

Gamba grass weed advisory committee meeting #19

A summary of activities tabled at meeting 19, undertaken in the period 12th March 2025 to 10th June 2025 to progress implementation of the Weed Management Plan Gamba Grass 2020 – 2030. Activities are those undertaken by the Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee members, the Weed Management Branch and the Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit.

Time 9:00am – 3:00pm

Date: Wednesday, 11 June 2025

Gamba Grass Weed Advisory Committee members present

Susanne Casanova	Chair – Representing Territory Natural Resource Management	SC
Dr David Liddle	Representing Environment Centre Northern Territory (ECNT) / Gamba Grass Roots	DL
Sharon Hillen	Representing the Local Government Association of the NT	SH
Kerri O'Brien	Representing the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE), (Vacant Crown Land)	KB
Matthew Phillips	Representing the Northern Territory tourism industry	MP
Anna Pickworth	Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) member to be appointed as new Indigenous Carbon Industry Network (ICIN) Representative	AP
Tom Price	Representing the Northern Land Council (NLC)	TP
Dr Natalie Rossiter-Rachor	Representing Charles Darwin University (CDU) / National Environmental Science Program (NESP)	NR-R

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Natasha Clayton	Representing the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA)	NC
Louise Kean	Representing the Department of Tourism and Hospitality (DTH), (Parks and Wildlife)	LK

Other attendees present:

Emma Burcher	Weeds Planning Officer – Weed Management Branch (WMB), DLPE	EB
Lee Humphries (LH)	Manager, Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit, Bushfires NT, Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service (NTFRS)	LH
Shelley Inglis	Manager, Operations and Compliance, WMB	SI
Roni Opden	Manager Planning and Science, WMB	RO
Jenny Petursson	Regional Weeds Manager, Katherine	JP
Liesl Wilson	A/Director, WMB, DLPE	LW

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

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

Objective of plan	Key outcomes this quarter
2a, 2d and 2e	<p>TNRM – Gamba Army</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifth season of Gamba Army was concluded, following 31 weeks of spraying across 50 sites. These sites include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 33 vacant Crown land sites in the greater Darwin area, ○ 11 Parks and Wildlife sites across 4 areas: Buffalo Creek, Charles Darwin National Park, Holmes Jungle Nature Park and Litchfield National Park, ○ three sites on Litchfield Shire land, ○ two sites on Department of Health land, and ○ one site on land managed by the Department of Corrections.
1a, 4a and 4b	<p>TNRM support for NLC GEBC project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gamba grass ecology sessions delivered to rangers attending the NLC funded gamba grass awareness workshop in Batchelor (26/03/2025) as part of the NLC Gamba Eradication Biodiversity Conservation (GEBC) Project. Sessions were to familiarise rangers with gamba grass and savanna ecology, gamba growth requirements, establishment in the landscape and typically seen changes when gamba invades ecosystem. • Aerial surveys for gamba detection conducted and gamba data collected in the Gamba A zone on Daly River Port Keats Aboriginal Land Trust, in collaboration with Thamarrurr Development Corporation, to inform eradication efforts.
1a 1b 1c, 3a, 4a and 4b	<p>Northern Land Council (NLC) – Gamba Eradication Biodiversity Conservation (GEBC) Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote gamba engagement continues across West Arnhem, East Arnhem, Daly River Port Keats, Katherine and Victoria River District. • Aerial and ground surveys with Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation (ASRAC), Mimal Land Management, Mutjung Rangers, Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation, Njanjma Rangers. • Aerial surveys of pastoral land with WMB revealing more gamba grass than previously thought. • Offer to control gamba on 2 permit leases if permits surrendered. Offer taken up by one lessee. Control work both by air and on ground. Two rounds of ground control undertaken in April and May 2025. GEBC conducted initial works and Big Rivers Conservation and Land Management were contracted for the second round of control. • GEBC regional Ranger workshops delivered in Katherine, Pine Creek. Western Arnhem Region workshops had to be cancelled. • Gamba grass survey and aerial control in the Eastern Daly region. Expansion of gamba grass range observed. TNRM contracted through GEBC to support survey of Thamarrurr management area. • Extravagamba Workshop held on 26th March. Brought in 80+ remote land managers to see and experience gamba in Coomalie region. Training provided on how to identify, survey and control gamba grass, collect relevant data and visualise gamba impacts and have these impacts explained. Participation from WMB, NT Herbarium, NESP, Batchelor Institute, TNRM, Jawoyn Rangers and CSIRO. • Mataranka to Katherine roadside treatment undertaken. GEBC surveyed road and Gamba Grass Management Units (GGMU)'s numerous times. Over 40 new sites identified, due to mainly young plants and some large adults observed beyond the 15m. • The GEBC surveyed the Victoria Highway and GGMU's numerous times. 10+new locations, mainly with first year plants. • Katherine and Daly River surveys along the A/B boundary. Gamba grass found in both the Class A eradication zone and B zone buffer adjoining the Class A zone.
2a, 2b, 2d, 2e and 2g	<p>NLC – GEBC Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment of project funds toward CSIRO biological agent research signed off by CEO, which is contingent on other parties also joining. • Two rounds of aerial control of gamba grass on Port Keats Road across approximately 150ha of roadside and gravel pits. Much of the controlled area was burnt by fires in weeks after control, with the second treatment confounding results. • Pine Creek to Katherine roadside treatment. GEBC contracted Territory Weed Management to go beyond the 15m. Over 200 sites were treated.

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2c and 2d	Community – Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group - Casuarina Coastal Reserve Adopt-a- Spot program conducted under the Parks and Wildlife Volunteers Program Continued gamba grass control in 13 “adopted spot” localities in Casuarina Coastal Reserve.
2c and 2d	Community – Weedwalkers Top End Landcare Group In collaboration with Parks and Wildlife the Weedwalkers Top End Landcare Group conducted gamba grass control at remote sites in Litchfield National Park.
2g	Community - Landcare NT - Darwin Harbour Catchment Waterways Project Field survey undertaken to map gamba grass in three urban catchments.
4b	NESP – support to GEBC Project Hosted NESP mapping station at Extravagamba Workshop held on 26th March. Gave talk to workshop participants on gamba grass ecology, distribution and impacts.
2g	NESP – support to Parks and Wildlife <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial re-survey of Litchfield National Park including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eradication zone on Tabletop Range ○ Expanded eradication zone. • Provided Parks & Wildlife with draft data and maps for Federation Funding milestone report. • Trained 5 rangers with how to use NESP grassy weeds aerial mapping app.
2g, 4b	NESP – Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of Rio Tinto staff (from Weipa) in how to use NESP grassy weeds aerial mapping app. Helicopter survey over northern Eastern section of Litchfield (near magnetic termite mounds). • Provided training in setting up NESP aerial survey on tablets to NLC, WMB, Parks and Wildlife and Rio Tinto (Weipa).
4b	NESP – Drone mapping Completed initial drone surveys of gamba grass at Batchelor for development of drone mapping map.

WMB and GFMU Updates:

Objective of plan	Key outcomes this quarter
1a	Class A zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with landholders about gamba grass on properties and liaison with GEBC Project and Kakadu Gamba Eradication Project. Progressing gamba register automation. Field inspections of gamba grass records. • Review of revised Threat Abatement Plan for Five Grasses including Gamba Grass and feedback provided to Australian Government.
1d and 1e	Review gamba grass Class A permits and A/B zone boundary Follow up with various stakeholders about the reviews including GEBC, Wagait Shire Council, NTCA and gamba grass permit holder wishing to retain their permit. Have Your Say gamba grass survey launched including questions seeking feedback for this review. Distributed by WMB to key stakeholders including WAC members for circulation through their networks.
2a, and 2c-2f	Gamba Action Program and liaison with Gamba Army Gamba Action Program finalised for 2025 and ongoing liaison with Gamba Army.
4a and 4b	Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMB staff attendance at Extravagamba in March 2025. The WMB facilitated workshops on gamba grass identification, weed data collection and the use of the NT Weed Mate App and different biocontrol agents available for various weed species. • Meeting held with the Australian Institute Conveyancers Northern Territory (AICNT) and the GFMU about gamba grass legal requirements, impacts and concerns purchasers of land / property are not aware of gamba grass. WMB and GMFU provided confirmation that a report can be provided back to conveyancers on request of the status of gamba grass on properties for sale and whether the property is complaint or not complaint. • Other general communications occurring, e.g. gamba grass Facebook posts. • New Communications Plan for 2025 – 2026 prepared and provided to WAC for review and comment. Implementation of new plan already commenced – including follow up on gamba grass requirements leaflets in 2025 rates.
4b	Research – Biocontrol

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	<p>WMB Weeds Scientist ongoing attendance at Weeds Working Group (WWG) meetings – discussions on the gamba grass biocontrol project and further consultation required to let any potentially concerned stakeholders know about progress on this project before release of NWBPS-Prioritisation-Results.pdf. A letter was sent to NTCA on behalf of this CSIRO project providing an update.</p>
5a	<p>Compliance Program Implementation of the gamba grass Class B zone compliance program and Fire Ready Program ongoing. Results will be included in 2025 Gamba Grass Annual Report. New gamba grass buffer fact sheet produced and to be uploaded online once approved.</p>