

Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee Meeting Communique

Overview

The Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC) held their 6th meeting on the 20th February 2025 in Alice Springs to progress the management of buffel grass in the Northern Territory. The Committee discussed a revised Terms of Reference, set dates for future meetings and progressed the development of the Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan.

Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC) present

Name	Representing
Phillip Cowan (Chair)	Department of Tourism and Hospitality- Parks and Wildlife
Tracey Guest	Parks Australia (UKT NP)
James Cocking	Desert Knowledge Australia
Lachlan Donchi (proxy)	NT Fire and Emergency Services (Bushfires NT)
Joel Andrew	Alice Springs Town Council
Josef Schofield	Australian Wildlife Conservancy
Roy Chisholm	Pastoral Land Board
Garth Forrester	Central Land Council
Ross Stanes	NT Cattlemen's Association

Buffel Grass WAC apologies

Benjamin Kaethner	Central Land Council
William Evans	NT Cattlemen's Association

Other attendees

Amber Clarke (Executive Officer)	Department Lands, Planning and Environment (Weed Management)
Luisa Tong (Minutes)	Department of Tourism and Hospitality- Parks and Wildlife
Roni Opden	Department Lands, Planning and Environment (Weed Management)
Stephen Wingrave	Department Lands, Planning and Environment (Weed Management)
Max Arkley-Smith	Department Lands, Planning and Environment (Weed Management)

Key Discussion Points

Ministerial Correspondence and Visit

At the 5th meeting of the Buffel WAC (27th November 2024) the Committee requested that the Chair write to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment seeking input into the WAC's future work and priorities post completion of the Buffel Grass Management Strategy: Central Australia 2024 – 2030 and buffel grass's declaration as a weed. The Minister responded indicating his support for the WAC and for updating the Terms of Reference to reflect the current purpose of the WAC;

- Draft a weed management plan for buffel grass
- Provide advice to the Minister on the progress of buffel grass management in Central Australia
- Provide advice to the Minister on other matters as requested.

The Minister also met with the Committee in person over afternoon tea to discuss aspects of buffel management including on ground management, landholder capacity building and the development of a weed management plan.



Minister Burgoyne meeting with Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee members.

Member Updates

Members provided updates on their organisations activities around buffel grass management since the WAC last met in (November 2024). There was generally limited on-ground works due to unfavourable hot/dry conditions but buffel control is being factored into annual work plans and opportunities for collaboration were discussed.

WAC Business

- Terms of Reference:

The Buffel WAC agreed to update the Terms on Reference based on directions supplied by the Minister (as discussed above). The Committee was also supportive of the prior approval of official proxies to represent organisations/individuals if members are unable to attend specific meetings.

- Dates were set for future meetings
 - Meeting #7- Wednesday 30th April 2025
 - Meeting #8- Tuesday 17th June 2025

Strategic Weed Management Plan

The Committee held a workshop to start developing the Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan (WMP). Key points covered included;

- Weed Management Branch staff provided the WAC with an overview of the purposes of a WMP, and required and optional content as outlined in the *Weeds Management Act 2001*.
- The Committee agree that they want the WMP to ensure it is: accessible to a non-technical audience, provides clarity on obligations, concise, realistic and achievable, flexible (allowing for different requirements/approaches in different geographic areas and for different land uses), allows for stakeholder input and shows clear alignment between the WMP and the Buffel Grass Strategy.
- The development of a draft timeline for the development of the WMP and some initial content for further discussion.