

DRAFT Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan 2026-2036 Submission Guide (NT)



What is it

A plan to manage and regulate buffel grass in the NT as per the Weed Management Act 2001. It addresses legislative requirements for the public and land managers now that buffel grass has been declared a NT weed. [Here](#) is the plan, here is the [strategy](#) it sits alongside & the [legislation](#) it relates to.

Why is it important?

Buffel grass is a landscape transformer, it fuels hot and frequent fires which native species cannot withstand, it suppresses bush foods and impacts sacred sites. Buffel grass is acknowledged globally as one of the biggest threat to arid environments. It has already covered massive areas in Central Australia and continues to spread and smother landscapes, causing fire and destroying biodiversity. It threatens ecosystems, culture and people. A bold vision and strong action is needed to slow down this catastrophic threat to the arid lands and care for the huge areas which are still buffel free!

This plan will determine the legal requirements for managing buffel grass for the next decade. This is a rare opportunity to shape policy which protects the NTs iconic and precious landscapes.

Tips

- Stay relevant - refer to points in the plan and stay within the scope of the plan. This plan is about the law, not everything to do with buffel in the NT! It is a narrow process.
- Express concern and be direct but be polite
- It's ok to keep it simple and brief - it's better than nothing!
- Say it in your own words if you can

What are ALEC's Key Concerns?

KEY ISSUE: The plan proposes an industry wide exemption for pastoralists to perform "high risk" buffel grass activities including purchasing, scattering, propagating and transporting across pastoral leases (45% of the NT), including to buffel-free places.

- Limit the seed of a weed! It is simple.
- This permit is for up to 10 years with minimal reporting and review requirements.
- Currently in the NT, we have no data on who buys and uses buffel grass seed, what cultivar is being bought and where it will be used. This exemption will mean this critical data will still not be known.
- The plan places most of the responsibility for buffel grass management on everyone except for pastoralists, who are permitted to spread buffel grass across their pastoral lease long into the future. It is a farce that pastoralists who alongside Governments have created the buffel grass catastrophe can keep making the issue worse!
- Buffel grass does not respect land boundaries, the seed disperses via wind and rainfall, we need to draw a line in the sand and stop fueling the problem by allowing it to proliferate across nearly half of the territory.
- Buffel grass is a grave threat, at a minimum we need to stop making the problem worse. Limiting the use of seed is a basic but key step!
- Pastoralists are also not the focus of educational programs. The Department of Agriculture should provide opportunities to learn about impacts, management strategies and alternatives to buffel grass that is evidence based.

Survey Questions & Example Answers

What, if any, management requirements in the DRAFT Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan do you consider are not reasonable?

- It is unreasonable to promote the removal of buffel grass and conservation goals whilst allowing the sale and planting of buffel grass seed for pastoral leases via the proposed permit system. LIMIT THE SEED OF A WEED!
- It is unreasonable to propose an industry wide permit which allows buffel grass and its seed to be imported, planted, propagated and scattered on pastoral leases which make up 45% of the Northern Territory. This privileges pastoralists, with Gov support, who have been instrumental in the historical and current spread of buffel grass in the NT.
- The scope of this permit is too broad and therefore difficult to monitor the importation, planting, cultivars and scale of buffel grass on pastoral leases. A more reasonable system would be on a case by case basis with regular review, reporting and monitoring. Any permit should not allow the purchasing or planting of buffel grass.
- The proposed permits could be up to 10 years, this is too long, a shorter permit is reasonable because it will allow for reviews, monitoring and adaptation to changes in environment and industry.
- Buffel grass doesn't respect land boundaries, because it spreads via wind, water and human movement. Pastoralists cannot reasonably control the spread from their properties onto others. A line needs to be drawn, stop the planting of buffel grass and making the problem worse so that efforts to contain its spread can be effective.
- It is unreasonable to prioritise one stakeholder over all others, this plan prioritises pastoralists over the many other voices in the community who are concerned and impacted by buffel grass invasion.
- It is unreasonable to have different goals for different land tenures because the goals of these land tenures contradict each other. For example, pursuing conservation goals whilst allowing for the proliferation of buffel grass on 45% of the territory.

Survey Questions & Example Answers

If you think additional management requirements are required in the DRAFT Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan, what are they?

- Pastoral leases should not be exempt. This plan should include additional management requirements for pastoral leases including banning all high risk activities stated in the plan. LIMIT THE SEED OF A WEED!
- A bold, strong innovative vision for buffel grass action, one that is appropriate for the severity of the problem
- Ensure that the impacts on First Nations people and culturally appropriate solutions are prioritised. First nations people with custodial obligations are supported to mitigate the spread and impacts of buffel grass on culturally important plants, sites and practices.
- If a permit system were to be implemented it should have regular review periods and be granted for a significantly shorter timeframe than 10 years
- If the proposed industry wide permit is implemented it must include reporting and monitoring requirements - without this mapping and management efforts will be undermined. ALEC strongly opposes the industry wide-permit approach.

Do you have any further comments or input regarding the DRAFT Buffel Grass Weed Management Plan?

- The impacts of buffel/why you are concerned
- Examples of concern amongst the community
- Any personal examples of the impacts of buffel grass you might have
- Express the technical support and research you and your community want to better manage the impacts of buffel grass invasion.