

PASTORAL LAND BOARD

**ANNUAL REPORT
2005/2006**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chairman’s Foreword	1
Membership of the Board	2
Functions of the Pastoral Land Board	2
Meetings of the Board held during 2005/2006	3
Policy Issues and New Initiatives	4
Administrative processes for pastoral land clearing applications	4
Moratorium on land clearing in the Daly Region	4
Review of the <i>Pastoral Land Act</i>	4
Guidelines for use of introduced pastures in pastoral lease development	4
Pastoral Land Monitoring Programs	5
Monitoring programs	5
Tier 1 data collection techniques	5
Establishment and reassessment of Tier 1 photo-point monitoring sites.....	6
Pastoral District Reports 2005/2006	7
General definition of land condition	7
Criteria used to assess pasture condition	7
Change in Landscape Function (LF) index	8
Darwin Pastoral District report	9
Katherine Pastoral District report	10
Roper Pastoral District report	11
VRD Pastoral District report	12
Sturt Plateau Pastoral District report	14
Gulf Pastoral District report	15
Barkly Pastoral District report	16
Tennant Creek Pastoral District report	17
Plenty Pastoral District report	18
Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District report	20
Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District report.....	21
Specific Land Condition Issues	23
Implementation of Management Plans to address land condition issues	23
Drought	23
Erosion on roads, fences and other infrastructure.....	23
Gamba grass	24
Feral Animal Control Program – VRD Pastoral District.....	24
Feral Camels in Central Australia	24
Weeds	24
Value of the Cattle Industry to the Northern Territory	26
Applications considered by the Board during 2005/2006	26
Report on Land Clearing previously approved	28

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

Table 1:	Tier 1 Photo-point Monitoring Sites established and reassessed 2005/2006	6
Table 2:	Weed issues in NT Pastoral Districts 2005/2006	25
Table 3:	Purpose and areas of pastoral land clearing approved 2005/2006	26
Table 4:	Clearing applications determined 2005/2006	26
Table 5:	Variations to clearing permits 2005/2006	27
Table 6:	Applications for non pastoral use determined 2005/2006	27
Table 7:	Purpose of non pastoral use approvals 2005/2006	27
Table 8:	Subdivision applications considered 2005/2006	27
Table 9:	Applications to convert to perpetual tenure considered 2005/2006	27
Table 10:	Applications to sublease pastoral leases 2005/2006	28
Table 11:	Status of land clearing previously approved	28

FIGURES

Figure 1:	Location of Darwin Pastoral District	9
Figure 2:	Comparison of all Tier 1 sites in the Darwin Pastoral District at establishment and the last round of assessments 2003 – 2006	9
Figure 3:	Darwin Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment to the most recent assessment	10
Figure 4:	Location of Katherine Pastoral District	10
Figure 5:	Katherine Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment 1993/1994 to recent assessments 2004/2005	11
Figure 6:	Location of Roper Pastoral District	11
Figure 7:	Roper Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment 1993/1994 to recent assessments 2004/2005	12
Figure 8:	Location of VRD Pastoral District	12
Figure 9:	Comparison of 32 Tier 1 sites in the VRD Pastoral District at establishment (1993/1994) and reassessment 2005/2006.....	13
Figure 10:	VRD Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment in 1993/1994 to the most recent assessments	14
Figure 11:	Location of Sturt Plateau Pastoral District	16
Figure 12:	Comparison of 21 Tier 1 sites in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District at establishment (1993/1994) and reassessment 2005/2006.....	14
Figure 13:	Sturt Plateau Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment in 1993/1994 to the most recent assessments.....	14
Figure 14:	Location of Gulf Pastoral District	15
Figure 15:	Comparison of 31 Tier 1 sites in the Gulf Pastoral District at establishment (1995/1996) and reassessment 2005/2006.....	15
Figure 16:	Gulf Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments	15
Figure 17:	Location of the Barkly Pastoral District	16
Figure 18:	Comparison of 132 Tier 1 sites in the Barkly Pastoral District at establishment (1996 - 1999) and reassessment 2005/2006.....	16
Figure 19:	Barkly Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments	17
Figure 20:	Location of Tennant Creek Pastoral District	17
Figure 21:	Comparison of Tier 1 sites in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District at establishment (1993 - 1995) and reassessment 2005/2006	18
Figure 22:	Tennant Creek Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments	18
Figure 23:	Location of Plenty Pastoral District	18
Figure 24:	Comparison of Tier 1 sites in the Plenty Pastoral District at establishment (1993 - 1995) and reassessment 2005/2006	19
Figure 25:	Plenty Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments	19

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Figure 26: Location of Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District	20
Figure 27: Comparison of Tier 1 sites in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District at establishment (1993 - 1995) and reassessment 2005/2006	20
Figure 28: Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments	21
Figure 29: Location of Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District	21
Figure 30: Comparison of Tier 1 sites in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District at establishment (1993 - 1995) and reassessment 2005/2006	22
Figure 31: Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments	22
Figure 32: Two year rainfall period 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2006	23

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

The Annual Report of the Pastoral Land Board for 2005/2006 covers the period 1 October 2005 to 30 September 2006 in line with the reporting period approved by the Minister in May 2005.

The Northern Territory pastoral estate is about 606,000 km² in size. The gross value of production for the NT cattle industry was estimated at \$213 million in 2005, which represents 45% of the total value of the Territory's rural industries and fisheries production.

One of the important functions of the Pastoral Land Board is to monitor the condition and use of pastoral land to facilitate its sustainable use and the economic viability of the industry in accordance with the objects of the Pastoral Land Act. The Board is committed to the maintenance of the condition of the Territory's pastoral land and, where possible, its improvement.

Achievements for the 2005/2006 year include:

- Improvements to Tier 1 monitoring program field data collection techniques which will help with the analysis of trends in land condition over time and aid in the ground truthing of satellite derived information. This will also provide more robust statistical analysis, collection of repeatable data and the reduction of operator bias when comparing many years of collected data.
- Inclusion of landscape function index analysis in the pastoral district reports for 2005/2006. This work was carried out as part of the NT State Assessment Report for the Australian Collaborative Rangelands Information System (ACRIS) and has been adapted to pastoral districts for inclusion in the Board's Annual Report for the first time.

Based on analysis of the Tier 1 monitoring data and basic landscape function analysis, the Darwin, Katherine, Roper, Victoria River, Sturt Plateau and Gulf pastoral districts are considered to be stable and in good condition with landscape function showing improvement. Landscape function and site condition has declined in the Plenty, Tennant Creek, Northern and Southern Alice Springs pastoral districts. This decline can be attributed in the main to severe drought conditions.

The Board thanks its Executive Officer, Ms Judy Bartolo, and officers of the Natural Resource Management Division, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts who have given the Board invaluable support, assistance and advice. In particular the Board acknowledges the role of staff within the Rangelands Management Branch who are responsible for the continued operation and implementation of the pastoral land monitoring programs.

Since the end of the 2005/2006 reporting period, Jim Forwood and John Childs have left the Board. Jim Forwood served on the Board for 15 years until June 2007. He was a member of the inaugural Board established in June 1992 and was appointed to the position of Chairman in June 2002. John Childs was a member of the Board from June 2001 until June 2007. The Board wishes to thank Jim and John for their conscientious work on the Pastoral Land Board and to acknowledge their fine contributions to the sustainable management of the Territory's pastoral estate.



Anthony Young
Chairman
Pastoral Land Board
26 November 2007

MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

CHAIRMAN

James Bower Forwood 3 year term - expiring 25 June 2007

MEMBERS

John Reginald Childs 3 year term – expiring 25 June 2007
Colleen Marie Costello 3 year term – expiring 25 June 2008
Steven Craig 3 year term – 25 June 2008
Thomas George Henry Stockwell 3 year term – expiring 25 June 2008

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Judy Bartolo

FUNCTIONS OF THE PASTORAL LAND BOARD

Section 29 of the *Pastoral Land Act* outlines the functions of the Board:

- [a] to report regularly to, and as directed by, the Minister, but in any case not less than once a year, on the general condition of pastoral land and the operations of the Board;
- [b] to consider applications for the subdivision or consolidation of pastoral land and make recommendations to the Minister in relation to them;
- [c] to plan, establish, operate and maintain systems for monitoring the condition and use of pastoral land on a District or other basis;
- [d] to assess the suitability of proposed new pastoral leases over vacant Crown land;
- [e] to direct the preparation, and monitor the implementation of, remedial plans;
- [f] to monitor, supervise or cause to be carried out work in relation to the rectification of degradation or other damage to pastoral land;
- [g] to monitor the numbers and effect of stock and feral and other animals on pastoral land;
- [h] to monitor and administer the conditions to which pastoral leases are subject;
- [j] to make recommendations to the Minister on any matter relating to the administration of the Act;
- [k] to hear and determine all questions, and consider and make recommendations on all matters, referred to it by the Minister; and
- [m] such other functions as are imposed on it by or under the *Pastoral Land Act* or any other Act or as directed by the Minister.

Other functions outlined in the Act include:

- [I] to determine applications for clearing pastoral land [section 38(1)(h)]
- [II] to consider breaches of conditions referred by the Minister [section 41]
- [III] to consider and make recommendations to the Minister on applications for conversion of term pastoral leases to perpetual tenure [section 62]
- [IV] to administer the access provisions of the Act, including nomination of access routes under PART 6
- [V] to determine applications for non pastoral use of pastoral land [PART 7].

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD HELD DURING 2005/2006

Five meetings of the Pastoral Land Board were held during 2005/2006. In addition to these meetings, five matters were determined out of session.

- **The 65th Meeting was held in Darwin on 15 December 2005**

The Board gave preliminary consideration to an application to convert a term pastoral lease to perpetual tenure and an application to subdivide a pastoral lease. Two clearing applications were approved and four non pastoral use applications. The Board also considered an application to sub-lease parts of a pastoral lease and its recommendation to the Minister. The Board also considered a land condition issue on one property and resolved to request preparation of a voluntary management plan.

- **The 66th Meeting was held in Darwin on 11 & 12 April 2006**

Matters considered at the Board meeting included determination of a clearing application, three non pastoral use applications, and an application to the Minister to vary term lease conditions. The Board endorsed a voluntary management plan, and considered property reports for three pastoral leases. Departmental officers briefed the Board on the further development and integration of the pastoral land monitoring programs.

- **The 67th Meeting was held in Katherine on 28 July 2006**

Field inspections were held prior to the Board meeting related to the Board's consideration of a subdivision application and an application to convert a term pastoral lease to perpetual tenure. Matters considered at the Board meeting included an application to clear pastoral land, three applications to convert term leases to perpetual tenure and a subdivision application. The Board noted progress with completion of rehabilitation works on one property and resolved to request preparation of a voluntary management plan for another property. Officers of the Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines briefed the Board on calculating carrying capacities for pastoral land.

- **The 68th Meeting was a teleconference held on 18 August 2006**

The Board gave further consideration to an application to subdivide a pastoral lease.

- **The 69th Meeting was a teleconference held on 1 September 2006**

The Board gave further consideration to an application to subdivide a pastoral lease and endorsed its report to the Minister.

POLICY ISSUES & NEW INITIATIVES

CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES FOR PASTORAL LAND CLEARING APPLICATIONS

Revised Guidelines for Clearing Pastoral Land were adopted in April 2004. These guidelines introduced public notification of pastoral land clearing applications. During 2005/2006 changes were made to advertising processes following restructuring of government departments. Pastoral land clearing applications are no longer advertised in conjunction with applications under the Planning Act, and are not displayed in the offices of Development Assessment Services, Department of Planning and Infrastructure. A public notice is placed in the NT News and the application is posted on the website for the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts. Copies of the application are also available through the relevant regional office.

MORATORIUM ON LAND CLEARING IN THE DALY REGION

No applications to clear pastoral land within the 'Daly Region' were lodged during 2005/2006.

REVIEW OF THE PASTORAL LAND ACT

A review of the *Pastoral Land Act* commenced in July 2004 with the release of a discussion paper. A total of 24 submissions were lodged in response to this discussion paper. A Key Issues paper was issued in December 2004 which summarised issues raised during the consultation period. A Steering Committee was then established which included members of the Pastoral Land Board and relevant departmental officers to oversee the review process. A recommendation paper was prepared by the Steering Committee in May 2006 and released to stakeholders who had lodged submissions to the Key Issues paper.

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF INTRODUCED PASTURES IN PASTORAL LEASE DEVELOPMENT

During 2005/2006 the Board developed draft guidelines for the use of introduced pasture species in pastoral lease development. Further development and implementation of the guidelines was deferred pending review of the *Pastoral Land Act* and possible legislative amendments.

PASTORAL LAND MONITORING PROGRAMS

MONITORING PROGRAMS

The Pastoral Land Board, the pastoral industry and the Northern Territory government are working together to maintain or improve the condition of the Territory's pastoral land. This land, held as pastoral leases, comprises around 45% of the Territory. Maintenance of this natural resource in good condition is essential for a profitable and sustainable pastoral industry.

Monitoring and reporting on the condition of pastoral land is a key function of the Pastoral Land Board under the *Pastoral Land Act*. The Board is also responsible for instigating remedial action to restore pastoral land condition. In support of the Board, the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA) operates a two-tiered pastoral land monitoring system. Both tiers of the monitoring program aim to assist pastoralists in making better management decisions.

The Tier 1 program uses photos and visual assessment of photo-point sites to assess pastoral land condition and changes in condition over time. Pastoralists are encouraged to use the photo-point sites to become more aware of pasture plants and the level of pasture use by stock. This in turn will help them better manage their livestock and land.

Tier 2 programs are designed to provide an objective assessment of pastoral land condition using remote sensing and ground-based assessment methods. Currently, only a small percentage of pastoral land is monitored and updated annually using Landsat satellite data. In 2005/2006 NRETA was successful in a project bid to develop a monitoring program across the whole of the NT using MODIS to provide annual updates of land condition.

TIER 1 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

During 2005/2006, modifications to Tier 1 monitoring program field data collection techniques were successfully trialled and implemented in the Barkly pastoral district. Additional data collected at Tier 1 monitoring sites will help with the analysis of trends in land condition over longer periods of time and aid in the ground truthing of satellite derived information. It will also provide more robust statistical analysis, collection of repeatable data and the reduction of operator bias when comparing many years of collected data.

The additional information will be collected on all Tier 1 monitoring sites located on a homogeneous area of the landscape that are representative of the greater landscape. Ground cover measurements are recorded in 1 metre quadrats. The following data is collected at each quadrat:

- The percentage foliage cover for each species to the nearest 5%
- The percentage dry weight for each species to the nearest 5%
- The percentage of bare ground within the quadrat
- The percentage of litter (including unattached plants)
- The percentage of rock cover
- Cryptogam cover (generic term that includes algae fungi, lichens, mosses and liverworts. They are often early colonisers of recovering soils and are viewed as positive indicators of surface stability)

Shrub and tree data is collected along the transect used for quadrat collection. The number of shrubs and trees are recorded in height classes that are present within a metre swath of the left hand side of the tape. Tree density of the Tier 1 site is measured using a bitterlich gauge to record basal area of the site.

ESTABLISHMENT AND REASSESSMENT OF TIER 1 PHOTO-POINT MONITORING SITES

The Tier 1 monitoring program commenced in 1993. By 30 September 2006, a total of 2,239 Tier 1 photo-point monitoring sites had been established on 223 properties, which includes 78 monitoring sites on 11 properties held under other tenure such as Crown leases and Aboriginal land. Generally, at least one site is located in each paddock on a preferred grazing land system. These sites will provide a bench mark for pastoralists to assess pasture changes over time.

During 2005/2006 a total of 498 monitoring sites were reassessed on 52 properties and 4 new monitoring sites were established (refer Table 1 below).

Pastoral District	Total No of Sites	No of Properties <i>[with Tier 1 sites]</i>	Average Sites/Property	New Sites Established 2005/2006	Reassessed 2005/2006	
					Sites	Properties
DARWIN 21 Pastoral Leases in District	144	21	7	0	15	3
KATHERINE 7 Pastoral Leases in District	49	7	7	0	3	1
ROPER 10 Pastoral Leases in District	51	10	5	0	0	0
VRD 25 Pastoral Leases in District	338	25	13	0	38	3
STURT PLATEAU 27 Pastoral Leases in District	176	26	7	0	34	6
GULF 18 Pastoral Leases in District	112	17	7	1	40	7
BARKLY 31 Pastoral Leases in District	445	31	14	0	133	11
TENNANT CREEK 8 Pastoral Leases in District	80	8	10	0	36	3
PLENTY 14 Pastoral Leases in District	157	14	11	0	61	5
NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS 30 Pastoral Leases in District	334	29	11	1	79	6
SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS 26 Pastoral Leases in District	275	24	11	2	59	7
OTHER TENURE All Pastoral Districts <i>Aboriginal Land and Crown Leases</i>	78	11	7	0	0	0
TOTALS	2239	223	10	4	498	52

**Table 1: Tier 1 Photo-point Monitoring Sites established and reassessed 2005/2006
1 October 2005 – 30 September 2006**

PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORTS 2005/2006

GENERAL DEFINITION OF LAND CONDITION

A general definition of landscape condition is provided by the Commonwealth Land and Water Audit (2001) “as a value judgement related to the worth of a landscape for a particular use”. In the Northern Territory, where maintaining natural pastures is a primary goal of sustainable pastoral management, landscape condition is most usefully defined in terms of the ability of the land to maintain productivity for future generations. Land condition in the Northern Territory pastoral estate, can best be described by three main indicators:

- The distribution of water and nutrients in a landscape often scarce in these essential components, which in turn affects,
- The productivity and composition of pasture plant species, and
- The presence of feral animals and noxious weeds.

CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS PASTURE CONDITION

Three condition classes are used to assess pasture condition (good, fair and poor). These classes are based on indicators of pasture condition such as the abundance of perennial plants known to increase or decrease following grazing, and ground surface indicators such as the exposure of bare soil to wind and water and its subsequent erosion. These indicators of pasture condition and associated assessment criteria have largely been determined from historical information, local knowledge, cross fence comparisons and stock grazing gradients out from water. The further from water the less intense the stock grazing pressure and the higher the condition class rating tends to be.

The condition classes can be described as follows:

Good: *There is close to maximum diversity and cover of annual and perennial plant species possible for that pasture type with perennial species of various ages. There is no active erosion other than natural features and processes. Plant and litter cover protects the soil from wind and water in all seasons except following fire.*

Pastures in good condition are stable and at or close to their productive potential. Pastoral managers should be aiming for good pasture condition, which necessitates careful management practices that maintain or improve pasture condition.

Fair: *Reduced cover and regeneration of palatable perennial species and there has been some establishment of less preferred unpalatable plants. Productivity remains high in good seasons but is markedly reduced in dry seasons. Lower plant cover increases the susceptibility of soil to erosion in most seasons and there is evidence of moderate erosion on susceptible land types.*

Pastures in fair condition are productive, but below their productive potential. They are sometimes actively eroding and can rapidly deteriorate to poor condition. Maintaining pastures in fair condition is not a satisfactory status quo, as long term damage to their productive capacity will result. They should be managed with the aim of improving condition and ultimately achieving good condition status.

Poor: *The palatable component of the pasture is depleted and the pasture is dominated by annual, ephemeral and unpalatable perennial species. There is no, or markedly reduced, regeneration of desirable perennial plants, productivity is impaired and the seasonal response is poor. Soils are unstable and susceptible to erosion in all seasons and past erosion leaves the site susceptible to further soil movement if grazed.*

Pastures in poor condition have severely reduced productivity, which is often especially telling during dry periods. They require a very long period of spelling to improve condition or mechanical intervention such as erosion control earthworks or reseeding may be required.

CHANGE IN LANDSCAPE FUNCTION (LF) INDEX

Assessing change in landscape function (landscape 'health') over time can assist in understanding if natural processes or grazing management practices are impacting upon pastoral district or individual station condition. Landscape function describes the capacity of landscapes to regulate (i.e. capture and retain, not leak) rainwater and nutrients, the vital resources for plant growth (Ludwig et al. 1997).

Functional landscapes have a good cover and arrangement of persistent vegetation patches (typically perennial vegetation) such that much of the rainfall is retained and is able to infiltrate the soil, and as there is little runoff, there is limited movement of sediment and loss of entrained nutrients, organic matter (litter) and seeds. Similarly, the good cover and arrangement of vegetation patches minimises wind erosion and loss of nutrients in dust. As patch cover decreases and patches become more distant, runoff increases resulting in lower infiltration and increased nutrient loss in transported sediments (i.e. erosion). These eroding landscapes become progressively more dysfunctional, i.e. have reduced landscape function. The composition of species contributing to pasture biomass (dry weight basis) is estimated at Tier 1 sites. Estimates are adjusted for any grazing that has occurred. The percentage area of bare ground is also estimated so that % ground cover can be calculated as 100 - % bare ground. These two data types have been combined to produce an index of landscape function, therefore potential 'health' of the pastoral districts.

The Richards-Green Functionality Index (RGFI) is a procedure for deriving an index of landscape functionality from data collected at monitoring sites, in the absence of more robust data collected through formal landscape function analysis. The index is based on vegetation and soil attributes that, in combination, contribute to increased retention of rainwater and nutrients as resources for the growth and persistence of plants. These attributes include perennial grass density, vegetation cover and soil surface conditions favourable to water infiltration and retention, nutrient cycling and surface soil stability.

Modifications to the RGFI were made in this analysis because the composition of herbage species by biomass is estimated at Tier 1 sites rather than species frequency.

Estimated ground cover has been weighted by the proportion of perennial grasses present (i.e. cover comprised of a high proportion of perennial grasses is assumed to contribute more to improved landscape function than a site with an equivalent cover of annual or ephemeral species).

DARWIN PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Darwin Pastoral District is stable.

RAINFALL DARWIN DISTRICT	
20 year district average 1456mm	2005/2006 district annual average 1814mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 1376mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 1427mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 98mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 387mm

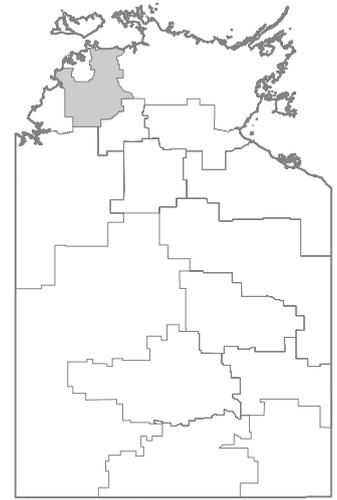


Figure 1: Location of Darwin Pastoral District

Rainfall in the Darwin Pastoral District for 2005/2006 was well above the 20 year average. The wet season was exceptional, with good rains received in early October and continuing through to late April. Four tropical lows formed over Top End coastal waters during the 2005/2006 wet season. Cyclone Monica caused wide spread flooding and damage across the Top End in April, 2006.

Tier 1 data collection was significantly reduced during 2005/2006 due to the exceptional weather conditions. Above average rainfall during November 2005 followed by a prolonged wet season and late cyclone prevented vehicular access to Tier 1 monitoring sites. Field work commenced in August 2006 with 15 sites reassessed on three properties. No change in land condition was observed, which is consistent with the general trend of stable land in condition in the Darwin Pastoral District.

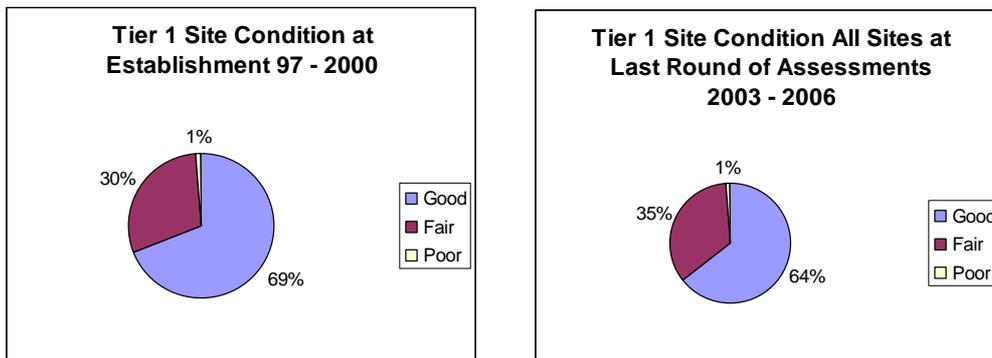


Figure 2: Comparison of all Tier 1 Sites in the Darwin Pastoral District at establishment and the last round of reassessments 2003 - 2006

A comparison of sites between establishment and the most recent round of assessments, indicate stable land condition with minimal overall change (Figure 2). A slight increase in the number of sites listed as fair condition at the expense of sites listed as good condition is mostly due to *Mimosa pigra* encroachment into some floodplain monitoring sites.

The Landscape Function (LF) index calculated for the Darwin Pastoral District provides indications of change in perennial biomass and cover between site establishment (initial) and recent reassessments (Figure 3).

The comparisons between initial and recent assessments indicate very minimal change in perennial species biomass and cover between establishment in 1997 and 2006 reassessment, confirming that land condition in the Darwin District remains in stable condition.

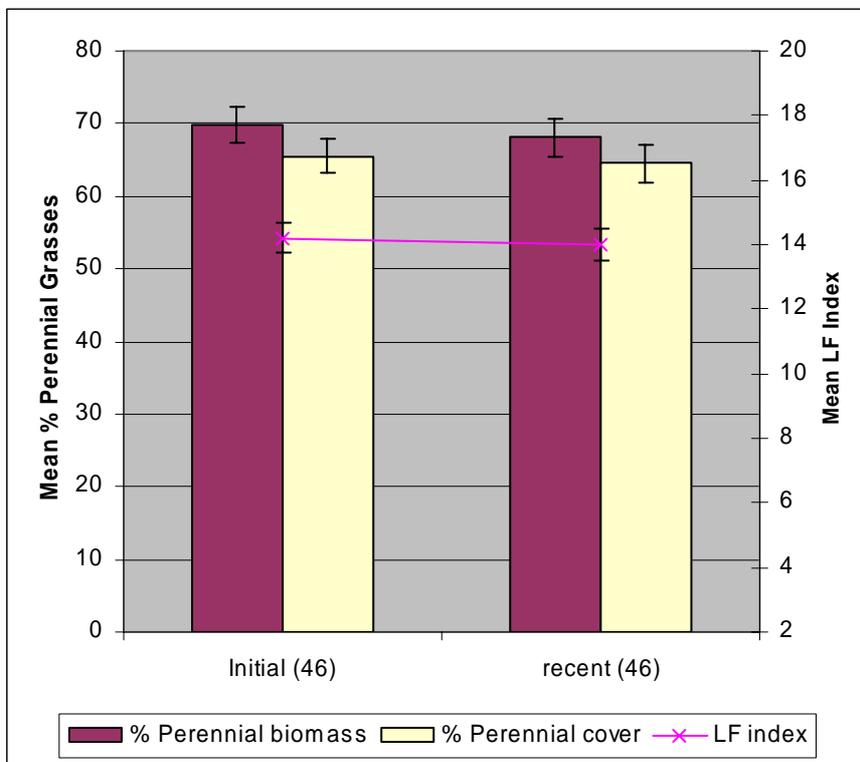


Figure 3: Darwin Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment to the most recent assessment

KATHERINE PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Katherine Pastoral District is stable.

RAINFALL KATHERINE DISTRICT	
20 year district average 988mm	2005/2006 district annual average 1414mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 974mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 1226mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 41mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 182mm

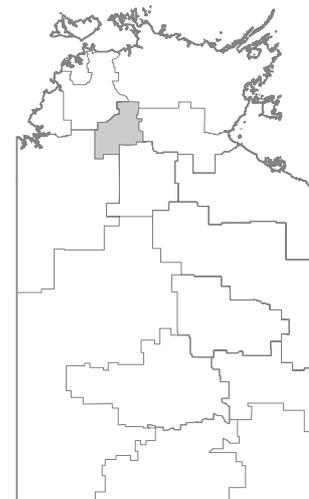


Figure 4: Location of Katherine Pastoral District

Rainfall in the Katherine Pastoral District for 2005/2006 was well above the 20 year average. The wet season was exceptional, with good rains received in early October and continuing through to late April. Four tropical lows formed over Top End coastal waters during the 2005/2006 wet season. Cyclone Monica caused wide spread flooding and damage across the Top End in April, 2006. The major effect of Monica on the Katherine district was major flooding of the Katherine township with flood levels peaking near 20 metres.

Tier 1 data collection was significantly reduced during 2005/2006 due to the exceptional weather conditions restricting access to monitoring sites. Only one property was reassessed under the Tier 1 monitoring program.

Landscape Function (LF) index comparisons between initial establishment (1993) and recent reassessment (2004) site data for the Katherine Pastoral District indicate that landscape function is stable, to improving (Figure 5).

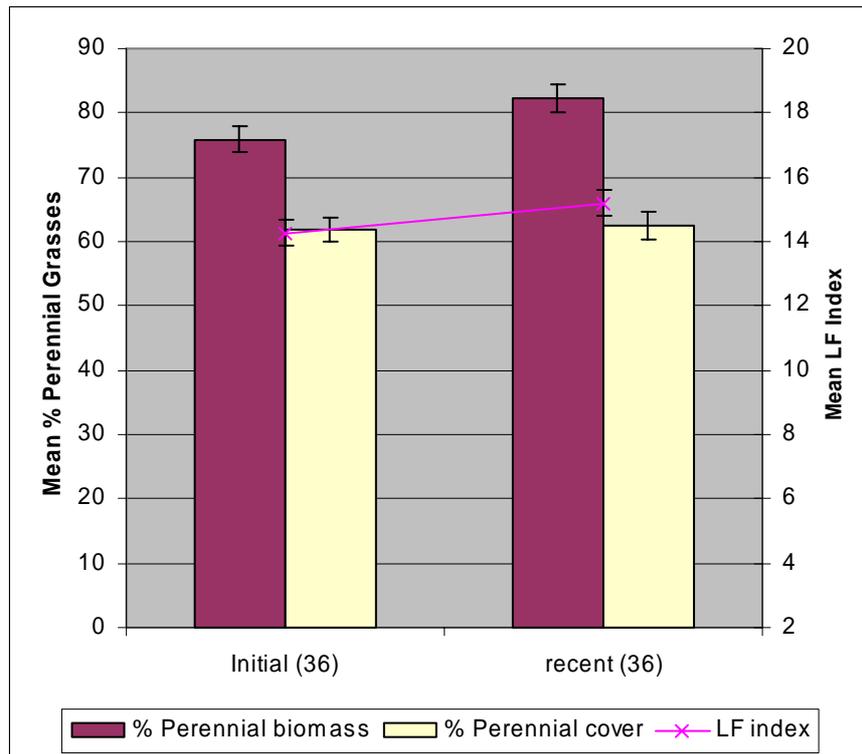


Figure 5: Katherine Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment in 1993/1994 to recent assessments in 2004/2005.

ROPER PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Roper Pastoral District is improving.

RAINFALL ROPER DISTRICT	
20 year district average 901mm	2005/2006 district annual average 1143mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 832mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 1034mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 70mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 241mm

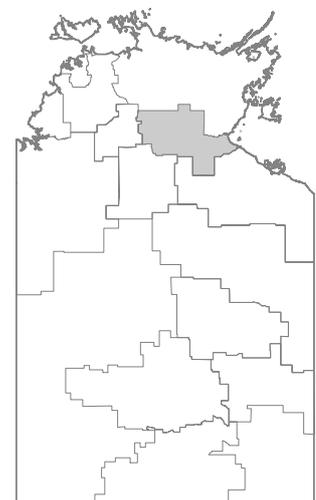


Figure 6: Location of Roper Pastoral District

Rainfall for 2005/2006 was well above the 20 year district average in the west of the Roper Pastoral District; whereas in the east of the district rainfall was only average. Some properties in the district had pasture growth slightly below the average or average. Remaining areas in the region experienced above average or high pasture growth due to favourable rainfall and seasonal conditions in those parts of the district.

Tier 1 data collection was not undertaken in the Roper Pastoral District during 2005/2006. An assessment of sites suitable for LF Index analysis from site establishment to 2004/2005 is presented in Figure 7. Comparison between the initial assessment and the most recent assessments in 2004/2005 highlight an increase in perennial species biomass and cover, indicating improving land condition within the Roper Pastoral District.

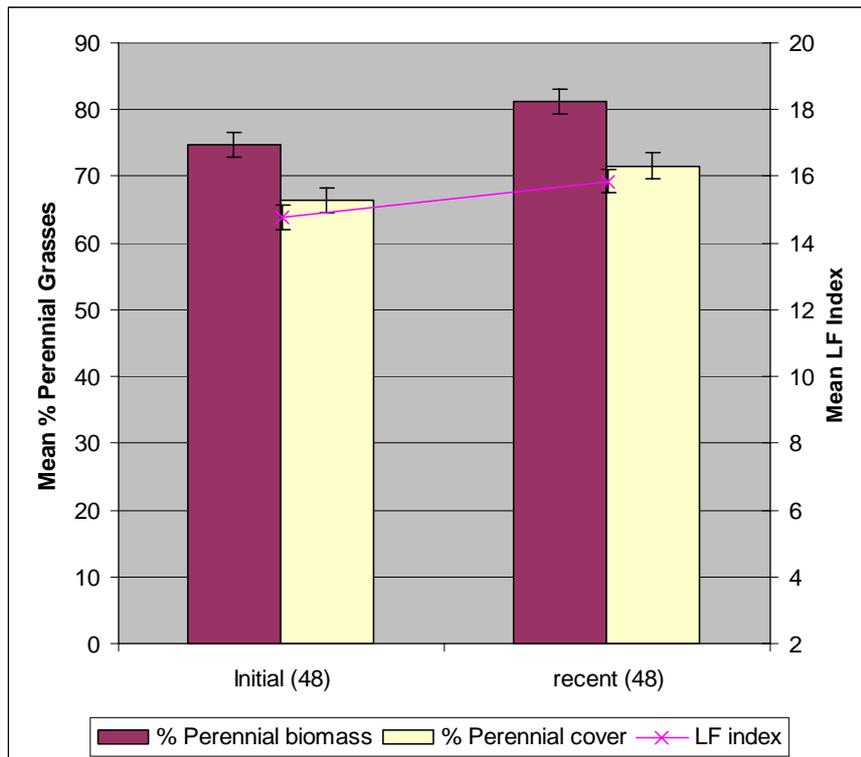


Figure 7: Roper Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment in 1993/1994 to recent assessments in 2004/2005.

VRD PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the VRD Pastoral District is stable to improving.

VRD DISTRICT	
20 year district average 849mm	2005/2006 district annual average 1131mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 798mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 1016mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 51mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 115mm

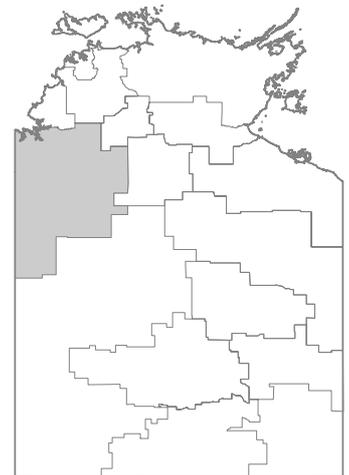


Figure 8: Location of VRD Pastoral District

Rainfall in the VRD Pastoral District for 2005/2006 was above the 20 year average. High above average falls from January through to April 2006 were experienced throughout the district with January and April's rainfall doubling historic monthly recordings in most cases. The high recordings in April were due to the effects of Cyclone Monica. Some of the largest totals (eg 261mm in 24 hours at Kidman Springs) occurred long after Monica made landfall and was a weakening tropical depression.

Highest recordings were found in the north of the district, with summer rainfall recordings at Bradshaw of 1081mm (892mm 20 year station average) and Legune 1436mm (1142mm 20 year station average). Above average rainfall averages were found throughout the district with Rosewood Station in the West district having a Summer rainfall recording of 858mm (736mm 20 year station average). Properties in the South of the district like Victoria River Downs had a summer rainfall recording of 807mm (745mm 20 year station average); Wave Hill with a recording of 817mm (647mm 20 year station average) and Hooker Creek with 1097mm (892mm 20 year station average).

Pasture growth in the North was well above average and extremely high in the mid and Southern regions of the district.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on three properties in the VRD Pastoral District during 2005/2006. Land condition on these properties has increased significantly from establishment in 1993/1994 with a significant increase in the number of sites assessed as being in good condition (Figure 9).

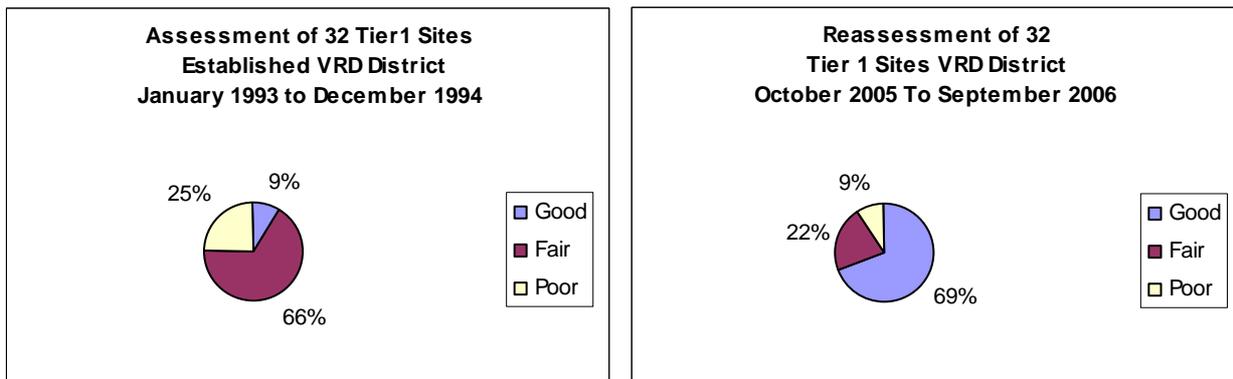


Figure 9: Comparison of 32 Tier 1 Sites in the VRD Pastoral District at establishment (1993/1994) and reassessment 2005/2006

Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the VRD Pastoral District indicates that landscape function has improved since initial site establishment in 1993/1994 compared to the most recent reassessments (Figure 10). The sites reassessed in 2005/2006 are consistent with the long term district trend. Site trend indicates landscape function is high and continues to increase. There is a very small standard deviation in the LFI trend, indicating that the majority of the VRD sites have similar high to very high perennial grass biomass cover and landscape function.

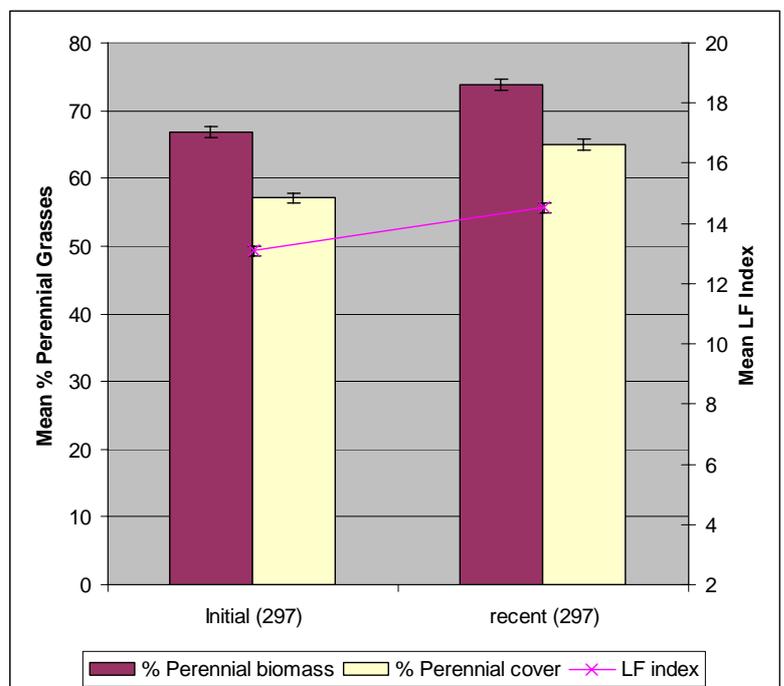


Figure 10: VRD Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment in 1993/1994 to the most recent assessments.

STURT PLATEAU PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District is good.

STURT PLATEAU DISTRICT	
20 year district average 808mm	2005/2006 district annual average 938mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 765mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 796mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 43mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 43mm

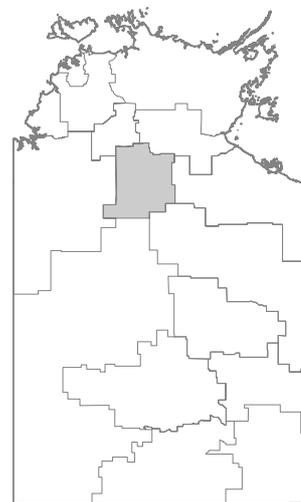


Figure 11: Location of Sturt Plateau Pastoral District

During 2005/2006, above average rainfall was experienced throughout the majority of the Sturt Plateau district, with December, February, March and April being the wettest months. Pasture growth was well above the average in the north-east, with extremely high growths throughout the remainder of the region.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on six properties in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District during 2005/2006. Site condition has improved since initial establishment with all sites now assessed as being in good condition (Figure 12).

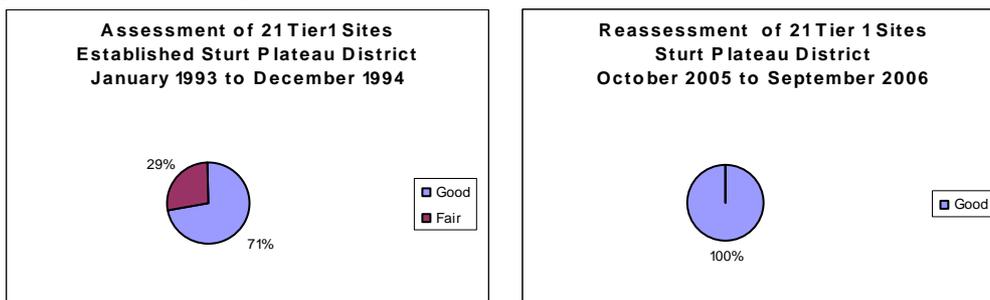
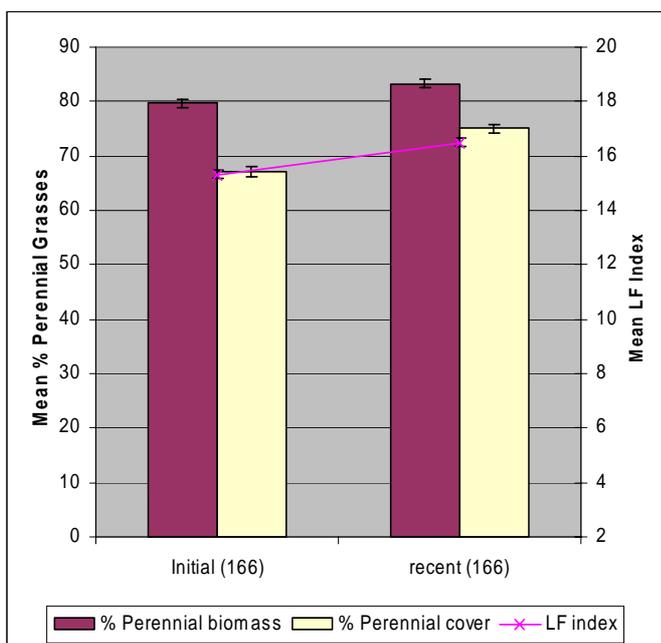


Figure 12: Comparison of 21 Tier 1 Sites in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District at establishment (1993/94) and reassessment 2005/2006



Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District indicates that landscape function is consistently high and has an improving trend. The majority of sites have a high to very high perennial grass biomass, cover levels and landscape function levels (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Sturt Plateau Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment in 1993/1994 to the most recent assessments.

GULF PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Gulf Pastoral District is stable with an increasing trend.

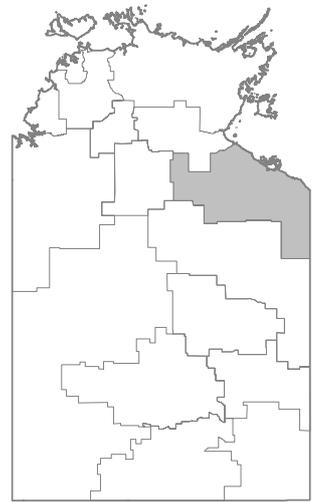


Figure 14: Location of Gulf Pastoral District

GULF DISTRICT	
20 year district average 846mm	2005/2006 district annual average 1078mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 710mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 710mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 51mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 37mm

During 2005/2006, rainfall for the Gulf district was above the yearly (20 year) average by 232mm. Rainfall figures in the west of the district were higher than that in the central southern area of the district but less than in the south-east. Very high rainfalls were recorded across the district in the months of January, March and April 2006 (approximately twice the averages). Due to the favourable rainfalls throughout the district, pasture growth was well above the average or extremely high.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on seven properties in the Gulf Pastoral District during 2005/2006. Site condition has improved since initial establishment (Figure 15).

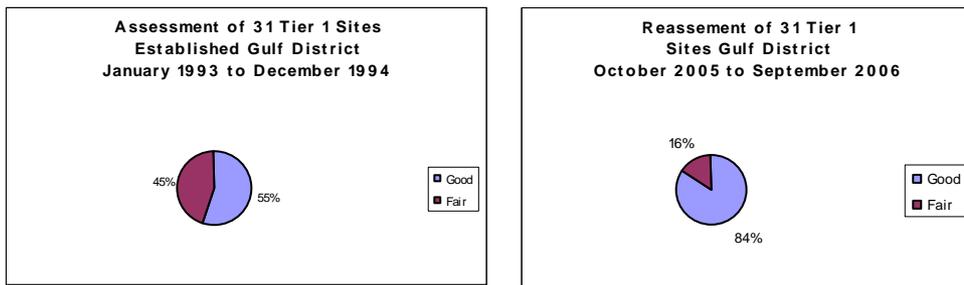
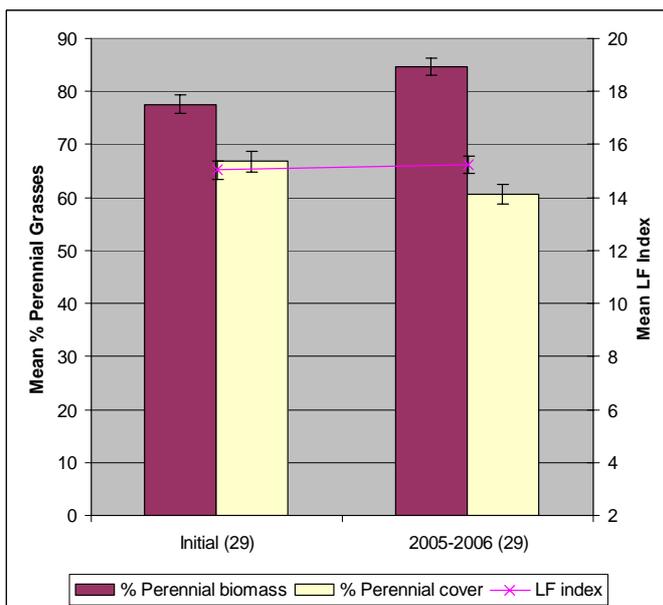


Figure 15: Comparison of 31 Tier 1 Sites in the Gulf Pastoral District at establishment (1995/96) and reassessment 2005/2006



Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the Gulf Pastoral District indicates that landscape function has remained stable with an increasing trend. Perennial grass biomass and cover levels have remained constant and increased (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Gulf Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments.

BARKLY PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Barkly Pastoral District is stable.

BARKLY DISTRICT	
20 year district average 429mm	2005/2006 district annual average 715mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 391mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 594mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 37mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 121mm

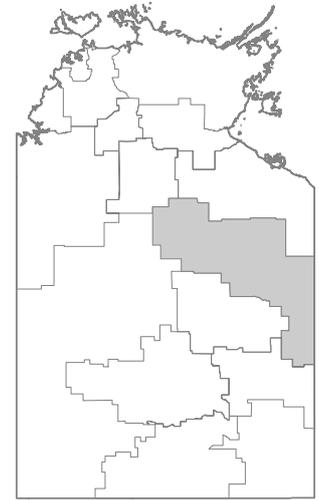


Figure 17: Location of Barkly Pastoral District

During 2005/2006, rainfall for the Barkly district was generally well above the 20 year regional average. In the far west of the district, recordings were double the regional average. The centre and south-east of the region received above average rainfall. In the far south of the district rainfall was slightly below average with little rain received in November and December 2005 compared with the rest of the district. Pasture growth was above average to high for most of the district; although properties in the south only had average growth with the slightly below average rainfall.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on eleven properties in the Barkly Pastoral District during 2005/2006. Site condition has improved since initial establishment (Figure 18).

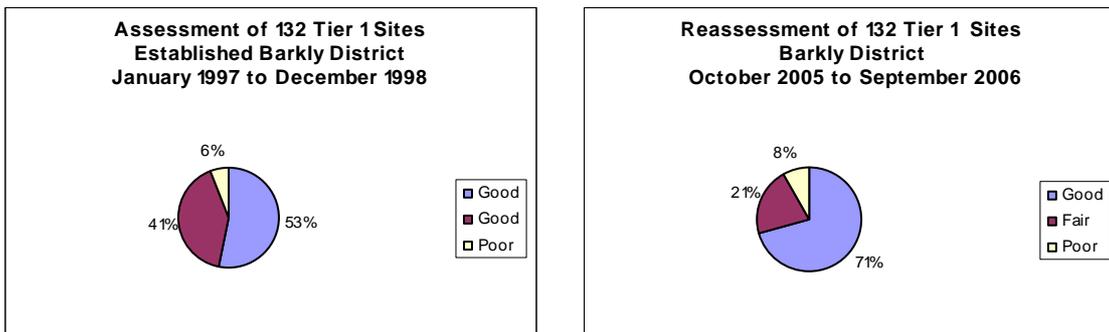


Figure 18: Comparison of 132 Tier 1 Sites in the Barkly Pastoral District at establishment (1996 - 1999) and reassessment 2005/2006

Landscape Function analysis for 115 sites assessed in 2005/2006 indicates that condition status declined with reduced perennial biomass and cover levels. Sites on six properties showed a sharp decline in perennial cover. These properties experienced below average rainfall in 2004/2005. A series of fires occurred late in the 2004/2005 wet season with three properties extensively burnt. The corresponding decline in perennial cover can be attributed to the effect of fire and below average rainfall the previous year.

Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the whole of the Barkly Pastoral District indicates that landscape function has remained stable across the region, with an increase in both the perennial biomass and cover of the sites (Figure 19).

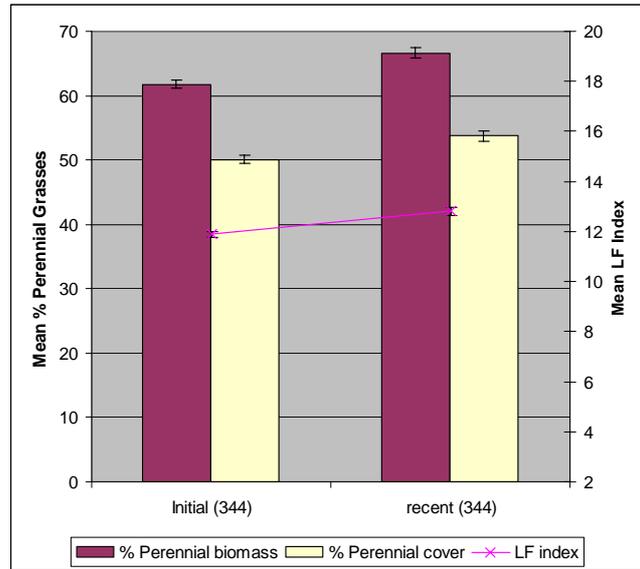


Figure 19: Barkly Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments.

TENNANT CREEK PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District is relatively stable.

TENNANT CREEK DISTRICT	
20 year district average 341mm	2005/2006 district annual average 354mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 302mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 308mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 39mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 46mm

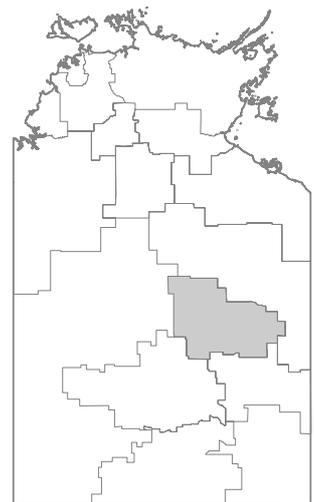
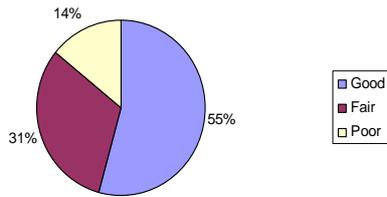


Figure 20: Location of Tennant Creek Pastoral District

During 2005/2006, rainfall for the Tennant Creek district was widespread and well above the district annual average. This was largely due to late summer rains, particularly the rain depression which developed from the remnants of Cyclone Monica in April 2006. Pasture growth was generally well above average, reflecting the beneficial summer rains.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on three properties in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District during 2005/2006. The monitoring assessments were undertaken late in 2005 during a long period of lower than average rainfall which finally broke a few months after the inspections. The data shown in Figure 21 indicates a decline in condition since establishment. This reflects the extended dry conditions and a possible overall decline in condition across the three properties inspected.

Tennant Creek District 1993/1995 (Est)



Tennant Creek District 2005/2006

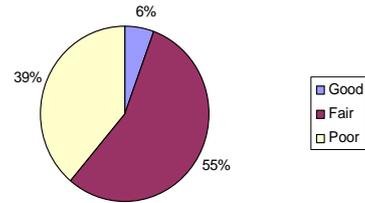
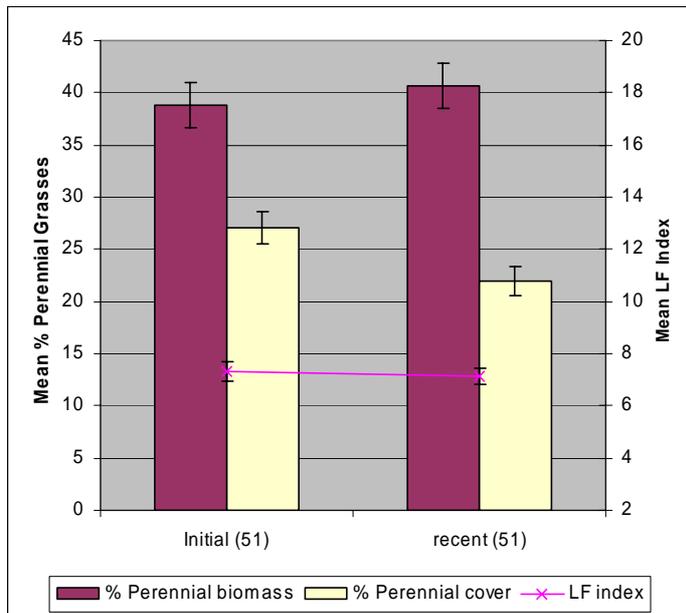


Figure 21: Comparison of Tier 1 Sites in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District at establishment (1993 - 1995) and reassessment 2005/2006



Landscape Function (LF) index analysis indicates that the Tennant Creek Pastoral District has a stable to slight decline in landscape function that appears to be mainly influenced by a decline in perennial grass cover (Figure 22). Sites reassessed during 2005/2006 show a greater decline in landscape function than the overall district trend, with the decrease in perennial grass cover the major influence.

Figure 22: Tennant Creek Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments.

PLENTY PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Plenty Pastoral District is declining.

PLENTY DISTRICT	
20 year district average 270mm	2005/2006 district annual average 290mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 212mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 225mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 58mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 65mm

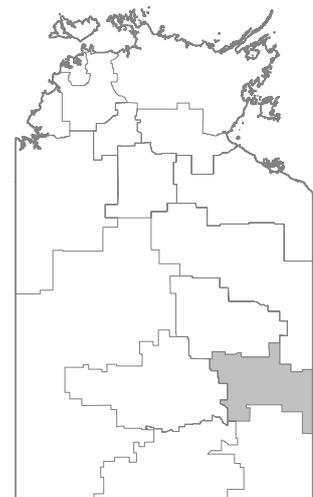


Figure 23: Location of Plenty Pastoral District

During 2005/2006, rainfall in the Plenty District was generally below or close to the district average. Dry conditions continued in the south of the district with low rainfall recorded on a number of properties. Pasture growth was average in central parts of the district, above average in some northern parts and below average in southern and eastern parts.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on five properties in the Plenty Pastoral District during 2005/2006. The monitoring assessments were undertaken during a long period of lower than average rainfall with properties in parts of the district being drought declared in 2004/2005 and 2005/2006. The data shown in Figure 24 indicates a decline in condition since establishment. In 2005/2006, fewer sites were recorded as being in Good condition and the percentage of sites in poor condition increased. This reflects the extended dry conditions and a possible overall decline in condition across the five properties.

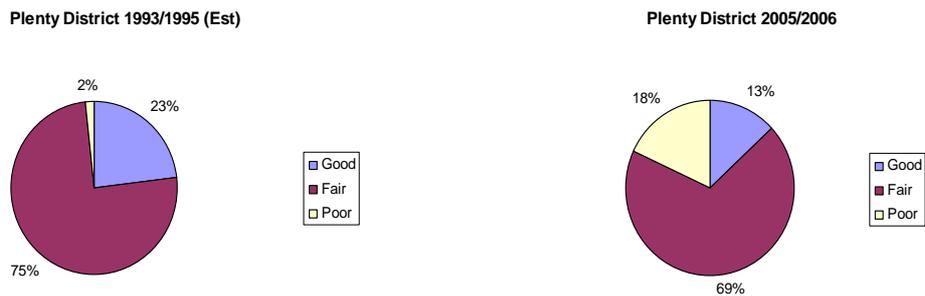


Figure 24: Comparison of Tier 1 Sites in the Plenty Pastoral District at establishment (1993 - 1995) and reassessment 2005/2006

Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the whole of the Plenty Pastoral District indicates a slight decline in landscape function (Figure 25). Sites assessed during 2005/2006 show more of a decline than the overall district trend, confirming the impact of low rainfall.

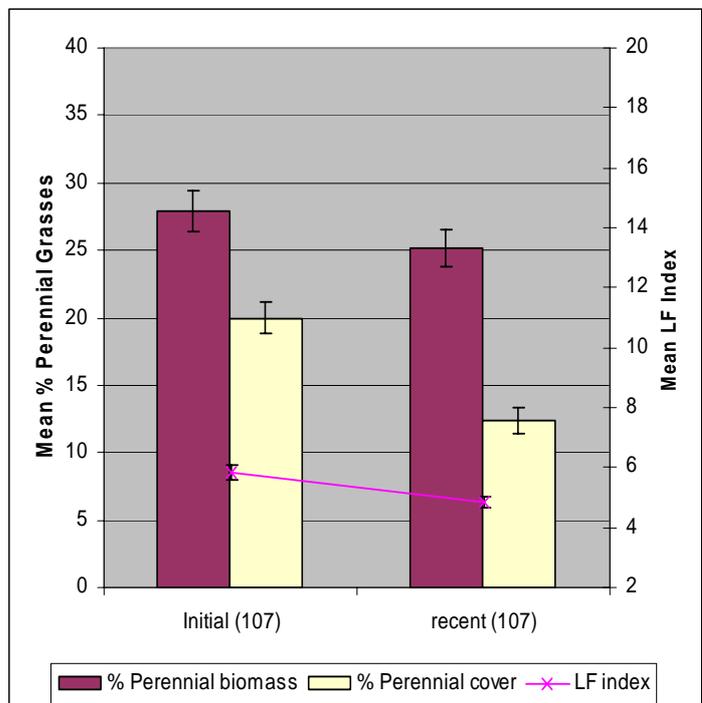
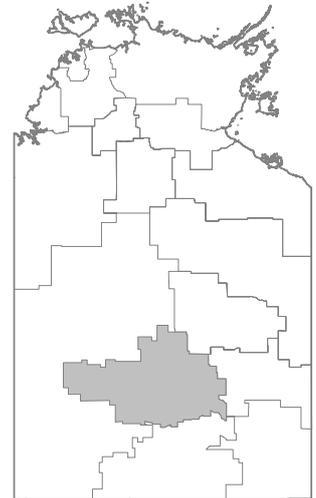


Figure 25: Plenty Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments.

NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District is stable to declining.



NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS DISTRICT	
20 year district average 298mm	2005/2006 district annual average 319mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 230mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 240mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 68mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 79mm

Figure 26: Location of Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District

During 2005/2006, rainfall in the Northern Alice Springs District was average to well above average, with excellent recordings in northern parts. Close to average rainfall was recorded in the centre of the region. In the south east of the district reasonable falls of up to 90mm in October provided some short term relief, however the season remained generally at or below average. Properties in the south-east received average to below average rainfall. Pasture growth varied across the district. In the north and west good summer falls triggered above average pasture growth. In the south average falls stimulated growth, however, without follow up rains and soil moisture remaining low, pastures declined.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on six properties in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District during 2005/2006. The monitoring assessments were undertaken during a long period of lower than average rainfall with some properties in the east of the district being drought declared in 2004/2005 and 2005/2006. The data shown in Figure 27 indicates a slight decline in condition since establishment. While the percentage of sites assessed in Good condition shows little change over time, there has been an increase in the percentage of sites assessed in Poor condition. In the north of the district where useful rains fell in the preceding summer there were very few sites assessed as Poor in 2005/2006. In southern and eastern parts of the district with a continuing rainfall deficit some of the properties assessed in 2005/2006 had a moderate number of sites in Poor condition whilst others had only one or two sites in Poor condition. This difference could indicate that factors in addition to rainfall may be affecting condition on some properties.

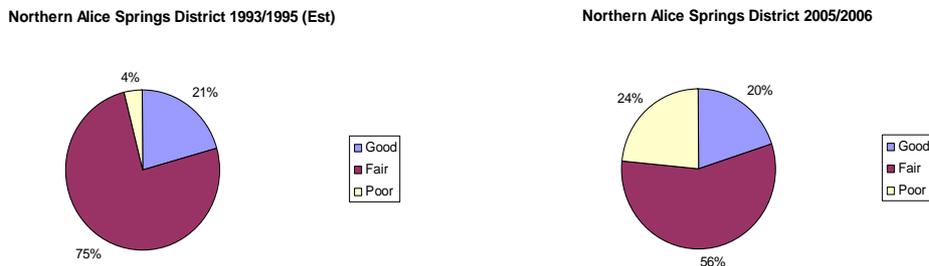
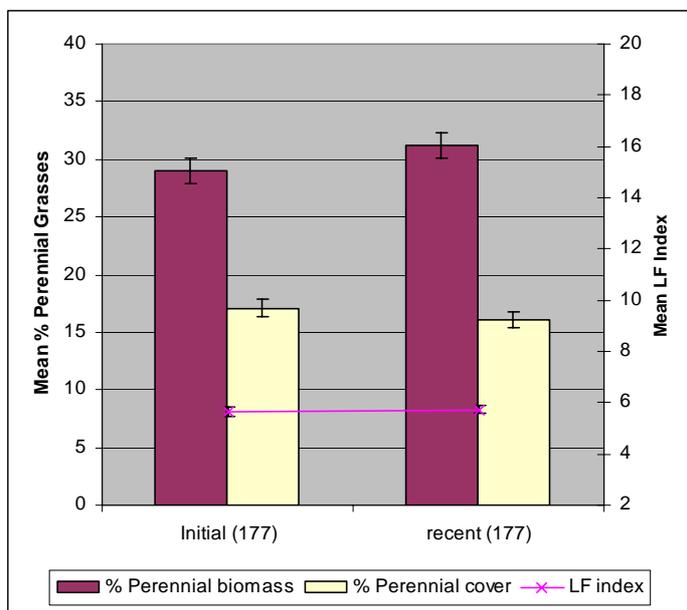


Figure 27: Comparison of Tier 1 Sites in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District at establishment (1993 - 1995) and reassessment 2005/2006



Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District indicates that landscape function has remained relatively stable since site establishment (Figure 28). Sites assessed during 2005/2006 show more of a decline than the overall district trend, confirming the impact of low rainfall.

Figure 28: Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments.

SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT REPORT 2005/2006

Land condition in the Southern Alice Springs is stable to declining.

SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS DISTRICT	
20 year district average 231mm	2005/2006 district annual average 233mm
20 year district average summer (October to March) 163mm	2005/2006 district average summer (October to March) 159mm
20 year district average winter (April to September) 68mm	2005/2006 district average winter (April to September) 74mm

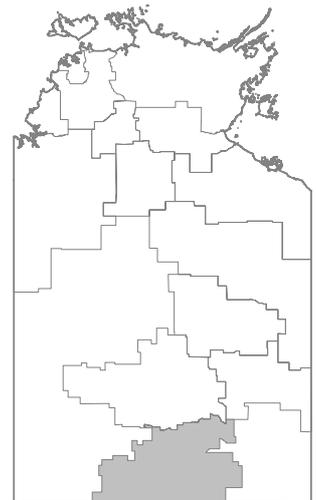


Figure 29: Location of Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District

During 2005/2006, rainfall in the Southern Alice Springs District was typically variable. Parts of the region received average or close to average rainfall. In the south-west below average rainfall was recorded. In the south-east of the district very dry conditions continued with well below average rainfall across a number of properties. Pasture growth throughout the district reflected the variability of the rainfall. Average to below average growth occurred in parts. Average to above average pasture growth was restricted to a small area in the far southwest, whereas below average to well below average pasture growth was widespread across eastern parts and especially in the southeast. In July a rainband moved across the district from the west, triggering a flush of winter annuals, however the warm dry conditions immediately following those rains caused this growth to dry rapidly.

Tier 1 monitoring sites were reassessed on six properties in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District during 2005/2006. New sites were established on another property but this data has not been included in analysis. The monitoring assessments were undertaken during an extended (> 3 years) cycle of well-below average rainfall with a number of properties in eastern parts of the district being drought declared in 2004/2005 and again in 2005/2006. The data shown in Figure 30 indicates a decline in condition since establishment. Three sites which had been burnt at some time previous to the field inspection were not used in this analysis. The percentage of sites assessed in Good condition has decreased. There has been a corresponding increase in the percentage of sites assessed in Poor condition. The relatively uniform decline in condition across all properties suggests that rainfall deficit is the common factor leading to the decline.

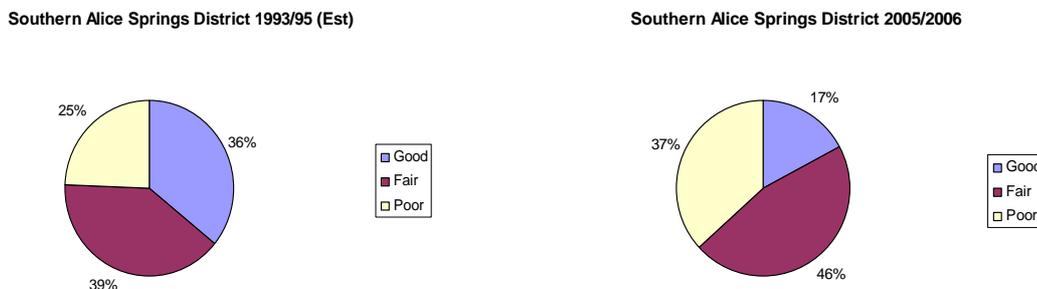


Figure 30: Comparison of Tier 1 Sites in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District at establishment (1993 - 1995) and reassessment 2005/2006

The Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District is the most southerly and driest portion of the Alice Springs Area. The unreliable rainfall, the ephemeral nature of the pasture species and the paucity of perennial species presents difficulties for land management and also when assessing land condition in the District. Consequently caution is needed when interpreting data from this very dry region.

Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District indicates an increase in landscape function since site establishment, based on perennial species (Figure 31). Although this seems incongruent with the Tier 1 monitoring data, this trend could be partly due to an increase in percentage biomass of the palatable introduced grass *Cenchrus ciliaris* (buffell) and partly due to an increase in percentage biomass of less palatable species such as *Eragrostis eriopoda* (woollybutt). Further analysis of site species composition based on biomass trends of palatable and unpalatable species could provide a useful additional approach to understanding land condition in the District.

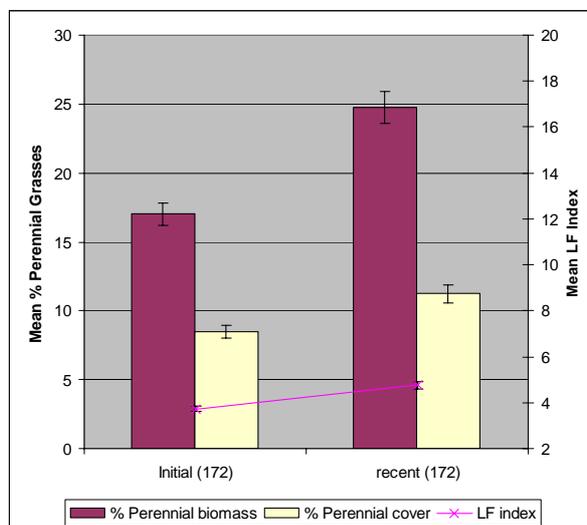


Figure 31: Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial to recent assessments.

SPECIFIC LAND CONDITION ISSUES

Implementation of Management Plans to address Land Condition Issues

In cases where specific land condition issues are identified on a pastoral property, the Pastoral Land Board may request the lessee to prepare a management plan detailing the action to be taken to address the land management issues which have been identified. It is a basic tenet of the *Pastoral Land Act* that pastoral lessees acknowledge their duty to adopt sound management practices and their responsibility to address any land condition issues that may arise. In line with this philosophy, the Pastoral Land Board seeks voluntary collaboration with pastoral lessees to address land condition issues and implementation of rehabilitation programs.

During 2005/2006 action continued in respect of implementation of management plans on nine properties. The Board requested new action to develop and implement a management plan for one property and rehabilitation works were successfully completed during the reporting year.

Drought

The dry conditions experienced in 2004/2005 continued across parts of the south-eastern NT during the 2005/2006 reporting period. Eastern parts of the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District and southern parts of the Plenty Pastoral District remained very dry with rainfall below average to well below average. As a consequence pasture growth in these areas was poor in most areas. Summer rains in the Northern Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Northern Plenty Districts resulted in average to extremely high rainfall and the subsequent growth of beneficial pastures, particularly in the Tennant Creek District, provided some relief from the previous difficult season.

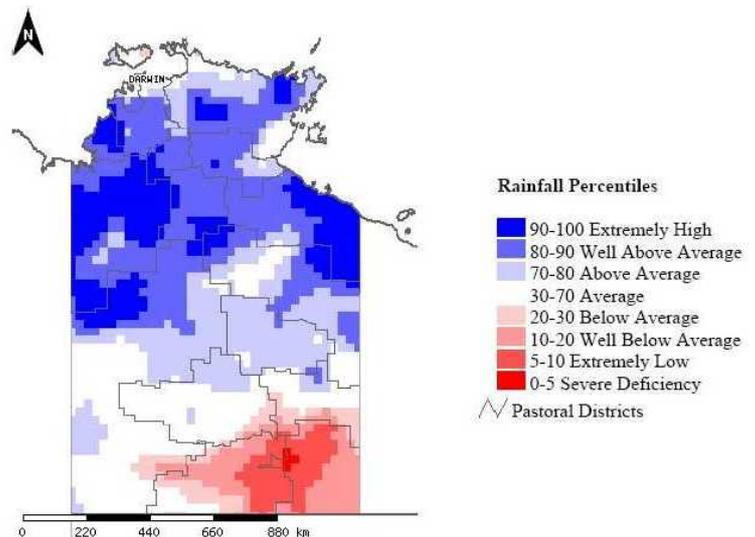


Figure 32: Two year rainfall period 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2006 (NAMS 2006)

The 24 month rainfall record (NAMS 2006) shown as Figure 32 illustrates that the rainfall over much of the Southern Alice Springs District and southern parts of the Plenty District is well below average (10-20th percentile) for the two year period October 2004 to September 2006.

Erosion on Roads, Fences and other Infrastructure

Erosion on roads, tracks and fencelines continues to be a significant soil management issue on pastoral leases throughout the Northern Territory. Officers of the Pastoral Land Management Branch, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, adopt a co-operative approach to assist station managers with appropriate soil conservation earthwork design and construction. Voluntary management plans have been prepared by Pastoral Lessees and successfully implemented on a number of properties to address issues arising from the poor siting of infrastructure, and/or inappropriate maintenance techniques.

Gamba Grass

Public concern continues regarding the spread of Gamba Grass throughout the Top End and its possible impact on regional biodiversity. Gamba grass continues to be controlled by grazing on Top End pastoral lease properties that utilise the pasture species.

Feral Animal Control Program – VRD Pastoral District

The VRD feral animal control program has resulted in the removal of large numbers of feral animals. Since its implementation in 1999, a total of 181,339 feral animals have been removed from the region. This figure includes the removal of 17,207 feral animals between the 1 October 2005 and 30 September 2006.

In accordance with section 49 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* and section 73 of the *Pastoral Land Act*, notices were re-issued in June 2006 and expire on 31 December 2006.

A feral animal survey is proposed for 2006/2007 to estimate the number of feral animals in the region and to improve understanding on the impact of feral animal removals on the population size. This will assist in estimating required removal rates of horses and donkeys in future notices.

The success of the feral animal removal program has resulted in renewed negotiations with the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Northern and Central Land Councils to ensure their ongoing participation in this program into the future. In the past, this funding agreement has provided reimbursement for helicopter and ammunition costs for control programs administered on Aboriginal Land Trusts.

Feral Camels in Central Australia

Feral camels occur in SA, WA, Qld and the NT and are an emerging pest. The current population is probably in excess of 1 million animals and indications are that population size is doubling every 8 years.

While effective management tools are available for managing the species, there are a number of issues which need to be considered and addressed before a national management program can be developed and implemented. There are a number of initiatives currently in train which are addressing some of these issues.

Weeds

Weeds threaten the sustainability of rural primary industries in the Northern Territory through increased costs, reduced efficiency and limitations on marketing. They also threaten water resources, freshwater fishing, and conservation of the natural environment, recreation, tourism and traditional hunting.

The Weed Management Branch, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, assists landholders to manage weeds by providing technical advice, assisting with weed management plans, carrying out surveys and controlling key infestations.

Major weed issues for each pastoral district during 2005/2006 are summarised in Table 2 on page 25.

PASTORAL DISTRICT	Main weed issues & control programs
DARWIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mimosa (<i>Mimosa pigra</i>) Mimosa continues to be the major weed impacting on the pastoral industry in the Darwin Pastoral District, with approximately \$1.4 million being spent annually in control programs. • <i>Senna obtusifolia</i>, <i>Hyptis suaveolens</i> and <i>Sida acuta</i>. These species are abundant in areas impacted by intense fire regimes, feral animal damage and heavy grazing regimes.
KATHERINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) • Mimosa (<i>Mimosa pigra</i>) • Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) • Noogoora Burr (<i>Xanthium occidentale</i>)
ROPER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mimosa (<i>Mimosa pigra</i>) • Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) • Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) • Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>)
VRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mimosa (<i>Mimosa pigra</i>) • Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) • Lions tail, devils claw, barleria and sickle pod
STURT PLATEAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>)
GULF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) • Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) • Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) • Hyptis (<i>Hyptis suaveolens</i>) • Devil's claw (<i>Martynia annua</i>) • Noogoora Burr (<i>Xanthium occidentale</i>) • Chinee apple (<i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i>) • Lion's Tail (<i>Leonotis nepetaefolia</i>) • Parthenium weed (<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>) follow up surveys indicated no new plants
BARKLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) • Mesquite (<i>Prosopis spp.</i>) • Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) • Rubber Bush (<i>Calotropis procera</i>) • Noogoora Burr (<i>Xanthium occidentale</i>) • Thornapple (<i>Datura</i>) • Mexican Poppy (<i>Argemone ochroleuca</i>)
TENNANT CREEK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) • Rubber Bush (<i>Calotropis procera</i>) • Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>)
PLENTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) • Rubber Bush (<i>Calotropis procera</i>)
NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubber Bush (<i>Calotropis procera</i>)
SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athel Pine (<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>)

Table 2: Weed Issues in NT Pastoral Districts 2005/2006

VALUE OF THE CATTLE INDUSTRY TO THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

The pastoral estate of the Northern Territory covers around 606,000 km² comprising 45% of the area of the Northern Territory under 219 pastoral leases. Pastoral holdings vary from small stations of 198 km² to the Territory's largest station, which runs cattle over 12,212 km². The area of land devoted to pastoral production has decreased over time due to other demands for the land. However, the trend in pastoral production, measured by the number of cattle turned off annually, is, in general, increasing, an indication of sustainability of pastoral land in the Northern Territory.

The estimated gross value of production from the NT cattle industry in 2005 was \$213 million, representing approximately 45% of the total value of production of the rural and fisheries industries in the Territory. In addition, the pastoral activity provided significant flow-on benefits to other industries, particularly transport and meat processing.

A total of 535,816 head of cattle were turned off from Territory pastoral properties to abattoirs, interstate and overseas markets in 2005. Of the total NT cattle turned off, 55.8% went interstate, 44.0% were exported overseas live, while only 0.2% were slaughtered at Territory abattoirs.

APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD DURING 2005/2006

APPLICATIONS TO CLEAR PASTORAL LAND 2005/2006

(i) Clearing Applications approved 2005/2006 – Purpose and Areas

Purpose of clearing	Number of proposals	Area approved ¹
Improved pastures/hay production	2	1870 ha
Selective clearing to reduce shrub dominance	2	720 ha
TOTALS:	4	2590 ha

¹Approval of the Board is limited to a designated area. Proposals may involve selective clearing within that area, for example, removal of a particular species only, strip clearing and retention of buffer zones.

Table 3: Purpose and areas of pastoral land clearing approved 2005/2006

(ii) Applications to clear Pastoral Land 2005/2006

Applications carried over from 2004/2005	5
Total number of clearing applications lodged 2005/2006	5
Applications lapsed/withdrawn	3
Applications approved	4
Applications carried over	3

Table 4: Clearing applications determined 2005/2006

(iii) **Applications to vary clearing permits 2005/2006**

Purpose of variation	Number of proposals	Approved
To extend the times for commencement and completion of clearing	1	1

Table 5: Variations to clearing permits 2005/2006

APPLICATIONS FOR NON PASTORAL USE 2005/2006

(i) **Applications for non pastoral use 2005/2006**

Applications carried over from 2004/2005	3
Applications lodged during 2005/2006	9
Applications approved	10
Applications lapsed/withdrawn	1
Applications carried over	1

Table 6: Applications for non pastoral use determined 2005/2006

(ii) **Purpose of non pastoral use approvals 2005/2006**

Non Pastoral Use Activity	No. of Approvals
Tourism	6
Horticulture	2
Store	1
Mining rehabilitation	1

Table 7: Purpose of non pastoral use approvals 2005/2006

APPLICATIONS TO SUBDIVIDE A PASTORAL LEASE INTO TWO OR MORE PASTORAL LEASES 2005/2006

Applications carried over from 2004/2005	2
Applications referred 2005/2006	0
Applications considered by the Board with recommendation to the Minister	1
Applications carried over	1

Table 8: Subdivision applications considered 2005/2006

APPLICATIONS TO SURRENDER TERM PASTORAL LEASES IN EXCHANGE FOR PERPETUAL PASTORAL LEASES 2005/2006

Applications carried over from 2004/2005	1
Applications referred 2005/2006	3
Applications considered by the Board with recommendation to the Minister	3
Applications carried over	1

Table 9: Applications to convert to perpetual tenure considered 2005/2006

APPLICATIONS TO SUBLEASE PASTORAL LEASES 2005/2006

Applications carried over from 2004/2005	0
Applications referred 2005/2006	1
Applications considered by the Board with recommendation to the Minister	1
Applications carried over	0

Table 10: Applications to sublease considered 2005/2006

REPORT ON LAND CLEARING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED

It is a requirement of the *Pastoral Land Act* that a lessee shall not undertake clearing on pastoral land without the written consent of the Pastoral Land Board. The Pastoral Land Board has included details of the number of clearing applications and purpose of land clearing approvals in each of its Annual Reports to the Minister since 1992/93. Since 1999/2000, the Board has also reported on progress with previous land clearing approvals. Table 11 below outlines whether clearing has proceeded and current status for determinations of the Board since the last report.

YEAR	CLEARING PURPOSE	AREA	COMMENTS
2004/2005	Introduced pastures & fodder production	100 ha	Clearing not yet commenced.

Table 11: Status of land clearing previously approved