



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 313

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA:

Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan

The Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan 2026–2036 ('The Plan') was approved by the Minister and came into effect on 1 May 2026.

1. The Weed Advisory Committee's communique of November 2025 records that the Committee "was unable to reach consensus on how the general duties under section 9E of the Act should be applied to the pastoral industry" and that "Two options will therefore be put to the Minister, along with information on WAC deliberations for his consideration".
 - a. What were the two options put to the Minister, and on what date were they put?
 - b. Which option was adopted, and what was the basis for adopting it?
 - c. The consultation summary records that "Non-pastoral members acknowledged the need to allow for continued use of existing buffel grass by the pastoral industry, but supported a risk-based approach to permits rather than broad exemptions". Will the information on the Committee's deliberations provided to the Minister be tabled?
 - d. What is the rationale for the allowances for pastoral use provided for in the Plan?
2. The Buffel Grass Permit Guidelines (Version 1, 27 April 2026) record that "To allow for the continued pastoral use of buffel grass, the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment has granted a pastoral industry permit for Crown land subject to pastoral lease under the Pastoral Land Act 1992".
 - a. Appendix A of the Plan, approved on 18 March 2026, states that the Minister "upon receipt of an application, can grant an industry-wide permit to Crown land subject to pastoral lease under the Pastoral Land Act 1992". The Guidelines of 27 April 2026 state that he has granted it. On what date was an application received, from whom, and on what date was the permit granted?

- b. For what term was it granted, what conditions attach to it including any bond, and will the permit be provided?
 - c. How many individual permits have been granted since the Plan came into effect on 1 May 2026, for what activities, and how many have been refused?
 - d. How many of those were permits to import buffel grass seed into the Northern Territory, and for what volumes?
- 3. Section 5.3.2.1(a) of the Plan defines “reasonable measures” for pastoral land as “use in accordance with the relevant objectives of the Pastoral Land Act 1992”, and provides that “Grazing is considered a reasonable measure for managing buffel grass on pastoral land”. Section 5.3.2.1(b) provides that reasonable measures on non-pastoral land in non-urban areas may include “Destroying outlier buffel grass plants and infestations as a priority”.
 - a. On pastoral land, what result must grazing achieve for the duty to prevent spread onto adjoining land to be discharged?
 - b. Where buffel grass spreads from pastoral land onto adjoining land whose occupier is expected to destroy it, who bears the cost of that control?
 - c. Appendix A of the Plan classifies as a low risk activity, for which “permits will not be required”, the scattering of buffel grass by owners or occupiers of land used for pastoral production, with seed sourced from within the same weed management region, “as long as use is in accordance with the objectives of the Pastoral Land Act 1992 and the size does not exceed 1 ha”. Over what unit is the one hectare measured — per event, per property, or per year — and how is compliance with that limit monitored?
- 4. What monitoring, compliance and enforcement resources are allocated to implement the Plan over its first two years?
 - a. The Department’s buffel grass page records that the Buffel Grass Weed Advisory Committee “was approved by the Minister for Environment on 6 May 2024 and disbanded on 17 June 2026”. Its last published meeting was on 12 November 2025, at which it was unable to reach consensus on the pastoral question. On what date was the decision to disband made, by whom, and for what reason?
 - b. What expert advisory arrangements now exist to guide implementation of the Plan, and when were they established?
 - c. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 sets a target that at least 90 per cent of compliance inspections under the Weeds Management Act

2001 are undertaken. How many inspections were planned for 2025–26, how many were undertaken, and who sets the number planned?

- d. How many of those inspections related to buffel grass, and how many resulted in a direction, notice or penalty?
 - e. If inspections are not recorded by weed species, in which system are they recorded and in what format?
5. What assessment has the Department made of the ecological impacts of buffel grass invasion across Central Australia and the Barkly?
 6. What assessment has been made of the impacts of buffel grass on the tourism industry in Central Australia, including in the MacDonnell Ranges, at Uluru and Kata Tjuta, at Watarrka, and along the Larapinta Trail?
 7. What outcomes would trigger review or amendment of the Plan if monitoring shows continued spread?