

Buffel WAC: Discussion paper #2

Development of a Buffel Grass Strategy

The Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC) has been appointed under the Weeds Act to develop a Buffel Grass Strategy. The Strategy will be used to inform how a weed declaration may improve the condition of priority areas, while balancing the role buffel plays as fodder for the pastoral industry and as a soil stabiliser. The Strategy may be adopted in part or in full under a statutory weed management plan, following a period of public consultation.

Outcomes from Discussion paper #1

Meeting 1 was held across 18-19 April 2024. The agenda was based on Discussion paper #1, with the intent to identify landscape areas with values most at risk of buffel impact, and management actions that might be employed to mitigate these impacts. The WAC discussed potential priority sites for buffel control, including Sites of Conservation Significance (SoCS), Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA's), Parks and Reserves, and discrete sites (eg community areas around Alice Springs township).

Feedback from the WAC indicated that a focus on disjointed priority sites would be unlikely to mitigate all of the negative impacts of buffel grass; however, a weed declaration over these same priority sites would likely create an unachievable compliance burden if enforced by law.

WAC Meeting #2

At the 2nd WAC meeting, members will contribute to progressing specific elements of the Strategy.

- Consider zoned management approach
- Develop Goals for Buffel Strategy
- Develop Objectives for Strategy
- Determine 'reasonable' actions to meet objectives

Geographic scope of Strategy

For the purpose of the Strategy, the geographic scope is defined as the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek weed management regions, shown in the map below.

Temporal scope of Strategy

The Strategy is proposed to be a 5 year plan, allowing the feasibility and impact of management actions to be assessed and refined.



- **Alice Springs Region:**
 - Strategic control*
 - Asset protection
 - Sites of Conservation Significance
 - IPA's
 - Parks & Reserves
 - Community values
 - Pathways of spread
- **Tennant Creek Region:**
 - Pathways of spread*
 - Mining & exploration areas
 - Gas pipeline
 - Road & rail corridors
 - Monitor distribution and risk

*per Regional Weed Management Strategies

NT Weed Management Regions

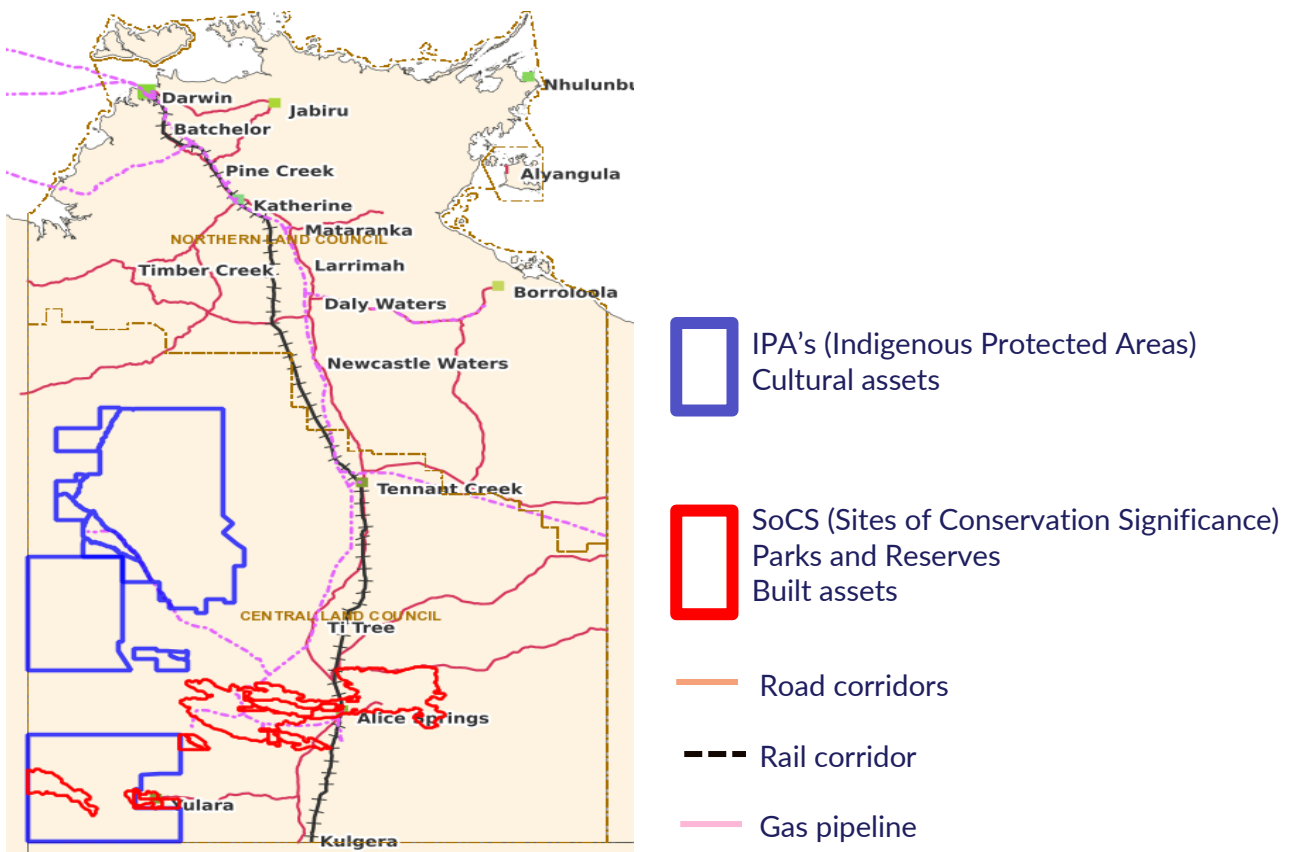
Priority areas for strategic control

Priority sites requiring buffel grass management have been identified in the Alice Springs and Tennant Creek Regional Weed Management Strategies, and are represented in the map below for discussion purposes.

In the Alice Springs weed region, buffel grass is prioritised for strategic control for asset protection, with particular regard to Sites of Conservation Significance (SoCS), Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA's), Parks and Reserves. In the Tennant Creek weed region, buffel grass is prioritised for reduction of spread, particularly along roads, rail and gas pipeline.

It is proposed that spread reduction is also addressed in the Alice Springs region, while further monitoring is adopted in the Tennant Creek region.

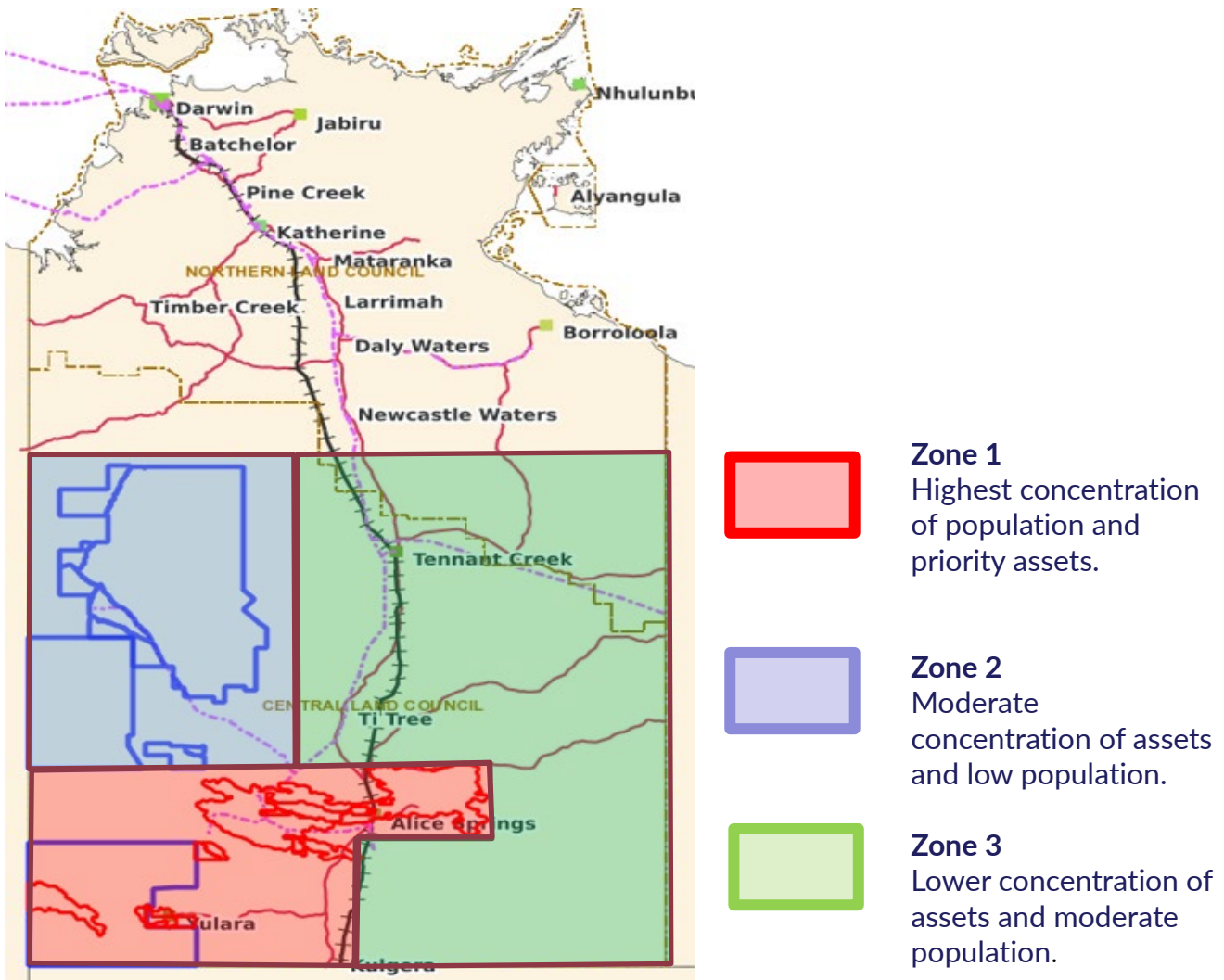
Buffel grass has not been identified as a priority in the Darwin or Katherine Weed Management Strategies, but ongoing monitoring of distribution and risk should be considered.



Priority sites – Regional

Zoned management

A zoned management approach may assist to develop and communicate the objectives and actions of the Strategy. For discussion purposes, this map has grouped identified priority assets and population density, into 3 zones.



Zoned Management Goals & Options – Workshop

The TWG recommended that the WAC detail the management options available for different land tenures or locations. The WAC will consider the relevant objectives of buffel management according to relevant land tenure or location/zone, which will in turn inform the management options and actions.

Zone/Tenure	Goals of buffel management	Management Options in area
Example:	Example: Eradicate Prevent establishment Prevent spread Detection Early intervention Minimise impact Enhance capacity & commitment	Example: Spray – on ground Spray – aerial Slash Burn Graze Manual remove
etc		

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Management Objectives and 'Reasonable' Actions - Workshop

The WAC will workshop what 'reasonable' actions might be, in order to meet objectives. The table below contains some examples to get started.

Goal	Objectives	'Reasonable' Management Actions
Prevent establishment	E.g. Prevent land becoming infested with buffel grass	Eg. Survey land following rainfall
		Treat isolated outbreaks as a priority
Prevent spread	E.g. Minimise seed spread on public road corridors	Explore vehicle hygiene/washdown options before entering 'clean' areas
		Designated road stops free of buffel
		Prevent transport of uncovered buffel
	etc	
etc		

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Milestones

The Buffel Strategy will be finalised by the end of June 2024.

The WAC will meet at least three times between April – June. The WAC has met in April, and the second meeting is scheduled in May. There will be at least one more meeting in June.

A draft Strategy will be circulated for review and comment following meeting #2, capturing elements workshopped during that meeting.

The Strategy will be updated and circulated prior to meeting #3, and its progress will be a focus of discussion and decisions at meeting #3.

The final Strategy will be presented to the Minister along with declaration advice, on its completion.