# Purpose

The purpose of the Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee is to provide a consultative forum to develop a buffel grass strategy for Central Australia that prioritises areas and methods where direct management actions will be most valuable and effective. The committee has direct responsibility under section 16 of the *Weeds Management Act 2001* (the Act), which states that:

1. The Minister may establish weed advisory committees for regions, districts or catchments, or for specific purposes.
2. A weed advisory committee consists of persons appointed by the Minister, who in the opinion of the Minister, have expertise or experience relevant to the management of declared weeds or who represent groups or organisations that are concerned with the management of declared weeds or related weeds.
3. The Minister is to appoint a member of a weed advisory committee to be the Chairperson of the committee.
4. A member of a weed advisory committee holds office for three years and is eligible for reappointment.
5. A member of a weed advisory committee may resign by writing delivered to the Minister.

# Functions of the committee

As determined by section 17 of the Act, the specific functions of a weed advisory committee are to:

* develop draft weed management plans in consultation with appropriate persons, groups or organisations, and with persons whose land may be affected by a declared weed infestation;
* advise the Minister on the progress of weed management in the region, district, catchment area or the specific purpose for which it was established; and
* advise the Minister on other matters as the Minister may request from time to time.

# Membership

## 3.1 Selection criteria

Membership will only include individuals who:

* have a genuine desire and ability to collaborate with others who may have competing interests or opposing viewpoints on weed management;
* have either (a) professional qualifications or experience in natural resource or weed management; or (b) who represent groups or organisations that are concerned with the management of buffel grass;
* are without financial or legal conflict of interest; and
* have strong existing networks which will enable broad community consultation and the dissemination of weed management advice and information.

## 3.2 Membership representation

Membership will:

* be representative of multiple industry and stakeholder groups and the spectrum of land tenures in Central Australia; and
* support departmental actions for the enforcement of legislation.

## 3.3 Terms of office

1. At least three meetings shall be held between March and June 2024 and thereafter as called by the Chairperson.
2. Time commitment is required for meetings, and additional time allotted for tasks related to committee work, such as reading, communication, responding to and representing committee issues and recommendations to stakeholders. Meetings will be held in Alice Springs.
3. Committee members may also be asked to serve on subcommittees formed to work on issues and tasks before the committee.
4. Meeting scheduling should, where possible, take into account travel requirements of members who live in remote or regional areas.
5. A member of a weed advisory committee holds office for three years and is eligible to be reappointed.
6. Committee members will cease to be a member if they resign from the committee or breach confidentiality.

## 3.4 Vacant positions

1. Where a vacancy arises, committee members may recommend to the Minister that a specific group or agency be contacted to nominate a representative.
2. The Minister may determine that a group or agency be contacted to nominate a representative.

## 3.5 Disclosure of interest (as determined by section 19 of the Act)

1. A member of a weed advisory committee who has or has had a direct or indirect proprietary or other pecuniary interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered by the committee (other than an interest held in common with other land owners or users of land in the area) must, as soon as possible after the relevant facts have come to the member's knowledge, disclose the nature of his or her interest at a meeting of the committee.
2. A disclosure under subsection (1) is to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the weed advisory committee and the member, in relation to the matter:
3. is not, while he or she has that interest (otherwise than as a member of, and in common with the other members of, a corporation consisting of not less than 25 persons and of which he or she is not a director) to take part after the disclosure in any deliberation or decision of the committee; and
4. is to be disregarded for the purpose of constituting a quorum at the meeting.

## 3.6 Confidentiality (as determined by section 20 of the Act)

A member of a weed advisory committee must not disclose information obtained in the course of his or her duties as a member unless the disclosure is made in the course of those duties.

## 3.7 Chatham house rules

When a committee meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, members are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of other participants may be revealed.

## 3.8 Conditions

1. Payment of members is determined under Section 9 of the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act*. The committee is classed as a C3 Advisory and Review Bodies - Ministerial Assistant, in accordance with the Statutory Bodies Classification Structure.
2. Northern Territory Government and Australian Government employees are not eligible for the payment of sitting fees or mileage allowance. Travel allowance for these employees will not be paid by the Northern Territory Government. Accommodation and other travel expenses may be paid by the Northern Territory Government in exceptional circumstances.

# Meetings

As determined by section 18 of the Act, the meetings of a weed advisory committee should be consistent with the following:

1. The Chairperson of a weed advisory committee is to call meetings of the committee as and when required to perform its functions.
2. The Chairperson of a weed advisory committee is to convene a meeting of the committee when directed to do so by the Minister.
3. At a meeting of a weed advisory committee:
4. one more than half of the members of the committee holding office constitutes a quorum;
5. the Chairperson, if present, is to preside but in the absence of the Chairperson, the members present are to elect one of their members to act as Chairperson and that person may exercise the powers and perform the functions of the Chairperson at the meeting;
6. questions arising are to be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting and in the event of an equality of votes the Chairperson or other member presiding at the meeting has, in addition to his or her deliberative vote, a casting vote; and
7. the Chairperson or other member presiding at the meeting is to determine the procedure to be followed at or in connection with the meeting.
8. A weed advisory committee must keep records of its meetings.

Additional terms include that:

1. In the event that a quorum cannot be achieved at late notice, the Chairperson may determine to seek a consensus out of session.
2. Where a member is unable to attend they may provide their opinion on matters to be considered to the Chairperson prior to the meeting.
3. A proxy can represent a stakeholder group at meetings, providing an update to committee members, but is not able to cast a vote on any matter without prior Ministerial approval.
4. Internal or external persons may be invited to attend the meetings at the request of the Chairperson on behalf of the committee to provide advice, information and assistance where necessary. They have no voting rights and may be requested to leave the meeting at any time by the Chairperson.

## 4.1 Out of session meetings

1. Where necessary, decisions may be made out of session.
2. Items to be considered out of session will be circulated electronically by the Executive Officer with the endorsement of the Chairperson.
3. Members should provide a response within a time frame designated by the Executive Officer with the endorsement of the Chairperson.
4. Responses should be provided in writing.
5. A non-response must not be assumed to be either positive or negative.
6. A summary of responses must be sent to the Chairperson. The response summary and outcome will then be circulated to all members with the endorsement of the Chairperson.

# Amendments

1. The terms of reference shall be reviewed if required.
2. The terms of reference may be altered to meet the needs of all committee members if supported by the Minister.

# The relationship of the committee to other committee and regional groups

The committee may seek input on regional issues from specific groups, such as regional weed reference groups, and will work collaboratively with other relevant community and management boards.

#  Support arrangements

Logistical and secretariat support will be provided by the Executive Officer of the Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee, Weed Management Branch, Northern Territory Government.

It is important for all committee members to familiarise themselves with the duties and responsibilities outlined in the *Northern Territory Government Boards Handbook – A guide for members and administrators of Northern Territory Government boards and committees*.

# Document control

## 8.1 Document Control

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## 8.2 Document Change History

The following table records the history of any significant changes made to this document. The version number of the document is incremented as follows:

* by 1.0 for significant changes
* by 0.1 for changes made for clarity and reading ease only

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