Buffel grass declaration

Buffel grass is an introduced grass species that is drought resistant and commonly used by pastoralists as cattle feed and a soil stabiliser. It grows prolifically following seasonal rains, is tolerant to fire, and is an early re-invader of burnt areas.

# What the declaration means

A declaration under the *Weeds Management Act 2001* (Weeds Act) means that all people have a general duty to prevent their land becoming infested, to prevent spread onto other land, and to follow any weed management plan in place for that species.

Under section 7(1) of the Weeds Act, buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris* and *Cenchrus pennisetiformis*) has been declared a weed for the purposes of preventing the plant entering into, and managing the plant in, the Territory.

This declaration **does not** mean that land managers are expected to eradicate buffel grass.

This buffel declaration will ensure there is a focus on reducing the negative impacts of buffel on the environment and culture.

# Why buffel grass has been declared a weed

Buffel’s resilience to fire enables it to survive and quickly produce new growth after burning, providing fuel for more fires. Buffel can create a fire hazard through increasing the frequency and intensity of fires impacting communities, culture and the environment.

### What you should do

The declaration of buffel creates a duty for land owners and occupiers to:

• Take reasonable measures to prevent the land becoming infested with a declared weed

• Take reasonable measures to prevent a declared weed spreading to other land

• Follow a statutory weed management plan for any weeds on the land

The **Buffel Grass Management Strategy: Central Australia 2024-2030****,** developed by the Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee, sets out a range of actions that would be considered reasonable to reduce buffel’s negative impacts across all land types.

Actions from the Buffel Management Strategy which are **enforceable** under the Weeds Act

* Limit introductions into areas where buffel is not established
* No new introductions of buffel grass into the NT without a permit
* Prevent land being ‘infested’ (i.e. dominated, excluding other species)
* No transport of uncovered buffel grass
* Avoid transport of contaminated product/machinery on public roads or between differing land tenures
* Report buffel where it has not previously been known

Key actions from the Buffel Management Strategy which are **not enforceable** under the Weeds Act

* Resource and assist Landcare groups with community-led projects
* Support private landholders through access to herbicide and equipment loans
* Aboriginal ranger groups funded to reduce buffel in Indigenous Protected Areas
* Identify clean areas for surveillance
* Prioritise treatment of new outbreaks and treat isolated outbreaks as a priority and follow up
* Minimise soil disturbance
* Avoid moving through infestations
* Maintain firebreaks around land area boundaries and infrastructure
* Maintain firebreaks and reduce fuel loads in priority landscapes
* Mosaic burning and treatment regime to intercept buffel growth cycle
* Follow up after buffel control to prevent re-establishment during native rehabilitation
* Control buffel grass to reduce seed production to a distance of 10m on either side of sealed roads
* Designated road stops kept free of buffel seeds
* Spray, burn or slash buffel in corridors adjoining priority areas to minimise buffel seeding
* Implement vehicle, plant, equipment, machinery and construction material hygiene protocol to prevent re-introductions after control
* Buffel control lines of 200m adjoining priority areas and differing land tenures
* Manage in accordance with the requirements and objectives of the *Pastoral Land Act 1992* and the *Soil Conservation and Land Utilisation Act 1969*