

Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee Meeting Communique

Overview

The Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee (WAC) held meeting 7 on the 30 April 2025 in Alice Springs, progressing discussions on the management of buffel grass in the Northern Territory. The WAC discussed a revised Terms of Reference, set dates for future meetings, heard a presentation from the South Australia State Buffel Grass Co-ordinator and progressed development of the Buffel Grass draft Weed Management Plan.

Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee members present

Name	Representing
Philip Cowan (Chair)	Department of Tourism and Hospitality- Parks and Wildlife
Tracey Guest	Parks Australia (UKT NP)
James Cocking	Desert Knowledge Australia
Joel Andrew	Alice Springs Town Council
Roy Chisholm	Pastoral Land Board
Garth Forrester	Central Land Council
Ross Stanes	Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association
Benjamin Kaethner	Central Land Council
Romy Carey	NT Cattlemen's Association (proposed new member, awaiting official appointment)
Ross Nowland	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (proposed new member, awaiting official appointment)

Buffel Grass WAC apologies

Lachlan Donchi (proxy)	NT Fire and Emergency Services (Bushfires NT)
Josef Schofield	Australian Wildlife Conservancy

Other attendees

Amber Clarke (Executive Officer)	Department Lands, Planning and Environment (Weed Management)
Tabitha Fudge (Minutes)	Department Lands, Planning and Environment (Weed Management)
Roni Opden	Department Lands, Planning and Environment (Weed Management)
Max Arkley-Smith (WMB update)	Department Lands, Planning and Environment (Weed Management)
Troy Bowman (Guest presentation)	South Australian Government; Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board

Key Discussion Points

Pastoral Land Board Correspondence

The Pastoral Land Board provided advice on the impacts of the declaration of buffel grass as a weed on the Land Condition Monitoring undertaken on pastoral leases. The WAC will continue discussing this matter with the PLB.

Member Updates

Members provided updates on their organisations activities around buffel grass management since the WAC last met (February 2025). Many organisations had undertaken significant buffel management work in response to the rainfall event in March. Buffel control is being factored into annual work plans for the non-pastoral land managers and opportunities for collaboration were discussed.

NTCA representatives indicated they had held their annual conference in March and NTCA members had expressed their dissatisfaction with the declaration of buffel grass as a weed. Other WAC members reported increased engagement and efforts since declaration.

WAC Business

- Terms of Reference:

Weed Management Branch (WMB) staff indicated they will be seeking approval from the Minister for the updated Terms of Reference. These updates are based on directions supplied by the Minister, to allow for the appointment of standing proxies and to clarify some procedural matters.

- Dates were set for future meetings
 - Meeting #8- Tuesday 17 June 2025
 - Meeting #9- Wednesday 3 September 2025

Guest Presentation

The WAC heard from Troy Bowman, the South Australia State Buffel Grass Co-ordinator. He spoke about how buffel grass is managed and regulated in SA, as outlined in their Strategic Plan and the Declared Plant Policy. On an operational level, Troy provided an overview of the key successes and learnings from the SA program. Troy also touched on some of the national efforts, such as the Weed of National Significance nomination.

Strategic Weed Management Plan

The WAC held a workshop to further progress the Buffel Grass draft Weed Management Plan (WMP). Key points included:

- Recap of discussions undertaken at the last WAC meeting around the purpose of a WMP; required and optional content as outlined in the *Weeds Management Act 2001*.
- The WAC discussed some proposed management requirements in detail. The WAC was able to broadly agree on some points, while others require further discussion and consideration.
- The WAC agreed to develop a package of supporting information to accompany the draft WMP when it is released for public comment; this will include facts sheets for different stakeholder groups, technical advice and information.