamba grass at a finer scale. The eight regions are shown in Figure 5 along with the eradication status of gamba grass at a 10 km scale. In addition, Figure 6 presents the 2025 assessment of GGMUs across each of the eight regions that are classed as 'active', 'monitoring' and 'locally eradicated'.

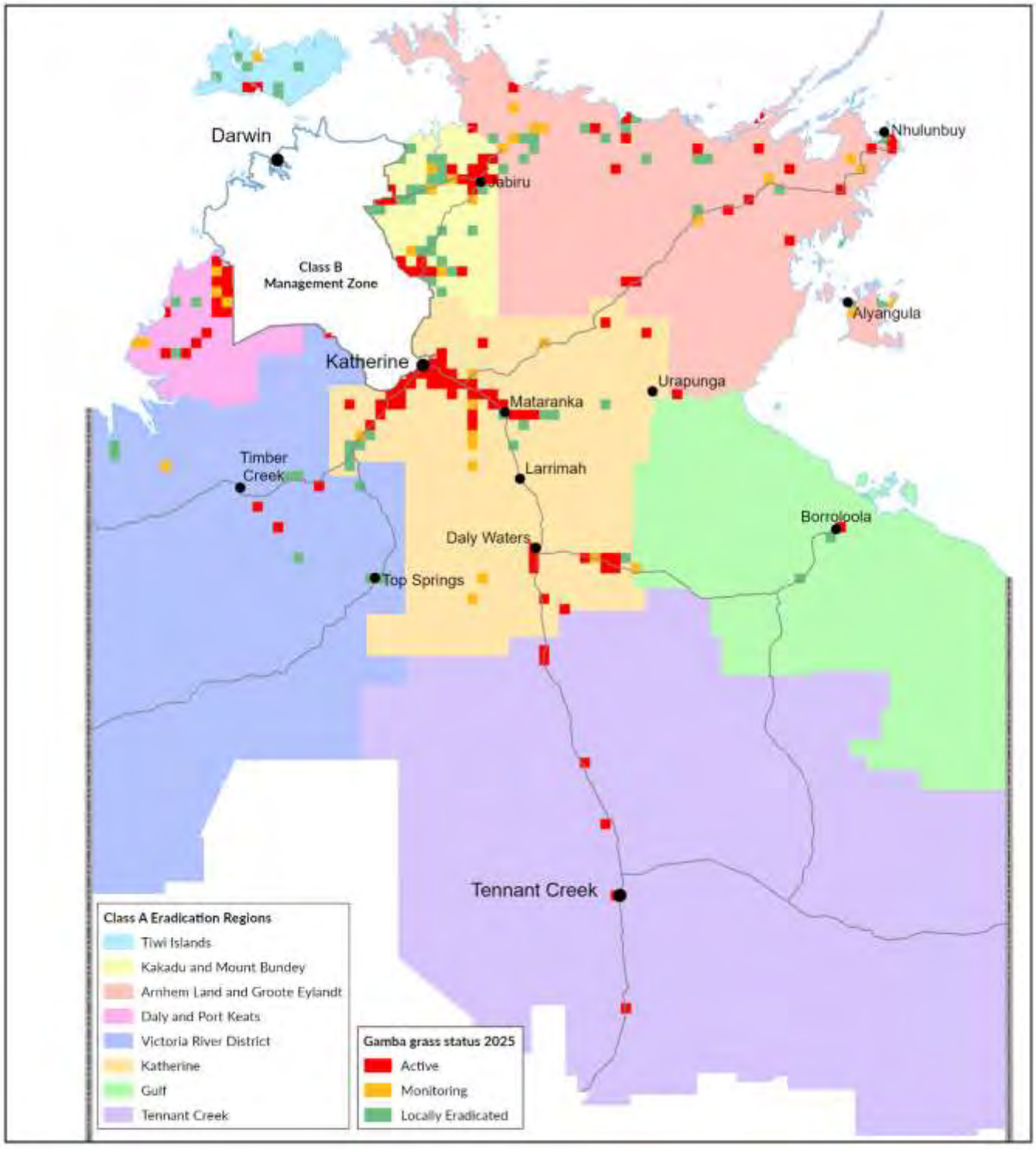

Figure 5: NT Gamba Grass Eradication Regions and the distribution of 2025 gamba grass records using 0.1 degree squared grids (~ 10 x 10 km). The 10 km grid status is based on the most conservative value (i.e. active is more conservative than monitoring) of all the 1 ha GGMUs within each 10 km grid.

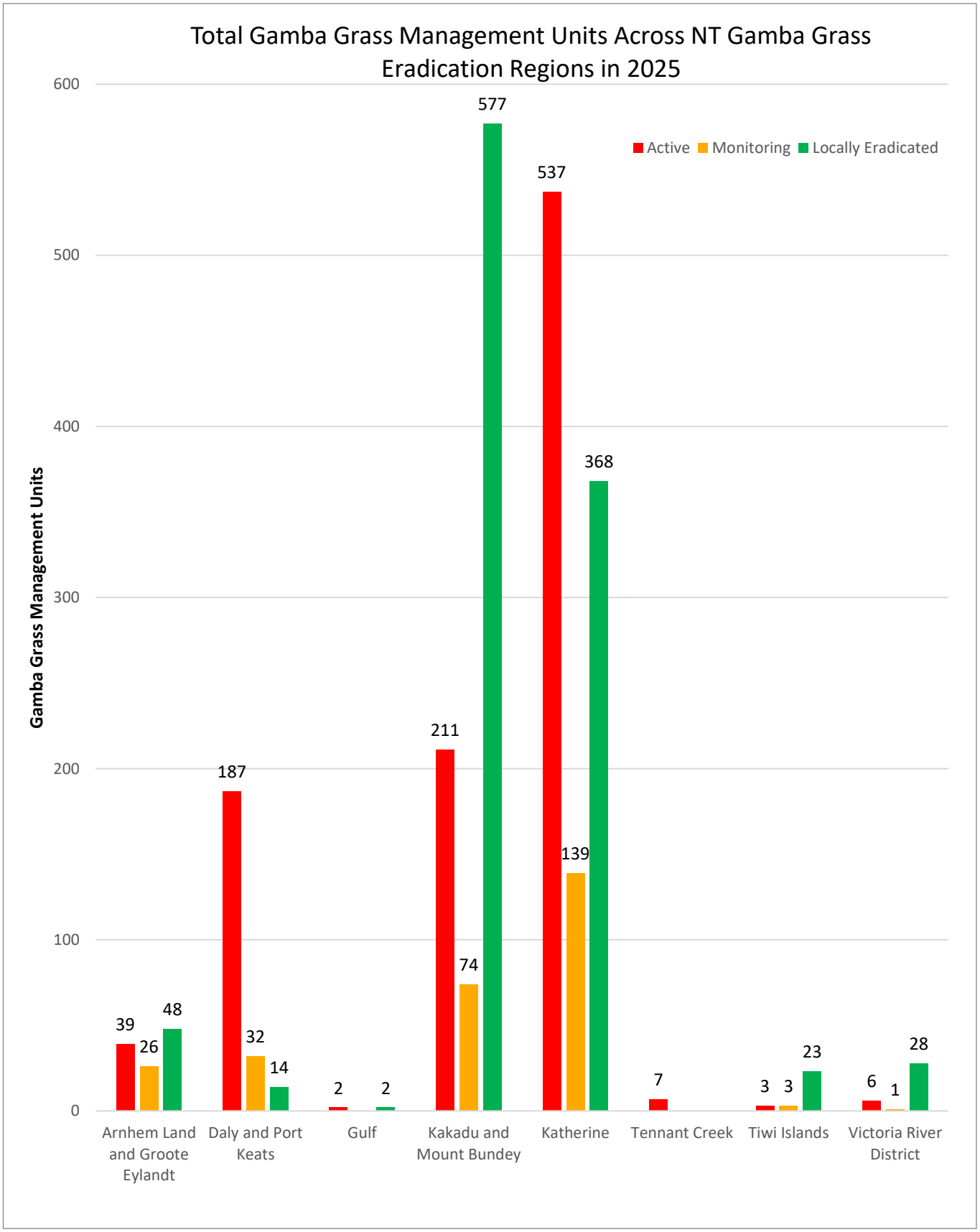

Figure 6: Total GGMUs assessed as 'Active', 'Monitoring' and 'Locally Eradicated' for each of the NT Gamba Grass Eradication Regions in 2025.

Assessment of gamba grass across different land uses and tenures in the Class A zone

Individual properties and parcels

Properties and parcels within the Class A zone include land under many different tenures, including pastoral land, national parks, vacant Crown land (VCL) and Aboriginal land.

A total of 106 individual properties[2] across the above different tenures have been assessed as having recorded gamba grass points based on all weed records in the WMB Corporate Weeds Dataset. The assessment towards eradication of these individual properties is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Assessment towards eradication of properties and parcels in the Class A zone

Number of properties	Assessment towards eradication
23	Management status as unmanaged, partially unmanaged, unknown or no data provided during 2024/2025
29	Active management – control has occurred
16	Assessed as 'monitoring'
38	Assessed as 'locally eradicated'

Many pastoral leases occur across the Class A zone. Generally pastoral lessees are working cooperatively with the WMB when assessing gamba grass across this zone.

Two permits exist in the Class A zone to retain existing gamba grass areas for grazing. These permits are closely monitored by the WMB and are audited annually.

Roads and highways

A total of 17 different roads and highways in the Class A zone have recorded gamba grass points based on all weed records in the WMB Corporate Weeds Dataset. The GGMUs containing these points have been assessed in 2025 as either 'active', 'monitoring' or 'locally eradicated'. This data is included in the regional assessment shown in Figure 7 and also presented separately for roads and highways in Figure 7.

Photo 3: Gamba grass on-ground control occurring on Elcho Island (photo provided by the NLC - GEBC Project)

[2] For the purposes of this report an NT Portion has been reported as a property.

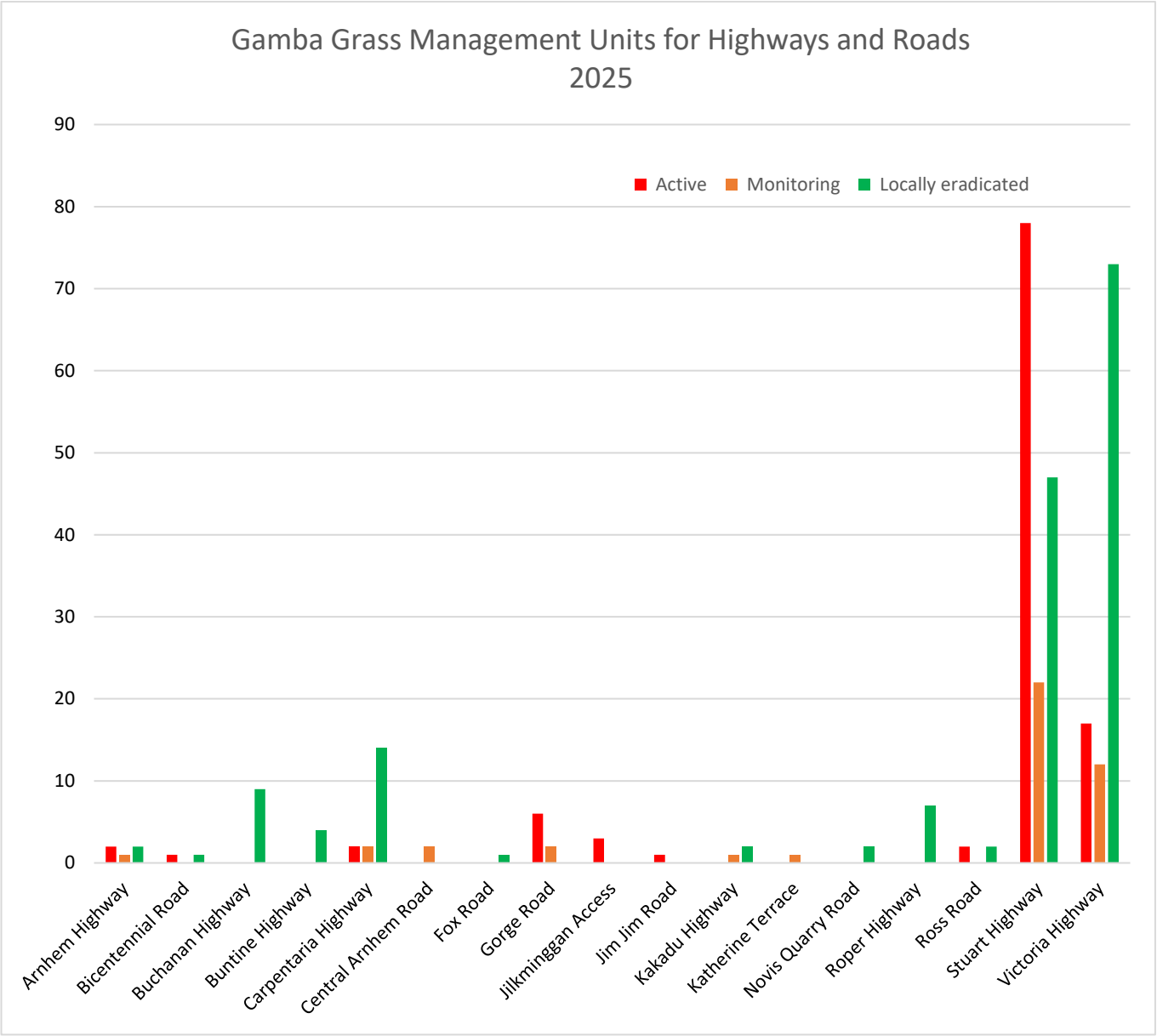

Figure 7: Total GGMUs for Highways and Roads 2025 Assessment.

Objectives:

1b: By July 2023, all gamba grass in the Class A zone is under an active eradication program and all gamba grass plants have been destroyed (unless under permit).

1c: By July 2026, all gamba grass in the Class A zone is eradicated (unless under permit).

Strategic action: "Individuals, land owners and occupiers implement required actions as per Section 4. Assess eradication status for land parcels."

Performance indicator: "By July 2023, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as b) active management."

A mapping and monitoring program and eradication register for the gamba grass Class A zone has been established to track progress towards eradication. The assessment of GGMUs, individual properties and roads has been provided above. Table 1 above presents the results of the Class A zone gamba grass eradication assessment for 2024/25 and summarises the number of properties understood to be actively managing gamba grass in the Class A zone.

Strategic action: "Individuals, land owners and occupiers implement required actions as per Section 4. Assess eradication status for land parcels."

Performance indicator: "By July 2025, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as c) monitoring phase."

This performance indicator has not been met, as presented by the results above. Significant Australian Government funding has gone into monitoring and follow up of gamba grass across the Class A zone since 2022. This funding has led to significant gains in follow up of gamba grass across this zone, but has also resulted in new detections, setting back timeframes towards eradication. The distribution of gamba grass in the landscape and the job of eradication is now known to be larger than expected in 2020. Updated distribution information will be considered in the review of the gamba grass Class A and B zone boundary, due by July 2026.

Strategic action: "Individuals, land owners and occupiers implement required actions as per Section 4. Assess eradication status for land parcels."

Performance indicator: "By July 2026, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as d) eradicated."

This performance indicator will be assessed through the implementation of the mapping and monitoring program and tracking the eradication of gamba grass in the Class A zone using the eradication register. However, it is noted that as all GGMUs are not in a 'monitoring' phase at the current point in time of this report, it will not be possible for all GGMUs to achieve a 'locally eradicated' status by July 2026. Only those GGMUs which were known prior to July 2024 will have enough time to progress to monitoring and beyond that, to locally eradicated, by July 2026.

Objective:

1d: By July 2026, a review of the permit system pertaining to gamba grass is completed.

Strategic action: "Existing permits that allow grazing of gamba grass in the Class A zone are reassessed to ensure they are appropriate."

Performance indicator: "Review of permit system is completed as it pertains to gamba grass."

A review of the permit system as it pertains to gamba grass has commenced and is yet to be completed. Some preliminary considerations of the review are outlined below.

There are two gamba grass permits in the Class A zone that authorise the grazing of already existing gamba grass. Permit conditions require that the gamba grass is strictly monitored to ensure there is no spread. These permits were issued in the past as a way of working with landowners after gamba grass was declared a weed in 2008.

Items raised during the review of the permit system to date include:

- The need for a stricter enforcement of permit conditions audited annually; as well as the need for compliance effort across all of the gamba grass Class A zone, where a site is in non-compliance.
- Note, audits of the permit holders were conducted during the reporting period in May 2025, with a follow-up inspection of Permit 003/2024 in July. In response to the audits, some landholder actions were required before being found complaint and considered for future permit renewals. These actions were undertaken and subsequently both permit holders were found to be compliant with their permit conditions. Both permit holders submitted their required annual report by 31 May 2025. The holder of Permit 003/2024 has applied to renew for another year whilst the holder of Permit 004/2024 is working towards eradication and has opted not to renew. Permit transparency was raised by the gamba WAC as an item to review, and so to address this, permit conditions are included in Table 2.
- Consideration of a bond / administration fee that can be utilised under the Act. However, this is not currently supported by DLPE.
- The circumstances around permit renewals and when the Minister may or may not approve a renewal. For example, repeated non-compliances may trigger the Minister not to renew a permit.

Table 2: Gamba grass permit conditions for permit holders in the Class A zone.

Conditions
The Permit Holder shall obtain all (if any) other approvals and permissions that might be required under a law in force in the Northern Territory in respect of conducting the permitted activity or complying with a requirement of this permit.
The Permit Holder shall not transfer the permit (and no transfer shall be effective) without the prior written approval of the Director.
The Permit Holder shall ensure a copy of the permit is available for inspection, upon request by a Weed Management Officer at all times.
Notwithstanding the permit expiry date above, the permit may at any time be revoked or amended by the Minister or his delegate.
Reports and annual returns required under this permit are to be submitted to the Director, Weed Management Branch, email: weedinfo@nt.gov.au.
The Permit Holder shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that any employee, agent or contractor of the Permit Holder involved in the conduct of the permitted activity: is suitably qualified to do so; and is aware of, and complies with, the conditions of this permit.
The Permit Holder shall ensure that appropriate vehicle and equipment hygiene practices are implemented in respect of any vehicle or equipment used in connection with the permitted activity or in complying with a condition of this permit.
Special Conditions
Gamba grass must not be baled or removed from the permitted area.
The boundary of the permit area is to be maintained to enable vehicle access.
By 31 May 2025, the permit holder must provide the WMB with a report detailing all survey and control activities conducted to comply with the requirements of this permit during the preceding wet season (October-April inclusive). The report must include: • A completed surveillance record sheet – Attachment B • Gamba grass control and survey activities completed using the NT WeedMate app. • Survey of historical gamba grass locations outside of the permitted area completed. Absent data to be recorded where gamba grass is no longer present. • Any other matter specified by the Director Weed Management or a Weed Management Officer.
All gamba grass plants found outside the permitted area must be reported and destroyed within 14 days.

The 2025 Have Your Say survey requested feedback on the permit review. Feedback received, where permission was provided, is outlined below:

- *Gamba grass has proven to only be a good stock feed, when it is eaten from a young plant. If it is fully grown, cattle don't eat it as much. Gamba needs to be fully eradicated. A good example why, Colpo grass was also introduced for the same reason, 40 years later we are still fighting it.*
- *The 2 grazing permits should expire within a set time period with the landholders provided support to transition to gamba free by the expiry date.*
- *I think the permit areas were fine. I know there will only be one if none due to the continued pressure to eradicate the permits. I think resources would be better spent on weeds that are invasive AND have no value for any industry such as Grader Grass and Belly Ache Bush.*
- *We advocate that there should be a gradual and supported phasing out of all gamba permits as the real risks of gamba to our land health far outweigh any short term financial benefits.*
- *Aim for eradication in both zones. Cows can eat other grasses, even natives. Clearly the pastoralists have failed to contain it and continue to do so. Rural areas have improved a lot in the last few years, Crown Lands remain infested.*
- *Progress eradication.*
- *Gamba Grass Roots would like to see the two existing gamba permits removed from the Class A eradication zone. We understand that it will take time to remove all the gamba from the permitted areas, so suggest gradually reducing the permitted area size over a few years until they no longer exist.*
- *I would like to see the existing permits phased out and the eradication zone made gamba-free.*
- *Fair enough.*
- *No comment on this one.*
- *Personally, I would like to see gamba fully eradicated but respect some use it for cattle feed. Better enforcing current laws and regulations would be a better improvement. All roads through Coomalie Council area are full of gamba which is now seeding without treatment.*
- *Allowing the maintenance of gamba in an eradication zone is at odds with the public perception of the zone being an "eradication" zone and erodes confidence in the gamba plan. In particular, allowing some landholders to grow gamba erodes expectations of compliance by other land users withing the zone. There is also substantial use of public resources to monitor the permits and this money could be used for other gamba related actions.*

The final results of the permit review will be provided in the 2026 Gamba Grass Annual Report.

Objective:

1e: "Review the Class A and B zone boundaries to improve the protection of areas in the Class B management zone that are free of gamba grass."

Strategic action: "By July 2026, review the Class A and Class B zones to ensure the Class A zone captures areas that are free of gamba grass and where eradication is considered feasible."

Performance indicator: "By July 2026, revised Class A and B zones are declared if recommended by the review process"

A review of the Class A and B zone boundary has commenced with stakeholder consultation underway. There is a need to ensure the Class A zone captures areas that are free of gamba grass and where eradication is considered feasible. The review is yet to be completed, however some preliminary considerations of the review are outlined below.

- Any additions of land to the Class A zone will shift the 500m buffer area within the Class B zone, which adjoins the Class A zone and must be gamba grass free. It is considered unreasonable to shift the boundary to expand the Class A zone into an area where dense gamba grass exists immediately adjacent the new Class A zone, as installing the new 500m gamba grass free buffer will not be feasible to achieve.

- The WMB is tracking eradication of gamba grass in an eradication register for known gamba points. Any Class B zone properties shifted into the Class A zone will add GGMUs to this gamba eradication register for tracking. Significant increases of GGMUs into this register could make the process unfeasible as resources to regulate any boundary changes are limited.

The Have Your Say survey sought feedback on the boundary review, with the question: *"what is your view on the current boundary and any changes needed"*. Word for word feedback received, where permission was provided, is outlined below:

- *Full of NT is an A zone.*
- *Areas of high environmental value such as reserves and bushland areas within Zone B should be made eradication zones, such as Casuarina Coastal Reserve, Rapid Creek and East Point.*
- *Sounds like government has areas they want to throw in the too hard basket. Expand the boundary so more people can stop wasting time controlling a valuable pasture species.*
- *We advocate for a consistent reduction to Zone B with a view to drive an eventual eradication of gamba.*
- *Expand eradication zones. It is possible if there's a will, and funding to do it.*
- *Review required.*
- *Gamba Grass Roots would like to see the eradication zone expanded as we believe there is more incentive to remove gamba from the eradication zones. As well as expanding the boundaries of the Class A zone, areas containing mostly land parcels under 3 hectares could be designated as eradication zones (eg. Darwin, Palmerston, Marlows Lagoon, Howard Springs, Bees Creek, Virginia, Humpty Doo). National Parks and nature/conservation reserves should also be declared as Class A eradication zones due to their high conservation significance and the safety of visitors.*
- *I would like to see the eradication zone expanded and new eradication zones created for parks and areas where land parcel sizes are under 3Ha.*
- *It has motivated some landholders to work to eradicate Gamba. Our road verges are worse than ever, with Gamba seeding, unmown, not sprayed in months. As I drive around, it is obvious that many smaller block still have Gamba. More education regarding effective strategies is needed. Too many people end up burning too late or bulldozing all vegetation or doing nothing. .. strategies that are very detrimental to the environment.*
- *boundaries look ok*
- *Sounds like you are giving in to the march of gamba.*
- *It would be good to see gamba free areas or areas with a low occurrence of gamba incorporated into the eradication zone. Would it be practical to include more Jawoyn lands adjacent to the current boundary into the eradication zone?*

Goal 2 – Contain and control gamba grass by actively managing infestations across the Class B zone and preventing spread into new areas

Objective:

2a: Reduce seed production.

2b: Implement weed hygiene measures to reduce gamba grass seed spread.

2c: Reduce gamba grass outliers at a land parcel and landscape scale.

2d: Prevent gamba grass spreading into clean areas.

2e: Reduce gamba grass abundance and density in the Class B zone.

2f: Reduce gamba grass presence around landholder infrastructure.

2g: Understand the distribution of gamba grass in the Class B zone.

Strategic action: "Land owners, occupiers and all users of land implement required actions as per Section 3 and 4."

Performance indicator: "An annual compliance program is developed and implemented to assess compliance with this plan and compliance action is taken against properties not complying."

In the Class B (control) zone, there is the potential for gamba grass to be present on many thousands of land parcels. The compliance program operates for the purpose of underpinning necessary gamba grass management enforcements for the protection of lives and assets. To date, the program has focussed on the most populated areas of the B zone. To inform the program, in 2016 aerial gamba grass survey data was collected for the Darwin region and processed through a prioritisation key, utilising key variables in order to rank gamba grass on the likelihood and consequence of impact. The compliance program was developed as a result of the 2016 survey findings, and subsequently has been informed by aerial survey undertaken for gamba grass in the Darwin rural area in 2023.

For each of the past 4 years, the WMB has committed to inspecting 1,100 properties per annum through the gamba grass compliance program in the Darwin rural area. The program has been delivered jointly between the WMB and the Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit (GFMU).

During this reporting period, the compliance program has been managed differently after the WMB and the GFMU were separated into different departments after the change of government in 2024. As a result for the 2024/25 reporting period, compliance areas of responsibility were delineated as follows:

- The GFMU have been undertaking compliance inspections within the Darwin rural area (Vernon Arafura Fire Protection Zone [FPZ]), Marrakai, Coomalie Community Government Council area, Daly River, Dundee, Wagait, Southport and Point Stuart.
- The WMB have been undertaking compliance inspections within the Darwin rural area Emergency Response Area (ERA), the City of Darwin and City of Palmerston areas.

Compliance inspection figures have been outlined separately below for:

- the GFMU compliance area outlined above,
- the Darwin rural area – ERA (WMB designated compliance area) and
- the City of Darwin and City of Palmerston areas (WMB designated compliance area).

Table 3, 5 and 7 present the results of compliance inspections undertaken across the Class B zone. Compliance inspections typically consist of a first inspection to check for gamba compliance. If the property is not compliant, the landholder is sent an advice letter that gamba management is needed. If they have received an advice letter in the past, an order to control gamba grass is issued. Some properties may only be inspected once, such as properties already compliant at the time of the initial inspection. It is acknowledged that some statistics are not available in

Table 3 that have been provided in previous reports. This can be attributed to the shift in how the compliance season has been managed, with staff changes and competing work demands. Next compliance season will be tracked more closely.

Table 4, 6 and 8 outline a summary of inspections that have progressed to compliance orders and resulted in penalty infringement notices being issued. It should be noted however that a large component of the compliance program is education. Progression to a penalty infringement notice only occurs after education has been fully explored. Education is delivered to landholders on gamba grass identification, control methods and legal requirements through various methods, including radio advertising, educational leaflets in rates notices, posters, call cards attached to landholder fences, social media posts and one on one information provided to landholders.

GFMU compliance area – Darwin rural area (Vernon Arafura Fire Management Zone), Marrakai, Coomalie Community Council Area, Daly River, Dundee Wagait, Southport and Point Stuart

During the 2024/25 wet season, a total of 951 compliance inspections were undertaken by the GFMU for properties within their delineated compliance area. Inspections were undertaken in areas of prioritised gamba grass risk, with the summary results shown in Table 3.

Table 3: GFMU compliance inspection results of 951 compliance inspections undertaken

Percentage	Compliance result
Not available	Properties inspected showed a significant improvement in gamba grass control from the time of initial inspection, and notable progress towards achieving compliance.
Not available	Properties inspected appeared to have attempted to manage gamba grass, with limited success. These properties received a letter of advice with information on best practice gamba grass control and support available through Gamba Action Program (GAP). (299 advice letters).
Not available	Properties inspected showed a reasonable level of ongoing land management, and were monitored for change throughout the season, with no intervention.
59%	Property inspections scored highly enough to result in authorised officer orders being issued, requiring the landholder to rectify non-compliance. (565 orders).

A total of 565, compliance orders were issued by the GFMU during 2024/25. Compliance with these orders is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: GFMU compliance with orders of 565 orders issued

Percentage	Compliance result
9.5%	Met their management requirements after being informed of non-compliance, or showed significant progress towards compliance.
54.6% not completed	Landholders were ordered, however they failed to make a reasonable effort to meet management requirements and were proposed for issue of a Notice of Intended Infringement. However, NOII's were not completed this season (316 NOII).
35.8% proposed	Other action required (such as reinspection, Fire Ready Program).

WMB compliance area - Darwin rural area – Emergency Response Area

During the 2024/25 wet season, a total of 516 compliance inspections were undertaken by the WMB for properties within the Darwin rural area - Emergency Response Area. Inspections were undertaken in areas of prioritised gamba grass risk, with summary results shown in Table 5.

Table 5: WMB Darwin rural area compliance inspection results of the 516 compliance inspections undertaken

Percentage	Compliance result
21%	Properties inspected showed a significant improvement in gamba grass control from the time of initial inspection, and notable progress towards achieving compliance.
27%	Properties inspected appeared to have attempted to manage gamba grass, with limited success.
23%	Properties inspected showed a reasonable level of ongoing land management, and were monitored for change throughout the season, with no intervention required.
29%	Properties inspected scored highly enough to result in authorised officer orders being issued, requiring the landholder to rectify non-compliance. (150 orders)

A total of 150 compliance orders were issued by the WMB during 2024/25. Compliance with these orders is summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: WMB Darwin rural area compliance with orders of the 150 orders issued

Percentage	Compliance result
86%	Met their management requirements after being informed of non-compliance, or showed significant progress towards compliance.
14%	Landholders ordered, failed to make a reasonable effort to meet management requirements and have / will be notified of an intended infringement.

City of Darwin and City of Palmerston areas

The WMB undertakes compliance inspections within the City of Darwin and City of Palmerston areas. During the 2024/25 season, 441 compliance inspections were undertaken for these areas. A summary of compliant properties and enforcement action taken is shown in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7: WMB City of Darwin and City of Palmerston compliance inspection results of the 441 compliance inspections undertaken

Percentage	Compliance result
48%	Compliant at the time of initial assessment and no follow up action was required.
52%	Compliance action taken due to non-compliance – orders issued. (230 orders)

Of the 441 compliance inspections undertaken by the WMB, 230 orders were issued. After this, 124 NOII's were issued during 2024/25. Compliance results after final orders were issued is summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: WMB City of Darwin and City of Palmerston compliance with orders of the 230 orders issued

Percentage	Compliance result
98.5%	Landholders met their management requirements after being informed of non-compliance, or showed significant progress towards compliance.
1.5%	Landholders ordered and failed to make a reasonable effort to meet management requirements and have / will be notified of an intended infringement.

Katherine

The town of Katherine is located across both the Class A and B zones.

The focus for compliance in this area during the reporting period has been on the Class A zone, the results of which are documented above under Goal 1.

Strategic action: "Land owners, occupiers and all users of land implement required actions as per Section 3 and 4."

Performance indicator: "By July 2024 and annually afterwards there is an improvement in gamba grass management as evidenced by an improvement in parcel compliance score."

The gamba grass compliance program consists of a widespread property inspection regime. Parcel-based risk scores have been collected in 2024/25 for the Darwin rural area (ERA) and are presented in Table 9. These scores inform targeted enforcement. They are also used to measure the broader change in parcel risk scores over time, and can indicate the effectiveness of awareness and enforcement approaches on influencing landholder behaviours.

Note these parcel risk scores reflect the same scoring system found online at Gamba grass | NT.GOV.AU where landholders can check the gamba grass risk for their property.

During the 2024/25 season, the overall compliance risk scores for the Darwin rural area (ERA) improved. The trends shown in Table 9 have been measured as a result of enforcement action.

Table 9: Overall compliance risk scores for Darwin rural area (ERA)

Total Percentage	Compliance result
72%	Land showed an improved parcel compliance score, indicating improved gamba grass management.
25%	Parcel compliance scores remained unchanged.
3%	Compliance scores worsened, indicating an increase in gamba grass hazard.

Strategic action: "Land owners, occupiers and all users of land implement required actions as per Section 3 and 4."

Performance indicator: "Reduction in area affected by gamba grass in target areas."

As reported in previous years' reports, it is not feasible to track a 'reduction' in gamba grass across the Class B zone at a landscape scale. Therefore, the revised gamba plan includes a revised performance indicator for the Class B zone, which is 'a reduction in area affected by gamba grass in target areas'.

The WAC have briefly discussed 'target areas' and have said the following needs to be considered:

- Prioritising according to environmental and economic value.
- Areas where there have been gains and achievements – which also points attention towards good outcomes.
- Where are long term gains possible / unlikely?

A preliminary list of target areas was discussed with the WAC:

- Transport corridors - roads and rail
- Residential and business areas – e.g. in Darwin and Palmerston as the whole area is at threat from gamba
- Areas with conservation values – e.g. threatened species and Sites of Conservation Significance
- <3ha blocks
- Darwin rural area with implications of recent aerial survey data to be considered.

Despite the consideration of target areas, the WMB currently does not have capacity to measure a 'reduction' in gamba grass across these areas within the Class B zone.

Notwithstanding, the overall area affected by gamba grass within the Class B zone is presented for 2021 to 2025 in Table 10 and Figure 8. This area has been calculated based on the total number of 1km x 1km grids that intersect with at least one gamba grass plant in the Class B zone.

In addition, Table 11 presents the total number of 1km x 1km grids affected by gamba grass across the Class B zone for Northern Territory Government (NTG) land, roads and highways. This area has been calculated using the same method described for Table 10. Table 11 highlights 84 1km x 1km grids that include multiple tenures (NT Parks and

Reserves and VCL) that contain at least one gamba grass plant. This information may be helpful in highlighting areas of VCL where control work may need to be prioritised to protect adjoining Parks and Reserves.

Table 10: Area affected by gamba grass across the Class B zone.

Year	Number of 1 km cells that intersect a gamba grass plant in the Class B zone represented as area affected (km^2)	Area affected by gamba grass (%)
2021	4,727	13.7%
2022	4,762	13.8%
2023	5,003 (including aerial survey data of the Darwin rural area undertaken in May 2022).	14.5%
2024	5,425	15.75%
2025	5,481	15.91%

Table 11: NTG land affected by gamba grass across the Class B zone.

Land use area affected	Number of 1 km cells that intersect a gamba grass plant in the Class B zone (represented as area affected (km^2))
NT Parks and Reserves	928 – noting 84 of these are also counted below under VCL
Vacant Crown Land (VCL)	906 – noting 84 of these are also counted above under NT Parks and Reserves
Highways	543
Rural roads	1,513
Urban roads	103
Pastoral roads	1,037

Areas affected are approximate only as:

- The area affected has been calculated based on 1 km^2 grids intersecting the Class B zone that include a gamba grass point. If a 1 km^2 grid includes any gamba grass the unit is considered 'affected.' This method is based on gamba grass records in the WMB spatial database which date back to 1960. Therefore, a single gamba grass plant in a 1 km^2 grid would be reported as 1 km^2 affected.
- Weed records are collected and continually added to the weed records database. Although absence records can be collected, no weed points are removed.
- The data being reported on in this annual report only reflects the gamba grass records reported to the WMB.
- Data audits are ongoing and may result in slight updates to the area affected by gamba grass, as reported in the Gamba Grass Annual Report 2023 (DEPWS 2023).

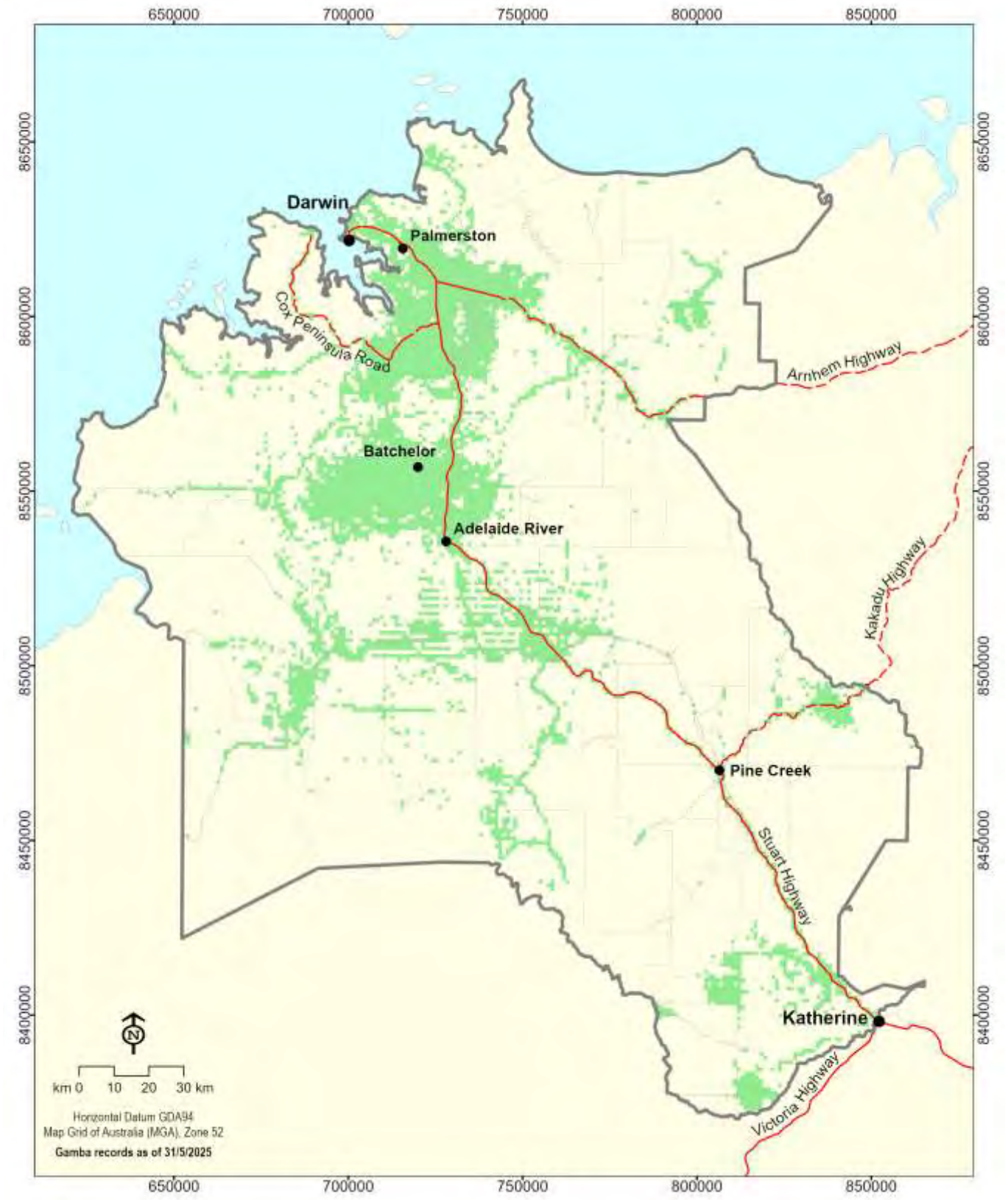

Figure 8: Estimated area affected by gamba grass in the Class B zone as of 2025 (based on data ranging from 1960 to 2025 reported to the WMB).

Objective:

2g. Understand the distribution of gamba grass in the Class B zone.

Strategic action: "The WMB are to undertake an annual assessment of land impacted by gamba grass. A mapping and monitoring program is developed for the Class B zone."

Performance indicator: "Increased understanding of priority areas for future mapping in the Class B zone."

The following information demonstrates the current understanding of the distribution of gamba grass in the Class B zone. A wide range of government, council and non-government stakeholders have been asked to provide information for inclusion in this report to demonstrate gamba grass management being undertaken across the Class B zone. Not all stakeholders have chosen to supply information. If you would like information on gamba grass management on land that has not been addressed below, you are encouraged to contact these stakeholders directly. In addition, feedback from the Have Your Say survey relating to gamba grass distribution has also been included below.

Metrics for some tenures:

NTG Parks

The Parks and Wildlife Commission, Department of Tourism and Hospitability (DTH) (previously DEPWS) have been tackling gamba grass via on-ground survey and control across parks in the Top End and Katherine regions. The Gamba Army contributed over 500 hours of spraying time across parks in Darwin and the Top End during the reporting period.

A summary of each park is provided below:

Adelaide River Parks:

- Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve, Black Jungle Conservation Reserve, Lambells Lagoon Conservation Reserve, Harrison Dam Conservation Area – Gamba grass treatment by Parks and Wildlife Rangers.
- Window on the Wetlands - Gamba grass treatment by Parks and Wildlife Rangers and contractors.

Darwin Urban Parks:

- Berry Springs Nature Park, Blackmore River Conservation Reserve, Howard Springs Nature Park, Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve, Tree Point Conservation Area, Manton Dam Recreation Area – Gamba grass treatment by Parks and Wildlife Rangers.
- Casuarina Coastal Reserve, Buffalo Creek Management Area – Gamba grass treatment by Parks and Wildlife Rangers, Adopt a Spot volunteers and Gamba Army. Gamba grass density and presence has declined significantly in the project site over the last 4 years due to this collaborative work.
- Charles Darwin National Park, Holmes Jungle Nature Park, Knuckey Lagoons Conservation Reserve – Gamba grass treatment by Parks and Wildlife Rangers, Gamba Army and contractors.
- Garig Gunak Barlu National Park – ongoing surveillance for gamba grass is occurring with no current infestations or new detections recorded.

Mary River National Park:

The majority of effort occurred along the Arnhem Highway and Leichardt Point in the North Wildman Block, with sporadic plants along the Point Stuart roadside. This work targeted cleaning up previously managed areas and buffer zones with repeated visits.

Litchfield National Park:

Significant gamba grass control work was undertaken in Litchfield National Park over the reporting period, through a co-ordinated approach blending aerial spraying effort (mainly helicopter) and significant on-ground follow up control

by rangers and contractors. This work focussed on gamba grass infestations on or encroaching on the Tabletop Range. This work has largely been the result of funding received through:

- The Australian Government's 'Supporting Communities Manage Pest Animals and Weeds Program'. In 2022, $492,000 in funding was awarded to this three-year project. 2024/25 was the final year of funding for this project.
- NTG funding was announced in 2024, contributing $250,000 per year ongoing towards the management of gamba grass in Litchfield National Park. This funding will ensure that work commenced through the Australian Government's project can continue.

In addition, gamba grass control has been undertaken across the reporting period by the Gamba Army, Parks and Wildlife Rangers and the community based Weedwalkers Top End Landcare Group.

A summary of work completed across Litchfield National Park over the reporting period is highlighted below:

- Tabletop Eradication Area 1-5 – targeted by contractors focused on treating and controlling regrowth in these areas, as identified from the Charles Darwin University (CDU) aerial survey undertaken in 2024. These areas have been backed up with helicopter operations for bigger infestations and isolated areas where contractors have not been able to access areas by vehicle. This concerted effort has resulted in a 90% reduction of gamba across the eradication area.
- Intensive use zones of Florence / Buley areas and working towards the Central Valley areas – the Gamba Army have been working on establishing or widening gamba grass buffer zones around these areas.
- Visitor node sites, walking tracks, roadsides, firebreaks and campground areas, including Sandy Creek and Surprise Creek campgrounds on the floodplains – treated by Parks and Wildlife Rangers.
- Isolated areas – targeted by Weedwalkers Top End treating more isolated patches on foot with backpack sprayers and physically removing gamba grass. This work has been followed up by helicopter spraying where infestations have been too large to treat. Weedwalkers Top End also undertook data collection and mapping of gamba grass presence and density, which was reported back to rangers to assist with logistics and planning for follow up control.

In addition, the Office of Climate Change has commenced funding gamba grass management in 2025 with $150,000 annually for three years. This funding will drive the Gamba Litchfield Neighbours Project (GLNP), boosting the capacity of land managers around Litchfield National Park to take sustained action and complement control efforts within the national park.

Katherine Region

Ongoing gamba grass surveillance is being conducted by park rangers in conjunction with regular park operations in Savannah-Gulf Parks within the Katherine region, ready to respond if gamba grass incursions appear.

- Nitmiluk National Park – surveys for gamba grass have been undertaken for Nitmiluk and the surrounding areas of Jawoyn land. No gamba grass has been detected.
- Victoria River District Parks – no gamba grass has been sighted.
- Giwining / Flora River Nature Park – isolated gamba grass detected and treated.

<u>Vacant Crown Land, Crown Land Estate</u>

Darwin Region

The Vacant Crown Land Weed Management Contract is in its third and last year of its current program (2022-2025) for the control of declared weeds on VCL from Darwin to Adelaide River. Weed control has been undertaken across VCL in the Darwin, Batchelor and Adelaide River areas across the reporting period. This program covers 200 plus parcels of land. Of these sites, 5 parcels have had limited treatment or reduced scope due to changed tenure / new development (Holtze and Strauss Water Treatment Plant). VCL parcels include:

- Darwin: 20 parcels, extending from Leanyer, Marrara, Hidden Valley, Cullen Bay, Darwin City and Berrimah.

- Palmerston and Surrounds: 47 parcels, extending from Knuckey Lagoons, Marlow Lagoon, Archer, Mitchell, Holtze, Johnston, Farrar, Bellamack and Zuccoli.
- Coolalinga and Surrounds: 48 parcels, extending from Coolalinga, Virginia, Bees Creek, Humpty Doo, McMinns Lagoon, Howard Springs and Gunn Point.
- Batchelor and Adelaide River: 18 parcels, extending from Batchelor, Rum Jungle and Adelaide River.
- Berry Springs and Surrounds: 75 parcels, extending from Berry Springs, Darwin River, Tumbling Waters, Middle Arm, Livingstone, Blackmore, Southport and Litchfield.

The current 36-month Darwin Vacant Crown Land Weed Management Program is due to expire in October 2025, with a newly scoped 60-month weed management program currently being procured through a public competitive process. Award is expected to occur prior to the next control season (October/November 2025).

Crown Land Estate (CLE) has been liaising with DLI, Department of Mining and Energy and WMB staff to minimise duplication of weed control where appropriate, resulting in the following outcomes:

- CLE, WMB and DLI have agreed that where there is no defined boundary between a road corridor and VCL, such as a firebreak, the 15-metre buffer from the transport weed program will suffice.
- Department of Mining and Energy has provided information of which extractive licences over VCL include weed management provisions.
- WMB have advised CLE where multiple sites adjoin and are owned by the same entity, they may be treated as one parcel for the purpose of determining the required management actions.

This coordination between Government agencies provides efficiencies, including cost savings, that will be strategically redirected to treat additional sites.

CLE has been engaged by WMB and Parks and Wildlife on the new Government action on gamba grass within the GLNP. Maps have been provided for gamba grass density and treatment areas on VCL within the Batchelor Township to support forward planning.

CLE received a total of 37 gamba grass orders from WMB and the GFMU. 14 sites were under contract, either through the VCL Weed Program or Gamba Army, and contractors were advised to retreat the areas and/or provide comment. The remaining 23 sites were treated through a smaller procurement due to the current VCL contractor not having capacity at the time. All gamba grass order sites identified by WMB and GFMU are to be included in the future 60-month weed management program. CLE has also assisted the WMB with gamba grass compliance across Crown Leased sites by providing the best point of contact for each lease or contacting the lessee directly.

Katherine Region

A new Katherine Region VCL weed management contract has been awarded during the reporting period. The contractor commenced the first treatment under the contract in February 2025. CLE is exploring a 36-to-60-month contract term for an ongoing weed management program, pending funding availability.

CLE Katherine has been assessing its Class B land parcels that adjoin the Class A zone where the 500m gamba grass free buffer zone requirement must be in place. The WMB has provided CLE with a list of 23 VCL sites that sit within 500m of the Class A (eradication) zone. Of these 23 parcels, 17 parcels have been added to the Katherine Weed Management Program for treatment in 2025. The remaining six parcels were considered inaccessible and CLE has engaged the Northern Land Council's (NLC) Gamba Eradication and Biodiversity Conservation (GEBC) project to have these sites added to aerial surveys of the Katherine River corridor. NLC provided survey and treatment data in July 2025 and CLE will review the data and liaise with the NLC and WMB for further action required.

Several sightings of gamba grass have been reported to CLE Katherine over the period, including near the CDU Campus and within VCL in the Pine Creek area. These reports were redirected to the relevant agencies (DLI) and/or assessed and treated through current weed management programs.

Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI)

Gamba Grass Control within Road Corridors – 2024-25 Season

Darwin Region

On 23 January 2024, Sterling NT were awarded a contract for T23-1696 - Darwin Region - Road Reserves - Weed Control for a period of 36-months valued $4.19 million (including GST).

This contract was split into four separate parts:

- Part 1: Darwin and Arnhem
- Part 2: Kakadu and Daly River
- Part 3: Batchelor and Douglas Daly
- Part 4: Cox Peninsula and Port Keats.

Annual weed management and vegetation control around roadside furniture is carried out during the wet season. The program targets declared weed species within a 0–15 metre zone from the road edge. Vegetation control around roadside furniture is performed in accordance with the DLI Standard Specification for Civil Maintenance.

The primary method of control is direct herbicide application to the target vegetation. Vegetation control is restricted to periods when plants are actively growing, typically after the onset of the wet season.

In the 2024-25 weed treatment season, all Northern Territory Government managed roads received two treatment rounds between December and May, where access was available, covering approximately 2,450 kilometres of road reserve, and an area of more than 7,300 hectares.

Ten spray teams operated across the road network during this period. Over 3,400 individual infestation sites were treated at least twice, including more than 3,000 sites specifically targeting gamba grass.

All treatment activities were documented using GPS logs, geo-tagged and time-stamped photos, and electronic logbook entries for each spray unit refill. The contractor must add dye to the herbicide to ensure sprayed areas are clearly visible during the WMB's inspections.

Large volumes of herbicide were applied across the road network. Almost 1,000 weed treatment logs were recorded between February and June, representing approximately 600,000 litres of mixed product. The treatment log is recorded when spray operators fill their tank, and the tank volume is 600 litres. This function for electronic recording of treatment logs was not available to the contractor prior to February, so the quantity of herbicide applied between December and February is not available.

DLI acknowledges that roadside weed control is not a one-season fix. Efforts will continue to be refined in collaboration with the contractor. Improvements to our mapping software now allow us to differentiate weed species more effectively, enabling targeted control of early-seeding species. DLI has also streamlined its treatment recording processes to maximise time spent on-ground.

Katherine Region

Multiple contractors were engaged to carry out weed spraying along road reserves throughout the Katherine region.

Targeted areas and species included:

- Stuart Highway (Pine Creek to Mataranka): Gamba grass and chinee apple
- Victoria Highway (Katherine to Buntine Highway): Gamba grass
- Florina Road: Gamba grass
- Gorge Road: Gamba grass.

Other Regions (Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, East Arnhem)

Weed treatment in other regions is undertaken on an ad hoc basis, as and when required, in consultation with the WMB.

Railway

Submission not provided.

Power and Water Corporation

Power and Water Corporation's weed management is delineated into two distinct business areas:

- Water Services - responsible for areas such as Darwin River Reservoir, Howard Springs Bore Field and other water and wastewater related infrastructure.
- Power Services - responsible for areas such as Hudson Creek System Control, Zone Sub-stations and other power related infrastructure.

Power and Water also engage Utility Support contractors to undertake works in remote communities as part of the Indigenous Essential Services (IES) program. The Utilities Support contracts provide the maintenance of IES utilities services assets across 72 remote Indigenous communities and 66 outstations across the whole of NT.

Water Services

Water Services spends approximately $1.1 million annually on vegetation management across sites including Darwin River Dam, Howard Springs bore field and numerous service easements and water/wastewater facilities.

Significant efforts are taken annually to ensure the on-going health of Darwin's drinking water catchments which include targeted weed spraying in the Darwin River Reservoir. A successful aerial spraying program was undertaken this year, focussing primarily on gamba grass, mimosa and olive hymenachne, with more targeted on-ground spraying undertaken around the edge of the reservoir. See Figure 9 for weed spray locations for the 2024/25 period for Darwin River Dam.

Water Services also ensure weed management is carried out under the Utility Support contracts at their bore and sewer compounds at IES funded communities and minor centres.

Power Services

A Weed Management Plan covers Power Services properties in the Top End region. Management actions under this plan have been successfully completed including gamba grass management, involving spraying, slashing and grading. These activities were undertaken around critical power network infrastructure, including system control, powerline easements and zone substations to ensure that weed infestation and associated fire risks do not impact on the Power and Water electricity network.

There have been significant reductions in gamba grass at Power and Water’s communications site located at Gunn Point, as well as at the Cosmo Howley Zone Substation located at the Intersection of Dorat Road and Oolloo Road.

Power Services also ensure weed management is carried out under the Utility Support contracts at their power station compounds at IES funded communities and minor centres.

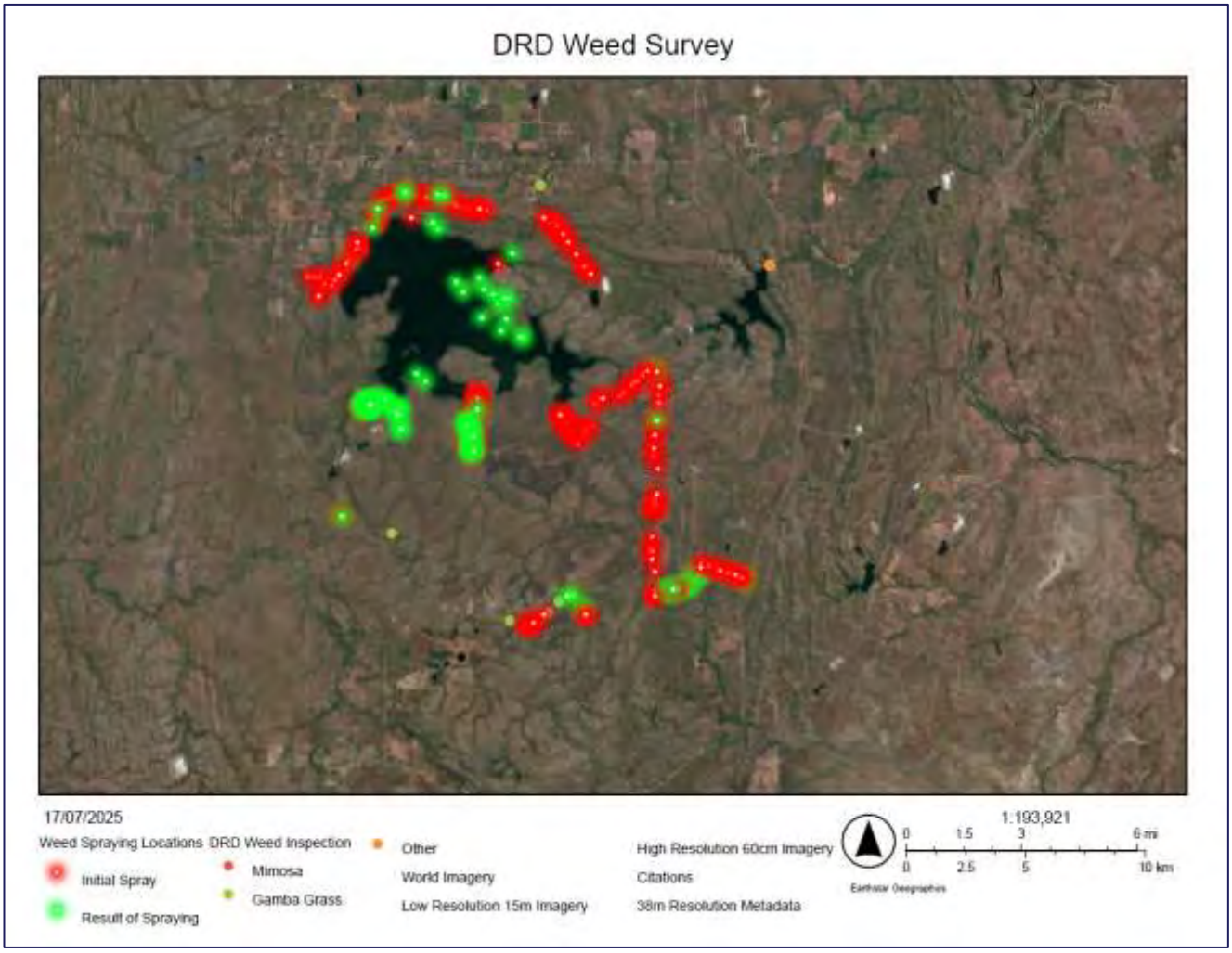

Figure 9: Darwin River Dam weed spraying locations for 2024 to 2025.

Local Government (Councils)

Councils with gamba grass in the Class B zone include the City of Darwin, City of Palmerston, Litchfield Council, Coomalie Community Government Council, Wagait Shire Council, Belyuen Community Government Council, Victoria Daly Regional Council and Katherine Town Council. All of the listed councils were invited to include a submission in this report. Council submissions that were provided are included below. For further information on what other councils are doing to manage gamba grass, please contact them directly.

Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT)

The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) is represented on the WAC by the Coomalie Community Government Council. The Local Government representative reports to the Executive of LGANT, as well as circulating information from the WAC to member councils. Over the reporting period, the LGANT representative attended all committee meetings and updated the WAC on the level of commitment and resourcing from the local government sector, which has highlighted the enormous responsibilities councils have in the gamba grass space, and that nearly every council in the NT is impacted by gamba grass, with each council having varying capabilities and roles.

The LGANT representative has also emphasized that all Local Government entities understood their role and obligations to manage weeds on the land holdings including, parks, reserves, and local road networks. All councils identify in their annual plans that weed management is a core service, and over time, councils have increased their resources in response to the gamba grass invasion in the Top End. The larger municipal and city councils have the resources to address weeds on their land, the smaller councils have limited funding and are impacted the most by

gamba grass. The proposed additional planning and resourcing in the new GLNP is welcome and it is hoped will lead to increased outcomes in the management of gamba grass in the Litchfield National Park area.

City of Darwin

City of Darwin treats gamba grass where it occurs across all City of Darwin managed land. Gamba grass was treated three times over the wet season in the City of Darwin bushland areas at East Point, Rapid Creek and Muirhead. It was also treated during the wet season in all areas surrounding the Shoal Bay Waste Management Facility.

Gamba grass was treated twice along the southern side of Buffalo Creek Rd (January and May 2025).

Spraying was also undertaken at two City of Darwin owned vacant blocks at Berrimah business park in April 2025: 18 Pak Street and 19 Lew Fatt Street.

In Woolner, gamba grass control was undertaken along the Bishop Street and Snell Street road reserves, as well as Beaton Road. These locations include steep embankments, which were treated by spraying.

Gamba grass control was also undertaken along numerous road verges outside vacant commercial and industrial lots throughout Berrimah and Winnellie in May 2025.

Litchfield Council

Litchfield Council's Mobile Work Force team undertook an extensive weed control program over the 2024/25 season, prioritising and targeting gamba grass. The Litchfield Council road reserves, which extend for over 800 kms, was sprayed a minimum of two rounds, followed by slashing ideally 3-4 weeks later. These operations were conducted between October 2024 and June 2025.

75 excised Litchfield Council owned land parcels (of which 48 are greater than 3 hectares) comprising a total of 1,500 hectares, were accessed for weed management periodically when seasonal and growing conditions were favorable. Firebreaks around these reserves were managed with spraying as well as slashing achieving on average a 6 – 10 m boundary where accessible and a 15 – 20 m buffer where gamba grass infestations were prominent, in accordance with the Litchfield Council Integrated Weed Management Plan 2021 – 2026.

Resources utilized comprised of 2 x 4wd spray utes, 2 x side by side buggies with rapid spray units accompanied by a bulk water truck, as well as 4 x slashing tractors. During this past season, Litchfield Council used a combination of 540 glyphosate, 600WG granule herbicide, adjuvant wetting agent and dye where appropriate. A total of 1,380 spraying hours was undertaken by the spray crews and a total of 327,270 L of chemical mix was applied.

Selected land parcels were targeted with the appreciated help of the Gamba Army crew when available, which helped increase coverage of areas extending beyond resource capacity. Looking forward, Litchfield Council has now employed a full-time Weeds Management Officer to oversee operations and are currently looking to implement more technological advancements in equipment and methods to improve the safety, efficiency and outcomes of operations. This will include digital flow tracking, monitoring data collection and mapping, which in the past were entered manually by the operators.

Overall Litchfield Council is endeavoring to continue a comprehensive gamba grass eradication program and to mitigate against and manage weed infestations within the Litchfield Council municipality and encourage opportunities for partnerships and relationships for coordinated weed management with the community, organisations and stakeholders.

Coomalie Community Government Council

Approximately 2.4% of the Coomalie Community Government Council's budget is spent on weed management, not including staff and equipment. Coomalie Council are responsible for approximately 200km of sealed road reserves and target these areas for gamba grass management where they can. They employ seasonal roadside contractors for gamba management. Municipal staff look after parks and gardens, of which some parks are nearly 100% gamba grass. Coomalie Council also conduct fuel reduction burns.

The Coomalie Council has noticed a change in freehold land over the last few years and believes that more is happening in the gamba grass space. It is noticeable that landholders are picking up the challenge and managing their gamba grass through different methods.

Having said this, gamba grass remains a challenge for the Coomalie Council. Resources for weed control are limited. In addition, there is over 200km of unsealed roads that the Council receives pressure from landholders to manage,

noting the Council receives no funding for the management of these roads. Having said this, the Coomalie Council are committed to gamba grass management, continually investigating potential solutions to these challenges.

Have Your Say survey feedback about the Class B zone and government land

Further to the above, the following word for word Have Your Say survey feedback has been provided about gamba grass on government land, where permission has been provided.

- *Ask councils, government and large land holders to explain why they are not treating gamba. Issue fines for those not managing.*
- *Government agencies are still not complying with the Weeds Act and failing to manage gamba on road verges and crown land. The gamba along roads and especially the Stuart Highway (especially in Coomalie) is the worst it has ever been. Aboriginal Land, vacant investment blocks with absentee owners, also continue to remain unmanaged. We would also like to see the burning of seeded gamba grass as a fire hazard reduction tool stopped as it is spreading the gamba seeds further into gamba-free areas and the hot fires negatively impact the environment by killing trees and wildlife. This gamba should either be burnt before it seeds or after it's been sprayed prior to seeding.*
- *My neighbours and I work tirelessly to remove our gamba but are constantly reinfested by surrounding gamba infestations, especially from Crown Land and the Humpty Doo industrial area. There are also several gamba infested 5 acre blocks near us.*
- *I have been unable to do my usual vigilante spraying this season (limited to only pulling stray clumps) .. and it is evident. So frustrating. Road verges in my area are seeding Gamba. I wish there were more people out slashing and spraying early in the season Too late now. All seeded. Next year will be a nightmare.*

Categorised list of priority areas that require gamba grass mapping

Based on the above information, the following areas remain a priority for future mapping in the Class B zone:

- Government and council land under gamba grass management programs - to determine the effectiveness of these programs and further work required. On-ground follow up survey, particularly in areas of environmental and cultural significance such as national parks, should include a focus on mapping gamba grass presence, absence (for previously present gamba points) and treatment in order to produce accurate maps of these areas in future annual reports.
- Litchfield National Park - to determine progress in gamba grass management following increased funding towards managing gamba grass over recent years.
- Continued mapping of the 500m Class B buffer zone that adjoins the gamba grass Class A zone - to determine any ongoing threat from this buffer area to the gamba grass Class A zone.

Goal 3 – Protect priority environmental and cultural assets from the impacts of gamba grass

Objective:

3a: Identify key environmental and cultural assets at risk of being impacted by gamba grass and incorporate into relevant Weed Management Branch, stakeholder and land manager regional plans, strategies and compliance programs.

Strategic Action "By December 2022, key environmental and cultural assets at risk of being impacted by gamba grass have been identified with stakeholder input".

Performance indicator: "By December 2022 a list has been developed of key environmental and cultural assets."

Key environmental and cultural assets are currently included in the four Weed management plans and regional strategies | NT.GOV.AU that form the Northern Territory Weeds Strategy 2021 – 2026. Key environmental and cultural assets at threat from gamba grass include important biodiversity conservation sites (see Sites of conservation significance list | NT.GOV.AU, parks and reserves, watercourses, and key sites of community value such as Arnhem Land and the Darwin rural area.

Key environmental and cultural assets were also considered further and reported on in the Gamba Grass Annual Report 2022 (DEPWS 2022).

Strategic Action "Identified key environmental and cultural assets have been prioritised in WMB and stakeholder planning processes."

Performance indicator: "Key environmental and cultural assets are prioritised in landholder management programs including regional plans."

This section summarises how key environmental and cultural assets are being prioritised in landholder management programs. To do this, Table 12 lists the key environmental and cultural assets listed in the Darwin and Katherine Regional Weed Strategies 2021 – 2026 and the various landholder programs managing gamba grass to protect these assets.

To demonstrate progress against this action, the revised gamba plan introduced the requirement to include an annual map with gamba grass overlaid across key environmental and cultural assets for target locations. Figure 10 presents key environmental and cultural assets across the gamba grass Class A zone, where the eradication of gamba grass is now being tracked year on year.

Figure 11 shows the distribution of gamba grass on the Tabletop Range within Litchfield National Park, which is the park's designated gamba grass eradication zone. Figure 11 shows a 90% reduction in gamba grass across this zone between 2024 and 2025. This change resulted from more strategic weed management within the area. This included focus on controlling small satellite infestations, more on-ground control and regular aerial mapping. While this reduction is encouraging, there are still very large gamba grass infestations remaining within the park (approximately 30,000 ha), which require intensive control (pers comm, Dr Natalie Rossiter-Rachor, NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub). 2024 and 2025 mapping of the Tabletop Eradication Zone was a collaboration between NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub, NT Parks and Wildlife and NT WMB.

Providing an accurate gamba grass presence map for all environmental and cultural assets across the Class B zone is challenging. Although gamba grass presence is recorded by land managers, these records are never removed from the WMB Corporate Weeds Dataset, even when gamba grass may have been treated and removed. In addition, gamba grass absence is rarely recorded.

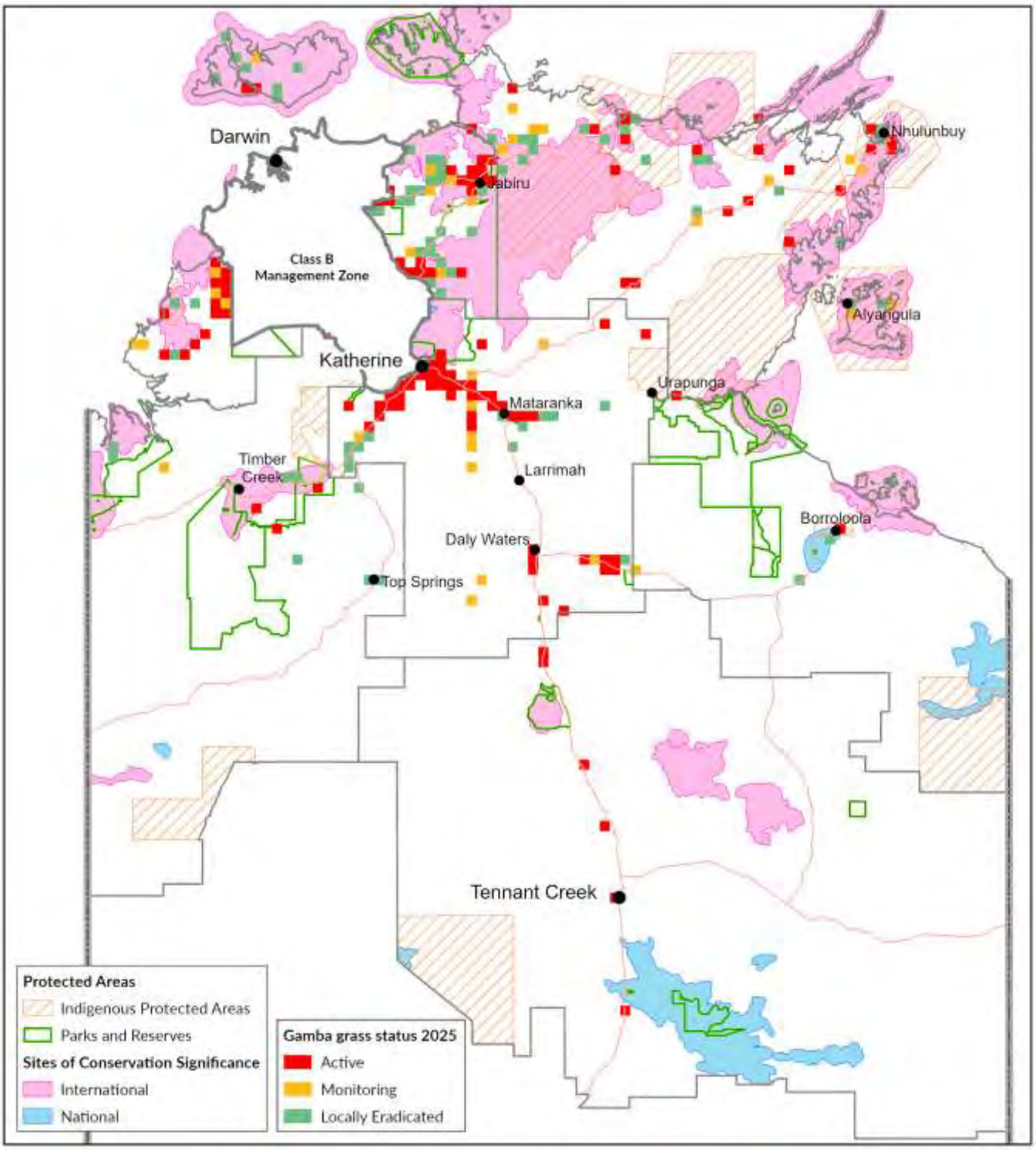

Figure 10: NT Gamba Grass Eradication Grids overlaying key environmental and cultural assets across the Class A zone.

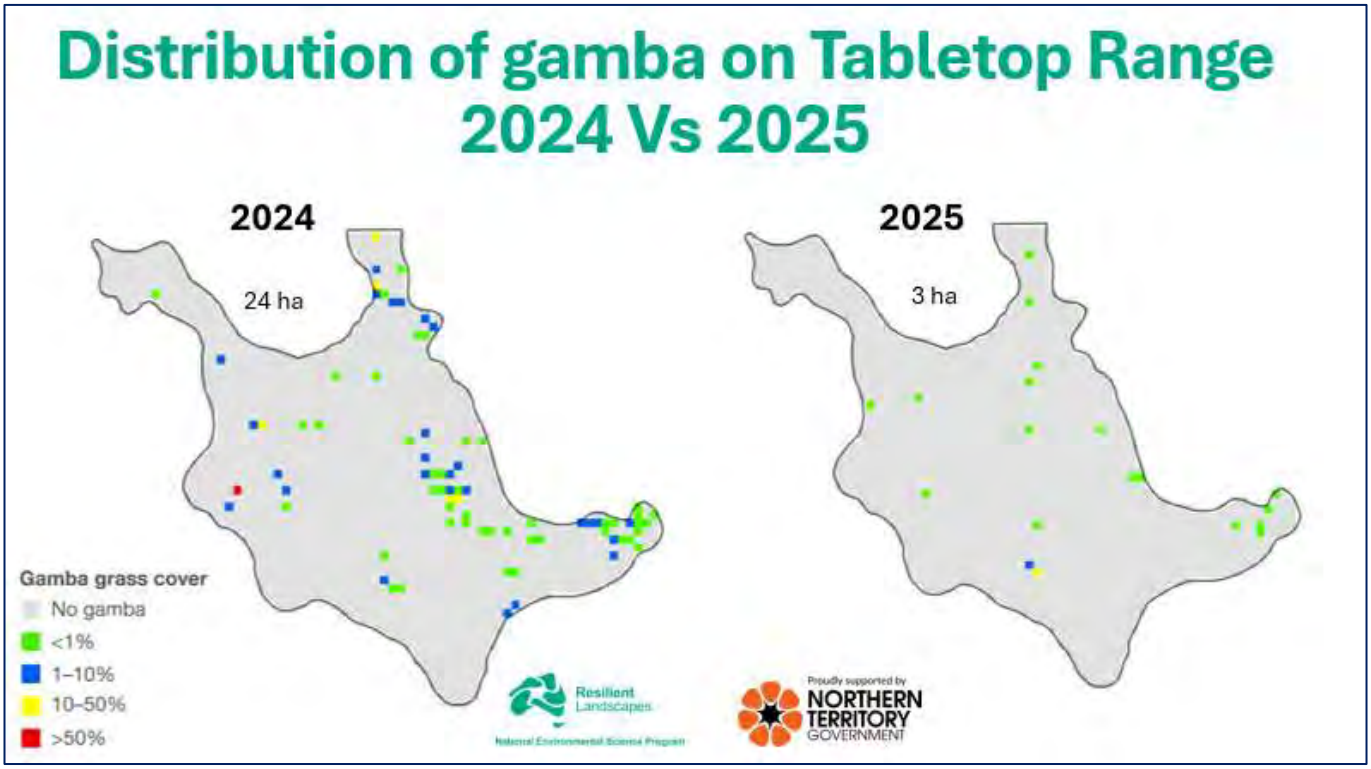

Figure 11: Aerial survey results of Tabletop Range, Litchfield National Park completed in 2024 and 2025. Gamba grass cover within grid cells (250 × 250 m) in five gamba grass cover classes: grey = 1: no gamba grass present, green = 2: <1% cover, blue = 3: 1–10% cover, yellow = 4: 10–50% cover, red = 5: >50% cover. The park's gamba grass eradication zone is outlined in black. (Data NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub).

Table 12: Key environmental and cultural assets at threat from gamba and gamba management programs.

Key environmental and cultural assets	Programs managing assets
Sites of Conservation Significance	Australian Government funding for gamba grass management, in line with Threatened Species Action Plan 2022 – 2032. Further information is provided below. Anindilyakwa Land Council gamba grass control program. Refer further information below. NT Parks and Reserves gamba grass management. Refer Goal 2.
Water courses, including the Daly, Mary, Goyder, Katherine, Victoria and Roper rivers	Australian Government funding for gamba grass in line with Threatened Species Action Plan 2022 – 2032. Further information is provided below. NT Parks and Reserves gamba grass management. Refer to Goal 2.
Key sites of community value – Kakadu National Park	Australian Government funding allocated to gamba grass in line with Threatened Species Action Plan 2022 – 2032. Refer to Parks Australia submissions below.
Key sites of community value – Arnhem land	Australian Government funding allocated to gamba grass in line with Threatened Species Action Plan 2022 – 2032. Refer to NLC submission below.
Key sites of community value - NT parks and reserves, e.g. Litchfield National Park and Nitmiluk National Park	NT parks and reserves gamba grass management. Refer to Goal 2.

Key sites of community value – Darwin rural area	Gamba grass compliance. Refer to Goal 2.
Rangelands – Sturt Plateau and the Beetaloo sub-basin	Australian Government funding allocated to gamba grass in line with Threatened Species Action Plan 2022 – 2032 – refer to NLC submission below. NT parks and reserves gamba grass management. Refer to Goal 2.

Australian Government funding allocated to gamba grass in line with Threatened Species Action Plan 2022 – 2032

In late 2022, the Australian Government made an announcement to commit $9.8 million towards gamba grass management, in line with the Australian Government's ***Threatened species action plan 2022–2032*** (TSAP). This funding is being directed towards managing gamba grass to protect matters of national environmental significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Target areas for this project are focussed on the legislated eradication zone for gamba grass (Class A zone) with funding directed to Parks Australia and the NLC for management. Submissions from Parks Australia and the NLC on how their funding is managing gamba grass to protect environmental and cultural assets are outlined below.

Parks Australia

During the 2024–25 season, Kakadu National Park engaged multiple organisations to carry out surveys and treatments. Contractors included Heli-Muster from Katherine, which conducted aerial spraying across the Mudginberri infestation; the Djurrubu Rangers, a local Indigenous ranger group, and Kakadu Native Plants were contracted to survey fishing and hunting access roads within Murrumburr land inside the park. The primary objective for the 2024/25 season was addressing gaps in gamba grass survey data—using aerial re-surveys over known infestations and expanding to additional reported locations. This strategy proved successful, achieving coverage of the entire park and delivering a significantly improved understanding of gamba grass distribution.

A substantial challenge identified this season was the proliferation of roadside gamba grass along both the Arnhem and Kakadu highways within the park. Seed dispersal from roadside populations outside the park appears to be driving these incursions. Parks Australia are increasingly concerned that unless roadside infestations beyond park boundaries are addressed, ongoing seeding will exacerbate the spread into Kakadu National Park and other protected areas.

Northern Land Council

The NLC has successfully completed the second control season of the GEBC Project, targeting gamba grass management across the Class A (eradication zone). Significant progress was made in 2024/25, with a strong focus on stakeholder collaboration, expanded surveillance, training delivery and on-ground control.

GEBC engaged with over 30 Indigenous ranger groups, Traditional Owners, pastoralists, contractors, and government agencies, helping to build operational capacity to manage gamba across the NT and support the goals of the Gamba Management Plan 2020–2030.

Activities spanned Arnhem Land, Katherine, Daly, and Victoria River regions, with field training and workshops delivered alongside rangers from Njanjma, Dhimurru, Laynhapuy, Djelk, ASRAC, Mimal and others. Surveillance efforts increased considerably in 2024/25, with over 1,900km of country surveyed on ground and large multiday aerial surveys across Katherine, Daly River, Mataranka, and Wongalara regions.

A major highlight was the Extravagamba Workshop in March 2025, which brought together more than 80 participants from 27 Indigenous and land management organisations. The event provided intensive training in gamba grass identification, ecology, and control, and fostered cross-regional collaboration — especially among groups from remote areas less affected by gamba grass.

Some rangers received formal qualifications delivered in partnership with the Batchelor Institute while Learning on Country students in Galiwinku joined field activities to build local and future gamba grass management capacity.

Cross-tenure control efforts expanded, with works undertaken on six pastoral stations in the Katherine and Mataranka regions. Notably, one of the last remaining permit-holding stations has agreed to the project undertaking full-property gamba grass control and will surrender its gamba grass permit following completion.

Key spread pathways were addressed, with focused roadside treatment along the Stuart Highway (Pine Creek to Mataranka), and on the Victoria, Roper, and Port Keats roads, targeting areas both within and approaching the eradication boundary.

GEBC continues to build strategic partnerships across government, industry, and research sectors, aligning actions with NT and Federal agencies into biological control agent research and working with mining, remote housing and civil construction operators to reduce spread and improve hygiene practices.

Anindilyakwa Land Council

The Anindilyakwa Land Council Land and Sea Rangers continue to proactively manage the risk of gamba grass within the Groote Archipelago through surveillance, stakeholder engagement and priority management of gamba grass across the Anindilyakwa Indigenous Protected Area. Biosecurity practices including visual inspections of vehicles and freight entering the IPA are carried out to mitigate the risk of gamba grass seed dispersal.

There have been six detections of isolated gamba grass plants on Groote Eylandt, highlighting that the risk of this weed spreading across East Arnhem land is ongoing and significant. The rangers continue to monitor historic gamba grass infestations and surveying, treating, and reporting any suspect weeds and any new gamba grass infestations to the WMB.

A new dedicated Plant Biosecurity Coordinator has been employed by the Anindilyakwa Land Council Land and Sea Rangers in partnership with Groote Eylandt Mining Company (GEMCO) as part of their Biodiversity Offset Management Plan (BOMP). The entire IPA is mapped biennially by qualified botanists for all weed incursions and treated annually as part of the GEMCO BOMP funding arrangement. The BOMP program focuses primarily on ecosystem transforming grasses, with gamba grass ranked as the highest priority for ongoing surveillance and treatment.

Photo 4: GEBC staff controlling gamba grass with Dhimurru Ranger (photo provided by GEBC Project)

Goal 4 – Increase community capacity and willingness to participate in gamba grass management

Objective:

4a: Engage with the community and obtain a high level of public support for gamba grass management action resulting in an increase in voluntary compliance with gamba grass management requirements."

Strategic Action: "By July 2021, develop a communications plan to raise awareness of gamba grass management requirements and available support. Engage with the community. Education and awareness activities are implemented to encourage compliant behaviour".

Performance indicator: "Public knowledge of gamba grass impacts and management requirements has increased."

A Gamba Grass Communications Plan 2024 – 2025 has been developed to raise awareness of gamba grass management requirements and available support. This plan, prepared in consultation with the WAC, is guiding communications in relation to gamba grass and is updated annually.

Gamba grass communications tools used over the reporting period are included in Table 13.

Table 13: Summary of gamba grass communications tools implemented over reporting period.

Tool	Purpose
A gamba grass requirements leaflet was developed and distributed to all rates payers within the Litchfield Shire Council, Coomalie Community Government Council and Wagait Shire Council, with rates notices issued in August 2024. This was a collaborative effort between council and the WMB.	To increase awareness of gamba grass legal requirements amongst land owners. 
A gamba grass requirements leaflet was sent to City of Darwin, City of Palmerston, Litchfield Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Palmerston and surrounding suburbs, for consideration to include in newsletter communications.	
Gamba grass requirements posters were printed and displayed at Gamba Action Program (GAP) collection points and various shopping centre, council and MLA notice boards.	
Gamba Grass Annual Report 2024 (DEPWS 2024) released, made publicly available online at nt.gov.au/gamba, and printed and distributed to key stakeholders.	To report on implementation of the gamba plan.
QR code stickers were developed, linking the NTG gamba grass control page, which includes videos of how to mix	To educate landowners and occupiers about how to spray gamba grass and mix herbicide.

Tool	Purpose
and spray herbicide for gamba grass. QR code stickers are attached to herbicide drums distributed through GAP and Gamba Grass Management Guides.	
Core flutes stating 'gamba control site' distributed through the Darwin rural area.	To bring awareness of sites where gamba is being managed, so that people can see what success looks like
Core flutes stating 'Control your gamba now! Prevent damaging dry season bushfires.' distributed through the Darwin rural area.	To educate people that now is a good time to manage gamba grass to prevent bad fires in the dry season.
Radio interviews throughout the year.	To discuss for example legal requirements including the 15m gamba free buffer requirement.
Social media Facebook posts throughout the year.	To educate the community about different gamba grass related topics including GAP.
Gamba grass bus wrap from December 2024 to April 2025.	To remind the community it is the time of the year to take action on gamba grass.
Gamba grass presentations / identification workshops: • WMB presentation at Arnhem Plateau Region CNRM monitoring project workshop in October 2024 about NT WeedMate, data collection, gamba eradication register and collecting absence data. • WMB/NT Herbarium presentations at Gamba Grass Workshop, Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) Conference 2024) about the gamba plan, GAP, data collection, tracking eradication of gamba grass (Class A zone). • WMB gamba grass identification workshop conducted at the 2025 Savanna Fire Forum – February 2025. • WMB presentations at Gamba Grass Management Workshop, facilitated by TNRM – Land for Wildlife and Landcare – Gamba Grass Roots, in February 2025. WMB presentations on gamba grass identification, gamba grass legal requirements and assistance available for managing gamba grass. • WMB presentations at Extravagamba, facilitated by the NLC – GEBC Project in March 2025. WMB presentations on gamba grass identification, impacts, biocontrol and why gamba biocontrol's would be beneficial, NT WeedMate App, data collection, gamba grass Class A zone eradication. • WMB presentation to the Australian Institute of Conveyancers NT in March 2025 about gamba grass impacts, legal requirements and assistance available and methods for improving information about gamba grass to purchasers of land and property.	Educate different stakeholders about: • Gamba grass identification and grasses easily confused with gamba grass and distinguishing features. • Assistance available to landholders for managing gamba grass. • The NT WeedMate App and data collection. • Methodology for tracking the eradication of gamba grass across the Class A zone.

Tool	Purpose
	To improve community awareness and capacity for identifying and managing gamba grass. 
WAC meetings held quarterly and outcomes of each quarter are uploaded online at: Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.	To oversee implementation of the gamba plan and actions being undertaken by different stakeholders. The online report is prepared to demonstrate key outcomes for each quarter achieved by the WMB, GFMU and gamba WAC members that are presented at WAC meetings.

The Have Your Say April – May 2025 survey results have also been analysed to assess performance against this performance indicator. Relevant responses are included in Table 14. These survey results have been considered in updating the next Gamba Grass Communications Plan 2025 – 2026 for the next reporting period.

Table 14: Have Your Say survey responses that report against whether public knowledge of gamba grass impacts and management requirements have increased.

Question	Response
Do you find the gamba grass annual reports are a transparent and meaningful reporting method?	• Yes 40% • No 20% • Did not know the gamba grass report exists 40%
Please provide suggestions as to how the annual reporting of activities under the gamba plan may be improved to be more transparent and meaningful to you.	• *The report does assist us as a community group.* • *Executive summary says everything is generally on track but there is no description of what it is on track to achieve.* • *Hold public forums for discussion when they are released.* • *Better advocacy.* • *I don't need to read all the details, but want radio or TV ads about effective management especially in Litchfield. I want updates on what is working and clear info on the risks of unmanaged Gamba and the destruction of biodiversity it will lead to over time.* • *Ask councils, government and large land holders to explain why they are not treating gamba. Issue fines for those not managing.* • *The annual report contains a great deal of useful information and provides a much appreciated level of transparency about what happens in the gamba space. Something to focus on to make the reporting even more useful would be to increase circulation (reach into the community).*

Question	Response
Do you know where to find resources on how to identify, control and manage gamba grass and the assistance available for managing it?	• Yes 100%

Landcare NT - Gamba Grass Roots

Gamba Grass Roots now operating under the auspices of Landcare NT Gamba Grass Roots - Landcare NT. Landcare NT | Supporting Community Landcare Across the NT is acknowledged as continuing to play a significant role in communicating with the community about gamba grass. Gamba Grass Roots Landcare Group have continued to operate market stalls, facilitate community forums on gamba grass and advocate for greater gamba grass funding to MLA's.

Notably, during the reporting period, the Gamba Grass Roots Landcare Group has been meeting with MLA's over gamba grass control. A petition with over 700 signatories was assembled, requesting increased funding for gamba grass control in Litchfield National Park, in line with the resources required to protect many significant sites within the Park as identified in research work undertaken by CDU. An open letter to the NT Government, which included support from local Tourism enterprises, was published in the Northern Territory News in November 2024. While the lobbying to provide the identified resources is ongoing, a press release by Minister Boothby on 11th February 2025 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.

The Gamba Grass Roots Landcare Group, in collaboration with TNRM Land for Wildlife, also facilitated a community forum held at Livingstone Recreation Reserve in February 2025. This forum focused on empowering rural landholders to address gamba grass.

Photo 5: WMB staff member presenting on gamba grass identification at the Gamba Grass Management Workshop run by TNRM (Land for Wildlife) and Landcare NT (Gamba Grass Roots) in February 2025.

Strategic Action: "By July 2021, develop a communications plan to raise awareness of gamba grass management requirements and available support. Engage with the community. Education and awareness activities are implemented to encourage compliant behaviour".

Performance indicator: "Changes in active management and voluntary compliance levels."

A summary of trends in effort and compliance is provided against Goal 2. Further changes may be evident in future reports by looking at whether there is an increase in the number of properties already compliant at the time of initial inspections or whether achieving compliance is more dependent on the active compliance programs.

Strategic Action: "By July 2023, complete a social marketing study (subject to funding) to identify community perceptions, needs and barriers regarding gamba grass management."

Performance indicator: "Better understand community perceptions, needs and barriers regarding gamba grass management."

A study to better understand community perceptions, needs and barriers regarding gamba grass management was identified as a strategic action needed in conjunction with the WAC during development of the gamba plan in 2020. A social marketing study (subject to funding) was proposed by July 2023 to identify community perceptions, needs and barriers regarding gamba grass management. No funding has been secured, and this action has not been progressed since the last annual report. As such, this performance indicator has not been met.

Annual Have Your Say surveys have been undertaken since 2021 to gauge feedback from the community on implementation of the gamba plan, which is useful to some extent in understanding this performance indicator. Annual Have Your Say survey results have been presented in each gamba grass annual report since 2021. Annual Have Your Say surveys will continue to inform this performance indicator.

In addition, the 2024 annual report documented a PhD project that may help inform this performance indicator in relation to pastoral land manager perceptions, needs and barriers. There are no updates available on this project for this report.

Strategic Action: "Improve landholder capacity for reporting gamba grass points in the Class A zone".

Performance indicator: "Public reporting to WMB on gamba infestations in the Class A zone."

It is essential that every gamba grass plant in the gamba grass Class A zone is reported to the WMB. This is to enable the WMB to track the eradication of gamba grass across this gamba grass Class A zone. The most efficient method of reporting these points to the WMB is using the NT WeedMate App.

A total of 10 organisations have used the NT WeedMate App in 2024/25 to record gamba grass presence and absence points in the gamba grass Class A zone. Collectively these organisations reported a total of 1,009 gamba grass records via the NT WeedMate App in 2024/25 for the Class A zone. This is an increase to the previous year when 348 gamba grass records were recorded across the Class A zone.

The WMB will continue to promote the use of the NT WeedMate App to landholders in the Class A zone. If you are a landholder in the gamba grass Class A zone and you would like to be registered to use the NT WeedMate App, please contact the WMB.

Strategic Action: "Development of an efficient tool (subject to funding) to encourage public reporting of gamba grass sightings and management effort. Promote the report gamba tool to encourage public reporting of problem gamba grass in the Class B zone."

Performance indicator: "Public reporting of problem gamba grass."

Gamba Grass Reporting Tool and Complaints

A new 'Gamba Grass Reporting Tool' was developed in the 2021/22 reporting period. The reporting tool can be found at Gamba grass | NT.GOV.AU and can be used for reporting concerns about unmanaged gamba grass. Reports

of problem gamba grass made through this online platform are automatically emailed to the WMB for follow up. Alternatively, problem gamba grass can still be reported to the WMB via phone or email.

The WMB received approximately 44+ gamba grass complaint reports in the 2024/25 financial year about gamba grass for the Darwin rural area, Darwin and the surrounding area. All complaints received are documented. If they are received in the compliance season the property will be inspected as a part of the compliance program. If they are received out of season they are listed for follow up. Follow up action may include undertaking an inspection of the property, engagement with land managers, follow up letters and the issuing of penalty infringement notices if the matter is not resolved. Arising from complaints, at least two penalty infringements notices were issued by the WMB in 2024/25.

The WMB received several complaints about gamba grass in the Katherine Region this reporting period. These complaints were about gamba grass on roadsides. The WMB referred these complaints to DLI (previously DIPL) for actioning. On behalf of stakeholders the WMB also lodged a complaint with the Environment and Sustainability Unit (DLI) about weed spread in general including gamba grass in relation to Carpentaria Highway upgrades.

NT WeedMate

The NTG NT WeedMate App remains the central tool for reporting weed data points to the WMB. Registered users for the NT WeedMate App currently sits at 324. Since the creation of NT WeedMate in 2019 there have been 14,034 gamba grass presence and absence points reported to the WMB using this App. Gamba grass records made using the NT WeedMate App are summarised in Table 15. This reporting period the compliance program data has been collected so it can be incorporated into the WMB dataset. This action is to be completed.

Table 15: Number of gamba grass records (including presence and absence records) reported to the WMB using the NT WeedMate App.

Year	Total	Class A zone	Class B zone
2024/2025	4725	1009	3716
2023/2024	1791	348	1443
2022/2023	3512	114	3398
2021/2022	1727	104	1623
2020/2021	1844	50	1794
2019/2020	435	48	387

NB: the numbers reported above are slightly different to those reported in the Gamba Grass Annual Report 2024 due to ongoing data auditing and clean up.

To find out more about NT WeedMate go to: NT WeedMate App | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.

Strategic Action: "Establish and support cross tenure working groups to ensure coordinated management of gamba grass across different tenures".

Performance indicator: "An increase in coordinated management effort."

As outlined in previous gamba grass annual reports a Gamba Management Framework was developed in 2020 that outlined the collaborative partnerships at the time to improve gamba grass management by the Department. Other co-ordinated stakeholder projects also aim to tackle gamba grass. A summary of the various collaborative partnerships to improve gamba grass management are outlined below.

Gamba grass collaborative partnerships

Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee

The WAC continues to meet quarterly, overseeing implementation of the revised gamba plan and with the assistance of the WMB. The WAC includes representatives for:

- Parks and Wildlife Commission, DTH (previously DEPWS)
- Crown Land Estate, DLPE (previously DIPL)
- TNRM
- CDU
- NLC
- Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
- Indigenous Carbon Industry Network
- LGANT
- The Environment Centre NT
- Tourism industry

Meeting updates for all meetings held from September 2021 onwards are available at Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.

Weed and Fire Working Group

The Weed and Fire Working Group has continued to collaborate on best practice management of weeds and fire management on government land, including gamba grass. Members of the group include:

- Crown Land Estate, DLPE
- Civil Services, DLI (previously DIPL)
- Power and Water Corporation
- WMB, DLPE
- Parks and Wildlife Commission, DTH
- GFMU (previously DEPWS) and Bushfires NT (previously DEPWS), Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Services

This group has met once over the reporting period, providing updates on each groups seasonal programs, discussing areas of concern and better co-ordinating management effort across adjoining lands.

Gamba Army

The Gamba Army was established in late 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The objective was to create jobs and tackle problematic gamba grass across the Northern Territory. After three years of single season funding by the NTG, the fourth iteration of the Gamba Army took place over two years, covering a fourth year of operation in 2023/24 and a fifth year in 2024/25, and provided with $300,000 in funding per year. 2024/25 was the final year of the Gamba Army.

In its fifth year, the program focussed on addressing priorities on NTG land. An estimated 2,000ha was treated by the Gamba Army in the Greater Darwin area, and an estimated 200 ha of gamba was removed from 47 different sites, including sites managed by Crown Land Estate (28 sites), Parks and Wildlife, including within Litchfield National Park (11 sites), Department of Corrections (1 site), and Department of Health (2 sites), as well as sites in Litchfield Council.

The Gamba Army proved to be an efficient and successful avenue for managing gamba grass across the Northern Territory, achieving effective cross tenure coordination to successfully manage gamba grass across multiple tenures.

The WMB oversaw results of the Gamba Army through an Annual Report. This reporting period the WMB received the Gamba Army Annual Report for 2023/24 and the interim Annual Report for 2024/25.

Gamba Action Program

During the 2024/25 GAP season, there were a total of 3,060 individuals who accessed GAP across 3,120 properties. GAP herbicide was limited to one 5L container per property this year. Landholders owning more than one property were able to collect up to two 5L containers. This approach enabled as many properties as possible to access free herbicide assistance.

Spray units are also available for landholders to loan. A total of 217 equipment loans were recorded during the 2024/25 season. This represents a 36% increase in equipment loans from the 2023/24 season, which saw 151 loans. The following loan equipment is available from the WMB for managing gamba grass each year:

- Slip-on tanks that run a 12V battery, available from one collection location (tank sizes 50L, 100L and 200L), and
- Quick spray units available from three collection locations (tank sizes 200L, 300L and 600L).

The WMB also develops and implements a GAP Communications Plan to support this program. Significant effort goes into promoting the GAP and supporting landholders with gamba management advice, for example through radio advertising, regular social media posts and one on one information provided to landholders.

Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit

In previous years the GFMU was a collaborative unit, combining specific functions of the WMB and Bushfires NT. This included compliance and risk mitigation services aimed at reducing unmanaged gamba grass in the Top End rural region. The intent was for better collaboration between the two divisions, as well as the NT Fire and Emergency Services. However, in mid-2024, it was agreed that the functions of the GFMU would be split, with the WMB managing gamba grass compliance in the Darwin rural area ERA, the City of Darwin and City of Palmerston areas, while Bushfires NT would continue as the GFMU, managing compliance in the Darwin rural area (Vernon Arafura FPZ), Marrakai, Coomalie Community Government Council area, Daly River, Dundee, Wagait, Southport and Point Stuart. Bushfires NT as the GFMU would also continue administering the Fire Ready Program, which assists landholders who are willing but unable to manage their gamba grass. In this reporting period of 2024/25, a total of 27 landholders were assisted through the Fire Ready Program.

Later in 2024, after there was a change in Government, the two divisions moved to different departments – the WMB to DLPE and Bushfires NT to NT Fire and Emergency Services. This shift caused the two compliance programs to diverge even further. The WMB were able to administer a very effective compliance season in 2024/25, however the GFMU experienced a number of challenges, which resulted in a less effective season than in the past.

Research Institutions working with the NTG

National Environmental Science Program - Invasive Grass Research Project

National Environmental Science Program (NESP) researchers are now in year three of a four year research project - Supporting the strategic management of invasive grasses - NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub. This project aims to support the strategic management of invasive grasses in northern Australia – in particular, gamba grass, para grass and olive hymenachne, to reduce their impacts on biodiversity. This project provides support to managers of protected areas and Indigenous ranger groups through co-development of user-friendly mapping, monitoring and decision-support tools.

Over the last year, a new NESP grassy weeds aerial mapping app has been established, which is now available for use by land managers. During the reporting period the project team, together with Parks and Wildlife, have successfully used the new app to conduct re-surveys of several areas of Litchfield National Park. Data and maps were provided to Parks and Wildlife. The project team have been training various land managers in how to use the app, including the NLC, WMB and Rio Tinto (Weipa) staff.

During the reporting period, the NESP project team have also completed initial drone surveys of gamba grass at Batchelor, for development of a drone mapping app for gamba grass.

The three key species of invasive grass included in this project are listed in the TSAP and the 2012 ***Threat abatement plan to reduce the impacts on northern Australia's biodiversity by the 5 listed grasses*** (TAP). The project is collaborating with research users to address 'Target 10' of the TSAP that, by 2027, 'Gamba grass is reduced to an area less than its 2022 range', and all six objectives of the TAP.

Biocontrol

The Centre for Invasive Species Solutions have released a report, 'National Weed Biocontrol Prioritisation Results February 2025' (NWBPS-Prioritisation-Results.pdf) as part of the Initial Stage of the National Weed Biocontrol Pipeline Strategy. Under this report, gamba grass is a prioritised weed and has been endorsed for Phase 1 exploratory research into a suitable biocontrol agent for gamba grass. DLPE has pledged funding as well as provided support to CSIRO to secure funding from other stakeholders within the Northern Territory in order for this research to commence.

Other coordinated stakeholder projects

TNRM – Partner of the Gamba Environment Biodiversity Conservation Project

TNRM currently are subcontracted by the NLC to support capacity building of rangers in the gamba grass Class A (eradication) zone, in line with objectives of the Australian Government funded GEBC project. This support includes assistance with making plans, undertaking surveys, patrols and mapping of gamba grass, as well as supporting rangers to increase ecological awareness of gamba grass as a threat to savannas.

Gamba Litchfield Neighbours Project

The GLNP is an exciting new 3-year program funded by the Office of Climate Change at $150,000 per year. The project, designed and delivered by the WMB, aims to improve the capacity of land managers in the Coomalie Community Government Council (Coomalie Council) area and sustain a longer-term approach to reducing the impacts of gamba grass, especially in those areas neighbouring Litchfield National Park.

Specifically, the WMB will increase the level of support available to private land managers in the Coomalie Council area, accelerate best practice gamba control on identified NTG-managed land parcels, and support Coomalie Council to develop and implement a long-term strategic approach to gamba control on Coomalie Council-managed land.

In addition, the WMB will host an annual gamba grass community and contractor information day, promoting the project activities, engaging and educating landholders and land managers on weed identification and control, and providing opportunities for small businesses to grow their capacity in best practice weed management services.

Various Landcare Groups

Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group

The Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group continues to collaborate with Parks and Wildlife to tackle gamba grass within the Reserve. After completing a two-year Casuarina Coastal Reserve 'Adopt a Spot' Pilot Project between 2021 and 2023, the project has been extended and volunteers continue to search for and control outlying infestations of gamba grass within the Reserve. More information can be found at: Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group - Landcare NT.

Weedwalkers Top End Landcare Group

The Weedwalkers Top End Landcare Group are continuing to work in collaboration with Parks and Wildlife to conduct surveys and control of outlier gamba grass plants at remote locations within Litchfield National Park. For more information visit: Weedwalkers Top End Landcare Group - Landcare NT.

Landcare NT

As part of the Darwin Harbour Catchment Waterways Project, Landcare NT have engaged a consultant to map gamba grass at Ludmilla Creek, Mitchell Creek and Rapid Creek catchments. This data will complement existing data from Sandy Creek within Casuarina Coastal Reserve and underpin ongoing efforts by the community to work with land managers in these catchments to address the species. For more information visit: Creek Connections | Landcare NT.

Objective:

4b: "Ensure adequate information and knowledge of gamba grass management is available and up to date, which translates into improved management approaches."

Strategic Action: "Research is undertaken that supports improved gamba grass management outcomes by addressing identified research gaps".

Performance indicators: "the Gamba WAC reviews annually key knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to improve gamba grass management outcomes."

Key knowledge gaps have been documented in gamba grass annual reports since 2021. Progress in resolving these knowledge gaps is documented below. In addition, key issues impacting success in achieving goals of the gamba plan, and some lessons learnt over the reporting period, are documented below.

Knowledge gap 1: Accurate gamba grass distribution records in both the Class A and B zones

Progress has been made towards developing a better understanding of gamba grass distribution records across the Class A (eradication zone), as follows:

- The WMB have been assessing and presenting gamba grass eradication results in annual gamba grass reports since 2022, in line with the Gamba grass mapping and monitoring program for Class A (eradication zone). This assessment is based on follow up of known gamba grass records and additional survey of some areas, but not the entire Class A zone.
- Australian Government funding into gamba grass management across the Class A zone has continued in 2024/25 for its third year. This funding has allowed additional gamba grass survey effort across the Class A zone since the 2022/23 season, enabling better understanding of the distribution of gamba grass, noting it is not possible to survey the entire Class A zone.
- The NESP Resilient Landscape Hub has developed a new grassy weeds aerial mapping app for government weeds officers and other weeds managers to map gamba grass via aerial survey. The new app is now available to some stakeholders and will be made available for public use in the future. NESP have started training stakeholders on the use of this app. The NESP Resilient Landscape Hub have also completed initial drone surveys of gamba grass at Batchelor as part of their work to develop a drone mapping app. Regular gamba grass mapping is essential for managing gamba grass, and for monitoring the progress of control programs. Improved mapping technologies will improve the feasibility of regular gamba grass mapping.

Knowledge gap 2: Integrated gamba grass management regime (herbicide and fire)

As documented in last year's report, it has become evident through gamba grass control and observing fire behaviour, if fire passes through an area where gamba grass has been sprayed and subsequently appears dead, it can render the gamba spraying ineffective and/or stimulate regrowth or seed growth. This has been observed. However no formal trials have been undertaken to prove this theory, and research into these interactions is needed.

Knowledge gap 3: Integrated gamba grass management regime (alternatives to glyphosate)

The WMB have received a report of potential herbicide resistant gamba grass during the reporting period. In collaboration with GEBC, the WMB is investigating this further. If gamba grass is confirmed to develop resistance to glyphosate, it will create a serious knowledge gap, as alternative chemical treatments for gamba grass are currently limited. A research project considering alternatives to glyphosate is documented at: Gamba grass is a key threatening process in northern Australia - NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub. However, this research highlights that further testing is needed.

Knowledge gap 4: Integrated gamba grass management regime (biocontrol)

A research gap exists, as no biocontrol is currently available for gamba grass. Progress in research for a suitable biocontrol agent for gamba grass has been discussed above.

Knowledge gap 5: Involving people and agencies in improved gamba grass action

Increasing community involvement in gamba grass action remains a gap, as is improved gamba grass management programs by agencies to achieve better on ground outcomes.

Various communication methods are utilised with the aim of increasing involvement in gamba grass management. However, getting more people on board remains a challenge. Additional funding has been directed to some gamba grass programs over the reporting period, which will assist with achieving better on ground gamba grass management outcomes. However, gamba grass remains an ongoing threat and more effort is required.

Key Issues

The WAC have discussed the following key issues that may hinder the goals of the gamba plan:

Resourcing and capacity

- Gamba grass is being found in new areas and the WMB are not resourced to respond and regulate gamba grass in all areas.
- Operational and commercial capacity for weed management in the NT fluctuates.
- Bigger and more pressing weed threats require WMB resourcing / landholder resourcing.

Class A zone compliance

- The current gamba grass compliance framework is for the Class B zone, not the Class A zone.
- Timeframes for building relationships with new stakeholders is impacting compliance outcomes.
- Political appetite for compliance in the Class A zone, including the gamba grass permits.

Gamba spread

- Increase in roadside gamba grass spread.
- Potential spread of gamba from the Class B zone to the Class A zone.
- Challenges with contractor management as a factor in gamba grass spread, particularly along rail and road corridors.
- Human activities, such as 4WD use, hunting, and construction material movement, were identified as contributing to spread.

Program agility and responsiveness

- The Gamba Army is no longer resourced and the program has finished.
- An ongoing program that has the agility of the Gamba Army is required so that work across multiple tenures can occur quickly.
- Risks of 60-month contractor agreements compared to previous shorter-term contracts for roads and VCL, which may not allow incorporation of new areas for long periods.

Research

- Gamba grass may be developing glyphosate tolerance over time, limiting control options.

Economic impacts

- Fire impacts on the economy caused by gamba grass are not being considered a significant risk.

Community Advocacy

- The fall away of community interest and advocacy for gamba grass management.

Lessons learnt

Implementation of different gamba grass management programs are providing new information. Reflecting on and sharing this information is an important step in helping to improve future programs. Two key lessons learnt over the reporting period have been shared by the Gamba Army, as follows:

- Manage gamba grass sites that have been burnt before unburnt areas. People believe that the fire risk is gone after gamba grass has been burnt and so they may not see the purpose of managing these sites. However, it is important to manage these sites so as to capitalise on the effects that the fire has had on the site. Access will be easier and the fire helps promote growth and make gamba grass easier to see, helping with herbicide uptake. Additionally, fire may temporarily remove seedbank and/or controlled recruitment, providing a window of opportunity to achieve long term results through targeting the remaining (adult only) plants.
- The success of a control project may not be best measured through herbicide output. For example, cleaning up isolated gamba grass plants and locally eradicating gamba grass from an area is critical to a successful management program, but herbicide output will not reflect this success. Herbicide output reduces substantially as eradication is achieved. Herbicide output alone as a metric will not capture management success.

Strategic Action: "Research is undertaken that supports improved gamba grass management outcomes by addressing identified research gaps."

Performance indicators: "Feedback to be sought annually to inform knowledge gaps."

To further inform gamba grass knowledge gaps, a question was asked in the 2025 Have Your Say survey, "*where do you think there are still knowledge gaps (unknown information) that need to be addressed to improve gamba grass management outcomes*?" Responses to this question are provided in Table 16, where permission was provided.

Table 16: Community feedback on knowledge gaps (including some resourcing gaps) that need to be addressed to improve gamba grass management outcomes.

Source	Directly quoted community feedback
Have Your Say survey 2025	*DORC manage the MTB trails in Charles Darwin, Lee Point & Howard Spring pine forest. Not enough is done in these areas to control Gamba. Government maybe should assist groups like ours with tools/machines to be able to spread larger areas. DORC only have 20Lt back packs, and they don't go far if spraying Gamba in Charles Darwin.*
	What is the best way to stop reinfestation with gamba or mission grass after an area has been sprayed and the gamba removed. Rapid establishment of natives? What are the weaknesses in Gamba's lifecycle, light/energy, water and fire requirements that can be used against it?
	That Gamba grass is only a problem and fire hazard when it is poorly managed and not controlled properly with grazing and/or fire.
	There is still some gaps in identification and responsibilities to remove.
	Its too late to poison now it will still be standing high and dry causing bigger fires.
	Rental properties with absent land lords seem to be the worst infestations after uninhabited blocks. Infested blocks need to be visited and eradication orders issued. Signage on infested blocks would assist in public education.
	Use of residual herbicides
	There are still large knowledge gaps in the community. This is partially due to the NT's transient population and new people moving to rural areas, though gamba is also a problem in suburban areas. A gamba information package could be provided by Weeds Branch via real estate agents to people purchasing or renting properties to inform new residents.
	There are still many people who can't identify gamba and are unaware of their responsibilities. The information sheet provided with rates notices is good but renters/tenants don't see it.

Source	Directly quoted community feedback
	There are still locals who cannot identify Gamba. They are not tuning in to learn about it. There are others who give up and just clear everything.
	not sure if there are knowledge gaps, problem more lies with delays in letters being sent out
	Urban residents should have better awareness. Have spotted untreated gamba throughout Darwin which is getting worse every year. Dick Ward Drive, Shoal Bay, Charles Darwin NP and many areas though Berrimah and Winnellie where commercial property owners do nothing to treat.
	An understanding of what replaces gamba where gamba is controlled. Is gamba control leading to increased native plant species or are we seeing one weed replaced by another? How does this vary with the extent of gamba infestations and methods of control? Answering these questions is likely to assist in managing gamba in a way that maximises positive environmental outcomes and minimises ongoing weed management issues.

These knowledge gaps will be explored further with the WAC. In the interim, some general responses are provided as follows:

- During the reporting period, 'Wild Matters', a consultancy on behalf of the Australian Government, completed a new national best practice management manual for gamba grass (Gamba Grass - Weeds Australia). This is a comprehensive manual that discusses gamba grass life cycle, reproduction and spread, gamba grass establishment, planning, control and residual herbicides. It also includes a number of case studies that may be applied to different management scenarios.
- The WMB have developed many communications devices that assist with gamba grass identification and control, including a Gamba ID booklet, Gamba Management Guide and Weed ID Deck | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.
- The WMB implements an annual gamba grass communications plan to educate landholders about their legal requirements. The WMB also implements an annual Gamba Action Program communications plan to promote the program and provide advice to landholders about the control of gamba grass.
- There will be a greater focus on educating real estate agents in the gamba grass communications plan for 2025 – 2026 with the aim of providing more gamba grass information to tenants and purchasers of land.
- Mountain bike trails managed by DORC could benefit from increased collaboration between Parks and Wildlife and DORC to explore possible grant opportunities for acquiring weed control equipment.
- Gamba grass in Charles Darwin National Park is managed through park management programs run by Parks and Wildlife. These programs include a combination of ranger efforts, the Gamba Army, contractors funded by Parks and Wildlife, and DORC volunteers. Parks and Wildlife have invested a significant amount of effort and herbicide into gamba grass control. Challenges experienced over the reporting year include some difficulty sourcing contractor assistance during times of high demand.

Strategic Action: ""Promote research activities and updated management recommendations"

Performance indicators: "Land manager awareness of improved management approaches."

Research outcomes

CDU/NESP released a webpage in 2022/23 Research synthesis of gamba grass - NESP Resilient Landscapes Hub that summarises their research on the biology, spread, impacts, and management of gamba grass in a user-friendly format for land managers and the broader public.

This information is available for the public with the aim of improving gamba grass management outcomes.

Any other gamba grass research developments will be included in annual gamba grass reports based on available information.

Integrated research outcomes in core business activities and publications

The WMB will continue to provide the community with information on how to identify and control gamba grass, including new research outcomes that may improve gamba grass management outcomes.

Key methods for communicating updated research outcomes are outlined above.

Strategic Action: "Delivery of gamba grass forums with a focus on celebrating gamba grass successes and educating the community / land managers on how to manage gamba grass and identifying other needs."

Performance indicator: "Capacity to manage gamba grass effectively has increased."

An annual 'gamba grass research and development community forum' is required under the revised gamba plan. A Gamba Grass Management Workshop was held in February 2025, hosted by the Gamba Grass Roots Landcare Group in collaboration with Land for Wildlife which is coordinated by TNRM.

Strategic Action: "Collaborate with other jurisdictions: a) to identify funding options for production of a National Best Practice Gamba Grass Manual by December 2022. b) On the production of a National Best Practice Gamba Grass Manual by early 2024."

Performance indicator: "Pathway is identified to produce National Gamba Grass Best Practice Manual." "Collaborate with other jurisdictions on the production of the National Best Practice Gamba Grass Manual by early 2024"

The National Best Practice Manual for Gamba Grass has been finalised and is available at: Gamba Grass - Weeds Australia. This manual has been prepared by consultancy Wild Matters, funded by the Australian Government.

Goal 5 – Implement transparent and accountable compliance, monitoring and reporting processes

Objective:

5a: "Deliver a transparent and risk-based compliance program."

Strategic Action "A risk-based compliance program is developed. The compliance program is promoted to the community. The compliance program is implemented annually".

Performance indicator: "Responsiveness to public enquiries."

All enquiries from the public were responded to. This included enquiries about plant identification, GAP, control options and enforcement action.

The WMB maintains a generic phone number, 8999 4567, and email address, weedinfo@nt.gov.au to receive public enquiries and reporting of all weeds. A dedicated team tracking sheet has been developed for reports specifically relating to gamba grass.

When complaints are made to the WMB and GFMU about gamba grass, they are recorded, triaged and followed up by authorised weeds officers. The WMB does not provide updates to every complainant about every complaint made, however that does not mean gamba grass complaints are not actioned. Complainants are welcome to follow up with the WMB on action that has been taken for gamba grass complaints.

Strategic Action "A risk-based compliance program is developed. The compliance program is promoted to the community. The compliance program is implemented annually".

Performance indicator: "Public awareness of the parcel compliance rating system."

An online Check your gamba grass risk | NT.GOV.AU tool was developed in 2021. Through this tool landholders can answer a series of questions about their gamba grass and will be provided a risk rating and advice on what they should do to manage their risk.

This self-assessment score system aligns with a similar process used to assess landholder parcels for compliance.

The 'Check Your Gamba Risk Tool' went live on 1 April 2021. Over the reporting period of 2024/25, there was 115 views of the risk tool.

Strategic Action "A risk-based compliance program is developed. The compliance program is promoted to the community. The compliance program is implemented annually".

Performance indicator: "Application of the parcel compliance rating system."

Application of the parcel compliance rating system has been discussed under Goal 2.

Objective:

5b: "Collaborate with key stakeholders to undertake regular monitoring and reporting of performance against the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030."

Strategic action: "By 30 September each year, deliver an annual report which addresses all performance indicators".

Performance indicator: "Regular, transparent, and meaningful reporting that is effectively promoted to the public."

This annual report has been developed to fulfil this requirement. The Have Your Say survey was conducted in April and May 2025 for a period of six weeks, seeking comment on community and stakeholder progress against the revised gamba plan and to seek community comment on implementation of the gamba plan. A total of 17 participants responded to the survey. Summarised results have been included within this report.

Strategic action: "Effectively communicate key outcomes of the annual report to the community".

Performance indicator: "Community awareness."

A communications plan has been developed that documents the mechanisms for informing the community about gamba grass matters, including the promotion of this report and key outcomes from the report.

Objective:

5c. "Ensure ongoing independent oversight of delivery of the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030."

Strategic action "Ongoing collaboration with the WAC regarding implementation of this plan".

Performance indicator: "Retention of the WAC."

The WAC is continuing to oversee implementation of the revised gamba plan. A commitment has been made in the Gamba Grass Communications Plan 2021 - 2024 for the WMB to meet quarterly with the WAC.

Four meetings were held during the reporting period:

- 12 August 2024
- 7 November 2024
- 12 March 2025
- 11 June 2025.

Meeting summaries can be found online:

Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee | Department of Lands, Planning and Environment

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5. DEPWS. (2023). Gamba Grass Annual Report 2023, Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security, Northern Territory Government. Gamba Grass Annual Report 2023.
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7. DEPWS. (2024A). Gamba Grass Annual Report 2024, Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security, Northern Territory Government. Gamba Grass Annual Report 2024.
8. *Weeds Management Act 2001* (NT). Northern Territory Legislation.

Appendix 1 Goals, objectives, strategic actions, performance indicators and performance measures from the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 - 2030

Performance Indicator colourings:

Performance Indicators
On track
Progress but some concerns
Significant concerns with progress

Table 17: Goal 1 Eradicate gamba grass from the Class A (eradication) zone				
Objectives	**Strategic actions**	**Who**	**Performance indicators**	**Performance measures**
1a. Understand the distribution of gamba grass in the Class A zone.	By July 2021, design a mapping and monitoring program for the Class A zone.	Weed Management Branch (WMB)	By July 2022, the extent of gamba grass has been assessed for land parcels identified in the monitoring and mapping program.	A generalised map of distribution or gamba grass presence confidence is publicly available. Annual measurement of gamba grass in hectares using available spatial data and eradication status information.
	By July 2021, commence the mapping program in the Class A zone.	WMB / land owner / occupiers		
	By July 2022, complete the mapping program and continue monitoring in the Class A zone.	WMB/ land owner / occupiers		
1b. By July 2023, all gamba grass in the Class A zone is under an active eradication program and all gamba grass plants	Individuals, land owners and occupiers implement required actions as per Section 4.	Land owners and occupiers	By July 2023, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as b) active management.	A register is maintained by WMB of all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone according to their current eradication status: a) unmanaged

Table 17: Goal 1 Eradicate gamba grass from the Class A (eradication) zone				
have been destroyed (unless under permit)			By July 2025, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as c) monitoring phase. By July 2026, all known land parcels with gamba grass in the Class A zone are classified as d) eradicated[3].	b) active management c) monitoring phase d) eradicated Summary data of a, b, c and d is produced. Annual summary data produced showing progress toward eradication.
1c. By July 2026, all gamba grass in the Class A zone is eradicated (unless under permit).	Assess eradication status for land parcels.	WMB		
1d. By July 2026, a review of the permit system pertaining to gamba grass is completed.	Existing permits that allow grazing of gamba grass in the Class A zone are reassessed to ensure they are appropriate.	WMB Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC)	Review of permit system is completed as it pertains to gamba grass.	Annual reporting on gamba grass grazing permit conditions and compliance. Outcomes of the July 2026 review are made publicly available.
1e. Review the Class A and B zone boundaries to improve the protection of areas in the Class B management zone that are free of gamba grass.	By July 2026, review the Class A and Class B zones to ensure the Class A zone captures areas that are free of gamba grass and where eradication is considered feasible.	WMB WAC	By July 2026, revised Class A and B zones are declared if recommended by the review process.	Gamba grass management zones review discussion paper is produced through consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the WAC. Updated Class A and B zone map is produced if zones are amended.

[3] For more information on active management, monitoring phase, and eradication status, see glossary of Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 - 2030.

Table 18: Goal 2 Contain and control gamba grass by actively managing infestations across the Class B zone and preventing spread into new areas				
Objectives	**Strategic actions**	**Who**	**Performance Indicators**	**Performance Measures**
2a. Reduce seed production. 2b. Implement weed hygiene measures to reduce gamba grass seed spread. 2c. Reduce gamba grass outliers at a land parcel and landscape scale. 2d. Prevent gamba grass spreading into clean areas. 2e. Reduce gamba grass abundance and density in the Class B zone. 2f. Reduce gamba grass presence around landholder infrastructure.	Land owners, occupiers and all users of land implement required actions as per Sections 3 and 4.	Land owners, occupiers and all users of land	An annual compliance program is developed and implemented to assess compliance with this plan and compliance action is taken against properties not complying.	Proportion of assessed land parcels that: a) Are already compliant at time of initial assessment and no follow up action is required. b) Voluntarily meet management requirements after being informed of non-compliance. c) Had compliance action taken due to non-compliance. Annual summary of a, b and c produced including the total number and area of parcels assessed as a proportion of the area of the Class B management zone.
			By July 2024 and annually afterwards there is an improvement in gamba grass management as evidenced by an improvement in parcel compliance score.	Proportion of land parcels that have had multiple year compliance assessments and: a) Compliance score has improved indicating reduced gamba density. b) Compliance score is unchanged indicating no reduction in gamba density. c) Compliance score has worsened indicating increased gamba density. Annual summary of a, b, and c produced.
			Reduction in area affected by gamba grass in target areas.	Gamba grass presence measured annually (1km grid map showing the area affected by gamba grass).
2g. Understand the distribution of gamba grass in the Class B zone.	The WMB are to undertake an annual assessment of land	WMB	Increased understanding of priority areas for future mapping in the Class B zone.	Aerial survey of gamba grass within the Class B zone (pending funding). Key areas of gamba grass improvement are reported on annually including metrics for the following:

Table 18: Goal 2 Contain and control gamba grass by actively managing infestations across the Class B zone and preventing spread into new areas				
	impacted by gamba grass. A mapping and monitoring program is developed for the Class B zone.			a) area sprayed b) the number of properties sprayed c) tenure types. Categorised list of priority areas that require gamba grass mapping is produced.

Table 19: Goal 3 Protect priority environmental and cultural assets from the impacts of gamba grass				
Objectives	**Strategic actions**	**Who**	**Performance Indicators**	**Performance Measures**
3a. Identify key environmental and cultural assets[12] at risk of being impacted by gamba grass and incorporate into relevant Weed Management Branch, stakeholder and land manager regional plans, strategies and compliance programs.	By December 2022, key environmental and cultural assets[12] at risk of being impacted by gamba grass have been identified with stakeholder input.	WMB Non-Government Organisations Landholders and occupiers	By December 2022 a list has been developed of key environmental and cultural assets[12].	By January 2023, a list of priority assets identified is made publicly available (with exclusion of certain sacred sites if necessary).
	Identified key environmental and cultural assets[12] have been prioritised in WMB and stakeholder planning processes.	WMB and landowners and occupiers with environmental and cultural assets	Key environmental and cultural assets[12] are prioritised in landholder management programs including regional plans.	An annual summary is produced to demonstrate progress towards protection of key environmental and cultural assets[12]. An annual map is produced with gamba grass overlayed across key environmental and cultural assets[12] for target locations[13].

[12] Environmental and cultural assets as outlined in the MWB Regional Weed Management Strategies.

[13] This performance measure requires stakeholders to be working towards collecting data (e.g. presence, absence and treatment) so more informed maps can be predicted over time.

Table 20: Goal 4 Increase community capacity and willingness to participate in gamba grass management				
Objectives	**Strategic Actions**	**Who**	**Performance Indicators**	**Performance Measures**
4a. Engage with the community and obtain a high level of public support for gamba grass management action resulting in an increase in voluntary compliance with gamba grass management requirements.	By July 2021, develop a communications plan to raise awareness of gamba grass management requirements and available support. Engage with the community. Education and awareness activities are implemented to encourage compliant behaviours.	WMB	Public knowledge of gamba grass impacts and management requirements has increased. Changes in active management and voluntary compliance levels.	Delivery of the communications plan, including participation in public events. The number of people participating in the Gamba Action Program has increased. Annual review and update of communications plan. Annual summary data produced as per Goals 1 to 3.
	By July 2023, complete a social marketing study (subject to funding) to identify community perceptions, needs and barriers regarding gamba grass management.	WAC lead in conjunction with Non-Government Organisations	Better understand community perceptions, needs and barriers regarding gamba grass management.	Development and completion of the social marketing study by 2023. Post study completion, and delivery of strategies that incorporate study outcomes to increase uptake of gamba grass management in the community.
	Improve landholder capacity for reporting gamba grass points in the Class A zone.	WMB	Public reporting to WMB on gamba infestations in the Class A zone.	Uptake of NT WeedMate. Presence / absence of gamba grass in the Class A zone is being reported to the WMB for a) all historical gamba grass points; and b) new sightings.
	Development of an efficient tool (subject to funding) to encourage public reporting of gamba grass sightings and management effort. Promote the report gamba tool to encourage public reporting of problem gamba grass in the Class B zone.	WAC lead in conjunction with Non-Government Organisations	Public reporting of problem gamba grass.	The number of reports being made of problem gamba grass via the gamba reporting tool at nt.gov.au/gamba
	Establish and support cross tenure working groups to ensure coordinated	WMB	An increase in coordinated management effort.	Promote active working groups achieving effective gamba grass management across tenures.

Table 20: Goal 4 Increase community capacity and willingness to participate in gamba grass management				
	management of gamba grass across different land tenures.			
4b. Ensure adequate information and knowledge on gamba grass management is available and up to date, which translates into improved management approaches.	Research is undertaken that supports improved gamba grass management outcomes by addressing identified research gaps.	WMB Research partners WAC	The Gamba WAC reviews annually key knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to improve gamba grass management outcomes. Feedback to be sought annually to inform knowledge gaps.	Key knowledge gaps are reported on annually including: a) further research or work needed to address these knowledge gaps, and b) any progress being made to address these knowledge gaps.
	Promote research activities and updated management recommendations.	WMB and Research partners	Land manager awareness of improved management approaches.	Research outcomes that can improve gamba grass management outcomes are a) made available to the public; and b) reported on annually. Integration of research outcomes into core business activities.
	Delivery of gamba grass forums with a focus on celebrating gamba grass successes and educating the community / land mangers on how to manage gamba grass and identifying other needs.	WAC in conjunction with relevant stakeholders	Capacity to manage gamba grass effectively has increased.	Delivery of gamba grass forums (every 2 to 3 years) to celebrate gamba grass successes, provide education and identify needs.
	Collaborate with other jurisdictions: a) to identify funding options for production of a National Best Practice Gamba Grass Manual by December 2022. b) On the production of a National Best Practice Gamba Grass Manual by early 2024.	WMB	Pathway is identified to produce National Gamba Grass Best Practice Manual. Collaborate with other jurisdictions on the production of the National Best Practice Gamba Grass Manual by early 2024.	Progress is made towards development of National Gamba Grass Best Practice Manual. Delivery of National Best Practice Gamba Grass Manual by early 2024.

Table 21: Goal 5 Implement transparent and accountable compliance, monitoring and reporting processes				
Objectives	**Strategic actions**	**Who**	**Performance Indicators**	**Performance Measures**
5a. Deliver a transparent and risk-based compliance program.	A risk-based compliance program is developed. The compliance program is promoted to the community. The compliance program is implemented annually.	WMB	Responsiveness to public enquiries.	Proportion of public enquiries responded to regarding the compliance process.
			Public awareness of the parcel compliance rating system.	Number of online downloads of the parcel compliance rating system, annually.
			Application of the parcel compliance rating system.	Annual summary of outcomes as per Goal 1 - 3.
5b. Collaborate with key stakeholders to undertake regular monitoring and reporting of performance against the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030.	By 30 September each year, deliver an annual report which addresses all performance indicators.	WMB WAC	Regular, transparent, and meaningful reporting that is effectively promoted to the public.	Public release of an annual report reviewed by the WAC that addresses performance indicators and measures within this plan. Annual online feedback undertaken to inform annual report.
	Effectively communicate key outcomes of the annual report to the community.	WMB	Community awareness.	Number of mechanisms used to promote the key outcomes of the annual report.
5c. Ensure ongoing independent oversight of delivery of the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030.	Ongoing collaboration with the WAC regarding implementation of this plan.	WMB	Retention of the WAC.	WAC are communicating with their represented stakeholders on performance of the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030 and acting on feedback received from stakeholders.