

**Buffel Grass Weed Advisory
Committee Discussion Paper #6
February 2025**

Agenda Item 10: Appointment of proxies to the WAC

It is inevitable and understandable that not all members will be able to attend every WAC meeting. However this can create issues around having suitable representation and in ensuring there is a quorum for meetings. As the WAC members are ministerially appointed (which has a 2-4 week lead time and a cost of approx. \$320 per instance) it is difficult for proxies to be appointed at short notice/on an ad hoc basis.

Weed Management Branch staff therefore suggest that;

- Each member consults with the organisation they represent, and if desired, nominate a formal proxy who can represent the organization when the current member is unavailable.
- WMB will then seek the necessary approvals to have those nominated confirmed as proxy members of the WAC (undertaking a bulk approval process for maximum efficiency). Approval would be sought for the same period as the current WAC membership (until 5 May 2027).
- Proxies would be welcome to attend all WAC meetings if interested (although this is not expected) and will receive all WAC correspondence.
- Proxies will only be eligible to vote or receive payment if the member for which they are proxy for is absent.
- The WAC Terms of Reference is updated to reflect above.

Agenda Item 11: Development of a Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan

Recap and overview

At the previous WAC meeting (#5 held 27 November 2024), the WAC briefly discussed the development of a statutory Weed Management Plan (WMP) for buffel grass.

Please see [Weed management plans and regional strategies | NT.GOV.AU](#) for examples of WMP's for other priority weeds in the NT. Note that more recent WMPs (e.g. for Mesquite and Bellyache Bush) have very much focused on just setting out legal requirements, whereas others (e.g. for Gamba Grass) also cover strategic goals and objectives. It is proposed that the Buffel WMP focus on just the legal requirements to ensure that the statutory document remains concise and streamlined.

The Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, the Honourable Joshua Burgoyne, has to date, not given a timeframe for the development of a WMP. There is therefore flexibility in the schedule to allow sufficient consultation, engagement and discussion, noting that many stakeholders would like to see its development progress.

Strategy to inform Weed Plan

The Buffel Grass Strategy recognises biodiversity and cultural heritage protection as priorities for buffel management. The Strategy provides management recommendations to reduce impact, while recognising its effectiveness at stabilising soil, and value to the pastoral industry. Many elements of the strategy may be utilised in the development of the WMP.

WMP Content **Required** under the Act: s10 (2).

A weed management plan is to include the following particulars:

- (a) the name of the plan;
- (b) the area or activity to which the plan applies;
- (c) the general and specific objectives of the plan;
- (d) the name and any classification of the declared weed or potential weed to which the plan applies;
- (e) the methods to be used to achieve the objectives of the plan and the time during which the methods are to be used, and other specifications required, to achieve the objectives of the plan;
- (f) the methods to be used to prevent the spread within or from the area to which the plan applies;
- (g) the requirements for owners and occupiers of land and officers to monitor the results of the plan and the methods used.

- Discussion on **required** content – several of these points can be drawn directly from the Strategy, eg (a) to (d). Other content will be informed through expert knowledge, industry best practice, and established data collection protocols.
- WAC members will be invited to consult with their stakeholders/networks to inform the methods.
- Public consultation will be sought via ‘Have Your Say’ survey, open throughout the weed plan development.

Optional Content under the Act: s10 (3-5).

(3) A weed management plan may include the following particulars:

- (a) the procedures for inspecting land, animals, vehicles, plants, fodder, soil and other things for the presence of declared weeds or potential weeds;
- (b) the processes to be adopted following the removal of declared weeds or potential weeds from land to rehabilitate the land;
- (c) the use of declared weeds under a permit;
- (d) the program for educating the owners and occupiers of land in the area to which the plan applies and other persons to whom the plan applies on how to manage declared weeds or potential weeds;

- (e) the criteria for obtaining assistance to carry out the obligations imposed under the plan and the extent of the assistance;
- (f) any other particulars that are determined by the Minister.

(4) A weed management plan may prohibit or restrict the use of a substance or class of substances or a methodology used to manage declared weeds or potential weeds.

(5) A weed management plan may adopt or incorporate by reference any code, standard, methodology or publication, or a part of any code, standard or publication, published by any authority or body.

- Discussion (pending time) on **Optional** content – what (if any) optional extras may be relevant to include in the buffel WMP.

Please note that it is not expected that the WAC will resolve all of the above aspects of the WMP at the February meeting. The intention is to ensure the WAC is broadly aware of what the development of a WMP entails and start discussing some aspects.

Approval Process: s11

- Approval sits with the Minister for Environment (gazetta)
- Minimum of 4 weeks public notice (NB: WAC has previously requested 8 weeks public notice)
- WMP can be approved for a period of up to 10 years