

Barkly Regional Weed Management Plan



Image 1: Prickly acacia (*Acacia nilotica*)

For further information about this Plan contact the Department of Land Resource Management, Weed Management Branch, Tennant Creek District Weeds Officer on 08 89624314

Weed Management Branch

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This Plan is in effect from 2015 – 2020.

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Location

The Barkly Region encompasses the Mitchell Grass Downs and Davenport Murchison Ranges bioregions, the Northern Territory section of the Mount Isa Inlier and parts of the Tanami, Gulf Fall and Uplands and Sturt Plateau. Its largest towns are Tennant Creek and Elliott. The Barkly region covers an area of 283,648 km².

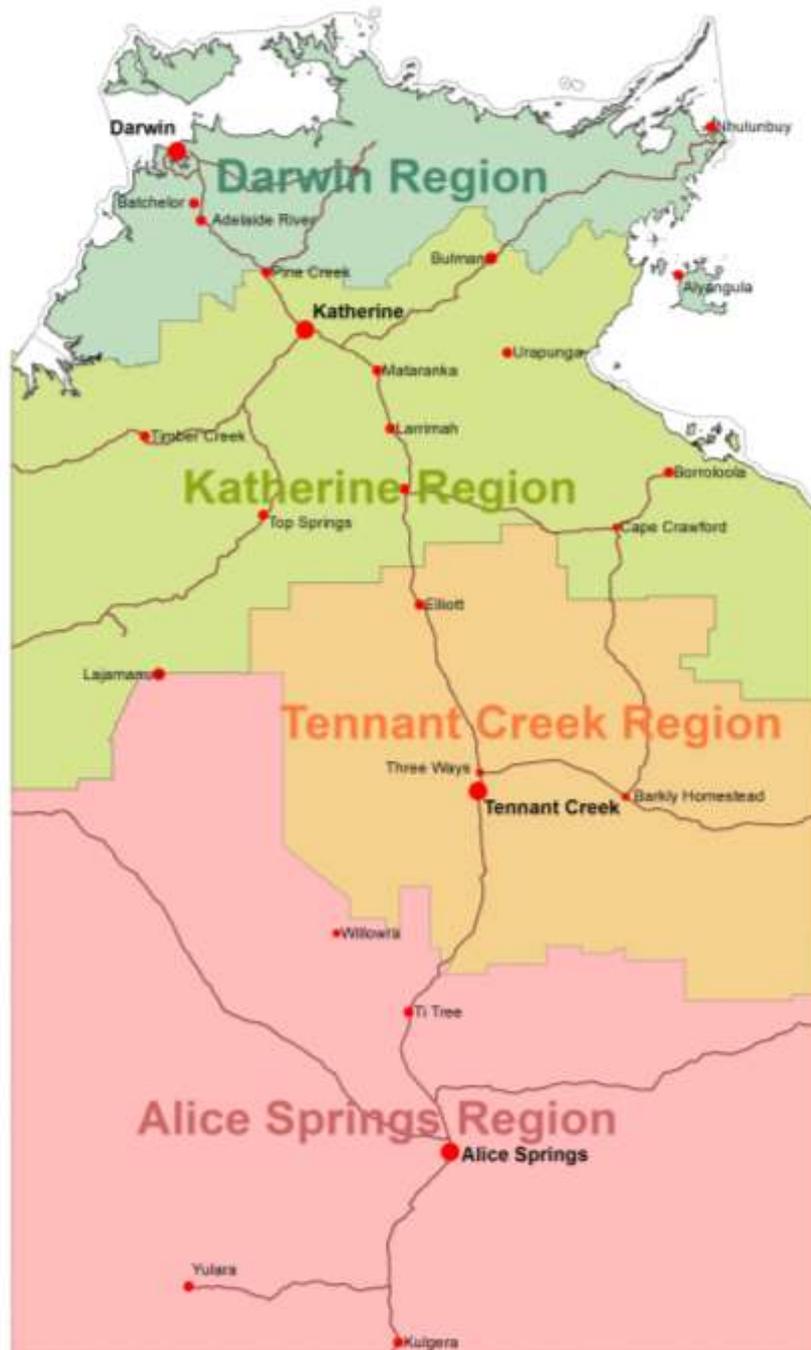


Figure 1: Northern Territory weed management regions

Purpose and Development of the Plan

Weeds remain an increasing threat to the Barkly region's natural assets. This threat is not new and considerable time and effort has already been invested in weed management across the region.

The Barkly Regional Weed Management Plan (the Plan) represents the Northern Territory Government's Weed Management Branch and key stakeholders' ongoing effort to reduce the impact of the regions priority weeds¹.

The Plan has been developed in line with the Department of Land Resource Management, Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018. It is intended to support local weed management priorities. Subsequently, direct consultation with key stakeholders has occurred throughout the development of the Plan.

The Plan also supports the implementation of individual statutory Weed Management Plans and provides a direction for managing weed threats through:

- Identifying priority weeds, landscape areas and pathways of weed spread;
- Providing a platform for the regional weed working group to operate;
- Guiding funding and resource investment; and
- Ensuring the Department of Land Resource Management, Weed Management Branch is transparent in its business planning.

The scale and range of weed management issues which already exist across the region highlight the importance of a coordinated and collaborative approach to the reduction of weed impacts. Therefore, the Plan encourages a 'working together' approach.

¹ The Northern Territory (NT) Government uses the NT Weed Risk Management System to identify and assess the weed risk of plants to the N.T.



Image 2: Rubber Bush (*Calotropis procera*) can invade pastoral country if not managed.

The core set of questions used to develop the Plan included:

1. What are our priority weeds? Where did the weeds come from? Where can they end up?
2. What are our objectives for regional weed management and do we have the time and money to succeed?
3. What actions are most appropriate to achieve our objectives?

Key Stakeholders

The following key stakeholders were consulted during the development of the plan and will support implementation of actions identified in the objectives of the plan.

Table 1: Key stakeholders

Weed Management Branch (WMB)
Barkly Regional Weed Working Group (BRWWG)
Central Land Council (CLC)
Northern Land Council (NLC)
NT Cattlemen’s Association – Barkly Branch
Bushfires NT
Barkly Shire Council
Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (DPIF)
Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM)
Department of Infrastructure (DoI)
Department of Mines and Energy (DME)
Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory (PWCNT)
Barkly Landcare and Conservation Association (BLCA)
Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation

Aim

To protect the Barkly region's economy, community and environment from the adverse impacts of weeds by:

- providing clear regional priorities; and
- providing clear, achievable and measurable regional management actions.

Legal Requirements of Landholders

All landholders must take all reasonable measures to prevent their land being infested with a declared weed and prevent a declared weed on their land spreading to other land.

All landholders must meet the management requirements outlined in statutory Weed Management Plans in order to secure compliance with the *Weeds Management Act* (the Act). The purpose of the Act, as defined in section 3, is:

1. To prevent the spread of weeds in, into and out of the Territory and to ensure that the management of weeds is an integral component of land management in accordance with the Northern Territory Weeds Management Strategy 1996 – 2005 or any other strategy adopted to control weeds in the Territory;
2. To ensure there is community consultation in the creation of weed management plans; and
3. To ensure that there is community responsibility in implementing weed management plans.

The Barkly Regional Weed Management Plan supports landholders in their obligations to manage weeds on their land.

Principles of Weed Management

The Plan incorporates the Northern Territory Weeds Management Strategy principles. These include:

1. Landholders and land users are responsible for weed management.
2. Weed management is an integral part of all land management.
3. Preventing initial introduction and spread is the most effective form of weed management.
4. When introduction does occur, early detection followed by swift action is the essence of successful weed management.
5. Weed management requires a continuous, long term commitment.
6. The integration of control methods including physical, chemical, ecological and biological can achieve the best weed management outcomes.
7. Cooperative weed management amongst landholders and land users on a catchment basis is recommended and supported.
8. Coordination between government agencies and landholders is necessary to establish the research, educational and legislative framework required for successful weed management.

Essential Supportive Documents

This Plan must be viewed in association with the following documents. Additional information resources are listed in Appendix 1.

NT Statutory Weed Management Plans

A Weed Risk Assessment informs the Minister for Land Resource Management of the risk of a weed and where potential exists for successful management. On the basis of this assessment and in consultation with the minister responsible for the administration of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* he can declare a weed species under the *Weeds Management Act* (the Act) as:

Class A: To be eradicated,

Class B: Growth and spread to be controlled; and

Class C: Not to be introduced into the NT (all Class A and B weeds are also Class C).

Once a plant species is declared, the Minister can develop a statutory weed management plan, which identifies a strategic approach to managing the weed species in the NT.

A statutory weed management plan establishes the objectives, management requirements and management actions to be achieved by land managers. The following plans apply to the Barkly region.

Weed Management Plan for Mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.)

Weed Management Plan for Prickly Acacia (*Acacia nilotica*)

Weed Management Plan for Bellyache Bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*)

Weed Management Plan for Neem (*Azadirachta indica*)

The weed management plans detail the legislated obligations of all land owners, land managers and land users in the NT to eradicate or manage and avoid further spread of the weed species. Conducting land management practices in accordance with the weed management plans will secure compliance with the requirements of the Act.

NT Weed Management Handbook

The Northern Territory Weed Management Handbook provides detailed information about weed control in the Northern Territory. Weed control option tables are available for most of the priority weeds in the region which detail herbicide recommendations and optimum treatment times. Other control methods have also been described.

Regional Priorities

In order to effectively utilise the limited resources available to the region to manage weeds, the Plan has been guided by three regional priorities: These are:

1. Priority weeds;
2. Priority landscape areas; and
3. Priority pathways of spread.

The Barkly Regional Weed Working Group, as an expert knowledge base, agreed on the final priority lists of weed species, landscape areas and pathways of weed spread. However, it is acknowledged by this group that other stakeholders may have different priorities at an individual catchment or property scale. *Figure 2* gives an indication of the distribution of Priority weeds in the region.

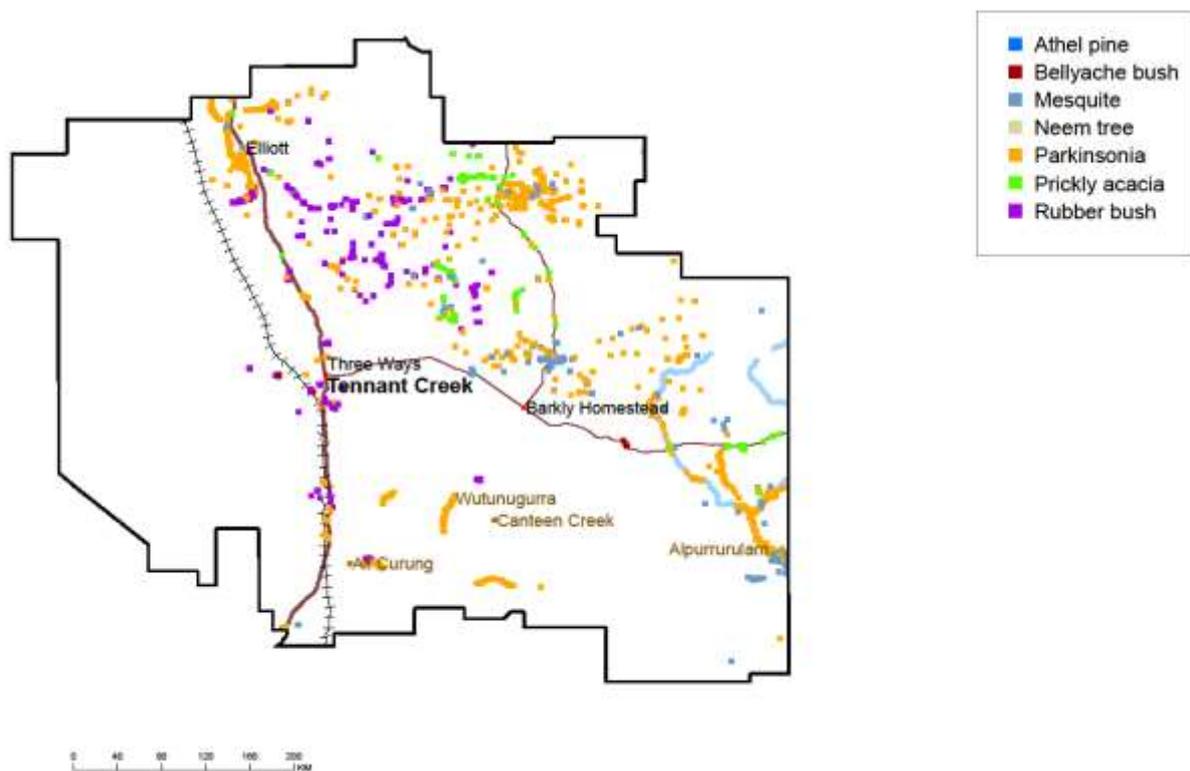


Figure 2: Indicative distribution of priority weed species and neem in the Barkly Region

Priority Weeds

Weed species that attracted priority management attention within the region were determined using one or more of the following criteria: (refer Table 2)

- a. rigorous weed risk assessment identified the species to be a very high risk to the Northern Territory and there is potential for successful management;
- b. identified as a Weed of National Significance (WoNS);
- c. local knowledge confirmed control attention within the region was a priority to ensure isolated or core infestations are eradicated or managed; and
- d. an Alert weed that may be present in the region.

Table 2: Priority weed species

Common name	Botanical name	NT Class	Weed of National Significance
Bellyache bush*	<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>	A	WoNS
Mesquite*	<i>Prosopis</i> spp.	A	WoNS
Prickly acacia*	<i>Acacia nilotica</i>	A	WoNS
Parkinsonia	<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>	B	WoNS
Rubber bush	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	B	
Athel pine	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>	A	WoNS

* Species must be eradicated as directed by statutory Weed Management Plans.

This priority list does not replace an individual landholder's own priority species for control, but the above mentioned should be incorporated into their management plan. This priority list does not relinquish a landholder of their legislative responsibilities for other declared weeds not listed above.

Opportunistic Weeds

Landholders should also prioritise management of opportunistic weeds such as those listed below, that commonly appear after control of priority species (refer Table 3).

Table 3: Opportunistic weed species

Common name	Botanical name	NT Class	Weed of National Significance
Cacti	<i>Opuntia</i> and <i>Cylindropuntia</i>	B/not declared	WoNS
Neem*	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	B	
Noogoora burr	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>	B	
Mossman River grass	<i>Cenchrus echinatus</i>	B	
Grader grass	<i>Themeda quadrivalvis</i>	B	

* Species must be eradicated as directed by statutory Weed Management Plans.

Alert Weeds

An alert weed is a species not yet naturalised in the region, that has the potential to have a high level of impact to the region should it become established, and the likelihood of the species naturalising and spreading in the region is perceived to be high. The species identified for the Barkly region are in Table 4.

Table 4: Alert weed species

Common name	Botanical name	NT Class	Weed of National Significance
Fountain grass	<i>Cenchrus setaceum</i>	B	
Parthenium ²	<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>	A	WoNS
Rubber vine ²	<i>Cryptostegia grandiflora</i>	A	WoNS

² Landholders are urged not to attempt to control or dispose of parthenium or rubber vine. If found, please immediately contact the Weed Management Branch in Tennant Creek or Alice Springs for identification and disposal



Image 3: Bellyache bush is only found in closely monitored, isolated infestations in the Barkly region. It poses a considerable threat to the region.

Significant threat

Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is not a declared weed in the Northern Territory. Buffel grass is the common name for a complex group of cultivars that were introduced successfully to central Australia for improved pasture production, soil stabilisation and dust suppression. These cultivars of varied palatability and suitability to the country appear to have hybridised and spread well beyond areas where they were planted and into places once thought unsuited to their survival. Buffel grass is contentious because it is prized by many pastoralists but is also highly invasive in central Australia. It can impact directly on biodiversity values, for example through competition, and indirectly through increasing the frequency and intensity of fires. These hotter fires can also increase the risk of damage to infrastructure and cultural sites.

Due to its extensive distribution in central Australia, value to pastoralists and the fact it is not a declared weed, buffel grass cannot readily be managed in the same way as the introduced plants in Table 2.

Resources need to be targeted to areas of greatest need and/or where potential for successful management is highest. Where containment is not feasible, resources may need to be focused on asset protection.

Priority Landscape Areas

Landscape areas that attracted priority management attention within the region were determined using one or more of the following criteria (refer Table 5):

- a. very high visitation areas;
- b. low incursions of weeds;
- c. site of significance for biodiversity conservation in the NT³;
- d. significant commercial values;
- e. significant cultural and heritage values;
- f. susceptibility to invasion; and
- g. weed source areas including top of streams and up-wind areas.

Table 5: Priority landscapes areas

Landscape area	Examples
Sites of high community value	Karlu Karlu (The Devils Marbles), Mary Ann Dam, Longreach Water Hole, Tennant Creek Telegraph Station
Sites of significance for biodiversity conservation in the NT	Lake Woods, Lake Sylvester, Lake Tarrabool, Eva Downs Swamp, Connells Lagoon, the Davenport and Murchison Ranges, Elkedra River floodout swamps, Frew River floodout swamps.
Pastoral Properties / Barkly Rangelands	Alexandria Station, Brunette Downs Station

Many of the priority landscape areas in the Barkly are associated with waterways such as rivers and lakes, due to the biodiversity these areas attract as well as the recreational and aesthetic values (refer Figure 3).

³Sites considered of high conservation significance because they support important wetland values, large aggregations of wildlife, concentrations of threatened species or endemic species, or are considered botanical hot-spots.

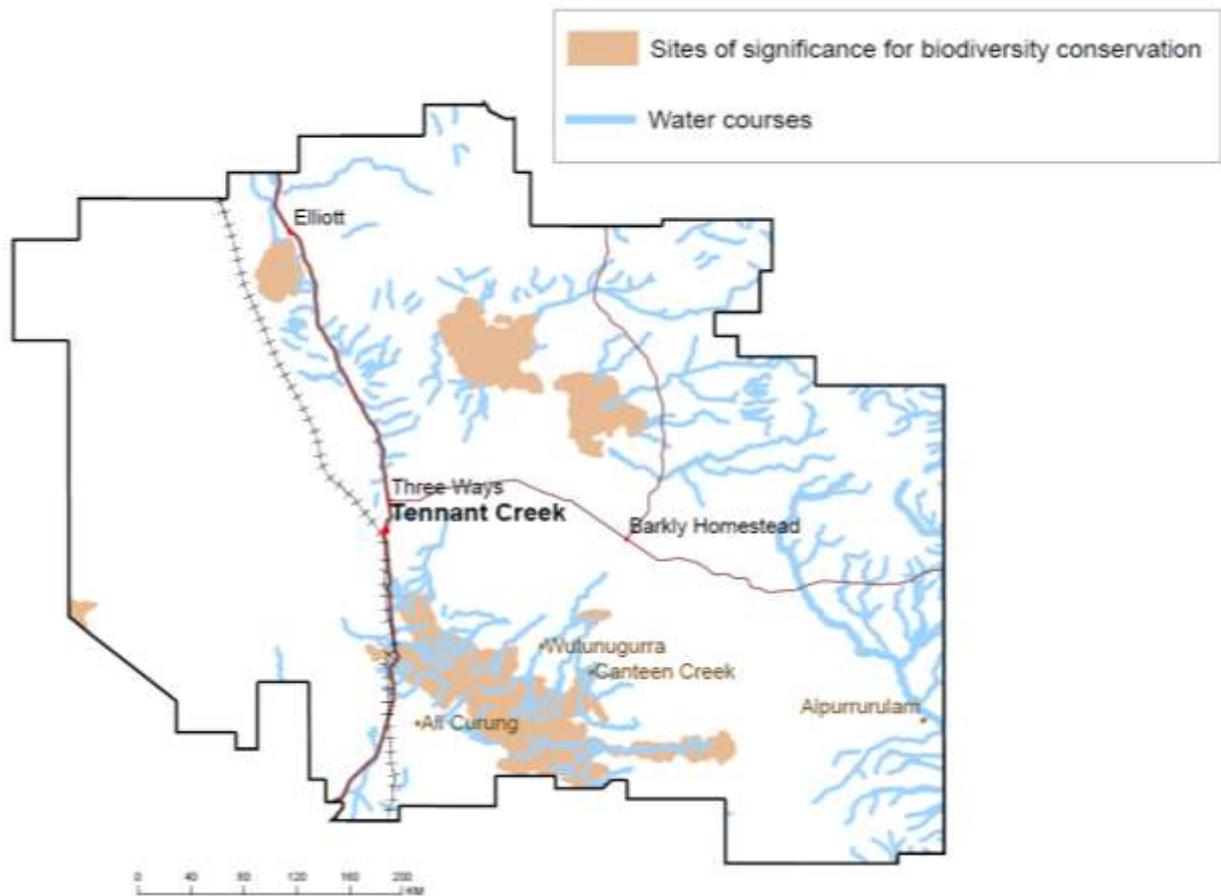


Figure 3: Priority landscape areas in the Barkly region



Image 4: Lake Woods is significant to the Barkly region for its productive pastures, biodiversity and recreation opportunities



Image 5: The highly productive Barkly Tablelands provide an abundance of valuable fodder in the perennial Mitchell grasses.

Priority Pathways of Spread

Pathways of spread (refer Table 6) that attracted priority management attention in the Barkly Region were determined using one or more of the following criteria:

- a. the physical characteristics of weeds to be transported;
- b. human activities most likely to spread weeds; and
- c. likely physical corridor for weed spread.

Table 6: Priority pathways of spread

Pathway of Spread	Examples
River corridors	Livestock, feral and native animal movements, wind, water, and recreation activities.
Mining & Gas exploration	Exploration, construction and maintenance activities.
Rail corridors	Construction and maintenance activities.
Pastoral properties	Roads, tracks, bores, cattle and hay movement of vehicles and equipment.
Roads and Stock routes	Construction and maintenance, such as slashing and grading, 4WD tourism, wind, livestock, feral and native animal movements.



Image 6: The 'Darwin-Red' variety of bellyache bush growing in a creek flood out area in the Barkly region.

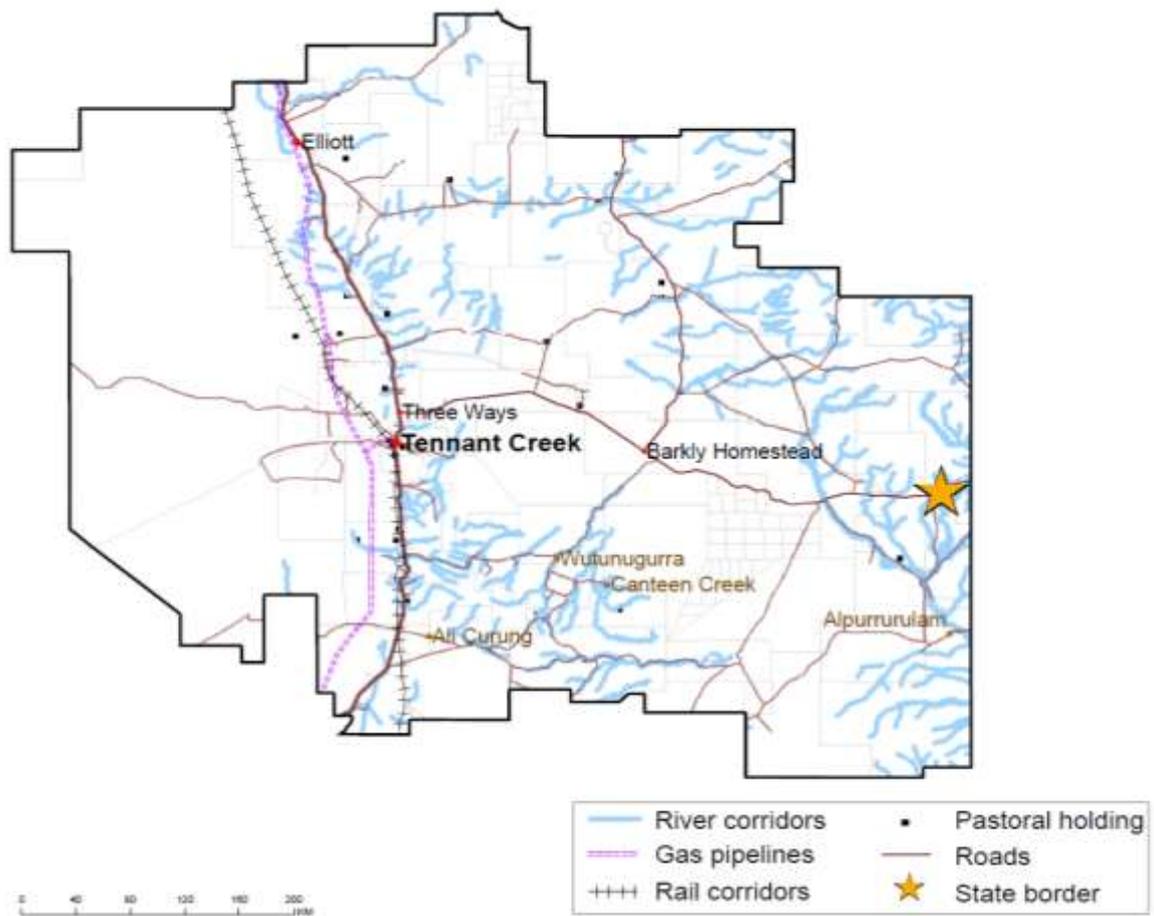


Figure 4: Priority pathways of spread

Objectives and Actions

The following four objectives of the Plan represent a realistic result of what the Plan can achieve in its five year timeframe. However, to achieve the objectives, the management requirements that support the objectives will require significant investment in time and resources over the five year timeframe.

Objective 1: To prevent the introduction and spread of the region's priority weeds

Objective 2: To improve adaptive weed management

Objective 3: To ensure landholders act responsibly and support a 'working together' approach to weed management

Objective 4: To increase the region's awareness of its priorities and capacity to manage weed impacts.

Objective 1: To prevent the introduction and spread of the region's priority weeds

Action	Primary Responsibility	Indicator and Timeframe
1.1. Prioritise rapid response operations to detected outbreaks of 'Alert' Weeds	WMB	ongoing
1.2. Support the implementation of the NT Weed Spread Prevention Strategy	WMB	ongoing
1.3. Implement regional activities to increase awareness and adoption of weed spread prevention procedures such as quarantining livestock and cleaning machinery	WMB & TNRM	2 rural shows annually
1.4. Develop and/or adopt a code of practice for Weed Spread Prevention	All	All completed 2016
1.5. Conduct up-skilling of ground level working groups to identify and report priority weeds	WMB & All	1 regional workshop annually
1.6. Monitor priority pathways for new and spreading weeds	WMB & All	annually
1.7. Inform landholders of their responsibility as directed by the statutory species Weed Management Plans and the <i>Weed Management Act</i>	WMB and TNRM	presentation annually
1.8. Identify and implement activities that increase awareness of weed spread prevention to encourage adoption of best practice management	All and WMB	new initiative annually

Management Requirement: Eradicate where possible, implement early detection, and implement weed spread prevention programs.

Objective 2: To improve adaptive weed management

Action	Primary Responsibility	Indicator and Timeframe
2.1. Share the results of weed control success and failings with the BRWWG	All	topical presentations at BRWWG meetings
2.2. Share landscape rehabilitation learnings	All	presentations at BRWWG meeting annually
2.3. Provide weed datasets to the Regional Weed Officer	All & WMB	No. of partners providing datasets
2.4. Continue to regulate and support property holders with a permit to use a declared weed	WMB	Inspect permit holders annually
2.5. Identify and support the trial of new weed management equipment	All	1 new tool tested regionally, annually
2.6. Maintain links with relevant research institutes and continue to support a partnership approach to regional priority weed research	BRWWG	research institutes represented on BRWWG
2.7. Identify and record where there are gaps in knowledge for future investigations	BRWWG & TNRM	Recorded in minutes of BRWWG annually
2.8. Map distribution of priority weeds	WMB & all	WMB present 2 species maps annually

Management Requirement: Monitor progress, utilise appropriate weed management methods and understand what makes resilient landscapes.

Objective 3: To ensure landholders act responsibly and support a ‘working together’ approach to weed management

Action	Primary Responsibility	Indicator and Timeframe
3.1. Develop and maintain regional partnership programs with industry	WMB	2 programs conducted annually
3.2. Identify priority programs for funding prior to funding announcements	BRWWG & All	2 priority programs identified annually
3.3. Create awareness of landholders’ legal responsibility	WMB	Present to landholder group annually
3.4. Participate in Regional Weed Working Group meetings and regional weed forum	All	2 RWWG meetings & 1 forum annually
3.5. Barkly Region Weeds Working Group to have representation on the NT Weed Advisory Committee	BRWWG through Anthony Cox the NTCA representative.	Attend 2 meetings annually
3.6. Coordinate planning activities on a catchment scale	TNRM & WMB	1 plan annually
3.7. Maintain cross border partnerships in support of national programs	WMB & TRNM	Participation in programs annually
3.8. Develop priority species management plans (an example of a management plan for bellyache bush is located as Appendix 2)	WMB	2 plans drafted annually

Management Requirement: Maintain coordination and sharing of resources.

Objective 4: To increase the region's awareness of its priorities and capacity to manage weed impacts

Action	Primary Responsibility	Indicator and Timeframe
4.1. Promote regional priorities to land managers through key partners	BRWWG & All	All land holders can identify priority weeds by 2016
4.2. Provide inductions and regular training to identify priority and alert weeds to volunteers and staff	WMB & All	1 official training session annually
4.3. Support land managers to develop and improve weed management capacity through on ground demonstrations & incentive programs	WMB & All	2 on ground demonstrations annually
4.4. Continue to develop regional and targeted communication materials	WMB, TNRM, NTCA & CLC	2 new products annually
4.5. Expose community members to the impact of alert weeds in neighboring states	WMB & TRNM & BRWWG	1 person travelling interstate to see impacts
4.6. Promote a 'working together' role in detection, management and prevention of spread of weeds	WMB	Develop a 'working together' brand for weed spread prevention by 2016

Management Requirement: Implement targeted communications and motivate landholder actions.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Regional Plan

Objective	Performance indicator	Monitoring activity
1	Is there better management in eradication of weeds and weed spread prevention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of days spent on species eradication • number of new outbreaks recorded
2	Is there an increase in information distribution and adaptive management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of stakeholders providing weed location data • number of monitoring programs developed and implemented
3	Is there improved partnered investment in the region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of partner investment programs • number of regional meetings and number of people to attend regional forum
4	Is there an increased awareness of regional issues, management priorities and responsibilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of major awareness raising events held and number of attendees • survey key land managers about their knowledge of regional priorities

Data collection

Datasets that assist with ongoing decision making and ensure accountability are essential. The Regional Weed Working Group, as a part of its core business annually, should consider the available data, presented by the Regional Weeds Officer and discuss progress towards the Plan objectives.

Evaluation

A review of the plan objectives, priorities and actions will be conducted every five years. The review should be undertaken by the Regional Weeds Officer in consultation with key stakeholders, and amendments made to the Plan, if required.

Acknowledgements

The Barkly Regional Weed Working Group and Weed Management Branch would like to acknowledge the contributions made by the BRWWG members, industry groups, community groups and land managers in the development of the Plan.

Appendix 1: Additional information resources

All resources identified below are able to download from www.lrm.nt.gov.au/weeds or you can contact the Weed Management Branch on 8999 4567 to obtain free copies.

Weed Management Handbook

This resource provides information on integrated weed control methods. Specific information is provided on herbicides registered for use in the NT. The handbook also indicates optimum treatment times for specific weeds.

Northern Territory Weed Data Collection Manual

This resource provides information on what and how to collect weed data, how to use it or how to submit this information to the Weed Management Branch.

Management Guides

The Management Guide for Bellyache bush provides information on best practice management of this species.

Weed ID Sheets

This resource provides information on how to identify weed species via use of photos and descriptions of various parts of the plant.

Weed Notes

This resource provides substantially more information on a weed species than the Weed ID Sheets and includes information on control methods for that species

Preventing Weed Spread is Everybody's Business

This industry-focused document highlights the roles and responsibilities of the Department and land managers, in context to weed risk, sustainable economic development and legislated requirements.

Appendix 2: Example of a weed management plan for bellyache bush

Katherine Region - BELLYACHE BUSH								
Goals	Objectives	Actions	Milestones	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5
To facilitate strategic management	Prevent spread	Develop cross tenure, co-ordinated management programs	All land managers understand their legal obligations to manage bellyache bush in accordance with the <i>Weeds Management Act 2001 (the Act)</i> , by complying with the Weed Management Plan for Bellyache Bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			Property Management Plans which are consistent with the requirements of the Weed Management Plan for Bellyache Bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) (PMPs) are developed for affected B/C zoned properties and lands	✓				
			PMPs implemented on affected B/C zoned properties and lands	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			PMPs developed for affected A/C zoned properties and lands	✓	✓			
			PMPs implemented on affected A/C zoned properties and lands		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Prevent new incursions	Information relating to bellyache bush identification, control, data collection and legislative requirements is promoted and made available to all land holders	All land managers are able to identify bellyache bush and survey their land at intervals commensurate with risk of infestation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			When bellyache bush is identified in areas it has not been found previously, land managers/user have accurately recorded the infestation, reported it to the Weeds Management Branch and are aware of their obligation to manage it in accordance with the Act by developing and implementing an adequate property management plan.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reduce impact of established infestations	Contain existing infestations in the B/C Zone using appropriate control methods, including biological control	PMPs developed and implemented on affected B/C zoned properties and lands	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
To build capacity	Increase awareness education and skills	Awareness relating to identification and potential impacts of bellyache bush increased in all catchments and in urban settings	Community recognises and accesses services and products provided by the Weed Management Branch. As bellyache bush has been traded as an ornamental, emphasis should be placed on growers and the nursery industry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		All landholders to be provided with levels of support necessary to develop and implement PMPs consistent with the requirements of Weed Management Plan for Bellyache Bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>)	PMPs developed and implemented on affected properties and lands	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Continue to work with indigenous ranger groups to increase capacity	Plans developed for affected lands	✓	✓			
			Plans implemented for affected lands		✓	✓	✓	✓
			Capacity to undertake contract work on other areas increased		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Motivate land managers to manage weeds strategically and consistently	Land managers undertaking weed management which is consistent with Weed Management Plan for Bellyache Bush		✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Increase coordination across land uses/tenures	Promote regional/catchment approaches to weed management which are consistent with the Weed Management Plan for Bellyache Bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>)	Control activities are occurring as indicated in the Weed Management Plan for Bellyache Bush.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		To support research efforts regarding control techniques	Establish optimal aerial application techniques Work with APVMA to utilise successful trial outcomes		✓			
	Increase information available for decision making	To support research efforts regarding biological control	Support Queensland research efforts	✓	✓			
			To facilitate the collection of appropriate and consistent data	Land managers are supplying data as per the draft Weed Data Collection Guidelines NT	✓	✓	✓	✓
To collate all data received and make it publicly available in an appropriate format			Distribution maps are available for all priority weed species	✓				
		Distribution maps are for priority weed species are updated as new data becomes available		✓	✓	✓	✓	
To identify emerging threats	Identify emerging threats	Not applicable						

Weed Management Branch Contacts

For more information or advice in relation to the identification, management or monitoring of weeds please contact the Weed Management Branch:

Phone: (08) 8962 4314 or if the office is unattended (08) 8999 4567 (Darwin Branch)

Email: weedinfo@nt.gov.au

Website: www.lrm.nt.gov.au/weeds

The NT Herbarium can also provide plant identification advice:

Phone: 08 8999 4516